

Opinion

The Battalion

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AFL-CIO WELCOMES BACK TEAMSTERS



Pay up — later

University officials made the right choice when they decided to let students pay residence hall and meal plan fees on an installment plan.

The current installment plan, which allows students to spread out payments for tuition and required fees, was a step in the right direction toward helping financially troubled students stay in school. But its usefulness was limited because optional fees — including room and board — still had to be paid up front.

Under the new plan, use fees and other optional fees (such as those for sports ticket books) still must be paid in advance. But students who live or eat on campus will find payment more convenient. In a time of rising tuition costs, it's good to see the University try to ease the financial burden on its students.

Wanna bet

Texans moved toward economic diversification by voting Tuesday to legalize pari-mutuel betting, but state officials should consider the vote as much a warning as a blessing.

Legalized gambling was opposed by religious groups and by those who said it would bring organized crime to Texas. Despite that opposition, voters turned out in higher-than-expected numbers and approved the referendum by a wide margin. They were no doubt swayed by the state's dismal economic picture and the situation in Louisiana, where racing is the state's fourth biggest industry and brought in \$500 million in wagers last year.

State officials should take note: Texans evidently are so disillusioned with the state's economy that many of them overcame moral misgivings to vote for a plan that won't generate revenue for several years. That level of dissatisfaction will make itself felt again, probably when it comes time to elect public officials. You — and the officials whose jobs are on the line — can bet on it.

— The Battalion Editorial Board

Texas prison inmate has profitable idea

Some convicts spend their time counting the long days. But not Eric Echols. He's trying to start a mail-order business — or a scam of sorts — while he's locked up in the Texas prison system.



Mike Royko

He's sending spicy love letters to women. And he says that if they enjoy his letters, he will keep them coming daily — for a fee.

One such letter was recently received by a Chicagoan, Jan Kodner.

"I don't know how he got my name," Jan said. "Probably out of a phone book. But I was surprised, especially by the tone of the letter."

Although the letter was handwritten, it's obviously one of many that have been run off on a copying machine.

It says: "Hi! Do you like to receive letters from guys? If you're a mature, single woman like I heard, I'm sure you do."

"What kind of letters? Romantic? Interesting? Spicy? Stimulating? Friendly? Chatty?"

"How about all of the above?"

"Wouldn't it be great if every time you went to your mailbox you'd find a letter from a guy waiting for you? And not just ordinary letters, but very special and thrilling letters?"

He goes on to explain that he is 23, single, an ex-Marine and is in prison due to "a most tragic confrontation with the law."

Then he gushes on: "For a long time, I've wished I had a woman I could write to every night just before I go to bed. I'd like this woman to be not just my friend but also my 'dream lover.'"

"I think you're the kind of woman I could really learn to like a lot. It would be good for me to have a woman like you to write to — and I know it would be good for you, too!"

"I'd like to get out of here someday and make my dream come true. (I'll tell you more about my dream when I know you better.)"

Said Jan, who received the letter, "I found that dream lover stuff a bit forward."

Then Eric's prose becomes even more titillating. "I'll try extra hard to make all my letters the kind you'll love to read. I have a great imagination — that's why I daydream and fantasize so much."

"And sometimes I'd like to describe things you and I would be doing TOGETHER — special things in special places."

"I'll always try to cheer you up and I'll always try to make you feel loved, wanted, needed — and stimulated!"

"I'm very macho and definitely not a wimp. I'm all man! And I'd like to have a special kind of relationship with you. So this may be the start of something wonderful for both of us."

"I'm willing to take a chance on you, if you're willing to take a chance on me. So how about it? Won't you at least give me a chance to tell you a little more about myself and try to make you happy?"

Then came the pitch: "Let's try it, shall we? Let me write to you every weekday for two weeks. You'll receive 10 letters."

"All I ask you to do is send me \$10 to take care of the postage, stationery and so on. That's not asking too much, is it?"

"I've sent you an inmate trust fund deposit slip. Follow the directions, then write me a letter telling me that you've sent it."

"You just wouldn't believe how eager I am to hear from you — and to begin our thrilling adventure together."

"Love, Eric."

And there was a form enclosed that permits people to send money to Eric, by way of the inmate trust fund, which handles prisoners' money.

Will Jan send \$10 to get Eric's dreams and fantasies of things they would be doing together — "special things in special places?"

"To be honest," Jan said, "I am curious about what fantasies he has about the two of us."

"And I do enjoy getting mail as much as the next person, although I am a happily married man — my first child being due next month."

"So I have sent him my picture," said Jan, an attorney.

"Maybe when Mr. Echols sees my bald head and bushy beard, I can have his 'postage and handling' fee reduced."

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Helpful hints for picking classes

It's the time of the year again to open up those illustrious course catalogs and try to make an informed decision about which classes to take next semester. The choices are never easy, which is unfortunate since they may affect the rest of your life, or at least your graduation.



