



EDITORIALS

Graduation frustration Not enough room in G. Rollie

Whether students like it or not, tickets will be issued this semester for the May commencement ceremonies. Considering the student population at Texas A&M, this announcement comes as no surprise. However, the fact that University officials waited until the end of February to announce this decision is inconsiderate and unprofessional to say the least.

Family members, from grandparents to siblings, sacrifice a great deal of time and money so their Aggies can attend this University. These people want to see their Aggies graduate, and rightfully so. Many of these relatives made their travel and hotel reservations months ago, only to discover they cannot attend the ceremonies unless they are one of the six lucky guests that remain on the graduate's cut list.

With approximately 1,100 seniors graduating and about 6,600 guests present in each of the three ceremonies, it is understandable that this decision was made, at least in part, out of a concern for safety. University registrar Don Carter said safety concerns were raised over the limited seating capacity of G. Rollie White.

In that case, why doesn't the University add an extra ceremony to an already rushed two-day event? Budgets may be tight, but students only graduate once.

It seems fairly logical that a school of 40,000 should have a coliseum or special events center that adequately reflects and accommodates its student body. Obviously with budget cuts hitting the state schools at every turn, government funding of such a complex would not be feasible. However, private funds have already been donated for this project, but for some reason the Higher Education Coordinating Board has not given their approval.

Issuing graduation tickets is not a novel idea; in fact, such passes are common at other world-class universities. Had students known about this stipulation last fall, most graduates probably wouldn't have minded limiting their graduation guest list.

Being forced to do so at the last minute, however, is not only rude and inconvenient to the very people who make this University possible, but it is, to say the least, really bad bull.

Richards' regents

Good choices, but lacking student

Governor Richards has nominated three new people to fill the seats on the Texas A&M Board of Regents. Her nominations are John H. Lindsey, Guadalupe Lopez Rangel, and T. Michael O'Connor. We support her in these nominations and urge the Senate to confirm them as our newest members of the Board of Regents.

The diversity of the nominations will be a great asset to our Board of Regents. Lindsey is an A&M graduate of '44 from Houston and has held several positions within the A&M systems. Lopez Rangel is a 43-year-old woman from Corpus Christi. She will be the first Hispanic woman to serve on the Board of Regents.

O'Connor is a 38-year-old rancher from Victoria.

The range in age, ethnicity, sex, and experience of these nominations will more closely reflect the demographic make-up of the population of the A&M campus. Hopefully, a greater range of concerns will be addressed with these new nominations.

The only thing that would make these nominations complete would be the addition of a student regent nomination.

This would not only provide for an even greater range of representation for the student body, but would vastly increase the effectiveness of our Board of Regents as well.

Smokers: The lepers of the 90s No respect, no rights and no place to smoke

Alcoholism? A disease. Drug addiction? Surely, a disease. Nicotine addiction? A violation of societal norms, punishable by a multitude of fake coughs and ugly stares; a deviant behavior that infringes on non-smokers rights; and a downright nasty habit. In a society hell-bent on tolerance, smokers have become the lepers of the 90s.

The minority group of smokers has also failed to attain a politically correct tag. Shall we dub them "respiratorally challenged"? How about "Marlborolly disadvantaged"?

I think not. Along with the lack of an appropriate label, smokers have been afforded zero rights. Few would argue that they deserved to be sanctioned as a minority (read: protected) class, but allowing them the privilege of smoking sections always seemed like a nice thing to do.

Not any more. As reported in the Tuesday edition of the Battalion, the Faculty Senate at Texas A&M recommended a smoking ban in all University buildings. Faculty Senators cited the January report of the Environmental Protection Agency that claimed second-hand smoke to be carcinogenic.

Unlike other groups who might whine about the loss of certain privileges, you won't find smokers up in arms. No pickets. No rallies. No "Save the Smoking Section" t-shirts.

Nothing. But I can think of one person who is a little peeved about the ban.

Me. I don't doubt that smoking causes cancer; only tobacco lobbyists will argue against that position anymore. I also don't doubt that second-hand smoke can be related to cancer.



RICH HENDERSON
Columnist

But to think that walking through a smoking section once or twice a day will give you cancer is absolutely ridiculous.

