

EDITORIAL A POOR PROCESS

Speculation and unsubstantiated rumors have run rampant this spring concerning the selection of Texas A&M's next president. Now comes word that the Texas A&M System Board of Regents, who will make the appointment, is split between two candidates. U.S. Sen. Phil Gramm and former CIA Director Robert Gates both have ties to the University. Either one would be a good successor to Dr. Ray M. Bowen, but the way in which the Regents have handled this matter is unfair and unproductive.

It appears as if politics are heavily in play. *The Houston Chronicle* reported five regents support Gates, while three support Gramm. A regent who did not wish to be named said of the senator, "he's a divider, not a uniter." He said Gramm has "huge drawbacks" because of his outspoken, conservative views. Intense internal debate within the Board of Regents is to be expected and should also be kept private. Keeping two candidate names secret and then leaking information after most students are gone is unfair to all involved, especially candidates under consideration.

The rumors are being kept alive by people who wish to advance one agenda or another. In the process, important issues facing A&M take a backseat to unproductive speculation. Students and alumni should be hearing what a candidate for president has to say about looming budget shortfalls, the drive for greater diversity and the future of Bonfire. Instead, some regents are hiding behind anonymity to leak what may or may not be accurate information.

From the lack of full disclosure in releasing names to the current backroom politics, the whole selection process has been handled poorly. The Board of Regents is playing an unnecessary, unfair game. And it is the students, faculty, alumni and all who care about Texas A&M who are dragged along in the mud behind them.

THE BATTALION

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MAIL CALL

Legalizing drugs not the answer

In response to Jonathan Jones' April 25 article:

Since we have a big problem with crime in this country, let's just make crime legal. That would certainly lessen the number of convicts in our country, solve overcrowding in prisons, save us some money on corrections facilities and the list goes on.

Give me a break. Hardly anything good comes from smoking marijuana, so why legalize it? It is a step in the wrong direction. Whatever happened to having some principle?

It drives me nuts to listen to people argue that America should legalize more substances so that we can further numb our minds to the real world. Grow up. Obviously there is something wrong with the people in this country when we are debating what substances we should be able to legally get trashed with. Why don't all of you druggies go find something useful to do with your time that might actually improve our society instead of bring it down?

Matt Warner
Class of 2002

Corps members should not have slept at speech

I just got back from the Laura Bush speech this evening in Rudder Auditorium and I am extremely disappointed in some of the people that were in attendance. There were three members of the Corps of Cadets sitting in front of me, and during Laura Bush's speech they were all sleeping.

Given the fact that Neal Simpson presented Bush with gifts from the Corps of Cadets at the end of her speech, it

would have been nice if the members of the Corps in attendance were actually awake.

Is it that hard to stay awake for a 20-minute speech by the first lady? How many other times are you going to be able to experience this? Show some respect and don't sleep during such an event or just don't go at all.

Eric Webb
Class of 2002

Playboy does not demean women

In response to Ryan Huseman's April 24 mail call:

When you say "If you will think about it," are you implying that women at Texas A&M who pose for Playboy do not think before they act? That their lack of thinking may cause women to become the "inferior gender?" Do you honestly believe all men objectify, dehumanize and strip women of individuality and uniqueness when they pose for Playboy to the extent that they could never be respected?

Women own businesses, are politicians, raise children, are lawyers, surgeons and more. Many are here getting their degrees now because they can make good decisions.

