

## THE BATTALION Editorial Board

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## EDITORIAL Wrong turn

### Texas Avenue plans fall short

The Texas Department of Transportation should rethink its plans for the expansion of Texas Avenue. The proposal does not address the root of the community's traffic problems around the Texas A&M campus.

The \$2.5 million plan would increase the width of Texas Avenue to six lanes from 700 feet north of University Drive to 400 feet south of Dominik Street. Noise walls, a bus lane and a raised median would also be included with the proposal as part of the construction.

Other suggested amenities are a pedestrian walkway, a lighted bicycle path and a jogging path. The final design largely depends on costs.

These benefits seem insufficient to justify the expense and drawbacks of the project. Despite any plans to ease congestion, the current problems will be greatly intensified during the building period.

Construction on the street will take at least two years. At times traffic will probably be confined to only two lanes.

The layout of the commu-

nity streets generates many of the area traffic problems. The basic cause of the current and foreseeable traffic difficulties is the fact that motorists have no other routes available.

Texas Avenue is the only central north-south thoroughfare capable of handling heavy traffic. Officials estimate daily traffic on the section to be improved will increase over the next 20 years from 37,000 to 48,000 vehicles.

FM 2818, Wellborn Road and the Highway 6 Bypass are too far out of the way to be of practical use to most drivers traveling to campus or the surrounding business districts. The improvement of side streets or access roads near Texas Avenue would help divert some of the present demand.

Although the Texas Department of Transportation project would provide some relief, the larger problem would remain unchanged. A more prudent use of the money and effort earmarked in the proposal would be to devise a better long-term solution.

## Second chance after suicide attempt No matter how bad it seems, there's someone who cares

My roommate, Jim, got a call last week from an old high school friend. They talked about old times and tried to update each other on the latest developments in their lives.

Then Jim's friend, Travis, said, "Oh, did I tell you? I'm blind now."

Jim was quiet for a second and then asked what had happened. His friend explained that he had been having trouble at his school in Indiana. His grades were dropping, and the people he called his friends were turning out to be less than reliable.

The winter was especially cold that year, and the semester had only begun. Finally, Travis stopped going to class. He couldn't handle it anymore. He stopped caring. He gave up.

Travis called his parents to let them know that he was leaving school. He didn't know what he was going to do. He might return eventually, he said, but he just couldn't handle it at the time. He needed to take some time off. He needed help.

He turned to his family. But they only turned away.

"Well, don't bother coming home," his parents said. "If you need some time off, and you're so sure that you need to leave school,

then you can find somewhere else to live while you figure out what you're going to do."

Travis didn't know what to do or where to turn. He only knew that he needed to leave, to get away. So, he packed a bag and started walking, never to see that school again.

There was a friend who lived a few hours away who had a nice apartment where Travis could stay for awhile. Without a car, it would be a long trip, but the walk would do him some good, Travis thought. It was snowing outside, and the cold air felt good. It seemed to give new hope as he thought about what to do with his life.

Two days later, Travis finally reached his friend's home. He was looking forward to seeing him. It would be nice to talk with a friend who could listen without spouting off lectures about responsibility and disappointment and failure. Travis knocked on the door. There was no answer.

In the times Travis had been there before, his friend had shown him how to let himself in. Inside, it was warm, a welcome feeling after all that snow. Travis looked around for a while and finally sat down with a bottle of scotch he found in the kitchen. He drank as he waited for his friend to come home. He thought back on all that had happened. How his life had changed so drastically in the last few days. Everything had been so right at one time. How could it all go so wrong so quickly, he wondered.

He had failed at school. His friends had turned on him. His parents were disappointed in him and had turned him away. And now, the one friend he could turn to was nowhere to be found.

The scotch felt good as it ran down his

throat. The world, which had spun so wildly out of control, was finally slowing down.

Travis got up and staggered to a place in the house he had avoided earlier. It was where his friend kept a gun hidden away for protection. He hoped it wasn't there. But it was.

Travis picked up the gun, held it to his head and shot himself.

Travis doesn't know how he survived. Most people don't get a second chance. All he remembers is waking up, his body soaking in a pool of blood. He made his way to the phone and finally did what he could have done all along. He called an emergency service for help.

