

Opinion

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THE BATTALION

Page 9

A&M should keep cloning

Last Monday, Texas A&M researchers announced they had become the first academic institution in the world to clone three animal species following the successful cloning of a pig and a goat earlier this year. In 1999, A&M researchers produced Second Chance, a calf cloned from a Brahman bull, and in 2000, they produced another calf clone, 86 Squared.



RICH BRAY

In making advances in such a controversial field, Texas A&M researchers are courageously taking the lead to dramatically increase the world's food supply.

Admittedly, researchers have a lot of work ahead before cloning fulfills its potential to increase both the quantity and the quality of meat available for consumption. Scientists often must try dozens of times before the process is successful. There also is a great deal of research that must be completed regarding the animals that have already been cloned, including the effects of aging and how many times the clones can be safely replicated.

The work that remains to be done here is advantageous to the community because it gives citizens more time to learn about and understand the issues involved in cloning. Society must decide how cloning is to be used, when it is appropriate and what limitations will be placed on the procedure.

The problem is that cloning sounds like something from a bad science fiction movie. People do not take the time to consider the impact cloning technology will actually have on society. By continuing to make advances in this field, researchers at A&M are forcing people to look closely at cloning because that technology, which once seemed to be decades away, is suddenly upon us.

The American people need to consider whether projects such as the Missyplicity Project, in which an anonymous donor has granted \$2.3 million to clone their pet border collie named Missy, is a proper use of this technology.

Of course, more difficult issues loom ahead. Americans must eventually decide if the cloning of humans should even be allowed in the near future. This is the most volatile issue within the cloning debate. Some activists are concerned that cloning technology will be applied to humans once the technology becomes capable of accomplishing such tasks. Those who firmly believe cloning must never be applied to humans sometimes argue against cloning itself, ignoring the potential positive.

With their work, A&M researchers are learning about the procedure so that we as a society can discover the best ways to use cloning. Perhaps we will decide that projects like the Missyplicity Project are justified and should be allowed, but the cloning of humans will not be allowed under any circumstances.

Maybe we will decide that human cloning will only be allowed in very specific situations. Perhaps we will simply decide that cloning itself is too dangerous and will discontinue such efforts entirely. Regardless of what decision society makes or what guidelines it sets, the only way an informed decision can be made is with information provided by researchers.

While A&M's researchers should keep ethics in mind, they must allow society to decide where the limitations will be placed. In producing clones of calves, pigs and goats, they are giving Americans the opportunity to learn about both the positive and negative aspects of cloning, as well as the limitations to what cloning technology can do.

In order to make the best decision in a philosophically challenging area, society needs A&M's researchers to continue making advances in cloning research. Without a doubt, this issue is going to be one that dominates medicine for a long time. But cloning is here to stay, and some of the medical advances that can arise from this controversy had their beginning right here. Citizens should be as informed as possible, and A&M must keep us talking.

Rich Bray is a junior journalism major.



ANGELIQUE FORD • THE BATTALION

Banning of Alabama court display is discriminatory

Thirty-five years after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his famous speech, "I Have a Dream," Alabama state Rep. Alvin Holmes tried to enter the Alabama Judicial Building and place a plaque in the rotunda commemorating that day. But Holmes and 50 supporters were locked out of the building. They left singing "We Shall Overcome."



BRIENNE PORTER

The conflict arises from Alabama Supreme Court Chief Justice Roy Moore's Aug. 2 unveiling of his monument, which features the Ten Commandments. The controversy lies in the fact that Chief Justice Moore will not allow any other displays to be placed in the rotunda. Moore did not ask anyone's permission to place his monument.

He also claims that he has the right to refuse other displays. Since the building is a public building paid for by taxpayers' dollars, Holmes has just as much right to display his plaque as Moore does. To not allow its display is to discriminate and that is unacceptable.

Moore said his display of the Ten Commandments "acknowledges the supremacy of God as the basis of the law." While people may argue the idea of the Ten Commandments as the basis for present-day laws, the issue is the right to display something in a public building. If Moore's display is legal, then Holmes' plaque should also be displayed. Moore contends that as Chief Justice, he is the lease holder of the building, and he has a right to deny the plaque from being placed in the rotunda. Yet, in an Associated Press article, Holmes said according to lawyers he has spoken with, Moore "does not have the authority to stop the display of the King speech."

