

Mail Call

Students should seek advising

EDITOR:

In response to Mr. Doolen's editorial of November 28 on academic advising, I agree that no academic adviser should be allowed to counsel over 100 students (I believe the optimum number is around 30), but many of the problems with academic advising lies with the students. I urged a friend of mine to see an adviser about career planning only to find out she did not even know who her adviser was. Many students do not take time to seek advice, and they should.

My department [agricultural engineering] eliminated most problems with advising apathetic or lazy students by blocking them from registration until they see an adviser. This semester I noticed the Department of Civil Engineering developed a similar policy. Maybe this should be a University policy.

James Darrell McCauley '90

Help from below

EDITOR:

WHOO! to the workers of the Underground eating

facility. I say this because of the incident that happened to me on Nov. 8 when I took off my Aggie senior ring and accidentally left it on my food tray and it was disposed of as trash. After I realized what I had done — approximately three hours later — I called to inquire if one had been turned in or found. I spoke to a very sympathetic lady who informed me that no ring was found and that I should check back the following day.

After I hung up the phone, I decided to go over to campus to check myself. Upon arrival, I spoke with a supervisor who informed me that many of the staff was already searching for my ring, and if needed, they would be willing to get a metal detector. After an hour of digging through trash and trays, my Aggie ring was found on the last tray inspected. My thanks goes out to all those workers who helped me and were willing to put forth that extra effort and time to find my ring. It makes me proud to be an Aggie! Gig 'Em!

Chris Davis '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.

Future idea: close campus to traffic

We have an excellent setting in which to attend classes. The walk to and from classes is generally pleasant, and the classes themselves are held in fine facilities.

Occasionally, though, certain campus intersections become congested with the combined traffic of cars, shuttles, buses, bicyclists and pedestrians. Many of you may recall trying to get to class by working your way through the jam.

It can be a mess. Car drivers try to get through and beyond it. Shuttle buses and shuttle drivers try to make the tight turn without hitting anyone, bicyclists try to weave around and between all the people and vehicles and pedestrians try to walk safely through. To complicate matters, almost everybody is in a hurry. It happens day in and day out.

Uniform scheduling intensifies the congestion even more. Everybody is trying to get somewhere at the same time. Things can lull from 9:00 until 9:55 on a Monday morning. Then, suddenly, whole buildings empty almost completely, and this flood of students is met by just as many going to replace them. Cars and shuttles pass through as well.

Two intersections in particular stand out. The biggie is located right in front of the Bus Stop Snack Bar. Large groups of people walking and biking to and from Blocker cross that intersection in thick masses several times daily. Meanwhile, cars, on-campus shuttles and shuttle buses move through the intersection. The other, less-congested intersection is located right in front of the Commons area. And other intersections around campus present similar problems.

Now, I do not want to make too much of this; it really amounts to no more than a minor inconvenience. Still, the problem is significant. It presents a small safety hazard to everyone concerned. The fumes can be choking. And the daily congestion adds just a little extra stress and strain to thousands of already-stressed lives.

Granted, traffic congestion presents no emergency; we could continue just like now. The problem has a partial solution, though, which deserves consideration. Traffic congestion



Jim Hayes
Columnist

tion could be reduced by discouraging thruway traffic during class hours.

The campus makes a convenient thruway. It interconnects Texas, University, Wellborn and Jersey/George Bush Drive. As A&M and College Station continue growing progressively larger, the on-campus traffic congestion seems likely to grow progressively worse.

Improving the situation would not require armed guards or even one-armed gates. Just placing signs requesting that motorists avoid using congested areas of the A&M campus as thruways during primary class hours (say, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.) could reduce congestion considerably.

Certainly, such repression could not be absolute. It would have to allow staff members to pass to and from staff lots, shuttle buses and on-campus shuttles to complete their routes, maintenance vehicles to travel around campus and other vehicles having urgent purposes to accomplish those purposes. Yet, it still could reduce campus traffic enough to make a difference.

Several benefits might result. Inhaling auto exhaust fumes would be less of a pedestrian problem than now. Everybody passing through the congested intersections would be a little safer. The trip to and from class would be a little more peaceful for everyone concerned.

The costs would fall upon those who currently pass through these congested areas while using the campus as a thruway; they would be requested to drive elsewhere during class hours.

Steps already have been taken to reduce thruway use of the campus. Most significantly, the mall located adjacent to the Chemistry Building occupies the space where Spence Street once ran. Construction around campus also has had the effect of slowing and diverting auto traffic.

