

Mail Call

Preregistration system needs improvement

EDITOR:

After reading many letters complaining about just every subject I have yet to read one about the preregistration system. It seems to me one of the main reasons for a schedule is so a student can get the classes and teachers he wants. The A&M administration doesn't put the names of the teachers assigned to each class. If they haven't been assigned, then preregistration should be postponed until they are. Most students know people who have had their classes previously and can tell them what teachers to take. One more point: Since we register according to last name, the order of who goes first should be alternated every semester. That keeps people like me from having to preregister last two consecutive semesters.

David Hale '92

Williams will make Texas stronger, greater

EDITOR:

Certainly Ellen Hobbs must be aware of the vast support for Clayton Williams at this University. So the question arises, was her condemnation of Williams as "just plain stupid" a petty ploy to get opinion articles for her page of the newspaper or was it a legitimate argument? Whichever it was, I'm sure she has received many letters in response.

The argument here is not whether Williams made a politically sound decision in telling an offensive joke. I'm sure the most devout Williams supporters will agree it was a serious blunder. The argument here is whether or not Williams is "just plain stupid." "The American College Dictionary" defines stupid as "lacking ordinary activity and keenness of mind; dull." Williams intelligence might be evaluated by scrutinizing his past decisions. One of Williams first major decisions was to attend A&M. Pretty stupid, huh? Could a man be considered stupid who started his entrepreneurship with only \$2,000, and eventually built his net worth large enough to be listed in Forbes 500? Williams received the Dean's Service Award for Teaching Excellence for his six years of teaching a class on entrepreneurship here at A&M. I would venture to say a world class university such as ours would not bestow such an honor on a stupid man.

If Williams successful life doesn't impress you as the life of a man showing above average mental activity and keenness, then ask one of the 100,000 Texans that Williams has created a job for; they might be a little more understanding for a man who made a mistake. But then, those people, along with over 60 percent of the Republican voters, don't think a term with Williams would be "four years of bumbling gubernatorial leadership." So when you go to the polls, remember: A vote for Clayton Williams is a vote for a stronger and greater Texas.

Davin Driskill '93

Help desk users need to look at other side

EDITOR:

I am writing in response to the letter from Chris Camperson in the Monday, March 26 Mail Call. I don't believe that Camperson realizes the reasons for what she calls the "attitude problems" of the Remote Computing Center help desk employees. I know many of the people who work in the various help desks across campus, and I believe that Camperson is jumping to conclusions and judging without knowing all of the facts.

First, she mentions that they sit in the comfort of their office, work on their own projects, and "shoot the bull." Yes, they do. However, these people were hired not only to help people with computer problems, but also to update existing program manuals and write new programs to make things easier.

Second, she mentions they have to be asked at least three times before they will come out and look at your program. However, they are told to look only at printouts of the programs. If they do go look at your program, they are doing you a favor. But in either case, they are not supposed to help you write your program, so you should not even bother asking.

Third, the attitude problems that Camperson mentioned are, perhaps, truly existent. But, when 30 or more people from the same class wait until the night before the project is due to start a program, (all of which ask the help desk employees the same questions), I believe you can see who would get the most frustrated.

Fourth, she also states, "since most of them are engineering majors, they seem to feel that non-engineering related problems are insignificant and do not require their help when a problem arises." I believe that Camperson is trying to blame her personal feelings for engineering and science majors on the RCC help desk employees. Of course, there could be another explanation for this: Perhaps they really don't know the answer to your problem. In that case, you just might have to go ask someone else.

