

EDITORIAL

ADVOCATE CHANGE FOR SAT

Change is to progress as an Aggie's ring is to the Aggie Network. Texas A&M assistant Provost Joe Estrada will help to bring needed change to the SAT test as he serves on the College Board national revision committee for the test. The board proposes to create a writing section, eliminate vocabulary analogies and promote a more advanced math section. Another objective of the the revision committee is to abandon some of the cultural bias in the test by eliminating innate ability questions and advocating a more content-oriented, curriculum-based measure. These changes are necessary and will lead to progress at Texas A&M by establishing more equal standards for college admissions.

With a new SAT style, the prospect of Texas A&M's Top 20 percent plan could be disregarded because the focus of the SAT will shift and expose students in low income school districts to better teaching techniques.

A study released in Fall 2001 revealed that students at Texas A&M admitted by the Texas top 10 percent plan had higher retention rates than other students. These students had the highest averages in their high school graduating classes and, as statistics show, were more adept to college coursework than others. Estrada told the *Houston Chronicle* that the graduation rank of students has a higher predictive value of student achievement than the SAT exam. With test changes, colleges can place more emphasis on SAT scores and expect reliable results in the pool of admissions.

Increased reading comprehension and math problem solving skills were just some of the reforms added to the SAT in 1993 and 1994. As students progress in their studies and more test preparation courses are offered, it is time for new modifications to be made to the SAT exam. Proponents have said the revised test will be more difficult rather than easier. It is time students and educators accept change and stand up to the challenge ahead.

THE BATTALION

EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor in Chief | MARIANO CASTILLO

Managing Editor	BRIAN RUFF	Member	MELISSA BEDSOLE
Opinion Editor	CAYLA CARR	Member	JONATHAN JONES
News Editor	SOMMER BUNCE	Member	JENNIFER LOZANO
News Editor	BRANDIE LIFFICK	Member	KELLY ZIMMER

The *Battalion* encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 200 words or less and include the author's name, class and phone number. The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 014 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters also may be mailed to: 014 Reed McDonald, MS 1111, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-1111. Fax: (979) 845-2647. Email: mailcall@thebatt.com



MAIL CALL

Johnny and Sully remembered

could perform Silver Taps?

Ali Enrique Razavi
Class of 2004

Voting ballots are misleading

I logged in to cast my vote in the yell leader runoff today, and I was a little surprised to note the order in which the candidates were listed on the ballot. In both the run-offs for senior and junior yell leader, Corps of Cadets candidates were listed before their non-reg competitors.

This was not because they were in alphabetical order, either, as Goble was listed before Giese, and Lusk and Bailey were listed before Lima and Holloway.

If seemed to me that whoever set up the ballot was hoping that some people would simply vote for the candidates at the top of the ballot, providing the Corps candidates with an advantage. I sincerely hope that was not the case, but I can think of no other explanation. If there is one, I would love to hear it.

Erin Brown
Class of 2002

Intolerance is a virtue

Education, not acceptance, needed



ADRIAN CALCANEO • THE BATTALION



MATTHEW MADDOX

It is that time of the semester again, when rainbows lose their Biblical interpretation and flaming liberals come out of the woodwork to gather at the Memorial Student Center. For those not aware, it is Gay Awareness Week (GAW) on the A&M campus. More so now than during any of the other 51 weeks, it is a week when biology is discarded for the pseudo-science of moral relativity and political correctness. This week's events will carry all the homosexual fervor that the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Transgendered Aggies (GLBTA) and related organizations can muster with funding from the University. But what is needed this week, is the education, prevention and support for those struggling against homosexuality.

The rally cry of the gay community during Gay Awareness Week is "tolerance" and "acceptance." In all actuality, those benevolent attitudes demanded are only intended for homosexuals. To those persons who either by science, personal morality or religious conviction believe that homosexuality is wrong, there is no tolerance granted. These individuals will be hounded as bigots and homophobes, as if standing by their principles is a great sin. GLBTA president Justin Anderson said, "We just want to be treated like everyone else and be respected for who we are." Despite what Anderson may want, respect is a virtue that is earned, not something to be handed out cheaply as a rainbow ribbon.

Some proponents of GAW believe that homosexuality should be accepted by adults and taught to children as a healthy and equal alternative to heterosexuality. Homosexuality exists, so why

not "tolerate" it? This is contradictory to the way any other health/societal issue is handled in America. For example, educators and

the media drill the evils of smoking, drinking and racism into young people. Undeniably, all four of these have taken a toll on our society. However, America currently is being educated against only three of these four, and is being led down a dangerous path that chooses blissful ignorance over responsibility. The reason behind this is that the social stigma surrounding homosexuality has become politically correct. Instead of treating homosexuality as a behavior, such as smoking, homosexuals are considered a type of person. Moreover, unlike race and age, which are protected classes because they are factors beyond an individual's control, homosexuality is a choice. Like a smoker craving a cigarette, gays may desire homosexual relations. That desire does not warrant special rights, acceptance or the ignoring of facts involved.

