

## Mail Call

### Students tired of pranks

EDITOR:

Last semester you could have asked who Bryan Skipworth was and anyone would rattle off Aggies Against Bonfire without batting an eyelash. Now, not only does Bryan hate Aggie bonfire, he has taken to believing it's OK to deface A&M's own venerated savior Lawrence Sullivan Ross with, of all things, a swastika!

It's easy to see that because Skipworth was unable to participate in organizations that actually contribute in a positive manner, he has resorted to non-conformist ways of stirring up trouble and getting his name in the paper. About 40,000 people know his name and what he has accomplished. Also, 40,000 people are a bit tired of his immature, uninformed, childish and thoughtless practices. This recent swastika prank was not only needless, but absolutely morally abhorable.

Since A&M is so against his beliefs and a bit too "conservative" for him, perhaps he should leave (I'm sure that many of us would be happy to pack his bags for him.). But perhaps Skipworth should stay away from t.u. — I think he's a bit too strange, even for them.

Gretchen E. Kelly '92  
accompanied by 12 signatures

### Stop 'foolish word games'

EDITOR:

I think something horrible is happening on the A&M campus. Lately, I have read several letters in The Battalion (I am not going to resort to name calling) that seem to come down hard on the University as a whole. What I mean is that every time an aspect of Texas A&M is put down the University as a whole suffers.

For example, recently letters have alternately insulted and promoted the Corps of Cadets, of which I am not a member. Somewhere along the line people seem to have forgotten that if it had not been for the Corps of Cadets there would not be Texas A&M University. The University was first established as a military academy in 1876 and although the Corps now represents a small part of the system, it is the reason why we are able to attend this University today.

Numerous other organizations have suffered due to the lack of respect that people have toward other people's beliefs, but we can also learn to respect (even if we don't like) the organizations and traditions that allow us to attend this fine University? Pro-Aggie or anti-Aggie, let's stop these foolish word games.

Elizabeth V. Graham '93

### Deforestation: an Aggie tradition

EDITOR:

Thank you for having the decency of printing the two pro-clearcutting letters. It's time we Americans stood up for our rights to chop down! If the forest service feels that selling clearcutting rights is good for them, then I'm sure that they mean because it helps the land, not because it pays their bills. I keep telling these intellectual snobs that clearcutting a few thousand acres, bulldozing whatever is left and then burning the remainder is a perfectly natural thing to do!

And I'm sick of these wimps worrying about what happens to wildlife. Any owls or whatever else that wouldn't survive without "old-growth" forests can't be more important than our mighty lumber industry! Why, every day The Battalion alone probably uses up a dozen trees!

After all, deforestation is a true Aggie tradition!

Joseph Kachmar  
Graduate student

### Don't cut down Silver Taps

EDITOR:

In reference to Coriene M. Case's letter on Feb. 19, I would just like to say that for someone who cannot seem to find the time or energy to attend Silver Taps, she sure can find the time to publicly voice her complaints about this University in The Battalion.

If I recall correctly, Coriene wrote into The Battalion on Sept. 13 confessing her pride in being a two-percenter and her lack of time to "partake in the many festivities" here at A&M. I believe this negative attitude could only be associated with a two-percenter. In her letter concerning Silver Taps, Coriene complains that she has to get up early, study and tend to personal obligations.

OK, OK, but what about all the men and women in the Corps? Are you not aware of the fact that these people get up every morning at the crack of dawn and either run or drill? All these people still have time and energy to make grades and deal with personal obligations. I admit however that there are some Aggies that can't make it to Silver Taps, but you don't see all of them writing in and calling the ceremony a hassle. How would you feel if everyone felt the way you did and couldn't find it in them to attend a Silver Taps held in your honor?

In reply to Coriene's comment that "some of us do have lives," yes we do, but unfortunately the people being honored at Silver Taps no longer have their lives. So don't feel that Silver Taps is a burden on you, just don't go and be quiet about it! Don't cut down a tradition held very dear to A&M and its students.

Alissa A. Miller '93

### Zips, remember your deposits

EDITOR:

This letter is directed at all seniors graduating in May. Although you may not remember it, when you first enrolled you paid a \$10 "property deposit" to the University. Instead of automatically refunding this money to you when you graduate, the University just pockets the money if you don't ask for it. Although the fiscal office is hoping everyone will forget to request the return of their money, you can go to room 102 of the Coke Building and get what's rightfully yours.

Annelise Weiner '90

### Have an opinion? Express it!

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. There is no guarantee that letters submitted will be printed. Each letter must be signed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer. All letters may be brought to 216 Reed McDonald, or sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111.

## Whining baseball players get their way once more

Spring break was basically a relaxed, carefree week of bliss. Most of my time was spent either at the beach on South Padre Island or in Matamoros, that friendly Mexican border villa.

