

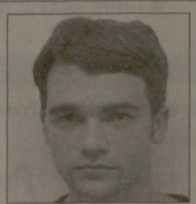
PERSPECTIVES

Ignorance is not bliss

Stupid actions of students deserve reflection, correction

SCENE ONE

An international studies class at generic university.



CHRIS MARTIN
columnist

TEACHER — Hi. Any intelligent and well-informed person knows that the United States government does certain underhanded things in other countries that the public thinks only other countries do.

STUDENT — Why do you hate America, you communist? Love it or leave, you baby-killing atheist!

SCENE TWO

A religious studies class at another generic university.

TEACHER — Hi. Moslems believe that Allah is the one true God and Mohammed is the greatest prophet.

STUDENT — I don't want to be nude, sir, but that is not in the Bible, you Christian-hating atheist!

Do any of these purely fictitious scenes seem familiar? Probably not, since only the best and brightest pass through the doors of Texas A&M University.

However, every once in a while one of these slightly less-than-astute students will slip through the stringent screening process (perhaps a flubbed stool sample) and finagle their way into an A&M classroom or two.

While many students possess a highly evolved spot in the brain that distinguishes between learning and indoctrination, these dervishes must scrape by with a brain mass that resembles partially digested corn chips.

Questioning a teacher is important, if not necessary, for a healthy classroom environment. But these students come armed not with opposing viewpoints backed with facts, but with defensive sissy-slapping retorts based on personal feelings.

It's easy to see why this happens, since up until the college level most students have their bowls filled with a never-ending supply of dogma-chow from parents, community, school and church.

When someone on the playground told you that their dad could beat up your dad, you naturally defended your turf. But as an adult, you become equipped with the mental faculty to discern whether or not their dad really could beat up yours. With mature intelligence such a challenge doesn't change your opinion or belief in your dad — it just keeps you from balling up your fist like a fool.

Fortunately this misunderstanding is a minor problem on campus. What really ails me, gentle reader, are the larger diseases infesting this, our beloved school.

First of all is the sudden outbreak of roll sheet scanning. This travesty occurs when students feel the need to leisurely flip through every page of the roll sheet instead of signing their name and passing it on.

They check all the names, inspect handwriting, memorize seating arrangements, recheck who is in class, analyze social security numbers and basically block up the whole teacher-roll sheet-student infrastructure like a greasy wad of chest hair.

Almost as bad as these "people" are the students who take up a whole table by themselves in the MSC's Hullabaloo eating area during lunch time to study, feeling fully justified by the fact that they are drinking a fountain Coke. These human paperweights do not realize that the MSC has plenty of plump and comfy chairs and benches upstairs for their Coke-drinking studying pleasure.

Which leads us right to the dead weights. These students show up late to class every day,

step on your feet and bring their tushes within precious inches of your nose while shuffling past to their seat.

To add insult to injury, they have the cajones to ask if they can copy your notes. To make sure it doesn't happen repeatedly, feel free to sketch Satanic sacrifice rituals, Marilyn Manson lyrics and pictures of you riding on the back of a baby dolphin with them in your note margins.

Finally, we must address the unfortunate outbreak of jean shorts on this campus. Two distinct strains of the pestilence have been identified — stone and acid washed. While the former strain may be cured with a timely khaki vaccine, the latter is almost always fatal, especially when paired with a pair of Teva sandals. The case is frighteningly similar to the Rocky Mountain jeans and Ropers plague of '96.

A&M is not a bad school. It just has bad people in it. Being perfect, I find it a challenge to not berate the masses more often.

If any of these cases smack familiar when you look into a mirror, please take the time to correct them. I, my high horse and tongue planted firmly in cheek, will thank you.

Chris Martin is a senior journalism major.

EDITORIAL

THE BATTALION

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FUTURE GAINS

Voting "against" means a vote for easing parking woes in Northgate

A familiar issue is once again facing College Station residents and Texas A&M students — parking.