Allow me to relate a recent occurrence in my life. Upon arriving on campus a few mornings ago, I pulled out a cigarette — the breakfast of champions. As I lit up, a familiar noise sounded out behind me. "Cough! Cough! Cough!"

A young lady, who had followed me off of the bus, began the ritual that so many smokers have become accustomed to. Even though we were outside — and she was a good six feet behind me — she looked directly at me as I turned around to see what the problem was.

"Cough! Cough! Wheeeeeze!" God, I thought, someone get this girl an acting position in a B-movie. I haven't seen talent like that since Shannon Tweed in the HBO After-Hours movie "Steel and Lace."

As if that wasn't bad enough, McDonald's has joined the group of tobacco hate-mongers, and has begun a campaign to remove smoking sections from their restaurants.

The very people who brought us the McLard Burger now want to protect our lungs. Hey Ronald, how 'bout protecting those arteries?

The zero-tolerance man strikes again. Even "Dear Abby" is getting into the act. In her syndicated column on Monday, Abby answered the following question:

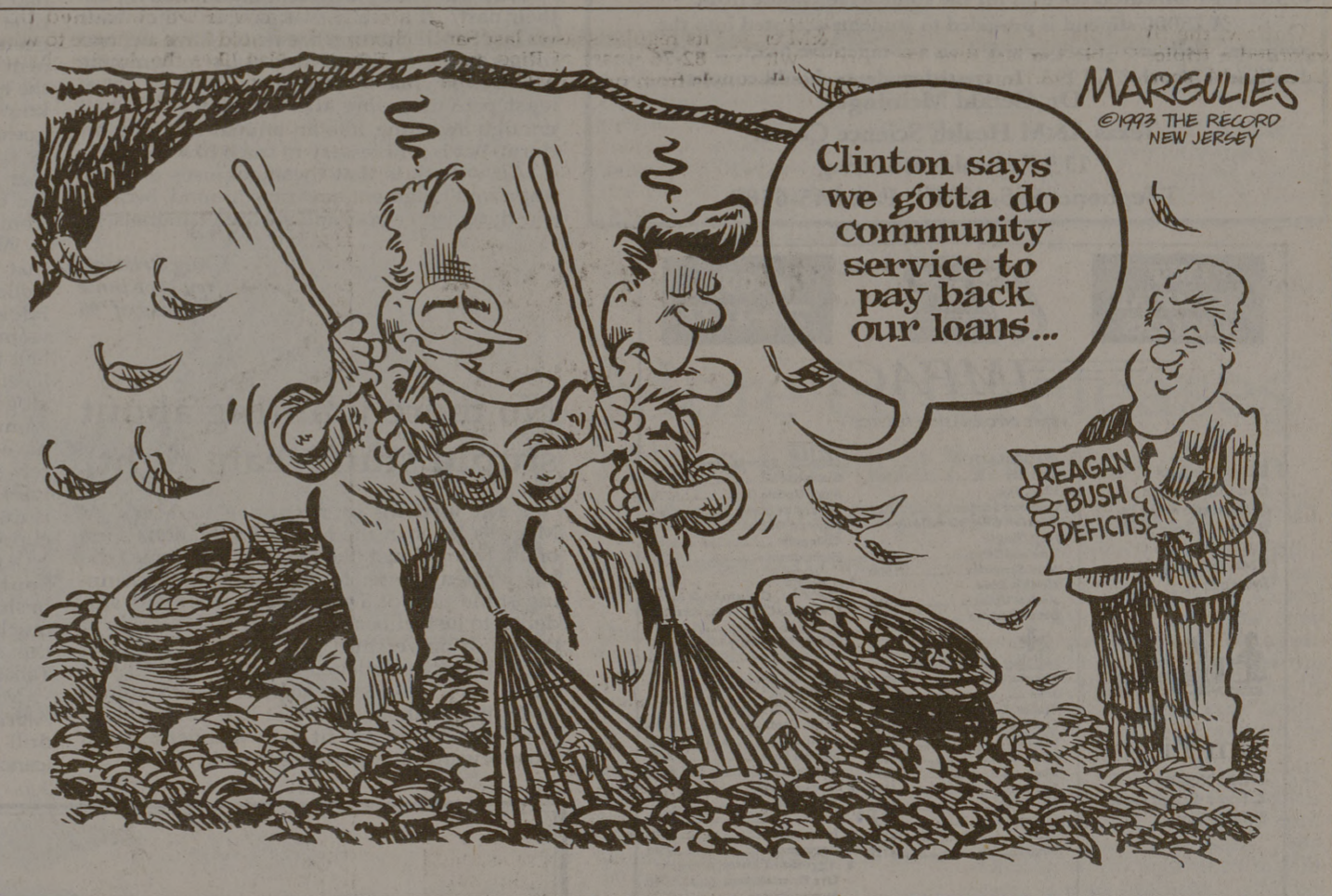
Dear Abby: In your column, you keep reminding people to show compassion and understanding for alcoholics and drug addicts, but nicotine addicts (for you) are fair game. Why?

