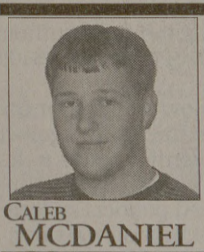


Listening to a little voice of reason

Americans need to heed their consciences, ignore television values

Americans would be much better off if they would heed the advice of a cricket. Jiminy Cricket, that is. After all, not following his advice got a small wooden boy by the name of Pinocchio into tons of trouble. Thanks to his disregard for Jiminy's counsel, Pinocchio ended up turning into a donkey and dining in the belly of a whale.



CALEB MCDANIEL

He should have listened to the cricket. "Always," said a singing Jiminy in Disney's animated feature, "let your conscience be your guide."

Unfortunately, American society seems to have forgotten Jiminy's jingle just as quickly as poor little Pinocchio — and with consequences no less disastrous than being half an ass in the gullet of Moby Dick.

Our culture says conscience simply does not mix with the exalted "pursuit of happiness." The worship of individualism has corroded our best and truest sense of what is good and bad, and everywhere is the evidence of what Gandhi called the second social sin — pleasure without conscience.

Indeed, the folly of Pinocchio has even been mirrored in the White House. President Bill Clinton is perhaps the prime example of a people who increasingly put being merry over being moral. By preferring philandering to fidelity, the President has ended up looking like a donkey and sharing Pinocchio's rather prodigious nose.

The President's shenanigans, however, are only symptoms of a much deeper problem.

The problem is rooted in the very foundations of our society. It is a society where the pursuit of pleasure is enshrined as an inalienable right. In such a society, anyone who infringes on this right is dismissed as preachy and prudish — even talking crickets are assigned to the dustbin of self-righteous do-gooders.

In reality, though, the reason for needing a return to conscientiousness in this country is not only because it is the morally right thing to do — although that should be reason enough.

Jiminy's advice also needs to be resurrected because pleasure without conscience is a quick formula for social disintegration.

The conscience exists not only to wag a finger in the face of filth; it also exists to protect us from ourselves. For a society without its conscience as a

guide will quickly find itself awash in a sea of serious problems.

Take MTV's "Loveline," for instance, where pleasure without conscience is treated as no more than a matter of sexual expression. Really, the stories of shattered lives that appear on the show are the remnants of relationships broken by individual pleasure-seeking.

Most unfortunate of all, the patients do not realize they are sick. Most of the callers seem to say, "If I want to do the horizontal tango with my girlfriend and her sister, don't step on my feet because it is none of your business."

And then, as they relate their often life-wrecking tales, the hosts manage to crack a joke or two about it and everyone goes home with a good laugh.

Speaking of good laughs, Exhibit B is the infamous Jerry Springer. Staged or not, the shows reveal a cultural confusion of pleasure and love. Almost every episode, something along the lines of "I love her, but the sex with him is great" can be seen. And in the midst of these truly disturbed kinds of revelations, chairs are thrown, chants are shouted and everyone goes home with a good laugh.

