

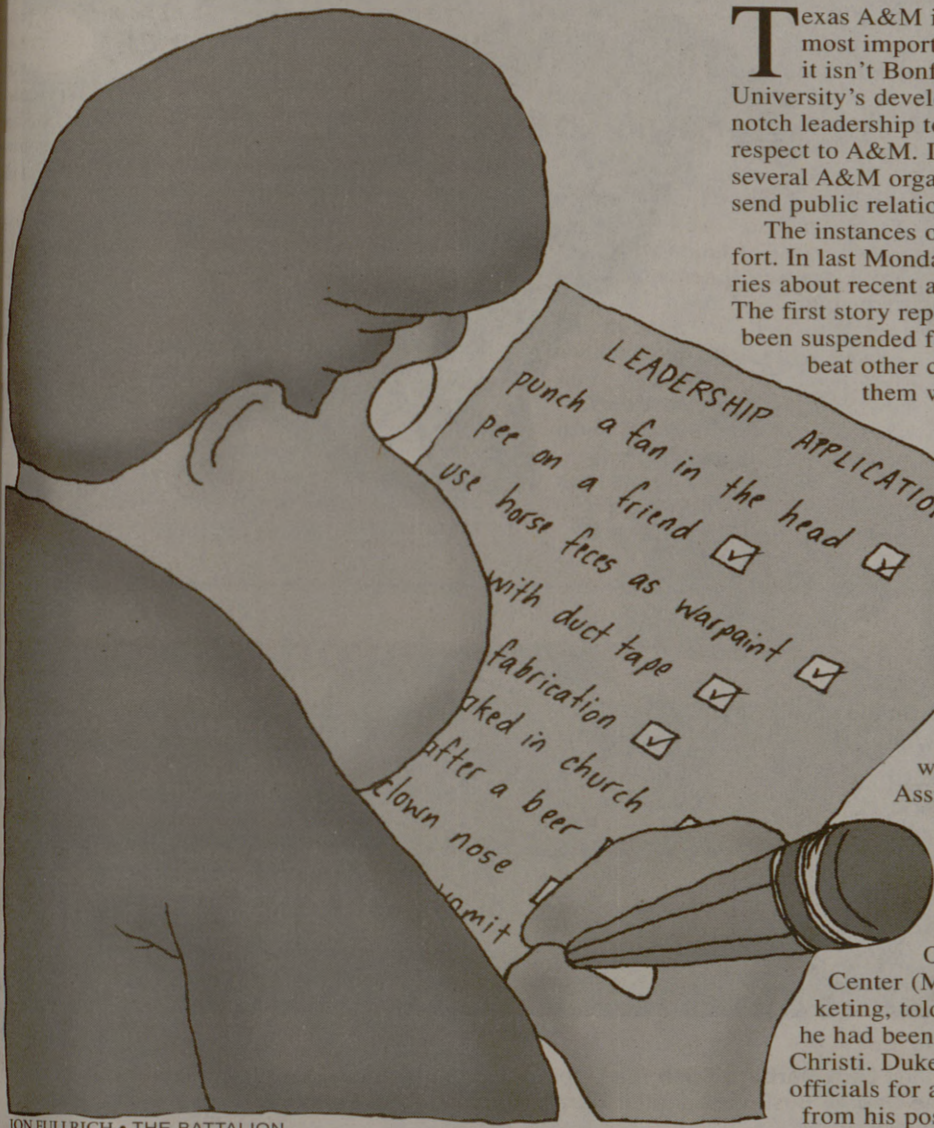
# OPINION

THE BATTALION

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## An embarrassment to their school

Student leaders must consider the impact their actions have on A&M's reputation



JON FULLRICH • THE BATTALION

Texas A&M is losing its single most important tradition, and it isn't Bonfire: it's the University's development of top-notch leadership to bring honor and respect to A&M. In recent weeks, several A&M organizations have struggled with leaders who send public relations officers running for cover.

