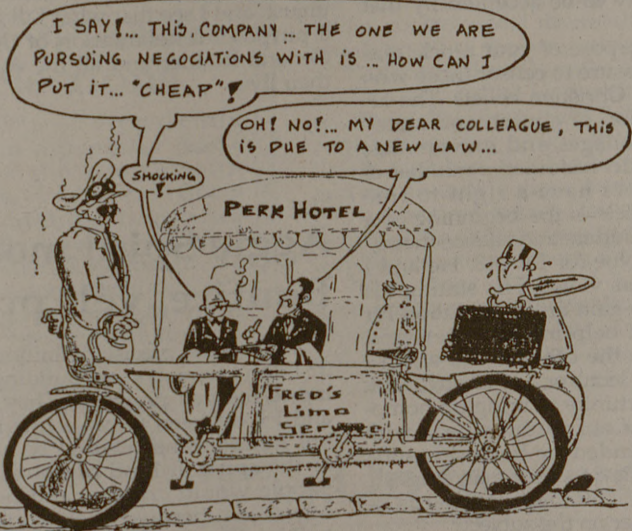


## PRO CON

### Were A&M officials ethical in accepting trips to New York?



**ELIOT WILLIAMS**  
Columnist



**JOHN SCROGGS**  
Columnist

When Jimmy Carter took office as President of the United States in 1977, he insisted on carrying his own baggage on all official trips — he was man of the people.

Well, the people should look powerful, not fly cheap. Similarly, the two A&M officials' acceptance of trips to New York was not unethical.

These allegations are ludicrous. To blame Margraves for accepting a complimentary trip to New York is like blaming the president for receiving gifts from foreign dignitaries — it is part of his job.

Some claim Margraves acted in an inappropriate manner by accepting the trip. They say that this trip was a kickback in return for giving the contract to Barnes and Noble. Imagine for a moment what your math professor would say if you told him you would give him \$20 at the end of the year if he gave you an A in the class.

He'd either laugh hysterically or have you expelled.

This is almost the same argument critics make of the Chairman. To claim that Margraves would give away a multi-million dollar contract to the first company to promise him a few Broadway shows is ridiculous. Miss Saigon isn't that good.

Allegations that Margraves personally benefited from this business deal have come to light as information concerning trips Margraves and Smith made in 1990 surfaced.

These men and women are treated with great respect and dignity. It is almost natural to expect them to be offered courtesies, especially ones as important as Chairman of the Board, are traditionally dignitary type positions. These people have a job to do, and that job is to associate with other people and companies.

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Margraves and Smith did nothing illegal. They accepted a trip once the contract had been decided, not before. To say the trip was unethical would be tremendously hypocritical. Would you have refused the offer?

Business in the '90s is done on the golf course, over dinner, at football games and lake side retreats. It is understood that a businessman such as Margraves must spend 40 hours a week in the office, and another 10 at social activities. It's not a lifestyle that I would enjoy, but it's certainly not unethical.

Once again, Texas A&M University has been spotlighted by the national media. Once again, the attention is focused on what many consider scandalous dealings.

Ross Margraves, TAMU Board of Regents Chairman, is under investigation by the Texas Rangers for possible business improprieties.

The Texas Rangers are conducting the probe to determine whether Margraves gained any personal profit from System

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business. With all respect to the Rangers, don't limousine service and Broadway show tickets sound like personal profit?

To add to these suspicious dealings, Barnes and Noble had, prior to these trips, just won the contract to run the MSC Bookstore, which is worth millions of dollars to both the University and Barnes and Noble. The decision by Margraves and A&M Vice President for Finance and Administration Robert Smith to accept these "gifts" reeks of questionable conduct and ethics.

Of course, almost as quickly as the allegations were made, a loophole was found. The Ethics Commission in Texas told the AP that although there are laws forbidding trips similar to these now, in 1990, when the trips were made, no laws existed to restrict such extravagances.

Yet, it is obvious that once a million dollar deal is made with a company, personal interaction with that company should be minimal and strictly on a business platform. Either the University should have paid for a bare-bones trip to New York, or Barnes and Nobles officials should have financed their own trip to A&M. These two alternatives seem to be both logical and ethical, qualities which some A&M administrators appear to lack.

