

No parking in handicap zones

Parking in a handicap zone is not only a breach of the law, it is also a callous and contemptible act. Illegally parking in a handicap zone at Texas A&M may result in a \$50 fine and possibly the towing of the vehicle. Offenders, however, should be treated much more severely.

Parking illegally in a handicap zone or blocking a designated handicap ramp should not pass unnoticed. Offenders should be reported immediately to the Department of Parking, Transit and Traffic Services. Handicap spaces should be reserved for those who truly need them.

The Battalion Editorial Board

Mail Call

Tax cut wrong

EDITOR:

The choice is clear. George Bush and the Republicans want a tax cut for the rich while the Democrats want to offer a break to all Americans regardless of income.

George Bush is trying to get Congress to pass a tax cut on capital gains. He claims that the cut is needed to boost the economy. The theory is that with the money saved from taxes the rich people will have more money to invest in the economy. Who is Bush fooling? The rich will not invest. They will do the same thing that they did when Reagan cut their taxes. They will take over companies or spend the money on BMWs.

The Democrats are proposing a real way of increasing investment and encouraging economic growth. The Democrats led by Lloyd Bentsen and the House leadership want to restore Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs). IRAs would offer all Americans an opportunity to increase their savings by offering tax-free savings accounts up to \$1,000 per year. Americans have one of the lowest savings rates of the industrialized nations and IRAs will help to change this. Savings are very important to the economy because increased savings gives banks more reserves which will allow them to make more loans leading to increased investment which will lead to strong economic growth.

Furthermore, at a time when Bush tells us we do not have enough money to fight the war on drugs or offer federal aid to our public schools, he is offering the richest Americans a tax break.

It is time for Bush and the renegade House Democrats to get their priorities straight and stop the capital gains tax cut.

J. Carlos Huerta '90

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.

Affirmative action ensures equality

In response to the article by Scot Walker in the October 2 *Battalion* on affirmative action, my response is that affirmative action is right and is needed. It's unfortunate that so many people misunderstand the concept and make assumptions about the purpose of such programs.

The purpose of affirmative action is to take steps and develop programs that correct past and present discriminatory practices. Affirmative action also insures compliance with the law and promotes equal opportunity.

Affirmative action should go beyond what is accomplished in the job market and reach out to improve the quality of life of all people in a social, economic and political sense. To limit affirmative action to the employment or educational area is to ignore the reality that discrimination affected and affects all aspects of some group's lives.

Affirmative action captures the spirit and intent of the civil rights laws and executive orders. It mandates that to achieve equal opportunity it is not enough to have, for example, color-blind, sex-blind, or ethnic-blind employment practices.

The civil rights laws were passed to eradicate the lingering past patterns and practices of discrimination and to help correct the disparate behavior resulting from the biased attitudes evident in the American work place. In implementing the spirit of these laws, programs of positive action on behalf of minority groups and women are warranted to redress the inequities that exist. Affirmative action is needed to achieve the transition to an equal opportunity environment.

This does not mean minorities or women will be placed ahead of more qualified individuals, as some always contend will happen with affirmative action. Each person must have the qualifications to perform the job.

What we're talking about is eliminat-

George Wharton
Guest Columnist

ing those illegal barriers that place some groups at a disadvantage and often deny them the opportunity to compete. Ensuring that only job-related criteria is used as the qualifications for positions and active recruiting of minorities is pursued are examples of affirmative action that result in equal opportunity for all groups.

A lot of people also misunderstand the role the System Affirmative Action Office plays in an educational setting such as the Texas A&M University System. The System Affirmative Action Office investigates and resolves complaints of discrimination, and the office is actively involved in eliminating discriminatory practices and barriers that restrict equal educational access and employment opportunities. These activities ensure equal opportunity.

Within the past 20 years, I believe we have moved closer to achieving equal employment opportunity. The numbers show improvements for minorities and especially for women. The principle that any person who is qualified should have the opportunity to compete for a job has become widely accepted.

However, not all groups have achieved their full civil rights. Therefore, we must ensure that the doors of opportunity are open for everyone and that all have access to a quality education, the key to success. Affirmative action helps guarantee that the doors are open.

It means, for example, providing training opportunities for those women and minorities who need it to become qualified for higher level positions. It requires recruitment using a variety of techniques to find qualified women and minorities to fill positions in the work force. Most importantly, it

involves working with and providing assistance to the minority community to expand the pool of young people interested in higher education. In this regard, I believe the System's efforts must be directed toward encouraging all students to prepare for their future so they can actively participate in and contribute to society. At present, outreach efforts to motivate minority students to become educated are an integral part of System efforts—recruiting, training, counseling, scholarships and summer enrichment experiences. Texas A&M University leads the state in the retention of minority students and A&M played a major role in establishing minority outreach centers across the state. Ultimately, however, the measurement of the System's success in this area must be the graduation rate for all students, including athletes, and more needs to be done here.

