

The Other Education

Grades can suffer due to extra-curricular pursuits

Today marks the first meeting of the semester for many student organizations. Aggies' campus will flood the MSC Koldus buildings and resume "other education."



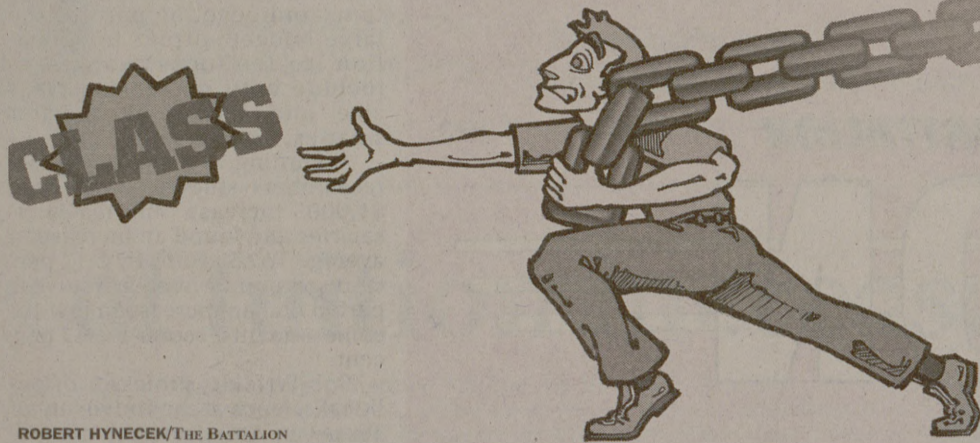
Glenn Janik

Coincidentally, today also marks the first day many Aggies begin their neglect of academics for the pride and glory of extra-curricular activities.

A terrible epidemic has engulfed campus. For many, the "other education" has become their only priority. The Texas A&M Undergraduate Association states, "The Department of Student Activities knows that the first priority of students is to study so that they may be academically successful."

With a wink and a nod, this warning is thrown the door the first day of Fish Camp. Counselors are not able to sell their individual organizations begin to harp on the paramount value of the her education."

The Fish Camp hard sell is quickly followed by MSC's Open House extravaganza. Every organization seeks new members to get involved and dues. As students walk by the woodcarvings on the walls of the MSC, the student activity carving is placed on an equal pedestal with Corps and academic carvings. Students are told the message by the carving: "A good Aggie is



ROBERT HYNCEK/THE BATTALION

an involved Aggie."

Many students take advantage of co-curricular and pre-professional organizations corresponding to their majors. However, a great number are drawn into the abysmal network of MSC committees and the student government bureaucracy.

What do the "other education" minions gain? Some argue invaluable communication skills, a vibrant social network, opportunities to help the community and a sense of achievement. For many this is true. The "other education" completes their university experience and readies them for a successful professional life.

However, due to excessive "other education," many Aggies suffer.

All Aggies know of a friend, roommate or classmate who is succeeding in the "other education"

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and struggling in their academic education. This summer, scores of recent Aggie graduates were forced to walk across the graduation stage and straight into temporary jobs.

This phenomenon is apparent in statistics available from Texas A&M's Office of Professional School Advising.

For Aggies reporting admissions into the top five law schools in Texas for 1998, less than 20% had GPR's below 3.00. The news for medical school admissions is more alarming. Less than five-percent of Aggies who reported acceptance into a medical school in 1997 had science GPR's below a 3.00.

These statistics cast serious doubt on those who say activities can make up for a low GPR. A poor GPR slams the door shut to many Aggies seeking admission into professional school.

Unfortunately, many poor GPR's are a direct result of over-involvement in the other education. A mentality has developed on this campus in which a 2.5 GPR, due to excessive involvement, is not only acceptable but laudable.

Is anyone acting to solve this epidemic?

One solution would be to increase the minimum

GPR for involvement in activities from a 2.0 to something reflecting a higher level of academic excellence. However, the current trend over-promotes participation in extra-curricular activities at the expense of academics; obviously, A&M is moving in the wrong direction. The "other education" elite in the so-called Student Senate are pushing for an extra Q-drop. Armed with an extra chance to quit a class, there is little doubt Aggies will have a greater opportunity to neglect their studies in the name of the "other education."

