

## Mail Call

### Calling all counselors

EDITOR:

I am probably addressing an old problem, but I felt one more letter in the already overflowing pile wouldn't hurt. The issue is the availability of counseling for students, or better yet, the need to expand this service. To those who are waiting to use this ever valuable service, it alone is a cause for severe depression.

Texas A&M University seems to be slow in responding to the needs of its students. On-campus housing has been a need for many years, and now we finally see dorms growing before our very eyes. Parking has been the greatest challenge of every student enrolled at Texas A&M, not Chemistry 101. Now, after umpteen years, we finally see a multi-story parking garage. Don't you think it is time someone appropriated the necessary funds to extend such a valuable service as counseling?

For any student with a professional or personal problem, counseling can provide a means to acquire self-assurance and direction. Isn't that what this whole thing is all about — becoming an Aggie with a degree and becoming qualified for a job? To an incoming freshman, this is the perfect opportunity for guidance. But if someone were to seek this guidance they would be asked to wait and call in at two-week intervals, and then maybe they could receive the help they requested.

Is this acceptable? What can be done to expand this service and make it more readily available to all students? I wish I knew because I would do it. I hope that someone who has the power takes the "bull by the horns" and extends a helping hand to students who are in need.

Tammy Gabriel

### It just doesn't compute

EDITOR:

As I sit here in my graduate student office waiting for 10 to 20 minutes to get on the computer system, I am faced with a few minutes to think about life and this "world-class university." After a few calculations, I am faced with a question: what happened to the approximately \$1.8 million that the University has been receiving each semester for the last couple of semesters via the computer access fee? (40,000 students, 15 hours per semester, \$3 per hour.) Maybe it's going to other systems or something, but I have accounts on three systems here on campus and there have been no visible or obvious changes in any of these three (ZAC, THOR, and ORION).

Well, maybe the "computer access fee" was just a new, modern, world-class sounding name for a fee that the University could institute in order to raise the tuition without "raising the tuition." I mean, all those building use fees and student services fees were starting to sound the same. But a computer access fee? Now there's a fee no world-class university should be without. Which brings me to another point: what exactly is a world-class university and how are we going to know when we achieve this great status? Personally, it sounds like politician-talk to me.

Thirty minutes and still waiting.

David Branyon  
Graduate student

### Student Senate neglects duties

EDITOR:

Working on better communication and cooperation with the student body is something that the Student Senate should be openly and actively concerned about. At least we, the Texas A&M class councils, think so, knowing that effective representation is not to be taken lightly nor is it easy to accomplish.

As fellow student leaders on class councils, which consists of each class's elected officers and selected chairmen, we approached the Senate to hopefully work together on communication and cooperation for these two representative bodies.

Unfortunately, our efforts were defeated on the Senate floor. It was our intention to form an official liaison by having a representative of each separate class to serve as an ex-officio member to the senate. This would aid the effectiveness of both organizations, yet not alter the voting structure or power of the Senate.

Unfortunately, some (in fact, most) senators felt this official communication link to fellow student leaders was absolutely unnecessary. Some senators remarked that Senate meetings are open and we can come to their meetings and ask for them to grant us speaking privileges.

It is unfortunate that some senators take such a passive attitude concerning their duties. Others commented that, in addition to representing their constituency, they can represent the class council as well.

This idea seems irrational when one considers that it is a huge and often neglected responsibility to represent and inform one's own constituency, and that we did not elect them to be the voice of class council.

We would like to encourage all senators to continue to work for better communication, as some senators are trying to do presently. Furthermore, the students of Texas A&M should be more active in ensuring that the senate's voice is truly a reflection of our student body voice.

Katherine Smith  
Class of '90 president and council member  
Accompanied by 36 signatures

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.

# The needy deserve our help

The plight of the poor, the hungry and the homeless is an abomination to the people of the United States.

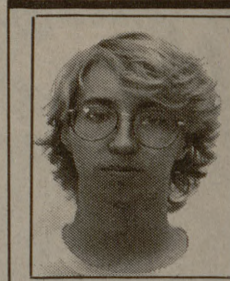
We are the richest, most caring people on Earth. Any time a natural disaster occurs in the world, from the recent earthquake in Mexico City to the massive floods in Bangladesh, the United States sends aid in the form of economic funds as well as skilled relief workers to better the situation.

