

Handicapped minority needs majority respect

Last semester, I had an experience that "opened my eyes" so to speak.

Somewhat, I had the misfortune of spraining my ankle. It was just a sprain, not a break. And after a quick trip to the health center, my foot was all bandaged up and I had two nifty crutches to play with.

My injury was only temporary, but for many students here at Texas A&M, being handicapped is a way of life. I started to wonder how students who are in wheelchairs get into buildings. I started to wonder how blind students read signs that have no braille equivalents beside them. I wondered how students who are deaf "hear" what their professors' lectures. I wondered what problems these students had.

A recent article in *U* magazine said Gavin Miller, a student at Northeast Louisiana University who is confined to a wheelchair, changed his major due to inaccessibility of the building where his classes were. It also described the situation of Teresa Carroll, a student at the University of Rochester who is also confined to a wheelchair, has problems with inaccessibility to buildings and a lack of services for handicapped students. Handicapped students from all over the nation are facing problems like these on their college campuses.

And how well is A&M doing? According to Charles Powell, director of handicapped and veteran services, 90 percent of the buildings here at A&M are accessible to students in wheelchairs. Powell said that many of the buildings at A&M are extremely old, and that ramps had to be added wherever it was possible.



Damon Arhos
Columnist

able. This often means that ramps are added to the back of buildings, Powell said.

Powell also said that A&M is one of the top schools in the Southwest Conference for accessibility and handicapped services. He said that while it often takes a lot of time to make handicapped additions to buildings, the University is definitely making an effort to cooperate with handicapped student's needs.

The only concern that Powell noted was the construction that is now going on at A&M. Powell said that construction areas are potentially dangerous for those students in wheelchairs and for blind students. He said that sidewalks are always carefully marked off so that these students will be able to get by safely.

The University seems to be aware of the needs of handicapped students. Even so, the statistics on handicapped student enrollment are stunning. Of the over 40,000 students here at A&M, there are approximately 25 students who use wheelchairs. There are approximately four totally blind people enrolled here, and only about eight who have limited vision. And there are ap-

proximately seven students enrolled at A&M who are deaf.

It is amazing that a University of this size has such a low handicapped student enrollment. Where do the problems lie?

One problem may lie with the recruiting of handicapped students. We need to tell handicapped high school seniors that we welcome them and that A&M does everything it can to accommodate handicapped students.

Secondly, we need to make the students, faculty and administration of A&M more aware of the needs of the handicapped students. Although handicapped students are a definite minority at this University, their needs deserve majority attention.

Thirdly, we need to go beyond 90 percent accessibility. Every building on this campus should have easy access by any handicapped student. And "easy" should mean "easy." A person in a wheelchair shouldn't have to enter through the back of a building. They also shouldn't have to "go around the block" to get into a room that is right in front of them.

A&M should be commended on its efforts to help the handicapped student population. However, more work needs to be done. We shouldn't stop the momentum that has begun. Changes to the University might take some planning, money and time. Changes in our attitudes and our awareness could take place immediately.

Damon Arhos is a senior journalism major and the Assistant Opinion Page Editor for The Battalion.

Mail Call

Dorm repair charge full of holes

Over the weekend of the A&M — t.u. game my suitemates in Aston Hall were written up for having visitors after hours. During the encounter the resident advisors noticed that holes had been drilled in the ceiling for additional lighting. The R.A.s explained how the shelves and lights would have to be moved and that it would cost \$12 per hole to repair.

Twelve dollars? \$144 for 12 holes, each no larger than the size of a cap?

My suitemates were further told that it wasn't likely the holes even would be patched and if my suitemates were to patch the holes themselves it would still be charge because "it doesn't work that way."

So where does this money go, Ags? It obviously doesn't get used for what it is collected. This is easy to see by the numerous other holes that have never been repaired but for which I'm sure someone was charged. \$144 could pair all the holes in every room of the whole hall.

How does the University arrive at this figure? I guess it is hard to make white paint once it turns yellow. Think about it, Ags.

Tim Batt '93

Thanks, Ags, bonfire was great

Editor:

I want to write and thank the student body for making last Friday's bonfire one of the best ever.

Because of the extensive controversy that has surrounded this tradition over the past few months, everyone directed their attention toward this year's ceremony.

We have shown that, as Aggies, we can work together with the University administration and community leaders to act in the best interest of Texas A&M University. We have set a precedent for the students who come behind us to follow.

Have a safe and happy holiday season, good luck on finals, and, once again, thanks.

Gig 'Em!

Kevin Buchman,
Student Body President

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 maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer.

Couple meets through mail; lives happily ever after

Lewis Grizzard

Syndicated Columnist

I met Tim Jarvis in Chicago 13 years ago. He is a good and honorable man. He realized right away that I, a native of the South, had no business in the frozen regions of the North, and he befriended me.

For one thing, he drove me to work in his 1961 Volkswagen through snow, sleet and mounting despair.

