

OPINION

THE BATTALION

Page 5B • Thursday, April 25, 2003

EDITORIAL

SAVING JOURNALISM

During the past decade, the journalism department has been dying a slow, painful death as faculty leave and are not replaced and as the last tide of degree-seekers swells the department, taxing classroom space and hurting advising capabilities. As more complications arise within the department, Texas A&M's looming budget cuts have provided an excuse for the College of Liberal Arts to consider eliminating the program altogether.

According to the Vision 2020 Mission Statement, one of the missions is to achieve academic excellence "by which we mean the achievement of national and international prominence through ... facilitation and support of interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary faculties and programs." But if the University seeks to successfully fulfill these goals, the journalism department must not only be saved, but improved. The primary reason for the necessity of its recovery is not the academic standing of A&M, but because students demand the program.

Journalism remains a sought-after degree that provides a well-balanced curriculum as entrance into a preprofessional program or toward a career in the field of mass communications. As America becomes increasingly affixed to the television screen for its daily dose of news, the need for well-trained journalists is evident. Cutting such a vital department from one of the state's flagship schools is dangerous, not only because it leaves Austin no alternative for Aggies who want to be journalists, but because A&M would be left behind in an evolving field.

Students want the program, are interested in the field and desire the degree, but the University denying them of this undermines the central purpose of A&M.

But just saving the program is not enough. The ineffectiveness of the department cannot be denied, but steps should be taken to improve it through the placement of a permanent department head and the restoration of full-time faculty in the numerous positions vacated in recent years. Budget cuts will undoubtedly harm various facets at A&M, but the damage should not include the permanent removal of the journalism department.

THE BATTALION

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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

Abortion is the best option for women

In response to Jerad Najvar's April 24 column:

It saddens me when someone honestly believes that overturning Roe v. Wade will somehow improve upon the sanctity of life in our society.

Overturning Roe v. Wade, Mr. Najvar, is not the way to rid this world of abortion. Like many anti-abortion advocates, you seem to have forgotten what the world was like before safe and healthy abortions were available to women. Have you forgotten about the back-alley abortion?

Do you really think women will not seek out the illegal alternatives if you destroy their right to control their bodies? All overturning Roe v. Wade will accomplish is the return of women dying as a result of a punctured uterus caused by the screwdriver they inserted in their vagina. You will not accomplish your goal of protecting lives by advocating the destruction of safe and healthy abortions.

Women have an essential right to protect their lives, and allowing women access to safe and healthy abortions upholds this right.

Leslie Landis
Class of 2003

Mistakes need to be corrected first

In response to the April 24 editorial:

According to my rough tally, so far this year contributors to The Battalion have misquoted the president of the University, a state senator, and countless students in pursuit of "fierce independence."

Perhaps rather than trying to survive as the first line of defense against a nonexistent tyranny, The Battalion and its editors should first focus on getting the facts straight and keep-

ing their opinions on the opinion page. The relationship between any news organization and the people it serves would be at best symbiotic: the press would be free to report fairly, fully and accurately, leaving the public free to make an informed decision about the matter at hand. As it stands with The Battalion and Texas A&M, the relationship seems rather parasitic: the contributors to The Battalion strive to create turmoil from nothing to serve their own ends, leaving University officials and student organizations exasperated and constantly defending themselves from an unfairly antagonistic press. The Battalion may not have a duty to reflect positively on the University, but it does indeed have a duty to reflect airily and impartially.

William A. Liddell
Class of 2006

More publicity is needed for football

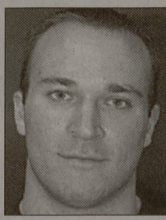
In a discussion with a high school football player's mother, the son was wavering between Texas A&M and University of Oklahoma because of the "BATTLE OF THE RED RIVER" that has given t.u. and Oklahoma so much press and TV time that gives Big 12 hopefuls the impression that these are two schools where players will be noticed more. Texas A&M, on the other hand, has been playing less publicized games causing recruits to not know as much about us. I hope that Coach "Fran" and all others involved read this and understand this fact. A&M needs to set up one or two games against respected teams to gain recruit attention. With that said, not only does the University need to do this but A&M needs to establish itself as a leader and a force to be reckoned with in college football before we lose that recognition we have fought for so many years to gain.