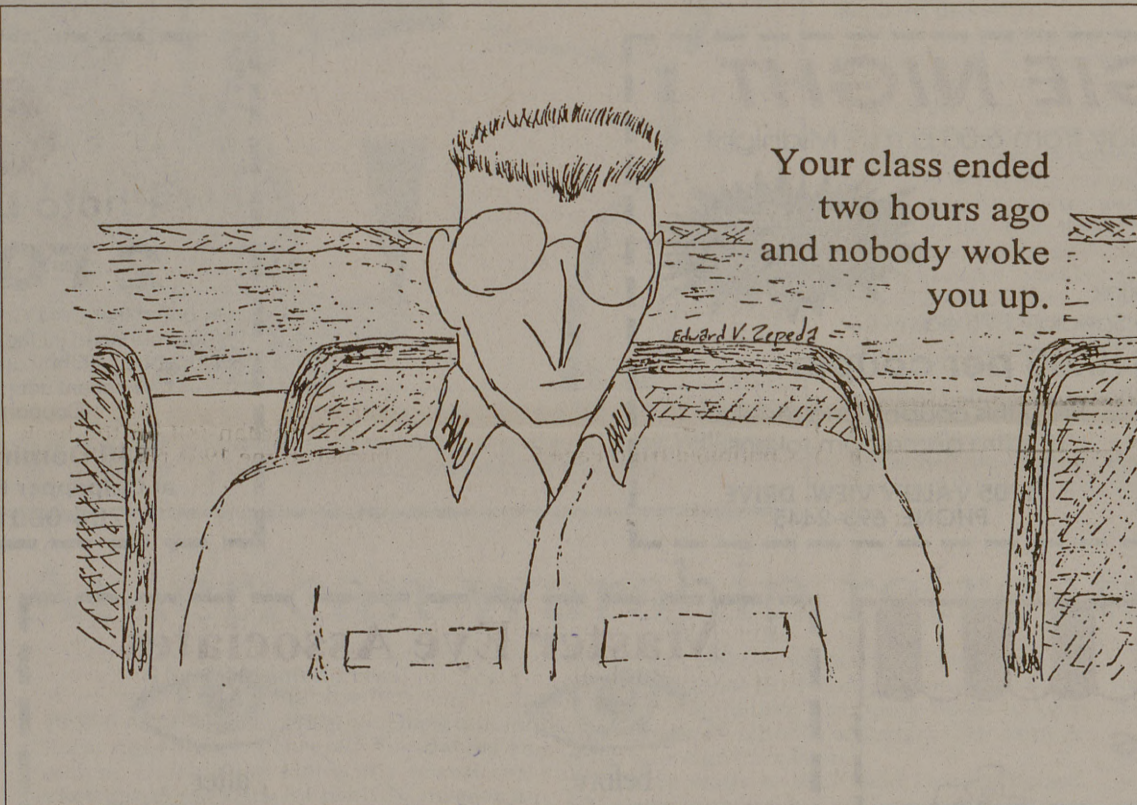
Too many students, looking for a solution to their problems, never find the help they need. Each year, thousands of students face seemingly insurmountable problems in school that are allowed to swell far beyond their proper perspective. Many of these students decide that the only solution to their lives is to end them. These students are wrong. There is hope. There is help.

The Department of Student Services at Texas A&M provides professional counselors who have faced these problems before. They know that the challenges are real, and they know how to help students deal with them. If you have a question — about anything — that no one else seems able to answer, talk to them.

We have all faced a point in our lives where there seems no hope. Some feel abandoned, forced to face their darkest hour alone. But there are people who can help them see that the sun also rises.

Robert Vasquez is a senior journalism major

ROBERT VASQUEZ  
Columnist



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## Learn to relax instead of becoming a slave to your work

One of the most lucrative business operations in the 90s is organizer manufacturing. The idea that organization and togetherness can be bought caters blindly to the great American dream of being able to fit 27 hours of work into a 24 hour day.



JENNY MAGEE  
Columnist

Check out the office supply aisle in the local office supply specialty store. Variety and assortment ceases to be an explanatory phrase. There are pocket-sized to brief case-sized binders filled with thousands of specialized pieces of paper, on which an hourly account of day to day activities can be recorded. Business meetings, upcoming assignments, quality family time and even sleep can be conveniently plotted out into their proper time slots. With the aid of tabs, stickers and time

slot spaces galore, an organizer offers an easy way to synthesize, categorize and formulize life. It is a mandatory accessory for any successful member of corporate America. But trying to buy organization is like trying to buy a sense of humor — it is just not possible.

The important question to ask is not whether it is good or bad to own an organizer, but why Americans feel the need to account for every hour of their day.

There is no questioning the fact that college life demands organization. Even the most carefree and absent-minded students' lives are molded to some degree at the beginning of each semester when the dreaded syllabus falls into their hands — a dated and numbered map of doom.

Unfortunately, there is no way to avoid the necessity of a certain degree of organizational skills in everyday life. Without it, many of us would never make it past number one on the day's agenda — lift head from pillow. However, there is a grave danger in falling mindlessly into this "together career person" image.

