

Opinion

Mail Call

Some dangerous adiposity

EDITOR:

You asked for letters, so here's one sure to get some irate, self-serving responses. In rebuttal to Jill Webb's column concerning social bias against fat chicks (can we call them fat young women?). I would like to offer comments from one who decided not to knock 'em 'til I tried 'em.

Fat women sweat a lot. The human body wasn't designed to cool such a mass of adiposity. They cover the smell with a half-ton of perfume. I picked up my date and spent the rest of the evening unable to smell anything. My sinuses had been grenaded. The woman ate more than I did at dinner (decidedly unfeminine). She also smoked — a tremendously gross thing to do in polite company. I tried manfully to dance with her. Leading her was like steering a small planetoid. Very unwieldy, and I couldn't get my arms around her properly (I'm 6'1"). I had to constantly watch her feet. She had on stiletto heels. I was afraid that one misstep by her would nail my foot to the floor. Let's face it, half of 300 pounds is still 150 pounds, a formidable weight on a small surface, as the physics people would say.

Fat people have a lot to offer society. Certainly, society would be missing a "large" piece of its rich tapestry without them. Fat women can be the sweetest around, if you ignore the fact that they are always stuffing their faces. Let's not forget that you have to be big in order to sing opera properly! But please don't inflict them on average men socially! It's too dangerous!

John S. Snowden
Grad Student

Making tracks is no good

EDITOR:

Once again the proposal for moving the railroad tracks along the Wellborn Road corridor is in the news, this time with an estimated \$50 million price tag. The Board of Regents wants the tracks moved so west of campus will no longer be "divided" from the rest. This project will be funded 45 percent by the state, which includes A&M and state highway department funds, 45 percent by the federal government, 5 percent by local government and 5 percent by the railroad. The Board of Regents has done all of this without public opinion on the matter.

Where A&M, Bryan, College Station and Brazos County will get the money is anybody's guess. At A&M, aren't there many more pressing needs such as day-care facilities for faculty/staff, dorm space, parking, a sometimes-inadequate library, establishing colleges of music and fine arts, minority recruitment and pay raises to name a few? What will Bryan and College Station do, cut our already-cut services, not get pay raises, stop building needed roads and parks? All of these could be provided for, and improve the quality of life more than moving the railroad tracks.

On the safety side, lowering gates have been installed at all intersections and train derailments are about as common as blizzards in this area. Why not build, at a much more reasonable cost, over- or underpasses for pedestrians and/or automobiles if the tracks are in the way?

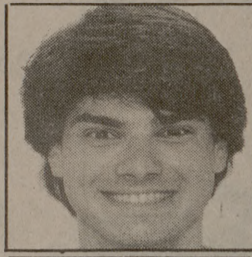
Moving the railroad tracks is an idea that's time has come and gone. The cost is too great and the benefits too few for too few people.

Mike Varner '88

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.

Spare a dime for a space station

I recently happened to be wandering aimlessly around some large unnamed downtown area when I stumbled upon a poor, hopeless fellow who was apparently down-and-out on his luck. He was dressed in a sharp three-piece suit and was rattling a few pennies in a small tin cup.



Mark Nair

"Excuse me," he said in that raspy, down-and-out voice of his. He rattled the cup and looked at me pitifully. "Got a dime, mister?"

Now I was oblivious to the more than obvious faux pas of helping our society's downtrodden and poor, so I offered to buy the poor fellow a cup of coffee and a nice, glucose-laden danish.

"Oh, no," he said, smiling a raspy, down-and-out smile. "I don't want any of that. Just a dime. Or a quarter, if you have a quarter."

How strange, I thought, as I rubbed my chin in puzzlement. But I was quarterless. All I had with me was my checkbook.

"Do you take checks?" I queried querulously.

"Sure," he said and handed me a pen. "Make it out to NASA."

Oh, ho. I could smell financial trouble on the horizon. "NASA?"

"Yes, its for the space station."

Ah. It suddenly became clear. NASA, the Space Shuttle, the space station, pennies from heaven. No problem.

He leaned into the light to grab my check. I gasped a hearty gasp. Golly! He looked very similar to James Fletcher, big man on campus at NASA, The Ad-

ministrator. But before I could be certain, he snatched my check from my hand and retreated into the dark and dreary shadows.

"Thanks," he said. I could tell he was on the verge of tears. Here was a man with a story to tell.

"You know," the down-and-out fellow said, "I wouldn't have to be doing this if it weren't for those meatheads in Congress. You want a space station, don't you?"

"Sure," I said. Heck, ever since the Ruskies shot old Sputnik over our heads playing the Soviet theme song over and over and over again, I was for anything spacial.

"Yeah," he said, wiping his nose, "everyone wants a space station, except those meatheads in Congress." He began to mimic a senator's voice (doing quite a good job, I might add), "Oh, we need to cut someplace. You hoo, NASA, odd man out. Its your turn. You want \$900 million? Well, take \$200 million. HA HA HA."

"Sorry," I said, genuinely sorry.

"Well, it's not your fault that the space station is doomed. Two hundred million? You can't even buy a decent hammer for \$200 million. Jeez."

I was stumped for even a few helpful words of consolation.

"And then, oh get this, now they're saying that 'Star Wars' can't be deployed before the turn of the century and it'll cost more than \$170 BILLION!"

"That's a lot of money," I said.