The National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality cites numerous studies that indicate the gay lifestyle leads to increased rates of instability, depression, suicide, drug and alcohol abuse and prostitution. The studies also show that these statistics are independent of the attitudes of the rest of the population. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention findings show that gays are multiple times more likely to have sexually transmitted diseases than the sexually active population at large. However, radical gay advocates have dictated American Psychiatric Association policy since the 1970s and officially it

does not assist homosexuals in recovering. Dr. Joseph Nicolosi, said recovering gays often feel betrayed by the APA. "How dare the APA fail to recognize our reality," they say, "that the transition has indeed been life-changing!"

Diversity — the most overexploited, politically correct buzzword of the year — will get more play during GAW as the reason for acceptance. Unfortunately for all involved, because "diversity" (and not academics) is the reason for attending college, the University is bending over backward to promote it. Tuition fees alone will increase by \$450 a semester for incoming students next fall.

Meanwhile, the Student Activities Office, the Office of Gender Issues Education, the Department of Multicultural Services, Women's Studies, The Women's Center, MSC Film Society and the Association of Former Students all will be sponsoring Coming Out Week events. On top of those sponsorships, the National Organization of Women, the same group that brought the V-Day festivities to A&M, will promote its agenda during Coming Out Week, according to the GLBTA Website. Its contribution: they sponsored the homosexual "marriage" on Wednesday. If Texas A&M is truly concerned about the safety of all students, whether they partake in homosexuality or not, a new focus must be placed on the truth. The truth is that education, not acceptance, is the answer.

Matthew Maddox is a sophomore business administration major.

Cat killers were rightfully cleared

When two Baylor University baseball players shot and killed a stray cat in the parking lot of a Waco Taco Cabana last March, they surely had no idea how inflated the whole situation would become.

Following the acquittal of pitcher Derek Brehm last month, animal rights activists screamed bloody murder and are calling for legislation to strengthen Texas' already hefty animal cruelty laws.

Activists denounce Brehm's acquittal and the dropped charges against Clint Bowers, claiming the laws are vague and the case sets precedent for others to get away with animal cruelty. These claims are vague in themselves, however: The laws are clear and well-defined, and no one is going to be punished for animal cruelty in Texas. Activists go overboard when they cry murder at the killing of a stray cat.

Kathie Robnett, president of Fuzzy Friends Rescue in Waco, said the case tells potential animal abusers "if you want to hurt animals, come on down here and do it because nothing's going to happen to you." This assertion is simply untrue. As of Sept. 1, 2001, animal cruelty offenses are punishable by up to two years in the state penitentiary and a \$10,000 fine. Gov. Rick Perry signed the bill following a knife attack on a dog in Dallas that left it blind in both eyes.

Animal cruelty is well-defined in the state penal code and includes provisions protecting any domesticated or captured animal. The law is specific enough to cite "tripping a horse" as a punishable offense, as well as the abandonment, neglect or improper housing of animals. Wild animals are not protected because they are hunted as game. However anyone that captures a live, wild animal is subject to animal cruelty laws.

Many people see the acts of Brehm and Bowers as barbaric and only something that a disturbed psychopath would attempt. Would there have been any controversy, however, if they had killed a bobcat, coyote or armadillo? Probably not. Brehm said he cut the cat's head off so he could bleach and keep the skull, as some of his cousins had done with deer, bobcats and other



CHRIS JACKSON

animals. Granted, not everyone wants a bleached cat skull to put on his desk, but as long as the cat is not someone else's property, there is no difference between it and a bobcat. A bobcat is simply not as furry.

Americans have been conditioned to give cats, dogs and other pets a near-human status. The reality is, however, that around the world these animals are killed and eaten for food, just as cows and pigs are eaten. The Chinese consider puppies a delicacy, and guinea pigs are an exquisite treat to those in Argentina. The differences between our cultures make them seem brutal for eating those cute, cuddly animals. It does not, however, make Brehm and Bowers wrong. In the same way, if Brehm and Bowers do not see cats in the same light as others, there should be nothing wrong with killing one as long as they stay within the boundaries of the law.

One needs to go little farther than the Internet to witness how absurd some activists can be concerning issues such as this.

When the Brehm and Bowers case broke last year, activists established a memorial Website titled "Justice for Queso," using the name Taco Cabana employees had given the cat. The site includes a heartfelt, yet farcical, eulogy for the late stray and a picture of an orange tabby cat that likely looks nothing like the actual Queso. The affair is dramatized to the point of irrationality, incorrectly claiming that the cat was savagely bludgeoned to death. However, Queso was not bludgeoned to death in a torturous manner, but killed as a hunter would kill its game.

The only reason Brehm and Bowers were accused of animal cruelty in the first place was because police suspected that either the cat belonged to someone as a pet or had been captured and tortured to death. Neither of these suspicions were true, and the two were rightfully cleared of charges. Activists have no reason to scream about cruelty unless they want to outlaw the killing of animals entirely.

Chris Jackson is a sophomore business administration major.