

Texas' taxes rising; sinning to cost more

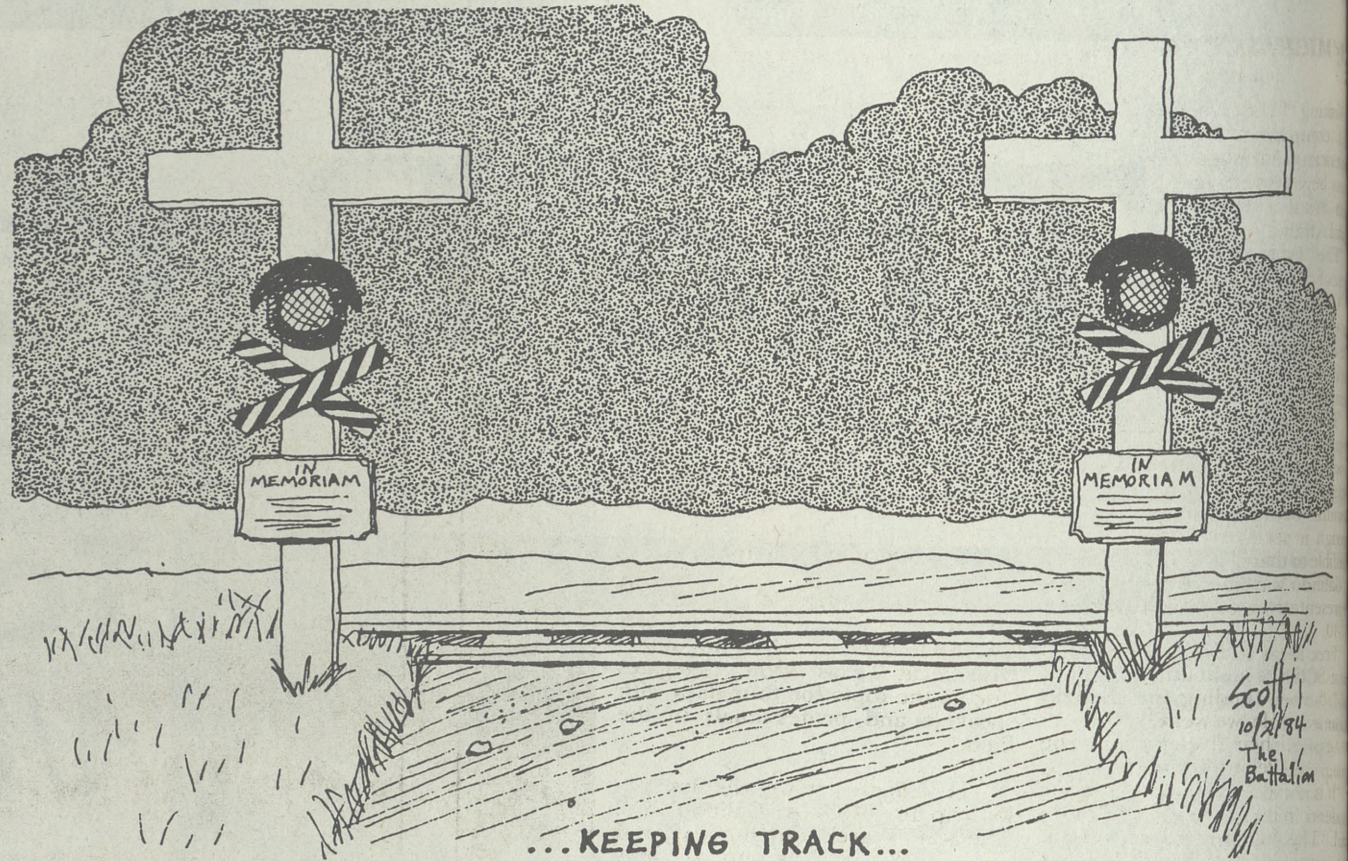
Sound the alarm. Taxes have been increased again.

This time, the state sales tax has been raised from 4 to 4.125 percent, increasing the sales tax that area residents will pay to 5 and 1/4 cents per dollar. All as part of Gov. Mark White's plan to raise \$4.6 billion over the next three years. Remember White? The guy who campaigned for governor on a platform of no new taxes for Texans. Under White, new taxes are being levied and sin taxes are being increased.

State officials say tax revenues must be increased to maintain state services at the present level and to implement badly needed improvements in our state education system. Though the poor of Texas will be disproportionately taxed by the sales tax hike, White's plan seems a much better path than the alternative of reduced state services.

