

# Opinion

## Have mercy A&M! No more fees, please



Dean Sueltenfuss

Earlier this week, just out of curiosity, I was looking at my fee slip. According to that slip, it is costing me (my parents, actually) about \$1,000 to attend Texas A&M this semester. That figure even includes a semester-long stay in the luxurious Hart Hall, one of the most prestigious and sought-after residence halls on campus.

About a third of the \$1,000 went for my room in Hart Hall, while another third of it was for tuition. The final third was for various fees. While I have no abhorrence of fees in general, I do occasionally like to know what they are for and why I am paying them.

One fee that I found particularly baffling was the general use fee of \$96.

"General use of what?" I asked myself.

Whatever it is, I'd like to quit using it so I can get my \$96 back.

I would assume that the general use fee has something to do with the use of classrooms, but \$96 seems a little steep to me — I mean, have you been in the Academic Building lately? The rooms smell like stale beer and they look as if they've been inhabited by psychotic tree sloths for at least a year. Is this the decorum that is costing me \$96 per semester? If it is, I have some friends who 0400610 could render all the classrooms on campus to a similar state for a fraction of the cost — and they could have a pretty good time in the process.

The health center fee of \$15 is another fee that I disagree with. Not only is it unfair, it's down right discriminatory. It's not my fault, I don't want to make myself out as a braggart, but I have never — not once — had to set foot in the health center. Furthermore, if I'm in need of medical attention I don't mind paying for it. But I DO mind paying for the medical attention rendered to the idiot who drank too much beer, got sick, and spent three days in the health center attempting to recover from his stupidity.

One of the less illegitimate fees is the student center complex fee of \$20. I must admit that I do spend quite a bit of

time in the MSC. I get my mail there. I occasionally buy books there. I play video games there. Every once in a while I even eat there. I pay for all of these things individually, though, so I'm really not sure what the additional \$20 per semester is all about.

The only other thing that I do at the MSC is occasionally sit down and read a newspaper. Having determined that being able to sit down and read a paper in the MSC is not worth \$20 to me, I would like to submit a formal request to the administrators of A&M to give me my money back. I'll read my newspapers outside from now on. Really — I don't mind.

I have to admit that the student center complex fee appears rather tame when contrasted against the student services fee of \$67. I just can't seem to figure out what services I'm receiving from Texas A&M that I haven't already paid for. Obviously, it wouldn't be anything having to do with academics — all of that stuff would have been covered by the tuition that I (my parents) paid. In fact, the only services I can think of that wouldn't have been covered by at least one of the other fees are things such as keeping the hedges trimmed,

keeping the grass cut, and keeping all those dumb squirrels fed.

Another fee that I found particularly intriguing was the computer access fee of \$48. Why should I pay almost \$100 per year so that some engineering student can spend all of his time writing programs on a university-owned computer? It's bad enough that we all have to pay for the small number of individuals who choose to use these computers.

The worst part of this situation, however, is that a lot of the students who use the computers don't even employ them for legitimate purposes. Some students use these computers to do such things as to communicate with other students at A&M or even to communicate with people in other cities or countries. And do you know who picks up the tab for these little improprieties? We all do — at about \$50 apiece.

If these fees don't strike you as being very impressive sums of money, just multiply them by the 40,000 students who are attending Texas A&M. A fee of just \$10 per student generates \$400,000 of revenue — an impressive sum indeed.

I guess what I'm trying to say about

all of these fees is that the reasoning behind them is flawed. In cases the student body in general using to provide funding for services that benefit only a select group of students at A&M. In other cases, resources that are obtained primarily from the student body are being spent on services or facilities that, while benefiting students at A&M, may not be desired by the majority of students here.

What it boils down to is this: The cases of Texas A&M should have a say regarding what their money is used for. We need to be more vocal in letting the administration know what we want, and the administration needs to be more responsive to our demands. We are paying a lot of money to attend university and many of us don't know where all of that money is going. It's about time that we found out.

