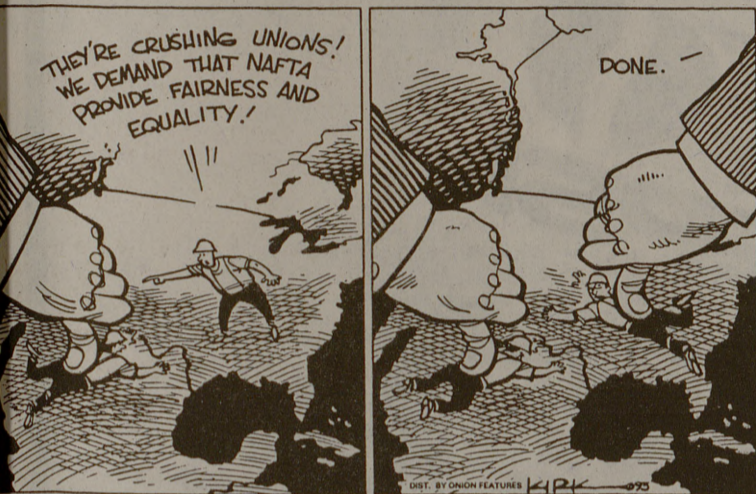


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## EDITORIAL Caddo Lake

### Texas must protect wetlands area

Environmentalists have succeeded in adding Caddo Lake in East Texas to the list of "Wetlands of International Importance" established under the Ramsar Convention. Unfortunately, the new classification carries no legal or regulatory protection. Lawmakers need to act to ensure natural preservation and conservation in the area.

The Ramsar Convention is a multinational ecological agreement made by about 80 countries in 1971. Only 13 sites in the United States have received such distinction to date. Caddo Lake is the first Texas site on the list. Supporters of the proposal sent to the Ramsar Convention's ruling body include musician and environmental activist Don Henley.

Caddo Lake is remarkable as the only natural lake in Texas — all others are man-made reservoirs. According to reports in The Dallas Morning News, the swampy region provides a habitat for 44 rare, threatened or endangered species. Over 300 varieties of plants and 216 species of birds

live there. The waters of Caddo Lake support a multitude of fish and are widely regarded as a first-class bass fishery. Millions of migrating birds also use the lake as a stopping point between their northern summer habitats and the forests of Central and South America. These features contributed to Caddo Lake's recent designation.

The Corps of Engineers proposal would set up plans to build a canal from Shreveport, La. to Daingerfield, Texas. Preliminary reports indicate that the project is no longer feasible because it would serve too few businesses to justify its expense and environmental toll.

Former supporters of the canal project now advocate the promotion of ecological tourism and nature activities to offset the economic loss from cancellation of the building plans.

The future security of Caddo Lake — as well as this new source of revenue — depends on legal protection equal to the lake's natural value.

## The few, the proud ... the bike riders

### Commuting by bicycle presents new traffic challenges

I have recently joined the ranks of the few, the proud, the kamikaze campus bicycle riders. I took the bold step forward and decided that for my last semester at A&M, I would avoid the hassles of the PTTS and just ride my bike to campus everyday. It is a decision that I am now having to reconsider.

When I first moved into my new apartment last July, I felt that I had made the right choice. I got a little one-bedroom place just a short bike ride away from campus. It cost a bit more, but I thought it would be worth it. I had lived in Bryan for so long, I just knew living across the street from campus would make things so much easier.

Residing near campus meant I could eat lunch in my own living room, sleep those few extra, precious minutes in the morning before class and save money on gas. Best of all, if my professor decided to pull a no-show, I could just run home between classes. Living next to campus was gonna be worth the few extra dollars in rent and the numerous extra roaches that came with this new apartment.

The first day of school came upon me, and I was ready. I had my backpack full of textbooks, my preplanned ten-minute bike route

and a shiny new lock and chain. It sounded too good to be true.

My first problem occurred when I realized that each time I had timed myself going across campus on my bike, it had been during the two-week period between second summer session and the fall semester, commonly known as the dead zone. Real dumb. The first day of class it took me fifteen minutes just to cross George Bush Drive.