Yet traffic congestion remains a problem in certain places at certain times. Taking steps to discourage thruway use of these congested areas could make the campus atmosphere more pleasant for students during the trip to and from class.

Jim Hayes is a senior economics major and a columnist for The Battalion.

Former governors, foreign governments

We have this former governor problem and the floor is open for suggestions on what we should do about it. They've been an embarrassment for some time (not as embarrassing as when they were in office, of course) but now they're getting to be a real hazard. The worst case, obviously, is the former governor who is now governor, and right there you see the problem — they keep running for things and sometimes we forget how bad they were and actually re-elect them. What I say is, why make a mistake we've made before when we have an opportunity to make a brand new mistake?

Two formers now gearing up to run again, Dolph Briscoe, the pet rock of governors, the man who wasn't there, and Mark White, the state weather vane, the man who kept his ear to the ground and his finger in the wind while bending with the flow. Hell of a posture.

White, perhaps the most assiduous follower of popular opinion politics has ever produced, is running on grounds that he's a proven "leader." No fudge. Briscoe is supposedly considering running for Senate, apparently on the grounds that most people know his name. The other two formers, John Connally and Preston Smith, are both in bankruptcy or they'd probably be running for something too. It's almost enough to make you grateful for the oil crash.

Well, what to do? Pass a law? One that says once we've gotten up the energy to kick you out once, you can't come back to haunt us anymore? Make prior service as governor a bar to citizenship, like conviction of a felony?

Looking on the bright side, Dolph Briscoe was a restful governor. Aside from his tendency to appoint dead people to boards and commissions where they did little harm, he did nothing because he was never there. Gone and forgotten, that was Briscoe.

For those who think the best government is the least government, Briscoe's your man — can't get less government than he gave. (In fact, I suspect history will judge Briscoe's governorship quite harshly. He was in office for six years when the state had money rolling in without even raising taxes. That's when we could have taken the California route, built a great university system, first-rate public education, improved social services, diversified the economy — and all without an income tax. Instead, Briscoe provided no leadership, the state did even less than usual except for what it says it does, which is build more roads, and now we're Mississippi with good highways.)

At least White had enough sense to follow Ross Perot on education. He did help to reform public schools — just not far enough. The poor man was actually beaten by the teachers, who didn't have enough sense to know he was on their side — that and no-pass, no-play and the oil crash. What an irony for a complete politician, to be beaten for the best things he ever did and something he had nothing to do with. Well, no one ever said it was an easy game.

The high point for amusement in White's term was the time a primary opponent accused him of being a nerd, on account of his picture in his high school annual has nothing under it. Just "Mark White." Not even on the



Molly Ivins

Syndicated Columnist

prom poster committee. Or in the French Club. Nada. Zip. The Grand Nerdtude Crisis enlivened an otherwise dull week.

Well, we could continue in the happy pursuit of remembering governors we are better off without, but that we wouldn't have time for Foreign Policy Horrors. It's still in short stories on the back pages ("Khmer Take Town" but the Khmer Rouge, the insane, genocidal communists who killed millions of their own people when they ruled Cambodia earlier this decade, are winning again — with American support. Did you see the film "The Killing Fields?" Yeah, the same guys. With a backing them. Our tax dollars. Our diplomatic policy. Our State Department. We have backed some truly deplorable dictators from Somoza to Duvalier to Marcos to the Shah of Iran but this is the first time we've ever backed Maoist-Stalinist killer-communists who slaughter their own people. believe we are looking at a new low.

Some people think America was responsible for bringing the Khmer Rouge to power the first time — certainly undermined the Cambodian government by Nixon's secret bombing (isn't that insane — "secret bombing" — it was not a secret from the Cambodians). If we bear any responsibility for their coming to power once, it is more than we should have on our record as a nation. But to let it happen again — encourage it to happen again. That's beyond any hope of forgiveness. Ever.

The Kissengeresque rationale behind this insanity is that America is posed to anything the North Vietnamese do, whether it's right or not, they're for it, we're against it. A truly intelligent policy, eh? Makes us the pawns.

The Khmer Rouge were so bad, the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia to get rid of them (you thought North Vietnamese communists were bad? The Khmer Rouge are so bad even the North Vietnamese can't take them). The Vietnamese are regarded as liberators in Cambodia. They finally left earlier this year after a couple years of occupation, leaving a puppet regime in place. So of course we're opposed to the puppet regime because the North Vietnamese set it up. So we support opposition to the puppet regime.