"You said it, buddy," said the poor old down-and-out fellow. "But, ho ho, let's give them they're money on a silver platter and it'll not even give NASA the stinking time of day."

"Politics," I said, pacing up and down the alley, looking angry. "Everything is politics."

"No kidding. And you know... The senate subcommittee that too dreams to boldly go where no space station has gone before and smashed like roaches told us to use the \$200 million sum to either phase-out space station program or maintain with \$50 million a month until next uary."

"That rivals my utility bills," I writing another check.

The poor old down-and-out, piece suit bum/beggar/borrower, his fist and chanted "SDI stinks, number one!" a few times until he came hoarse from the excitement petered out by whimpering, "No tion for the station. Money now."

"What else can I do?" I asked, checks like machine gun fire.

But my downtrodden friend used to ramble. "Even DOD's budget congress have said that SDI will knock out 16 percent of incoming missiles. HA! We could spend money much better than... than than wasting it!"

By then I had run out of checks, asked if he took credit cards he didn't after dark. He thanked me, shaking my hand as if he were pumping a water pump in the desert, left a stunned yet hopeful space supporter.

And on my way, a few streets from the block, I heard another raspy voice nearby as bad down-and-out voice in the alley. I looked around and saw my eyes. It sure as heck looked like a cranky Frank Carlucci.

"Pssst, buddy. Got a quarter for SDI in the sky?"

"Jenkies," I exclaimed loudly, then I quickly ran away.

Mark Nair is a graduate student opinion page editor for The Battalion.

Who is that mystery voice?

I don't want to sound too high and mighty here, but if it weren't absolutely necessary, I don't think I'd spend the night at a Motel 6.



Lewis Grizzard

I spend about half my life in motels and hotels as it is, and I've gotten to the point where I need my comforts — minibar in my room, little jars of shampoo and turn-down service where they leave a candy mint on my pillow.

I'm certain a room at a Motel 6 would be clean, but I've got the feeling the towels would be small and there wouldn't be but one pillow and there wouldn't be HBO on the television.

Regardless, I've become a Tom Bodett fan, and if you listen to radio at all, you know Tom Bodett is a national spokesman for Motel 6.

His commercials are homey and clever and he always signs off by saying, "We'll leave the light on for you," which is what your mother used to say when you were going to be out late.

In a world where an advertiser would hire that idiot from Australia to scream at you about batteries, Tom Bodett's calming voice is most welcome.

He talks about Motel 6's great room service (there's a pizza place nearby that delivers) and he even spoke the recent good news that in some Motel 6 rooms, there are new bedspreads.

Since I'd never heard of Tom Bodett before he broke in with Motel 6, I set about to find out more about him.

I even tried to talk to the man directly, but he lives in Alaska, as it turns out, and he was off on his dogsled somewhere.

I did learn the following about him: Tom Bodett was born in Michigan in 1955. He has been a cannery worker, a logger, a building contractor, and a commentator on National Public Radio's "All Things Considered."

He lives in Homer, Alaska, with his wife and son.

I also found out he is an author. I am now in possession of two of his books and I have read them and they have brought me much joy.

One book is "As Far As You Can Go Without a Passport," (Addison-Wesley). The other is "Small Comforts" by the same publisher. Both books are filled with essays that come across as a conversation with your neighbor.

Tom Bodett has a lot to say about stacks of wood, McDonald's coming to Alaska, getting a truck out of a ditch, naming a baby and machinery.

"Machinery and I have an understanding," he writes. "We hate each other."

What I like most about Tom Bodett's writing is he's not topical. He neglects AIDS, nuclear war, racism, the falling dollar, and airline deregulation and deals instead with the fact he's never been able to spit very far.

Tom Bodett has the most believable voice in radio advertising since Arthur Godfrey tried to sell me tea.

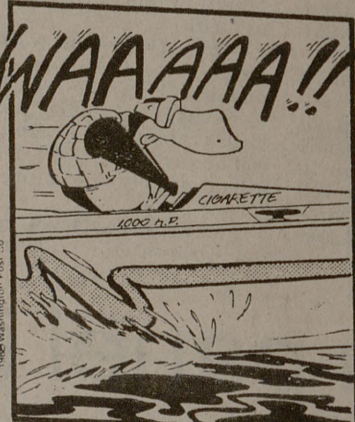
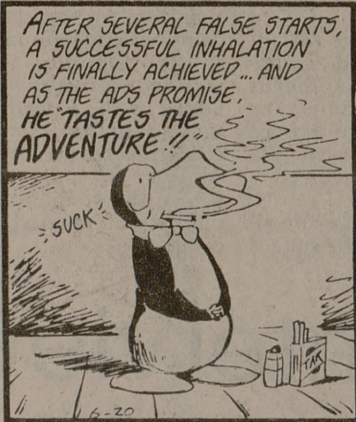
And you know, he is the sort of person who would, in fact, leave the light on for you if he said he would.

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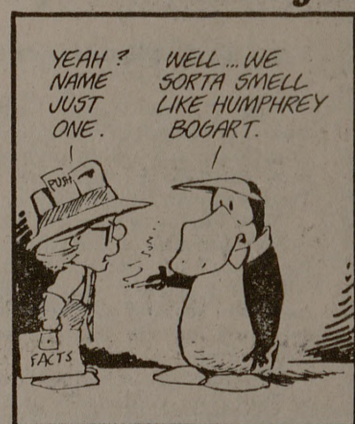
BLOOM COUNTY

by Berke Breath



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