Yet, here in America, one of every seven people are living at or below the poverty line. Thousands sleep in subways and bus stations, in trash dumpsters and along alleyways, having no better place to go. Many among America's children are malnourished due to a lack of a proper diet. Not every child will have a Christmas with a tree, or gifts from Santa, or a turkey with all of the trimmings. And all of this occurs in the land of supposed prosperity and wealth — and hope.

It is no great wonder that there exists a poverty problem. Approximately ten percent of the people hold 90 percent of the wealth, which translates into 90 percent of the populace sharing the other ten percent.

We have above us a government which spends over 50 percent of its general taxes on a defense which already is more than sufficient for our land's protection. Our government is quick to bail out companies, banks and foreign countries, even those contrary to its own ideologies — all of which have failed. But it is hesitant to help the needy among its own people.

Americans and their government do much in the name of poverty, but most of the aid is superficial — cosmetic in a sense. We give food and toys, millions of dollars for the upkeep of shelters and food lines, and untold hours of time to



Todd Honeycutt  
Columnist

distribute these items, but does all of this actually help the underprivileged?

In the short term it relieves some of their suffering, but most of the aid we give does not raise them from the pool of poverty. Our aid is momentary and fleeting and does not increase anyone's standard of living at all.

The U.S. government should be trying to implement plans to help the poor: a revised welfare plan which restricts funds to those who choose not to help themselves as well as to those who have children for the purpose of obtaining more welfare money, programs to motivate the poor to learn and to help them obtain a higher education, free daycare for parents who need to work though unable to afford daycare, work projects to provide employment for those without jobs, programs to help the homeless re-establish themselves in the community, and food banks to maintain a proper nutritional level among the poverty stricken.

The private sector can and does do much to help, but it does not have the power that the government has, nor the responsibility to use its power.

The U.S. government is responsible because a significant minority of its constituents are in need, because it is obligated to help its own people before it attempts to solve other countries' problems, because the problem will increase if ignored. The ideas are avail-

able, as are the people and the tools and the money, if funds are redistributed from defense and foreign aid. The desire to solve the problem, however, is simply non-existent.

The problem of the homeless and the hungry was ignored in the recent Presidential election by both political parties. The problem is consistently overlooked by Congress and state legislatures. The only reason for this is because we, the American people, mostly middle class (but a step away from poverty), ignore ourselves. We close our eyes and forge any problem exists. During the holidays we give money to charity because it is the season to give. But people need money throughout the year, not just during November and December.

The solution lies within us. We must make poverty an issue and force the government to take effective measures toward abolishing it, though realistically it can never be fully extinguished in a class system. Senators and congressmen will do nothing until we force them to heed us, until we threaten to take their jobs away from them (which says much for the political system we have allowed to evolve).

This holiday season, be thankful for what you have and perhaps even for what you do not have. If you have some spare change, give it to the Salvation Army bell ringer who is standing outside in the cold by the stores where you shop. Any aid received is greatly appreciated by the poor who are fed and cared for. And if you have some time and a twenty-five cent stamp, write your political leaders and demand that they do more. A poverty problem does exist and it's one that we all need to address.

Todd Honeycutt is a sophomore psychology major and a columnist for The Battalion.

# NCAA needs death penalty

Let's forget about the allegations; what Jackie Sherrill may or may not have done, and what George Smith might have received or might have lied about. Let's look at the heart of the matter — the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

The NCAA essentially sets rules and regulations that all college sports programs must abide by in the spirit of "ethics and fair competition." They limit the amount of recruiting activities and restrict the compensation players can receive (scholarships and other benefits).

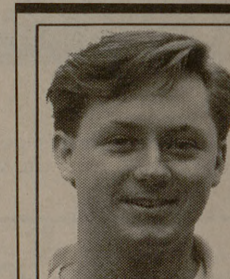
Letting the universities run free-rein with their sports programs would turn college athletics into a business. Schools would be spending millions of dollars each year on recruiting and maintaining their players, but they would also be earning millions of dollars in ticket revenue.