I moved back South in 1977 and Tim followed me a couple of years later. He experienced a sundown in August, single bars with 400 ex-Phi Mus and a Georgia-Florida football game and he was hooked.

But he began having some of the problems in Atlanta that I had in Chicago.

He hit the singles' bars, and that can get to a man after a while. Tim was nearing 40 and all the ex-Phi Mus he met couldn't understand why he wasn't driving a Mercedes.

But then he found something. It was in a magazine. It was a deal where American men could correspond with English-speaking Asian women.

Tim found Rosel from the Philippines. They corresponded. Then, Tim flew to the Philippines and met Rosel for the first time.

They fell in love and they got married in San Jose, Calif., last spring. I was the best man.

If you're looking for any bad news, go buy a newspaper. Tim and Rosel are not only happy, they've just moved into their new house and they're expecting a baby early next year.

What I mean to communicate here is that Tim Jarvis, now 41, got tired of the singles bar thing and found his love in life through corresponding with a woman in the Philippines.

I wrote a column about them when they married. And the calls and letters came flooding in.

One wrote, "How could you love somebody you met through the mail?"

The deal is this:

Don't write or call me anymore. I can't help you with any answers, but Tim and Rosel can.

They now publish their own pen-pal

magazine like the one through which they met. I've seen the first issue, and the young ladies are beautiful.

Tim and Rosel want to give others the same opportunities they had. If you are

interested, write them at American Asian Couples, P.O. Box 590, Atlanta, Ga. 30239-0590.

Or call them at 404-664-3664. Tell them how they can't be happy.

Former A&M worker gives telephone hints, warnings on use of Student Locator service

Chris Carter

Guest Columnist

As I put a close to three years as a student worker at the infamous "Student Locator," I feel it is time that someone shed a light on my former occupation.

What we are: Student Locator is a free service that lists the telephone numbers of students, faculty and staff, and departments on campus. We have up to seven operators working at peak hours, and as few as two working the graveyard shift. We are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

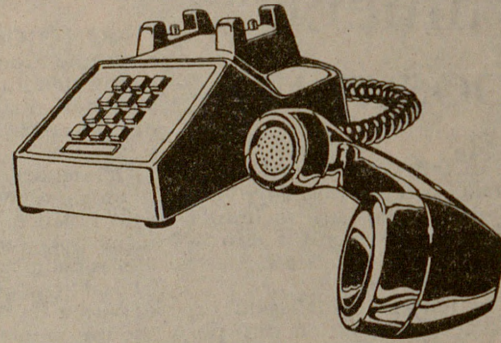
What we are NOT: As of yet we are not computerized. Instead, we have a three foot wide telephone book, so please be patient.

When we take a long time to answer the line it is because we are busy taking other calls. We take from 600 to 800 calls an hour.

I think I should clarify a few things that seem to be recurring misconceptions about Student Locator:

1. We do not know all 40,000 students personally.
2. We do not have a "more recent number;" only one per customer.
3. We do not list women by their first name and bra size. Please get a last name.

4. We do not have listings for the athletes. You have to call Cain Hall. And no, we don't know why no one answers there.
5. Please don't call us while you're eating. If you heard it once you'd never do it again.
6. Please don't call us from a speaker phone. We can never hear the first letter of your words.
7. Please at least try to spell the last name. "Your guess is as good as mine" doesn't work; our guess is they aren't listed.
8. Please find a pen and paper BEFORE you call, and use it when we give you the number.
9. Please don't call A&M information if Student Locator doesn't have the number. We are the same people and we know it's you.
10. You cannot dial Beijing direct from the library. Don't try.
11. You cannot get pizza delivery places on the elevator phones. Don't try.
12. We can't give you someone's address. Don't try.
13. We can't give out the numbers for Resident Advisors. Don't ask.
14. We are people too. While most students say "please" and "thank you," some choose not to bother. It never hurts to be nice.
15. Please turn down the stereo before calling us. Most of the return calls we get are because the student couldn't



name for someone "The Third" (William Alexander Buttersworth III Junior and Chip are also nicknames for someone "The Second;" and at least 20 percent of the students are known by their middle names but are listed by their first name).

Considering the bureaucracy involved with getting information out of this place, I think the staff behind Student Locator do a pretty good job pulling it all together.

I must admit that the past few years Student Locator have been fun. I've been like having a bird's eye view of life at A&M. So, if anyone is looking for a low-paying job with a lot of work fringe benefits and a lot of great people to work with, call Student Locator and tell them that Mike sent you.

I would like to thank Charlene, Charlene, and all my former co-workers for a lot of nice memories, as well as "Bob," "the Debbies," "Jenny," "Mindy," and the countless other students I've met, who have invited me to parties called just to say hi, or even just took a few minutes out of their lives to be nice. You made an otherwise mundane job enjoyable, and I thank you all.

As with all columns, opinions expressed by Guest Columnists are not necessarily those of The Battalion. Persons interested in submitting guest columns should contact the Opinion Page Editor at 845-3314.

The Battalion

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