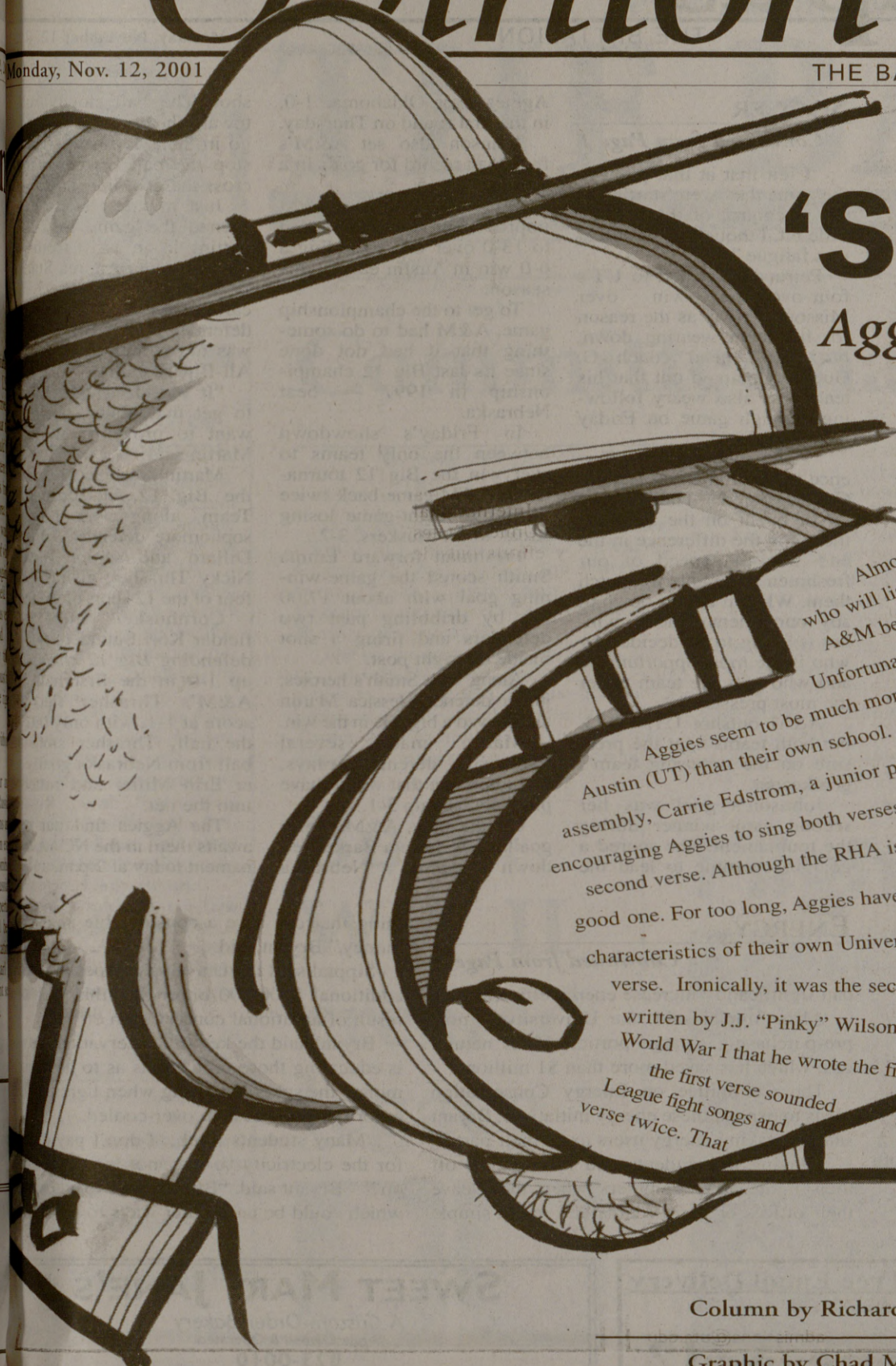


'Sounds like Hell!'

