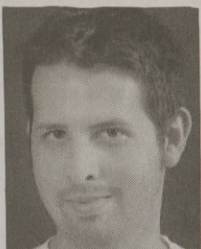


Too abstract for Aggieland

New modern art on campus will take away from traditional campus atmosphere



MIKE WALTERS

The figure stands frozen in a moment of intense strength and focus, his hands gripping a chain wrapped around a steel pipe as if they were the reigns of a powerful beast he was taming. The roughneck statue in front of the Petroleum Engineering building celebrates a theme that can be appreciated by the future scientists and engineers walking class on that side of campus — man conquering nature with the ease and confidence that comes with the proper knowledge that Aggies seek in their education and growth at this University.

Perhaps the best thing about great art is that viewing it can give one a concrete sense of values, beliefs and emotions, renewing one's strength by seeing something of beauty that the viewer may relate to. Statues on campus like The Roughneck can give a tired Aggie a refreshed resolve on hard weeks of testing and stress, with the silent reminder of the strength and beauty that is possible in man.

Sadly, there are Aggies who don't understand this sentiment. Elizabeth Jurewicz, chair of the MSC Visual Arts Committee, believes abstract sculptress Rita Blitt should be the artist to spread art awareness throughout campus. However, Aggies should reject such abstract twists of metal as the kind of art that embodies the spirit of Aggieland, and refuse to allow them on our beautiful campus.

"Any type of art, especially art that's abstract and different, that causes people to think, will be very influential on a campus that is isolated from those kinds of influences," Jurewicz told *The Battalion*. Her statement echoes an idea that is sadly common — that art is the most interesting and special when it's abstract and conveys no solid meaning.

In the same article in *The Battalion*, Jurewicz was reported as saying her committee wanted to bring "more abstract" sculptures to campus, "Unlike other statues ... such as the Victory Eagle at Cain Park."

It's wrong to think that different always means better. The Victory Eagle was donated by the class of 1991 as "a perpetual symbol of the Aggie spirit." The eagle has always represented America as a symbol of freedom, strength and independence, which are common values that Aggies share as young soldiers, scientists, doctors and scholars.

It's probably not a coincidence that people like Jurewicz wish to have something different from a statue like the Victory Eagle — they don't understand it. It represents values that are unfor-

tunately becoming extinct on this campus along with Bonfire.

Journalist and historian Hendrik Willem Van Loon once said "the arts are an even better barometer of what is happening in our world than the stock market or the debates in Congress." The loss of appreciation for traditional Aggie values is showing in the Visual Arts Committee's choice for new campus artwork.

Make no mistake, there is merit in change. Allowing "non-reg" students and women to attend Texas A&M were steps forward in the school's history. But forgetting why classic statues are important, and the principles they represent is unforgivable.

This school will only go downhill if we throw away values that are shown in the hard lines of our realistic statues. By favoring the haphazard forms and meaningless shapes of abstract art simply because it's a social trend, we sacrifice what it means to be an Aggie.

