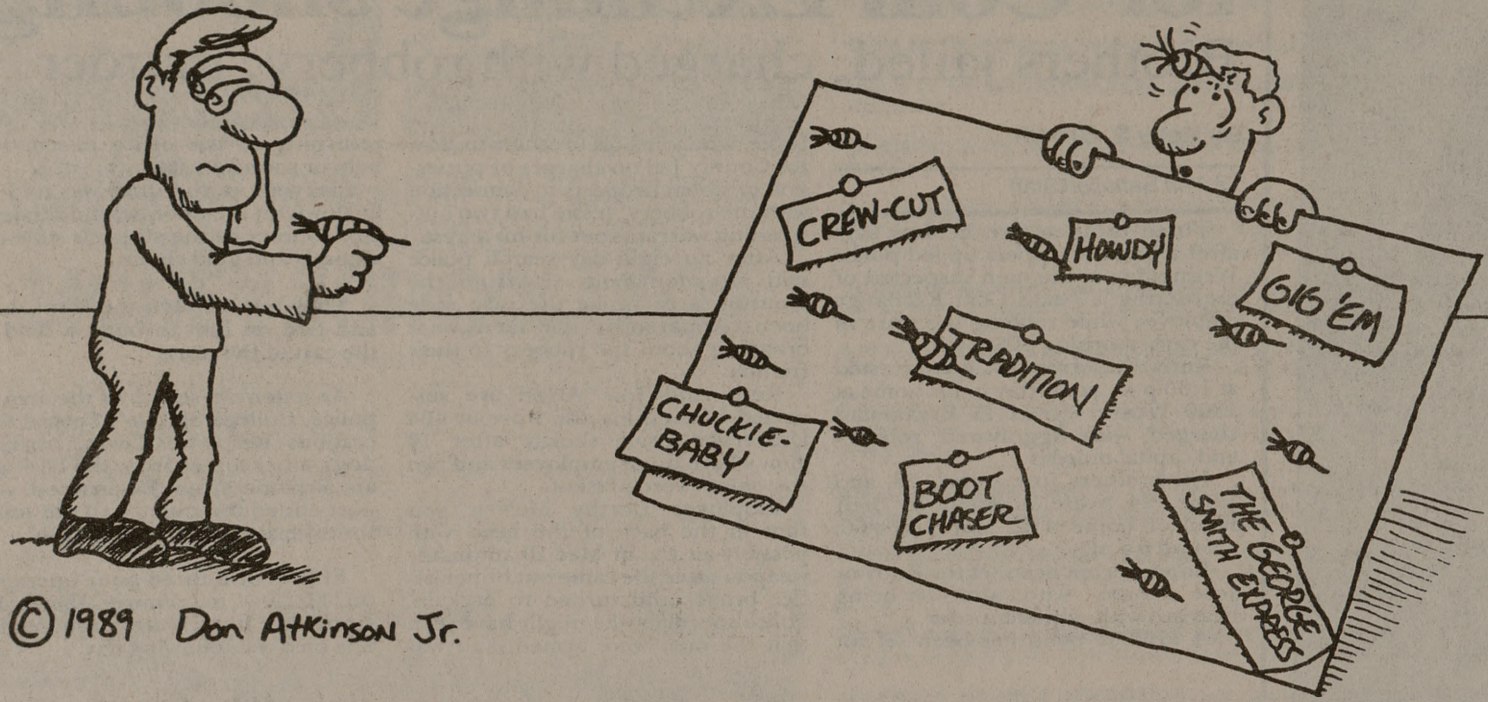


HOW A&M BUSES GOT THEIR NEW NAMES:



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Global warming: a heated issue

Should we all be checking out real estate in Alaska, or are scientists who warn of catastrophic global warming just blowing hot air?

Sometimes it's hard to tell, admits one of those scientists.

At a recent conference on global warming, climatologist Stephen Schneider displayed two New York Times articles from last January.

"US Data Since 1895 Fail To Show Warming Trend," one headline proclaimed.

"Global Warmth In 88 Is Found To Set A Record," said the other.

Schneider turned to his audience and asked, "Anybody here confused?"

While most scientists concur on the basic mechanism behind global warming, there is less agreement over how much or how quickly the Earth is heating up, and even less over what should be done about it.

The underlying principle is called the greenhouse effect, familiar to anyone who has left a car with the windows rolled up on a sunny day. The short-wavelength sunlight passes through the windows and is absorbed by the seats, which give off long-wavelength heat radiation that's trapped by the glass.

Earth's "windows" are gases like carbon dioxide, methane and chlorofluorocarbons, which let sunlight through but trap heat radiated from the ground, keeping it from escaping into space.