Occasionally, though, I would worry. I was depressed because my bottle of Pepto was so empty that I had to add water and shake it when I needed some. But alas, I was mainly troubled by the baseball lockout.

Baseball has always been my favorite sport. Once in grade school, our class assignment was to write about our favorite season. Many kids choose fall or spring. I choose baseball season and promptly failed my paper.

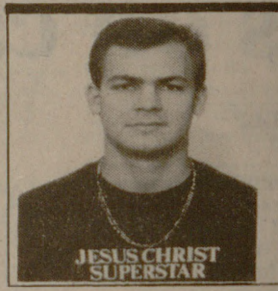
Last summer, a friend and I drove to Chicago for a week of baseball. We had the pleasure of seeing numerous games at the friendly confines of Wrigley Field and at Comisky Park. It was wonderful. I thought that my love for professional baseball was boundless. But now, I have almost had it.

For those of you who are not familiar with the situation, professional baseball players are greedy souls. Spring training, the annual preparatory period for professional players was delayed for 32 days while the players and team owners tried to reach an agreement on numerous grievances. Training camps opened yesterday and, once again, the players are left with smiles and fat pocketbooks.

This is the sixth work stoppage that major league baseball has seen in the past 18 years. This time, the players had to make severe compromises and settle for only 95 percent of their demands. What more could these guys want?

The life of a major-leaguer is not a bad one. The player works for less than half of the year. His work is playing a game for a few hours. This is not to mention that he gets to dart around the country in jets and stay in great cities for days at a time. The only drawback might be the fact that he only sees his family for about half of the time when the season is in progress. That, though, is compensated for by his salary which averages over \$500,000 now.

I, personally, can hardly imagine a better lifestyle. Apparently the players can. The new, four year agreement signed with the owners provides for a \$100,000 minimum salary for players. Also, the owners must contribute \$55 million to the players' pension fund and now, 17 percent of players with only two years of experience can file for salary arbitration. This all means that the players whined loudly enough to get their way.



Matt McBurnett  
Columnist

This is ridiculous. Even the last year on the 24-man roster of players will receive \$100,000. This guy may only play a few games but will make a six-figure salary.

Many major-league players have college educations. Almost all had the chance to go to college. Some prefer to go to the minor leagues and try to work their way up to the majors. The guys may have to accept the fact that they might have to get a real job once they retire from baseball. It is silly to expect the owners to provide them with outrageous pension plans. At any rate, any buffoon could manage to save some money when making \$500,000 a year.

High dollar salaries are ruining baseball. Once fondly referred to as "America's pastime," it is more a matter of big business. I have attended quite a few baseball card conventions. Usually the organizers of the event recruit a big name baseball star to sign autographs. This is good for the fans and the baseball card dealers. Last year, Darryl Strawberry was at one, charging \$5 for his autograph. I nearly threw up on the guy. I just do not understand.

It is natural for one to want to receive the most money he can for his skills. Some baseball players are making \$3 million now. That is simply insane. The team owners are partly at fault. They set the precedents in the '70s that they would be willing to bid big bucks for free agent players. The whole scene has become a horrible display of greed.

When I watch reruns of "Home Run Derby" on television, I get a chance to see great players from the late 1950s and early 1960s. These guys laugh and have a good time just playing the game. Even the great ones of the era like Mickey Mantle were friendly and kind. They worried much more about their batting averages than the Dow Jones average. Those attitudes hardly exist today. Professional baseball has lost much of its integrity, and it is coming closer than ever to losing a fan.

Matt McBurnett is a junior electrical engineering major.

# It's time for the United States to legalize marijuana

Every civilized society in recorded history has known and made use of mood-altering chemicals. From the hashish of the Afghans to the peyote of the American Indians, drug use of one sort or another is a common thread woven into and running through all human cultures. Many types of drugs are in use around the world. Perhaps the least understood and most maligned is THC, or marijuana. While second only to alcohol in global usage, it is socially unacceptable in this country and in some states carries severe criminal penalties.

Marijuana enjoyed a brief period of limited popularity in the U.S. in the 1930s, until the federal government criminalized it in late 1938. Lack of widespread exposure and such paranoid films as "Reefer Madness" succeeded in frightening the general public away from it. Marijuana remained almost unheard of in the U.S. until the 1960s when it was reintroduced on college campuses. In the 1960s and 70s drug use spread to every level of our society and spawned an entire subculture. By 1980, six out of every 10 college seniors had tried

**Chris Black**  
Reader's Opinion

marijuana at least once and three out of ten were regular users. In 1987, NBC News reported that marijuana is the United States' fourth major crop behind wheat, corn and cotton. Yet anti-drug organizations still vehemently insist that drug use is declining.

It has become painfully obvious that marijuana, legal or not, will not simply go away. It is also clear that there is a demand for it in a broad segment of the population. Research on the long term effects of marijuana have shown it to be safer, less addictive and less physically damaging to users than a number of drugs sold and consumed legally. It should therefore, be legalized for sale and use and should be regulated in much the same way that alcohol and tobacco are now, with restrictions on age, driving while intoxicated and use in public.

