

# Opinion

## Zoning Out

### Stadium construction inconveniences Aggie fans, but promises improvements

There is a wise quote that reads, "The toils of the road will seem nothing, when I get to the end of the road." All A&M students, faculty and guests who attend football games for the duration of the football season should remember this quote. The Zone is far from the spectacular display it will soon be. Unfortunately, until it is all done, as the football spectators will suffer. The good news is that they will not be suffering for long.

As anyone could tell from the first football game, The Zone construction — as it is now — is hardly anything could make the north side of the stadium look worse. Hopefully first-time visitors to Kyle Field can picture its completed construction in their minds or come back next season to get a better look. But this is how construction schedule, especially long ones, go. The work does not rest or get put on hold for the football season.

Another dilemma the construction causes is the inconvenience to the fans that come to the games and the workers that will remain. Cutting 12,000 seats and a major entrance from Kyle Field has caused many obstacles. Football patrons are advised to

come early to games because of the longer, narrower lines to enter the stadium. It is a tall task for the majority of the students on this campus who attend football games to even get to their bench before kickoff. To ask that they not only be on time, but early, is a stretch.

Do not forget to mention those people who were unable to get tickets because of the ticket shortage.

It is better to be late than not be there at all. Kyle Field workers, who range from field maintenance crews to concessions staff, have had to change their normal routines because of the construction. Stadium operations has had to relocate utilities and phone lines, install new water systems and deal with numerous other nuisances as this season approached.

Aramark runs all concessions for Kyle Field, and they have been adversely affected as well.

Two of the company's concession stands were demolished, cutting profits for this season, and their entire warehouse and office spaces have been temporarily repositioned at the south end of the stadium.

It is time to go back to the quote. These toils of the road, although annoying, will be long forgotten at the end of the road next season.

The ugly duckling construction will bloom into the pleasant "Zone." Thousands of new seats will be added to allow more fans into Kyle Field.

Students, alumni, and visitors will not have to wait in endless, narrow lines to enter the stadium. Stadium operations will be back to normal, and of course the hot dogs and cokes should taste even better as Aramark receives its new-and-improved warehouse and concession facilities.

Hopefully this season will proceed in a winning manner for the Aggies to take away attention from all of the inconveniences of The Zone's construction. Visitors should all come back next season. You cannot judge Kyle Field 1998 or A&M football until you have seen The Zone.

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In Elkins-Nesheim's experience, that perception is wrong on two counts. She said for many of the gay, lesbian and bisexual students who come to see her, the choice is not about whether or not they are homosexual, but about whether they should "come out."

"Being gay is not a choice. The choice is whether you are going to be your authentic self or someone else in order to fit into society," Elkins-Nesheim said.

In many states, however, there is a price for being true to yourself. In a number of states, gays and lesbians can be evicted from their homes and have no protection against losing their jobs, simply because of their sexual orientation.

And thanks to "evidence" from organizations like Exodus International, some people feel as though they have every right to continue denying homosexuals the same rights as every other American.

However, it is the details Exodus does not include in its statements that are much more telling of the ability to convert gays into "ex-gays."

Two of Exodus' original male co-founders fell in love and left the ministry. Thirteen different Exodus ministries were forced to close after their directors "returned" to homosexuality. In fact, Exodus has no record of the number of the ex-gays who are still living a heterosexual lifestyle.

Mark Satterlee, a gay man who tried conversion therapy, wrote the following to Newsweek: "After four years of prayer, time and money, I finally realized that God made me the way that I am and that just as someone cannot be ex-straight, one cannot be ex-gay ... I never met one person who had legitimately changed from gay to straight."

It is time to realize that gays cannot be changed. Homosexuality is no more a choice than heterosexuality is. Groups like Exodus International do not provide a defense for those who choose to discriminate against homosexuals; they simply provide excuses.

It is time to stop focusing on things that cannot be changed and refocus on things that must be changed, such as prejudice.

In the words of one Newsweek reader, "What we really need are fewer ex-gays and more ex-bigots."

## Play abuses free speech

According to Mark Twain, sacred cows make the best hamburger.

That may be true, but sometimes sacred cows leave a bad taste in the mouth.

Terrence McNally is a playwright who has taken Twain's philosophy to new heights. On Tuesday, McNally opened his new show, "Corpus Christi" in a New York off-Broadway theater. McNally's play centers around a gay Christ figure. The play is indicative of the growing acceptability of Christian bashing in America.

It is ironic that anti-religion sentiment could persist in the United States. After all, as taught in grade school, many of this nation's original settlers came here to escape religious persecution.

