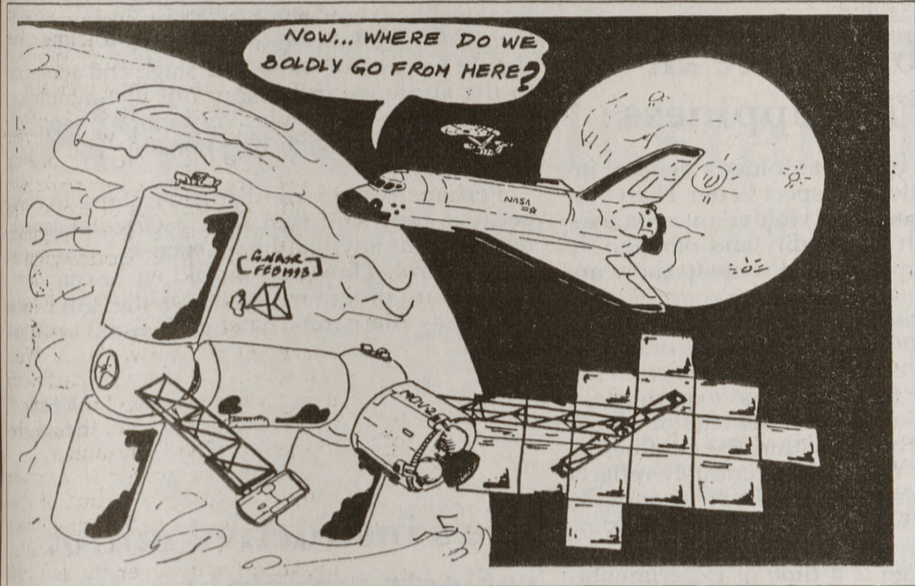


Monday, March 1, 1993



## Taking sides: Should the United States cut funding for the space station?



**TIMM DOOLEN**  
Guest Columnist

As President Bill Clinton has repeated many times, we are in a time of national crisis concerning the growing annual budget deficits and the steadily increasing national debt. In his speech two weeks ago, Clinton repeatedly referred to the terms "sacrifice" and "contribution." And although the Space Station Freedom could make many contributions to science, the initial \$38 billion price tag and projected operating cost of \$200 billion for the next 25 to 30 years is too much of a sacrifice.

Critics will tell you the space station is an unnecessary and costly project; America faces pressing problems here on Earth. Such myopic thinking ignores a fact apparent in the broader view — America has always faced and will always face "pressing problems." Poverty, crime and war are certainties of our past, present and future.



**JASON LOUGHMAN**  
Managing Editor

If anything, now is a more opportune time than ever to fund such an "extravagance" as a manned space station. Our most dangerous foe, the Soviet Union, collapsed. More than 20 years of failed policies have clearly demonstrated government inability to reduce poverty with increased spending. The real extravagances, then, are massive defense spending to fight a foe that no longer exists and huge outlays for "entitlements" that often perpetuate the poverty we seek to combat.

And though a station is not at present an urgent need, we will at some time in the future want to travel in space. Space travel need not be the province of astronomers searching for signs of alien life. A permanent presence in orbit or on the moon would enable us to conduct, year-round, the sorts of research possible now only during brief shuttle flights. This research has shown concrete benefits in the here-and-now perspective to which space station critics seem to be limited.

Examples such as meteorological and environmental monitoring of the Earth, new pharmaceuticals, advanced computer chips, pacemakers and even velcro are tried but true. If we are to establish a foothold in space, a 20th century station is a necessary stepping-stone toward that 21st century end. And if Space Station Freedom is plagued with delays and unforeseen expenses, its biggest hindrance, in the words of Aviation Week and Space Technology, is "shallow popular support, not scientific, technical or economic problems."