Finally, after bravely dodging the swerving trucks and zipping little foreign cars, I made it onto campus. I thanked the biking gods for the bike lanes. They are fantastic, as long as you are going straight or turning right.

But beware the first time you have to cross a campus street or — even worse — have to turn left. It's impossible. I once circled the entire campus doing right turns just so I wouldn't have to make one left turn.

Anyway, as soon as I neared the building where my class was already half over, I attempted to ride up on the sidewalks. I endured the many evil stares and malice-filled glances as I cruised inches from these pesky people. I even heard one person question, rather rudely, my right to ride a bike on the sidewalks.

Well, to answer this irate walker, I can only say this: I'll stop riding my bike on the sidewalks when the campus planners deem it appropriate to place the bike racks closer to the bike lanes. Who in their right mind would design a campus with multiple bike racks located mere inches from the main entrances of the most-used buildings?

Aside from these initial trifles of the first day, I still felt that riding my bike to class

each day would be the best solution for me. The time and money I saved from not having to purchase an off-campus parking tag alone offset the problems I faced from having to ride through campus on a bike.

Now that I mentioned it, I have just one quick gripe — the parking situation here is a huge joke. I was once told that the permits don't ensure a parking space, similar to the way hunting licenses don't ensure that you'll get a deer. Great. Does this analogy scare the hell out of anyone else? Can you imagine some zealot with his parking space hunting license and a shotgun?

Anyway, back to the biking saga. The beginning of the semester was full of mistakes, but I now feel confident that I have learned most biking etiquette: Never be caught riding on campus during the twenty minute period between classes, always yield the right of way to motor vehicles, never leave a bike unchained to a rack — even if just for a moment — and avoid that one stupid person who always sits there and watches you coming like a deer caught in the headlights.

Invariably, that idiot will try to second guess you and in an attempt to jump out of the way, will end up putting his leg through your spokes.

So now I have joined the ranks of the incredibly elite group of campus bike riders. I cruise seemingly effortlessly from class to class, looking smooth, cool and suave — with shoelaces streaming from my front spokes.

John Scroggs is a senior English and philosophy major



JOHN SCROGGS  
Columnist

## ASK NOT WHAT BONFIRE CAN DO FOR YOU BUT WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR BONFIRE



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## Give of yourself, because money can't solve everything

People never surprise me" is a standard reply to the weird, shocking and stupid actions performed by the people in the world around him. I always envied that outlook because people continually surprise the pants off me, especially when it comes to money.



JENNY MAGEE  
Columnist

For example, last Tuesday I was innocently reading my Houston Chronicle as lunchtime entertainment when my attention was attracted by the headline story, "Oiler delivers one baby of a controversy."

The story explained the debate that occurred when the Oiler's starting right offensive tackle David Williams missed the New England Patriots game to be with

his wife for the birth of their son. Of course, I experienced the initial outrage at the Oiler coaches for expecting Williams to put football before fatherhood. But, as I read on something else struck me as being even more absurd. KPRC, a news-talk radio station in Houston, was interviewing listeners for their reactions to the Williams incident. One caller said, "You know, if one offensive lineman is so important for the Oilers to be able to beat the Patriots, then I feel sorry for them. If the Oilers fine him, I would like to send him \$100 and encourage everyone else to send him something to make up the difference."

My first thought was that this man is obviously an alien from another planet where there are no homeless people starving in the streets or unemployed parents who can't feed their children. Certainly no American, surrounded by the day to day effects of a lagging economy, would advocate sending money to a man who makes \$2 million a year.

Let me put this into perspective. If he is fined, Williams could stand to lose one week's pay, approximately \$125,000. If a

typical undergraduate student at A&M lives on about \$8,000 a year for five years of study, David Williams could put three students through this school on one week's paycheck. I do not think the man is in need of financial assistance.

Then why was the phone call respondent so willing to rip open his pocketbook and start shelling out money to

**People like the idea of buying morality. It is convenient to contribute to good or moralistic causes because it makes us feel our lives are good and moralistic also.**

David Williams? As I continued on with the story, I found the answer.

