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EDITORIAL

A matter of ethics Regent's actions tarnish A&M

A Texas Rangers probe into allegations against Texas A&M Board of Regents chairman Ross Margraves could open yet another major scandal, further damaging the University's reputation following recent NCAA investigations of the school's football program.

While Margraves may be absolved of any impropriety, A&M System administrators must work to ensure that future business dealings leave no room for charges of questionable conduct.

The allegations against Margraves stem from an anonymous letter to members of the Board of Regents claiming Margraves had personally benefitted from A&M business deals.

In addition, Margraves told the Associated Press Sunday that after winning the contract to run the MSC Bookstore, Barnes and Noble Bookstores, Inc., provided plane travel, limousine service, Broadway show tickets and rooms at expensive hotels to him and Robert Smith, A&M vice president of finance and administration.

Although Sarah Woelk of the state Ethics Commission said the trips were not illegal when they took place in 1990, such actions can only be seen in the worst possible light.

Board of Regents Vice Chair-

man Raul B. Fernandez said Barnes and Nobles officials could have traveled to A&M.

"Either they can come here or we can go there," Fernandez said. "We have two options, they can pay or we can pay."

If this were the case, then this scandal might have been avoided by having Barnes and Noble representatives come here.

Despite the lack of legal restrictions against accepting such offers, the propriety of taking these trips is highly questionable. Margraves should have minimized his personal involvement with Barnes and Noble while conducting business for A&M.

The MSC Bookstore contract is worth millions of dollars — to both the University and to Barnes and Noble. The issue of proper conduct as good business practice should have been paramount to everyone involved. Instead, expensive hotel rooms and theater tickets have maligned the integrity of the entire A&M University System.

This investigation will eventually determine whether Margraves gained personal profit from System business. Until then, Margraves and all other System officials owe their continued full cooperation in order to minimize the damage to Texas A&M.

... With a little help from our friends Companions let us express different sides of personality

College is about many things. It's about money, time and effort and good grades. But another thing that makes college worthwhile is friends. Just plain good friends.

As the semester is winding down and I'm looking back over the last four and a half years, I think about where the friends I've ended up with fit into my life. I reflect over the person I have become and how those people benefit from me and how I benefit from them.

I realized — now that it is time to go — just how important friends are. And that the qualities I am looking for don't necessarily have to reside in the same person, but can be spread over many different people.

This idea started me to thinking about the differing personalities of the people I am around most frequently — the ones who actually see me when I am smiling and when I am crying.

I am a psychology major, so I love analyzing the human mind and/or lack of it.

I can begin with Taffy. She is the intellectual personality. She is disciplined, reserved and serious. In a sense, she is my reality base. I look at Taffy and am reminded of what needs to be done to be well prepared for life after college. I learn discipline

and tolerance from her.

Jean is the adventurous personality. She leaps first and looks last. When I am with her, my playful, carefree side comes out. I leave behind the articles and papers and books to read. Far behind....

I tried my first drink with Jean. It was this summer at Marco's. I had one — one — margarita and was giggling all over the place. I remember us leaving a note for our waiter telling him how cute we thought he was. Of course, I was the one to write it. She obviously had better sense than I did.

This wasn't the end of my drinking escapades with Jean. That Friday night we went to her favorite little bar. I went in timid and shaky, but I came out brazen and bold. At first, Jean ordered my drinks because I didn't know the names for them. And the bartender, in honor of my first drinking experience and because we had the same birthdays, gave me my first drink on the house.

By the time the night was over, I had learned enough to order about six drinks: four rum and cokes and two madder sours. Needless to say, I could have easily stared a raging bull in the eyes at that point. The only problem was that I couldn't focus on anything. But just being with her made it all worth it.

Now Debra really wouldn't have liked this. She is the paranoid personality. And unfortunately, we have things in common also. She is scared of death of boys and will not approach them.

One night at a party we saw the guy that she is infatuated with. In the process of being introduced to him, I believe she honestly

stopped breathing. She was just standing there looking at him. And when he said something to her, she mumbled something back really fast. We were all looking at her like, what?

