

Viewpoints

Opinion

Tuitions threaten internationals

By COLIN CROMBIE

Two bills concerning international students attending public institutions of higher education in Texas were recently, and at the last minute, introduced to the Texas legislature. By a case of constitutional emergency, they have been pushed forward and will be heard soon.

These two bills, H.B. 2161 and S.B. 856, are completely negative and will more than erase any monetary benefits that Texas may hope for after blindly glancing over the contents of these bills and naively passing them.

The House bill, introduced by Representative Blake, is a reintroduction of a bill that Senator Bill Moore introduced two years ago, but now all amendments have been dropped. The amendments allowed for a reciprocal arrangement concerning foreign publicly funded universities. The result was that most international students now pay \$14 per credit hour. The proposed bill wishes to raise tuition fees for all international students to \$40 per credit hour.

The Senate bill, an apparently unjustified and definitely ambiguous measure introduced by Senator Mengden, if passed will in essence (and who knows — possibly intentionally) stop the attendance of all international students at public universities in Texas. This bill calls for no international students to be admitted until all qualified residents of Texas seeking admission are satisfied. A public university could, therefore, not grant permission to an international student until the first day of classes. With all the procedures necessary in obtaining a visa, tickets, etc., it would be impossible for an international student to attend.

Both bills would severely limit the number of international students coming to Texas.

Apart from the loss Texans would suffer in the exchange of cultures and information, the Texas economy would also suffer.

Raising the internationals' fees would not increase the revenue, but surely would cut it back. If there were any increased income to the state, it would not be significant. Texas would probably lose money, because with an increased tuition rate of the magnitude proposed, many internationals would no longer come to Texas. They do not live and study here in hibernation. One foreign student puts about \$5,000 into the Texas economy each year through taxes, living and travel expenses, etc.

There is the argument that out-of-state American students pay \$40 per credit hour already. The proportion of \$40 to \$14 to respective parents' income must be taken into account. Fourteen dollars is equal to or exceeds in some cases \$40 when compared in these terms. Also, the higher standard of living here in America and the rampant inflation of several foreign countries must be taken into account.

Texas has a surplus budget and there seems little economic justification for even introducing the two narrow-minded bills for the little revenue, if any that would result.

Many graduate students are internationals, and the prohibitory measures, if passed, may reduce the public universities of Texas to a state similar to northern universities: floating down the brain drain.

We, the Executive Committee of the International Students Association are shocked and incensed at the mere existence of these petty bills. We urge all international students here at A&M and we urge all those who feel as we do, international and American, to sign the petition that we have at the MSC, and to write immediately to the congressmen who introduced the bills and to the representatives for this district, Representative Presnal and Senator Bill Moore.

Colin Crombie writes on behalf of the Executive Committee of the International Students Association.

Readers' Forum

City Council not insensitive

By JIM GARDNER

In a recent letter to the editor, the student vice president for external affairs, Phil Sutton, blasted the City Council for their denial of a proposal to extend legal drinking hours on weekends in College Station. This seemed to trigger also the charge that the Council is insensitive to the interests of the majority of the residents of College Station — Texas A&M students.

Speaking to the first issue, the least significant of the two, I seriously question the contention, based on a limited "poll of the student body taken some time ago" that "24,000 students support this type of bill." Nevertheless, I also would like to respond to his rhetorical question: "You may ask, how may the seven voting members of the College Station City Council deny the request of 24,000 students in a town the size of College Station?" The answer is, of course, that a majority, four, did not feel the proposal warranted passage. Another Councilman and I did vote for it, which wasn't mentioned in his letter. What Mr. Sutton's proposal needed was two more votes.

On the broader issue, he implies that the students deserve better treatment but won't get it until they "get out and vote." To illustrate the "shaft they are getting," he asks another question: "Why are the rental rates higher in College Station than in Houston?" Perhaps he should ask himself if the transient nature of a large segment of our population might have something to do with this, if this is the situation. Might not this be explained, at least partially, by the 75 per cent average annual occupancy rate caused by the reduction in TAMU enrollment by nearly 35 per cent during three months of the year?

No, Mr. Sutton says this is so "Because the City Council has not seen fit to adopt a policy to stimulate the building of new apartments to a sufficient degree to meet the demand." One wonders what he feels such a policy should be.

Two of the more important and common ways apartment (or any other) development might be influenced by governmental action are tax policies and the granting or withholding of required zoning. In neither of these areas does College Station fall short.

