

Opinion

Mail Call

Cooke in hot water with Aggie fans

EDITOR:

OSU-52, A&M-15, Cooke Cablevision-0.

Much like the football team Saturday night, many fans were plagued with problems during the first half. As die-hard Aggie fans, we followed Cooke's advice and ordered the game early in the week to avoid problems. We were told that the Home Sports Entertainment feed would be provided in our homes on Channel 23 just in time for kickoff (for a mere \$20).

To offset this outrageous price, we invited 30 of our closest friends to enjoy the game with us.

However, we noticed at 6 p.m., the HSE signal on Channel 23 was scrambled. After several minutes of busy signals, we finally got through to Cooke. After explaining our situation, we were told that two technicians would be over to resolve our problem.

Indeed, at 6:25, the technicians showed up and replaced our box. With our newly unscrambled signal, we sat down and prepared to watch the game. Until our screen went blank at 6:30.

In vain, I tried to call again, but the phone at Cooke was busy. After ten minutes I gave up and drove to Cooke's office where I found several other angry customers. We were finally let in after banging on the doors for several minutes. We were told they had experienced some initial problems but that everything was working now. Rather than risk the possibility that we were being brushed off, I called my house to verify their story.

Needless to say, my friends were still staring at a blank screen. By this time at least 30 unhappy people had gathered in Cooke's office with similar problems.

Finally, someone at the office took my address and tapped that sacred button that allowed our television to receive the signal. Another call home confirmed that we were getting the game (now late in the first quarter).

As it turns out, so many problems were encountered, that Cooke finally had to unscramble the channel for the entire city. It hardly seems fair that we should have to pay for a "service" that non-paying customers also received.

For almost a year and a half, we have asked Cooke to provide HSE as a premium channel like Home Box Office. If this had been done, this kind of problem would not exist.

The entire situation was handled in an unprofessional and unbusiness-like manner. Cooke Cablevision should be left to recover the cost of this venture on its own.

Donald Thompson '89

It's just so ridiculous

EDITOR:

After reading Dean Sueltenfuss' Sept. 15 article in *The Battalion*, I looked at my own fee slip and noticed that I was paying approximately \$218 in the form of the fees that he spoke of. This disturbed me quite a bit since I'm only paying \$224 in tuition fees.

The other fees which Dean wrote of came within \$6 of being as much as my tuition. THAT'S RIDICULOUS!!

Inquiring minds want to know — exactly what are we paying for? If possible, I'd like to see an article in which someone reveals this information. I'd especially like this information to be truthful.

If I'm paying to feed the squirrels, I'd like to know it!

Michelle L. Keller '92

Library in need of change

EDITOR:

The other night I was studying in the library and needed to make some copies. Much to my dismay, discovered I had only a \$5 bill, so off I went in search of change. I discovered the only way to make change was to buy computer paper at the check-out desk. I have no need for computer paper (especially at fifty cents for 10 sheets) and I don't believe I should have to make an unnecessary purchase to make change for copies.

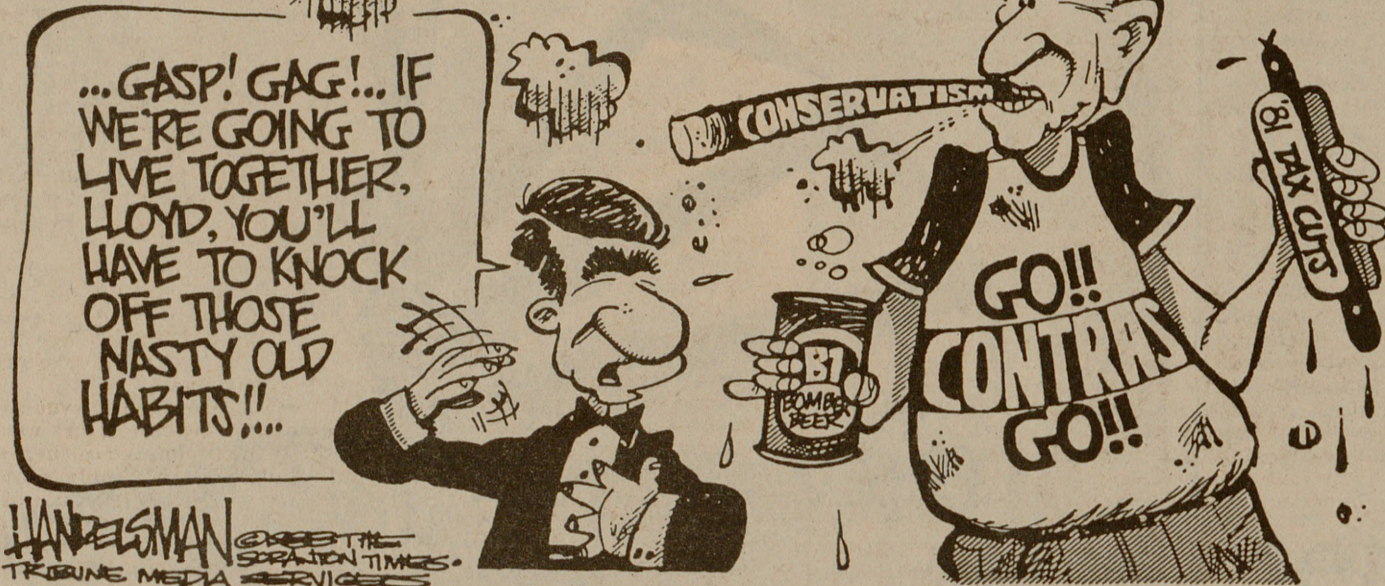
Today I asked a library administrator to explain the policy and was politely told that "the library is not in the business of giving change." She said that the University's "powers that be" didn't want the library to possess any more cash that was absolutely necessary. This has been the policy for the past 20 years (I guess that makes it a tradition).

