

## Aggies: Give it all you've got in these last few weeks

Ags, a great time is upon us. We have so much riding on these last few weeks of the semester. We have the SWC Championship and the Cotton Bowl on the line, plus we have grades to make.

These goals and responsibilities have been on everybody's minds, but lately there have been a great deal of negative feelings on campus. These feelings have separated and caused distress among many Aggies.

One of the main issues lately has been bonfire. From a yell leader's standpoint, let me say that bonfire is in

**Waylan Cain**  
Guest Columnist

no danger of being canceled this year or in the years to come. As with any other event or tradition, through time people sometimes lose sight of the true purpose. In the past couple of years, as has been brought to everyone's attention through the media, drinking has been getting out of hand on Duncan Field during the burning of bonfire. All the negative attention bonfire has

received is not necessary. All someone needs to do is what I am doing now, asking Ags to be more conscious of the tradition behind bonfire instead of just going to bonfire and drinking — so lets do that.

Steve Moore, a redpot, summed up the reasons that keep bonfire burning: "Bonfire symbolizes A&M as a whole," he said. "Centerpole, for instance, is Texas A&M standing for higher education at its best. The logs stacked around the pole are Aggies, you and me. We make A&M what it is, no mat-

ter what walk of life we come from. Without any one log the stack would not be complete. That is what makes A&M so special to Aggies everywhere."

It is now time to look past those issues that have had adverse effects on student morale. It is time to look beyond the past, in the direction of the immediate future. The Arkansas and t.u. games are coming up, and these will decide the Conference champion and the Cotton Bowl berth. Bonfire is going to burn on Dec. 1. Everyone has been saying Howdy! Basketball season has begun. The holidays are near.

So Ags, lets pull together in these

last few weeks, and, like at the end of a race, lets work harder to end this year well.

And, one last thing about the Aggie game. The last team needs the power of the Twelfth Man to pull through. Be like crazy on Friday, and if you're going to be in town at midnight on Thursday night, come out to Kyle Field to practice your yelling. If you're going to come in from home Friday, be ready to yell when you get here.

*Waylan Cain is head yell leader and a guest columnist for The Battalion.*

## Tax payers never seem to get a break

Time for income tax and workers comp revisited — yes, handing over these old favorites once more on account of the beloved readers have raised points, objections, silly quibbles, sound alternatives and other matters that need addressing.

On the matter of a state income tax, several citizens having an off day wrote to demand how I dare advocate increased taxation: Here n't I have an idea what it's like out here in the real world and some of us are struggling just to cover the food and the house and the transportation and I may want the government to take another four percent of my income, but by God there are some of us who just can't afford it!

Sheesh. Give me a break, folks. Read my lips. We need a state income tax to replace the system we have now because the system we have now is unfair and costs the average Texan too much. You say you don't want the state to take three or four percent of your income? Well, how much do you think the state is taking right now?!! Count it, next time you spend a dollar, pay attention when the clerk says, "And tax." Look at the receipt you get: See where it says, "Tax?" What percentage is that? Come on, tell me.

Why do you think you're having a hard time making ends meet? If you're not rich, you're paying much more than your fair share of this state's taxes right now. It's a little hard to calculate, but if you're making under \$20,000,

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Syndicated Columnist

you're probably paying twice as big a chunk of your income as someone who makes twice as much as you do. Is that fair? Are we taking discretionary spending on luxury items here? No, we are talking about diapers.

Now, a more reasonable objection comes from former Yankees and other refugees, folks with bitter memories of living in places with both state income taxes and state sales taxes. One former Pennsylvanian says that state not only has an income tax but a sales tax almost as high as Texas' to boot. I realize such places exist. But if that's your reason for opposing an income tax, what you are saying is, "We have an unfair system of taxation, but let's not scrap it and start over with one that's fair because the state government could later make it unfair again." Attention citizens, of course there's no guarantee that once we get rid of the sales tax, they won't add it back, penny by penny. The only guarantee is us. Eternal vigilance is not only the price of liberty, but of fair taxation as well. I just

don't see the sense of saying we shouldn't change a bad system because there's a chance they'll mess it up again later on. They probably will; that's why our motto is — Perpetual Reform.

Now, back to workers comp. Here we are, headed straight for the worst of all possible outcomes, comp insurance just shot up another 22 percent, bidnesspeople all over Texas going rigid with shock — they cannot take this another month. Reminds me of the special session on education in '84, when the teachers were so poorly represented by their own leadership they wound up on the wrong side of almost every important issue. They used up all their chits and all their credibility trying to stop stuff that: A. couldn't be stopped and/or B. made no difference. The teachers did themselves so much damage in that one session they haven't recovered yet.

Frankly, I think the bidnesspeople are being just as poorly served by their representatives and spokesfolks, from the Chamber of Commerce on down. From the beginning, the bidness lobbyists on workers comp have been screaming that we had to get rid of trial de novo, trial de novo had to go, trial de novo was the root of all evil, and especially the root of high comp insurance rates. The trial lawyers kept saying trial de novo wasn't the problem, but the trial lawyers obviously had a large self-interest at stake, so their credibility was zip. But they were right.

Trial de novo is gone, it's history, goodbye, any Texas worker who gets screwed by the system from now on can't take it to court and start over. But you watch: The insurance companies are going to turn right around, butter not melting in their corporate mouths, and say: "Oh, well. That wasn't the problem."