In respect to taxation, College Station residents, apartment owners, commercial building owners, land speculators, et. al. enjoy a municipal tax rate that is about 7th from the lowest among nearly 300 of Texas' largest cities.

In addition to direct property taxation, we finance a part of the cost of city government through "profits" from certain utilities, primarily water and electrical. This is, in effect, an indirect form of taxation. Because of our rate structures (which I feel need to be "flattened out"), the large volume users, such as commercial interests and apartment owners with central meters, have a "tax break" two ways: low municipal property taxes and vital utilities at a discount rate.

City Councils in the past have been more than generous in regards to providing properly zoned land for apartment development. The accompanying map I prepared last month, shows graphically the existing and potential apartment areas in



this community. The black areas on the map indicate either existing multi-family developments or apartments under construction. The gray areas depict the hundreds of vacant acres of land which are zoned in such a way that apartment development can take place.

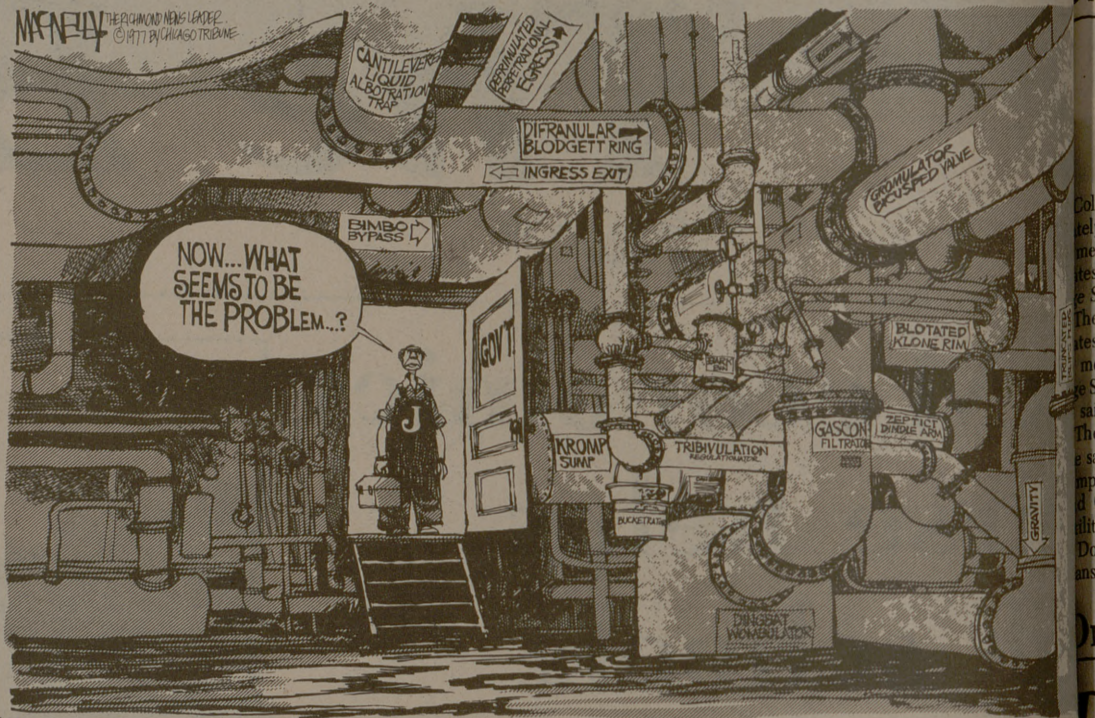
The present Council cannot take credit for the abundance of vacant apartment land, of course. In fact, it is questionable in my mind if "credit" is due, since the result of previous as well as current Councils' actions has left us with anything but a rational, orderly development pattern. Nevertheless, there is adequate zoned land for more apartments than can be foreseen at present.

A casual survey, also made last month, revealed that at least a thousand new units (completed but vacant or under construction) would be on line by the start of the coming Fall term. Perhaps the intensified advertising campaigns ("Win \$1,000 and Other Gifts") are in response to the likely prospect of adequate if not an over-supply of apartment housing units in the near future.

In his final paragraph Mr. Sutton gets off his most dramatic shot: "To borrow a phrase, I'm mad as hell, and I'm not going to take it any more!" I'm sure he is disappointed and obviously angry. I hope he doesn't take this modest set-back too seriously.