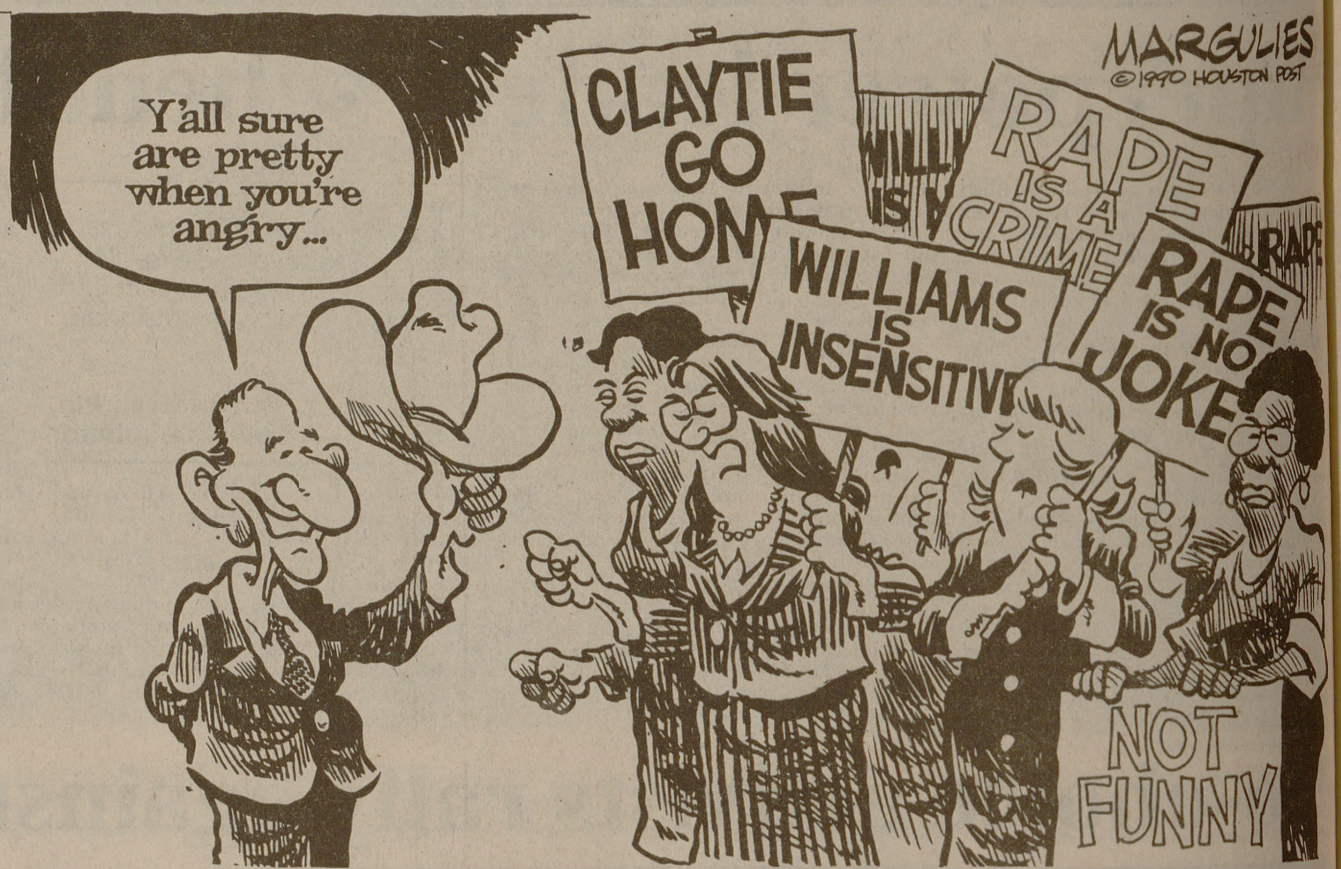
The help desk employees should not be blamed for the things mentioned here. I am under the impression that the professors and TAs that require the use of a computer should spend five minutes explaining things to their students. Camperson and others would not have these problems with the RCC help desk if they would look at the other side of the situation and try to understand the feelings of the students who try to help whenever they can.

Dawn Paul '91

accompanied by four signatures

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.



NOTSAFE president leads fight against safety awareness, laws

I don't join many clubs. I'm not a "joiner," one of those people who joins every club and organization that sounds halfway interesting. Actually, people like joiners (and "padders," people who join things just to pad their resume) get on my nerves. But I found a club I want to join. The National Organization Taunting Safety and Awareness Everywhere.

NOTSAFE. I read about NOTSAFE in the Oct. 5, 1989 edition of the Washington Times. The stated aim of the group is to fight against society's preoccupation with safety.

Yes, you read that right. To fight against society's preoccupation with safety.

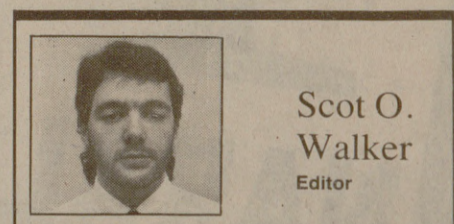
You see, we constantly are being bombarded with laws that are supposed to protect us from something, but what they actually do is take away little bits of our personal freedoms. Dale Lowdermilk, the founder and president of NOTSAFE, is the leader of the war against these unnecessary laws, and his weapons are sarcasm and satire.

One of Lowdermilk's common tactics is to take someone's idea and expand on it logically to reveal its own uselessness.

Consider the laws that require drivers to wear seatbelts and motorcyclists to wear helmets. A convincing argument in favor of those laws is that taxpayers often end up footing the bill when someone has an accident and lands in the hospital.

Lowdermilk reasons that the same logic could be applied to fat people. After all, studies show that fat people consistently have more health problems than the rest of the population. So, the logic is that fat should be illegal.

"We should have a special license for anyone who works in a supermarket, so they could screen fat people as they walk by," Lowdermilk is quoted as saying in the Times. "An overweight person that goes into a supermarket and buys five banana cream pies deserves to be apprehended. If we're gonna keep the heart attack victims off the tax rolls, we need to start at the grocery store and



Scot O. Walker
Editor

make sure they are not allowed to buy food that makes them fat."