And what could be more equitable than making people pay more for entertainment — namely movies, liquor, cigarettes and massage parlors? It seems a far better way to raise money than a state income tax or a state university tuition increase.

— The Battalion Editorial Board



...KEEPING TRACK...

The Battalion USPS 045 360

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In memoriam
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Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the Editorial Board or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty or the Board of Regents.

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

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Letters Policy

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the address and telephone number of the writer.

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Whistling trains now a source of fear

I used to love to lie in bed with the window open so I could hear the trains in the distance. The sound of that whistle way far off was better than any lullaby. I don't like to hear the trains go by anymore.

On Thursday, Sept. 20, I almost lost a friend and fellow Battalion staff member in a car-train accident. On Friday, Sept. 21, I did lose a good friend in a second car-train accident.

These two accidents happened at the same dark intersection — almost exactly 24 hours apart.

Since the accidents, there has been talk of closing the Luther Street crossing or putting up signals — there are no signals or crossing gates at that intersection — and even of relocating that stretch of the railroad tracks.

There has also been a lot of concern expressed about the caution drivers take at train crossings.

At the Board of Regents' railroad committee meeting last Friday, Bryan Mayor Ron Blatchley talked about how most people don't see the danger in racing a train through a crossing, so the crossings must be equipped with as much safety equipment as possible. He's probably right, but something happened the other night that made me realize that even the most cautious driver can get into real trouble at a crossing like the one at Luther Street.

I was assigned to work on both of the accident stories — an emotional challenge because I knew people involved in both accidents — so I'd been keeping up with the investigations and various discussions about the accidents.

Last Monday night I learned that someone had put up a cross — a burial-type cross — at the intersection. I decided it might be worth checking out.

So my roommate — who is a reporter for KAMU — and I took her car and headed for the Luther Street intersection. We were both pretty paranoid about the whole thing, and de-



Robin Black

decided to take every precaution before we started across the intersection. We had the windows rolled down and the radio off — all the better to hear oncoming trains. We both turned around and took a long, hard look. No train, no problem.

About the time the nose of her car got to the tracks, there was a train. We never heard it and never saw it, but believe me we had looked; the train's whistle never sounded until it got to the intersection.

I don't think that in my short life I've ever come so close to dying. I don't ever want to come that close again. When that happened, I realized how dangerous an intersection like the one at Luther really is and how easy it is to get into real trouble at such an intersection.

It also put to rest the doubts in the back of my mind that my friends had been trying to beat the train to the intersection — they probably never knew what hit them.

There's going to be more talk in the next few weeks or even months about what happened and what can be done to intersections to help avoid similar accidents.

Any action to improve the Luther Street intersection is going to take time. Probably a lot of time. Until then, it might be a good idea to avoid the intersection altogether. People who usually use that street can get to wherever they're going by taking Jersey Street — it connects with the same streets Luther does. I can tell you from firsthand experience that caution is important, but that doesn't eliminate the all the danger at the intersection.

There's also going to be more talk about railroad-crossing safety. Next week is Texas Railroad Grade Crossing Safety Week, and state officials will be working with state railroads to make us more aware of what we can do to reduce our chances of becoming another gruesome newspaper write-up.

Please take time to listen to this information — and use it. I don't want to write any more obituaries.

Robin Black is a senior staff reporter for The Battalion.

Growing from tadpole to another old Aggie

It happened to me. I thought I was past this stage. I'm a senior now and I paid my dues. But it happened anyway.

I have a freshman roommate. At first I thought, "How bad can it be? I know this girl, we've been friends for a long time and she will be better than someone I don't even know." Did I have something to learn.

As a senior I have outgrown many of the idiosyncrasies that she performs each day.

For example, I don't come in squealing about the guy who sat next to me in History 105 and asked to borrow my notes. By now I know that he isn't interested in me, just my notes. And just as well, because at this point I have had classes with the same people for two or three years and they are friends of mine, not possible dates.

I don't rush to pick up the phone after the first ring. By now I know it's probably someone from The Battalion calling with a problem that I will have to take care of or someone calling to remind me about a meeting I forgot. And those times I think it may be "the call" I have enough poise and willpower to let it ring a few times. And I don't spend hours giggling on the phone.