A resolution will go to voters Saturday to determine the future of plans for a parking garage in the Northgate area.

Council Resolution No. 9-11-97-7b gives citizens the opportunity to give the go-ahead for construction of the Northgate Public Parking Garage Project.

The garage would ease parking woes in the highly-trafficked Northgate area, offering 752 new parking spaces.

Located on 1.65 acres between College Main and 2nd Street, the garage would provide access to churches, restaurants, merchants and nightlife.

The project has already earned the support of the majority of the Northgate business owners. And, the city promises the \$6.8 million project will not result in an increase in property taxes for residents.

Students should jump at the chance to open new doors for parking. Since campus lots are already overcrowded and parking addition plans are stalled, the resolution offers the chance to alleviate the ever-increasing parking problem.

"Mudlot," used by an estimated 700 motorists per day, is scheduled to close in December. Commuters will then have no parking options for longer than two hours during business hours Monday through Friday.

Not only will the closure of "Mudlot" mean a loss of much-needed parking spots, but any additional businesses will complicate the problem further.

The garage offers financial benefits as well, with costs set at \$1 per hour and a \$2 per day maximum, compared to the \$6 per day maximum charge at university garages.

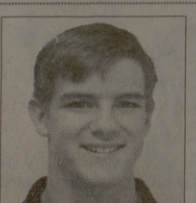
All things considered, the Northgate garage promises to be an invaluable asset to the community. With all its expected benefits and the dwindling future of parking near Northgate, the chance to support the garage is an opportunity voters should not ignore.

On Saturday, vote for the plan that makes sense, but watch the wording. Support the garage — vote against.

PERSPECTIVES

A&M practices encourage labeling as cult

It is time for the students and faculty at Texas A&M University to admit the truth. It is time for Aggies everywhere to face the reality of the situation. A&M is a cult, and we need to admit it.



CHRIS HUFFINES
columnist

According to *Webster's Dictionary*, a cult is a "quasi-religious group, often living in a colony, with a charismatic leader who indoctrinates members with unorthodox or extremist views, practices or beliefs." The University fits that definition to a "T."

Many readers are now saying to themselves, "A&M can't be a cult. That would make me a cult member, and I know I'm not." Oh, how wrong you are.

First, A&M is a quasi-religious institution. After all, no other university I know of builds a 55-foot monument to its school spirit every year. It is

reminiscent of the pyramids of Egypt or the cathedrals of Europe. Aggies even persecute heretics, the mark of every truly great religious and quasi-religious institution.

As to the charge of living in a colony, College Station is in the middle of nowhere. It is at least an hour to Waco, Austin or Houston.

The University is a shining star of intelligent civilization in a squalid, rural wasteland of ignorance. Aggies are alone here in their own little Mount Carmel.

Many readers have now begun laughing because they know that A&M does not, and cannot, have a charismatic leader, and therefore, is not a cult. The students don't like the faculty enough, and no student attends long enough for either of them to form a cult following.

However, there are idealists who live forever, such as Karl Marx, or Confucius, or Lawrence Sullivan Ross, Rock, the good Ag, and Reveille.

The benevolent founder of A&M appeals to all good Ags, while Rock, hero of every Yell

Practice story, represents the perfect Aggie.

And, of course, there is Reveille, the physical manifestation of this maroon trinity.

This next point will be far easier, since A&M indoctrinates its followers heavily. Starting with Fish Camp and T-Camp, then proceeding through Howdy Week, this University ruthlessly brainwashes its students.

From the moment any student sets foot on campus, they are steeped in words like "Howdy!," "red-ass" and "two-percenter" until they have soaked up all that Aggie goodness.

Having fallen prey to it myself, I can testify that this brainwashing is a powerful force. And, let's face it — bleeding maroon is not the mark of a well-balanced, objective person.

Finally, A&M holds unorthodox views, practices and beliefs.