The A&M System has been made a great deal of progress since the Affirmative Action Office was established in the mid 1970s. However, we still have much to accomplish. We are in a transition period moving towards equal opportunity. The vehicle of affirmative action is the best transportation we have to achieve the goal of an appropriate representation of minorities and females in all areas of the A&M System.

It distresses me that there appears to be a growing and dangerously tolerant acceptance of discriminatory behavior. There is an ongoing resistance to the full integration of our society from a number of different groups and for various reasons. To combat this threat all of us we need to highlight the diversity of the many groups that comprise American culture and the contributions these groups have made to society. Equal opportunity doesn't just happen. It takes the active involvement and support of faculty, staff and students to ensure the A&M System is an equal opportunity institution.

George Wharton is the Director of Affirmative Action for the Texas A&M University System.

Students tell strange and silly Sbisa stories

Thousands of students eat at Sbisa dining hall every day and enjoy it immensely. The food is generally good and Sbisa should be commended for doing such a great job of serving so many people.

Yet after talking to some students who frequent Sbisa, I discovered Sbisa isn't the finest in culinary dining like I always thought it was. Some of the comments may be exaggerated or have little basis in truth, but most are humorous, and none are fabricated. So read them, but do so with a grain of salt (no pun intended).

Bill Petrie, self-proclaimed Sbisa authority, said, "If Sbisa started serving Fruity Pebbles, A&M would well be on its way to becoming a world-class university." There are problems, though, according to Petrie who said "the whipped-cream topping has a consistency similar to window caulking, except that it has the distinct chemical property of being more adhesive than superglue."

Tonya Yurgensen, who only occasionally visits Sbisa, said "I like it when people take a cup and smush it in the whipped-cream jello topping and stick it to the bottom of the table. Sometimes it stays there for weeks."

Liz Tisch, Sbisa groupie, said "Every meal is a natural laxative for me. In Sbisa, you can always be guaranteed your food will be from one of three colored food groups — green, orange or brown."

Petrie went on to say, "The food is usually greasy, but sometimes the food just isn't quite greasy enough. That's why when I go to the hamburger line, I ask for a grease-burger with an extra ladle of grease poured on top.



Timm Doolen
Assistant Opinion Page Editor

"Also, the gelatin occasionally appears in 'unnatural' colors and flavors."

Dwight Jones, gelatin and spud expert, said "The jello is sometimes not coagulated 100 percent and tends to be slimy like lukewarm sludge. The wedge-cut fries are skanky when served regularly, but when kept under a heat lamp in the vegetable tray, they taste like the sole of an old shoe."

Staton Shed said, "I hate the fact that the vanilla ice cream out of the machines has absolutely no flavor whatsoever. Except occasionally it tastes like rat poison."

"And their whipped butter that fills a whole tray is probably made from one stick of margarine that has been whipped to 50 times the original size. Also, the orange juice tastes like tequila, but unfortunately with no alcoholic effect."

Randall Roth, Sbisa connoisseur, said the orange juice is either too strong or too weak. "It'll either eat away the lining of your stomach or taste like watered-down juice that your mom tried to stretch out until the end of the week," he said.

Roth also said the stewed tomatoes looked like fetuses. "I also don't like it when they take old broccoli, mix it with

cheese and call it something else. They're trying to fool us," he said.

Don Kopf, Sbisa expert, complained that the bananas are either green and crunchy or brown and taste like pudding. "The blackened catfish looks like a big, fried slug," he said.

I also uncovered what I like to call the "French fry fiasco." Sbisa serves different fries on different days of the week (e.g. tater tots on Tuesday and wedge-cut fries on Wednesday) as indicated by the marquee above the fried spuds section. Yet sometimes Sbisa is inconsistent with their usual pattern, which causes unimaginable havoc to some Sbisa-goers.

Jason Druebert, distressed diner, said, "They're supposed to have 'tater tot Tuesday,' but when I went to Sbisa this Tuesday, they were serving curly fries. I was confused and didn't know what to do, so I went to my Thursday classes instead of my Tuesday classes. Luckily they were the same classes — this time — but who knows what might happen if they serve wedge-cut fries on a Tuesday or Thursday and I have a test!"

"Once on a Thursday, they were serving the regular shoestring fries for lunch. I went home and took a nap between lunch and dinner, and went back to find them serving straight-cut fries!

I'd thought I'd slept for 24 hours and missed all my Friday classes!"

Jay Burchfield concurred with Druebert's findings. "When I walk into Sbisa and they're serving the wrong type of fries, it takes my mind and body quite awhile to recover from the sudden disorientation. And after the initial shock, I find it has lasting effects on my biological clock."