In essence, college is supposed to prepare students for the work force. But I wonder if the work force ever questions

what it is asking for. The last thing America needs is a bunch of stressed-out, young employees trying to accomplish 10 years of work the first week on the job.

The business world has enough employees who are skilled at eating a bagel, talking on the phone, watching the news on TV and typing a memo all at the same time.

What American companies need are a few employees who have the ability to

**Our standards of what constitutes success have become so high that functioning at a normal level of accomplishment has become shamefully passe.**

place their entire concentration on one thing at a time. Seriously, it is a very rare and highly marketable skill.

The problem stems from the fact that Americans are obsessed with accomplishing what was once thought to be impossible. Look back at this country's

history. A bunch of poor rag-tag rebels miraculously defeated a much more organized and proficient English army. Thus, generation after generation has perpetuated this inherit need to do more better and faster.

Then look at the figures that our culture idolizes: Superman, who can leap buildings in a single bound, Michael Jordan, who basically defies gravity and Andrew Carnegie, the classic rags to riches entrepreneur.

As a culture our standards of what constitutes success have become so high that being normal or functioning at a normal level of accomplishment has become shamefully passe.

So here we are surrounded by approaching project deadlines and impending mid-terms. It is obvious that a "take time to smell the flowers" outlook will not make day to day pressures melt away. That is not the point.

The point is that as a society, we need to become secure enough with ourselves again so that we can relax every once in a while. We need to slow down long enough to take in what is happening around us today. Americans are so busy

planning the future that the present ceases to be a reality.

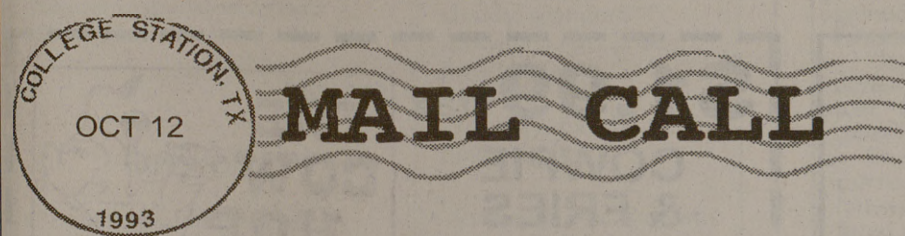
Economic activity today is based on predictions that were made months ago. Many people have already spent next month's paycheck, and political figures begin to plan their re-election campaigns the second day in office.

Other nations around the world do not advocate self-imposed stress the way America does. In Japan there are public bath houses where business people go and enjoy an after-work massage.

In Italy it is a commonplace occurrence for a store owner to close the shop early to spend a leisurely late lunch with a relative. These and many other countries recognize an extremely simplistic fact about people — that they need the time and freedom to have lives outside of work.

In today's society, one of the most vital skills a college education should give students is the knowledge to balance work and personal life. Otherwise, colleges will be providing the American work force with robots, not employees.

Jenny Magee is a sophomore journalism major



### College grants make investment in future

I am writing in response to Charles Heard's guest column of Oct. 7. In this column, Charles says to help reduce to deficit by not taking money from the government unless you have earned it.

While I agree with this philosophy, I disagree with his attack of college grant money as an example.

First, he insinuates that a grant is like a loan from a bad lender. I would like to point out that a grant is not a loan; it is money given to people in need who meet certain criteria and is for the purpose of aiding them in achieving certain goals.

Second, federal college grants are an

investment in America's future. The government awards these grants to needy students who use the money for an education they might not otherwise be able to afford. These students go on to become productive citizens and, in essence, repay these grants by their contributions to society.

They become the researchers who work to cure disease; they become the doctors who treat us when we are ill; they become the teachers of tomorrow; they become the business men and women who keep our economy afloat, etc.

Cutting educational grants to lower the deficit could have negative repercussions in the future. By not giving people the opportunity to attend college, they are kept in lower income dead-end jobs, or they may end up on welfare. Besides, grant money is not the major expense

contributing to the deficit. There are many wasteful programs that could be cut or reduced that would save far more money than cutting college grants.

Martin Gross' book "The Government Racket" shows many wastes and abuses in the government that, if eliminated, would save a tremendous amount of money that could be used to fund needed and useful programs as well as help pay off the deficit, and possibly lead to a reduction in our taxes.

However, this will never happen unless you, the people, get involved. Write your congressman and vote out the pork-barrel politicians. Give the president the line-item veto. It starts with you.

David R. Webb  
Class of '93

Margie Aguilar  
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