

# Opinion

## Computer access fee a good move for A&M

There's a new fee in town — its name is "computer access."



Sondra Pickard

Unannounced and completely unexpected, it sneaked onto our fee slips this semester. It seemed to be quietly and strategically stuffed between the student center complex fee and the student I.D. card fee. Now, along with the ever-unpopular student service fees and building use fees, we will pay \$3 per semester hour for access to computers that we may or may not use.

Few — if any — outside the Texas A&M administration are welcoming computer access with open arms. In fact, I have yet to find one student who's remotely positive about it, or even neutral. Most are outraged. Everyone's confused.

"Why should I have to pay for something I won't ever use?" they ask. "How can they do this to us? It's just not fair."

The confusion and outrage are understandable and probably were expected by the administration. But when fees are created or raised, temporary student chaos is bound to result.

To help ease the pain, a brief explanation for the computer access fee accompanied our fee slips. It doesn't say

much, and it doesn't come close to easing the pain.

But now that we're stuck with the fee, it's time to stop crying and start giving a little thought to what the administration is up to and just what we'll be getting for our precious computer access dollars.

It did appear on our fee slips as if out of nowhere, but the possibility and feasibility of such a fee was considered for more than two years before it actually went into effect.

There is a definite need for more and better computer facilities on this campus. Figures compiled by the University clearly indicate that student computer use on this campus has skyrocketed since 1980.

But it takes money to maintain and expand what we already have, and that money is never easy to come by. The state's not in the habit of giving handouts whenever A&M is in need, so another source of income is needed.

The idea of charging every student for computer access is new, but A&M is certainly not alone in its experiment. Groups of A&M administrators and professors from each college researched the issue and found that at least 50 public colleges and universities nationwide had some kind of computer access fee ranging from \$1 per semester hour to \$150 per semester.

It seems to be the best method of ensuring that students have total access to computers whenever they need it. And A&M's \$3 per semester hour rate is especially reasonable when compared to those at some other schools.

## Scotland, like Europe, should discover joys of shower bathing

IRVINE, Scotland — This is a wonderful country. The scenery is breathtaking. The tiny villages are charming, and the Scottish people are open and giving, have marvelous senses of humor, and many of them look like they just walked out of a Bobby Burns poem.



Lewis Grizzard

But I discovered something about Scotland I have discovered in many other parts of Europe.

These people have not figured out the rather simple theory of the shower bath despite the fact they have had centuries upon centuries to do it.

To be completely comfortable, I absolutely must have a shower, one that stays hot for more than 45 seconds and offers more in the way of water pressure than a slow sprinkle.

During the first days of my trip here to play the storied golf courses of this country, I stayed at Rufflet's Inn in historic St. Andrews.

Nice place, nice people, good food and good drink. But the shower in my room was pitiful. It couldn't have wetted down a cat, much less a fully grown person like me.

And, predictably, 45 seconds into my shower, which was just enough to wet my feet and under one arm and get shampoo in my hair, the water turned cold.

Desperate, I got out of the shower and heated some water in the coffee pot and poured it over my head and got shampoo in my eyes.

Blinded, I wandered into the hallway trying to find a towel when the door to my room locked behind me.

Realizing I was outside my room with no clothes on, I hid in a maintenance closet wiping the shampoo out of my eyes with a mop. I remained hidden until the maid came and unlocked the door to clean the room.

I walked in holding the mop in a strategic position.

The maid screamed and ran out of my room and told the desk clerk there was some pervert upstairs doing something strange with a mop. Luckily, the authorities didn't press charges as long as I agreed to leave town as soon as possible.

So I traveled to Montgreenan Mansion, a small, delightful hotel near Irvine. They didn't have any showers there, and I was forced to take my first tub bath since my rubber ducky had a blowout.

I hate bathing in a tub. It takes forever to fill a tub, and you have to be a contortionist to get in and out of one, and I don't like washing my face in water I've been sitting in.

We really could help the Europeans improve their standard of living if we could show them what a shower is and how it should work.

In the spirit of Lend-Lease and the Peace Corps, perhaps we could send over a team of plumbers to enlighten our friends abroad on the latest in bathing techniques.

Also, I'd like to say a few words about European toilets, and as soon as I figure out how to flush one, I will.

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For example, the University of Michigan, which is on the quarter system instead of our semester system, charges every student \$50 per quarter for computer access. Engineering and business majors pay \$100 per quarter. And some universities make it mandatory to buy a computer upon entering school.