"If anyone is dubious that a greenhouse effect can be dangerous," says astronomer Carl Sagan, "just point them to our neighboring planets."

A thin atmosphere keeps Mars in a deep-freeze, while an atmosphere rich in carbon dioxide keeps Venus roasting.

Earth, with a moderate carbon dioxide concentration, has equable temperatures, liquid water and abundant life.

But since 1850, Earth's atmospheric carbon dioxide has increased 25 percent, mostly due to burning fossil fuels.

During the same period, average temperature, compiled from hundreds

David Foster
Associated Press

of monitoring stations, has increased about 1 degree Fahrenheit.

Cause and effect? Common sense might suggest that rising levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are responsible for global warming, and that is the basis of mathematical models being used to predict future warming.

If nothing is done to reduce society's production of greenhouse gases, the Earth faces the equivalent of a doubling of carbon dioxide by the middle of the next century. And that, the various models predict, could produce a global temperature rise of two to 10 degrees.

The serious disagreement starts here.

Robert Jastrow, former director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, questions both the accuracy of the models and the assumption that the greenhouse gases have already caused warming.

The past century's warming trend could be due to natural changes in climate or the sun's brightness, he says.

But Jastrow's successor at Goddard, James Hansen, is a leading supporter of the climate models.

Though uncertainties remain, he says, they are unlikely to change his basic conclusion, "that a growing greenhouse effect will increase the frequency and severity of the extremes of the hydrologic cycle: droughts, on the one hand, and extreme wetness and storms on the other."

Verifying the major effects of greenhouse warming could take 10 to 20 years of observation, Hansen says. By then, some scientists warn, it may be too late to stop greenhouse warming already in the works.

A temperature change in the lower range of predictions might not cause catastrophic damage.

But a 10-degree rise could expand ocean water and melt enough polar ice to raise sea level nearly three feet, flooding coastal regions worldwide, some scientists say.

Despite the uncertainties, many scientists — and more recently, government policymakers — have decided global warming is too much of a risk to ignore.

In May, the White House softened its go-slow attitude to embrace the idea of a formal international treaty-negotiating process on global warming.

Citing "growing consensus" among scientists, the Environmental Protection Agency in March urged reduction of carbon dioxide through energy conservation.

But such measures can cost big money, and maneuvering has already begun to protect special interests.

Last month, the oil industry released a study that concluded natural gas heat might contribute more to the greenhouse effect than oil heat. The gas industry attacked the report as flawed and biased.

Such spirited debate, while not always enlightening, at least keeps the issue of global warming alive. And that, Schneider said, is key.

A crisis — last summer's heat wave — drew attention to global warming.

"I hope that a cold, wet winter or normal summer or two won't deter humanity" from learning more about global warming, he said. "The bottom line is, we insult the environment at a faster rate than we understand the consequences."

David Foster is the AP Northwest regional reporter.

Mail Call

Bonfire: a bunch of hot air could possess) for clarifying the facts being involved with our school's traditions and feeling the spirit of Aggieland makes me a mindless conformist. Got your ring yet? Please don't wear it in your nose, even if it make a statement.
Paul C. Linden '91

EDITOR:

If the wood used for the bonfire was indeed destined to be burned anyway, then using the wood for the bonfire may not entail any additional atmospheric pollution, but it is still contributing to air pollution and the accumulation of greenhouse gases in the troposphere. Moving the burning site of the logs from the woods in which they are taken to the Texas A&M campus does not change the fact that air pollution is certainly created.

Areas around the world are being rapidly deforested, and there is no justification for this University to be taking part in global deforestation in the manner of the bonfire. This year in particular would be a good time for students to funnel their energy into stopping the tree killing in the proposed MSC expansion rather than taking part in an outdated and environmentally objectionable form of celebration. Alternative methods for a campus-wide celebration with more positive results must be brainstormed and then enjoyed by everyone.

The University is striving for an international reputation, and this is a much more attractive and longlasting goal for the campus to focus on rather than simply winning a football game against an across-state rival. A reasonable replacement for the bonfire might be a campuswide party reflecting the diverse makeup of the student body. The opportunity to sample food, music, language, dress and culture of other people is far more interesting and enriching than watching a fire burn.

Michael C. Worsham
T.E.A.C. Vice President

Too bad, two-percenters

EDITOR:

It is a shame that Jim Hayes feels so strongly that the traditions at Texas A&M were "tailor-made" for the Corps of Cadets only. It is sad that he feels he must separate Aggies into two groups: cadets and civilians.

It is difficult for those inclined not to participate in Aggie traditions to understand why those who do participate feel so strongly about it. Maybe you two-percenters would really like it if you tried it.