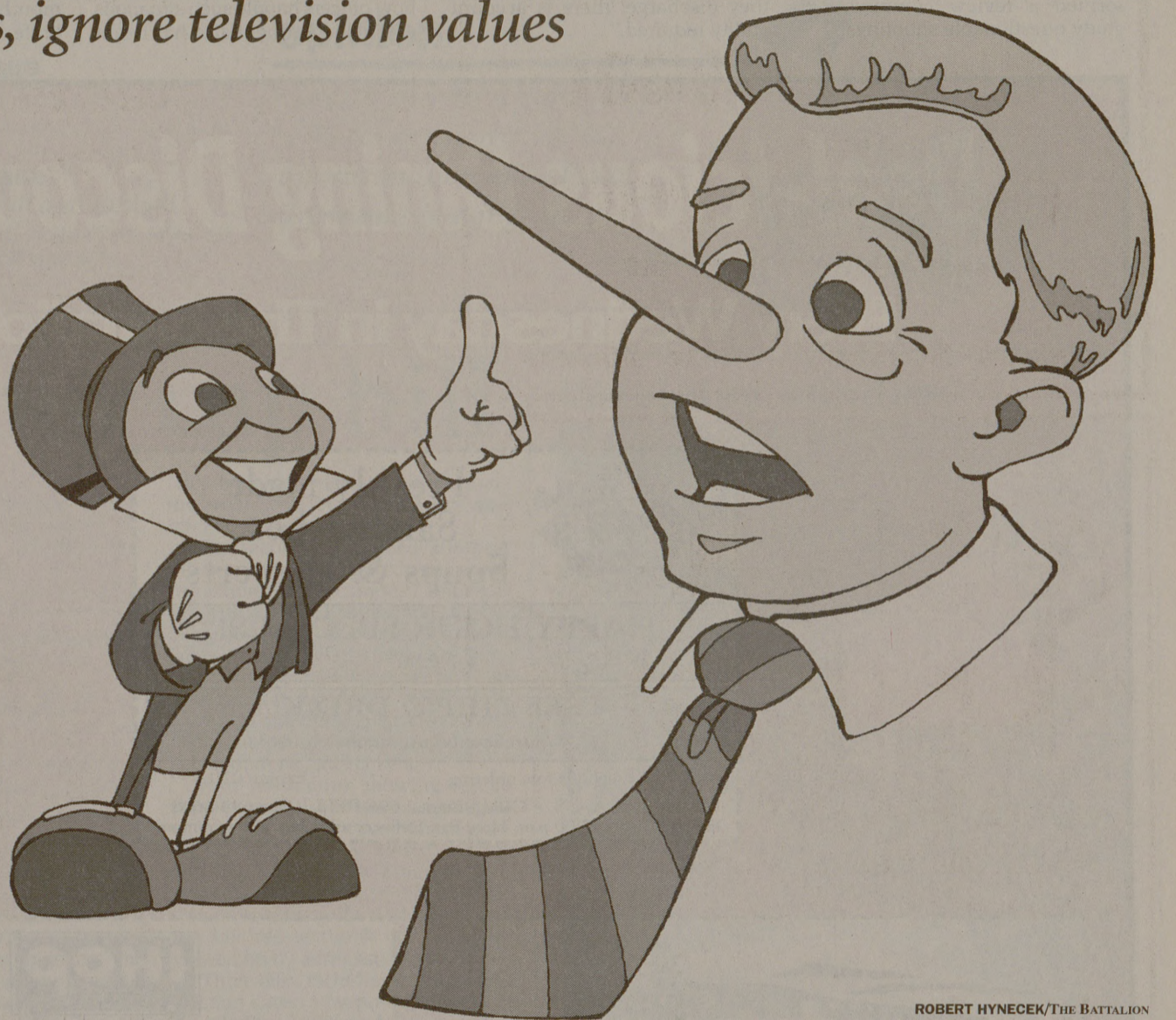
There has never been a segment of closing thoughts with Jerry, however, that dares to suggest the real problem with his guests is the absence of conscience from their relationships. That just would not be the popular thing to say.

It is the thing that must be said, though. It must be said about drinking. When its pleasure trumps conscience, car accidents, alcoholics and dead frat pledges are inevitable.

It must be said about spending habits. Because the pleasure of buying material luxuries is not tempered enough by conscience, Americans live in lavish excess while much of the world lives from meal to meal.

It must be said about sex. When unconstrained by conscience, its pleasure can lead to broken hearts, unprepared parents, and exploitative pornography. Not to mention impeachment trials.

Everyone, if they are honest with themselves, has followed Pinocchio's lead at one point or another.



ROBERT HYNCEK/THE BATTALION

The key is to learn from those mistakes. The need is to see that pleasure without conscience is not something condemned only by moralists.

It is something condemned by any clear-thinking social scientist.

And it is eloquently implied in the words of a

president. "A people that values its privileges above its principles," said Dwight D. Eisenhower, "soon loses both."

Caleb McDaniel is a sophomore history major.

Falwell's comments about Antichrist could spell disaster for Jewish males

In a speech that left the outside world perplexed, offended and confused, the ever red Jerry Falwell declared the Antichrist is a white Jewish male who is currently alive.



LISA FOX

He should not have done this, because the repercussions could prove to be enormous.

The modern evangelical concept of the Antichrist is one of a man who expresses the ultimate evil. His purpose is to seduce souls away from their belief in Jesus. The Antichrist's coming is supposed to precede the second coming of Christ.

Further literature about the Antichrist states his life will be similar to that of Jesus and it will be easy to confuse him with Jesus, because of their similarities.

Falwell, by claiming the Antichrist can be found amongst Jews, has unwittingly urged white Jewish males for potential hate crimes. Those who heard the story are to wonder what propelled him to do this.

According to the Dallas Morning News, Falwell, the founder of the religious group Moral Majority, has held his belief about the Antichrist for more than 40 years. For some reason, he can-

not understand how his words could be construed as anti-Semitic. Perhaps he should try to comprehend the implications of his viewpoint.

The complications that could arise from Falwell's statement can be understood when viewed in the context of history. The Nazis saw Jews as the "ultimate evil" — akin to most people's perceptions of the Antichrist — which is why they proposed their "final solution." Therefore, by claiming the Antichrist is a Jew, Falwell has single-handedly and unknowingly calling for the destruction of the Jews. Again.

As Dr. Bill Leonard, a Baptist and dean of Wake Forest University, said, "Such is the stuff of which holocausts are made. Once you start identifying a particular religious community as the source of the most evil person in the world, what in the world have you done?"

