

OPINION

Tuition increases in Texas inevitable

When students return to college this fall, we will face significant tuition increases which will affect us all. Exactly how significant those increases will be is not yet known.

The Texas House of Representatives approved a bill Tuesday that would raise college tuitions in Texas, beginning Fall 1985. But the bill still faces tough opposition in the Senate.

Tuition costs and the state budget have been a major focus of the legislature this year. We've known a tuition hike was coming; it is inevitable. The question is how much of an increase will there be, and exactly what will it mean to resident and nonresident students.

Under the bill, tuition for Texas residents would double next year and increase slightly every year until 1990. But even with the increase, Texas residents still would be paying one of the ten least expensive in-state tuitions in the nation.

However, tuition for nonresident students would increase drastically — making it the most expensive in the nation.

On the brighter side, the bill would set aside 25 percent of Texas tuition dollars for student financial aid.

The Battalion Editorial Board hopes the Senate will pass this bill. The money raised from the tuition hikes would enable the Legislature to continue funding state colleges and universities at, or close to, the present level of funding.

Without a doubt, these tuition hikes would make a heavy impact on many students — all nonresident students, for example — but budget cutbacks could have a much more devastating effect on higher education in Texas.

So instead of moaning about the inevitable, maybe you should prepare for the future and rework your academic budget.

The Battalion Editorial Board

Dreaming, experiencing other worlds part of writing

I remember the time when, as a little boy, I consciously discovered imagination. I was swinging in the back yard and was mad at my sister. I pumped my legs hard, wanting to fly away — it didn't matter where. I went faster and faster until the squeak of the chains holding my swing was a constant. Suddenly, I screamed out the pent-up fury that only a very young child can experience and I was free. I was flying. The blue of the sky was my ride to a world that was happy and where I was king.



Shawn Behlen

That was the greatest realization of my life: that I could escape everyone else's reality and create my own.

As I grew older, I turned to writing. It allowed me to share my various worlds of thought and make people think as I did and feel as I did. It was a game of infinite possibilities that had no ending. It made me feel powerful and I loved it. I passed through school hearing friends refer to me as "the writer." Some said it seriously and with care. Others used it as a goad, smiling inwardly with a tease in their voice and a mock in their stance. Either way, it was a difference that I cherished. I came to college and ended up in journalism, determined to find out whether I could turn my love of writing into a career.

But with seeming cruelty, journalism

taught me a lesson. No other occupation deals with reality as does journalism. I had to forsake my private worlds and step forward with facts. I was heartbroken, deciding that journalism was nothing more than a bastardization of true writing. But I was wrong. As usual, the hardest lessons are the best.

I learned discipline — that cruelest of skills. Words such as terseness and sparsity took on new meanings and slowly I came around. And, better for losing the battle and winning the war, I thought myself ready for the world. But life is strange and inconsequential events can too easily become all-important.

His name is David Leavitt and I am convinced that he is a god. Three days ago, I had never heard that name. Then I went to Hastings, purchased this month's *Interview* and read about this individual's accomplishments.

Envy's never been so green.

Leavitt is 23, one year older than myself. When he was 21 and still at Yale, he published his first short story in *The New Yorker*. In 1983, he published stories in *Harper's* and *Christopher Street* and was included in a volume of *O. Henry* award-winning short fiction. In 1984, his first book was published. "Family Dancing" is a collection of nine short stories and has been nominated for a National Book Critics Circle Award. Leavitt is now writing his first novel and has just been selected to write the decennial "My Generation" essay for *Esquire*. The last two men to write this essay were F. Scott Fitzgerald and William Styron.

I read the interview, becoming increasingly upset. I realized that here was a mind — one that can think and create and show us ourselves. By that time, I felt in myself a sense of anger. I laughed haughtily and told myself that I couldn't be that good.

I bought "Family Dancing" and was blown away. The stories are incredible. They all center on three topics, either separately or together: cancer, divorce and homosexuality. But they encompass all life — speaking directly and sincerely. I realized that in these stories the printed word had become art, a creation. I sat there for quite a while in the dark and I cried.

His work is what I've always dreamed of creating myself.

I did nothing the next day. I was empty. But slowly, a sense of urgency emerged and I was filled with my childhood. Forced into isolation for the first time in years, I rediscovered my world, my visions, my solaces. And I wrote.

I wrote about anything I could think of and I could not stop. It was a purgation of the holiest sort — three years of an inner self on hold were at an end. Reality was no longer my prison and facts no longer my wardens. I was excited and scared. I realized that my worlds were still the best.

I have a need to make up myself and my surroundings. I have a need to dream.

Shawn Behlen is a senior journalism major and co-editor for *At Ease*.

Big guys play for keeps

We called it "playing army." Our team usually won because we had the better fort and the bigger dirt clods. It was a fun, but intense game.



Kevin Inda

The object of the game was to bombard the other team members and their fort until they cried or gave us something we wanted — usually fireworks or candy.