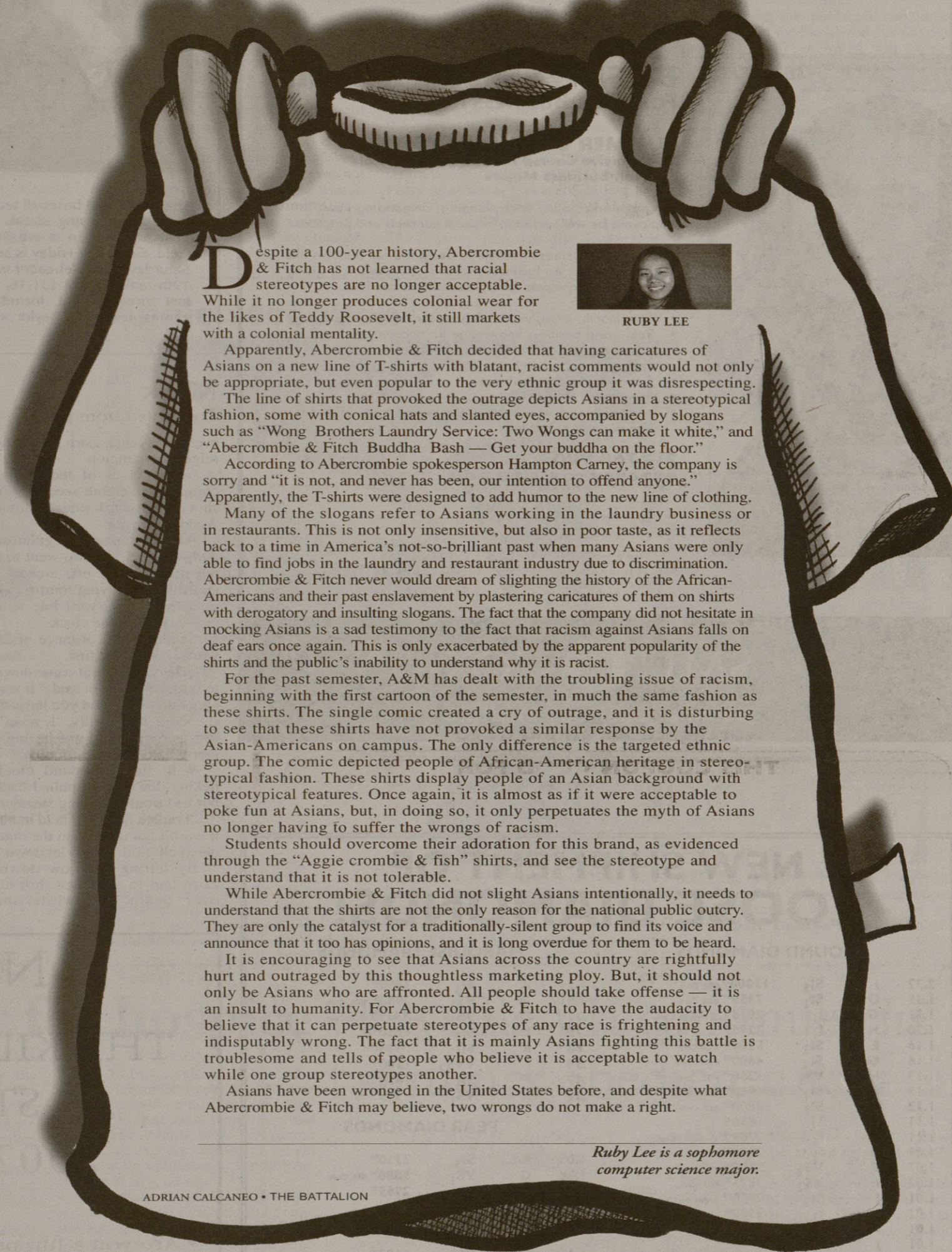
Sensual pleasure is not always the goal of Playboy models or readers. Modeling is a rewarding experience that opens opportunities, expresses creativeness and builds pride. The human form (both male and female) is beautiful and should be celebrated, not cast down and hidden from view — doing so builds respect, maturity and appreciation.

Appreciate what women do (and want to do), not what they should or should not do for you.

Chris Brenes
Class of 2003

No sense of fashion

Abercrombie T-shirts offensive to Asian-Americans



Despite a 100-year history, Abercrombie & Fitch has not learned that racial stereotypes are no longer acceptable. While it no longer produces colonial wear for the likes of Teddy Roosevelt, it still markets with a colonial mentality.



RUBY LEE

Apparently, Abercrombie & Fitch decided that having caricatures of Asians on a new line of T-shirts with blatant, racist comments would not only be appropriate, but even popular to the very ethnic group it was disrespecting.

The line of shirts that provoked the outrage depicts Asians in a stereotypical fashion, some with conical hats and slanted eyes, accompanied by slogans such as "Wong Brothers Laundry Service: Two Wongs can make it white," and "Abercrombie & Fitch Buddha Bash — Get your buddha on the floor."

According to Abercrombie spokesperson Hampton Carney, the company is sorry and "it is not, and never has been, our intention to offend anyone."