Lowdermilk also attacks the use of statistics to justify laws. After all, he says, one-half of all fatalities that occur to children under the age of 3 are from strangulation; one-half of those are from hot dogs; a third of the remainder are from peanut butter. So, "logically," we should ban hot dogs and peanut butter, he says. Or we could require square hot dogs, or better yet, predigested hot dogs.

For our own safety, of course. Lowdermilk hates warning labels, too, because the rationale for the ones we have could be extended to require them on everything.

Take aspirin, for example. Or actually, *don't* take it. After all, aspirin alone kills about 900 people a year, although there is no warning label on it, and you can buy it over the counter.

There is more to NOTSAFE than just fighting safety. How about fairness? On animal rights, for example: "Animals have rights. And I think insects are animals. They're living creatures of God, and therefore insects have rights also. What I suggest is that we reduce the speed limit to 15 mph to prevent the slaughter of insects on our highways."

(And you can't tell me when you drop a lobster in boiling water that it doesn't hurt. Give me a break. Just because they're ugly — Now, maybe that's the factor. If it's cute, it gets rights; if it's ugly, it doesn't. And then we can apply the same logic to people.)

Lowdermilk goes on in the Times article: "I get carried away on that animal rights thing. If we spent half the amount of money that we spend on dog food to feed people around the world,

there would be no hunger. There are 40,000 people a day that starve to death. I've suggested that we send the animals that are in our shelters to foreign countries to be eaten by the people that are starving. Animal rights activists jumped all over me, saying that is inhumane. What is inhumane about saving a human being?"

Back on the safety issue, Lowdermilk delights in a new scientific discovery, the "risk compensation factor," which says that when a person puts on a seatbelt because he has to, he takes greater risks, resulting in more crashes and more pedestrian fatalities.

Lowdermilk relates this to pedestrian fatalities at crosswalks. "There are more injuries and accidents at intersections that are marked (with crosswalks) than at unmarked intersections," he says. "The lady crossing the street, inside the white

The rationale for the warning labels we have could be extended to require them on everything. Take aspirin, for example. Or actually, *don't* take it. After all, aspirin alone kills about 900 people a year, although there is no warning label on it, and you can buy it over the counter.

lines, thinks she is protected by a dome or something, and the car plows right over her."

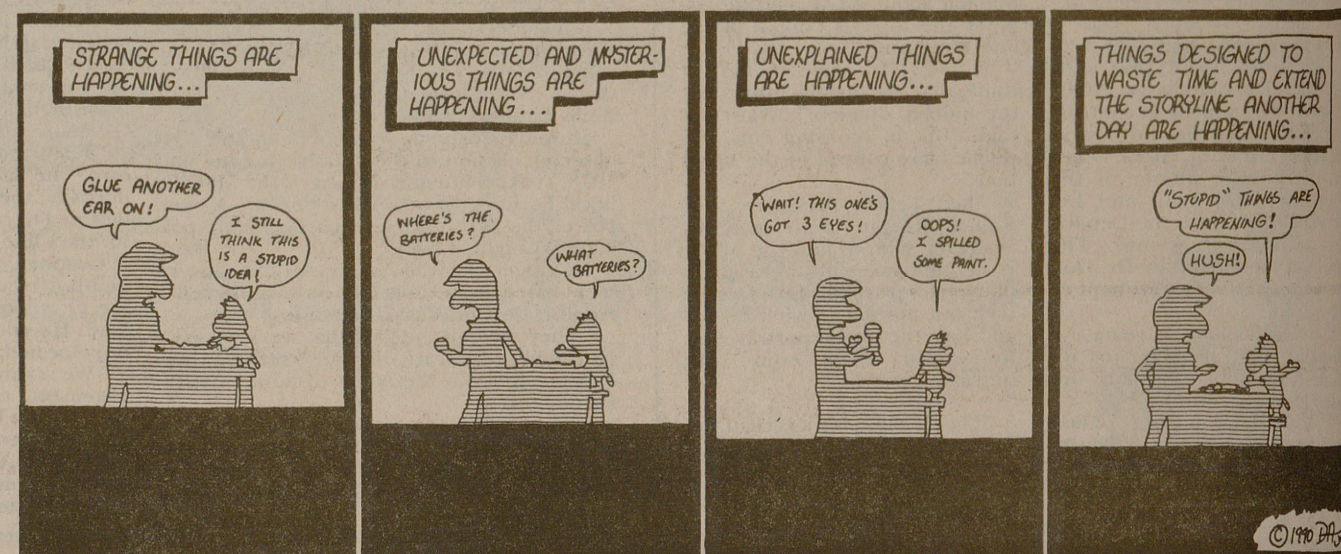
Lowdermilk's point is that everything has its downside.

"Let us screw up a little bit," he says in the Times article. "We're a free country. Remember that this is the land of the free and the home of the brave. You've got to be brave to be free. That's the bottom line."

Amen. How do I join?

Scot Walker is a senior journalism major.

Adventures In Cartooning by Don Atkinson Jr.



The Battalion

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