"I missed the birth of my two sons, and I would give anything to get that back," the caller said.

This person's willingness to give his

money to Williams is motivated by a void that he feels in his own life. Like so many people, he perceives a certain virtue in a "public figure" that he lacks, and by contributing his money, he is putting himself on the moralistic side of the fence.

People like the idea of buying morality. It is convenient to contribute to good or moralistic causes because it makes us feel our lives are good and moralistic also. It is the theory of close approximation: A couple of hundred dollars can become ample retribution for past wrongs. How else could TV evangelists like Oral Roberts, Jimmy Swaggart and Jimmy Baker get people to make blind contributions to their "religious causes"?

I don't know how many times I have felt compelled to shell out a few bucks to some representative of a noble cause that came knocking on my door. Or why I automatically feel like I am a part of "Walk America" or "The United Way" simply because I shelled out a couple of bucks.

Unfortunately, money is necessary for the existence of these organizations, and they have to get it from somewhere. But

monetary contributions should not become a substitute for real human service or as a way to fill the voids in our own lives.

The major problems come in when people become so tuned in to this idea that financial contributions make them good people that they forget to ask where they are sending their money and what is being done with it.

There are many worthy charity organizations and legitimate groups that do a lot to help those in need. However, there is also a good number of con artists who are willing and happy to play up to guilty consciences.

There are many people in this country who desperately need financial support. However, money can not give needy people everything that is missing from their lives. Emotional and educational assistance are just as important. Sometimes, time is a more genuine and valuable gift on both the part of the giver and receiver.

Jenny Magee is a sophomore English and journalism major

COLLEGE STATION, TX  
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**MAIL CALL**  
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### Margraves unethical in accepting trips

Texas A&M Regent Chairman Ross Margraves should resign immediately. He sees nothing wrong with taking free trips to New York City paid for by Barnes and Noble Bookstores Inc., which won a lucrative contract to operate the Texas A&M Bookstore.

My daughter is an Aggie and she has to pay inflated prices of \$40 to \$50 a book or \$300 a semester for textbooks. Mr. Margraves enjoyed \$200 a night hotel rooms, meals, limousine service, Broadway shows in the Big Apple that were in effect paid for by the students and their parents.

Mr. Margraves needs a course in ethics. He should be doing what is best for the students, instead he appears to be

acting in his own self interest. Barnes & Noble Bookstore should be kicked off the campus. Competitors should be allowed to open other campus bookstores.

Jimmy Dunne  
Houston

### Aggies handle MOB apology with class

Last Saturday, at the A&M vs. Rice football game, I was especially proud to be an Aggie. As you may know, there has always been a lot of tension between the Aggie Band and the Rice MOB. My brother, who is a senior in the MOB, told me before the game about the nice gesture they were going to do for the Aggie Band. He said their band director really did want to

patch things up between the two bands. I admit, I was a little concerned about how the Aggies would respond, but I was very impressed to see the band and the students' reactions. Seeing Aggies shaking their hands and standing up and applauding is evidence enough of what Aggie spirit and pride is all about.

Kerri Dortch  
Class of '95

### A.R.M.Y members embarrass University

Every time I go to a Lady Aggie Volleyball match, I bury my head in shame. At a recent match, several A.R.M.Y. members were disrupting the match in such a way that they had to be escorted

away from the visiting team's bench. This past Friday evening, the umpire had to stop the match, because A.R.M.Y. members were not giving the opposing team's server enough room. Besides these incidents, A.R.M.Y. continually attempts (and always succeeds) to be extremely distasteful and obnoxious.

Not only do their actions embarrass their own organization, but they also embarrass the entire University. It is a shame that a visitor to our university must leave here with the impression that we support our teams in an unsportsmanlike manner.

If anyone feels that they must act in this manner, there is a little school over there in Austin that would love to have you. Need directions? Take highway 21. It runs both ways, too!

Stephanie Reed  
Class of '94