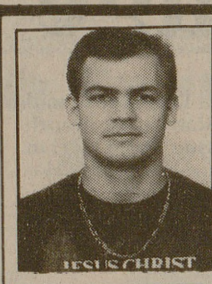


## LOTRAK project costs a lot more than it's worth

Normally, I am fairly apathetic about campus construction. I only think about it when it inconveniences me. For example, I have a helluva time driving on campus because I am unsure about which roads are one-way, two-way or the other way. Anyway, I normally view construction as a built-in evil with which we students must continually cope.

With the new LOTRAK project, though, Texas A&M has really gotten off track.

LOTRAK is the catchy name given to the not-so-catchy proposal detailing the lowering of the train tracks that run parallel to Wellborn Road. The project



**Matt McBurnett**  
Columnist

is reported to cost \$35 million, with A&M footing \$6.6 million of the bill. The project proports to be a panacea for all the woes associated with the

railroad tracks. The supposed advantages of having the Wellborn tracks underground include that the train would not block vehicular or pedestrian traffic, noise levels would be reduced and the danger of a train/auto accident would be diminished.

This is all well and good, but not for the price, because:

- The train track situation is not that bad.
- There are numerous other areas in which the \$6.6 million could be used.
- This is but another example of Texas A&M's misappropriation of funds.

What is wrong with the railroad tracks? One of the reasons for the the LOTRAK proposal is that traffic is congested due to the trains.

This is ridiculous. Even on the rare occasions on which a train has delayed my crossing Wellborn, the train was traveling at good rate, and my wait was short. We should not forget that if we are in a hurry, University Drive travels, uninterrupted, directly under the tracks.

Another complaint about the tracks is that the noise level is too high. Well, I lived on the Northside of campus for a year and not once did a train make even half as much noise as my dormitory neighbors.

As for hazards, if one obeys the law, there is no chance of having a problem with a train. Trains are big and long. Intersections are completely controlled and clearly marked. To get hit by a train, one must either be a complete idiot, or have a deathwish.

I do not understand why A&M supports the LOTRAK proposal. The money could easily be spent elsewhere. A good place to start would be with undergraduate programs.

Last year, I had my first true electrical engineering lab. As with most labs, it coincided with a class. For most of the year, we did labs which resembled our classwork, and the purpose of the lab was served. When we got to the section of class involving relatively high voltage calculations, we were unable to do a lab.

As usual, the equipment we needed for the lab was set up for us at our lab stations. Something was wrong, though. The equipment was, to say the least, "old army." It was so archaic that our lab

instructor told us not to do the lab because "you might die!"

And they want to spend \$6.6 million to change something that works?

Our library could use a financial boost, also. I know of no other library that uses its funds to establish a shuttle bus service to another library, (as ours does to Austin) instead of spending the money on aiding itself.

Examples of misguided money

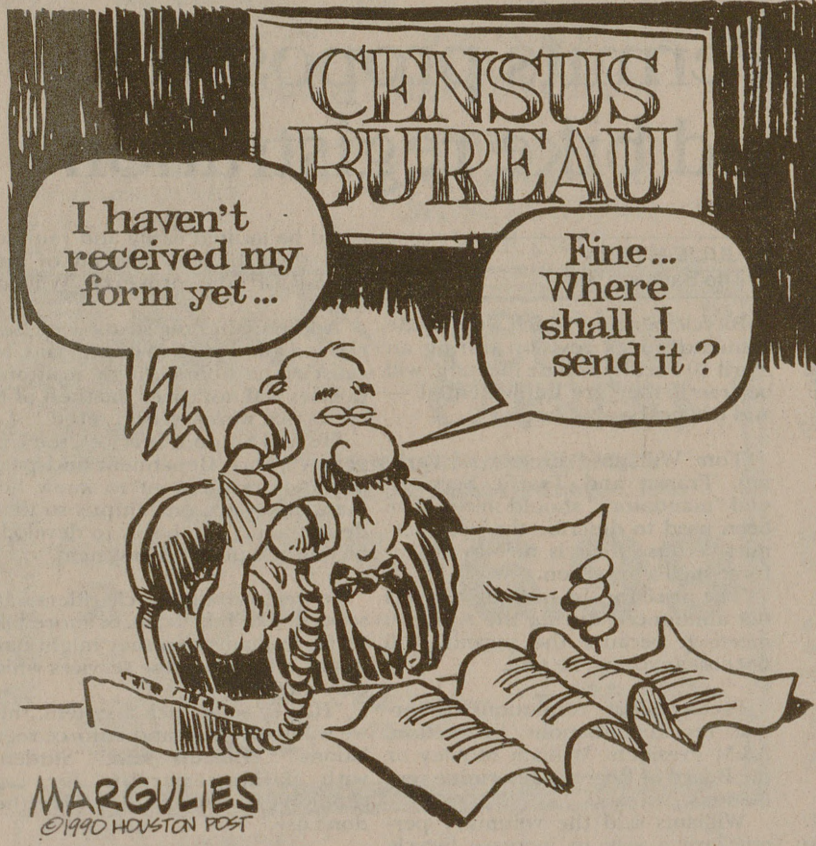
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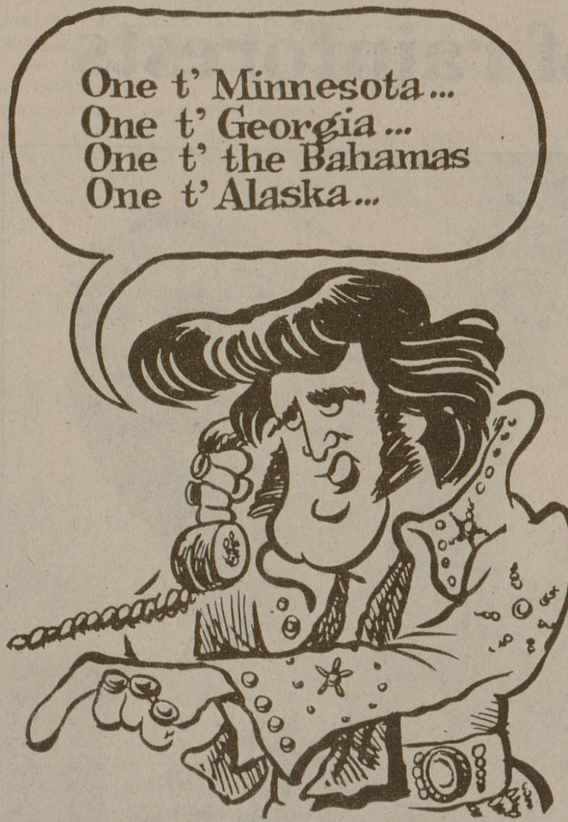
management abound. We at A&M would rather give superfluous funds to our athletic department, or make superficial changes to our campus (like our corner markers and underground railroads), than spend the money where it is needed.

