

EDITORIAL

MORE MIDDLE EASTERN COURSES NEEDED

As a new semester begins, there is a blaring hole in the curriculum offered to Texas A&M students. Currently, there are only six courses offered at A&M that pertain to the Middle East. This is alarming, because it reveals not only an unrepresented area of study at the University, but it also uncovers an inability by the University to keep up with the changing world curriculum. Texas A&M has dropped the ball on keeping up with the evolving educational demands of students in its lack of offering Middle Eastern courses.

Texas A&M is a world-class University ranked among the top public universities in the country, yet there is no one here to teach Aggies about the events unfolding in our world. Across the country, universities are offering new, more in-depth courses in Middle Eastern studies, some even offering courses on international terrorism. These universities are reacting to the world, giving students a reactive curriculum that adapts to the changing environment of the world and the educational demands of today's student. A curriculum based partially on current events is beneficial to students and should be something Aggies can take advantage of. The University must equip itself with the faculty and resources necessary to change with the world and allow for demanding, reactive courses in each semester.

THE BATTALION

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MAIL CALL

Bonfire survey participation high

In response to Rolando Garcia's Jan. 23 article:

The Bonfire poll had more participation than I have ever seen for any student election. Dr. Bowen and other administrators can't deny that we want Aggie Bonfire. High visibility suggests a large saturation of an idea or message you are trying to promote in a particular environment. This was not done effectively. I saw more visibility for First Yell and Rush Week than I saw for Bonfire 2002.

One example was the absence of reminders in the computer labs about voting for Bonfire online. Some people did work hard, but not enough advertisement strategies were used. Dr. Cole's opinion on the poll proves that we must fight to maintain our unique nature. The student body did vote but with little help from our current leaders. The administration has forgotten its Aggie heritage by taking a neutral and an almost negative approach to Bonfire. This is an attack on all Aggies, past and present.

Kevin T. Geiger
Class of 2004

WB depicts teen reality

In response to Katherine Tucker's Jan. 23 column:

No matter what you think about teen dramas, one has to admit that the situations depicted on the shows of the WB network do happen in teen and young adult lives.

Issues like the death of a parent, alcohol abuse, drug abuse, school violence and even discrimination can regularly be seen on these WB shows.

Monday night's episode of "7th Heaven" was one of great education. This episode, which has been advertised as a tool for classroom education, depicted the intolerance of some towards a Muslim family due to their religious and cultural background and what the compassion and tolerance of a few can do to change the views of those around them.

In light of Sept. 11, I find it to be great loss for all in our Aggie land community not to have had the opportunity to view this show and learn the

lesson of tolerance and compassion for others who are different from you, without having to stay up late in the evening.

Theresa Duncan
Class of 2003

Clinton was not "shameful"

In response to George Deutsch's Jan. 23 column:

I found Deutsch's column to be offensive, not just as a Democrat, but as an American. It clearly shows the right-wing bias our student newspaper possesses, especially with its continual attacks of the Clinton Presidency. Deutsch calls the Clinton Presidency "shameful and heavily tarnished."

Let me correct a few of the misconceptions. The Clinton Presidency resulted in the creation of 22 million new jobs, passage of the Family and Medical Leave Act, increased minimum wage, expanded Work Study and Pell Grants, lowest crime rate in history, the Welfare Reform Act, Children's Health Insurance Program, increased investment in biomedical research, protection of women's reproductive rights, all while achieving the slowest per capita growth of government spending since the 1950s.

Every President deserves to have statue, and every former President should have the discretion over his or her own Presidential Library.

Jonathan Steed
Class of 2004

Tattoo removal program helpful

In response to Matthew Maddox's Jan. 24 column:

The "Liberty Tattoo" program has been designed to help those with less than desirable pasts erase those reminders and move on with their lives.

Maddox's column states these people need "permanent reminders," but painful memories of the past are enough. The confidence of a clean slate is more beneficial than the negative reinforcement.

Jessica Wolstromer
Class of 2004

Military Tribunals are just Circumstances similar to World War II tribunals



DHARMARAJ INDURTHY

On Sept. 11, the United States became embroiled in a struggle unlike any in its history. In the wake of catastrophe, new policies were initiated at home. Most notable was President George W. Bush's executive order empowering him to choose which cases will be tried in military tribunals rather than conventional courts. While this order grants significant power to the president and the secretary of defense and imposes new restrictions for some of the accused, establishing military tribunals is prudent and necessary in these extraordinary times.

Under Bush's order he can select cases in which non-citizens suspected of terrorism can be tried in a military tribunal. The secretary of defense appoints military commissions to hear these cases and regulates the proceedings and rules of evidence. These commissions can sentence death for convictions on capital crimes.