Notwithstanding Mr. Sutton's misconceptions regarding the Council's policies toward students generally, and their housing in particular, his letter has a positive aspect to it. His expressions of concern should offer some encouragement to those of us who feel there is a need for more effective student involvement in local affairs. I would hope, however, that it manifests itself in less "shooting from the hip," to borrow a phrase, and more reasoned criticism and active participation in the political process.

Jim Gardner is a member of the College Station City Council.



Letters to the Editor

Book theft hurts

The Aggie Code of Honor states that, "Aggies do not lie, cheat or steal, nor do they tolerate those who do."

I have found that there is at least one Aggie who cannot be called an Aggie. He stole my books! I had put them in one of the lockers at the MSC and left it unlocked; never dreaming that a fellow Aggie would take my books. I have always trusted people, and it hurts to find out that there are some who cannot be trusted, especially an Aggie. I hope that I never meet the person who took my books, because I do not want to be a friend of someone who cannot even follow the simple Aggie Code of Honor.

—Kathy DeSavigny

Army to hell

I recently returned to the campus to visit the home of the Fighting Texas Aggies. What changes have been wrought! But there was one thing I expected to remain unchanged — the tradition of friendliness and the great greeting of "howdy." But much to my dismay, only two cadets — a Fish and a Serge Butt — out of the hundreds of Corps members I passed so much as said "howdy."

This mark of campus friendliness was a tradition of Aggies of old. The failure to greet strangers with "howdy" is New Army. "Ole Army" has gone to hell or T.U.

—Edward C. McHam '62

Gay bill pending

I would like to commend the valiant efforts of the Texas A&M administration in their stand against recognizing a homosexual student organization on campus. Certainly such an organization would scar the social image and prestige of Texas A&M itself and of the student body in particular. But the administration's case may very well be destroyed in the near future if legislation now pending before the U.S. House of Representatives passes.

House Referral 2998, otherwise known as the "Civil Rights Amendments of 1977," would legalize homosexual conduct and prohibit job discrimination on the basis of "affectional or sexual preference" by having said words inserted after "religion" in the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The bill has a number of sponsors including Shirley Chisholm and Mr. McCloskey. At present, the bill is before the Judiciary Committee, but it has also been referred to the Committee on Education and Labor. No hearings have been held yet.

—Tracy Huckins '79

Gay series commended

Appalled by society's misunderstanding of homosexuals and their life styles, I applaud The Battalion. Presenting the facts in such an informative and unbiased manner will surely educate those ignorant on the subject. You are to be commended for the series.

—Michael Fred

Illegal beach ball bounced

I regret to say that I am the misguided youth who brought a beach ball to the Pure Prairie League concert Saturday night only to have it taken away twice. After giving up on frisbees, I brought the beach ball to a concert last fall and everyone seemed to enjoy it. It seems that the Clown Hall rules committee, in its never ending battle to make waiting for a concert miserable in those orthopedically designed bleachers, had added yet another rule to its repertoire.

Why no beachballs? I think I have the answer.

- 1) It could blossom into more harmful things like footballs and then bowling balls.
- 2) A misdirected hit towards the stage could damage someone's woofer or tweeter.
- 3) Someone could jump off the second floor in their enthusiasm to hit the ball (they ought to ban shoes with laces on campus).

Liquor arguments were weak

This letter will supplement the letter of Councilman Gardner relating to the College Station City Council vote on extension of the hours for serving alcoholic beverages.

As one of the persons who voted against the extension, I would like to comment on the matter.

From my own perspective, I feel that the extension failed to pass because its proponents did not do their "homework." For example, the City Council was presented with no current substantial evidence of student opinion, with no

comprehensive survey of those who operate drinking establishments and with no real evidence of the needs of cities other than College Station. (There was evidence that the hour extension a year ago did result in any noticeable increase in traffic accidents.)

Again, from my own perspective, I feel that it would be highly probable if the matter were fully discussed and even debated in a public hearing, followed by an independent student survey.

—Lorence Brown
Mayor, City of College Station

Slouch by Jim Earle



THE LEAST WE CAN DO IS KNOCK OFF STUDYING AT NIGHT UNTIL THIS ENERGY THING IS UNDER CONTROL!

The Battalion

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- Typed triple space
- Limited to 60 characters per line
- Limited to 100 lines

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