

Parking fees: More for our money?

The parking situation at Texas A&M has gone from bad to worse, and then to worse still.

Bad was a serious shortage of on-campus parking spaces for students and faculty. Worse was the campus police crackdown on parking violations, with penalties ranging from \$10 fines to \$50 towaways.

And now, parking fees will increase by 66 percent next year, thanks to the Texas A&M System Board of Regents. On-campus students, off-campus students, faculty members, staff members — all will be hit by the higher rates.

Off-campus students may think they can save on parking by riding the shuttle buses. Think again. Shuttle bus passes are going from \$42 to \$44.50.

A better solution might be to move into a dormitory and leave your car at home. But student housing fees are going up, too — by about 6 percent.

Altogether, the board passed 17 fee increases. Eight of those will affect the main campus.

Student housing, student services, board plan and shuttle bus rates are going up by moderate amounts. A 3 to 6 percent increase seems reasonable to

correct for the effects of an inflationary economy.

But what about parking? The economy doesn't need a 66 percent correction factor.

It would make sense if we were getting something for our money. But the on-campus parking garage that's been promised for the last few years is beginning to seem like little more than a mirage. The massive parking fee increases would be justified if plans for the long-awaited multi-level parking garage had materialized.

What's done is done. The board has voted, and we have no choice but to accept.

But the regents need to realize the financial burden they've placed on students — especially since the increases have been unaccompanied by any substantial increase in available student financial aid.

At the regents' meeting Tuesday, Vice Chairman William McKenzie said that in the future, the board needs to look for ways to decrease the steadily climbing fees.

That idea is long overdue.

— The Battalion Editorial Board



Belgium trip memorable for visiting Texas professor

When Super Tuesday and The Day After become only blurred recollections, I will remember Belgium. Even after the furor over school prayer has subsided and Aggie football is no longer a mystery, I will still be haunted by memories of Louvain la Neuve.

There is nothing special about traveling abroad. Defectors do it. Hijackers used to do it with frequency. But two weeks of torture in this "man-made" Belgian city is an exception. It is a special story which must be told so that many respectable, anti-orange, Battalion readers can be spared similar punishment.

My first midsummer impressions of Belgium were bad. It was taxing enough to have to buy gasoline in liters and order meals in French, but to eat all of that sauce on my food was too much. My sanity was further put to the acid test by being shut off from the USA. Yes, my deprivation in this small college community southeast of Brussels caused me to appreciate the value of chicken fried steak, saying "howdy," and the unparalleled scenery along highway 6.

This quasi-vacation had its roots in a decision by NATO to have me take part in an international institute on computers in science. Since there were only 15 of us from North America, I thought I had finally grasped the meaning of that ubiquitous cliché "creme de la creme."

What an illusion! In retrospect I still wonder why I was punished in this fashion. I hadn't openly criticized Ross Perot or the 12th Man; I wasn't even an expelled staff writer for The Battalion.

Belgium is a schizophrenic nation with two principal ethnic groups, the French-speaking Walloons and the Flemish-speaking Flemings. Arguments over which is the dominant culture have resulted in perpetual conflict.

The Belgian government attempted

to achieve some degree of peaceful co-existence by having virtually everything printed in two languages. And get this: the university used to offer all courses of study in French and Flemish.

How could I find logic in this creative

reader's forum

madness? At least blacks and whites speak the same language in Texas — most of the time. So I had to keep asking myself, why am I here, a place where you can be fined for not voting? Why am I in a city where Walloons do talk — but not in English?

My first full-scale indulgence in French dialogue was futile. I vividly remember the French lady who took a bottle of wine and sat on a campus bench directly in front of me as if to attract my attention. When I went over and started speaking French, the jeune fille wept profusely. Thinking she had been moved by my irresistible oratory I naturally sought the reason for her emotional outburst.

Was I surprised to learn that it was my inept command of the language which had brought her to tears? As I departed I heard her mumble in English, "I thought all Texans spoke a foreign language."

There were other anxious moments during this trans-Atlantic fiasco. I recall visiting Waterloo and getting lost in a Flemish community, after having spent the night before learning how to say "I'm lost" in French.

And how could I forget the illusion of instant wealth I experienced in exchanging dollars for Belgian francs and how I had to call to Houston for \$50, only to find out later that the call cost \$48.

I even remember meeting an American tourist in Brussels and we simultaneously asked each other, "What are we doing here?"

The most gratifying memory of Louvain la Neuve involved making professional acquaintances and listening to profound speeches. I recall one lecturer saying "Any teacher who might be replaced by a computer should be replaced."

There was also another quote attributed to Tennessee Williams which "Make voyages; there is nothing that Williams did in fact say this, I'm sure didn't have Belgium in mind."

On Monday, my scheduled departure, I was confronted with the inevitability of hugging my mother-in-law at the airport and listening to her bring me up to date on new jokes.

Despite all these negative signals choice was easy. The maladies of Brazos are only petty nuances compared to spending another Tuesday in Belgium.

William E. Moore

Editor's note: Dr. Moore is presently serving as visiting professor in the year chemistry program. A distinguished professor at Prairie View, he has lectured or participated in numerous conferences for five summers in the last decade.

Letters

Texas A&M on trial

Editor:

I have been a graduate student at Texas A&M University for five years. I have to admit that I am an irremediable two-percenter.

I thought that the students of this school were a faceless monolith until I observed signs of actual outrage when Texas A&M hired Mr. Sherrill. I am sufficiently encouraged to write this letter before I leave for good.

It is past time for the students of this school to organize for better purposes than to shield mental children with edged toys. This institution has an unfortunate tendency to confuse partial or otherwise inadequate instruction with academic rigor, tradition with ethics and morality.