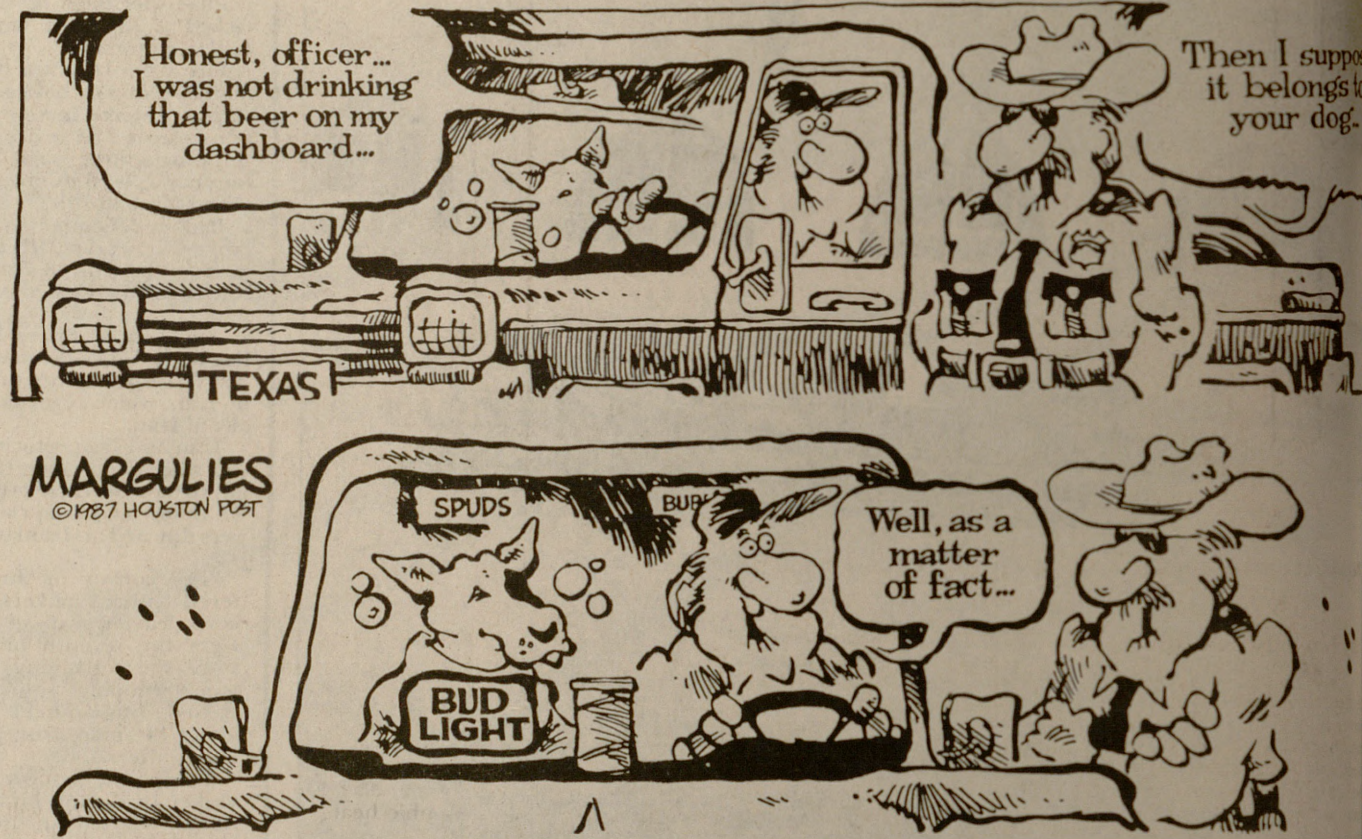
Although it doesn't charge a computer access fee at this time, The University of Texas will probably do so within the next year. Dr. Charles Warlick, the director of the Computation Center at UT, says the

idea is under consideration and that there is a trend toward such fees in Texas and nationwide. Warlick says it simply is not possible to charge students for exactly how much they use computers and that equal access is the best idea.

A&M's fee is chicken scratch for what we're getting. We shouldn't complain about fees when the state tuition we pay is among the lowest in the nation. If it didn't come in the form of an itemized fee, it would have eventually come in the form of higher tuition, which would have caused more of a ruckus.

The computer access fee will be to support and expand student computing use only — not faculty administrative computer use. Those who never use computers on campus and say they never will, probably should. A time may come when the wish for access to a computer, when to do a research paper or work a problem. When it does, instead of wishing they had paid for computer at the beginning of the semester, they can use one of the facilities on campus with no hassle.

Sondra Pickard is a senior journalism major and editor of The Battalion.



## Mail Call

### Kyle Field belongs to students

EDITOR:

"Come and see us practice" says Jackie Sherrill. "Come early, we will be glad to have you." Right. If you're so glad to have us watch the football team practice, why did you turn Kyle Field into Huntsville maximum security prison?

