

## Making a resolution to change

Aggies should stop practicing pointless and silly traditions, focus on the good ones

The start of a new semester is the perfect time for Texas A&M University to make a New Year's resolution. This year's resolution is simple: Get rid of the school's worst traditions.



GLENN JANIK

Many traditions at A&M involve not only ceremonies and events, but the words and phrases Aggies use daily on campus. The A&M lexicon is full of outdated and somewhat disgusting terms.

Only in Aggieland could "red-ass" mean anything good. In the rest of the country "red-ass" is an uncomfortable, unflattering status people actually try to avoid.

Each of these phrases is a senseless saying that makes Aggies appear to be slack-jawed, back-woods rednecks. By purging our vocabulary of the most embarrassing Aggie-isms, perhaps the more valuable sayings — like "howdy" — will be noticed.

The practice of Midnight Yell could use some adjustments also. The yell leaders do a superb job during the practice.

So then why must they waste our time with 20 minutes worth of

antics before practice begins? Why do the yell leaders show up at Kyle Field at 11:40 pm, do hundreds of little-tiny push-ups and then roll around on with each other on the turf? Neither the fans nor the football team receives any encouragement from this pre-game wrestling match.

According to a recent Rolling Stone poll, Texas A&M University is the most spirited college in the country. Our traditions help keep our spirit alive. However, as current Aggies, we have an obligation to get rid of the traditions that make our school look flat-out ignorant.

Perhaps if we transferred our energy away from "Gig'em right back at you" and the dead-dog scoreboard, and back to the valuable traditions, more people would say "Howdy," show up for Silver Taps and attend Muster.

As the last year of the millennium dawns, let's resolve to do away with our worst traditions. Yell practice will be more enjoyable, Aggie Moms will be happier and perhaps the traditions deserving our attention can be restored to the rightful place.

Glenn Janik is a senior political science major.

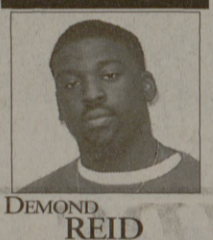


# Gig'em right back at you

J.P. BEATO/THE BATTALION

## NBA shows poor sportsmanship

There is no joy in Mudville, because the Mighty Casey wants a 5-year, \$50 million contract.



DEMOND REID

The six-month saga of the "Lifestyles of the Rich and Greedy" came to an abrupt end when the National Basketball Association players and owners reached a settlement concerning the lockout.

Basically, the past half-year foolishness has been over a measly difference of two percentage points. It is this type of money-grubbing and penny-pinching that has caused a rift of mistrust and frustration between professional sports and the American public so wide that it makes the Grand Canyon look like the gap between Mike Tyson's front teeth.

In a situation such as this, it is hard to decide who to hate more.

On one hand, there are grossly overpaid, ultra-testosteroned, parole-violating behemoths who have been pampered for the majority of their adult lives because they have a "sweet" jumper or a 35-inch vertical leap.

On the other hand, there are the gazillionaire, megalomaniac owners who probably did not get any action in high school, but since they have more money than God now, they think they can use the world as their own personal playground.

Sure Kevin Garnett will end up making \$126 million, but Minnesota Timberwolves owner Glen Taylor is writing him the check.

The best thing to come out of the settlement is that we no longer have to listen to Patrick Ewing talk. How did he get elected president of the Players' Union? Who was he running against, Latrell Sprewell and Dennis Rodman? Patrick Ewing is not qualified to be president of the Luke Perry fan club. It is good to know the NBA is putting the basketball back in his hand and taking the microphone out.

During the negotiation meetings, it was easy to feel sorry for the majority of the NBA players. If those guys wanted to spend their days in a stuffy room listening to a boring speaker, they would have stayed in college.

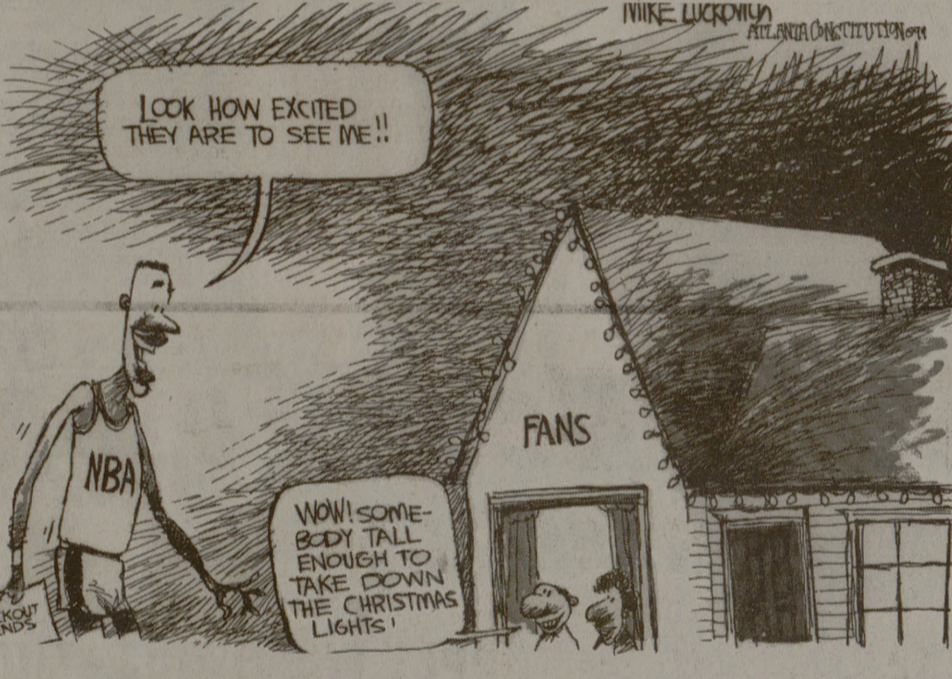
The people who are really to blame for this entire fiasco are we, the fans. We empower the basketball players with our money, which in turn empowers the owners. We are facing nothing more than the Frankenstein we have created.

