

Opinion

Only Aags can end school's 'code of silence'

I went to see "Nerds in Paradise" Saturday. Although it wasn't a highly intellectual movie, there was a phenomenon presented that I found fascinating — and applicable to Texas A&M.



D.A. Jensen

In "Nerds," the "bad frat daddies" blindly followed their leader in the persecution of the "nerd frat daddies." The situation is similar across the A&M campus. Unfortunately, there is a lot of blind following happening at A&M as people associated with the University allow the school to keep a code of silence.

Texas A&M is a public institution and should be governed by the public it serves. This is usually not the case because the University student public often follows its leaders faithfully and blindly.

That's why there have been so many lawsuits fought to inhibit the release of information to interested sources.

The University participates in these lawsuits even with the knowledge that it has a slim chance of victory. It isn't humorous until you realize that the public, which has the right to the information, pays to fight its release.

Now, the case of the football investigation reports.

There is something strange happening. Too much of the student body, former students and the general public are accepting personal privacy as a legitimate excuse to withhold valuable information. The court system is not. The details of the A&M football investigation will be released, and rightly so.

It is time for everyone to realize that this is a public school. It is not, and should not be, governed by the wishes of a select few. We, as the public, demand to be informed about the working of every other aspect of our

public life, like the government. This demand has led to the Freedom of Information Act and the Texas Open Records Act.

Why do we accept a code of silence when it comes to our University? The public and the media should not be foiled every time they attempt to gain controversial information. When they do encounter unnecessary difficulty they should protest, vigorously. The media does protest. The largest interested body, the students, sits back and calmly lets the administration have its way.

I'm sure everyone associated with the University would like to believe that it is a grand, no-fault institution. I can assure you, it is not, and this hesitation to release the requested football investigation information is proof. Even

if the released information doesn't reveal horrible wrongdoing, it does reveal the administration's reluctance to be open with its consumers.

Maybe the biggest question is why the release of the report was fought if no rules were violated? If no rules had been violated, the A&M administration would have held the report up like a medal of honor for all of the Southwest Conference to see. It would be so proud of its cleanliness that it gladly would have forsaken Kevin Murray's privacy. It is a rare happening when good news is not proclaimed.

The editorial board of *The Battalion* pointed out that the University should not "thumb its nose at the law." I say it is more important for the University not to thumb its nose at those who support it. The insult is complete. The consumers and supporters of the

University don't have the right, in the administration's eyes, to receive information about the activities of the University.

It's time to demand a policy of openness from this institution.

I know it is hard to accept criticism of an institution we all love so well. I expect to be told that Highway 6 runs both ways. I also expect someone to seriously consider what has been said and realize that treating the problem with "traditional cliches" will not make it go away. We have a right to know what is going on in Aggieland. The law gives us the right. We must fight to make use of the right.

D.A. Jensen is a senior journalism major and a columnist for *The Battalion*.

Mail Call

Unfair publicity

EDITOR:

I believe that the photo on the cover of the Sept. 29 issue of *The Battalion* was unfair publicity. *The Battalion* at least should have included the other eight candidate's names. If Heather Glenn wins, I think that it will have been because of the picture. Hopefully in future elections this type of publicity will be equal for all of the candidates.

Janice Steffes '91

A column or self-parody?

EDITOR:

In regards to Brian Frederick's Sept. 22 column about "scrapping" the public school system: Huh?

I don't know how to start criticizing a column that borders on self-parody! Does Mr. Frederick honestly believe that we are oppressing our grandparents by sending our children to public schools?!

Does he honestly believe that when property taxes are reduced, slumlords will lower the rent on their properties enough so that poorer families will be able to afford private schools?!

Does he honestly believe a return to the 18th century — when the truly poor had to rely on handouts for their education and when separate was considered equal — would be better than what we have now?

Come to think of it though, maybe Mr. Frederick has a point. Apparently our public schools are failing to teach our children even basic reasoning skills. After all Mr. Frederick is a product of our public school system.

Jerry Rosiek '87

Best education isn't private

EDITOR:

I would like to respond to the Sept. 22 column by Brian Frederick on the public school. Brian's idea of scrapping the public schools seems sound at first, but, like many people, Brian has made an unreasonable proposal based on a lack of in-depth knowledge of the public education system. His attitude is the same that has swept across Texas in the past decade: Everyone believes he knows what is best for education.

The problem Brian has is his assumption that parents will select the best education for their kids, if any at all. He said that those who didn't provide their children with an education would hardly exceed the current dropout rate. Even if it is equal, Brian doesn't think having 500,000 students drop out of school in Texas each year is a major problem. What does he propose to do with half a million new illiterate people in Texas each year? And the idea that parents will select the best schools for their children is preposterous. Most parents will be looking for a cheap education for their kids.