Basically, there's two ways to cut insurance rates — improve safety or cut benefits. We're about to cut benefits in a system everyone agrees already pays abnormally low benefits. Because you bidnesspeople just will not listen on safety, even though it's in your own self-interest, just like the teachers five years ago. Bidnessmen from Dallas called the other day, said how dare I argue that safety was the root of the problem — the problem is all these fraudulent claims, the problem is all these adjective-deleted workers and these adjectival-interjection shyder lawyers (whereat we both stopped to abuse people just a happy spell) ripping off honest, hardworking bidnessmen.

This fellow says he doesn't care about the safety stats, they're just based on all these phony claims anyway, aren't they, what do I mean bodies, what do I mean, what are we talking about, maybe 20 or 40 fatal accidents a year? No. The safety stats I'm talking about are not based on the number of claims, valid or fraudulent. They're based on corpses. We're talking over

800 dead workers a year. As the man the famous Monty Python sketch says that is an ex-parrot. That is no phony claim. If you cut the accident rates in this state to average — not talking about being No. 1 or the Top 10 — anything ambitious, just average, — you save the system \$500 million a year and that's your insurance rate, bubba.

(The man from Dallas has been keeping track of who files comp claims and has a profile: male workers, 18 to 25, making about five dollars an hour. "Guys who can make more money staying home," he said. "The guys who make eight dollars an hour, they don't file claims," he said. He had it right in his hands. I waited. But it was just another copped ball on the playing field of life.)

Guy tells me over 80 percent of accidents are caused by worker carelessness. I don't doubt it. Bidnesspeople of Texas, explain this to me — I know that if you make a widget, the widget has to be goof-proof, absolute goof-proof, or you will get your butt sued off and spend the rest of your life in Chapter 11. Or so you like to claim. Right? OK, why is it you think the place where the goof-proof widget is made should not be goof-proof as well? For the same reason your widget should be goof-proof — so it won't cost you money. Looking forward to further correspondence on this point.

## The thrill of making a hole-in-one

I made a hole-in-one. Honest I did. This isn't some sort of make-believe column like I often write. For instance, I recently wrote a column about Jim Bakker meeting his new celtmate, Mad Dog.

But this isn't anything like that. I mean that I hit a golf ball on a par three and it went into the hole for a "1." Do you know the thrill of writing a "1" on a golf scorecard next to your name?

I've had my thrills in sports before. Playing for dear old Newnan High back in '63, I hit a jump shot at the buzzer to defeat the top-seeded team in the region tournament.

That got my name and picture in the paper. (I wanted a kiss from a certain red-headed cheerleader, but she remarked how she detested kissing anyone covered in sweat.)

I also pitched a no-hitter in Pony League, finished second in a tennis tournament, hit a hard-way six on a crap table in Vegas, made back-to-back net eagles playing with Greg Norman in a pro-am golf tournament in Hilton Head and once had dinner with the girl who used to say, "Take it off. Take it all off," in the old shaving cream commercial.

**Lewis Grizzard**  
Syndicated Columnist

(I realize having dinner with a girl who made a shaving cream commercial has nothing to do with sports, but she made the commercial with Joe Namath, so there.)

But none of that compares to my hole-in-one.

Get the picture: I'm on the par three, 12th hole at the lovely Island Club here in coastal Georgia. I admit No. 12 isn't that long a hole, but I didn't design the course, so it's not my fault.

The hole is 128 yards over a small pond.

It was Saturday morning, Nov. 4. I was playing in a threesome, comprised of myself, Tim Jarvis and Mike Matthews, two players of lesser talent with whom I often hang out.

It was a lovely morning, having warmed to the low 70s as I approached the tee. I was wearing an orange golf shirt, a pair of Duckhead khaki slacks and my black and white golf shoes, the ones my dog has not chewed up yet.

I was on the first tee. "What are you going to hit?" asked Matthews.

"None of your business," I said.

We were playing for a lot of money. OK, so we weren't playing for a lot of money, but you never tell your opponent what club you are hitting.

"Tell us," said Jarvis, "or we'll tell everybody how you move the ball in the rough when nobody is looking."

"Nine-iron," I said.

The green sloped to the right. I said

to myself, "Keep the ball to the left of the hole."

(Actually, I said, "Please, God, let me get this thing over the water.")

I hit a high, arching shot. The ball cut through the still morning air, a white missile against the azure sky.

(That's the way Dan Jenkins or Herbert Warren Wind would have described it.)

The ball hit eight feet left of the pin. It hopped once. It hopped again. It was rolling directly toward the hole.

An eternity passed.

It has a chance to go in, I thought. But that's not going to happen, of course, because I'm terribly unlucky and I've done some lousy things in my life and I don't deserve it to go into the hole.

It went into the hole.

A "1."

It was a joyous moment when my first hole-in-one fell snugly into the hole. But the next moment came at the next tee, the par four 13th.

For those non-golfers, the person with the lowest score on the previous hole gets to hit first on the next hole.

I strode up to the tee with my driver teed up my ball, and then said to my opponents, "I think I'm up, but does anybody have a zero?"

Jarvis and Matthews were gone friends and I shall miss them.

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