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# OPINION

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# SPREDASS OR DUMBASS?

## Students promote spring break stereotype | Spring break hype is not justified, offers through actions, make regrettable decisions well-deserved vacation for college students

know this from what one sees. This type of orgy-esque description is often the only portrayal of spring break activity one can find. Because spring iving lots of break is all about the hookup. eaningless sex Take a look at MTV Spring Break ith random peo-

**JOHNSTON** skin than speech in most of the broad-A University of Florida student named Cody posted that informative casts, and how else are the cameras to essage on a college Website message board under the category "What does spring break mean to you?" Thanks by filming students stint in Dallas is the she for the information, Cody, Lots of girls who are taking part are sure to be ecstatic if they run into in it? Shows like you at Charlie's next week, because "Beauty and the they must be looking for exactly what cks were 4-9 since Robal you have to offer. After all, that is Out" tend to emphawhat spring break is all about, right? and fined \$13,500 by So what is spring break really all

about? It has always been a longad only been on a lost awaited post-midterm holiday that colre in his 14-year career, lege students begin to yearn for as soon as they return to the classroom in straight loss Tuesdayned January. Apparently, it now comes atuban, who had personal tached to slightly different goals and n and even was briefly expectations than those of the past. 0K, so today's college students are had given Rodman pemis spontaneous. They are adventurous, actices and show up lateful they are fun-loving and they are slightly influenced by their hormones. an wants to win, but he's But these characteristics are no excuse player," Rodman said for the level of depravity to which 6 loss in Seattle. "Hedwe spring break has sunk, not only for nanging around the plays Cody, but for many other college stuh or something. That's dents as well. The media may be red it's dumb. That's whyth sponsible for creating spring break's down. He needs to be sex-drugs-and-alcohol riddled stereock and put people in type, but it is students themselves who promote that stereotype by choosing to icks play again Thurst participate in its debauchery without a

against Minnesota. Atta von't be as high as it h The rest and relaxation of spring break appears to have been replaced old out four games this by the hype and hysteria of a shack-ae the hometown natives, thon bikini-fest during which males lue and green. He die and females alike seem to magically ce for the locals to see he forget about their significant others, hairdo featuring the teat their morals and their brains in favor of very little clothing, lots of alcohol nan's career may be ow and well, you know. Of course, the hampionships, three wil break can be a complete blast without vo in Detroit, and seven any of this mess — but one would not

spot around the world. get this footage than Beach" and "Singled

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 (and we're not talking just a random mug) during the break. Thirteen percent of the students admitted to having five or more. But to reveal an even more disturbing statistic — 47 percent of the whole group said they did not use a condom at any time, and out of the students who claimed five or more hookups, 73 percent never thought to use one either. Cody's definition of spring break

might not be so warped after all. There is no reason spring break

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 cannot go together. If anything, college

students should want to prove the



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. The idea that spring break is a wholly negative event is incorrect. It is crucial that college students dispel the myths surrounding spring break, because it truly

is a positive and worthwhile event. 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

ior if they were to remain in College

Station. If a location becomes a breed-

ing ground for hedonism, chances are

the students would have acted in the

other given occasion. Irresponsibility

on the part of students results from the

lowered maturity level of the individ-

cause of the preparation of businesses

and an increased number of police.

Most business owners and law offi-

cials are experienced and knowledge-

able concerning the activities of vaca-

become safer during this time be-

If anything, popular vacation spots

ual, not the location itself.

same manner anywhere else on any

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. Fishing trips, jet ski rentals and shopping are other alternatives to camping around the keg buried in the sand. Spring break presents an opportunity to participate in many activities that are unavailable to students in the Bryan-College Station area.

anticipate problems in advance.

The false representation offered

by movies and television contributes

students will return from South Padre

to the common stereotype that all

pregnant or with a criminal record.

The common story line of drunken boy meets tipsy girl and the two

spend "quality time" together is one

spring break and the dangers it sup-

Another common misconception

that creates fictitious ideas about

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. Allinclusive trips organized by travel companies offer airfare, hotel accommodations and other amenities for a

This arrangement saves students time and leaves travel preparation to experienced professionals. Students are offered information about local restaurants, clubs and bars as a safe alternative to wandering dark alleys in a strange town searching for

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. A good tan and the chance to stare at girls in bikinis is just a bonus.