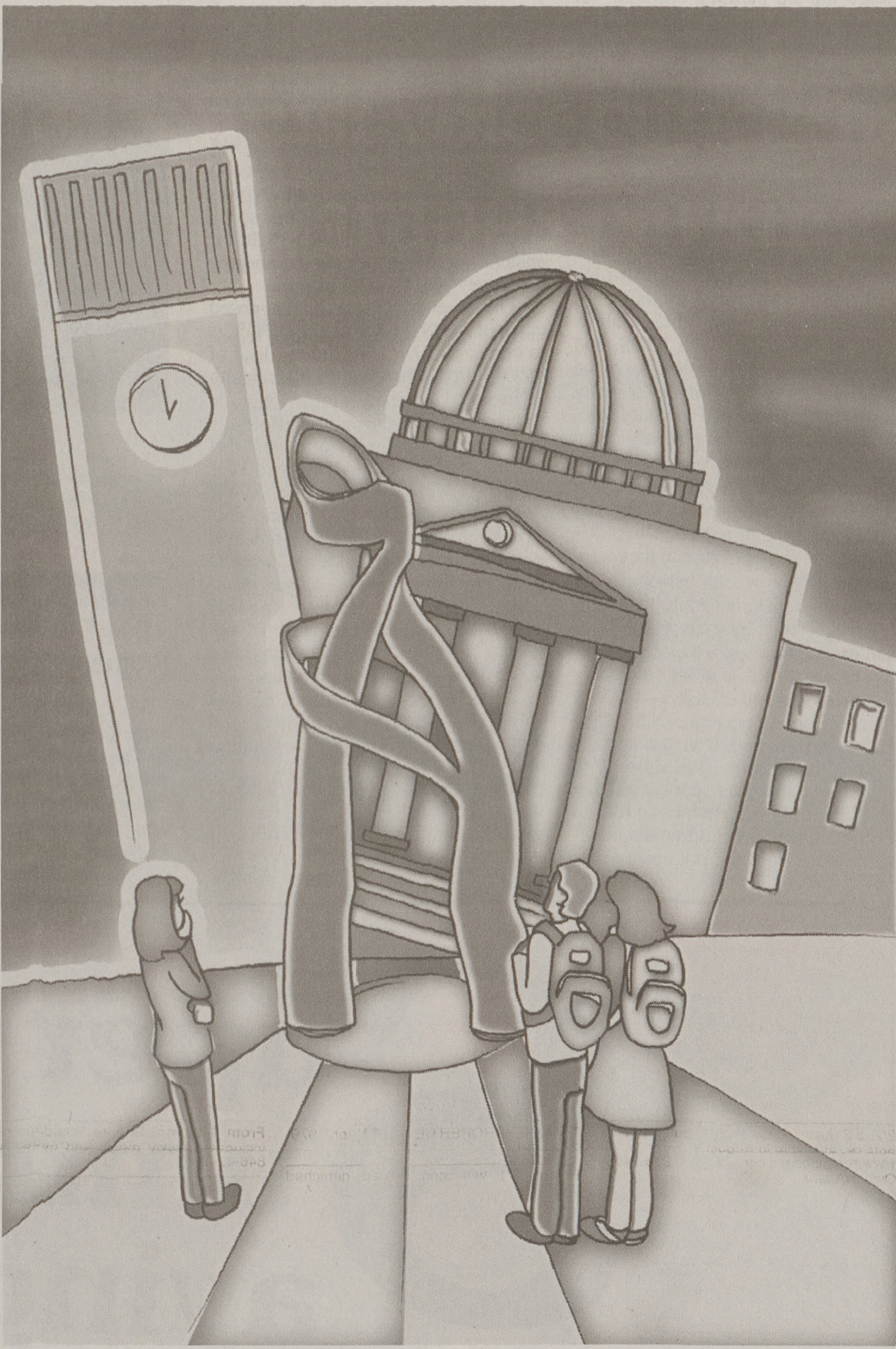
The school's push to be the "Harvard of Brazos County" at any cost — from the racism of new admissions policies to the destruction of a relaxing Flag Room in favor of yet another tired study area — there is part of the Aggie spirit that's rapidly disappearing. Aggies should try to remain proudly distinct rather than try to "go with the crowd." It's contradictory to try to achieve distinction as a top university by being like every other school.

A&M has represented an distinctive characteristic called the Aggie Spirit. Aggies lead the world into battle against terrorism and tyranny. A&M scientists paved the way in the human exploration of genetics with our cloning projects, and many Aggies have gone on to become politicians such as Texas Gov. Rick Perry. Our heroism, individualism and determination is world famous.

So what kind of art awareness is most appropriate to Aggies? The twisted guesswork of Blitt's sculptures, or art that captures the Aggie spirit in the form of a soaring eagle or a rugged oil worker?

Installation of the two sculptures at Cain Park and by the Kleberg Center will be complete by Sept. 1. If Aggies prize the spirit of our traditions, they should take one look at the silly forms and say, "No thanks." Aggies must not give in to the mindless duplication of other universities and artistic traditions. There's nothing wrong with being different — in fact, Aggies should be proud to be so.

Mike Walters is a senior psychology major. Graphic by Gracie Arenas



MAIL CALL

Local business not part of Rock the Vote

Rock the Vote is a non-profit, non-partisan organization developed to encourage young adults to vote. Rock the Vote engages young adults in the political process by incorporating the entertainment community and youth culture into its activities. Rock the Vote does not support or participate in any individual electoral campaigns. The "Rock the Vote" slogan and logo was trademarked in 1990. This summer the City of College Station adopted MTV's Rock the Vote Program. We at Rock the Vote look forward to bringing our nation-wide campaign to your college town, uniting the vitality of music culture with the renowned Aggie spirit.