The space station does have problems. As of 1990, the program had gone through six successive directors and 11 major program reviews under four NASA administrators. Funding, upon which the size, objectives and timetable of the station depend, changes every year but is often far less than NASA requests. As the National Research Council wrote, "It is too costly for the nation to rethink its objectives in space on an annual basis."

It would be far more costly for America to take the shortsighted view that scrapping the space station is better than solving its problems.

Let the critics ask themselves: Will our descendants, on a backwards and stagnant planet, point to the United States of 1993 and revile us for our lack of foresight and courage?

## Ageless woman stands test of time Fountain of youth found in backyard, country lifestyle

I guess Eunice Davis was just like any other grandmother. She cooked. She cleaned. She was good to her grandchildren. She told stories. There was nothing too remarkable or unique about her. She never did anything that historians would deem worthy of saving for posterity. She didn't travel to many exotic lands. To my recollection, she didn't meet any heads of state. She was a simple woman who led a simple life.



**CHRIS WHITLEY**  
Columnist

Yet something set her apart from the rest of the world. Eunice knew the secret to success in life. I never realized this until after she died last week. The secret is simplicity. Keeping life simple. Keeping problems simple. Keeping everything simple.

Eunice exemplified a simpler way of life that seems to be lost in today's hectic race to succeed. Not everyone can relate to that doctrine, but all can learn from it.

She spent almost all of her 92 years living quietly in the heart of rural America — "the sticks," I always called it. I loved to visit Eunice, but I hated traveling to "the sticks" to get there. I'm a city boy. I can't help it. After visiting her for a couple of days, I used to complain that I wasn't getting enough carbon monoxide in my lungs.

There was nothing to do. There were no tall buildings, no bright lights, no shows, no glitz. It was a tolerable place to visit, but I wouldn't want to live there.

I never understood why Eunice had such a fascination with the wide open spaces and such a contempt for the city. Every time we would drive her back to our safe, smoggy suburban neighborhood to visit, she would be like a fish out of water.

But Eunice was a product of her environment. She had a persona that resembled the country way of life. She always had her share of "chores" to do, but she never let the turmoils of life keep her from living it. And that didn't mean striving for mediocrity. But it also didn't mean making things too complex.

Perhaps it was an attitude that fit the past more than the present. For my sister and I, two children of the '80s who were thrown into the back seat of the car every so often and forced to sit together for four hours without ripping each other's hair out, going to Eunice's house was like going

back in time. In her dilapidated mobile home by the lake, you found very few symbols of status and that was OK by her. Give her a television set to watch the nightly news and "Young and the Restless" and a telephone to call Aunt Ila now and then, and she was happy. She had a fairly nice air-conditioning unit, but she hardly ever turned it on, which made for quite a few summer nights suffocating in the heat.

Looking back on all my complaints, however, I was the one that missed out. The wonders of nature were everywhere to be seen, scarcely tampered by human intervention. Yet there always seemed to be a football game on TV that caught more of my attention.

I never stopped to notice the people around her who followed the same approach to life and maintained a healthy existence into their 80s and 90s. The county, where she used to live, had a median age of 55.4 — the oldest in the United States. Down the road from Eunice lived a woman whom, I thought when I was younger was the oldest woman in the world. I found out recently that same woman is still alive and kicking at 101! And there are more like her. Willard Scott would go nuts over this place.

Eunice did what Ponce De Leon spent his life searching for — she defied the aging process. Her low-stress existence kept her healthy and independent into her 90s. In fact, if Ponce hadn't frantically tromped across Florida and instead had settled down in a nice little villa in the Pyrenees, he might have lived that long, too.

