

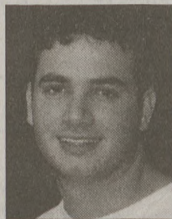
# FORUM

THE BATTALION

Page 4B • Thursday, February 19, 2004

## Cultures must be accepted

Many students tend to attach labels and stereotypes to international students. These preconceived notions are often judgments of others' appearance, customs and beliefs. We live in a society where such stereotypes are extremely hard to overcome. In the United States, we claim to live in an indivisible nation; however, the reactions of some to events such as Sept. 11 proves otherwise. We must not mistreat individuals simply because they resemble those who acted against us. It is our duty to strive for a better world where discrimination of no kind is accepted. As Aggies, we pursue an individual education, surrounded by traditions that unite us into one big family. It can be difficult to get acclimated in the American culture. International students experience a variety of feelings and reactions after they arrive in the United States. These feelings vary from long lasting euphoria to acute depression. But, when arriving in a welcoming environment, most do tend to get acquainted with the "new" culture more rapidly and comfortably. As Aggies, we should try to always provide a happy and welcoming place for internationals. Together we must work to change our campus' environment to a better place where we will judge and be judged by the content of our character rather than our skin color, clothing or beliefs.



JULIO JANA

Stereotypes are indeed hard to overcome. They exist, in this case, due to the lack of understanding of other cultures. We are fortunate to be part of an institution that strives for diversity and unites more than 120 countries as the Texas A&M student body. Emphasizing demonstrations and incentives such as the recent March for Diversity show international students that they are welcome and that Aggies are reaching out to them rather than making judgments based on where they come from. To further support international awareness among us, the International Student Association is proudly sponsoring an entire week of events to expose the many cultures represented here at the University. The affair will target all audiences, especially those who wish to overcome cultural stereotypes, by personally experiencing the art and individuality of various cultures. During the first week of March, events such as the talent show, Dress Parade, International Buffet and Cultural Display will be the main channel of communication used by international students to reach out to the community in an attempt to share their cultures and hopefully break down wrongful stereotypes. For more information on about International Week, please visit: [www.tamu.edu/isa](http://www.tamu.edu/isa). ISA has brought and will continue to bring students together, promoting respect and international awareness for all.

Julio Jana is a junior agricultural economics major.

## Snapshot served no purpose for students

In response to Evan O'Connell's Feb. 17 photograph:

I am disappointed with the inappropriateness displayed in the photograph shown. It was unnecessary and served no useful purpose to students of Texas A&M to see a picture of the police officer carrying the weapon with which he was killed. That is not the Aggie way of being respectful to a fellow student who passed away, regardless of the cause, or means used. Christopher will and should be honored with the same regards as every other student who has passed away. Please remember that while it may be The Battalion's responsibility to report the news, it is also the responsibility to be mindful of appropriateness of pictures included with the articles.

Katy Robertson  
Class of 2004

## Photograph portrayed situation accurately

Authors of Feb. 18 mail calls suggesting that The Battalion was insensitive to have shown a picture of a wrapped weapon being carried away from the Southside garage are unjust.

It is sad and disheartening that Christopher Lawler chose to take his own life, but the picture shown is a vivid truth of the reality that it depicts. To show a picture of a bright and lively individual would not be true to the incident.

The Battalion should not be criticized for its betrayal of reality if for no other reason than the deterrent factor that this picture and pictures like it present. It sends a message to others who would err in suicide that your actions will be shown to be as they are — unflattering, debasing and cowardly.

Furthermore, The Battalion article itself reached out to those who may have been harmed psychologically by Lawler's death. Those who say The Battalion has a lust for

## MAIL CALL

morbidity must have overlooked the large front-page picture of Girl Scouts and the articles on diversity, Barbara Bush and scholarships. If the Aggie Family really wanted to support those who need it during this difficult time, they would do best to divert their energies from whining to consoling the bereaved and reaching out to those who might end up with a picture of their own demise on the front page.

Dalton Vann  
Class of 2002

## Morbid image was taken out of context

The Battalion's coverage of Christopher Lawler's death was not inappropriate in any way. The decision to use the photo of the police officer carrying the firearm used by Lawler was not in bad taste.

Would one accuse his local news station of immoral reporting if it aired footage of a murder scene swarming with squad cars and bound in police tape? I think not. Did the same Aggies who wrote in complaining about the cover photo find it absurd that newspapers across the globe showed the knife from the O.J. Simpson murder case in their pages? I think not.

The Battalion is doing its job. The photos used for Lawler's death and the deaths of previous Aggies depict the awful truth of suicide: It happens, and it can happen on our streets and in our residence halls. The Battalion's job is not to paint a pretty picture of Aggieland, and it does not have a "lust for morbidity." If anything, I'd think our paper has a lust for serving Aggies truthfully and reporting the news.

Aaron Alford  
Class of 2005

## Diamond Darlings should support team

I came back to College Station last weekend for the opening weekend of Aggie Baseball, and I was severely dis-

appointed. Not with the team, the team did awesome. I wasn't even disappointed with the weather ... well, maybe a little bit, but at least it was dry. I was disappointed with the Diamond Darlings.

After the final game of the weekend, as we exited Olsen Field, the Diamond Darlings were stationed at the gates to "hand out promotional items" (as stated as one of their duties on the sports.tamu.edu Web site) in the form of posters: posters of the Diamond Darlings. Correct me if I'm wrong, but isn't the purpose and mission of the Diamond Darlings to promote Aggie Baseball? Then why in the world were you handing out posters with pictures of yourselves on them?

Granted, it did have the baseball schedule printed on it, but it was barely noticeable if one wasn't looking for it. I didn't drive more than four hours from Corpus Christi to sit in 30 degree weather and yell until I lost my voice to see the Diamond Darlings. I came back to Aggieland to see the baseball team beat the hell outta TAMU-Corpus Christi.

Christy Chan  
Class of 2002

## Wohlgemuth is the candidate for Aggies

In response to Anthony Woolstrum's Feb. 11 article:

I choose Wohlgemuth, an Aggie mom, for Congress.

Wohlgemuth has appeared on Texas Monthly's top 10 best legislators list for helping balance the state budget with no tax increase. Wohlgemuth saved the state \$1.1 billion as the state legislature was trying to get rid of a \$9.9 billion budget shortfall.

In addition to being an effective conservative legislator, Wohlgemuth is no stranger to Texas A&M. She has two daughters and a son-in-law who have graduated from here. She understands the values and traditions that make this university great.

Logan Renrow  
Class of 2005

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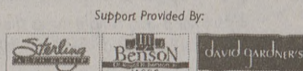
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