

SPRING BREAK OR DUMBASS?

Students promote spring break stereotype through actions, make regrettable decisions

Spring break hype is not justified, offers well-deserved vacation for college students

Spring break means having lots of meaningless sex with random people and blaming it on the alcohol in the morning.



MELISSA JOHNSTON

know this from what one sees. This type of orgy-esque description is often the only portrayal of spring break activity one can find.

Take a look at MTV Spring Break broadcasts airing from every hot spot around the world. There will likely be more skin than speech in most of the broadcasts, and how else are the cameras to get this footage than by filming students who are taking part in it?

should not be fun, especially when it is an extremely necessary vacation from school and classes. But there is also no reason why fun and responsibility can't go together.

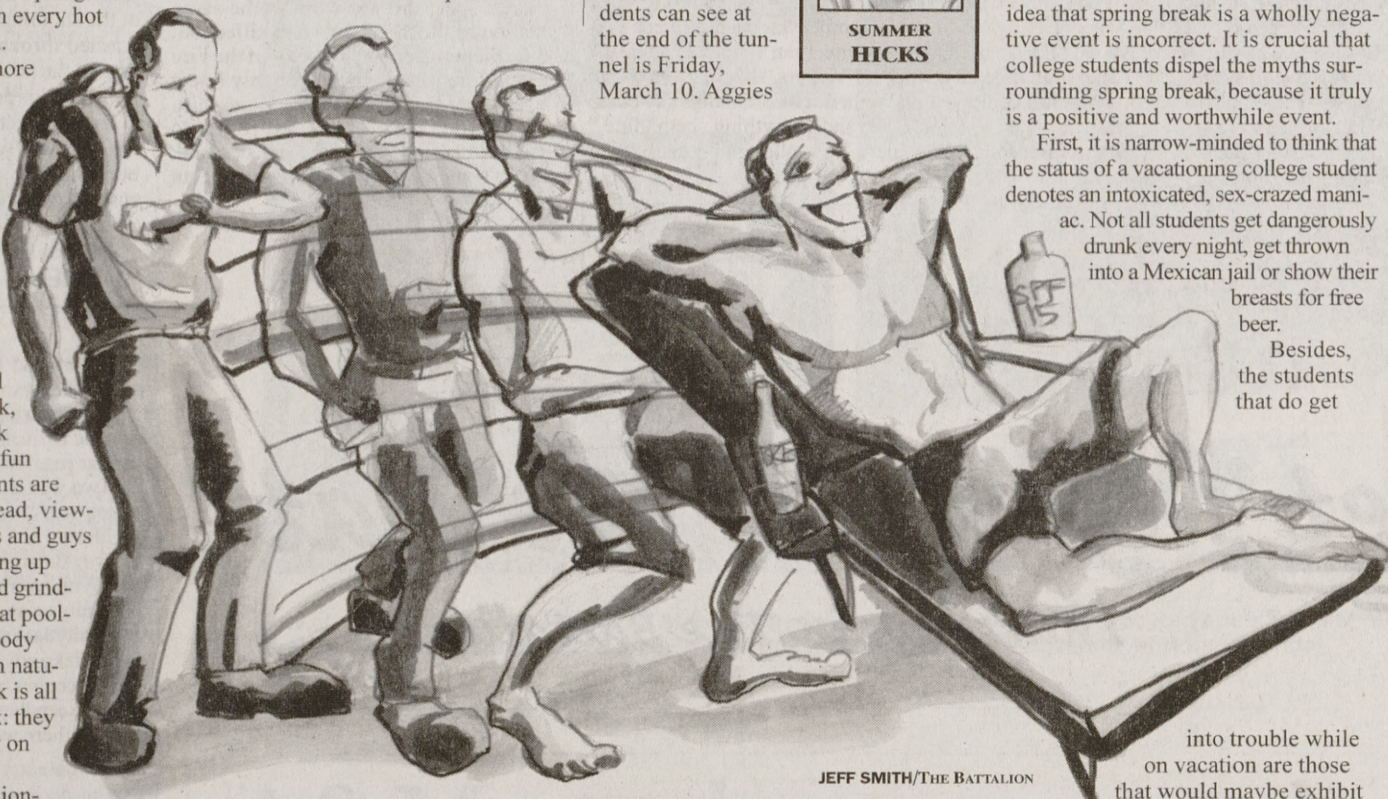
As midterms loom ominously in the immediate future, the only light many college students can see at the end of the tunnel is Friday, March 10. Aggies



SUMMER HICKS

Over the years, spring break has gained a questionable reputation. It is narrowly viewed by some people as a wild, drunken, hormone fest where college students over-indulge themselves in alcohol and free love.

anticipate problems in advance. The false representation offered by movies and television contributes to the common stereotype that all students will return from South Padre pregnant or with a criminal record.



JEFF SMITH/THE BATTALION

A University of Florida student named Cody posted that informative message on a college Website message board under the category "What does spring break mean to you?"

So what is spring break really all about? It has always been a long-awaited post-midterm holiday that college students begin to yearn for as soon as they return to the classroom in January.