Summer Hicks is a senior

#### many college stubroadcasts airing from every hot dents can see at the end of the tunnel is Friday, There will likely be more March 10. Aggies into a Mexican jail or show their breasts for free Besides, the students size the more physical aspects of spring break, and therefore overlook the plain old relaxing fun that many other students are probably having. Instead, viewers can see lots of girls and guys in little clothing strutting up and down catwalks and grinding against each other at poolside. It is no wonder Cody and thousands like him naturally think spring break is all about drinking and sex: they into trouble while can watch the foreplay on on vacation are those JEFF SMITH/THE BATTALION that would maybe exhibit This reckless decisionthink to themselves, "If I can just the same negligent behavmedia 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? Being responsible is not actually the drag it is always made out to be. All students really have to do for a start is make sere all the tried-and-true slogans apply for the following week: think when you drink, use protection, don't drink and drive — and stay away from Floridians named Cody

Melissa Johnston is a senior

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.

Unlike those unfortunate enough to have entered the real world, students are blessed with the opportunity to leave worries behind and relax. The prospective road trip or beach vacation symbolizes all that college students hold dear - the chance to experience life outside the classroom. Spring break often represents the last opportunity to take a vacation with friends before entering a job that offers three days a year of

## the remembered for de la showing up at a bow as showing up at a bow

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.

school shooting with dismay. his time, though, the situaoftball team tion seems more tragic. A six-year-old irl in Mount Morris, Mich., lies dead after being shot in the chest by her sixyear-old classmate Feb. 29.

In the past, school shootings occur m middle schools and high schools. Older students killed each other over

large issues, like feelings of isolation and troubled relationships. What issue did Kayla Rolland die for? None – that is why this particular school shooting raised so many

Bill Clinton only considered the issue for about five seconds before spouting his solution to the problem more gun control legislation, according to CNN. However, there are more issues surrounding this incident than

Elementary schools are not as safe as people think. Though reports usually focus on high schools and middle schools, crime and violence do occur in American elementary schools. In fact, 45 percent of elementary schools reported one or more violent incidents in the '96-'97 school year, coording to a study done by the National Center for Education Statistics. Four percent reported one or more serious vioent crimes, such as assault with weapons and murder.

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 acted violently when he shot Kayla in the chest with a .32-caliber semiautomatic handgun.

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 boy lived in his uncle's home, which contains guns and illegal drugs. His father is in prison. His mother lives somewhere else and marijuana was

smoked in the uncle's house daily.

This child probably sees the world a little differently than others. The child definitely needs help. But the child also killed a girl, and slapping him on the wrist could have terrible consequences.

The boy understood crime and punishment enough to know to deny pulling the trigger in his police interview.

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. Actions such as these indicate knowledge of crime, and understanding

crime means the child is old enough to be punished. 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 Indeshould 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 involun-

tary 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. Putting the boy through a program teaching about the impacts of violence, the value of human life and of the consequences of crime would solve the problem.

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-areal-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.

### performances to close Local publications draw criticism

rdless, the Aggies are elop strength in the pail March 7 column.

I find it extremely ironic and outrageous that in an editorial e, the Buffaloes rely on complaining of the unprofessional nature of other publicaions, The Battalion referred to one of the other newspaper as written as if its readers are re-

npleting its secondye ler Watkins. The Ag

e the next step," Jack Furthermore, The Battalion displaying a picture of where an Aggie — who tragically committed suicide — landed, rather than showing sensitivity towards his friends and family.

Until the Battalion gets it act together, I believe that it should not criticize other publications. Frankly, Texas A&M deserves a better newspaper than the unprofessional Battalion.

> Timothy Shelby Class of '99

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

In response Lauver, 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 Lauver mentioned, is correspondence written by others.

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 jour-

So, anyone who thinks that judge for yourself.

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.

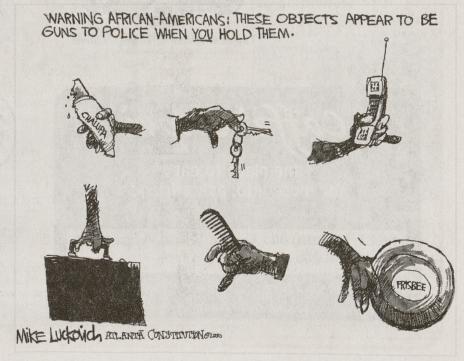
> Michael R. Lakin Class of '98

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 eed McDonald with a valid student ID. Let

The Battalion - Mail Call
013 Reed McDonald
Texas A&M University College Station, TX 77843-1111

Campus Mail: 1111 Fax: (409) 845-2647 E-mail: battletters@hotmail.com



### MAIL CALL sionalism, given their history of

response to Mariano Castillo's

arded." Can The Battalion be any more unprofessional?

Besides sounding as if they are still in junior high, The Batalion's use of "retarded" is blaantly offensive and insensitive the plight of the handicapped ndividuals in our society.

r the first Big 12 Tou ould be real importan editors should be the last ones overall program and to talk about journalistic profesinsults than arguments.

Its "professional and informative" articles are simply onesided 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

The Battalion, on the other nalistic one.

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