

EDITORIAL

Frankly irresponsible Congress again indifferent to ethics

Even under the scrutiny that attends an election year, some politicians continue to shirk their responsibility to act with integrity. Some members of the House of Representatives abuse their privilege of free mailings, or franking privileges, by promoting their own re-election campaigns. The Postal Service credits each member of Congress with a certain amount of free mailing based on the population of their districts. Representatives receive more so-called franking privileges than Senators, enabling more self-serving abuse of taxpayers' money. The franking privileges of the 102nd Congress have cost \$75 million to date. The tenth most active offender Rep. Charles Wilson, D-Lufkin, has mailed 2.37 million pieces since Jan. 1, 1991, with a cost of \$1.47 per household in his district. Wilson is presently locked in a tight re-election campaign. The volume of mail in the first eight

months of this year exceeded the volume of the same period in 1991 by 40 percent. While it is important for congressmen to maintain communication with their constituents, many use franking privileges to augment their re-election campaigns. The average Representative spent 60% more money on franking than their average challengers spent on their entire campaigns in 1990. Franking privileges subsidize incumbents unfairly, inhibiting the election of the better candidate by giving incumbents an upper hand. Present Congressional guidelines forbid franking within 60 days of an election. Congress should further check itself by eliminating all franking within 120 days of an election. This measure would not end abuse of franking privileges but would limit it without infringing upon the intended function of maintaining communication between the government and its people.

Roosevelt's New Deal: time to set the historical record straight

We've followed the Battalion opinion page with great interest this semester and enjoyed the "Mail Call" controversies and Battalion columnists. Anthony LoBaido's column of Oct. 8, however, merits special attention. LoBaido demonstrates a fine grasp of journalistic concision and simplicity. Sadly, his discussion of the New Deal reveals that his understanding of history is as simple as his style.

GUEST COLUMNIST

RICKY F. DOBBS

only took place in the formative period of the New Deal as a means of stabilizing the market. Instead of pushing the "modern American farmer to the edge of extinction," New Deal agricultural programs began a cycle of subsidies which dramatically increased farm income while raising everyone else's food prices. Agribusiness is now an unassailable lobby in Washington. New Deal programs brought the Cotton Research Laboratory to A&M and put this University on the federal government gravy train with the rest of the workfare folks. The Ag School hasn't recently complained about New Deal intervention in the farm economy.

Regarding the Bank Holiday and the Gold Reserve Act, LoBaido's argument had a head-on collision with itself. He wrung his hands earlier about tight credit and suddenly wants a gold standard? Considering some advisors encouraged President Franklin D. Roosevelt to nationalize US banks, the March 6, 1933 "holiday" seems rather a tame response for a "socialist." FDR's policies further protected small depositors and the banks themselves. There aren't many bankers these days wishing themselves rid of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

"Clearly, a lack of money brought on the depression," LoBaido says. Although Milton Friedman and others would certainly back him, even Friedman realizes the critical role of the Fed in America's money supply. Friedman knows that of all industrial countries, the United States deserted the gold standard last, much to its own chagrin.

"An elementary analysis of the ... New Deal," LoBaido argues, "should be enough to provide 1992 America with valuable lessons in dealing with the desire for a 'Second New Deal.'" We agree, even though LoBaido's "elementary analysis" was very elementary indeed and provided few valuable lessons — except in the use of distortion.

If we want to look at a "lesson" about the effect of the New Deal we need look only at the Northgate Post Office. The Northgate Post Office bears a WPA cornerstone and testifies to the hard work of motivated Americans who appreciated "government intervention" and the food that it brought to their tables.

The next time LoBaido travels through history and shows us his free-market wonderland, he should investigate his sources more thoroughly. We would be more than happy to provide him with materials from both liberal and conservative authors on the subject.

Dobbs, a doctoral student in history, is one of 13 history graduate students who collaborated in the writing of this column. The group calls itself C.L.I.O., or Conservatives and Liberals Interested in Objectivity.

MAIL CALL

Bonfire protesters ignores benefits

As do most anti-bonfire types, Shawn Ralston misses the point in her piece from Monday's Battalion. Bonfire, along with other hallowed Aggie traditions, cannot and should not be justified with a spreadsheet. Ralston argues "...bonfire is an outrageous waste of time, resources, manpower, and money," but ignores what some term "The Other Education." Our studies alone would leave us rather unprepared for "The Real World" that lurks beyond graduation.

Besides going to class and studying, we will make friends, get our feelings hurt, fall in love, attend bonfire and Aggie football games, Silver Taps, Elephant Walk, party, road trip, skip classes, sleep through tests, laugh, cry, and generally discover ourselves and the world. I submit that bonfire and other Aggie traditions are at least equally important as classroom activities as parts of our education as a whole.

Bonfire isn't just about cutting down a bunch of trees, wiring them together, and tossing a match. It's about working together towards a common goal, coordinating complex financial and field activities, planning, time management, school spirit, and indeed human spirit as well. Waste of time? Not!! It's worth every cent and every drop of sweat a hundred times over.

As we've so often been reminded, without our traditions, A&M would be "just another school". Students at t.u. or wherever will never feel the heat of the fire on their face at bonfire, or the trickle of a tear rolling down their cheek as Silver Taps sounds a final farewell to friends and fellow Ags. Shawn, if you think you're grown up and we're not, I have to wonder if maybe you grew up too fast. I invite you to come out to bonfire with your fellow Ags and experience some of what you must have missed.

Gig 'em Ags, and build the hell outta bonfire!