As a taxpayer in Alabama, Holmes should have the same right as Moore — who is also a taxpayer — to display the King plaque. University of Alabama political science Prof. D'Linell Finley told The Associated Press, "If you put up one monument representing one political view, you do open up the claim that other groups should have the right to bring in monuments too." Promoting just one view, especially a religious one, in a state building goes against the idea that there is an inherent impartiality within the American justice system.

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Bob Johnson of The Associated Press writes that, "Civil liberty groups have complained that the Ten Commandments monument could be offensive to some visitors to the taxpayer financed building."

Holmes believes that "the authority (to decide what to display) rests with all the justices of the Supreme Court (of Alabama) and not just with one individual."

The other justices need to voice their opinions and fight for equality and fairness in this case. Without their input, Moore is left to do whatever

he wants, including denying what is fair and just.

King was one of the most important players in the civil rights movement of the 1960s. His nonviolent protest and oratory skills worked to create a society where discrimination of any kind is not permissible. To forbid the plaque's display is an embarrassment to all the work King and others of the era did for this country. The country was based on the idea that all men were created equal, but it was not until the 1960s when that ideal was realized. It seems now that the idea is no longer true in parts of the country. Moore has taken steps to say that the work of King is not as important to this country as the Ten Commandments are. This serves to erase most of the work that King did.

The country should not stand for this kind of blatant discrimination in the court system. If Moore has that much of a problem with the display, then he should also remove his display and just not allow any type of monument to be displayed. Only then would the equality and impartiality of the justice system be preserved.

Brienne Porter is a junior political science major.

CARTOON OF THE DAY

Using the available data, divide variables (x) and (y) to compute the average length of driver

40" SIZE OF TIRES = x

62.4" AVERAGE HEIGHT OF DRIVER = y

$\frac{(Y) 62.4}{(X) 40} = 1.56$

THE UN-POSTULATE

THE UN-CARTOONIST ©

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A step in the right direction

Beginning Fall 2001, the College of Liberal Arts will offer a bachelor of arts in music. Authorized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board last April, the new music major is the first of its kind for Texas A&M. The College of Liberal Arts had only offered music as a minor.



LEIGH HENDERSON

Adding music as a major to the curriculum will not only make A&M a more desirable place but also will help the school to be more academically competitive among other top state schools around the nation. Compared with the music programs of various other public universities in Texas such as the University of Texas-Austin, the University of North Texas and Texas Tech University, there was, until very recently, little

music opportunity available at A&M.

With the new music major, A&M will come closer to the goals that Vision 2020 has set for the arts program.

New, properly funded liberal arts programs will bring exposure to the university and work to eliminate stereotypes, including that A&M offers strong engineering and agriculture programs at the expense of other academic disciplines.

According to Vision 2020, creating a powerful arts program is one of the steps to building a flourishing and balanced academic curriculum. The improvement of the arts at A&M was listed as the fourth of the 12 goals, among others such as strengthening graduate programs and

diversification of the A&M community.

Vision 2020 states in part, "It is abundantly clear that we will never be seen as a premier institution nationally without a far stronger letters, arts and sciences program."

A&M's academic program, for years lacking a music major, is quite unusual compared to others schools nationally.

The music major program here is not like a conservatory program, where music is the only focus. Instead, the new music major coursework is broad. It combines traditional music courses, including composition, theory and performance, with liberal arts courses such as anthropology, journalism and philosophy. This will strengthen the broad base of knowledge a liberal arts education is supposed to provide.

For those who understand the influence that music has on the spirit and the success of A&M,

the music degree could not have come at a better time.

Until A&M produces and maintains a liberal arts program that can compete with the programs of other public universities such as the University of Michigan or the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, A&M will not be able to fulfill the purpose of Vision 2020.

By creating more liberal arts programs, perhaps students will be able to see the arts as prominently as other majors. This is a worthy goal to work for. This year, A&M will see the establishment of what could, in the Aggie tradition, become one of the most respectable music programs in the country.

Such a lofty goal might be far in the future, but possible with the right amount of resources. That will contribute significantly to the establishment of a top university, something every Aggie should want to be a part of.

Leigh Henderson is a sophomore psychology major.