

## EDITORIAL NAMES NECESSARY

Texas A&M leadership helps itself to more than \$1 billion of taxpayer money annually, but so brazen is the arrogance of the A&M Board of Regents that they are conducting a presidential search process that is full of deceit and lacks in public accountability. This must end immediately.

The Presidential Advisory Committee, appointed by Chancellor Howard Graves to screen nominees and recommend a replacement for retiring University President Dr. Ray M. Bowen, released the names of three candidates with the unmistakable impression they were finalists. Just two days later, Board of Regents Chairman Erle Nye announced that two unnamed candidates were on the short list. The autocratic and cavalier manner in which this matter has been handled should provoke outrage among students and faculty. But committee members such as Deputy Chancellor Jerry Gaston could do little more than play word games and neither confirm or deny the fact.

Taxpayer money has been spent in the search for a new president. To keep the process secret is unacceptable. Students at A&M still do not fully know who the candidates are for the next president. The Board of Regents has not released the names of the two other candidates, and it is not required to do so until three weeks before the vote. As such, the regents could wait until most students have left for the summer before releasing all the names. The vote is scheduled to take place in June. The additional two candidates should be revealed well before students leave for the summer.

It would be the height of University administrative arrogance to not allow students the ability to consider and offer feedback on all the candidates. They, after all, pay a large portion of the bills that keep A&M running; Texas taxpayers pay the rest. Who more than students have a vested interest in the next president of a public university? Aggies in particular should know about the men or women who wish to lead and make decisions on their behalf.

Students are not paying steadily-increasing tuition and fees for the privilege of being ignored by the Board of Regents. The president is responsible to those who pay the salaries. As such, citizens from all across the state should call on the Presidential Search Advisory Committee and the A&M Board of Regents to end the behind-the-scenes intrigue and say who is under consideration.

Three of the candidates recommended by the committee are interacting with those whom they wish to lead. It would be irresponsible for a candidate to be considered without the opportunity for students and members of the A&M community to listen and offer their opinions and input. But if the Board of Regents waits until the deadline for releasing the two additional names, this is exactly what will happen. Those who pay the bills deserve better.

## THE BATTALION

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### MAIL CALL

#### Traditions belong to all Aggies

In response to Collins Ezeanyim April 1 column:

As a member of Traditions Council, I share in the humbling responsibility to promote and preserve the traditions of Texas A&M through education and awareness. I would like to make it clear that Traditions Council does not declare something a tradition. The traditions belong to all Aggies.

While the criteria stated are accurate: occurs continuously, brings all Aggies together, and makes A&M a better place, there still remains an unexplainable underlying special meaning behind our traditions that cannot be characterized.

No matter how they started, whether by building a trash pile as Bonfire in 1909, finding a dog on the side of the road to become Reveille, holding a special ceremony for a former president of Texas A&M University, Lawrence Sullivan Ross, for the first Silver Taps in 1898, or humpin' it at the YMCA Building in 1931 for the first Midnight Yell, these traditions began without any "declaration." Traditions Council does not "declare" something a tradition.

We help to promote the traditions that all Aggies have formed together. We want to be a resource to all Aggies: current, former and future students, faculty, and the families of Aggies along with speaking engagements and programs to help promote traditions.

In the case of ring dunking, it is my personal opinion that it should not be supported, because it centers around alcohol. I think it is each Aggie's personal choice to participate in it. But, Traditions Council does not

support ring dunking in our speaking or programs.

It is all of our responsibilities to decide, from all of our different activities and aspects, which of these traditions help to build the Aggie spirit and will continue to in years to come. If we look at the deeper meaning behind the things we do, the traditions belong to all of us, and that it is what makes them special.

John McFate  
Class of 2001  
Tradition Council chair

#### Bias is undeserved

In response to Sarah Szuminski's April 1 article:

It was unnecessary to point out that two of the four junior yell leader run-off candidates are in the Corps. It was totally irrelevant to the articles content and showed bias against Lima and Holloway, the non-reg candidates. To some Aggies who still believe in the antiquated idea that Corps members must dominate all aspects of life at A&M, this bit of information is vital to their vote. It seems there is a glass ceiling that allows a non-reg to only reach a certain level of accomplishment as a student; whereas, if you are a member of the Corps, you are given the divine right to reach the apex of University life. During my years at A&M, I have learned that this world is superficial; it matters more to people what you are, rather than who you are. Please show the due respect to the two non-reg junior yell candidates; they deserve a fair, unbiased election, just as the Corps members do.