Admittedly, no Aggies I know of have castrated themselves and are waiting for the spaceship so they can leave their "vessels," and no one here in Aggie land is mixing up "special" Kool-Aid, but things like bury-

ing dead animals so that they are facing the Jumbotron, throwing the yell leaders into a concrete pond of semi-stagnant water and gathering at midnight to assume the position and chant in unison is pretty unorthodox.

After all, from the outside looking in, you can't understand it; from the inside looking out, you can't explain it.

Despite the proof now before them, most readers will simply laugh off the fact that they are in a cult.

They will laugh the weak, warbling laugh of the damned.

A&M is a cult. But, is this a bad thing? As a long as the Aggie cult does not abuse its power and position as the largest and most successful cult on this fine planet, there is absolutely nothing wrong with being a cult.

As long as A&M realizes that its cult status is abnormal and not the way everyone else should be, the Aggie cult is a good thing. And never let anyone tell you differently.

Chris Huffines is a sophomore speech communications major.



MAIL CALL

Differences in men, women are natural

In response to Michelle Voss' April 29 column:

I wanted to sincerely thank you for showing me the error of my ways. Yes, after reading your illuminating article I decided to turn off the WCW Nitro, put down my beer and rethink my existence.

Therefore, as a spokesman for the male race I decided to make a short list of how we could help refine ourselves.

First, we will be forced to reject the imaginary, violent sport of pro wrestling in favor of a more realistic, "female" form of entertainment.

I am talking about the soap opera, the most accurate depiction of real life that is imaginable.

Men can now plan their class schedules around their favorite soaps, as well as buying up all of the latest copies of Soap Opera Digest.

The process does not stop there. We will learn how to cry uncontrollably through an entire movie, soaking the popcorn, seats, and those around us. Next comes the intricate art of shopping, or should I say the ability to spend all of our spouse's money on clothes, jewelry, and other "necessities."

Finally, males will learn how to properly handle their emotions, i.e. taking them out on everybody else around them. I truly know the world will become a better place when the male race discovers its many faults.

However, until that day, females will have to learn to live with all of our little quirks, as we have discovered how to accept theirs.

You see, men will always be men and women will always be women, but the two will invariably find a way to live together.

Whenever you find your "lesbian planet" you may move there and you may enjoy it, but take a look around and note just how many women you see.

*John Elliott
Class of '00*

Core classes give new experiences

This letter is in response to the column by Mickey Saloma. I guess he is not doing too well in one of his "core" classes this semester. So what does he do? He decides to use his column to belittle his classes.

Maybe he should try and do what most students here at A&M do, work harder.

As for his comment about most students knowing what they want to I would greatly disagree. Most freshman and sophomores have an idea of what they want, but most are still feeling things out.

The classes required in the core curriculum give students the chance to experience different aspects and help them in choosing a future profession.

I know I used to want to minor in political science, but decided not to after taking a class on it. Instead, I have been considering making history my minor, also due to classes I have taken here.

Don't knock the core curriculum just because you aren't getting the grades you want in them. Be a true Aggie, work harder, and quit your pity party.

*Chris Cox
Class '98*

Success requires a varied education

In response to Mickey Saloma's April 29 column:

Saloma discusses Texas A&M's high reputation of excellence and world-class status as an argument to end core curriculum. In my opinion, the presence of core curriculum gives students a more well rounded education and helps them develop an array of skills.

By eliminating classes such as English 104 and political science, those students with a less-than-adequate background in those areas are at a grave disadvantage.

To produce "leaders of state and nation," students graduating from A&M must have a wide base of knowledge and highly developed social and communication skills.

By assuming all students entering this university should already be competent leaders, thinkers and strong communicators is a travesty. Students came to college to gain a better understanding of the world and to find their place in it. High school students do not enter college in hope of fine-tuning their skills, but to learn.

To eliminate core curriculum at A&M would be doing an injustice to the student body.

*Jay Gerdes
Class of '01*

MIKE LUCKOWICH ATLANTA CONSTITUTION '96