After all, would you rather see money being used to improve the academic situation at A&M, or to buy a sports car for a prospective player?

Dean Sueltenfuss is a junior journalism major and columnist for The Battalion.

## Mail Call

### Laverne DeFazio for Miss America

EDITOR:

I read Becky Weisenfels' editorial on Monday, and I couldn't help but smile a little. I'm used to Miss America bashing around this time of year, but this time I think the managing editor has slighted the wrong person. She portrays the new Miss America as a bimbo?

If I remember correctly the Associated Press wire story correctly, Gretchen Carlson is an accomplished classical violinist who attends Stanford. And what about Gretchen's future goals of attending Harvard Law School and becoming a successful business executive? Yes, I see a definite pattern of "bimboism" developing.

I suggest while the editor was sitting on her couch, watching the tube and preparing for the Miss America pageant, Gretchen was practicing her violin, brushing up for her LSAT.

Perhaps Ms. Weisenfels doesn't feel that Gretchen using all of her gifts — intellect, wit, and other qualities, including beauty — is the American way toward her goal of corporate executive? Or maybe our beloved Battalion managing editor is just a tinge jealous of the newly crowned Miss America's combination of beauty and brains?

While I neither support nor denounce the pageant, I can only ask, "What real bimbo here?"

Stephen Pace '91

### Behind the times

EDITOR:

I have been a student at this fine university for four years and will graduate this fall. In the course of time, I have fallen prey to illness like any other person. I have been to the Health Center only to find it lacking the prompt, efficient health care I had expected.

I found my hopes for efficiency dashed while I waited in the "cattle sick pen" they call waiting rooms to see a doctor. Admittedly, they have changed the size of the waiting room near the doctor's offices, but still the basic fact remains — a herd of ailing folks! Often, I have felt even worse leaving the Health Center before I left.

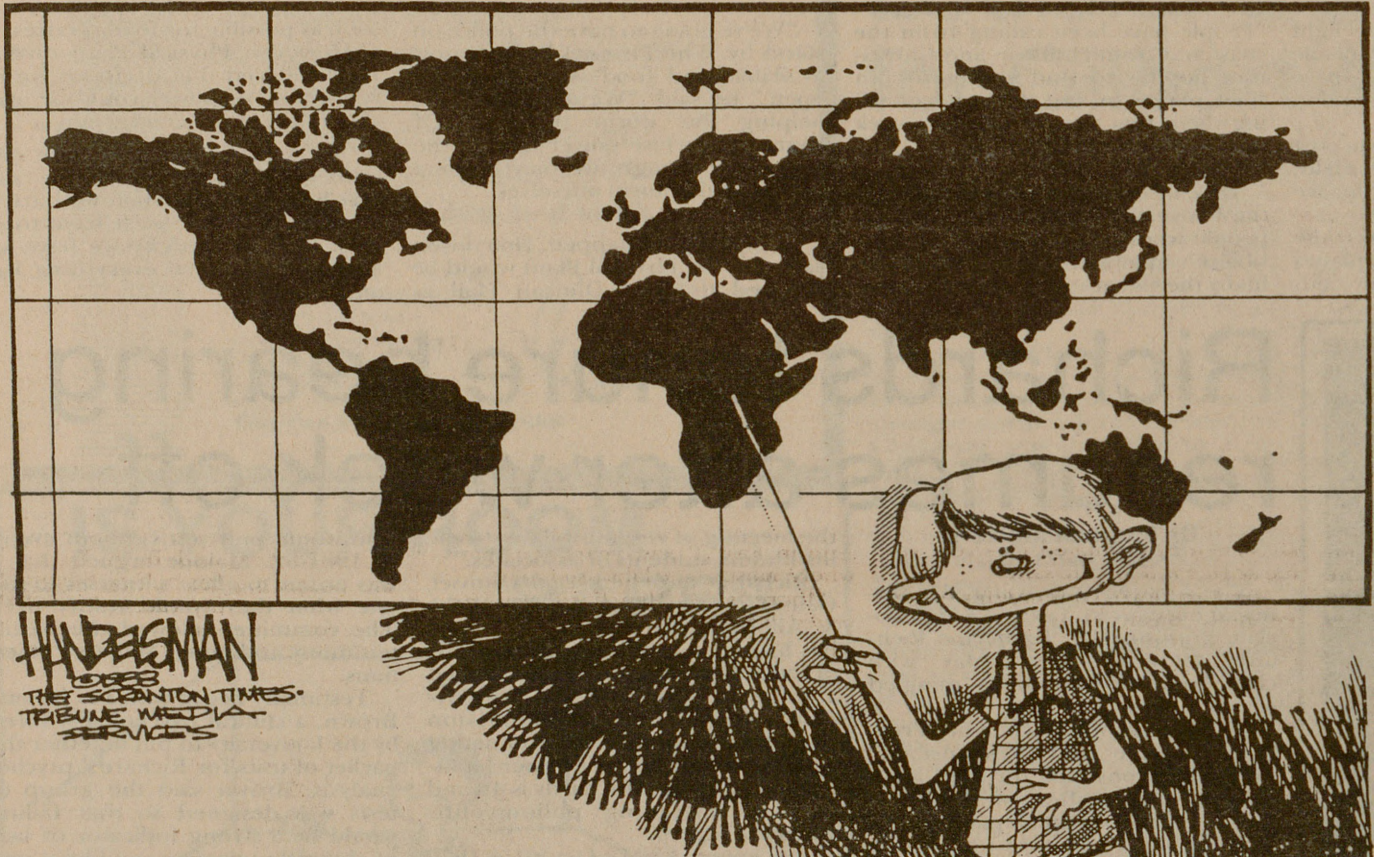
Before anyone suggests that I see a doctor in the Bryan-College Station area, don't own any means of transport to get there and with the parking situation, who'd want to lend me their car?