Aggies should sing first verse of War Hymn



Almost all Aggies are willing to tell anyone who will listen about the characteristics that make Texas A&M better than any academic institution in the world. Unfortunately, when it comes to the "Aggie War Hymn," Aggies seem to be much more interested in singing about the University of Texas-Austin (UT) than their own school. At the Oct. 24 Residence Hall Association general assembly, Carrie Edstrom, a junior political science major, proposed a resolution encouraging Aggies to sing both verses of the "Aggie War Hymn" rather than just the second verse. Although the RHA is unlikely to cause a change, the suggestion is a good one. For too long, Aggies have been singing about UT rather than the unique characteristics of their own University that are included in the long-lost first verse. Ironically, it was the second verse of the "Aggie War Hymn" that was first written by J.J. "Pinky" Wilson in 1918. It was only after Wilson returned from World War I that he wrote the first verse. The Aggies decided that the first verse sounded too much like the Ivy-League fight songs and chose to sing the second verse twice. That tradition continues today, though it recently has been

Column by Richard Bray

Graphic by Chad Mallam

challenged by a Residence Hall Association (RHA) resolution.

It is not as if Texas A&M has nothing to sing about. Because of its traditions, military history and Texas A&M's well-deserved reputation for unity, the University does not fall short of attributes worthy of song. Instead of singing about such qualities, however, students choose to waste their breath by singing about the Longhorns.

It is embarrassing for the student body to sing a song that focuses on another school. Some have argued that by singing the second verse, Aggies attract the attention of outsiders due to its unique nature. However, the attention Aggies attract is disbelief at how jealous the War Hymn makes Aggies sound. The second verse makes the Aggies sound like a little brother trying desperately to equal their superior bigger brother through mindless taunts.

As a result of the derisive song, visitors find it more difficult to take Aggies seriously. Anyone who scoffs at such concerns needs to realize that a lot of these outsiders whose opinions do not seem important now are either potential Aggies or will be paying for some potential Aggie's education in the future.

To attract the highest-caliber students, Aggies must display professionalism. While the "War Hymn" is not as embarrassing as being a Texas Tech fan, it does not portray classy behavior. The "Aggie War Hymn" is a very visible aspect of A&M. Aggies sing it at every football game, which is the most publicized event on campus. When other people hear the student body singing about UT rather than their own school, it sounds petty and immature, damaging the reputation of the school they should be singing about.

While the RHA is unlikely to enact a change in student behavior, Aggies should have enough pride in the school to sing a song which focuses on A&M. To do otherwise makes the University appear ridiculous.

Richard Bray is a junior journalism major.

'High alert' causes economic panic and paranoia

On Oct. 29, President George W. Bush called for Americans to be on a "state of high alert." According to CNN.com, Attorney General John Ashcroft said that intelligence sources had gathered credible information that more attacks could take place on the United States within the next few days. Five days later, Homeland Security



JENNIFER LOZANO

Director Tom Ridge said that this previous alert was extended indefinitely. On the same day, California Gov. Gray Davis revealed to the public an FBI warning of a terrorist threat to many bridges in the West.

For Americans involved directly and indirectly in September's terrorist attacks, these warnings do nothing but upset their nerves. These warnings also contribute to a struggling economy and contradict statements made previously by officials encouraging Americans to resume their normal lives.

It is understood that government officials want to keep Americans informed on issues that directly relate to their well-being, but most of these warnings are unspecific and can only bring about minuscule changes. However, the economic affects could be drastic. Alan Greenspan,

chairman of the U.S. central bank, said, "all modern economies require the confidence that free-market institutions are firmly in place and that commitments made today by market participants will be honored not only tomorrow but for years into the future." As expected, the shock of Sept. 11, markedly decreased consumers' confidence in the future of America's marketplace.

Unfortunately, every time a "high alert" warning is issued, consumers' faith in the marketplace is tested once again.

In addition, instead of going about their normal activities, such as going to the mall, many Americans are tempted to stay at home and watch the news. If, as The Associated Press reports, "consumer spending accounts for two-thirds of the nation's economic activity," the effects of these warnings could be devastating. To a nation that has been shaken into a permanent state of high alert from the events of Sept. 11, these non-specific warnings leave Americans wondering exactly what degree of precautions should be taken and only add to economic troubles.