Critics have objected to the new standards of justice. Laura Murphy, director of the American Civil Liberties Union, criticized several provisions of the President's order: the lack of juries, lower burden of proof on prosecutions and the requirement of two-thirds agreement by the commission to convict and sentence. Furthermore, she contends that executive power is unchecked and compromises our system of government. Nat Hentoff, of the Village Voice Alternative Weekly, cites the lack of appeal opportunity, restrictions on choosing lawyers and unfair evidentiary rules as severe compromises of liberties.

However, one must view these measures in their context. As Sept. 11 is perceived as the modern Pearl Harbor, parallels can be drawn between tribunals of today and tribunals instituted by Franklin Roosevelt during World War II. Although no declaration of war exists, there are no restrictions making tribunals exclusive to Congressionally declared war. The relevant question is "do circumstances of today resemble the circumstances of WWII?" Are these accused terrorists common criminals or war criminals?

Most agree with Bush. In a poll by *Newsweek*, 72 percent support the civil restrictions and expanded governmental powers in general. In the *Washington Post*, the president defended his position by noting that tribunals would protect potential jurors and prevent compromises of intelligence. In his executive order, Bush said that in the current state of armed conflict threats to US security and the integrity of military operations demand such measures.

While some contend that past tribunals were abusive, John Dean, former council to the president, said tribunals

have a respectable history dating back to the American Revolution. Those during the Civil War and World War II evidence good practice. Michael

Nardotti, former judge advocate general, cites conviction rates as low as 85 percent in World War II trials, notably lower than the current rate of 93 percent in federal courts and courts martial. Although these tribunals differ from Bush's tribunals, there is nothing fundamentally wrong with the idea.

The nation is confronted with

extraordinary circumstances today, akin to those of World War II. When weighing the rights of accused non-citizen terrorists against the safety of Americans and military operations, the nation should conform the former to the latter. America treads on unfamiliar ground, fighting an enemy too threatening to perceive as a common criminal and too elusive to qualify as an object of war. New policy must be built to accommodate the times and safeguard the liberties of all Americans.

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ADRIAN CALCANEO • THE BATTALION

Wendy's founder was humanitarian

Dave Thomas, founder of the Wendy's fast food chain, passed away at age 69 of liver cancer. He will be remembered by most as the guy from the commercials, but in real life, Thomas had a "Biggie" size heart. A fitting tribute would be for elected officials to take his inspiring



JONATHAN JONES

story of success and continue to cut the frustrating red tape on adoptions. Thomas was a quiet and tireless living advertisement for the protection and value of every human life, and America is better for his example.

Thomas was a regular guy who considered himself just a hamburger cook. For some, that made him an easy target of ridicule. The *Arizona Republic* had to decline a cartoon from their cartoonist depicting Thomas laying on the ground next to a "Triple Lard Burger" and Biggie Fries. A tombstone depicted in the cartoon memorialized him as "another overweight American who ate a lifetime of junk."

Dave Thomas was born out of wedlock. His mother could not care for him and he was adopted at six months old. In 1962, after being mentored by Harland Sanders of Kentucky Fried Chicken, he purchased a string of failed KFC restaurants. Six years

later, he made his first million. Thomas is in the *Guinness Book of World Records* for his staying power as company head and personality. Since 1989, he has filmed 800 commercials, when his original intention was only one. People responded positively to the friendly guy who served good food without regard to the gospel according to the Surgeon General. Thomas repeatedly said humility, hard work and a strong family background were the ingredients to his success, which he happily shared.

In 1990, President George H.W. Bush named him a national spokesman for adoption. He created the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption to "educate prospective parents about the adoption process and streamline the adoption process by making it easier and more affordable." For adoptive families, the bureaucratic process can be exhausting. Here was a fast food tycoon who spent much of his time actively promoting the right of every child to life and home. As the 29th anniversary of *Roe vs. Wade* approaches, it is appropriate to reflect on the importance of children in our society. For Thomas and adoptive parents across the country, leaving no child behind is a lifetime of work.

More than two centuries ago, Thomas Jefferson wrote that life is an inalienable right, as "the care of human life and happiness and not their destruction is the first and only legitimate object of good government." Currently, more than 100,000 Americans and untold thousands around the world are waiting to be adopted. Testifying before Congress in favor of an adoption tax-credit, Thomas said, "I know firsthand how important it is for every child to have a home and a loving family. Without a family, I would not be where I am today."

President George W. Bush proclaimed Jan. 20, 2002 as National Sanctity of Human Life Day. In his statement, he said Americans "should join together in pursuit of a more compassionate society, rejecting the notion that some lives are less worthy of others, whether because of age or illness, social circumstance or economic condition." Following in the example of Dave Thomas and adoptive parents, public officials would serve the future well to not allow the sensationalized, rare cases of abusive parents to hinder the adoptive process. Hopefully, the passing of Dave Thomas, the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* and Bush's declaration will stir a national debate about the need to protect precious life.

Jonathan Jones is a senior political science major.