The University experience is the last time many Aggies will read Shakespeare, perform science experiments and work equations for the pure joy of gaining knowledge. These activities are astronomically more important to the human mind and human condition than sitting on some obscure subcommittee or judging a meaningless election.

Perhaps students saddled with over-involvement and poor GPR's will awaken and reconsider their priorities. Perhaps Dr. Bowen will maintain the academic integrity of A&M and quash the proposal clamoring for an extra Q-drop.

Unfortunately the trend will probably continue. Texas A&M will become a school of students over-educated in the "other education" and under-educated in real education.

Glenn Janik is a senior political science major.



SANTA, ALTHOUGH I'VE BEEN BAD MY NAUGHTINESS DOESN'T RISE TO THE LEVEL WHERE I SHOULD GET TOYS...

YOUNG BILL CLINTON

Corporate sponsorship of sports, national landmarks harmful to country's identity

ate last night the Texas Athletic Department and 21st Man Foundation announced at Kyle Field that they will now be known as Snuffy Stadium.



Zach Hall

In a story run in today's issue of Bryan-College Station Buzzard, who have exclusive rights to the late-breaking story, local businessman Joe Q. Snuffy donated \$6.2 billion to the athletic department. This generous donation prompted the athletic department and powers that be the University to change the name that has stood for more than 70 years.

"We did consider A&P's long history of tradition and reverence that the name Bryan Field has represented for so long," athletic directorally Cleaver said, "however, in light of the substantial donation by Mr. Snuffy we felt that he deserved a recognition equal to his nation. Besides, we were afraid he might rescind his gift if we did not do something for him to return."

This move will certainly stir up much controversy as did the decision last year to change the school colors to purple and gold.

That decision was made after the Snike Corporation threatened to withdraw its \$3.5 billion sponsorship if the A&P football

team refused to change its old maroon and white colors.

Football coach Pepst Smith refused to talk to The Battalion about the renaming. It appears that his corporate sponsors do not like the refusal by The Battalion to accept corporate sponsorship.

However, Jane Q. Aggie, a senior history major, who would speak to The Battalion, said "There was a time when baseball and football stadiums were named for individuals based on the merit and sacrifices those individuals made in the form of time, energy and love for their school or team. Now we see sponsorships given to the highest bidder with very little consideration for commitment and love of school or team."

While the above story is false, in a true story, The Houston Chronicle reported the new Houston Astros baseball park may soon be known as Enron Park.

The Enron Corporation, a national energy giant, is among 13 other companies in a partnership with first naming rights to the new stadium. These 14 companies make up the Sports Facility Limited Partnership, which bought the land where the ball-park stands and donated the land to the Harris County-Houston Sports Authority.

The members of the partnership will negotiate with the Astros, probably through a pricing war, and then a bid will be sent to the Astros for a final name

for the stadium.

Hopefully, the Astros will not fall prey to the corporate trophy hunters, as have other sports facilities such as The Summit, Jack Murphy Stadium and Candlestick Park.

This is not to say corporations do not benefit sports entities or venues.

The Shell Corporation, which sponsors the Shell Houston Open, is testament to that. They are the largest donor to charities of all the corporate sponsor on the PGA Tour. However, tournaments and charitable events need corporate sponsorship and public donations to survive; sports facilities do not.

The Houston Astros can show their gratitude to the companies that donated land and money to them in other ways than the near-permanent move of naming a stadium after the highest bidder.

In 15 to 30 years, when the naming contract has ended, the stadium could face a new name if the Astros are unhappy with their current moniker.

If Enron, Texaco or any other member of the partnership wants to have a stadium named after their company, then they should buy the property and stadium outright and name it what they wish.

However, the Astros' stadium project was not funded solely by these partners. In fact, a majority of the money is coming from public funds.

The Astros owe it to the Houston public to either conduct a public-naming campaign or give the stadium a name with some relevance to the Houston Astros. The current name it has been given is The Ballpark at Union Station.

