

## Not such a hot idea

As the scorching heat of another Texas summer hits campus, students will visit the Student Recreation Center to take full advantage of the swimming pool. Until recently, however, the outdoor pool was scheduled to close for renovation during the summer. Now, thanks to a frenzy of complaints from the student body, Texas A&M decided to postpone renovation to the outdoor pool in the best interest of the students.



ANDI BACA

Closing the outdoor swimming pool was an illogical idea simply because it is summer. Any renovations to the outdoor facility should have been planned for winter months when the pool is closed. The Rec Center would not be in a rush to complete the work because it would be during off-season, when students would use the indoor pools. Students spend all year anticipating relaxing outside by the pool.

Although students may feel that A&M does not consider their opinion as they plan events that affect their lives, this is not the case for the Rec Center pool. Rec Center staff said the dates for renovation were reconsidered because they received so many complaints from students through phone calls and confrontations. Considerations and compromises were made by the staff to accommodate the student body. Each individual complaint made an impact on the decision to close the outdoor pool.

The outdoor facility is used as a social gathering place for some students and organizations. Others swim laps in the pool for exercise. By taking away the availability of the outdoor pool, students felt they would have been cheated out of a popular summer activity.

Student fees cover using the Rec Center facility, including the pool. If A&M had decided to close the pool, the fee should have been pro-rated to compensate students instead of having them pay for a facility that was unavailable. Students may have been more accepting of the renovation plans if they had been given an opportunity beforehand to express their views.

Finding an alternate pool would have been difficult for some students. The closing of the outdoor pool would have made students feel they were at a disadvantage. "If I didn't have the Rec pool, I'd be laying out in my backyard," Dan Prendergast, a senior biology major, said. "You can drag out the hose, but it's just not the same."

Although most apartments have pools for their residents to use, students who live on campus or in a house may not have access to other pools aside from the one at the Rec Center. Students would risk trespassing if they go to an apartment pool where they do not live.

While plans to close the indoor instructional pool Aug. 19 are still underway, thanks to the outcry of complaints from students, they will be able to enjoy their time at the outdoor pool this summer without worry. Now, the outdoor pool will not begin renovation until September 2, 2002, due to both students who were willing to voice their opinions and administrators who were willing to listen.

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ADRIAN CALCANEO • THE BATTALION

## Abercrombie & Fitch too sexy for young kids

Sex sells. This principle has been recognized since the advent of motion pictures, when "peep show" nickelodeons were among the first ever moving picture clips available for viewing. But back in the 1940's, a "peep show" entailed a woman lifting her dress to reveal her bare ankles. Over time, the standards for determining what defines appropriate sexual content have greatly deteriorated.



LINDSYE FORSON

Sexuality in past advertising was based on innuendos. Today, sexual content in advertising has become incredibly blatant. Ad campaigns such as Victoria's Secret's, which depict practically naked models plastered on 30-foot-billboards, or Uncle Ben's commercials featuring a couple lustful for something other than rice, market their products through these techniques unabashedly.

Leading the pack in explicit advertising is clothing company Abercrombie & Fitch. In their latest 2002 "XXX" catalog, it has been reported that 121 of its 280 pages show suggestive photographs which depict sexuality in many different forms, ranging from nudity to near orgies. In addition, the pages that do show clothing advertise clothes that are not for sale. It seems clear that Abercrombie is advertising something, but it certainly is not clothes. Instead, they appear to be advertising a lifestyle. A&F spokesman Hampton Carney said of the catalog, "It's all part of the college experience... a commentary on college life." Has this man spent a day on a college campus?

It does not take a college degree to recognize the irony in a clothing company publishing a magazine where very little clothing is actually worn. This is not to say it does not work. Some people, no doubt, come into the store to buy the magazine, and Abercrombie's young, sexy image is probably due in no small part to its association with this type of magazine.

It may be possible to chalk up Abercrombie's raunchy magazine and other distasteful ads as merely a desperate grab for the attention and discretionary spending of society's youths, but sev-

eral recent incidents suggest that Abercrombie has crossed the line.