In short, I find the excessive waits unacceptable and ask for a change:

1. Isolate those people who are contagious in isolation waiting rooms.
2. Increase the medical staff and stagger the lunch hour, i.e., not everyone from noon to 1 p.m. (This university is notorious for shutting down for lunch when students have important matters to attend.)
3. Use the \$15 "health center fee" charged to everyone to our advantage to help us stay well so we can learn!

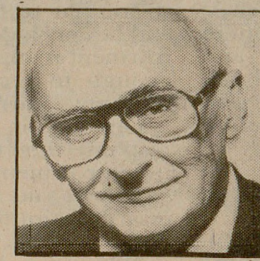
Brenna D. Burnham '88

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



... AND I LEARNED ALL ABOUT GEOGRAPHY RIGHT HERE IN THE USA...

## Jessica's back & bigger than ever



Mike Royko

I don't know why anyone was concerned about the TV writers strike. Even without their creative efforts, there is so much that is worthwhile on television.

For example, last night I was flipping through my cable channels, looking for a wrestling match, when suddenly I was face to face with Jessica Hahn.

I was surprised to see her because I thought she had used up her fame allotment and had passed on to wherever transient celebrities go — the People magazine graveyard.

But there she was, being interviewed by Larry King, so I decided to stick around and see what she's been up to.

Because I tuned in late, and missed the introduction, I didn't know why she was being interviewed.

And at that moment, she was discussing her breasts. She said that as a teen, she had been plump. So she dieted and lost 40 pounds. But this left her with unusual proportions. She said her

breasts drooped almost to her knees.

I thought that King would surely ask her about the difficulty of buying suitable undergarments.

But they went on to discuss her body. She had gone to a California body shop — the kind for people, not cars — and had her body rebuilt. New nose, teeth and anything that was hanging low.

Then it became clear why they were talking about such highly personal matters. I mean, if I had breasts or anything else that hung down to my knees, I would not go on the Larry King show and talk about it.

