

# Reader's Forum: More laws are not the answer

Editor:

It seems that yet another red-inked entry must now be slated on the students' budget; for most students, this entry has enough digits to demand short cuts in everything from entertainment to eating. This entry is for the money needed to get liability insurance now required by law.

Realizing that most students need both the previously mentioned popular activities, it would then be reasonable to ponder the wisdom of such a law. The state legislature, for one, could assure drivers that this law (like the rest of them) was passed in the spirit of the common good, meant to protect the individual driver from losses suffered in the common car wreck. It is true that most drivers who are at fault in wrecks do not have the financial clout to beat out a trying round in an often unreasonable or unfair civil court bout. The seriousness of the crash cases predicts the likelihood of such bitter battles. But is the new law a good solution to the problem?

The answer to that question depends on who is asked it. Insurance companies are enjoying a boon in new clients who were, in effect, recruited by the state legislature. Although the insurance agencies are regulated, their climbing rates are more steep than the hills of Austin. Even with good driving records, typical college students are just old enough to pay the highest rates allowed.

Traffic officers (state, county, city, etc.) are also enjoying a period of new prosperity, seeing that at least 25 percent

of all Texas drivers still do not have insurance. To be certain, the roads are ripe with plenty of pickings to fill our officers' citation rations. Not to mention the bulging budget boundaries of the traffic departments — soon they will be able to rescue the ailing automobile industry themselves by buying new fleets cars.

Aside from all of this, a most important part of the question of the law has been overlooked. Who has wondered about what happened to individual responsibility and the corresponding personal freedom of a citizen to operate his own car on a public road? Who has considered the consequences of the state shifting from dictating who can't operate a motorized vehicle without a license to who can't operate a motorized vehicle with a license?

As he fills out next months' insurance premium check, someone will indignantly say, "But there has to be driver licensing, a minimum age for drivers, minimum vision requirements, annual auto inspections, explicit traffic rules, mandatory liability insurance, and a full-time traffic trooper gang to enforce it all. Why, if it weren't for these laws, mad drivers would be everywhere, running loose on the streets, making insane lane changes and amber light charges, endangering the lives of other motorists and pedestrians."

But he has not yet driven down Highway 6.