Making schools compete for students isn't a bad idea — competition is what made this country great — but under Brian's proposal it could only hurt education. Most of the students want to go to schools that are easy and fun. Since the number of students dictates how much money a school has to operate, the schools will want as many students as possible at the expense of quality.

Another problem is that he assumes the poor will be helped by the rich in getting an education. Our society now does not always help the poor when they need it. Does Brian expect this to change in the future? A free education is the only guarantee the poor have, and now Brian proposes to take that away from them.

There are many more fallacies in Brian's proposals, too many to go into now. The problems of Texas education are a result of people who do not fully understand the dynamics of public education. If the Texas Legislature would work with the professional educators of this state instead of against them, then things would improve drastically. Some people might say we cannot trust teachers to do what is best, but if we can't trust those who are in the trenches, then education is a lost cause.

Kent Morrison '89

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 classification, address and telephone number of the writer.

GARY MARKSTEIN
TRIBUNE NEWSPAPERS-AZ
COPLEY NEWS SERVICE



Campus center provides career, personal counseling for students

Whenever an article is published about the Student Counseling Service, whenever our services are advertised or whenever an SCS staff member gives a speech, I have mixed emotions.

Kerry Hope
Guest Columnist

On one hand, I'm glad that more students will be aware of the Student Counseling Service. On the other hand, I know this increased awareness means that more students will request services — and we are understaffed even to meet current demands. This guest column is written to let you know about your counseling center, how to access our services and what happens when the demand outstrips our resources.

The Student Counseling Service (SCS) provides academic skills development, career counseling, choice of major counseling, personal counseling, and daytime emergency counseling. We usually work on an appointment basis, but if you are in a crisis, a counselor is available from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays without an appointment.

When you call or come by the third

floor of the YMCA Building to make an appointment, a receptionist will ask if you are a currently enrolled student who has paid a student service fee. She will ask you the general area (like those listed above) in which you want counseling. She's not being nosy — she just needs to know what type of appointment to schedule.

In the academic or career area, you are likely to begin with some testing or a workshop, and then have a one-on-one counseling session if you need further assistance.

In the personal counseling area, the receptionist will set up with an "intake" appointment with one of our counselors and have you listen to a 5-minute tape about counseling and our services. You generally can get in for an intake within a week or two of when you call to make your appointment.

During the 50-minute "intake," you will talk with the counselor about your concerns, and then the intake counselor will come up with a plan for further services. Often this plan includes individual or group counseling at the SCS. Some students have to be referred elsewhere if their issues are not appropriate for the services available at the SCS. Some students don't need any

further services beyond this "intake" session.

Sometimes whether or not ongoing counseling beyond the "intake" will be available at the SCS depends on the number of student requests during that time of the semester. Often we are on a waiting list for ongoing counseling from two to six weeks long. If you don't want to have to wait for more counseling, your intake counselor can make a referral for you to another agency or mental health professional.

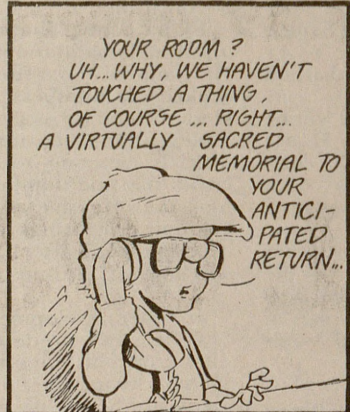
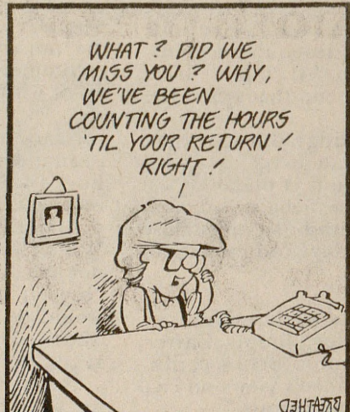
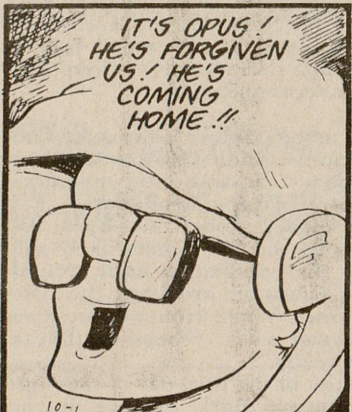
We have never been on a waiting list for academic or career services. When we're on a waiting list for personal counseling there are always, of course, emergency services available at the A.P. Beutel Health Center.

The American Psychological Association Accreditation Report stated that "the fact that this is such a strong, excellent program is, at present, one of the best-kept secrets in the country." We have a quality staff that is concerned about Aggies and their educational and emotional development. I hope this guest column will help you or a friend know how to ask for help, and to know that we're here and that we care.

Kerry Hope Ph.D. is the associate director of Texas A&M's Student Counseling Service.

BLOOM COUNTY

by Berke Breathed



The Battalion

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