So villagers join together, pick up your pitchforks and torches and let's go monster-hunting. If we come together as a group and collectively boycott the N.B.A. and all N.B.A. merchandise, the revenue will drop faster than a freshman after seven beers.

And a decrease in revenue means a decrease in salaries.

If we hit both the players and the owners in the wallet, maybe they will stand up and notice that the fans are mad as heck and we are not going to take it anymore. After all, if the N.B.A. loses enough money, "The Mailman" will no longer be Karl Malone's nickname — it will be his job title.

Demond Reid is a sophomore marketing major



MIKE LUCKOVICH

## Racial bias, threats of violence should not affect execution

Just over a week ago, convicted murderer Gary Graham was granted a stay on his scheduled execution. Graham, a 34-year-old black man, received the death penalty in 1981 for murdering a man after a robbery in a Houston supermarket parking lot.



ZACH HALL

After being on death row for 17 years, Graham has finally reached the end of his legal rope. But Graham and his attorney, Richard Burr, contend that witnesses and evidence has emerged that can prove Graham's innocence. They claim that a new trial must be granted.

While Graham was denied a new trial, the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals granted him a stay until his case could be further reviewed. In doing so, it appears that justice was held hostage by militant political and racial activism.

Until this time, no court has granted a new trial for Graham, and his sentence has not been commuted. According to the *Houston Chronicle*, Graham, in the final days before his scheduled execution, has vowed that he "would fight like hell" before he is allowed to die. He also urged support for his cause adding that "if it takes a picket sign, bring that. If it takes an AK-47, bring that."

In support of Graham, radical black Muslim activist Quanell X of Houston is quoted in the *Houston Chronicle* openly urging African-Americans to support Graham by taking out their violence on whites.

"For the next three to four days we are asking for total peace and calm in the black community. We don't want any brothers doing any drive-bys, anybody mugging anybody, anybody robbing anybody."

"If you feel that you just got to mug somebody because of your hurt and your pain, go to River Oaks (an affluent mostly white neighborhood in Houston) and mug you some good white folks."

"If you're angry that our brother is put to death, don't burn down your own community, give these white folks hell from womb to the tomb."

Perhaps Quanell X would gain more respect and support if he championed a true racial cause and not one that involves a convicted thug. The efforts by much of the black community to turn this issue into one of racial bias are unsubstantiated and misdirected. The 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals should not further this issue any more and should lift the stay so Graham can face his punishment.

Furthermore, Quanell X's actions should be closely watched and perhaps he should be brought up on charges of inciting riots.

Graham was convicted on testimony of Bernardine Skillern, who was an eyewitness to the murder. She followed Graham in her car to get a closer look at his face after Graham tried to flee the scene of the murder. She has subsequently picked him out of a police line-up every time since then.

In addition, the case has had 35 previous reviews. Graham was determined to be guilty by every one of them. The judges during these reviews ruled Graham does not need a new trial because the new witnesses could not be deemed credible.

It should also be noted that these witnesses did not come forward until 1993, when Graham was first scheduled to die.

Hopefully, the decision by the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to grant a stay was not done out of fear of riots and the threat of armed insurrection. It is unlikely, though, that they will allow Graham a new trial.

Nevertheless, no court or any branch of law should be pressured into action by violent threats. The Graham case is not a Rodney King case. The black community should not allow its radical racists to taint future causes that might have merit. No cause, regardless of how unjust it is, warrants violent actions against innocent citizens.

If and when Graham is again scheduled for execution, the Houston and Huntsville communities should not tolerate the violent threats and actions from militants like Quanell X or any of his sympathizers who share his views.

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## The Battalion

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## REALIZING A DREAM

Martin Luther King Day should be a time to reflect on the past, make plans for bettering the future of race relations in America

It has been more than 30 years since the death of Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King, but the passage of time has not dimmed his legacy.

As the nation prepares for the next millennium, King stands as a symbol of what man can be when he strives to better himself and his society.

King is reminder of the nation's past and the great strides we have made towards racial harmony. His "I have a dream speech" still stands as a turning point in the history of race relations and civil rights, serving as a yardstick with which we can measure or progress towards a time when people are no longer judged on the basis of skin color.

King's legacy is also a symbol of how far American society still has to progress before even half his dream is realized. Society has come a long way, but we must not stop while the goal is still out of our grasp.

King also serves as shining example of what person can do when he puts his mind to it. In an age of increasing cynicism, the legacy of King continues to inspire social reformers across the globe. King is proof that one person can make a difference in the world.

Further, his example was one of calm reason. Instead of taking to the streets with violence, King chose to work towards his goals through civil disobedience. Even when faced with violent resistance, King never resorted to using force. His was a philosophy of peace, not pain.

King was also a man who tried to bring the races together, instead of dividing them. He accepted all races as followers and did not discriminate.

He offered a vision of the future in which all people were represented. For this reason, King stands as a symbol of freedom for people of all races, not just a few.

King, despite the flaws some historians choose to dwell on, was man who brought people together in an effort to make the country and the world a better place. Through his efforts, he has come to be thought of and honored as a modern-day founding father.

However, as Americans stop to reflect upon the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, is important to remember that there is still long path to travel before his dream is realized.