The instances of poor leadership are too numerous for comfort. In last Monday's *Battalion*, there were two front-page stories about recent alleged transgressions by the Corps of Cadets. The first story reported that the Parsons Mounted Cavalry has been suspended following allegations that some of the cadets beat other cavalry members, urinated on them and doused them with water and horse feces.

The other story reported that a cadet was charged with a Class C misdemeanor after punching a University of Nebraska fan as he ran onto Kyle Field after the Cornhuskers beat A&M's football team. The disorderly conduct charge is punishable by up to a \$500 fine.

The Corps was in the news this summer after photographs were found on the computer server of A&M's yearbook, *The AggieLand*, depicting a man being stripped of his clothes, blindfolded and bound with duct tape. On Oct. 10, *The Battalion* quoted Assistant Director of Student Life Mike Collins as saying 20 members of A-Battery were issued University sanctions, which can range from expulsion to deferred suspension to a warning.

The Corps is not the only organization on campus facing behavioral difficulties. In October, Chris Duke, the Memorial Student Center (MSC) executive vice president for marketing, told police that he had fabricated allegations that he had been carjacked and forced to drive to Corpus Christi. Duke is currently under investigation by University officials for a possible ethics violation and may be removed from his position on the MSC Council.



RICHARD BRAY

Duke's difficulties come one year after former MSC President Josh Rowan resigned following allegations that Rowan drank too much, used illegal drugs and made unwanted sexual advances toward a female student while on a University-sponsored trip to Italy.

Perhaps the most shocking story comes from Tuesday's *Battalion*, which reported that junior information major Brennan Jasper Bice, a Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity member, was arrested after he admitted to secretly videotaping sex with a sorority member and then showing the tape to 15 other fraternity members. Bice was charged with improper photo or visual record with the intent to arouse or gratify, a state jail felony punishable by up to two years in a state jail facility.

The Corps, the MSC and the Greek system are supposed to be producing this University's leaders, but in the process they have been providing A&M with a great deal of negative press. Recent news reports have depicted Aggies as liars, thugs and sexual deviants, and students should expect more from those who represent them.

Members of organizations such as the Corps and the Greek system place themselves in positions of leadership. The Corps prides itself on developing young leaders and the Greek system works to play a role in the community through service projects and similar activities. Just because the members of these organizations have not stepped forward for individual leadership positions does not make them any less responsible for the effects their actions have on A&M's reputation.

Although not all of A&M's leadership has produced embarrassing headlines, there have been too many recent incidents to be ignored. These incidents reflect not only upon the individuals, but the University as well. Regardless of whether such an association is fair or not, it is the responsibility of A&M's student leadership to present this University in the best manner possible, and they simply haven't been doing this recently.

A&M's leadership must realize that their actions affect not only themselves, but those they represent as well. No one else can correct this problem. It is time for A&M's student leaders to take the responsibility their positions require, and improve A&M's reputation rather than damage it.

Richard Bray is a senior journalism major.

## INS needs to toughen up on immigration

Recent miscues involving Haitian immigrants and D.C. snipers display ineptitude

When more than 200 Haitian refugees arrived off the coast of Miami on Oct. 29, they brought with them a renewed debate on the treatment of Haitian refugees.

Moreover, the incident brought attention again to an incompetent Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) that desperately needs reform. This is just the latest in a list of recent events that show a lack of fairness and effectiveness that are crucial to America's security.

A recent *New York Times* article said "Haitians seeking political asylum are held in detention centers pending the disposition of their cases" while all others are deported. However, it is the only nationality to which this policy applies. Cubans, on the other hand, are allowed to stay in the United States as long as they reach American shore.

This presents one of many discrepancies within the immigration system. To be fair, the United States must treat all people the same. However, that is not to say then all of the Haitians should be allowed to stay. Instead, the policy they face

should be applied to all ethnicities.

Every immigrant to the United States should be scrutinized and those who can prove the need for political asylum should be permitted to stay. There are more than five million undocumented immigrants in America, according to New California Media Online. This number will grow so long as the United States allows anyone who arrives to stay, and the Coast Guard neglects to stop hundreds from reaching the shore in broad daylight.