But not only does anti-religious sentiment exist, it is trendy. MTV plays videos by Marilyn Manson, a self-described antichrist superstar. Off-Broadway theaters feature plays attacking Christianity.

The debut of McNally's play attracted about 100 protesters, and rightfully so. "Corpus Christi" is nothing short of a full-scale assault on the biblical portrayal of Jesus. The play's gay Jesus character, named Joshua, has sex with his disciples, an event foreign to Matthew, Mark, Luke or John.

McNally does not discuss the play's contents with the press, only releasing this description: "From modern day Corpus Christi, Texas, to ancient Jerusalem, we follow a young gay man named Joshua on his spiritual journey and get to know the 12 disciples who choose to follow him."

The play's message is particularly insulting in the ultra-sensitive '90s. Every ethnic group must be called by its appropriate name, all cultures must be accepted and every religion is to be respected. These rules, however, only apply when dealing with groups who, in some way, are in the minority.

It seems tolerance is a one-way street. When it comes to the culture of the majority, sensitivity is optional. It is acceptable to trash the majority's religion.

But real cultural sensitivity means being sensitive to everybody, even those in the majority. Just because it is the country's predominant religion, does not make it open season on Christianity.

Frighteningly, off-Broadway theaters are not the only places exhibiting anti-religious sentiments these days. Attacks on religion are emanating, shockingly, from the White House.

Consider presidential adviser Sidney Blumenthal's comments on Kenneth Starr's top deputy, Hickman Ewing. Last April, Blumenthal called Ewing a "religious fanatic," referring to Hickman's evangelical Christian beliefs.

Faced with criticism of his attack on Hickman's faith, Blumenthal eventually apologized for his bigoted remarks.

It is interesting how anti-religious behavior gets justified. Often, those who aim to destroy the sacred claim they are merely expressing themselves.

Candace Simon is a theatergoer who watched the opening of "Corpus Christi."

"It's all about free speech," Simon said in an interview with the Associated Press. "They have the right to protest, the theater has a right to stage it."

One wonders if the framers of the Constitution had defaming Christ in mind when they endorsed American's right to free speech. One might hope that free speech would have more constructive uses.

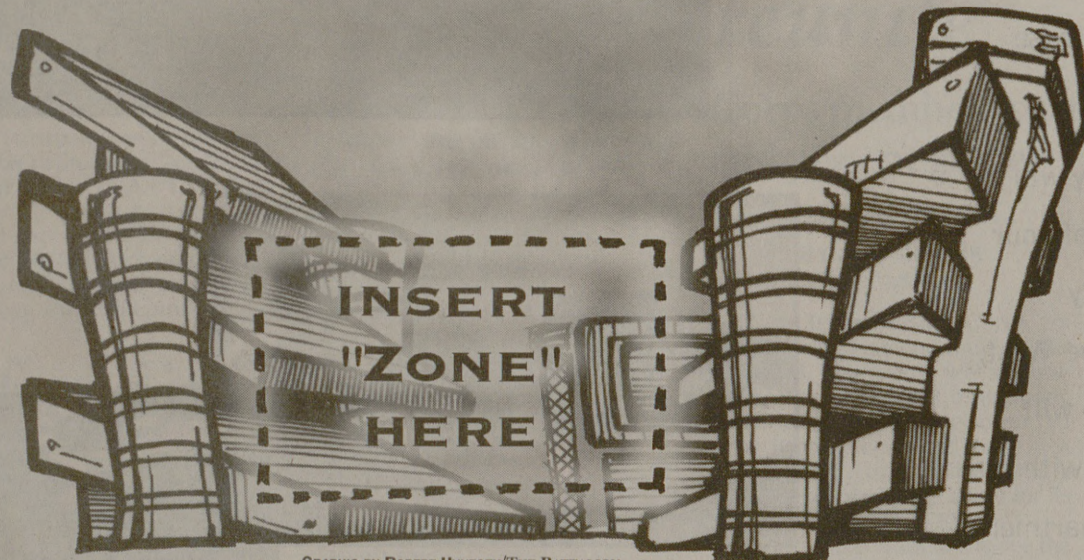
Freedom is a precious commodity. And Americans are endowed with the God-given right to practice religion, not destroy it.

Bigotry is bigotry. Calling it art does not make it something else. The anti-religious behavior that passes for acceptable these days is bigotry.

By telling the greatest story never told, "Corpus Christi" is profaning the sacred. It is one sacred cow that should have never been slaughtered.