Terri Wood
Class of 1999

SAVING THE ECONOMY

Bush's tax cuts will not help looming recession

Americans have finally stood up against President George W. Bush's failed revival of trickle-down economics. Last week, the Senate denied Bush his plutocrat-tilted tax plan for a scaled down version aimed at immediate economic stimulus.



JUSTIN HILL

Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board Alan Greenspan, in speaking out against the dividend tax cut, could have delivered the prophetic kiss of death in early February when he doubted the stimulative effects of Bush's dividend tax elimination, according to CNNMoney. Americans and some courageous congressmen on both sides of the aisle have joined Greenspan in declaring that a time of war, nation building and ballooning deficits is not the time to push a large, questionable and heavily slanted tax cut on the United States.

Bush came into office with a stalled economy, and claimed to hold the key to its revival with his \$1.8 trillion tax cut. Granted, Bush inherited the tail end of a slightly inflated economic boom, but the current state of the economy is inexcusable.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, since Bush took office, unemployment has risen 43 percent, 2.7 million people have become unemployed with 2.4 million coming from the private sector and the Clinton legacy 4.2 percent unemployment rate has gone up to 5.8 percent. Bush is actually the only president to post an average monthly job loss since the Bureau began keeping statistics in 1939. No longer can he pin the blame on Clinton. His tax cuts have been in place for more than two years, and America is still in an economic recession.

Since jobs do not wholly represent the health of the economy, one might look at the stock market since more than half of the United States is now invested. The Wall Street Journal reported that investors have lost \$2.8 trillion since Bush's inauguration and the Dow, S&P 500 and Nasdaq have all fallen more than 15 percentage points. Along with jobs and the stock market being in the toilet, America's federal deficit is in the red for the first time since 1997 while the Bush administration condescendingly refers to Rubinomics as baseless and ineffective.

Bush has proven many things since tak-



ing office. He has proven that he is not as inept as many believed. He proved he could console and lead the country after a tragedy. He has shown great political skill and has easily installed many aspects of his agenda for the United States, all with a closely divided Congress. Currently, he is proving that he can proceed down a road of foreign policy that is divisive and exploratory at best. He has also proven he cannot responsibly steer the economy into growth and progress.

Former President George Bush earned a superior resume and a longer list of accomplishments than his son throughout his career but found out quickly that a failing economy is the albatross on the neck of a floundering president. Bush used his pseudo-mandate of election in 2000 to push his massive tax cuts, which were overwhelmingly tilted to the hyper-rich to avoid a one-term presidency. Those tax cuts have put Americans deeper in debt and economic stimulation is still unseen.

The current White House has proven its incompetence in maintaining a healthy economy and has chosen to pursue an agenda to help its donors and corporations it is in cohorts with. The talk of short-term stimulus has obviously not been the practical aim of the administration. The reduction of the burden on the working class has been overlooked. It has chosen to focus tax adjustments on the upper brackets of the U.S. progressive tax system while overlooking the most regressive tax in the United States, the payroll tax.

The Bush economic plan centers on

corporate welfare, tax rebates to the richest 1 percent of Americans and corporate investor incentives in a blurred quest for economic stimulation. Bush is still advocating what his father referred to as "voodoo economics." One could argue that it succeeded under Reagan, although the wealth distribution under Reagan was so skewed it resembled the early 1900s wealth stratification.

Furthermore, Bush is reigning in a new era of corporate excesses by allowing the corporate and industry executives to completely govern themselves. Corporations are given discretion over their polluting and pollution controls, labor unions have stricter financial disclosure rules than corporations such as Enron and America's energy plan now includes controlling the oil resources of other countries in "trust."

U.S. priorities have faded and America's direction is sketchy. No matter what ideology one claims, the United States is in dire need of an economic jump-start that confronts corporate crime, workers rights and the environment. So far this administration has succeeded in cloaking the issues most Americans hold paramount in war and a constant state of fear. It might be time for the administration to swallow its pride and start tackling the burgeoning deficit and disappearing middle class because its tax cuts have proven they are not the paths to economic prosperity.

