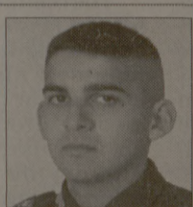


CAMPUS CONNECTION

Dirty dancing

Scheduling Kyle Field Concert to coincide with Ring Dance shows lack of consideration

Something stinks in Aggieland. It is the lack of consideration of members of the Texas A&M administration that stinks. These members are responsible for a slap in the face to the students of the class of '98.



MICKEY SALOMA
columnist

The first ever concert at Kyle Field has been scheduled the same night as Senior Ring Dance with no consideration given to either the concert-goers or those attending the dance. It must be admitted that the proceeds from the concert will benefit the Boys & Girls Clubs of Brazos Valley, the Harvey Little League and the Still Creek Boys & Girls Leagues. The concert is supporting a noble cause, and helping the area community's less fortunate is important, however scheduling an excellent Ring Dance is also important. No disrespect to the charities, but this concert could have been scheduled at another time. In order to maximize the proceeds for these organizations, it makes sense to have this concert before summer break, but not on this weekend. This concert should have been scheduled on the Friday of Parent's Weekend. They could have had the concert followed by Midnight Yell. It would have bolstered

the attendance for Yell and made A&M look that much better to the parents. Maybe it should have been scheduled on the Saturday before the last three days of finals.

There is no better way to blow off some steam than to listen to three obscure country stars play their lame, "I am not quite George, Garth or Reba" songs.

Believe it or not, I am a fan of country music, but I am not a fan of anybody ruining an event that I have been looking forward to for four years.

One of the concerns of the two events scheduled at the same time is that the loud music coming from Kyle may interfere with the Ring Dance.

Athletic Director Wally Groff said that he "couldn't imagine [the noise] being a problem."

However, those of us in touch with reality know that concerts tend to be on the loud side.

I have heard the sounds of concerts from Wolf Pen Creek on campus. Does Groff really think that music from across the street will not be heard? Will the three so-called country superstars be playing an acoustic set?

Ring Dance is a great Aggie tradition. Aggies take serious pride in earning their rings. It is an all-star day when an Aggie receives his or her ring and after receiving it, most people look forward to attending their Ring Dance.

I am not all too enthused about Ring Dance itself, but I am never really enthused

about spending 60 bucks in one day.

All I want is the picture. I want a picture of me in my senior boots with a ring on my finger with a beautiful woman inside the giant Aggie ring. Again, that has been something that I have looked forward to for four years.

I do not want to spend all that time in line to get this picture taken listening to people complain about the loud music. Furthermore, I don't want to listen to any unwanted noise from a miserable concert taking place across the street.

This is no way to spend a Ring Dance, especially when you have paid an arm and a leg to get in.

The biggest concern of the scheduling conflict is the parking. There is no place for everyone to park except West Campus. I can just picture hundreds of women in expensive dresses trotting half a mile over train tracks to get to the dance.

This problem could have been avoided if people would have just been more considerate. Why couldn't this concert be held at the new Reed Arena? Let's get our money's worth on that big, over-priced gymnasium.

The fact remains that at a university as large as ours, scheduling conflicts occur all the time; however events as large as those occurring the night of Ring Dance should be spread out. This University is for the students and the officials should be a little more considerate to us.

Mickey Saloma is a senior journalism major.



PERSPECTIVES

"Color-blindness" stands as a euphemism for allowing racism

It is the quintessential gray area — race and its correlation to achievement. As a nation, we struggle with sweeping generalizations and predetermined judgments every day. Ideally, we should achieve a level of color-blindness, where skin shades and heavy accents wouldn't matter in the least. However, those utopian conditions do not exist, and it seems doubtful that they ever will.



BEVERLY MIRELES
columnist

A host of laws have been enacted to resolve the differences people see when only noticing the color of skin. Affirmative action came about in this way; it was something that was supposed to bring forth the end of lily-white school environments and boardrooms.

But as the nation's mentality changed, affirmative action became the scapegoat of politicians and radio

talk-show hosts. And although criticism abounds still, no solution has been reached.

Affirmative action is being denounced in many states, rulings against it have already been handed down in Texas and California. A new case against it is taking place in Michigan, where two students have filed a federal discrimination suit against the University of Michigan.

Judicially speaking, it all comes down to this: what is worse — denying a student access to a school because of color, or denying a school's community of color because of test scores?

This question, in broad terms, is what *Hopwood v. The State of Texas* attempted to answer. There are no easy answers when it comes to race, but the final ruling in 1996 declared that "The University of Texas ... and its officers ... are hereby enjoined from taking into consideration racial preferences in the selection of those individuals to be admitted as students at the University of Texas School of Law."

Two years later, the ruling is still being protested. Only two weeks ago, students in Austin protested outside of

Attorney General Dan Morales's office, demanding an appeal of the anti-affirmative action ruling.

This is because since *Hopwood*, the number of minority students accepted has dropped noticeably in only a short period of time. And though the state of Texas has enacted the "10 Percent" legislation, where the top ten percent of students at Texas public schools automatically gain entrance into state colleges and universities, minority figures are still dropping.

It seems doubtful that the students will get their appeal. A judge threw out a bid by black and Hispanic groups to intervene in the case just last week.