Apparently, the T-shirts were designed to add humor to the new line of clothing. Many of the slogans refer to Asians working in the laundry business or in restaurants. This is not only insensitive, but also in poor taste, as it reflects back to a time in America's not-so-brilliant past when many Asians were only able to find jobs in the laundry and restaurant industry due to discrimination. Abercrombie & Fitch never would dream of slighting the history of the African-Americans and their past enslavement by plastering caricatures of them on shirts with derogatory and insulting slogans. The fact that the company did not hesitate in mocking Asians is a sad testimony to the fact that racism against Asians falls on deaf ears once again. This is only exacerbated by the apparent popularity of the shirts and the public's inability to understand why it is racist.

For the past semester, A&M has dealt with the troubling issue of racism, beginning with the first cartoon of the semester, in much the same fashion as these shirts. The single comic created a cry of outrage, and it is disturbing to see that these shirts have not provoked a similar response by the Asian-Americans on campus. The only difference is the targeted ethnic group. The comic depicted people of African-American heritage in stereotypical fashion. These shirts display people of an Asian background with stereotypical features. Once again, it is almost as if it were acceptable to poke fun at Asians, but, in doing so, it only perpetuates the myth of Asians no longer having to suffer the wrongs of racism.

Students should overcome their adoration for this brand, as evidenced through the "Aggie crombie & fish" shirts, and see the stereotype and understand that it is not tolerable.

While Abercrombie & Fitch did not slight Asians intentionally, it needs to understand that the shirts are not the only reason for the national public outcry. They are only the catalyst for a traditionally-silent group to find its voice and announce that it too has opinions, and it is long overdue for them to be heard.

It is encouraging to see that Asians across the country are rightfully hurt and outraged by this thoughtless marketing ploy. But, it should not only be Asians who are affronted. All people should take offense — it is an insult to humanity. For Abercrombie & Fitch to have the audacity to believe that it can perpetuate stereotypes of any race is frightening and indisputably wrong. The fact that it is mainly Asians fighting this battle is troublesome and tells of people who believe it is acceptable to watch while one group stereotypes another.

Asians have been wronged in the United States before, and despite what Abercrombie & Fitch may believe, two wrongs do not make a right.

Ruby Lee is a sophomore computer science major.

ADRIAN CALCANEO • THE BATTALION

From Russia with love

Mail-order bride industry must be regulated

Mail-order brides are the answer to a bachelor's dream. They are beautiful women looking for love and adventure in America and desperate to leave their countries behind. However, these marriages create more problems than solutions. Marriages between American men and foreign women who are mail-order brides should be regulated by tighter government regulations.



ANDI BACA

The Internet is a haven for Websites, such as A Special Lady, that market hundreds of foreign women available for marriage. They are targeted at American men who can provide money and a U.S. citizenship. A Special Lady advertises loyal, intelligent and beautiful women who are "marriage-minded." The Website says "looks, income and material things are not so important to them." Anastasia King was one of these women. She married Indle Gifford King Jr. and lived with him until her death in 2000. According to Court TV, King recently was sentenced to 29 years in prison for choking Anastasia with a necktie.

Many mail-order marriages create a tense lifestyle as husband and wife discover that their arrangement is less than ideal. After all, these women are marrying men they have never met before and have problems becoming romantically attached to them. Many of these individuals have little in common. A Special Lady advertises a broad range of women, from those who can

speak English to those who can only write it using a dictionary. It offers three-way calling with translators for men who want to call the women. Court TV said King was twice as old as Anastasia. Prior to his marriage to Anastasia, King had been married to another mail-order bride. Yahoo! News said King killed Anastasia because he did not want to pay for another divorce.

Most mail-order marriages are not based on love or commitment, rather on personal gains accompanied by each partner. Women trade love for economic stability and a U.S. citizenship, while men trade money for a partner. Yahoo! News said Anastasia's parents signed her up as a mail-order bride so she could have a life full of opportunities they never experienced. Foreign families see the United States as a way for their daughters to escape poverty and political turmoil. They often are misled and do not consider the safety risks involved in sending their daughters to live with a stranger. Regulations on men are slim and left up to the agency. A Special Lady does not mention any screening tests or questionnaires that men must submit before they search for a bride.

Mail-order brides seem like an easy fix for a life of solitude and an answer for many American men. However, the government should tighten regulations on mail-order brides coming into the United States in order to prevent tragedies such as what happened to Anastasia King.

Andi Baca is a senior journalism major.