Kristen Sachtleben  
Class of 2002

## Now open to the public

### CIPA should not be enforced



JESSICA CRUTCHER

Attorney questioning a law that would require public libraries to restrict access to pornographic Internet sites began last week in a U.S. District Court. Former President Clinton signed the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) in 2000. The act requires public libraries to install filtering software onto their computers to protect children from objectionable material. If the libraries refuse to comply, they could lose millions of dollars in government subsidies.

The American Civil Liberties Union, along with a group of libraries, library patrons and Website operators, are requesting a permanent injunction against CIPA. They say CIPA violates the free speech of adults.

The requirements set forth by CIPA are inherently flawed. Few would argue that children should have access to hardcore pornography. However, filtering software is not the way to protect children. Parents should properly monitor their children instead of expecting librarians and an electronic babysitter to do it for them.

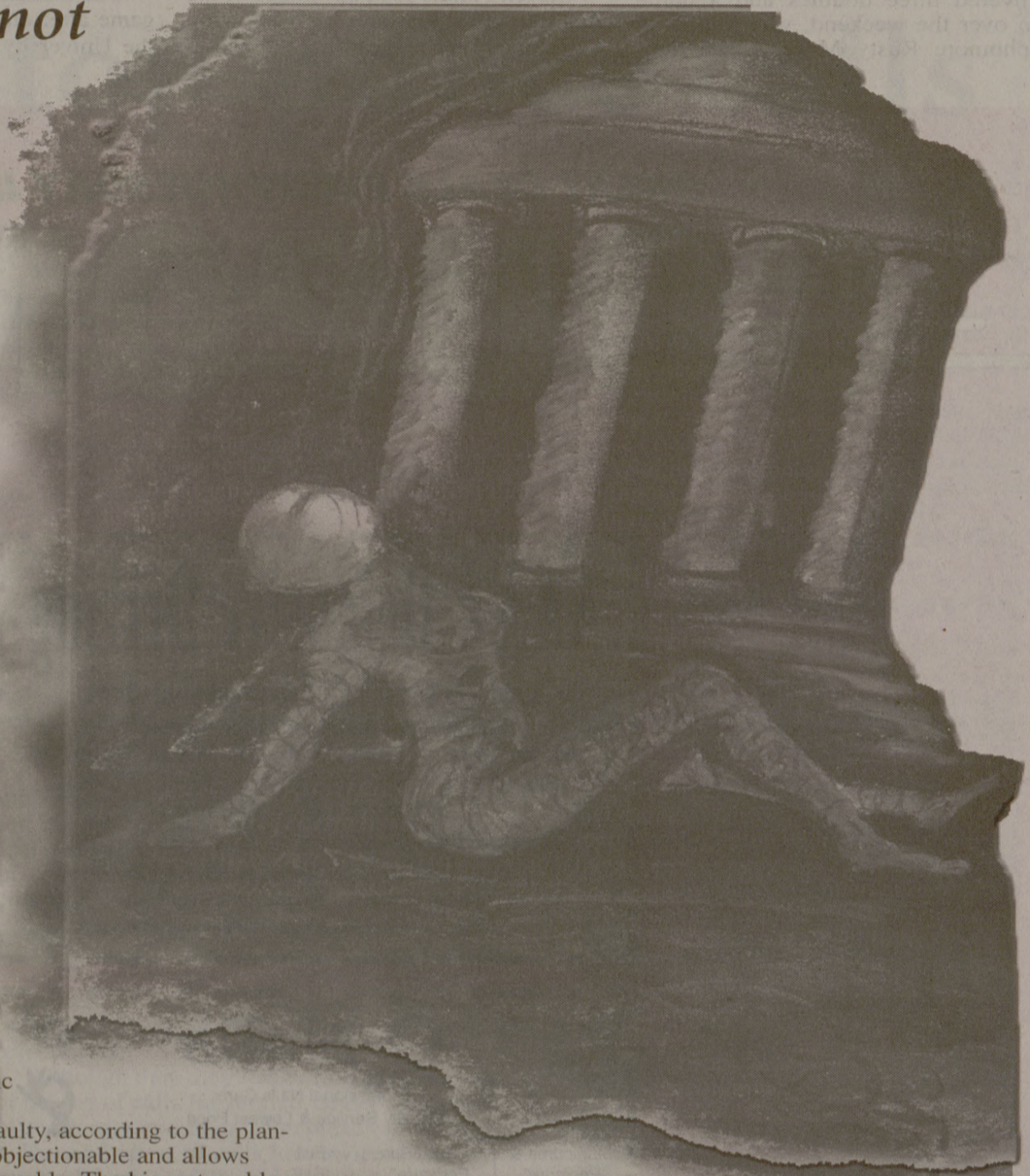
The way the software works is faulty, according to the plaintiffs. It blocks Websites that are unobjectionable and allows access to some sites that are objectionable. The biggest problem is that the definition of "objectionable" is highly relative.