Opponents of legalization claim that

it would endorse drug use and encourage people to use more dangerous drugs. It has been shown, however, that involvement in the drug culture, and not marijuana itself, encourages use of harder drugs. If marijuana was legal, users would not be forced to become involved in the drug culture in order to obtain it and would therefore have less of a chance of being exposed to dangerous drugs.

Opponents also claim that we will become a nation of "potheads" (that people would become addicted and lose interest in life). This is simply not true. The vast majority of marijuana usage is moderate or intermittent. Because of its illegality, it is difficult to obtain accurate information about how many people use it; but ABC's Ted Koppel quoted statistics that place the number of regular marijuana users at 30 million. According to another study, at least one

out of 12 people is a regular user and no one is the wiser. This in itself is a strong argument against those who claim that legalization would destroy the country's motivation.

Marijuana, despite early irrational fears, has proven to be no more dangerous than alcohol. When marijuana first became popular again, anti-drug groups published numerous pamphlets and reports describing the "health risk" involved in marijuana use. They warned of everything from chromosome damage to drug induced psychosis. While long-term heavy use can result in partial short-term memory loss and decreased motivation (neither of which is permanent after use is discontinued), THC has a high margin of safety with no deaths having occurred in humans, even from very large doses. THC does no damage to the liver, brain or circulatory system, even with heavy

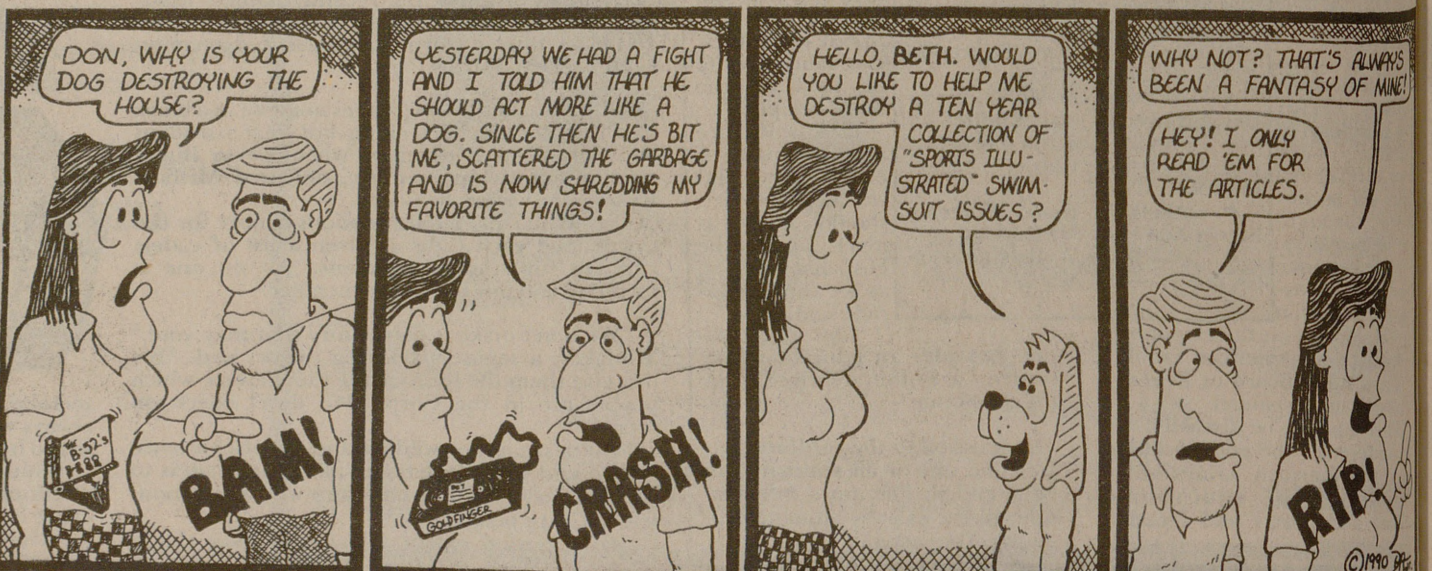
use. It also causes little or no driving impairment. The same cannot be said for alcohol, which is legal in all 50 states and is also one of the leading causes of death in the nation.

Marijuana has been present in various cultures for thousands of years. In the last 20 years, it has become the second most popular drug in the United States. Research has shown it to be non-addictive, relatively safe and less damaging than many legal drugs currently on the market. The time has come for the U.S. government to cast aside irrational prejudices and apply its own tests, established to determine legalization of new drugs, to marijuana. By those standards it is safe, if used in moderation, and should be legalized for personal use.

Chris Black is a sophomore history major.

## Adventures In Cartooning

by Don Atkinson Jr.



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