Debra is also paranoid about bodily harm and property issues, which I can relate with. She won't drive her car into certain sections of Bryan for fear that some hoodlums might steal parts from it. She won't bring her violin up to school because she said she's afraid some crack addict might break in and steal it. Again, we looked at her like, WHAT?

But I won't be too hard on her. I have some pretty bizarre phobias that pop up now and then myself. The bottom line is just that with her, I can express my fears, no matter how real or unreal they may be.

Last, but certainly not least, I have a balance of all three of the personalities. This is Andy. He and I have been friends for four years now, and we have been through a lot. I should say I have put him through a lot. He has witnessed and survived my temper tantrums and irrational mood swings. People that have been in contact with these have come and gone, but not him. I guess he provides me most with security.

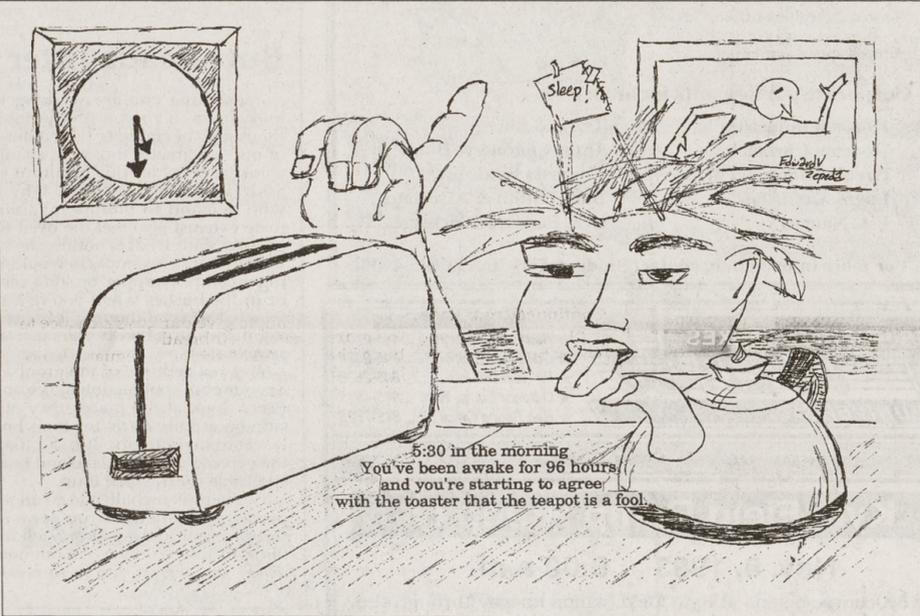
I try my hardest to give back to my friends also because they are very important in my life. I know part of what I give them is laughter, because they all seem to think my life is like a situation comedy. But they enjoy me, and I enjoy them.

Isn't that one of those important little things in life?



TRACEY JONES
 Columnist

Tracey Jones is a senior psychology major



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Bandits on the data highway pose threat to personal privacy

The recent merger of Telecommunications Industries (TCI) and Atlantic Bell marks the beginning of a new industrial revolution. The new revolution will be marked by increased reliance on computers and the "digital super-highway" that will pipe gigabytes of information into our homes, cars, offices and personal digital assistants every minute.

We will have no choice. Information will be the new currency, and we will be subjected to so much of it each day we couldn't possibly examine it all. Computers will be our data filters, deciding what we see, how we see it and how it gets to us.

More importantly, all of this information will be flowing almost effortlessly through computers to which everyone

will have access.

No big deal, right? Wrong. If we do not take steps now to establish the laws and protocols which will govern the transmission of data in the 21st century, we risk jeopardizing much of our privacy.

In 1971, a time before the PC, before faxes and before digital telephone systems, Arthur R. Miller outlined a potential problem facing our society in his book *The Assault on Privacy*.

He warned that the "computer with its insatiable appetite for information... and its inability to forget anything that has been stored in it, may become the heart of a surveillance system that will turn our society into a transparent world in which our homes, our finances and our associations will be bared to a wide range of casual observers, including the morbidly curious and the maliciously or commercially intrusive."