But it turned out that Ms. Hahn is displaying her rebuilt body in Playboy magazine. As you may recall, last year she displayed her unaltered body. So we will have a chance to compare the old and rebuilt bodies and marvel at the wonders of modern science.

I was about to switch to the public broadcasting channel, for their nightly installment on the sex life of insects, when King said he was going to take calls from the live audience.

Sensing the potential for conflict, I stayed tuned and was right. The first caller was a Southern lady who didn't care for Hahn's morals one bit.

She demanded to know how Ms.

Hahn could be a good Christian and flaunt her body so shamelessly.

I didn't take notes, but Ms. Hahn said she thought the good Lord, in his infinite wisdom, had given her this opportunity, so she took it, and still considered herself a good girl.

The caller didn't agree. She thought the good Lord would disapprove of Ms. Hahn's conduct, and that she was a bad girl.

Although I'm not a theologian, debates of this kind fascinate me. But it seems to me that Ms. Hahn was probably right. If the Lord didn't want Ms. Hahn posing for Playboy, He could have prevented it. All He'd have to do is make her body grow yak fur.

Then, to the amazement of King, Ms. Hahn and me, a call came from Hugh Hefner's fiancée, a young lady named Kimberly Conrad. I don't believe that's her real name. My guess is that she was born Thelma Fugelblatt, but Hef doesn't carry on with Thelmas.

Anyway, Kimberly and Jessica are pals, since Jessica lives in the Hefner playhouse, and they told each other what beautiful people and wonderful human beings they were. It brought a

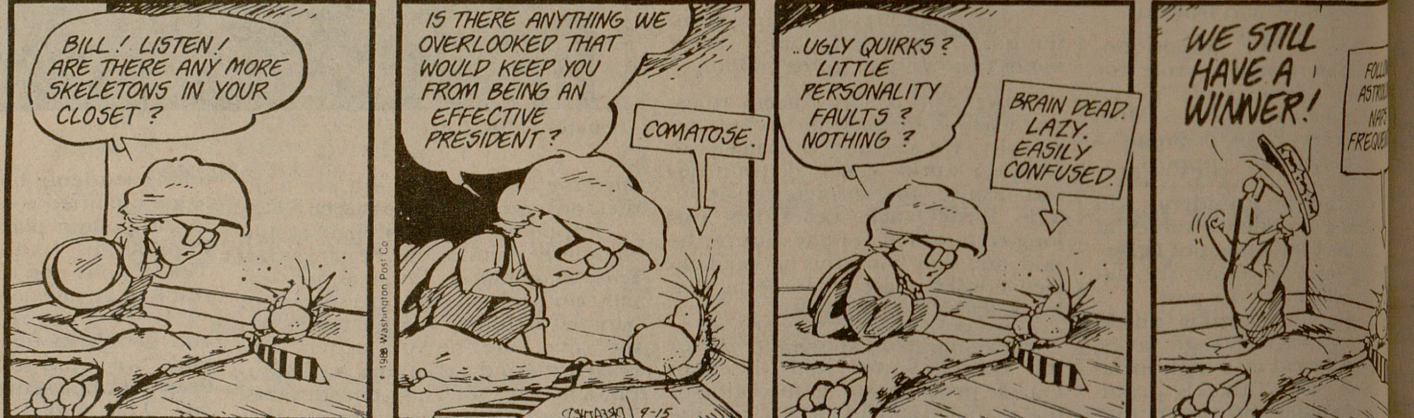
tear to my eye. Or maybe I'm developing a sty.

Then Hefner himself came on the phone. He giggled. I've known him, on and off, mostly off, for about 25 years, and every time I've heard him talk, he giggles. I suppose that if I had led his life, I'd giggle, too. If I had any strength left.

He, too, said that Jessica was a wonderful human being. And she said he was a beautiful person.

There was more, but I had to walk

## BLOOM COUNTY



by Berke Breathed

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