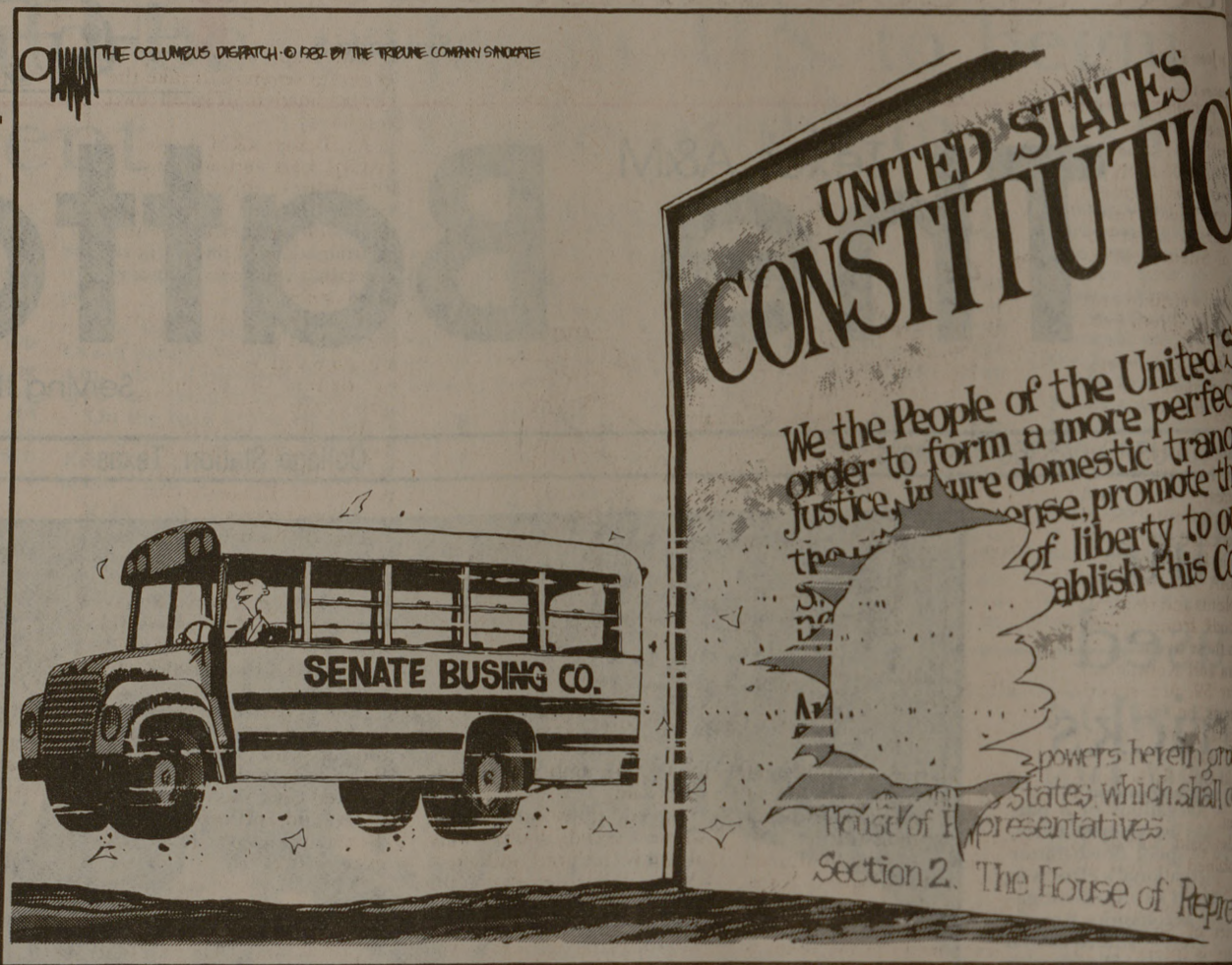
D. S. Zimmerman '83  
Hart Hall

## Slouch

By Jim Earle



"Not only does his ride leave early, but he has a doctor's appointment on Monday after the Spring break."



# 'Chaucer' meets the Aggies

I brought with me to Texas A&M two years ago a dozen or so paperbacks that I had studied in high school — just to give my bookshelf that air of collegiate pseudo-sophistication. Last week the books finally had to yield their space to newer texts.

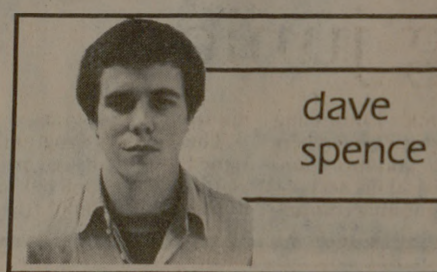
Intending only to thumb through the old ones, I found myself having read the entire prologue of Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Canterbury Tales." "A brilliant, enlightening slice of medieval society," as my teacher Mrs. Brown used to say.

After re-reading the stuff, I had to admit, surprisingly, that the work was nothing less than extraordinary. Using the persona of an observer of a pilgrimage to Canterbury, Chaucer described (and criticized) members of medieval English society with sarcasm and jocosity.

His technique is timeless. So what might Chaucer have said about a weekend "pilgrimage" of Aggies to Austin, I wondered:

After mid-terms where every student be acosted,  
He turneth all his energy in thee persute of Austin,  
And there benext to a gas pump me saw,  
And these Aggies so traveling in spite of thee law.

Thee firste group cometh in a Cadillac so meek,  
Sporting pigtailes and reptiles — musteth be Greek,  
So giddy and propre, like thee best of thee genre,  
Surely thee ladies their daddies assumd



dave  
spence

that they were,  
Fore withe daddy's card they filled thee tanke,  
And thee beere padé fore withe a check frome his banke.  
Three militry gents next came in perfecte formation,  
In three Trans Ams, of jets a perfecte emulation,  
Emerging frome each craft in darke glasses of a pilot,  
I wast greeted bye each, "Howdy, Damnit!"  
And as they left, withe rigidly reheate aplomb,  
Their license plates read, "DROP," "THE," "BOMB."

Following thee three soldiers, a red convertible pule inn,  
Behind the wheel a tan blonde, in thee sun shee having beene,  
Though her auto sat sleek, withe sensual, gliding lines,  
Its body was put to shame, bye her smoothe bronzed thighs,  
Thee passengre seat empty, but fore a chilled bottle-o-wine,  
I askt if it I mite fill it, she answered "no"

withe a fingre sign.