For example, A&F has come out with a line of thong underwear that is sold in its Abercrombie Kids' stores, targeting 7 to 14 year-old children. As if selling things to children is not bad enough, printed conspicuously on the underwear are provocative phrases such as "wink, wink" and "eye candy." Objectionable advertising is one thing, but pushing adult sexuality on an innocent 7-year-old child is another.

The most recent thong incident followed Abercrombie's previous debacle, the release of a line of racially insensitive T-shirts. These T-shirts feature phrases such as "Pizza Dojo — Eat in or wok out — You like long time", "Wong Brothers Laundry Service - Two Wongs can make it white", and "Buddha Bash — Get your Buddha on the floor." All of these phrases were accompanied by offensive pictures which personify classic racial stereotypes that Asian-Americans have worked hard to overcome.

Abercrombie & Fitch is, to put it simply, pathetic. They have no pride or respect for themselves or their targeted customers. This company does not give thought to the repercussions that would undoubtedly come if adolescents actually adopted the type of lifestyle they are glamorizing.

Whether parading pictures that entice teenagers to embrace a lifestyle involving sexual promiscuity, exhorting little girls to engage in adult activities, or racially stereotyping an entire people group in order to make a joke, it seems as though Abercrombie would do anything and go to any length to grab the attention of today's teenagers and turn a profit. It is not, however, Abercrombie or their kind who will ultimately decide whether such tactics will succeed and be rewarded. Instead the responsibility lies upon consumers to realize and react to Abercrombie & Fitch's harmful and dehumanizing tactics.

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## Coalition for Life needs new strategy

In recent weeks, the Brazos Valley Coalition for Life has been hard at work trying to block the path of a major women's health resource. While the Coalition still has members who pray outside Planned Parenthood, its sights are set upon the Texas A&M Women's Center, which is seen as a potential threat to the morality of impressionable young adults who enter its doors.



CHRISTY RUTH

The Coalition claims the Center is discriminating against young women who object to abortion, and it finds the material the Center distributes regarding unplanned pregnancy offensive. Unfortunately for the Coalition, this is not something the Board of Regents or the A&M president can wave a magic wand at and change. By directly approaching the vice president of Student Affairs with a petition that can be read at [www.geocities.com/aggiesforlife](http://www.geocities.com/aggiesforlife), the Coalition demonstrated its ignorance of the way the Women's Center works.

While the Center must accommodate students' various needs, the Coalition is overlooking the fact that many of the pamphlets available at the Women's Center promote adoption, abstinence and birth control. Only one pamphlet mentions abortion, and it is a reference to the services offered by Planned Parenthood, which includes abortion and the morning-after pill.

The Women's Center is entirely within its rights by distributing literature regarding birth control, abortion, equality issues and any other relevant issue concerning women. The stance taken in the Coalition's petition appears to be made by people who have never stepped foot in the Center. If they had, they would have noticed that four of the 22 pamphlets offered are devoted to abstinence or adoption. The rest concern breast health, equality or birth control issues.

The Coalition failed to do its homework. If it had, it would know that since the Women's Center is a service branch of a public universi-

ty, Rick Perry is not the final authority on how the law functions. As long as the University accepts grants from the federal government, it falls under their jurisdiction. It is more difficult for public schools to close programs such as the Women's Center than it would be for a private school to close a similar program.

There are certainly students and faculty members who practice abstinence, but even if the majority of students objected to the pamphlets distributed in the Center, they could not legally remove the offensive material by bullying the Center's employees.

Even more upsetting about the path the Coalition has taken is that rather than independently distributing its own information on campus, it wants to interfere with the information provided by the Women's Center. Its arrogant attitude of "we know what is best for you" is insulting at an institution comprised of adults. If the Coalition hopes to protect the student body from information that might contribute to their moral corruption, it has come to the wrong place at the wrong time.

Protesting sex education in high schools might be a better use of the Coalition's time. At least high school students have not reached the age of consent and the government might be more apt to meet the Coalition's demands. As educated adults, students at A&M are expected to make their own decisions and use their own discernment during their time spent here.

If a woman who objects to birth control chooses to go into the Women's Center, all she has to do is avoid that information. There are plenty other reasons for any woman at A&M to go in and see what the Women's Center has to offer. It would be ridiculous for an Alcoholics Anonymous group to petition restaurants which serve alcohol, and it is just as ridiculous for the Coalition to petition the Women's Center.

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