I think this policy should be changed. Maybe the student government could lobby for a change. In the meantime, unless you want to make an unneeded purchase or you enjoy long walks to Skagg's for change, be prepared when studying in the library: Bring your own change!

Ken Gleason '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 classification, address and telephone number of the writer.

THE ODD COUPLE!



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Space shuttle will rise from the ashes like a phoenix



Timm Doolen

Assuming no further delays, tomorrow morning the Discovery Space Shuttle will be flying again, the first time in over two and a half years that Americans will have entered space. Two decades worth of hope and aspirations from all Americans will go up with this flight. The success of this flight will be, in a way, the culmination of our progress in the 70s and 80s, especially since the Challenger accident, and an indication of our future in space. It won't let us down.

The history of our space program includes many successes and a few devastating failures. Before the Challenger tragedy, our space program was a symbol of pride for this country — arguably our most recognizable symbol of patriotism in recent history.

Space was the one thing that we were better at than the Soviets. The whole world watched in 1969 as John Kennedy's dream was fulfilled when Neil Armstrong placed his foot on the face of the moon. No Soviet has ever walked on the moon.

Before 1986 we had only lost three lives to the space program — an Apollo mission that exploded on the launch pad. The Soviets have a history of troubles with re-entries, losing several lives quite unexpectedly.

We thought we couldn't fail, but then the Challenger disaster brought us back to earth, so to speak. As a nation we realized that our prized space program was inately run by humans, capable of failure. NASA officials learned that they couldn't expect the equipment to run at 110% without the proper testing and maintenance. Our rush to remain the best and to prove that it was impossible for us to fail in space eventually showed us that it was very possible — much to the regret of the seven families who bear the burden of that failure.

Statistically speaking, space is safer than a highway, but we expect more of our spacecraft than we do of our automobiles. After all, the shuttle is the cutting edge of space technology — it can't fail. But it did, and we can only hope

that we learned from this tragedy that we should take no short-cuts, risk nothing where space travel and human lives are involved.

If the Discovery launch is any evidence of how future space shots will be handled, we've learned this lesson, at least for now. Two years of extensive analysis of the Challenger wreck and testing for the new launch has gone into the Discovery's flight.

Some may ask of the importance of getting the Shuttle flying again on regular missions. It is of extreme essence if the space program is to further its conquest of our solar system.

The space program has a bright future with four possible long-range missions planned in the near future. Of course, there's the mission to Mars, hopefully possible by the early 21st century. If the Mars mission can't be accomplished, NASA also has plans to possibly land at Phobos, Mars' nearby moon.

Two lunar projects are possible; one is a lunar observatory, the other a lunar base. These long-range projects would be a giant step to extending our arm into the cosmos, as would the Mars shot.

All of these projects will require a space station orbiting Earth, which is projected to be constructed during the late 1990s. It is to be a joint mission with help from the Japanese and European space agencies.

But how will the parts of the space station be lifted into space? By the American Discovery and its companion shuttles.

NASA projects 20 flights between 1995 and 1998 just to get the parts into space. So it is extremely important that NASA gets its feet on the ground, or rather off the ground, within the next few years so our space station can go up as planned. Then again, when was the last time that NASA ever did anything on time?

The Soviets plan to go to Mars, and they may beat the U.S. to our neighboring planet. For the past decade they have been testing their cosmonauts for endurance to see how long a man can last in zero-gravity. Though the United States hasn't remained idle, the Soviets have jumped ahead of us, in some respects, in the quest for Mars. Maybe with

some proper diplomacy we'll be able to send a joint mission to Mars by 2010. But don't expect it. Diplomats don't always solve their problems the way scientists would like them to.

All the programs that NASA has planned in years to come are multi-billion dollar operations, bringing up the question, is it worth the money? Well, yes, it is. There are many commercial residuals from the space program, but whether we reap real benefits from space or not, one simple word justifies the expense: knowing. We all want to know more about the universe we're living in. Within the next few years, our Space Shuttle will carry into space a telescope that will improve our view of the universe and give us a better picture of where we're at than anything before it. If that's not worth the money invested, what on earth (or off) is?

But shouldn't we take care of our own problems down here, before we launch billions into space? No, because we'll never get all the problems taken care of and they'll always be around. There is plenty of money allocated for domestic policies, and we need to utilize our technology as long as we have the resources. We're a strong country and it's good for us to be a leader in science and technology as well as the military. Space, right now, is our greatest means to that end.

Space travel is also good within our country, if only a means to bind its citizens together. It did just that in the summer of '69, when Neil Armstrong gave us those famous words: "One small step for man, one giant step for mankind." NASA and the space program have always instilled pride in this country's citizens. Looking to the future, we dream of exploring Mars, and can even envision colonizing other planets, and some day travelling to other solar systems.

Though you and I won't be alive to witness most of these monumental occurrences, we need to start taking those first giant steps for mankind now in the twentieth century. If everything goes as scheduled, tomorrow morning when the Discovery goes up, it will be taking with it the triumphs of a generation of Americans, and the dreams of generations to come.

Timm Doolen is a sophomore computer science major and columnist for *The Battalion*.

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The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Journalism.

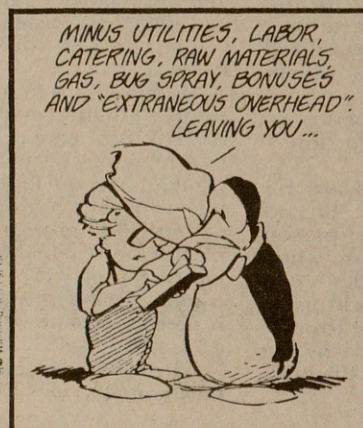
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