But even if no laws existed at the time to prevent such improprieties, shouldn't a basic knowledge of right and wrong have alerted Margraves and Smith to the obvious questionable behaviors?

Ethics are standards of moral values and principles of which individuals in positions such as Margraves and Smith should instinctively be aware.

Not long after President Clinton was inaugurated in January, he made it clear that one of the defining objectives of his administration would be to institute broad reform of the health-care and insurance industries.

With this, the President then turned all say and responsibility relative to this matter over to his wife.

In effect, Bill Clinton relinquished part of his own presidential power to an unelected individual. While Mrs. Clinton's intentions are not untenable, the fact that she wields this much power, power that belongs to the president, is neither acceptable nor defensible.

The president of the United States is allowed of course to make executive appointments. In fact, he must make dozens of them. However, these appointees are subjected first to the scrutiny of senate confirmation hearings. Nominees must face an inquiry and ultimately a binding yea or nay vote by those on the committee. This process is designed to allow the president his due appointment

powers, and in turn prevent appointments that would otherwise prove objectionable.

The president is also allowed to hire individuals to serve on his executive staff. These persons serve in less than vital roles, though, calling news conferences and similar tasks. As such, they are not made to appear before any sort of confirmation committees.

Hillary Rodham Clinton enjoys all the powers, if not to a greater degree, accorded high-level cabinet members, and yet she has been able to escape the potentially damning litmus test of a Senate confirmation committee. The first lady is poised to usher through Congress what she calls one of this country's most revolutionary social initiatives.

This proposal would effect each and every American, and yet she has neither been elected by the people nor even confirmed by the people's representatives.

The beauty of our political system is its accountability — no individual can ever be a runaway train. In a democracy, those laws under which the people must live always have been created and passed by those who would represent our interests. As a result, in the United States policies of this magnitude have always been relegated to either the president or our representatives in Congress. The First Lady, however, appears now to have superceded these conventions.

The fact that the First Lady is spearheading health-care reform, while perhaps a tribute to her intellect, is nonetheless setting a troubling and dangerous precedent. Bill Clinton has arbitrarily created a position, what amounts to a health-care czar, whose recommendations will ultimately effect us all.

## Setting a dangerous precedent Hillary Clinton has power without accountability



**JASON SWEENEY**  
Columnist

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton is scheduled this week to begin a nationwide tour to promote her much-publicized health care reform plan. She has gone on the offensive in recent weeks promoting what promises to be one of the most far-reaching social initiatives ever.

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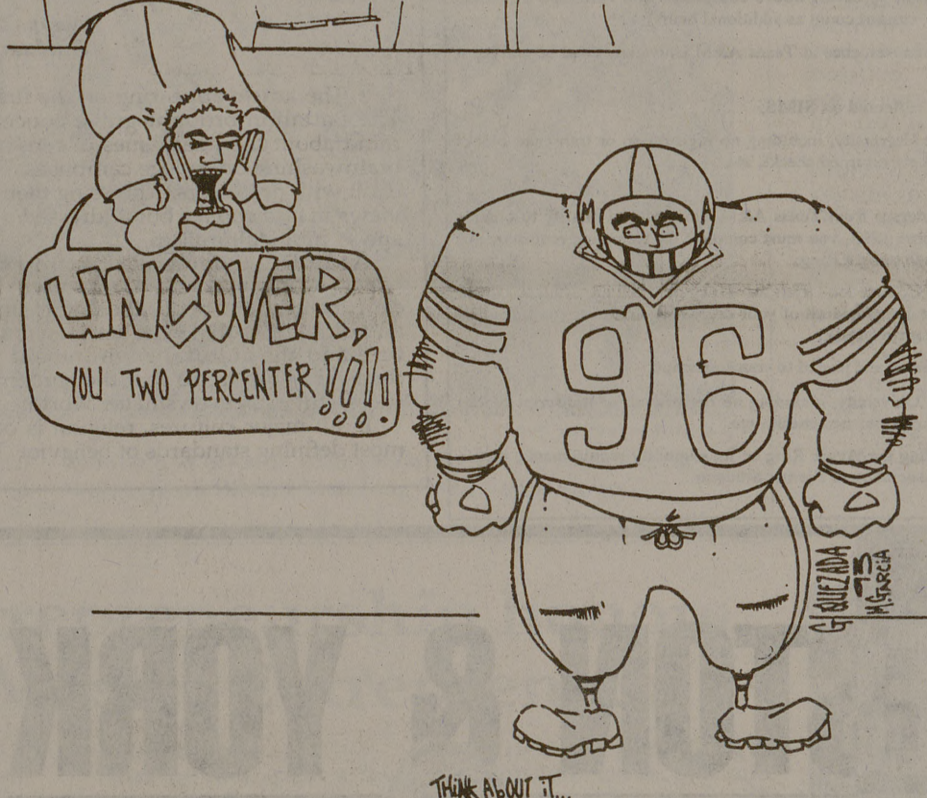
The First Lady is actually no different a citizen than you or I and therefore no more qualified to act in this role. However, she has received the attention of Congress simply because of the power instilled in her by the President. The President should feel at ease now in creating whatever position he sees fit. The precedent is certainly there.

