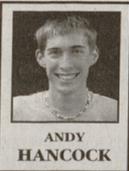


# OPINION

THE BATTALION

## Something worth signing

### Petition urging rethinking of Bonfire changes should be supported



ANDY HANCOCK

more supervision. More time needs to go into finding and agreeing on a structural design, and more monitoring of students and their behavior is a must.

participants are informed of before participating. If a student cut and more student involvement can be reinstated, it can be done with minimal risk.

Basically, anyone from the Classes '03 and before, as far as people are concerned, are all tainted.

One reason the two-year suspension was instated was to allow previous thoughts and actions concerning Bonfire to leave the system. Transfers, freshmen and future students have not been tainted by the Bonfire philosophies of past.

If students make their voices heard, the University will not and cannot turn a blind eye to them forever. The more students push for what they believe in, the more the former students will support those efforts.

Do it the right way. Do it politically, do not defy the administration. Negotiate with it and provided the student body with a voice to be reckoned with.

The administration was overwhelmed by the media, and in doing so, made an ultra-conservative decision. It forgot what is important: the students.

The Senate has formally declared its support of Bowen's decision, speaking on behalf of all the students. It is not doing its job; it is not representing the student body—nor is Lane, they are being puppets of the administration, not serving the students as they were elected to. Political correctness should not be taken at the students' expense.

Bonfire 2000 is a bad idea, but Bonfire 2001 is not. It is possible; after all, A&M is one of the best engineering colleges in the nation.

The Empire State Building was built in a year, so students with ample professional supervision undoubtedly would be able to build a stack of logs safely. There can be a cut, though it needs considerable supervision. There need to be cutbacks, but not eliminations. A further compromise can be met. Few students want Bonfire to be canceled altogether, but few want the scaled-back version in which only a select few are allowed to participate.

If change occurs, it should be done through politics, like a petition, not through defiance.

Andy Hancock is a senior journalism major.



ADRIAN CALCANEO/THE BATTALION

Bartschmid argues that A&M should have some type of student cut. Student Body President Forrest Lane in a Battalion article earlier this month defended the administration's decision on cut.

He said that because most of the injuries and accidents in the history of Bonfire occurred during cut, its elimination is justified. Yet those injuries are a risk that

More Aggies have been injured at parties, or driving, yet that is acceptable and taken with a grain of salt. People accept risk when they get up every morning. Participating in Bonfire is no different; there are risks, and that is part of life.

Now, as the future of Bonfire is in peril, the ones with a voice are the Class of '04 and transfer students that have not partici-

## Cyberlaw

### Development of Internet laws should be encouraged



LUKE McMAHAN

The Internet has been described as many things: a land of opportunity, the information superhighway, the ultimate free-enterprise system, a capitalist's utopia and a place where anything goes.

All are accurate, and for the most part, this is a good thing. However, too much of a good thing could be a bad thing.

The Internet has afforded all people incredible opportunities, and according to some critics, that is the problem. With every door that the Internet opened for a small business or an individual investor, another door opened for those seeking to abuse the freedom the Internet has to offer.

In recent years, the number of Internet fraud cases that have gone to court has skyrocketed. Less blatant forms of Internet abuse are also widespread.

**A remedy for this problem is the speed with which law schools are teaching this new form of law. The efforts of the legal community to quickly teach and create these laws and the intricacies that they contain should be applauded, endorsed and hurried along.**

With companies like America Online, Amazon.com and many online brokerage firms using the Internet as their primary means of conducting business, countless numbers of disputes arise and are settled in the courts. These things are inevitable.

A remedy for this problem is the speed with which law schools are teaching this new form of law. The efforts of the legal community to quickly teach and create these laws and the intricacies that they contain should be applauded, endorsed and hurried along.

Law can be perceived as a well-grounded and slowly changing discipline. After all, many arguments presented by attorneys revolve around decisions made by other courts concerning similar issues years ago.

With disputes concerning the Internet, lawyers rarely are afforded that task or privilege. When the laws of the pre-Internet world are applied to Internet cases, the logic is sometimes morphed along the way or totally inapplicable.

Three years ago, there were 15 to 20 Internet law courses taught at the 196 law schools affiliated with the Association of American Law Schools, according to Pamela Samuelson, a leading cyberlaw scholar at the University of California-Berkeley School of Law.

Today, it is estimated that the number has swelled fivefold. Students study this subject for practicality and self-interest. Internet law is hot and in high demand.

This is also a revolutionary time in the field of law. Samuelson said, "I tell my students, if you like stable stuff, this course is not for you. If you would like to see the law in formation, see the forces that will affect how the law develops, this is a good course."

Law students graduating with a specialization in cyberlaw will not only be pioneers in the field, but will also have played a significant role in the creation of the law itself.

The importance of a solid platform for cyberlaw to build on can be seen in recent events. Less than a month ago, 16-year-old Jonathan Lebed was prosecuted by the Securities Exchange Commission (SEC) for manipulating stock prices on the Internet.

Lebed used Yahoo finance message boards to spread fabricated good news about stocks he already owned in hopes that others would buy the same stocks and cause the price to rise. The task at hand was drawing the line between simply being devious and breaking the law.

The technicalities in the case were wrongfully ignored. Lebed sent between 200 and 300 identical messages on Yahoo under different user identifications.