And the injunction that the judge issued will probably not be pursued by AG Morales, although UT requested that he use the injunction to start a new appeal of the case. This is because Morales does not support the preferences that affirmative action sets forth, and neither does the Supreme Court.

It's an optimistic view he holds of the nation if he thinks that diversity will still prevail, even without affirmative action. He may say that he supports color-

blindness, but realistically, there is no such thing in this nation, no matter what laws are on the books.

Terrible as it is, color has almost always been a factor. Saying that affirmative action isn't right because it involves racial preferences is denying the fact that racial preferences for whites have flourished for years. And while Cheryl Hopwood and her fellow plaintiffs may celebrate the ruling, and pat each other on the backs for fighting for justice and equality, all they really did was start the regression of race relations in many facets of education and the nation.

Racism isn't only shown in lynchings and angry mobs. It is more practical, and effective, when it is shown in the absence of minorities.

By supporting the end of affirmative action, many people are only allowing racism, in all its insidiousness, back into our lives, under the pleasing title of "color-blindness."

Beverly Mireles is a freshman microbiology major.

CAMPUS CONNECTION

A&M offers students many religious choices

Sinner, sinner, sinner, was the heard across campus last week as the first batch of campus preachers visit campus.



JOHN LEMONS
columnist

They are known as Pelagianism, which is based on the teachings of Pelagius, an early fifth century priest. Pelagius claimed that there is no such thing as original sin and that man can live a completely sinless life by his own self-determination. The Catholic church declared this theology heresy. Furthermore, these are ideas that no mainline Christian denomination endorse.

So, in reality, these preachers spoke a message that few have taken seriously over the last 16 centuries. It is interesting that these old and little-held ideas could rear their head on campus to upset so many people.

Indeed, although the crowds around these speakers contained many vocal atheists and Christians, nobody seemed particularly pleased with the message. Regardless of the content of these preachers' messages, their very appearance begs the question: Does A&M need regular visits from itinerate cam-

pus preachers? Probably not. A&M is one of the most over-churched places on earth. If one wants to be religious, A&M is the place to be. Aggies have their choice of numerous Bible studies on any day of the week.

There are nearly as many Christian organizations and ministries on this campus as there are students.

Aggies can join Aggie Sisters for Christ, Brothers Under Christ, Campus Crusade for Christ or Interservice Christian Fellowship.

If they want a group affiliated with a denomination, they can go to Baptist Student Ministries, the Catholic Students Association, the Wesley Foundation or United Campus Ministries.

If a student wants to speak with somebody who really knows their religion, there is a campus pastor, priest or rabbi available at All Faiths Chapel every Monday through Thursday between 1 and 4 p.m.

Now, this column is not meant to criticize A&M's numerous ministries but to point out how many there are. A&M needs another campus ministry like it needs another fee increase. It is already blanketed by both.

So, if A&M already has an active and effective campus ministry in existence, what do these vagabond

campus preachers want? Most likely, what they want is attention. In the case of last weeks preachers, this motivation explains a lot.

It explains why these preachers were so quick to resort to ugly name calling. Ugly scenes always draw a crowd.

If attention is what these preachers want, it is the one thing students cannot afford to give them.

Next time these ill-mannered preachers appear, students should just ignore them.

From their last visit, it apparent that these speakers have nothing to contribute but spite and strife. Aggies should not allow them the opportunity to accomplish even that much.

Aggies do not need to pay attention to angry and abusive campus preachers.

There are plenty of legitimate ministries at Aggies disposal. Student should support these ministries who give to A&M year after year, rather than gratifying the rantings of come-and-go campus preachers.

Now, if Aggies had as many choices in parking spaces as they do ministries, then perhaps A&M really would be heaven on earth.

John Lemons is an electrical engineering graduate student.



MAIL CALL

Abiding laws of traffic is necessary for all

Manisha Parekh might just want to travel to Los Angeles to see what life is like without pedestrians and bicyclists.

As a transportation engineering major, I have heard the stories about the California commute, two hours each way by car because the congestion is just that bad.

In the case of Los Angeles, walking, cycling and transit were not priorities for the residents and thus they have built freeways up to a point such that they are unable to drive without sitting in lines of traffic.

It is important to note that the pedestrians and cyclists that Manisha calls "unnecessary traffic dangers" are important because they are not spewing pollution or causing traffic congestion like people in their vehicles are.

I do agree with her plea to pedestrians and bicyclists to use facilities where they are provided, i.e. the crosswalk for pedestrians and bike lanes (on the cor-

rect side of the street) for cyclists.

But the statement that "paved streets were actually created for cars" is not only shortsighted but also incorrect as described by Texas laws.

With or without bike lanes on the street, cyclists are allowed to use streets as vehicles and have their own set of rules to abide by. I will agree that many cyclists on campus do not obey the rules, but that does not mean that those who do obey the rules should be asked to get into our cars for our commute to school or work.

With the Bike to Work Day on May 1st coming up, I would suggest that all Aggies revisit the mode of transportation they use to get to work or school and should one choose to bike or walk, to obey the traffic rules as a bicyclist and pedestrian so we can all coexist equally.

Peter J. V. Koonce Graduate Student Class of '98

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