As members of the world academic community, we have the duty to do what we can to maintain the quality of our education when our institution fails to do so; a responsibility to express our outrage openly when the regents, administration, or faculty acts against the interests of students they are hired to serve.

Apart from research, the students of this institution and their intellectual fulfillment are the only proper reason for the existence of Texas A&M. To substitute football, military discipline, or 19th century tradition for the active nurture of mental abilities of those who must soon accept the responsibility for the survival of our species is a crime against humanity.

Since I won't be here much longer, I'll answer the obvious criticisms now:

I'm a Baptist, a Republican, and I know that Hwy. 6 goes both ways. For some people, both are the wrong way...

J. J. Robinson II
Grad. Student, Entomology

Mice make headlines

Editor:

On Tuesday, a picture of Dr. C. Thomas Caskey appeared on the front page of The Battalion along with a slide of "genetically engineered mice."

I thought your readers would be interested in knowing a little more about the significance of those two mice.

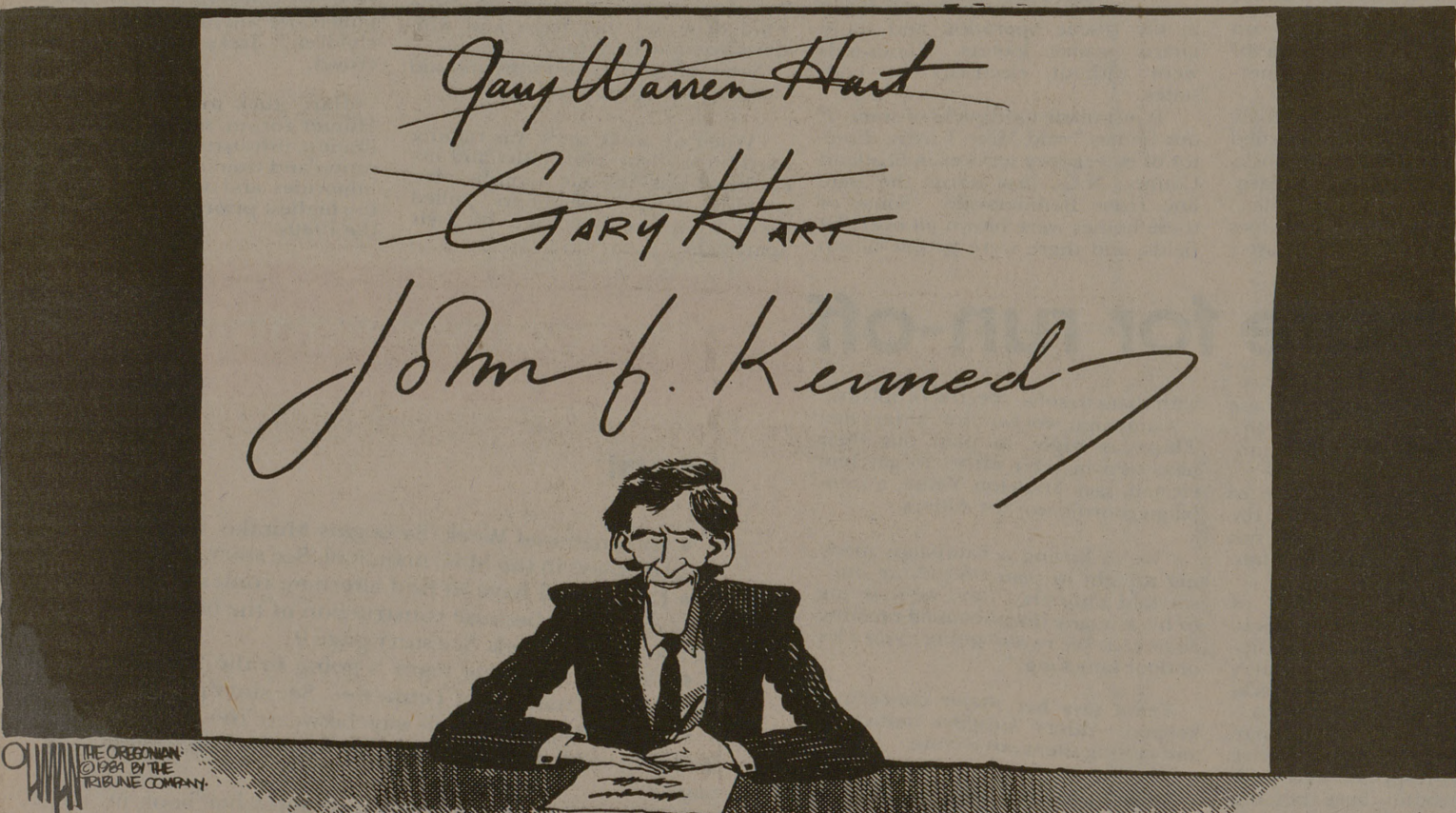
They are siblings. One of them is more than twice the size of the other because it contains a foreign gene composed of the mouse metallothionein promoter fused to the human growth hormone structural gene.

A picture of the same two mice appeared on the front cover of SCIENCE, the journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Science on Nov. 18, 1983. According to SCIENCE, this is thought to be the first example of a human gene expressed in another animal.

Readers desiring more scientific detail may wish to refer to that issue of SCIENCE.

Accolades to MSC Great Issues for bringing the ethical and philosophical issues associated with genetic engineering to the attention of the University community.

Mary Alice Meyer
Medical Pathology Department



Senator Hart works on a new signature...

The Battalion

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The Battalion also serves as a laboratory for students in reporting, editing, and photography classes within the Department of Communications.

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Letters to the Editor should not exceed 100 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length. We make every effort to maintain the anonymity of our contributors. Each letter must be signed and include the address and telephone number of the writer.

Reader's Forum columns and guest editorials are welcome. Address all inquiries to the Editorial Page Editor.

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