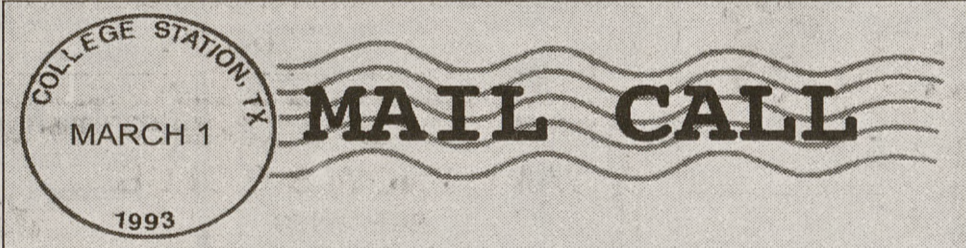
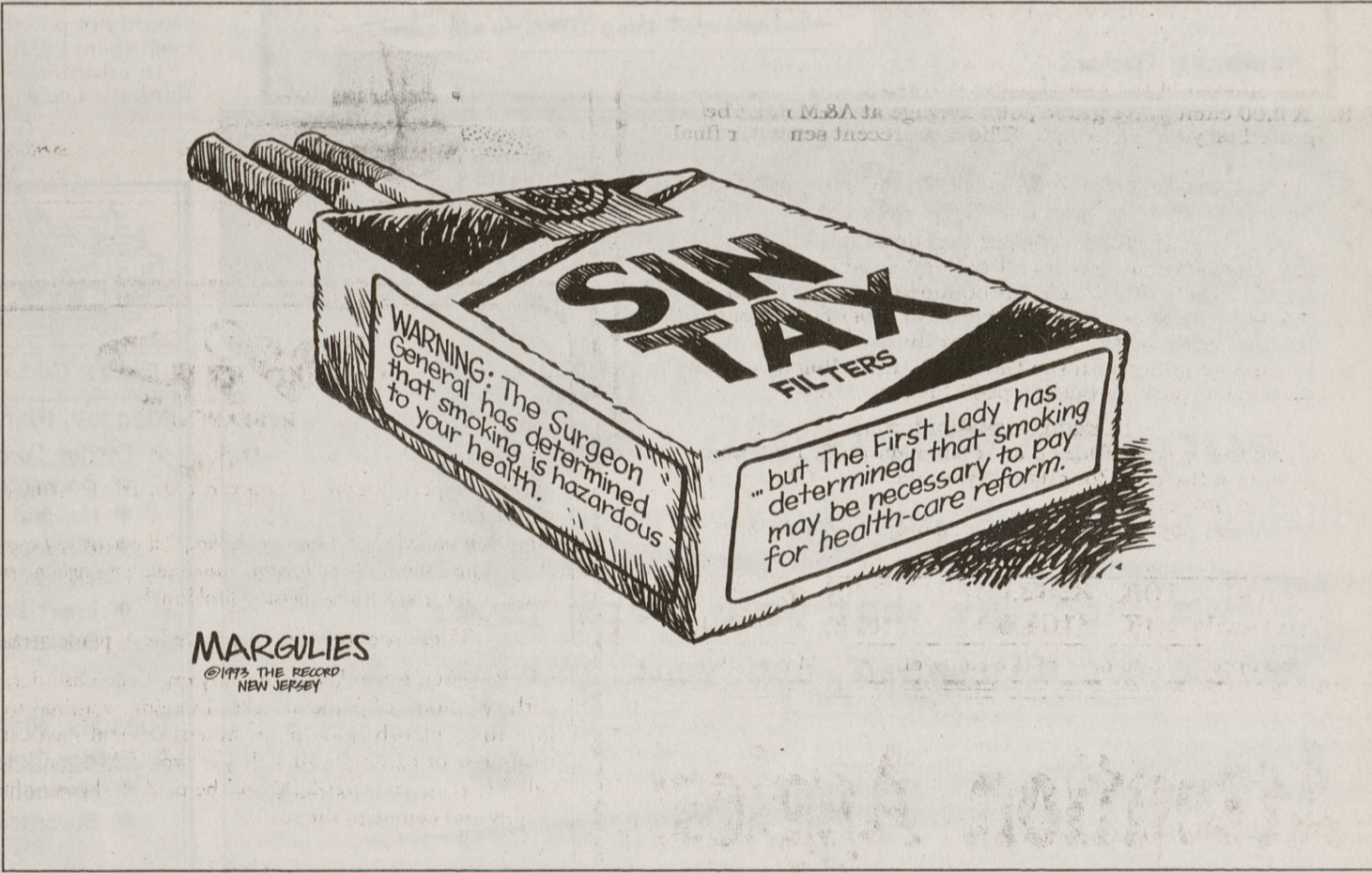
I can't say that I would trade Eunice's lifestyle for my own, but I also can't say that I will live to be 92, either. Eunice never wanted to change the world. She never wanted to climb up the corporate ladder. She never wanted people to immortalize her.