I had a female friend whose menstrual cycle was thrown off when Sbisa served

tater tots on a Saturday," he said

Druebert said, "I just want to know why they switch fries on certain days and who is responsible. Is it somebody at the Food Services level or does the change come from 'higher up' in the University?"

The "French fry fiasco" and the other comments are all interesting, but

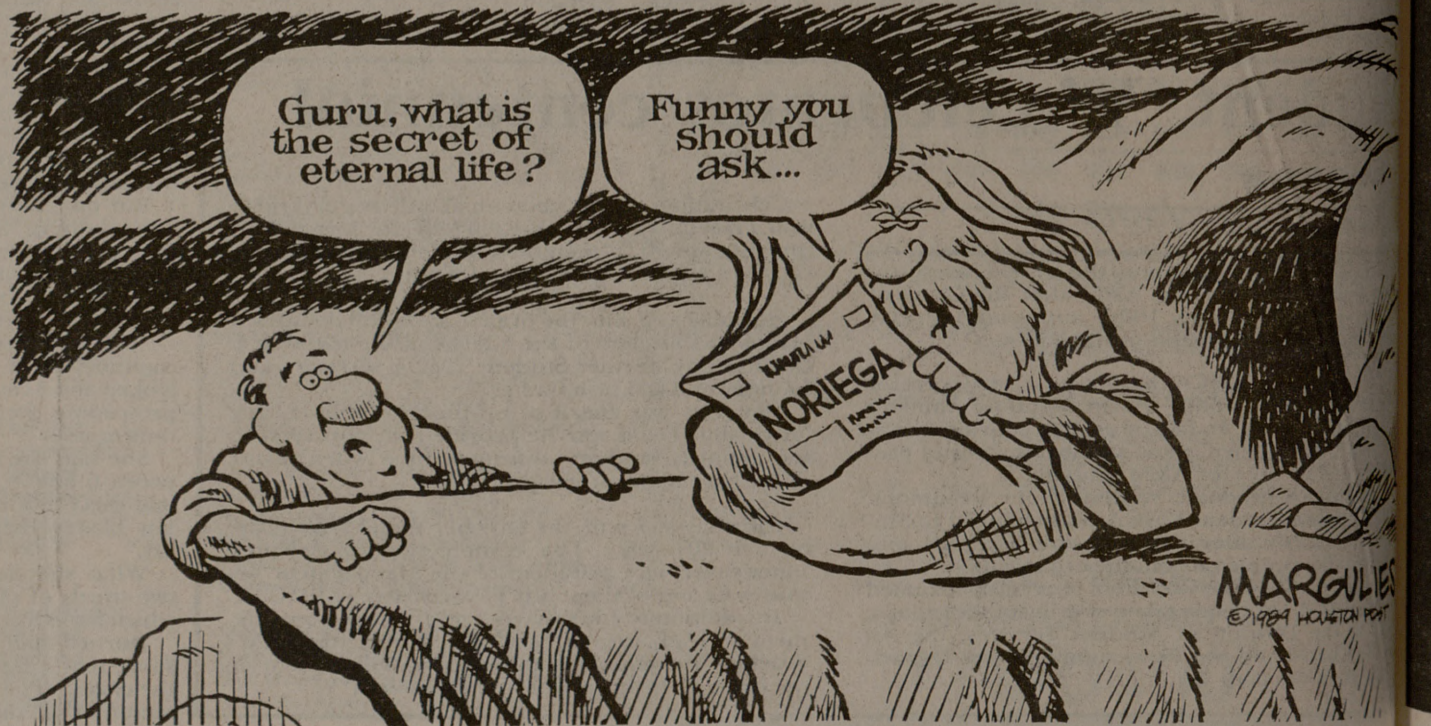
some questions remain unanswered.

- Why does every entree taste exactly the same?
- Why do pimentos sneak into every vegetable — corn, beans, spinach, etc.
- What were those cereal items that looked like a cross between pretzels and dog biscuits?
- Why does the cordon bleu look like a giant fried hamster?
- Why do Sbisa workers have to dress up in those silly costumes once a month? (It doesn't make the food any better.)
- What is the coating on the pudding made out of?
- Why do they always cover the meat with sauce, noodles or bread? (What are they trying to hide?)
- What exactly is a bagelwich?
- Which meat is the generic turkey/pork/chicken cutlet made from?
- What does the word cutlet mean?
- When will the fresh-baked cookies return?

We may never know the answers to these perplexing questions.

If you have a humorous complaint please write to *The Battalion*, and maybe I can compile another list of strange and silly Sbisa stories.

Timm Doolen is a junior computer science major and assistant opinion page editor for *The Battalion*.



The Battalion

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