A similar warning was also released prior Oct. 11. According to CNN.com, Ridge said, "we'll never know" if the alert may have "thwarted or frustrated an attack" on the United States. Ridge is correct that we will never know if the warnings had that effect; one thing we do know is that the warning for most civilian Americans only

For Americans involved directly and indirectly in September's horrific terrorist attacks, these warnings do nothing but upset their nerves.

increased paranoia and panic among an already shaken nation. As for the California FBI warnings, the information that prompted the alert began with a call to the U.S. Customs Service Office in Boston, Mass., from what officials call an apparently reliable source. The warning

passed on by the FBI was of uncorroborated information regarding the possibility of additional terrorist attacks against the West Coast, specifically targeting suspension bridges including the Golden Gate Bridge, the Bay Bridge, the Vincent-Thomas Bridge and the Coronado Bridge in San Diego, Calif. between rush hour on Nov. 2 and continuing through Nov. 7. Although these warnings were slightly more specific, they did not suggest specific action that Californians should take to be "on guard" against potential terrorist attacks.

The question that arises from these warnings is, who are American's on guard from?

Is one supposed to fear being in skyscrapers, driving on suspension bridges, or doing other mundane activities like opening the mail? Instead of resuming normal lives, this unprecedented war and its well-meant but futile warnings are causing Americans to do just the opposite.

As a result, Americans are sending the already-weakened national economy further down the recession spiral. Americans are aware that the environment in which they live has changed drastically since Sept. 11, and they do not need additional warnings for every threat the FBI encounters. Instead, warnings of a similar nature to these should be communicated to state and local law enforcers so that they take necessary measures to protect the general public.

After all, they have the means to do so. Government officials should do their best to encourage citizens to be observant and informed of national news. Most importantly, they should be reminded to spend time with friends and family, to enjoy the beautiful fall weather and to go on living their lives.

Jennifer Lozano is a junior English major.

CARTOON OF THE DAY



THE UNCARTOONIST ©

Column lacked MSC research

In response to Brady Creel's Nov. 9 column:

Had Creel spent less time trying to fake competence and more time fact-checking, he would know that the MSC president always has been appointed after an application/interview process, not elected.

Creel makes a point about how the students deserve to know how and why their money is spent, and the closed sessions regarding the position of the president disallow that. This is not true. Closed sessions of the MSC Council are held only to fill a position or remove a person from office. This is not to save face for the University, it is to protect the image of the students

being considered in the event that unpleasant facts about them surface. In this case, Josh Rowan was dismissed in closed session so the whole University would not have to know that he is entirely devoid of character. All other meetings, including budgeting discussions, are open to the public.

Additionally, Jennifer Brashares was appointed "in secret" because she was the natural successor to head the organization. She was the executive vice president of programs, which is the number two-person of MSC Council.

Finally, as a former student, I am not enraged by the actions of the University or the MSC, but at the utter contempt and disregard Rowan has shown for everybody other than himself. Every former student I have spoken to shares my feelings.

Therefore, the next time you

MAIL CALL

write a column, you should consult more than old *Battalion* articles for information, because it is evident that you know nothing about the MSC.

Corry Clinton
Class of 2000

Editorials need serious focus

I think it is great that *The Battalion* has decided to run many more editorials this year. Whether we like it or not, the opinions read in *The Battalion* comprise the only organized voice on most A&M issues.

Saying that, I'm disappointed that the editorials are completely lame, expressing opinions that are readily available without the amplification of the opinion page. Recent editorials have focused on such hard-hitting issues as "We

love Web registration," "We love the Corps," and "We love Red, White and Blue Out." Although appealing sentiments, these editorials need to be balanced with discussions that people may (gasp!) disagree with.

A recent graduate of the University of Texas-Austin who now lives in College Station remarked that students here do not seem as worldly as those in Austin — she never hears anyone talking about current events, and tons of people talking about the next big party. As the media source for most A&M students, *The Battalion* is the best agenda-setter at this University, and has a duty to cover intellectual, controversial issues for the students to unravel in their spare time. Keep the editorials coming, but give them more substance.

Anthony Garza
Class of 2002