The letter was signed, "A Moderate Texan in Freeport."

Abby responded, "... I've yet to hear anyone say, 'Gee, I'm glad I'm a smoker.'"

Dear Abby: Gee, I'm glad I'm a smoker. — A Pissed-Off Smoker in College Station.

Henderson is a sophomore political science major.



Long lost verse of the Aggie War Hymn needs to be sung

Students sing school fight song backward; not applicable to all college opponents

The Fightin' Texas Aggie band plays at the SWC basketball tournament in Dallas today, but don't expect them to be too inspirational. Fans will be singing about Texas' fight song while A&M plays Houston.

Aggies sing their school song backwards. It sounds like an Aggie joke, but it is true. The first verse of the "War Hymn" is completely left out, and the second verse is sung twice.

Although the "War Hymn" is played at every home game and yell practice, most students are oblivious to its first verse.

The second verse of the "War

Hymn" is the older and better known verse. It was written by Pinky Wilson in Germany in 1918 during World War I.

Wilson was commissioned to write new words for the "War Hymn," and the song was set to music for the first time by the Fightin' Texas Aggie Band in 1938. When Wilson wrote the new lyrics, he placed the original words in the second stanza.

"Texas is our biggest rival, but I realized the words I originally wrote don't apply to all the contests now," Wilson said in an interview with the Battalion on Dec. 9, 1938. "I hope the new ones will be adopted."

However, some old Ags felt the first verse of the "War Hymn" sounded too much like the school songs of Northeastern universities and refused to sing it.

The first verse is as follows:

All hail to dear old Texas A&M
Rally around Maroon and White
Good luck to the dear old Texas Aggies

They are the boys who show the real old fight
That good old Aggie spirit thrills us

And makes us yell and yell and yell (yell like hell)
So let's fight for dear old Texas A&M

We're going to beat you all to Chigararoom, Chigararoom,
Rough Stuff, Real Stuff, Texas A&M.

Regardless of what the cadets thought in 1938, the Corps Commander should have ordered them to sing it anyway. The current "War Hymn" sounds silly. Surely someone must have felt a bit goofy singing "Good bye to Texas University" when A&M was losing to Notre Dame 14-0 in the first half of

the Cotton Bowl. Even so, the odds of changing the "War Hymn" are about as good as Warren Gilbert Jr. being named alumni of the year.

When Oklahoma plays A&M in football next year, the fight song should get interesting. Perhaps Oklahoma will join the Aggies in singing the "War Hymn." Texas has actually beaten them.

Singing the first verse is not a matter of tradition, it's a matter of choice. The Singing Cadets have been singing it for 53 years.

In contrast, the "Corps Standard," the official handbook of the Corps of Cadets, still has no mention of the first stanza.

It's not that a different verse can't be sung; it just won't be. Programs for freshmen and transfer students including Freshman Orientation Week, Fish Camp, T-camp, freshman conferences, and transfer con-

ferences do not teach the first verse of the "War Hymn." These programs don't plan to change their agendas anytime soon.

Unless the familiar rendition of the "War Hymn" is somehow changed, most Aggies will graduate without ever singing the first verse of their school song.

If strict adherence to tradition won't allow people to sing the first verse, at least one of the redundant verses could be cut. NCAA regulations prohibit the band from finishing the whole song at times anyway, so why not saw one of those verses off?

Pinky Wilson would be disappointed if he could come back to A&M. The fight song still doesn't apply to all the contests.

Holmes is a senior journalism major.