His warning seems much more applicable today, as companies begin the process of constructing the data highway which will connect all of us to a massive global network. Whether we like it or not, by the end of our generation's collective tenure in the work force, almost

everyone will be connected to this system in one way or another. Interactive TV, movies on demand, home shopping, access to electronic mail and video phones will pervade our lifestyle — bringing with them the associated risks.

As we all become more familiar with the new "digital" world, we will begin to rely on our interconnectedness more and more. Therein lies the danger. People will

Your buying habits may already be falling into criminal hands. And we are rushing to connect these computers, as well as several thousand others, to a common data network?

have a tendency to view this network as a benign highway of information. If used maliciously, however, the possibility of data hijacking may become a reality.

Today's technology is dangerous enough. Private data corporations, mostly

credit card companies, already have files on almost every American. They know what you buy, when you buy it and where you shop. The data they own contains such information as where you vacation, how often you buy condoms and the average amount of toilet paper you buy a month. These files make Big Brother look harmless.

Their computers can instantly spit every little bit of information about you to anyone with enough know-how. There have already been several cases where data criminals have stolen files on who knows how many people. Your buying habits may already be falling into criminal hands. And we are rushing to connect these computers, as well as several thousand others, to a common data network?

It is important for all of us to realize the potential for abuse in a system of global interconnectedness. Our current judicial system has spent a very small amount of time setting precedents in this field. As Janlori Goldman, the Director of the American Civil Liberties Union Project on Privacy and Technology warns: "Privacy lives in a series of loosely structured voluntary guidelines adopted by

various industries, such as insurance and credit reporting companies."

Basically, our laws are not ready to cope with the new network. Defining data piracy is not easy. Unlike the material world where theft is obvious — "I know I parked my car around here somewhere" — in computer systems a criminal could steal all of the data on your computer leaving it in the same pristine condition it was in before he began.

It is therefore clear, that laws must be defined today. Our legislators are reluctant to act in an area they consider too technical to understand, yet the policy decisions are clearly defined. We must protect ourselves from the data pirates of the next century.

Certainly everyone will appreciate the conveniences of the new digital world. Still, the dangers are apparent. Our generation will be instrumental in implementing this global network. We must make the important decisions regarding privacy and security lest our daily lives become the underground soap operas of the 21st century.

Eliot Williams is a sophomore electrical engineering major



Aggie Spirit falls to the almighty dollar

It is disappointing to read in a national newspaper that the Aggies are being investigated by the NCAA again. It would seem that in a university where "Aggies do not lie, cheat, steal or tolerate

those who do," that allegations of seven student-athletes being paid for work not performed should not exist.

Although college sports has become big business, the Aggie Spirit should not succumb to the almighty dollar. The Aggie Spirit is what distinguishes Texas A&M. To lose this would be a loss felt by all Aggies, including Former Students and future Aggies.

NCAA needs to stop picking on A&M

For the past five years, A&M has been under the NCAA microscope

whether it be basketball, football or badminton. Jackie Sherrill and Kermit Davis broke the rules and received their punishment. All was said and done, right? Wrong. Coach Slocum and his staff obviously have done everything in their power to prevent A&M from having a tarnished reputation.

But for some strange reason, whenever the orange bloods are dominated by someone for so long, the NCAA feels the need to intervene (Ask SMU, Houston, TCU and Texas Tech). Sure, those other schools deserved to be punished (especially SMU), but A&M doesn't deserve any more than we have already received.

Seven Aggie football players broke the rules and were punished. They missed the Cotton Bowl and more. They were ridiculed in the public and the media even after they paid the money back

and admitted they were wrong. The players and coaches couldn't enjoy the success of their 12-0 regular season because of something that happened that has absolutely nothing to do with A&M or the Aggie's success on the football field. One player may have even lost his chance at the Heisman next season.

After all of this, A&M faced damage in recruiting not only last year, but now it looks like this year is in trouble as well. And it's not over yet.

Enough is enough. These players were recruited legally, and they play for A&M because they want to. The NCAA needs to go bother somebody else for a change. Just because we are winners, doesn't mean we are cheaters.

John C. Beck
 Class of '92