This name has more nostalgic and relevant appeal than Enron or Texaco Field. Another Chronicle article reported that Enron was interested in financing a deal for a new ballpark in San Francisco. Will the name of that stadium be Enron Park II?

The Battalion has just been informed that Joe Snuffy has been accused of paying athletes to come to A&P. To avoid public controversy Todd & Black Health Clinic officials have notified the media that they will donate a large amount of money to the athletic department and 21st Man Foundation for sponsorship rights.

The Battalion staff has been notified that they will no longer have access to A&P athletic events at Todd & Black Stadium.

It seems since Todd & Black sponsors both the local newspaper and football stadium, the athletic department is denying access by all other media entities.

Note: the writer of this column, in keeping with the national trend, decided to sell his soul and column rights to the Greed Corporation and will no longer be writing for The Battalion.

Zach Hall is a senior philosophy major

Court should not hear sexual harassment suit

When LaShonda Davis told her mother a boy in her fifth grade class was groping and verbally assaulting her, she could not have known it would turn into a Supreme Court case.



Brandon Mullen

However, Aurelia Davis, LaShonda's mother, is suing the Monroe County (Georgia) School Board for not taking action against the young boy. If the Supreme Court allows this, they could see a flood of lawsuits against school boards for students' actions.

Aurelia Davis contends she pleaded with the school system to separate the two children. Davis said her daughter's grades fell and that she was emotionally scarred due to the boy's harassment.

Yes, the school system should have taken some action. The boy should have been moved to another class, or at least the other side of the room. But if the school had taken these measures, LaShonda still would have been vulnerable. The school could not have provided full-time supervision for just these two children.

Unless the boy was removed from the school completely, he could still harass her when they passed in the hall or on the playground. And removing one child for harassment could lead to a large number of expulsions — one for every time a bully picks on someone else.

Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor made a valid point when she said, "Is every one of these incidents going to lead to a lawsuit?"

If Davis wins, the ruling might prompt future cases against school boards that are not related to sexual harassment.

Every school has bullies and every bully has his favorite targets. It may be the boy with glasses or the fat kid, and these students could sue on the basis of discrimination against the physically challenged. Young children are always going to have to deal with teasing; it is part of society.

And society has already dealt with this incident. Davis' mother contacted the police and the boy pleaded guilty to sexual battery. The case should have ended there. LaShonda is now 16 and the boy does not go to her school anymore. But Davis said the school system should shoulder some of the guilt.

Davis has a couple of powerful

allies. The Department of Education and the National Education Association are supporting her. They believe if Davis loses, then any future case of sexual harassment could be dismissed easily. They base their argument on Title IX, which keeps federally funded schools from discriminating on the basis of sex.

Davis' attorneys said this covers student on student sexual harassment.

This is a broad interpretation. School systems can not be expected to police hallways listening for sexual innuendoes. They can teach the students what sexual harassment is, but afterwards it is up to the parents to enforce society's rules.

The school board's position is Title IX does not cover sexual harassment. They said Title IX, approved in 1972, was intended to prevent sexual discrimination by school systems and teachers, not students. Realizing the historical setting of 1972 this interpretation makes sense. Passed during the equal rights movement, Title IX was intended to protect women from people in power positions who could oppress them.

Davis' attorneys state sexual harassment between students is equally oppressive and they are using another statute, Title VII, to support their argument. Title VII makes a company responsible for harassment between workers.

While this may appear to be relevant, the workplace is a totally different environment from a school. In the workplace, the employer has the power to demote and terminate its employees, the power of school administrators, however, to punish students has been weakened by the elimination of corporal punishment. Now the means of controlling students is severely limited.

The Supreme Court must rule in favor of the school board. The blame cannot be transferred like this. The boy is responsible and his parents should be accountable for the way they raised him.

The only thing the school is guilty of is being in a tough situation. If they took action in this one case, then they would be expected to protect every child in a similar manner. But because the school system did not do anything, it is facing a landmark lawsuit.

The School System should have definitely taken decisive action. The Supreme Court cannot allow this lawsuit to go forth because it would lead to more lawsuit against many good school systems.

Brandon Mullen is a senior history and English major