Suppose a school had a team that could easily win their conference. How much money would this team generate in ticket sales, concession sales, and television rights? This team could gross millions of dollars in a season.

Now consider a college team that would have trouble besting a 4A high school team. How much money would this team generate? Let's say about \$15 in a season.

Obviously, a school would not spend a great deal of money year after year on a team that consistently loses. The colleges with the better teams will spend more because there is obviously more demand from the public for those teams, and more money to be made because of this demand. So, what about the athletes, the ones who work to make the money for the universities?

Well, according to the NCAA presi-



James Cecil  
Columnist

dent, the athletes should not be compensated because, as students, they are receiving a "priceless education."

Last week I got the bill for my "priceless education."

What we have are players who are worth several millions of dollars to the university getting maybe a few thousand dollars a year in terms of tuition, room, and board. No other business enterprise treats its employee group with such contempt. Any other group that tries to limit compensation to its employees would be considered to be operating illegally. I wonder what Samuel Gompers would think of this situation. Doesn't it only make sense that athletes are paid what they are worth?

Now, you might be whining that "college athletics isn't a business, it's amateur sports for entertainment!" That's what the NCAA says — "amateur sports."

But here, amateurism is an ideological instrument used to keep athletes from sharing in the wealth they create. This ideal is propagated by the myth that being paid for athletic achievement is immoral or unethical. If it is immoral then the American public is encouraging this immorality by providing the money. Does the NCAA want to punish millions of Americans; give them the "death penalty?"

If the NCAA and universities were serious about amateurism in the first place, then coaches shouldn't be paid.

Perhaps a solution would be to compensate players at least minimum wage, or set a limit of \$1000 a month during the year that they play. At least this might be close to their worth to the school. But one important aspect of a solution is that the universities involved ought to come to an agreement they can all live with instead of the NCAA forcing rules on the schools.

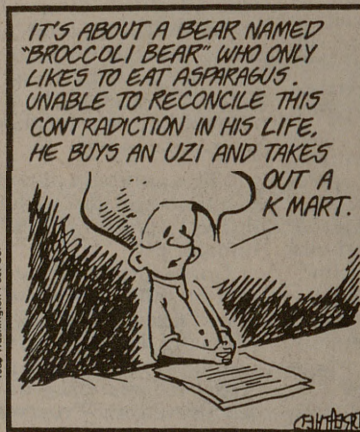
In principle though, many people disagree with the whole idea of compensating athletes. They see these athletes as just students who happen to be involved in extra-curricular activities (you've heard the one about "athletic scholarship" being an oxymoron). But such beliefs are blind to the facts of the matter.

Our society places a great deal of value on sporting events. Consider the hundreds of thousands of dollars collected from ticket and concession sales at the A&M-UT game. This game is always played on a traditional holiday and not even bad weather will drive the mobs away.

Are these the values we want from our society? I don't think so, but that's not the issue here. The fact is that the public is willing to spend a great deal of money to watch a pigskin move up and down a field. The players in this game ought to benefit from their work based on the value the public places on it. The NCAA can't regulate the value the public places on college sports, so it shouldn't attempt to regulate the way teams receive this value.

James Cecil is a senior economics major and a columnist for The Battalion.

## BLOOM COUNTY



## The Battalion

(USPS 045 360)

Member of  
Texas Press Association  
Southwest Journalism Conference

### The Battalion Editorial Board

- Becky Weisenfels, Editor
- Leslie Guy, Managing Editor
- Dean Sueltenfuss, Opinion Page Editor
- Anthony Wilson, City Editor
- Scot Walker, Wire Editor
- Drew Leder, News Editor
- Doug Walker, Sports Editor
- Jay Janner, Art Director
- Mary-Lynne Rice, Entertainment Editor

### Editorial Policy

The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting newspaper operated as a community service to Texas A&M and Bryan-College Station.

Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the editorial board or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty or the Board of Regents.

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

The Battalion is published Monday through Friday during Texas A&M regular semesters, except for holiday and examination periods.

Mail subscriptions are \$17.44 per semester, \$34.62 per school year and \$36.44 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.

Our address: The Battalion, 230 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-1111. Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77843-4111.