Mark A. Nimocks
Class of '88

Mysterious Pavilion man deserves credit

In my long (too long) time here, I have never felt the urge to put my pen to paper and parade my thoughts in the school rag. Until now. There is something of utmost importance I want to bring to attention.

There is a person at A&M whose value, I believe, goes unnoticed.

It is the Pavilion guy. The older gentleman who so efficiently directs you to where you need to go. He comes out of nowhere for the first couple of weeks of the semester. You confront him immediately upon entering the Pavilion, as he says "What do you need?" You answer and he tells you where to go. He doesn't possess great warmth, but he takes care of business courteously and in short time. There's

no dallying at the front door; he'll move you on to your proper place. After this couple of weeks is over and the Pavilion traffic dies down, he disappears. Where does he go?

He reemerges mid-semester outside Heaton Hall to distribute class schedules wearing those mean Terminator shades. Again, it's strictly business. This guy is an A&M institution. So when you pick up your class schedule, tell the registration guru "howdy."

Seth Wallace
Class of '91

Messy Aggies treat campus like landfill

Some Aggies can really be pigs. The other day I was visiting some friends in the Commons Lobby. Out in front of the Commons two Aggie "gentlemen" were goofing around when one of them dropped a glass bottle, which broke as it hit the pavement. When another student saw that they were simply going to walk away from the mess they made, she asked one of them if he was going to pick up the glass. To which the Aggie gentleman replied "It's my friends bottle." At which point the two gentlemen walked away leaving the mess on the ground.

Then when my friends and I went into the Commons Lobby we began to notice discarded copies of that days Battalion everywhere. The same was true for candy wrappers, soda bottles, and chip bags that we also saw in different locations throughout the lobby. One of my friends said, "Oh, the maid will pick it up." I couldn't understand this attitude. Sure students (or more accurately many student's parents) pay a lot of money to live in these buildings, but that doesn't excuse the common courtesy of students picking up after themselves. The next day I saw one of the custodians picking up after these Aggie pigs. This woman had an armful of newspapers, soda cans and papers, and this is only from one small section of the lobby. The paper and mess in the restrooms I won't even describe.

You're not living at home anymore where mommy will pick up after you. If you make a mess, be responsible and just throw it away when you are leaving. I can only imagine what it is like on weekends when parents are in the buildings. Come on Ags, grow up!

Thomas Green
Class of '93

Construction workers courteous fellows

Almost every afternoon since school has begun, the old Chemistry Building has been under construction. Almost every afternoon since school has begun, I've had to go through the construction, and sometimes this means picking my way across narrow passages and other obstacles — and of course, construction workers are everywhere.

At first I was apprehensive at walking by the workers — you know the reputation — but my nervousness proved false. They were all very nice and even doffed their hats as they said, "Howdy."

And when I had to navigate the small paths, they would politely step on the grass or dirt so I could step by. Now, I'm not the type who expects doors to be opened for me or any of that stuff, but I do sincerely appreciate the courtesy these guys show me every

day, and I just wanted to tell them "thank you."

Kathy Platt
Class of '94

Allegations without proof are worthless

This is a letter in response to the recent controversy sparked by alleged racist activities at the Sigma Alpha Epsilon party on Oct. 2.

I feel that whenever there is a situation that alleged racism has taken place there is always a massive witch hunt. It reminds me of the Salem witch trials where anyone suspected of being a witch was alienated. Today, in my opinion, people are too quick in crying racism in situations in which they were not involved.

I think that a major problem facing this country is that the in thing seems to be the emphasis of all of our differences, which is wrong. We are all Americans and Aggies, period, regardless of race and should emphasize our similarities instead of our differences! Remember that in this country you are innocent until proven guilty, not guilty by suspicion.

I am not a member of a fraternity nor did I attend this party and neither did most of you who are complaining, so I urge you to follow my lead and not pass judgment so quickly.

I am sure a lot of you people think I am a racist but nothing is further from the truth. I say why don't we all stop bashing frats and all be true to each other as Aggies can be and not judge a group through rumors!

Maverick Welsh
Class of '96

Perot resistant to political pressures

I think that most people that decide to enter politics actually have honorable intentions. The problem is that in order to climb the ladder to bigger and better offices these intentions tend to get pushed aside for more practical pursuits.

This means sacrificing personal convictions for those of whichever party you happen to be a member. The penalty for not doing so means not getting the prestigious committee appointment, losing endorsements from prominent party members or worst of all not getting needed contributions. Under this system issues and solutions become irrelevant. What matters is that you upheld your parties stand and didn't let the other party win.

Bush and Clinton have been a part of this system for a long time and considering the offices they hold they obviously know how to play by the "rules." Ross Perot being the outsider and not under these same constraints has the enviable position of getting to do the things that need to be done without having to worry about the party backlash.

Bush and Clinton being intelligent and honorable men must realize what they would be able to accomplish if they did not have to always worry about the standard party position on every issue. Maybe the reason they didn't attack Perot, and actually complimented him, is because they are a little envious of his current position. Just something to think about if you are wondering who to pull the lever for on Nov. 3.

Randy Engel
Class of '92

FROM:
Your Good Ol'
Boy in Washington!


Re-elect Joe Politico!

Times are tough,
Life is hard,
But —
Here's my re-election card!

Fiscal Responsibility with Discounted Family Values for the 90s!!

So vote for Joe, pay his salary and you won't see him again. —
'Til next election!

Rep. Politico has been endorsed by the American Cheese Producers Special Interest Group.



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