D.A. Jensen

You're bombarded with strange foreign names, inadequate course titles, ever-changing course numbers and nasty morning classes. Where do you begin now that you aren't forced to take the unsolicited advice of an adviser? Here's where to start:

- You're off to a bad start if you set up a schedule that requires you to be in class by 8 a.m. every morning. There are very few people who can successfully resist the urge to party on a least one weekday. Think of the agony you'll feel the morning after when the alarm rings at 98 decibels at 6 a.m. If you do get up and stagger to class, you probably won't get much out of it.

- Instead of the five-day-a-week regime, go the two-day route. By scheduling those 8 a.m. mornings on only Tuesday and Thursday, you increase your attendance rate and retention rate exponentially. You still get out of classes at a reasonable time, so you have sufficient party time or soap time — but not at the expense of your education.

- If you must take the 8 a.m. class, avoid the professor with the name you

cannot pronounce, read or recognize. If the name looks like a mutated form of alphabet soup, chances are you won't understand a word said during lecture. Beware of this section even if it is taught at a more civilized time of the day. The time may not help your comprehension.

There are rules governing the language proficiency of foreign graduate students, but they are essentially useless since the consumers of the class aren't given the opportunity to influence them. They don't apply to professors at all.

This class can be safe if you have a working knowledge of the material before entering the class. It's easier to understand what's happening if you already know the basics.

- Avoid classes that are listed as STAFF in the catalogue. This is a possible indication that you may get stuck with a graduate student who didn't find out he was teaching the class until the day before it started. This is a real danger. You know who suffers.

The class can end up unorganized and useless, taught by an unprepared, hostile graduate student. Express your concern to the graduate student. Most try to accommodate you. If you don't obtain satisfaction at this level, a trip to the department head is required. Save this as the last resort.

- Now there are team-taught classes. These have the potential to offer students a multi-faceted view of a single subject. It sounds like a good idea, but for the students it often spells disaster.

Just imagine. You get over the hump of the first exam and have actually started to enjoy the class. You're accustomed to the lecture style of the professor and have become an efficient note-

taker. BOOM.

Friday's professor is gone on Monday. There is a stranger in front of the room telling you how the new section of the class is designed. You've lost the comfortable, familiar learning atmosphere. It's time to explore new lands and experience new test formats. Instead of concentrating on learning, you are forced to concentrate on learning the new professor's style.

- Don't automatically take the class that is supposed to be a blow-off. Inevitably you will be the one person who gets the yahoo who wants to finally make the class a challenge. You end up struggling in the class you thought was going to make your life a breeze.

- The last class of classes to avoid are those that have a Notes-n-Quotes graduate student doing your note-taking work for you. This is ultimately detrimental to your course grade. You will be tempted to skip class. If you do go to class you will be tempted to daydream. The \$21 spent on Note-n-Quotes will take you through the class. Or so you think. Try again.

Notes taken by another person, no matter how comprehensive, cannot be substituted for the learning that takes place as you listen to a lecture and write it down. These people are doing you a service only if the prepackaged notes are used as a supplement to your own hard work. Don't be fooled.

- My last bit of advice is to totally ignore all the advice I've given so far. It's nonsense. I've never based my decision about a class on any of the above guidelines, and I've gotten a high quality education so far. Sometimes it's a challenge, but that's why we're here.

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

Mail Call

Since when is morality passe?

EDITOR:

For a whole semester, I have been subjected to reading the romp on Brian Frederick letters in *The Battalion*, and I'm trying to understand what all the fuss is about.

Why is someone who believes in a standard of ethics and sticks to them called a "fascist" or a "neo-Nazi"? I think Frederick's columns are good because he seems to stick to his guns in what he says. That's rare.

Since when is morality and patriotism passe? It would be interesting to see what the left-wing members of campus would think of me. "Fascist Nazi" they would shout if they knew I saluted the flag or honored the fact that many Americans (including Aggies) fought to keep this country free, and that I would give my life to do the same.

These people sicken me with their lack of guts. They wave flowers and say "peace" while our enemies prepare to destroy us. To Iran we are "the great Satan which must be destroyed." It is us or them. I don't like it at all, but so goes

life. We should offer the best intentions, certainly. But we must be ready for the worst.

So if these views are fascism, then indeed Frederick is a fascist. And so am I. And so are the founding fathers, and so is God. Because his standard is higher than all ours, and he sticks to it, even if I don't.

James Sexton '89

Who's the Czar?

EDITOR:

Pardon me, but would someone please tell me who's the Czar who decided to convert the tower dining room into a faculty lounge? Also, is this the same person who changed the senior ring requirements? I need to know so I can take him or her off my Christmas card list.

Paul J. Russell '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.

BLOOM COUNTY

by Berke Breathed