Guess who? The Khmer Rouge are part of an opposition coalition that includes Prince Sihanouk, who has been on everybody's side over the years, and some small democratic elements — but the Khmer Rouge is the only part of the coalition that has weapons and an army. It's the Khmer Rouge now fighting the government left by the North Vietnamese and winning. And it's the Khmer Rouge that will take over, with our backing. Why should the Cambodians, a lovely people who have never done us any harm, have to endure mass killings a second time just because we got beat by the Vietnamese in a war we had no business fighting and no real sore losers.

Food for more than thought

My body and I had a long talk the other morning.

First, my heart asked, "What's that you're drinking?"

"Coffee," I said, adding, with some degree of pride, "but it's decaffeinated. Caffeine is bad for me, so I've cut it out."

"Uh-oh," said my heart.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"You haven't heard," replied my heart. "A new study has indicated decaffeinated coffee is made from beans that can cause bad cholesterol."

I already had cut down on eggs to help reduce my cholesterol count. Now I'm told decaffeinated coffee, which I thought was good for me, picks up where the eggs leave off.

"One other thing," said my heart, "you know how you often get up in the middle of the night and go downstairs and eat some raw zucchini?"

"Raw vegetables are good for me," I said.

Lewis Grizzard

Syndicated Columnist

"That may very well be," said my heart, "but another new study says getting up suddenly in the middle of the night can cause a heart attack."

My blood joined in.

"You're not actually going to eat that cinnamon roll, are you?"

"I love cinnamon rolls," I answered.

"What's wrong with a cinnamon roll?"

"Sugar," said my blood. "Eat too much sugar and we'll have to deal with hypoglycemia."

"Dang right," said my pancreas.

"But I drink diet soft drinks, to cut down on my sugar intake," I said.

"Yeah," my blood said. "You and all those dead laboratory rats."

After that, I made a few decisions. I decided I wouldn't drink any sort

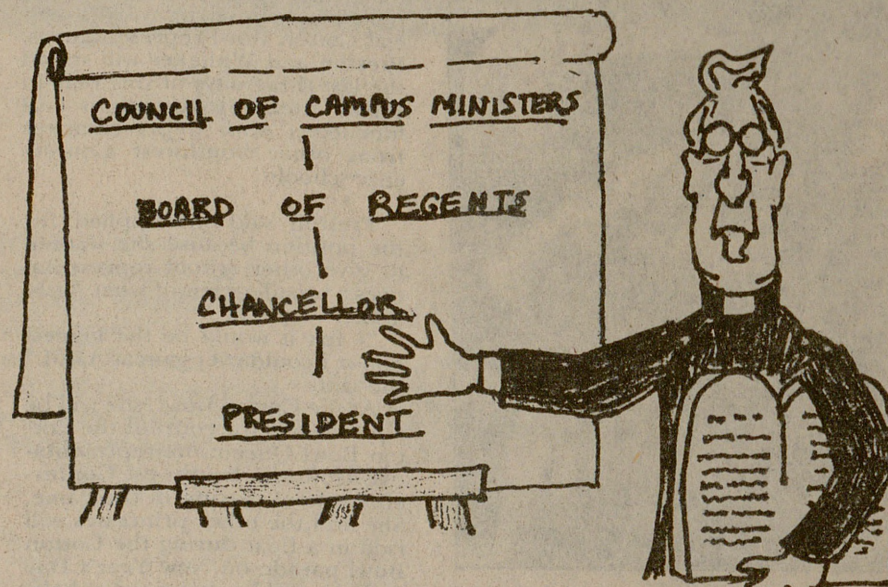
of coffee anymore, I'd eat cereals made only of oat bran, I'd cut out all sugars — both real and artificial — and I would never, under any circumstances, get up at midnight, which could cause me to have a heart attack.

(If my house catches on fire, at midnight, I'll cross that bridge when I come to it.)

I went to the refrigerator, pulled out a non-alcoholic beer and had myself a good cry.

Copyright 1989, Cowles Syndicate, Inc.

AND THOU SHALT NOT BUILD BONFIRE,
FOR SUCH IS THE WORK OF THE DEVIL



...THE BOARD OF REGENTS IS INFORMED OF SOME ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES AT TEXAS A&M...

The Battalion

(USPS 045 360)

Member of
Texas Press Association
Southwest Journalism Conference

The Battalion Editorial Board

Scot O. Walker, Editor
Wade See, Managing Editor
Juliette Rizzo, Opinion Page Editor
Fiona Soltes, City Editor
Ellen Hobbs, Chuck Squatriglia,
News Editors
Tom Kehoe, Sports Editor
Jay Janner, Art Director
Dean Sueltenfuss, Lifestyles 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.

T.O.C. © 1989