

FORUM

THE BATTALION

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University traditions are most important

When walking around Northside, it is not uncommon to see students walking around in shirts that read "No Frats." And many members of the "close-knit" community feel that fraternities and sororities are diluting the Aggie Spirit by not putting Texas A&M's traditions foremost in their group. However, if the same discerning eye was turned back onto many residence hall groups, a compelling hypocrisy would be revealed.



CHRIS MAHAFFEY

Many fraternities, sororities and the like celebrate their own traditions that are not associated with A&M, such as singing songs and memorizing famous names from the group's history. In a similar fashion, most halls have their own yells and traditions, which date back a number of years. The fact that both sets of groups possess such traditions is not a bad thing, but when these traditions trump the traditions of A&M, it tears the Aggie Spirit apart.

According to the 1933-34 YMCA-sponsored "Student's Handbook," an Aggie, among other things, "learns the college songs and yells as soon as possible." Many Northside residents are quick to criticize other Aggies for not learning our songs and yells, and, to some extent, they are right; if we wish to preserve A&M for future Aggies, we must do our best to learn the yells and songs that have been shouted and sung on this campus for so many years.

However, many of these students, in the same breath used to criticize Greeks for not putting A&M first, will take an Aggie song or yell and add the name of their hall or a string of epithets. Surely, the A&M students of the 1930s, the first classes to be referred to as Aggies,

would rather an Aggie be at a fraternity party than defile timeless songs of Aggie pride with egocentric, boastful or vulgar statements.

Another criticism often heard is that a majority of those involved with fraternities and sororities do not attend traditions such as Midnight Yell Practice. And while a lack of participation in our most celebrated traditions is by no means excusable, some of the Aggies critical of others for skipping yell practice choose to stumble to yell practice, reeking of booze, on the border of illegal intoxication.

As an A&M student at yell practice, we are representing the University to all families, guests and media present, and frankly, I would rather have Aggies not participate than participate in a state of mind and body that is embarrassing to fellow Aggies. I would imagine that the first Aggies would agree.

Some halls and Corps of Cadets outfits have the right idea. Most halls focus intensely on teaching basic A&M traditions, the yells and the songs to the freshmen in their halls before the first yell practice. The Corps works diligently to ensure that its fish know a number of facts about Texas A&M.

The yell leaders also are holding fast to tradition. I will never forget the Arch Yell last year when people were deviating from the prescribed yell and a yell leader was quick to reprimand them, telling them to do the yell correctly.

The attitude of these spirited Aggies is the one that has preserved our traditions thus far and will continue to save them for future Aggies. As for the others: Forgive me for not being able to discern lack of spirit defined by lack of participation from a lack of spirit defined by selfish, immature motives.

Chris Mahaffey is the president of the Residence Hall Association.

"Surely, the A&M students of the 1930s... would rather an Aggie be at a fraternity party than defile timeless songs of Aggie pride with egocentric, boastful or vulgar statements."

MAIL CALL

Terrorists think they are right too

In response to Mike Walters' April 20 column:

The column sounds great and impulsive though it is a myopic vision. If the author quotes "Doing right thing is often a lonely..." the same strategy or policy is being used by the enemy too.

It doesn't sound pleasing but if we could look at it from the terrorist's point of view, definitely he thinks the same. He is very sure of what he is doing and also thinks that what he is doing is the right thing. So, the people who are fighting for terrorism would act according to the same ideology as the people who are for fighting terrorism. Let us give a thought to it if only Iraq was as big as America.

Secondly, if Uncle Sam is supposed to be one of the most rationally-thinking nations in today's world, and if he wants other nations in the world to revere the United Nations for whatever decision it makes, then he should take care of his part and act accordingly. That is the way other nations should look up to the United States.

Srihari Vempati
Graduate Student

NASA deserves the money it gets

In response to an April 21 mail call:

Is spotting asteroids really all you need NASA for? I suppose then that you never use computers, tin foil, or saran wrap. You've never seen the benefit of heart monitors, night vision cameras, or solar power. You don't bother with weather forecasts, cell phones or any sort of

long-distance communication at all. Even the most esoteric astronomical data helps refine our knowledge of physics and help create stronger alloys and plastics and faster computer chips.

Compare the amount of money spent on the space program to the amount Americans spend getting their hair styled or on alcohol. You'll find it's barely anything at all, and the space budget gets slashed all the time. Never mind that every dollar spent in space comes back seven times over in spinoff technologies and new jobs.

Hunger, poverty, and overpopulation have been problems for a long time. They aren't going to go away, and waiting until they're gone before doing anything else means nothing else will get done. However, space exploration has brought about massive improvements in quality of life even for the poorest, and can be used in many ways to hold back overpopulation, protect the environment and bring back limitless supplies of metal ores without requiring strip mining or risking using up the earth's resources.

Eric Aley
Class of 2003

Space exploration serves a purpose

The Mars mission and exploration in general is of monumental importance and foundation to the continuing evolution of American and global society.

NASA has a huge influence on the future of communication. Lets start with your TV, which I'm sure you admire more than say, Neil Armstrong, even though you two have a lot in common being that you both love sitting there staring into empty space. Satellites play a huge role in broadcast television, not to mention your cell phone.

Made possible only by NASA. So what can planetary exploration do for you, Mr. Obama? Well, by the middle of the century nuclear energy without waste will be made possible using helium-3 mined from the moon. Enough fuel to power the entire United States grid for a year supplied by a mere 100 tons of helium-3 delivered once a year. Think the money you'll save by making you and your quality richer everyday and is an enriching investment. Back on Earth, your alarm's going off because you burned another batch of cheese. Seems NASA just your life yet again.

Political cartoon all about president

I've always been a fan of political cartoons whether with or against my political party. Since The Battalion has been naming Mike Luckovich's cartoons have been less than humorous. out of ten of them beat the dead horse: Bush and his takes" with 9-11 and Luckovich has redrawn this so many times that I can see money on what tomorrow's will be. What about the events taking place in the USA Today ran five political today, and only one of them tered on Bush. There are major events occurring, in saying that this cartoon should be completely discontinued, but haps The Battalion should another artist's work Luckovich fails to come up new material.

Doug Haskovec
Class of 2005

Are You Getting Your Aggie Ring Today?



The Aggie Ring is a treasure. This Ring symbolizes pride, tradition, and honor. This Ring represents your hard work and connection to the Aggie Family.

When you place This Ring on your finger, you will stand as an ambassador of Texas A&M University.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Today is a day to celebrate! While you celebrate, we encourage you to do so responsibly to ensure your safety and the safety of your fellow Aggies.



Matt Josefy
Student Body President

Jack Hildebrand
Student Body President-Elect

Kelli Hutka '97
Director of Campus Programs
The Association of Former Students

Linda K. Hill
President
Federation of TAMU
Mother's Clubs

RAD
Responsible Aggie Decisions
Office of Greek Life
Collegiate Panhellenic Council

AOLP
Aggie Orientation
Leader Program

CARPPOOL
CARRYING AGGIES & PROTECTING OVER OUR LIVES
693-9905

STUDENT LIFE
Alcohol & Drug Education Program

THE CHOICE IS UP TO YOU
MAKE RESPONSIBLE DECISIONS