It bears noting that President Clinton has again demonstrated his penchant for less than dynamic leadership. It is the president who is counted on to lead the nation in matters of great importance. We have to wonder then about a president who would betray the confidence of his constituents by so casually abdicating such a large segment of his social agenda.

In the matter of health care, who is Hillary Rodham Clinton accountable to? Certainly not a president who has admittedly washed his hands of the matter.

I am not here to pass personal judgement on either of the Clintons; however, Bill Clinton was elected President of the United States. His wife was not. As such, it is he or perhaps one of his Democratic colleagues in Congress who must lead these efforts. One problem we are facing is that many on Capitol Hill and in the media seem to have been charmed by the novelty of a First Lady who is in turn a political activist. While perhaps a curiosity, it is nevertheless an act not allowed for either by the Constitution or statute. If the First Lady had such grandiose notions about implementing policy perhaps she should have run against her husband in the Democratic primaries.

Jason Sweeney is a senior political science major



## COLLEGE STATION, TX NOV 5 1993 MAIL CALL

### Is A&M big brother?

A university should be a place where students and faculty alike can voluntarily come together in order to explore ideas and opinions. In the past we at Texas A&M have been afforded opportunities to express our opinions without censorship. Are the MSC and A&M now on their way to becoming the mind police?

In the Nov. 3 Battalion Kevin Jackson stated all student organizations were going to have to gain approval for their programs if the meeting would be open to non-members. Why does the university have such a policy to begin with? Is the aim of the university to provide extracurricular activities for students or only to provide opportunities for those deemed "politically correct"?

had closed meetings? Why are the campus liberals so worried about clubs brining in speakers to speak to non-members? I had a high school teacher who told me to go to every campus meeting on campus — whether it is the Gay club, the KKK, the communists, the reborn Christians, whatever.

Part of the purpose of college is that is a marketplace for the free exchange of ideas. Why should a student not be able to attend a meeting or hear a speaker (or an idea) just because they are not regular members of a club?

It looks as though the MSC council is scared to death that the College Republicans might actually get Rush Limbaugh to come to campus. Within a week of announcing a foreseeable Limbaugh visit, MSC president Heather Hartman says, "If they're going to do a program that affects the whole campus, they have to get approved by Student Services."

If the MSC council has to approve a speaker, then what speaker would they not approve? After all, if anyone can speak (Has anyone heard of the First Amendment?) then why should anyone have to be approved? So who is it they are trying to censor? Maybe we should know more about these people on the MSC council (since they seem to wield a lot of power on restriction of speech).

my liberal male-bashing professor, or the political indoctrination classes about to be passed at A&M?

Chad Walter '94

Have you ever read about the rise of the Nazi Party in Germany — how little by little they, a minority, were able to whittle away at the basic human rights of the majority and eventually silence all their opposition? Ever thought about how scary it would be to be in such a land as the free and open expression of ideas were daily vanishing? If you want to know what it's like to live in such a place, try living in Aggieiland.

Robby Chamness '94

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Address letters to:  
The Battalion - Mail Call  
013 Reed McDonald  
Mail stop 1111  
Texas A&M University  
College Station, TX 77843  
Fax: (409) 845-2647

Eliot Williams is a sophomore electrical engineering major

John Scroggs is a senior English and philosophy major