This reckless decision-making, though, is not just some perception one gets from a TV screen. It is also a reality. In a 1997 poll by Durex Condom Company, 64 percent of college students admitted to at least one random hookup.

media wrong when it comes to how responsible they are actually being during spring break. Really, how smart do students look when they are too drunk to think for seven days in a row or they cannot remember the names of people they have slept with?

think to themselves, "If I can just make it until then, everything will be all right." Spring break is seen as a well-deserved, one-week vacation from classes, tests and studying.

First, it is narrow-minded to think that the status of a vacationing college student denotes an intoxicated, sex-crazed maniac. Not all students get dangerously drunk every night, get thrown into a Mexican jail or show their breasts for free beer.

Besides, the students that do get into trouble while on vacation are those that would maybe exhibit the same negligent behavior if they were to remain in College Station.

Irresponsibility on the part of students results from the lowered maturity level of the individual, not the location itself. If anything, popular vacation spots become safer during this time because of the preparation of businesses and an increased number of police.

Another common misconception is that the only scheduled activity for students during spring break is waiting in line for the beer bong. In actuality, there are many other options for vacationers. Students may choose to spend time on the beach, go swimming, scuba diving or parasailing.

Spring break offers students the possibility of taking a discounted vacation with friends to locations that are not included with Disneyland on the family's list of places to see.

Aggies need to act responsibly while on vacation in order to ensure their safety and dispel the illusions associated with them. Spring break is a great opportunity to leave school behind for a few days and unwind.

Most business owners and law officials are experienced and knowledgeable concerning the activities of vacationers during spring break and

Summer Hicks is a senior English major.

Six-year-old shooter deserves punishment regardless of parents

America once again looks at a school shooting with dismay. This time, though, the situation seems more tragic. A six-year-old girl in Mount Morris, Mich., lies dead after being shot in the chest by her six-year-old classmate Feb. 29.



JILL RILEY

While the statistics are much lower than they are for middle and high schools, the study's findings prove that elementary students are capable of being violent. The fact could not be more evident as it is in the Mount Morris case.

The boy's violent behavior must be punished in some way. In this case, though, serious questions abound over who needs to "get it." Do you detain the child, the mother or the uncle?

The fact that the murderer was six-years-old should not have much influence in determining his punishment because he showed signs of understanding the crime.

He claimed he gave the gun to another student before the shooting. He also knew to drop the gun and run to the bathroom to hide after shooting Kayla.

The boy's father knew his son was capable of such an action. When he heard about the shooting he feared his son was involved, according to CNN.

"He said a sickening feeling came over him... because he knew his son and knew the type of problems he'd been having," said Genesee County Sheriff Robert Pickell.

Punishment should be doled out when even the father in prison knows his son could act violently.

Chris DeWitt, the spokesperson for the state attorney general's office, claims the boy could be charged under Michigan's law allowing children to be prosecuted as adults for murder or other violent crimes.

According to most reports, however, the boy will likely receive no punishment. The county Family Inde-

pendent Agency will determine whether the government should take custody of the boy or release him to his mother, according to the Detroit Free Press.

The only official punishment mentioned at this point will go to the person responsible for allowing the boy access to the gun.

The police have charged Jamelle James, 19, of involuntary manslaughter, but the boy should be punished as well. How he should be punished would also pose a problem because there are no facilities for detaining young prisoners.

If they are shipping the boy to a program, they should also send the mother to a few "Parenting Responsibly" classes, and the father to "How-to-stay-out-of-prison-and-be-a-real-dad" class.

The death that occurred in Mount Morris was tragic. It was caused by negligence and bad parenting. The fact that the murderer was 6 years old should not have much influence in determining his punishment because he showed signs of understanding the crime.

Punish the boy and his parents for their wrong behavior. The parents of little Kayla deserve at least that much retribution.

Jill Riley is a senior journalism major.

Local publications draw criticism

In response to Mariano Castillo's March 7 column.

I find it extremely ironic and outrageous that in an editorial complaining of the unprofessional nature of other publications, The Battalion referred to one of the other newspaper as "retarded."

insults than arguments. Its "professional and informative" articles are simply one-sided looks at issues its staff thinks is relevant.

Most of what it publishes are attacks on anyone not as leftist as its writers. Anything else, as Lauer mentioned, is correspondence written by others.

The Battalion, on the other hand, is more than just a big opinion page. It reports news on local, state, national and world levels. It does not have a political agenda, merely a journalistic one.

So, anyone who thinks that the Batt is a liberal piece of trash, I encourage you to pick up a copy of The Touchstone the next time you pass one of their bins around campus and read the two month old "news" and judge for yourself.

MAIL CALL

Then, for anyone who thinks the Batt is a conservative piece of trash, pick up the next copy of the Aggie Review.

Congratulations, The Battalion. You're the moderate source of news on campus.

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 Texas A&M University College Station, TX 77843-1111

Timothy Shelby Class of '99

In response to Aaron Lauer's March 8 mail call.

In response Lauer, The Touchstone is by no means held to professional standards. I've been reading that rag for years now, and I've seen plenty of typos and mistakes accompanied by more

Michael R. Lakin Class of '98

WARNING AFRICAN-AMERICANS: THESE OBJECTS APPEAR TO BE GUNS TO POLICE WHEN YOU HOLD THEM.



MIKE LUCKOWICH ATLANTA CONSTITUTION 1998