When you first came to Texas A&M you started the 12th man kick-off team, which was a fine contribution to this school. Five years and two Cotton Bowls later, you have sent a message to the 12th man that we can't even be trusted on our own Kyle Field. The addition of chain-link gates on all of the port-holes and the policy of locking the outside fence to the field not only angers us, it makes us wonder — what is the point of the 12th man?

This is not a personal attack on Jackie Sherrill but on all of those involved with the closing of Kyle Field in the evenings.

I enjoyed jogging on the track at night. Being allowed in the stadium at night gave me a sense of belonging to the University and its football team. I don't think it is right for a school to grow at the expense of its students or for a field to be resurfaced at the expense of its joggers. I thought what made this school special and different was that the school belonged to the students. The closing of Kyle Field is very disappointing and it really makes me think that A&M probably is just becoming "one of the other universities."

Jason Oakley '90  
Bill Hampton '88

### Aggie pride is justifiable

EDITOR:

As a resident of the state of Louisiana, an avid football fan and a proud Aggie mom, I have been looking forward to Saturday, when A&M hosts LSU at Kyle Field. After reading an article by Marty Mule in the August 31 New Orleans Times-Picayune, I felt compelled to write this letter.

Mr. Mule's article was titled "Aggies aren't bragging this year." He said, in part:

"A year ago, A&M was a hot commodity, a legitimate national contender that was heralded from the Atlantic to the Pacific. LSU, in the season opener, burst A&M's bubble 35-17, a victory aided in no small measure by the Aggies' pregame braggadocio."

"They were so arrogant," Tiger guard Ralph Norwood said, "that it was hard to ignore. Coach (Bill) Arnsparger just kept telling us to let them do the talking before the game. We'll do the talking after the game."

"It worked out just that way. But the Aggies are quiet in College Station now."

Maybe the Aggies aren't bragging this year, but the Aggie mom is. Last year was my first venture to Tiger Stadium, legendary for the awesome spirit of LSU students and fans. But instead of being awed by their spirit, I came away with a different impression and one that gives me reason to brag.

I can brag about the 17 Aggies I entertained in my home last year for the A&M-LSU weekend. They were fun, well-mannered, helpful and gracious.

I can brag about the remarkable good-sportsmanship displayed by all of them when they did not respond in a like manner to the insults and harassment (that "awesome LSU spirit") hurled at them by LSU students and fans before, during and after the game.

I can brag about an Aggie in our group who exemplified Aggie sportsmanship. After the game, in response to an insult from an LSU fan, he told the person that he had every right to be proud of LSU for winning the game, but that we were just as proud of our team and his insults were unwarranted. The LSU fan, embarrassed and unable to reply, cowered away with his "awesome" spirit somewhat diminished.

I can brag that when LSU visits Kyle Field Saturday they will find a spirit there quite unlike their own. Aggies are not arrogant; they are justifiably proud.

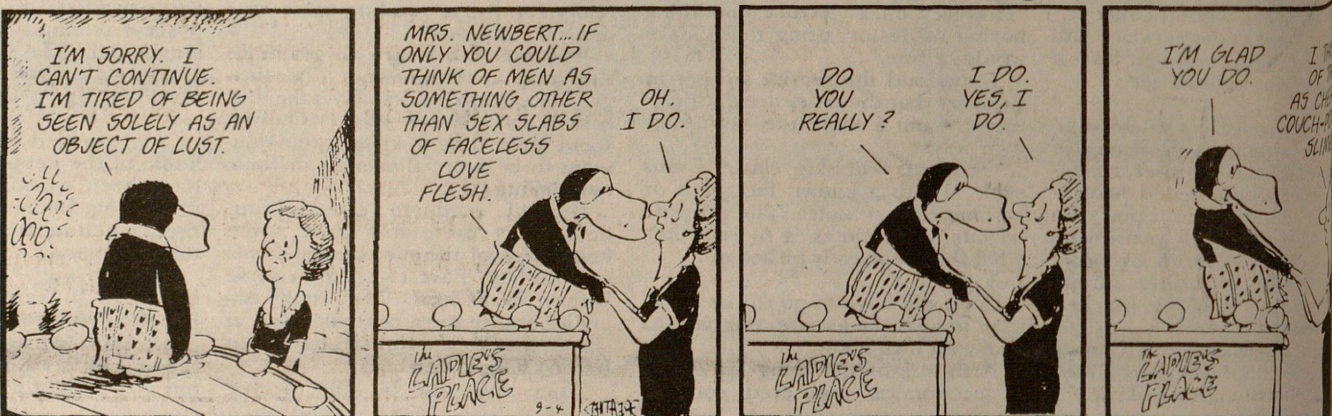
Beat the hell out of LSU, Aggies!

Carol Schmidt

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## BLOOM COUNTY

by Berke Breathed



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