I don't go home every other weekend. Mom and Dad made it a whole summer without seeing their youngest daughter, and I think they can make it for a month or two. Besides, I spent eighteen years in my hometown and only three years here. I'm going to make

up for lost time by staying here (or taking road trips to more exciting places) as often as possible.

I don't call my friends who are still in high school. Of course, after being gone for three years, I don't have many friends left. Those who are left probably wouldn't understand what I was talking about anyway.

I don't start studying for my exams a week ahead of time. As a senior I have refined the art of procrastination so that I do all my studying the night before an exam. Cramming is better for the brain, right?

I don't swoon every time a c.t. in boots says hello. By now I know that he says it (A) because he needs an ego trip, or (B) because it's his habit and he's just saying howdy to everyone he meets, which is fine.

I don't think I'm going to flunk out of the University just because I make D's on all first-round exams. By now I know that my prof will drop a test grade, curve the whole class's grades, or that I will Q-drop the class. Besides, it takes more than one semester of low grades to get booted.

But the difference in attitudes that really blew my mind occurred on a recent weekend. I decided to wear a sheet, actually a curtain made from a sheet, to a toga party. My roommate nearly blew a fuse. She couldn't believe that I, the quiet girl she knew in high school, was going out in public dressed in a sheet. To top it all off, she couldn't believe that I had done it before and had had a blast. By now, though, I know how to do silly things without looking like a freshman.

Patrice Koranek is the managing editor of The Battalion

Patrice Koranek

LETTERS:

Mass to be held for victim of train-car wreck last week

EDITOR:

I would like to take this opportunity to inform the Aggie Friends of Kathy Hossley that there will be a memorial Mass held at St. Mary's Catholic Church on Tuesday, October 2, at 7:00 p.m. prior to Silver Taps. All are welcome to share in this special memorial service for Kathy and her family.

Julie Kassem

Women should not vote for Republicans

EDITOR:

The Republicans say there is not a gender gap in support for President Reagan. I don't know if there is or not — but there sure ought to be.

I watched the Republican Convention in Dallas when they were discussing abortion. I saw this big fat man who was leading the right wing Republicans who said that a woman shouldn't have an abortion even if the pregnancy was caused by rape.

He said that it would be murder to abort the pregnancy and that the woman should be forced to carry the child even if she did not want the child and hated the father. He said she could adopt it out after she had born the pain and expense of the pregnancy.

Think of it, the Republican Party sees a woman's body as something she has no control over and as an instrument to be used to add to the population of the world.

Women ought to tell those men who want to tell them what to do with their bodies that until they have carried a child to term, they should keep their advice to themselves.

Houston Thompson
Silsbee, Texas

Man impressed by honor, integrity of A&M students

EDITOR:

As the General Manager of Chapparral Minerals, Inc. I have been taking courses at Texas A&M University to improve my knowledge of the oil business. Two things have recently occurred to me that positively reflect on the institution and its students.

During the spring of 1984, while taking a course in geophysics, I left my Hewlett-Packard 41CV calculator in the computer center. Several days later I went back and, to my relief, the calculator was being held at the desk by the student in charge. When I offered her a reward, she declined saying she did not accept money for things like that.

In the second case, I misplaced an expensive leather briefcase, but could not remember where. Several months later, I received a call from the Geophysics Department saying that they had found my briefcase and had finally figured out how to unlock it. By unlocking it and ex-

amining the contents, they had tracked me down. When I picked it up, my briefcase was in fine shape and so was the \$50.00 savings bond I had left inside.

The integrity and respect for others' property that was displayed in these two instances are a great credit to the students at Texas A&M University. I've sent a \$250.00 check to the Texas A&M University Memorial Scholarship Fund as a token of my appreciation.

Stephen E. Ogden
Chapparral Minerals, Inc.

McGlohon off base one more time

EDITOR:

In the Friday Battalion Robert McGlohon's critique of William F. Buckley, Jr.'s article was obviously colored by Robert's preconceived ideas about what a conservative writer would say. To quote Robert's article: "Later in the article, the author proclaims, 'When one realm of ethics or morality is abandoned — particularly in an area like sexuality, which can so debase human dignity — all of the others are likely to follow.' Imagine that: Sexuality debases human dignity." He did not follow Buckley's train of thought. He was saying that abandoning ethics or morality in the area of sexuality debases humanity dignity. He was not implying that sexuality itself would debase human dignity.

One is left with the impression that Robert read the article with his mind already set to disagree and only cued in on what he wanted to hear.

Norene Dupre