Since Mr. Hayes is so fond of metaphors, here's one: After experiencing the thrill of a roller coaster, many will often try to get others to experience the same thrill. For those of you who are too scared or too busy to get involved with Aggie traditions, you're really missing out on what much of the college experience is all about.

Also, thanks to Coriene M. Case (who spoke in Wednesday's Mail Call with the pride and spirit only a two-percenter

Mr. Righter is wrong

EDITOR:

As juniors and *Battalion* readers at A&M, we have read very few music critiques we have actually enjoyed. At first, we thought John Righter's editorial was to be one of them. John's comments on glam rockers and Richard Marx we agreed with and felt were funny and well founded.

Then John opted to blow a perfect fine article out the door in just two simple paragraphs. The first of these paragraphs dealt with the ego of Bono. Apparently John had just heard of U2 and their album *The Joshua Tree*. In the past three years U2 has received much well-deserved publicity, not only on television but in magazines such as *Rolling Stone* and *Time*.

John, being such an open-minded critic, has apparently made his judgment on Bono from such coverage. It is a shame he has jumped to such conclusions without doing any research. Bono's (and U2's) musical genius has earned them millions of true fans with albums such as *Boy* and *October* that show a personal and religious side of Bono and U2 that few know about or have ever heard.

The second paragraph was on his request for Led Zeppelin to "stay dead." We admit that two years ago we [only occasionally] listened to Zeppelin. But after hearing such great albums as *Physical Graffiti* and *Houses of the Holy* we have come to consider Led Zeppelin one of the best rock groups of all time, not only to us, but millions of others as well.

If John is to refer to Zeppelin as a "pathetic forefather," it is only logical to assume that this would include The Doors and The Beatles also, since they were the forefathers of music. However, without these legendary groups, music would not be where it is today. It is a shame that such a great educational institute as A&M is attended by such self-acknowledged music "critics" who refuse to open their minds and ears to groups such as U2, Led Zeppelin, The Smiths, The Alarm, REM, The Violent Femmes, The Doors, the Cure, Rush and The Cult. We do not claim to be musical authorities, but we do feel John's article left something to be desired.

Lance Nash '91
David Schrutka '91

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

If the ugly shoe fits, don't wear it

Lewis Grizzard
Columnist

Imagine this poster: There is a circle. Inside the circle are two feet, which obviously belong to a woman. The feet are wearing a pair of tennis shoes.

There is the familiar slash through the circle. Underneath the circle are two words:

"Dress professionally."
The message is clear. Don't, ladies, wear leisure shoes at work.

That was the poster that employees of one company saw one recent morning when they came to work.

How it got there, according to Beth Zoffmann, public relations director for the company, was that managers noticed a large number of female employees wearing their tennis workout shoes during the entire work day.

"I wear tennis shoes to and from work and on the train," explained Beth Zoffmann. "It makes sense the way women's shoes are designed — for style, not for walking comfort. When I get to work, though, I put on the appropriate shoes immediately."

A number of the employees, however, became irate after seeing the poster. Here's a sampling of what one, who didn't want her name to be used ("It would cost me my job!"), had to say:

"A lot of women are mad. How dare you tell us what to wear! It's seen as sexist."

"Not all the men here dress out of GQ, but if they got too bad, then they would be approached individually, and that's what should have happened here."

"A lot of us feel if there were a problem — and I don't see that there is — it was mostly secretaries who stay at one work place all day long and don't meet clients. But if there was a problem, then somebody should simply have talked to the individuals involved."

I've got to agree, and that is precisely how I handled the situation in my own office recently.

Ever see those black hightop workout shoes women wear these days?

They look like correction shoes for people who are missing some toes. Actually, what they look like are shoes an East German female weight lifter would wear — one named Greta with big, hairy thighs.

My own secretary, the lovely and talented Miss Wanda Fribish (whose thighs

I have never seen), came to work in a pair of shoes like that the other day.

I called her into my office, shut the door and said, "Good God, Wanda. Where did you get those awful-looking shoes?"

Realizing I wanted to handle the matter in a professional, non-sexist manner, she replied, "You want to see the nose on the back of your head, Fribish Eyes?"

"But Wanda," I said, "you look like an East German female weight lifter in those shoes."

At this point, Miss Fribish, a former Female Tractor-Puller of the Year, kicked me in the shins.

"My shoes," she said, "are my business."

See how easy it was for me to deal with a female employee about her footwear, one-on-one?

I suggest office managers do the same with those female employees appearing in the workplace with improper footwear.

To be on the safe side, however, you ought to wear a pair of shin guards. I didn't know those East German female weight-lifter shoes had steel toes.

The doctor said I should be off my crutches in another couple of weeks.
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The Battalion

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