Taking the past record into account, am not surprised at A&M's willingness to support ridiculous proposals such as this. It has become a tradition.

*Matt McBurnett is a junior electrical engineering major.*



MARGULIES  
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## Mail Call

### Office hours should be observed

EDITOR:

Let me ask you a question. The last time you went to your professor's office during posted office hours was he or she there? Chances are they were not. Chances are that they hardly ever are there when they are supposed to be.

This is one thing that makes me very angry. Our time is just as valuable and important as the professor's, yet they don't seem to agree. It is the responsibility of the professor to be in their office when they have told their students they will be. Many times students such as myself have to take time from work or skip a class to go talk to a professor, and when they are not there it wastes our time.

To all the professors: Try to be more considerate of your students. If you expect us to be in your class every day then the least you can do is be in your office a mere three hours a week. Without your students, where would you be? After all, we essentially pay your salary.

Vanessa Parker '91

### Cartoons should be taken lightly

EDITOR:

This letter is addressed to Pablo Pissanetzky and anyone else who has a problem with comic strips in The Batt. I got a little flash of reality for you. It's a cartoonist's job to make fun of people. Who would want to read Doonesbury if it praised our system of government?

For that matter, who would care to watch "Don the Greek" being responsible with alcohol and respecting women? Also, this may come as a shock to you, but there are some people who don't blindly believe everything they read in comic strips.

I have been reading comic strips for a very long time myself and I still have the ability to profess my belief that penguins can't talk, mosquitoes don't wear clothes and Clayton Williams doesn't dress like Ronald McDonald. So if you still feel insulted, all I can say is lighten up, it's only a joke.

Steve Harrison '92

### Hobbs' opinion of Williams 'sexist'

EDITOR:

This letter concerns a recent column by Ellen Hobbs, your Opinion Page Editor. While on the campus attending the Sul Ross reunion (probably unheard of by Hobbs), I obtained a copy of The Battalion. Reading her self-serving, sexist opinion of Clayton Williams was the low point of the visit. Like so many other little reporters she breaks the trust, and for her own ego reports words and happenings that were supposedly off the record.

Mr. Williams is a highly successful businessman, a good Aggie and has been most generous in his support of the school. All of us, even Hobbs, are benefiting from his gifts. I doubt that the accomplishments of a junior journalist match those of Williams. And she has the audacity to call him stupid. If on some dark night she uttered a cry for help, she would be fortunate to have a Clayton Williams nearby. He would answer her call for aid.

Having learned so much by her junior year, perhaps her senior year will be even more fruitful. Hopefully she may gain a little more tolerance of stupid people, lessen her anti-male feelings and pick up a little Aggie loyalty.

Albert B. Watts '33

**EDITOR'S NOTE: The quotes in Ellen Hobbs' column were reprinted from a Houston Chronicle story and were not off the record.**

### Earth Day is coming

EDITOR:

HOWDY AGS!!! EARTH DAY IS COMING! EARTH-DAY IS COMING! What, might you ask, is Earth Day? Well, it is officially April 22. It is one day set aside out of the year to promote awareness about the land, water and environment that surrounds us. We as a nation throw away enough aluminum to rebuild airplanes for the entire commercial airline in-

dustry. We discard enough iron and steel to continuously supply all the nation's automakers. Houston alone uses about 300,000 tons of paper each year. It takes about five million trees to make that much paper.

Do these facts disturb you? Well they should! There are going to be seminars and special events throughout April, so let's get involved. Let's face it, Ags, we only have one planet to live on, so we better take care of it.

Mark A. Norwood '90

### Diploma has sentimental value

EDITOR:

Sometime on April 11 or 12, someone entered my office in Bizzell West and stole my framed Texas A&M diploma from where it was hanging on the wall. Since a diploma is a highly personalized document, I can only assume that the thief was after the frame, which was a traditional "Aggie" walnut frame with a maroon velvet border. I further assume that because of the special nature of the frame, the thief wanted it for an A&M diploma.

If my assumptions are proven to be correct, then I will be very saddened. I would hope that no Aggie would steal a frame for themselves or would accept a frame that was used by someone else. If by some chance, you, the thief, are reading this letter, please have the decency to at least give the diploma back. The paper worth is negligible. The sentimental value is enormous.

John Norris, Ph.D. '84

### 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.

### The Battalion

(USPS 045 360)

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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.

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### Adventures In Cartooning

by Don Atkinson Jr.