There is no such thing as a common standard of decency, so attempting to enforce decency standards at the national level can only cause problem. CIPA will restrict the First Amendment rights of adults. CIPA could also be used as a means of restricting knowledge about birth control, abortion access, homosexual rights and other controversial subjects.

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For example, Candace Morgan, associate director of the Fort Vancouver Regional Library in Washington state, was asked to examine photographs from a pornographic Website in court. "We have sex education manuals similar to some of these," she said.

In the not so distant past, womens' right to information on birth control and abortion was denied by "public decency"



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laws, such as the Comstock Laws of the early 20th century. This could happen again, if CIPA is upheld as it stands. Many people do not have personal access to controversial personal information at home or school — they must not be denied access in the library as well.

Although some libraries provide blocking systems on a voluntary basis, they should not be forced to do so. Morgan said her library does this, but also holds parents and guardians responsible for their children's activities.

There is no perfect way to protect children from objectionable materials. However, undermining the First Amendment rights of other patrons is inexcusable. CIPA's vagueness provides too tempting an opportunity for lawmakers to ban controversial material from public places. To be fair to all involved, the court must not uphold CIPA.

Jessica Crutcher is a senior journalism major.

## Proposal for peace in the Mideast



BRIENNE PORTER

Since the beginning of this year, conflict between Israelis and Palestinians has escalated. Almost every day there is a report of a suicide bomber or Israeli military action that results in death. There are strong opinions on both sides of the conflict, but one thing is clear: Only decisive action will save that area of the world from dissolving into complete chaos and violence.

The main areas of conflict are those won by Israel during the Six Day War in 1967. These lands were once home to the Palestinians, but for the past 35 years they have been under the control of the Israeli government, making Palestinians refugees. Many people argue that the Israelis won the land fairly and it is the spoils of war. While that may be technically true, the real problem is that there is a nation of people living as refugees away from what was their land. Many of these refugees decided to wage war on the Israeli government to win back their homeland. They chose to use guerrilla warfare where everyone is a target and innocent casualties are expected.

Something needs to be done to stop the slaughter of innocent people. Here is the proposal: first, order and maintain a cease-fire for both sides, including a condemnation of terrorist actions from both Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian leader Yassir Arafat; second, create a Palestinian homeland out of the occupied territories of the Six Day War; third, all Arab nations must recognize the right of Israel to exist as a sovereign nation; and lastly, make Jerusalem an

international city under the control of a neutral third party.

The most important thing that needs to happen immediately is a cease-fire and condemnation of the terrorist actions. According to the New York Post, "the Israeli casualty count in just the first three months of 2002 now tops all of 2001." This fact is startling and when the number of Palestinian casualties are included, it is clear that a cease-fire is imperative. Many charge that Arafat has not done enough to condemn these terrorist attacks on Israeli citizens and soldiers.

To end violence from groups such as

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Islamic Jihad, there must be a Palestinian homeland. These people need to have a country and not live as refugees. After World War II and the Holocaust, many future residents of Israel lived in displaced persons camps, and many of them felt the need for their own Jewish state to protect against the chance of future Holocausts. The Palestinians are in a similar place that the Jewish Israelis once were — they have no home and are living in refugee camps. The creation of a Palestinian homeland will help end the violence and build a connection between the two countries. This connection will be necessary to continue peace while growing into a stable region. The land to create the Palestinian homeland needs to come from the territories won by the Israelis in the Six Day War. Those lands include the

West Bank and Gaza Strip. Many other leaders have called for the creation of a Palestinian nation, and after the recent violence and the Passover Massacre, those cries need to be heard.

With the creation of a Palestinian nation there must be recognition by Arab nations of the legal right of Israel to exist. Without the normalization of relations, there can be no peace. There will be no peace because Israel will not be secure in its borders next to the Palestinian nation and that uneasy existence could lead to more violence.

The last idea is to create Jerusalem as an international city not under the rule of no one nation but a neutral third party. Jerusalem is a holy city for three of the world's largest religions — Islam, Judaism and Christianity. To have one nation and religion claim this city is to have the other religions feel that the holy city is under siege. An international city will allow all people to travel to and within the city without fear and bring openness and freedom for all religions to travel to their holy places. This idea of over-seeing Jerusalem will diminish conflict and help ensure peace in the holy city. A third party such as the United Nations with a council made of people from each religion would be ideal.

Actions must be taken to end the Mideast conflict. The world cannot stand by and allow the region to descend into chaotic violence. Yet, both sides need to work together to broker peace. Both sides of the battle are at fault and need to work to correct past wrongs. Without a desire for peace, the fate of the Israelis and Palestinians is darkened.

Brienne Porter is a junior political science major.