JOHN LEMONS



GRAPHIC BY ROBERT HYNCEK/THE BATTALION

Andrew Baley is a junior political science major.

## Reveille's rank demands respect

In response to the Sept. 21 article, "Garry sees doors of Corps open for women."

I am writing in response to Bryan Buckman's article about Garry on Monday, Sept. 21. The caption under Garry's picture said she is the highest-ranking female in the Corps of Cadets. That is not true. Reveille has five diamonds, and anybody who can do simple math knows five is greater than the three diamonds Garry wears.

Now, had the proper research been done, one would have found that Reveille is the highest-ranking female in the Corps of Cadets.

Jason Hoelscher Class of '99

## President answers to American public

In response to Sept. 22 articles: The articles in the Sept. 22 Battalion sickened me. No matter what Clinton does, every newspaper continues to quote Americans defending his actions and accusing anyone who disagrees of being an extreme conservative.

I am just as sick of hearing about Clinton's scandals as the next person, but it is our responsibility to hold our leaders accountable for their actions.

## MAIL CALL

Our country has become apathetic. What once would have been an outrage is now accepted without question.

We are the future of our country. We are the leaders, the college educated. If we are blind to Clinton's dishonesty and questionable activities, how can we expect anything better from him?

Clinton has not done a "great job," or even a "decent job." He has stripped our presidency of its honor and respect.

Apparently, many people feel that Clinton's scandals will have "no effect" on our country. I sincerely hope that these events will have a profound effect on every American citizen. It is time for us to do the research. It is time to listen to our president's testimony, his evasions, his lies, and it is time to hold him accountable.

Clinton has not fulfilled his duties. We should not make the same mistake.

caught me performing sexual acts in my office, I would be fired.

Clinton not only cheated on his wife with a 21-year-old intern in his office while we were paying him to conduct the affairs of the nation, but he lied about it under oath to a grand jury.

The sad part is, the people of this nation want to blow it off because the economy is good and "Clinton has done a wonderful job as President."

Clinton defenders cannot name any Clinton acts that had an impact on the economy. Only some allusions to a weak welfare reform act and a balanced budget idea that Clinton vetoed and then resubmitted as his own.

However, the fact of the matter is, any other official would have to answer for his actions. Clinton should be no different.

Brad Fox Class of '97

## Clinton's actions demand attention

The news of the President's actions has really upset me. Although his sexual encounters should normally be none of our business, what he has done is. He holds the highest office in the land, but he also works for the citizens of this country. If my boss

Leah Graves Class of '01

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class and phone number.

The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:

The Battalion - Mail Call  
013 Reed McDonald  
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## Gays not converted by prayer and persuasion

Prejudice and discrimination can rear their ugly heads in many forms.

Whether it be in the segregated South of the '60s or the glass ceilings of the '80s, discrimination can be found throughout history.

As much as we would like to lull ourselves into a false sense of equality as America approaches the next millennium, discrimination, and the prejudice that underlies it, is alive and well in the United States. Alive and thriving, actually.

For years, the gay, lesbian and bisexual community has fought for the same rights afforded to heterosexuals. For a while, it looked as though they were making progress. Folks began to accept homosexuals as actual people and began to realize the extent to which they are discriminated against. Statutes were passed in many areas to protect the precious civil rights that everyone, regardless of sexual orientation, deserves.

And then, suddenly, the pendulum began to swing backwards.

The religious right went on the offensive, claiming gays and lesbians can convert to heterosexuality through the power of prayer. In July, Exodus International, a group that specializes in "conversion therapy," took out full-page ads in newspapers across the country proclaiming that gays can be prayed straight.

Pronouncing the numbers of gays that had "successfully" converted to a heterosexual lifestyle as proof of the therapy's effectiveness, Exodus leaders hit the national television circuit to say the homosexual lifestyle is a choice and a sin that can be corrected through prayer.

Maybe the "Information Age" should be renamed the "Misinformation Age."

According to the American Psychological Association, conversion — or reparative — therapy is not only scientifically ineffective, it is also potentially harmful.

Becki Elkins-Nesheim, director of Gender Issues and Education Services, agreed.

"It is not directly harmful towards gay, lesbian and bisexuals," Elkins-Nesheim said, "but for the population in general. When you have a group struggling for civil rights, to say people (gays) are able to be prayed back, it makes the perception that it's a choice



MANISHA PAREKH

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Manisha Parekh is a junior psychology and journalism major.



MIKE LUCKAICH ART AND A CONSTITUTIONAL

John Lemons is an electrical engineering graduate student.