The interesting part of the game came not during, but after the battle, in the negotiations. This is where the winning side would try to get something of value from the opposing side. If the terms weren't satisfactory, dirt clods would resume flying. The reason we usually won is because we saved the biggest dirt clods for the negotiations. That gave us increased bargaining power.

Occasionally someone would get hit in the face with a dirt clod, but for all purposes it was still a relatively safe game. And besides being safe, everyone would still be friends in the morning.

Being the argumentative children we were, coming to agreeable terms rarely happened. We would continue arguing and throwing dirt clods until our mothers called us in for dinner.

"Playing army" is still a popular game — even for adults. The United States and Soviets happen to be engaged in a modified version right now. I say it modified because they aren't quite playing the way we used to.

Instead of battling it out before the negotiations, they're doing the opposite — and for obvious reasons. Primarily because if battle took place before the negotiations, there wouldn't be anyone around to negotiate with. They're also playing with a somewhat more dangerous weapon than dirt clods — nuclear arms.

And the stakes are a little higher in the adult version of "playing army." Instead of negotiating for fireworks or candy, they're negotiating for something more important — life.

Nobody knows for sure what will evolve from the Geneva talks. The players might or might not eliminate some of their nuclear weaponry. Chances are the "might nots" will prevail over the "mights" but let's still hope the talks go well. We wouldn't want either side to start throwing the big dirt clods they've been saving.

There's not an easy solution to nuclear disarmament. Neither side wants

to give up any of its nuclear arms. The just want the other side to. It's an all-or-nothing situation for both sides.

It's just too bad we can't have their mothers call them home for dinner and all wake up friends in the morning.

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Letters Policy

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Selling houses is a fine art

By ART BUCHWALD

Columnist for *The Los Angeles Times Syndicate*

There was a great deal of excitement in our neighborhood last week. The first house advertised to sell at over a million dollars was put up for sale.

Most of the homes in our area were built in the '40s and '50s and originally sold for \$30,000 to \$50,000. Over the years they have increased in value, but no one ever dreamed that one of them would ever be advertised for a million.

Trembling, who reported the news to me, said, "I knew someone would break the six-figure barrier sooner or later, but I never thought it would be Ed Hurwitz."

"I can't believe Hurwitz is asking a million for his lean-to. I don't think he paid more than \$63,000 for it 10 years ago."

"I saw the ad in the paper this morning. It said, 'Historical mini-estate, located in one of the most prestigious neighborhoods in Washington. A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the special affluent family who wants more from a home than just a place to live. Offered at \$1,450,000. Within walking distance of the Swedish Embassy.'"

I said, "It's a joke. It has to be a joke." "Oh yeah? You should see the lineup of cars in front of the house. You would think T. Boone Pickens was coming to dinner."

Out of curiosity we decided to wan-

der over to Hurwitz's house. Sure enough, there were Mercedes-Benzes, BMWs, Jaguars, Lincolns and chauffeured Cadillacs parked all along the street. Women in fur coats stood in line waiting to get in, and Hurwitz passed out a mimeographed sheet describing the features of the house. This included "antique lighting fixtures, a wet bar in the basement, contemporary library with original moldings, and a state-of-the-art laundry room."

"What a turnout," I said to Hurwitz. "It even surprised me," he said, "but not the real estate agent. She said the only way to keep out the bargain-hunters and attract the upper-bracket crowd is to ask for more than a million dollars for your house."

"Aren't they disappointed when they arrive?"

"They don't seem to be," Hurwitz said. "They figure if you're asking over a million there's got to be more to it than they can see. Besides, people who can pay prices like that want to gut the structure anyway, and spend another million to make it 'liveable.' One of the big attractions of this place is they can throw out everything in the house and not feel guilty about it."

Hurwitz took Trembling and me inside.

"You didn't even paint it," I said.

"Why paint it? Whoever is going to buy it will only repaint it. Women's eyes light up when they see this joint and

they can hardly wait to call their decorator. The one thing I learned in selling a house for a million bucks is the less you offer somebody the more chance you have of getting them to buy it."

We went into the kitchen. There was a 1960 gas stove, a 1970 refrigerator, a scarred wooden table, two chairs, and a spice shelf that Hurwitz had gotten with green stamps.

One of the women said to the other, "It's utterly charming. You don't see kitchens like this anymore."

The second woman said, "It's a dream. You can start from scratch and do anything you want with it."

"That's true of the bathroom too," Hurwitz told them.

When we got back into the living room I said, "I wouldn't believe it if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes. The people are actually salivating to buy this hunk of junk."

Hurwitz seemed offended. "It may be a hunk of junk to you, but for the people who came here today it's the dream they worked for all of their lives."

"Hey, wait a minute," Trembling said. "If you get one million for this wreck that means all our homes in the neighborhood will be reassessed for tax purposes and we'll be paying for your scam."

"Don't blame me," Hurwitz said. "I originally asked \$100,000 for the house and had no bites. Now that I'm asking for a million I can't keep people from kicking down the door."