New York Sub is selling presidential campaign T-shirts displaying the Rock the Vote slogan on their front. The use of the slogan has not been approved by MTV or Rock the Vote National. As representatives from the College Station Rock the Vote Street Team we ask that you not associate this abuse of our slogan to our organization. If you would like to learn more about how to get involved with Rock the Vote College Station, please contact your local Community Street Team Leader, Marcella Colbert, at marcella_colbert@yahoo.com or check out our Web site at: www.rockthevote.com. More about our events will be available in your local businesses and via *The Battalion*.

Marcella Colbert
MTV Rock the Vote

McCain-Feingold Act is beneficial

In response to Eric Brown's July 26 column:

"It is a sad fact that the government has come to the point where it must regulate the amount of money that can be donated or spent by individuals, special interest groups and unions." I couldn't agree more. But the realization of the aforementioned fact coupled with the claim that soft money should still be left unregulated is even more heart wrenching. Your contradictions are very disturbing. Here's another:

"These politicians often forget why they are here: to represent the interests of their constituents." Is this referring to the politicians who refuse soft money and refuse to sell out to special interests? Or is it referring to the politicians who are solely dependent on special interest funding for election? Leaving special interests unregulated guarantees their rise to the helm of American politics and, consequently, the voice of the people goes unnoticed. Politicians can then ignore the concerns of constituents as long as they act accordingly to the wishes of the special interests. McCain-Feingold is a bold step in the right direction. Grass roots campaigning is what it's all about so I suppose I'll end with this: McCain-Feingold in 2008 - you can bet your bottom dollar they won't sell out

Brad Brewer
Class of 2006

Students must voice concern over West Campus parking

Texas A&M faces an endless dilemma: There are only about 34,000 parking spaces and more than 45,000 students, as well as faculty, staff and visitors trying to park in them. The frustration this formula adds up to has created a great animosity between students and Transportation Services that runs rampant across campus. The attitude is not unfounded; TS rarely seems as if it is making policies that are in the best interest of students.



KRISTINA BUTLER

A recent example of such a policy is the new pre-pay system in parking area 72, a parking lot near Wehner and that is frequently used by those studying late at the West Campus Library. The new system requires people who park in the lot to first decide how long they plan to be there and then pay for that amount of time. If life were predictable, this system would work well. Since this is an imperfect world, full of classes that run late and tests that get out early, the system has only fueled the frustration felt by many students into an even bigger flame.

The most apparent problem with the pre-pay system is the inability for students to predict how much time they will need to park on campus.

"I don't like (the new system). You don't know how long you're going to be here," said senior accounting major Colin Baker.

Students may plan on staying on campus for an hour and a half, but whether they need to meet with

a professor after class or they run into a friend, something is bound to hold them up at one time or another. If someone parked in lot 72 doesn't make it back to the car in time, he will find a \$40 ticket on his car.

In addition, problems could arise if a student's professor decided to cancel class. A student who has already paid money to park in the lot for two hours will not get a refund when he gets back to his car 15 minutes later.

The lot would be much better served as a commuter lot for students who take all their classes in Wehner.

Unfortunately, TS isn't coming up with solutions that would work best for all parties involved. Rodney Weis, director of TS, said the issue is a need for visitor parking on West Campus.

While visitors obviously need places to park, too, students who are on campus every day should be TS' primary concern. If the West Campus Parking Garage is too far to make visitors walk, some of the parking lot should be allocated to 30-minute parking or paid parking and the rest to permit holders. This idea is obviously feasible, since previously some of the parking lot was allocated to faculty permit holders and the rest was for paid parking.

To solve the bigger problem, an improvement is needed in the communication between students and TS. The perception among many students is that TS is out

to get them, which is actually far from the truth. When students have a problem with the TS' parking policies, they are more likely to do nothing and complain about it than find out the reasoning behind the policy. Students must voice their complaints to allow positive changes to be made in their favor.

TS says that it is willing to work with students' complaints either by fixing the problem or explaining why they can't. Weis has only received four e-mails regarding parking area 72, even though there seems to be a much greater student population that is disgruntled with the change. He said he has personally responded to each e-mail. Students who are inconvenienced by the new policy must speak up.

Weis said that TS would be willing to make changes when problems occur.

"We're going to keep evaluating it, we're going to keep analyzing it, looking at it and certainly as the technology changes and we're allowed to do more for the customer, we're going to do that," Weis said.

Students must put aside their frustrations with TS and instead, initiate changes by taking action. If there really is a problem like the one in parking area 72, it will not get changed unless students take their parking fate into their own hands.

“Unfortunately, TS isn't coming up with solutions that would work best for all parties involved.”

Kristina Butler is a senior journalism major.



MIKE LICKOICH