Therefore, when a visitor to the site read several of the same messages, the impression was that different people held a positive consensus on the stock.

The issue of Yahoo allowing an infinite number of user identifications or accounts for a single user was ignored.

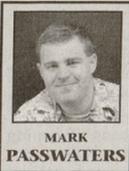
The framework needed to handle cases like Lebed's is in desperate need. Without them, judgments and verdicts will be handed out based on archaic rulings and criteria that play a relatively insignificant role in the heart of the matter at hand.

The massive undertaking by law schools nationwide to begin the teaching and creation of this new Internet law is necessary and should be encouraged.

Luke McMahan is a senior industrial engineering major.

## Unworthy risk

### American military neglected, abused



MARK PASSWATERS

Any decision made about adding ports of call must be approved by both the Defense Department and the State Department; in this case, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright had requested that such an idea be considered.

Any claim that Aden was the safest available port is a farce. Ports of call previously used by the Navy include Naples, Italy; Alexandria, Egypt; Jeddah and Dammam, Saudi Arabia; and Manama, Bahrain—the headquarters of U.S. Navy forces in the Persian Gulf. Zinni claimed that Jeddah and Dammam were especially risky.

**Then, there is the most important question of all, which the Clinton administration has refused to answer honestly: What was the Cole doing in Aden, Yemen, in the first place?**

The days of Teddy Roosevelt's "Great White Fleet" are over. Military forces should be committed only under the most serious of circumstances with a clearly defined objective, not on a political whim. This administration, more than any other, is guilty of abusing the military.

It started in 1993, with the botched attempt at "nation-building" in Somalia. The operation in Haiti was deemed a "success" by the Clinton administration, since the supporters of living martyr Jean-Bertrand Aristide—"our guy"—are now the ones doing the killing. Iraq has been used as a punching bag whenever Clinton's personal peccadillos have gotten him into trouble—Iraq was bombed one day after Clinton's infamous "apology" speech for his involvement with Monica Lewinsky and the day he was impeached.

The use of force in Bosnia and Kosovo has not accomplished any concrete objectives, but has merely caused the population to wait for foreign forces to leave before letting ancient feuds erupt again.

Perhaps the reason the Clinton administration is hap-

py to repeatedly send underpaid, undermanned units on Quixotic crusades is its lack of respect for the armed forces. The current commander-in-chief wrote of his "disdain for the military uniform," in his famous letter to Yale's ROTC commander after his draft deferment. His sentiments seem to be echoed by his political appointees, who have shown contempt for the military uniform with their actions.

When the Voice of America (VOA) wrote an editorial that it intended to broadcast to the world decrying the cowardly use of terrorism, the State Department (which oversees VOA broadcasts) shot it down.

An unnamed State Department official wrote in a memo that was leaked to the media that "The 17 or so dead sailors does not compare to the 100+ Palestinians who have died in recent weeks," and demanded that VOA "take the edge off."

Once the memo was public, the State Department had a change of heart. Spokesman Richard Boucher issued a statement calling the memo "wrong" and saying that it "in no way reflects the views of... the department or the bureau of Near Eastern affairs." It is tough to believe that, considering how the Clinton administration has repeatedly shown disdain for the armed services.

The Austin American-Statesman was correct in its Oct. 22 editorial, which stated, "The (Clinton) administration's national defense policies are nothing to brag about." Some feel that since Clinton is about to leave office, such offenses can be overlooked. This cannot be done, especially when considering that Al Gore has already stated his intentions to continue Clinton's defense and foreign policies.

The military is not a toy. Individuals in uniform are brave human beings who should benefit from the respect of all Americans, especially those in government. The Clinton administration has repeatedly abused the armed forces through needless deployments and then stabbed them in the back with a lack of support.

When those being dumped on are in uniform, the offense should be deemed downright criminal.

Mark Passwaters is a senior electrical engineering major.

### Mail Call

#### Aggie Band missing because of finances

In response to Brenda Toepfer's Oct. 11 Mail Call.

I am a senior in B-Company in the Aggie Band. The reason the Aggie Band was "missing in action" is strictly financial.

It is my understanding that it cost around \$150,000 for just the upper-echelon to travel to the Notre Dame game this fall. Believe me, the Aggie Band would have loved to attend that game, but we can only afford one of these types of trips per year.

So, I apologize for your disappoint-

ment, but unless you happen to have a large wad of cash just lying around, these football games will have to go on without the Pulse of AggieLand.

Roy Toone  
Class of '01

#### Fetus displays justified

In response to Brad Burris' Oct. 25 Mail Call.

Burris asks the question of those hanging the posters "Is your objective to dissuade young women from abortion by any means necessary?"

Although I have not personally been involved in the hanging of posters, I applaud those who are actively involved in

trying to protect and save human life.

Consider for a moment that your personal view equates abortion with murder, and that an unborn child has an inherent right to life. Would you not then be required by your convictions to dissuade others from performing such a heinous act, even if it meant offending someone or causing someone to feel uncomfortable?

And why does it offend you? Is it because you are offended by all clumps of mass and tissue that are torn apart, and you can therefore never again participate in a biology dissection lab? Or is it the thought that the picture you see is a human child, and that as a proud member of the "socially accept-

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