People are concerned about possible violence or holocausts, but not because they think Falwell purposefully tried to get people to find the Antichrist and kill him. The concern is, rather, that some extremists might see his speech as a cause to murder, mutilate and maim white Jewish males.

However, the logic behind Falwell's argument makes sense — sort of. He said Jesus is destined to return to Earth in the next 10 years. So, it follows that the An-

tichrist is already here. And since the life of the Antichrist must parallel that of Jesus, it is perfectly clear he must be a Jewish male.

The problem with this philosophy is "the statement subliminally supports the stereotyping, and . . . bias towards Jewish men," as Sanford Cloud Jr., president of the National Conference for Community and Justice said.

After all, it is not going to be easy for those who listened to Falwell and believe him to interact with Jewish men anymore. For if they really believe the Antichrist is walking among them and conducting business with them, it will not be possible for them to forget they might be working with the ultimate expression of evil and corruption. This could lead to unspoken distrust and fear of Jews, especially Jewish males.

It also appears that Falwell's words reflect a "wishful thinking" view of reality. Jesus is not destined to return in the next 10 years.

In fact, the Old and New Testament do not mention specific dates or descriptions. So Falwell is the bearer of bad news by focusing the spotlight of the Antichrist on God's Chosen People.

In this instance, let the Reverend choose somebody else.

Lisa Fox is a senior journalism major.

GUEST COLUMN

Aggies should take closer look at racial prejudices

There once was a lady who lived in a shoe. She had so much time she didn't know what to do. She had neighbors she didn't quite favor because their activities they didn't quite savor.

Each and everyday she looked across the way to see if they changed their activity this day. Each morning she looked out of her window and stared as her neighbors hung their laundry with care.

Each time it blew her mind how they could find the gall to hang up clothes with such grime. It happened one day a close friend stopped by and asked what was interesting it kept eye.

She replied, "After washing their clothes, they hang them on high to ensure that they will properly dry. Oh, look how dirty," she began to exclaim, "those people should be ashamed!"

The friend agreed and walked towards the pane and as she leaned on it, her clothes got stained. She looked at her friend and loudly screamed, "You stupid fool, your windows aren't clean!"

In his book *Race Rules: Navigating the Color Line*, Dr. Michael Eric Dyson states, "There's no denying that in terms of racial politics, where you stand — and the history that makes that stance both possible and plausible — determines what you see and hear."

This explains why the media, within its First Amendment right, further negative images and portrayals of people of color and are able to stand behind their work with a fervency anyone could admire.

This also explains why gatherings of people of color are considered riotous though they are peaceful.

It is very likely views will be skewed and understandings will stagnate if persons of color are only seen in limited roles and settings such as sporting fields, protests and prisons.

Aggies are 34 days into the New Year and already at odds on race. Most individuals believe all hate crimes are heinous and when the word "Jasper" is spoken chills run down the spine of every man. But on this campus, hate crimes are committed everyday.

No, lately no one has physically murdered, but many are being killed softly. The constant emotional and mental battles of racial prejudice,

stereotypes and harassment fought by people of color could dishearten even the haughtiest soul.

Texas A&M is on a pathway of destruction and the failing ability of the administration, faculty, staff and student body to understand and encourage people of color as a part of Aggie culture and tradition is the vehicle by which this destruction will occur.

If this University is ever to attain "world-class" status everyone, from administration to the student body, must learn to evaluate their thought and perceptions on issues of race or be willing to accept the consequences of the failure to do so.

In the Jan. 27 issue of *The Bryan-College Station Eagle*, an overview of a study that examined graduates of the Texas A&M University system in the workplace found that graduates displayed deficiencies in areas of communication, professionalism and diversity.

The study stated graduates of the system, specifically A&M, "lack exposure to diverse cultures."

The focus group that performed the study encourages universities in the A&M system to "produce more multilingual students who are able to deal effectively with people from different cultures."

But the dialogue on race must not concentrate on diversity alone. The term diversity contains so many elements that race becomes convoluted and diluted.

Dyson also states, "The refusal to face race, or our courageous confrontations with its complex meanings, defines our national identity."

The refusal of the administration, faculty, staff and students to confront our issues of race and confront its complex meanings will continue to define the University and state.

A&M has been integrated for more than 30 years. Our country has been racially segregated and polarized since its inception. How long will it take to remove the grime associated with race from our national personality and consciousness, much less collegiate perceptions? Are Aggies' windows clean?

LaSondra Carroll is a junior journalism major. Dessiree Ewing is a senior food science technology major.

WERE KNOWN AS THE 'GET CLINTON' PARTY. WE MUST DO SOMETHING TO CHANGE THAT.

GET GORE, TOO?



MIKE LUCKOVICH/ATLANTA CONSTITUTION