Justin Hill is a junior management major.
Graphic by Ruben DeLuna.

Genocide must be recognized

(U-WIRE) STANFORD, Calif. — In 1915, 1.5 million Armenian citizens of Ottoman Turkey perished.

Mass death in World War I was no anomaly, of course. Had foreign attackers massacred these Armenians as part of the wider war, historians might show thrift in spilling ink to describe near-extinction of a lesser-known race of farmers and merchants. Had plague or famine broken out, 1.5 million Armenians lost would be as inconsequential to humanity's collective consciousness as apparently are the million Eritreans who died between 1984 and 1985 from war-related famine. But for the 1.5 million fallen Armenians, invaders and pestilence cannot be blamed. Thursday, April 24, is Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day, so named because Armenians' own Turkish brethren were the butchers.

Among forms of mass death, systematic genocide evoke exceptional sympathetic remembrance. The Holocaust, the Khmer Rouge's Cambodian killing fields, the 1992 Bosnian atrocities, the 1994 Rwandan Genocide and the Kurds in modern-day Turkey, all evidence this general principle. But this axiom of global recollection does not hold for the

forgotten Armenians.

That we lack recollection of the Armenians is not an accidental by-product of history's unkind whirlwind. Rather it stems from active suppression by Turkey. Even now, 88 years later, Turkey disputes that "genocide" — systematic, widespread, ethnically motivated killings — occurred. It debates scores of eyewitness and survivor accounts of horrors that spattered the Anatolian plateau in tears, misery and blood. It denigrates the extensive documentation of organized tortures, murders, rapes, beatings and property seizure. It denies Armenians were crucified alive on the doors of village churches. It dismisses as mirages the countless columns of Armenians shepherded at fixed bayonet point without food or water to their collapse into the searing Syrian Desert.

Instead, I want to tell you about my great-grandparents, Mike and Dorothy Gibilian. Mike, to avoid certain death, was hidden by sympathetic neighbors and bribed his way out of the country on a transport ship. The same day, Turkish gendarmes bayoneted Dorothy's two infant boys before her eyes, then captured and forced her extended family on a death march for hun-

dreds of miles into Syria. Only she survived. Mike and Dorothy reunited after six years apart. For Armenians, their tale is among the happiest from 1915.

Friday some of my Stanford University Turkish friends will respond unfavorably to this essay, as they have in past years. They will explain that an Armenian archmage and his fabricating wand are at it once more, waving up a fairy tale portrayal. The response predictably will brim with annoyance and exasperation at my words. But what we will not read in this response is a direct rebuttal of my family's suffering, for no one can deny that truth. And if you ask any other Armenian whose family lived in Turkey in 1915, each will offer a similar truth. Collectively, humanity rightfully calls these truths "genocide."

So, my Turkish friends, before you rush to set enraged ink to page, please realize that an 88th year of general recriminations is not the appropriate response to my family's tale. Please understand another year of unfounded general denials helps only to send the Gibilian's truth to history's backwaters, something any student at a university so

renowned as this one could possibly tolerate in our mutual pledge of objectivity. Please consider that our joint failure to come to proper common understanding about the Gibilians is akin to declaring their lives irrelevant, to metaphorically stomping upon their tragic graves, to a willful closure of our eyes to truth, however unpleasant it may be.

This year, the Armenian Genocide reaches its 88th mark without Turkish affirmation. The perpetrators have perished, the victims vanished, the memories faded. Truth will not live if only the powerless have the strength to shoulder it. Turkey has the power to change all this, to set things right for all time. Acknowledgment of now-distant wrongs is not weakness — it is the magnificent evolution of Turkish society.

It is the strength to overcome ancestors' fallibility and heralds a day when we Armenians and Turks — brothers and sisters of the same ancient mother Anatolia — live, laugh and embrace harmoniously again. I look forward to that day on this Remembrance Day.

Chris Guzelian is a columnist at Stanford University.