As shee drove off I felt rejected,  
ly for love,  
Until thee next couple came in  
pik-up truck,  
Fore poor Billy Bob (his name),  
Was undre fire from Billy Sue,  
nasally del,  
"Girl," he commanded, "Git in  
car."  
"Not after," shee replied, "yer  
Star!"

In next pulled an engineer, M  
specific,  
Twenty-thousand dollars a year  
seemed terrific,  
He fumbled withe thee gas cap,  
withe thee pump,  
Fore such confusing devises went  
his curriculum,  
And afre filling up thee tanke,  
ing up his engine,  
He screached onto thee highway,  
behind his transmission.

Thee caravan continued longe  
night,  
A frenzied escape frome a s  
plight,  
And into thee bowels of Austi  
road,  
Fore on thee walks of Sixth S  
school people ignore.

Benext to that gas pump I'd not  
behind,  
So I stood at thee highway and  
a ride.

# Letter: How many will die in fires before we learn

Editor:

How many MGM Grands and Westchase Hilton's have to happen before big U.S. cities take responsibility to introduce tough ordinances on the means by which high-rises are constructed and the training of people to operate fire alarm systems in these high-rises? Hopefully Houston's Mayor Cathy Whitmire and city council will take the bull by the horns with "the buck stops here" attitude and formulate such an ordinance. One death is one death too many if it can be prevented. The introduction of this type of ordinance would be a step in the right direction.

While there are no studies that have proven that the materials used in the construction of new high-rises form poisonous gases when burned, it is conclusive that the victims of these recent high-rise fire tragedies were not killed by typical carbon monoxide poisoning. However, it has been speculated that a fire in a newly constructed building can produce hydrocyanic gas. This is a more deadly gas that is used to kill criminals in the gas chambers.

With that thought in mind, we don't need a building to fall on us to tell us there is a problem. However, it is a problem with a solution that is readily available to us if we tackle it head on.

Richard Gosselin '85

## Where should bikers ride?

Editor:

I sincerely wish to apologize to the girl who I inadvertently ran into with my bike at about 12:30 p.m. Tuesday next to the Academic Building, especially since this is the first pedestrian I've ever hit. Actually, I should apologize for the as yet inexplicable actions of the C.T. who caused this little accident in which, fortunately, nobody was seriously hurt.

As I recall, I had ample clearance between the oncoming C.T. and a lamp post next to a curbside structure, but for some unknown reason, he decided to move toward the curb as he saw me approach. I am sorry that I didn't quite feel up to testing out the quantum mechanical probability of going through a lamp post, but as he did not stop moving or resume his original direction, I was forced to veer off in the opposite direction to avoid him. Unfortunately, someone else, the girl, happened to be there and was coming toward me. Fortunately, I was not moving very quickly at all, or the results could have been worse. Nonetheless, some older man attempted to berate me for not staying on the street like I was supposed to.

To the girl: I have already apologized. To the C.T. (and anyone else guilty of such acts): I can only say that if anything like this ever occurs again and I am unable to stop in time (yes, it takes a couple of seconds to stop, even moving slowly), I will not hesitate to run into that person to avoid hurting myself or innocent people.

To the man: It is your opinion that bikers should ride on streets and not on sidewalks, whereas I have heard of motorists who complain that bikers should stay off the streets. Where the heck are we supposed to ride, then?

It does not seem logical to place bike racks near buildings and sidewalks if we are supposed to stay on the streets. How about walking bikes to class? It would seem more efficient, then to have bike racks around the perimeter of the campus, since the end result would still be walking to class.

Obviously, the most efficient method is to ride the bikes to class and park in the designated areas, but if 35,000 motorists, bikers, pedestrians, etc. don't cooperate, then what? Come on people, most of us have enough common sense to look where we're going, so pedestrians, don't pull stupid stunts around bikes unless it is obvious the biker is being careless. Most riders try to be careful, but it makes it worse when walkers try to anticipate where riders will go — let the biker do the

anticipating. After all, bikes are a lot less maneuverable than people, so try to give us half a chance.

Roy Gut

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