A bigger problem within the INS is its blatant disregard for the law, as seen recently with sniper suspect John Lee Malvo. According to a *Washington Times* article, Border Patrol was called in December 2001, just two months after Sept. 11, regarding a custody dispute between Malvo and his mother. At that time, Malvo's mother admitted they had been illegal alien stowaways on a cargo ship, and Malvo was arrested. With no documentation allowing them to reside legally in the United States, both should have been deported under the law. The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 clearly states that "Illegal alien stowaways are to be detained and deported without hearings." However, Malvo was let go by the Seattle INS district office.

An even more alarming example occurred in March, when INS sent out Visa upgrades to two of the Sept. 11 hijackers, ringleader Mohammed Atta and Marwan al-Shehi. According to the *Miami Herald*, the upgrades were postmarked March 5, 2002 and sent to a Florida aviation school where the terrorists had undergone training to prepare for their mission. Unbelievably, not a single person at INS recognized the names on the files before sending them out six months after the tragedy.

One would believe that in the continuing fight on terrorism, the people who protect this nation's borders were being stricter than ever on who is allowed to live here. This, however, is not true. Instead, in the past year, INS sent visas to dead terrorists who committed the worst attack ever on American soil, permitted another alleged terrorist to live here illegally and most recently displayed their incompetence with the Haitian incident. To protect America, INS must be two things: fair and effective. Recently, it has proven to be neither.

Lindsay Aiello is a sophomore journalism major.



LINDSAY AIELLO

### MAIL CALL

#### Journalist should not approve of censorship

In response to Mark Wood's Nov. 8 column:

I find it strange that Mark Wood, a journalism major, would call for a video game to be banned from sale. What's next? Maybe he would also like the government to control the content of movies, television, books and newspapers. Censorship is a very slippery slope. Freedom of speech applies to all Americans and all forms of media.

James McKenzie  
Class of 2002

#### Parents are responsible for monitoring children

The Nov. 8 articles concerning mature content in video games such as BMX XXX fail to address the real problem. The issue is not that companies are making these games for children, it is that people, parents in particular, are buying these games for children.

While it's a retailer's right to carry what products it may, and stores that sell specifically to children probably should not sell BMX XXX, it falls on the consumers themselves to make the final decisions about what

makes it into their homes.

To blame the companies who make these games or the retailers that sell them is irresponsible. Children are expressly prohibited from buying this game. Therefore, it must be parents who are in the end giving games with this content to their children. Parents need to take responsibility for themselves and their children and do what is required of parents by monitoring what their children do instead of looking to the government or others to do it for them.

The issue really isn't about what products are offered, it is about parents who don't want to take the time to find out what they are buying their children.

Some time ago, it became status quo to blame everyone but yourself for what happens. This is just another example of people shifting blame from themselves to the companies who make BMX XXX for the game affecting children.

Ryan Anderson  
Class of 2003

#### Aggie Ring deadline should be pushed back

When I finally get my Aggie Ring it is going to be bittersweet. Sweet because when I started my undergrad here in 1986 I did not make it to grad-

uation. Therefore, when I graduate this December I will have waited 16 years for my Aggie Ring.

However, it will also be bitter because of what appears to be complete apathy on the part of the Ring Office. As if it isn't bad enough that graduate students have to wait until the day of graduation to order, we now miss the new ring order deadline (Dec. 14) by one week.

I'm sorry if I am the only person who cares that the new ring order deadline is one week before graduation. After all, this just means all graduate students who graduate in December as well as all undergrads who will have enough hours at the end of this semester will have to wait approximately an extra 11 weeks for the next order delivery.

I won't even pretend to know what goes on behind the scenes in the ring office to take orders and make delivery possible, so I'm sure there is some logical explanation as to why we can't delay the deadline one week and save everyone an extra 11+ weeks in waiting for their new ring. However, if at all possible, I would plead on behalf of all of the eligible graduate and undergraduate students to please extend the Aggie Ring order deadline by one week.

Kevin Munkres  
Class of 2002