She wanted to make sure the green beans were ready to be picked in the garden. She wanted the pecan pralines to taste just right. She wanted to make sure and save the table scraps for the stray cats that would occasionally drop by.

In a way, Eunice outlived her era. She was not a woman of the 1990s. She was a woman content to live life on no one else's terms but her own. That's how such a simple person could attain far more success than most of us will ever know.

No, Eunice wasn't any different from any other grandmother. Except she was my grandmother.

*Whitley is a junior journalism major.*



## Gun control issue sparks reader debate

I am writing in response to Michael J. Carroll's letter entitled "Guns only 10 percent of crime problem." Carroll stated that if guns were outlawed in America, "criminals" would "rob our houses, rape our wives and children and murder us all." This is all great, except that it reflects a mentality of paranoia and irrational thought.

Wouldn't it be great if every "criminal" was the savage depicted by Carroll? But that is not the world we live in. We can't despise the teenager who kills because he has watched all his friends die since grade school and because he can't sleep a night without the sounds of sirens, gun fire and shouting. Do they deserve Carroll's "death" penalty? Is this the "criminal" that Carroll hates so much? Though any characterization does not accurately depict every situation, we cannot be so naive to think that we are so righteous.

If every "criminal" is not the savage, is every "law abiding citizen" the American

hero with love in his/her heart and God on his/her side? I have yet to define the "Good Murderer" and the "Bad Murderer." Either way you slice it, a murderer is a murderer and if you can feel good at the end of the day and say "I'm really glad I killed that person," then maybe it wasn't worth it. Our world is a shade of gray, and it's quite a gamble to buy a gun and say "Someday I'll kill someone and I won't be a criminal. Maybe, at least, I won't feel like one."

As for his statement calling the media a "biased-liberal" entity, that is really getting old. Even if the media tends to print less of the "law abiding citizen kills criminal" stories, there seems to be plenty of "Child shoots child" and "Child shoots himself" to go around. Is it worth it to preserve this precious second amendment right?

People like Carroll are preparing us for war. A war between ourselves and a war in which no one is right. People today are purchasing weapons in staggering numbers. By the inherent nature of these weapons, like guns, they will become criminals, if not by law, by associa-

tion, psychologically. It takes two to fight, the "criminals" and the "law abiding citizens."

The "law abiding citizens" are unconsciously perpetuating their own pain by fighting back. Guns are only part of the problem, but half the problem is people like Carroll. Either way, guns are a great place to start for peace.

*E. Anthony Martinez  
Class of '95*

I'm writing in response to Dedric Walker's letter on reducing the number of homicides through a government ban on guns. The ban would be impossible to effectively enact, and many of those murderers would still be committed with other weapons. Also with citizens completely disarmed, criminals would be less fearful to commit more crimes.

Calling people's fears unbiased that governments of civilized nations will abuse their authority is neglecting history. While gun controls are more stringent in Canada, guns are not illegal there as Walker stated. Switzerland has a gun ownership rate comparable to the U.S. and has a low murder rate. In any type of violent crime the United States leads far ahead of any industrialized country. The only way to change this is to attack crime with realistic programs that can work.

*Michael Werre  
Class of '94*

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