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# Smart students and stupid behavior

## Classic Chronic Cramming and other moronic stunts

As we all know, stupidity has as much of a place on campus as does supreme intellectuality and scholarly pursuits. In fact, they are more often than not closely intertwined.



FRANK STANFORD  
Columnist

This, of course, has nothing to do with good students versus poor ones, or differentiating rural students from suburban ones. All of us have a similar powerful propensity to do things with our brains that we don't really think about the repercussions. Sigmund Freud called this unconscious desire the "id" — a word from which we must have derived the term "idiot."

There are three main categories of stupid student behavior. Since it happens to be finals week, let's begin with Classic Chronic Cramming; it's just got to be a disease. First, to those of you who never have to go through this mind-wrenching, intestinal clenching ordeal, the rest of us are madly jealous. We also wish it upon you. It makes us sick when you're ready for the exam two days before, so you can relax or take in a movie on test-eve.

Basically, this type of cramming begins the moment after the last test. At this time the afflicted party thinks, "Whew! that was a close one," and immediately following: "Cool, I don't have to worry about this class for another five weeks. Time to relax and enjoy myself."

Those of us who reason like this (you know who you are) are aware of the impending stress from last minute learning, but still insist on this vicarious method of schooling. The grades are never as good as they could have been, but we do it anyway. Very stupid.

Unlike the many other habitual dumb doings, Classic Chronic Cramming has somewhat of a silver lining. Although the stress and risk of substandard performance is eminent, countless procrastinated household chores get done, and done well.

Amongst the 2,000 or so "study breaks" we take the night before the exam, our entire living area receives a cleaning rivaling only that of the ever-motivating "parents are coming" situation. All trash cans are emptied. The kitchen floors get scrubbed. Six-month-old Hershey's chocolate syrup is scraped off the refrigerator door shelves.

This type of activity usually takes place not just until the living area seems spotless, but until you realize you're actually dusting the baseboards with Pledge and a Q-tip. At this point, you realize how ridiculous you are and resume studying.

Probably the second most prevalent form of stupidity for students is Drinking Dumbness. "I'll just have ONE drink, maybe two, and then I'll leave."

This line of B.S. to oneself rarely, if ever, works. Usually, you have all sorts of duties to look after, but your roommate or good friend is begging you to join them, "for just a little while." We all know what will invariably happen. You have a bit more fun than you expected. One or two drinks turns into thirteen, and before you know it, it's 3:30 a.m.

This scenario, however, is only semi-stupid, because having a good time is not necessarily considered being foolish. It's really the precursor to something far dumber.

Now, I'm sure for some of you out there, 13, 16 or even two dozen drinks is just not a problem for your aluminum foil-lined stomach. But for the rest of us mortals, the sixth or seventh drink is bordering the danger zone.

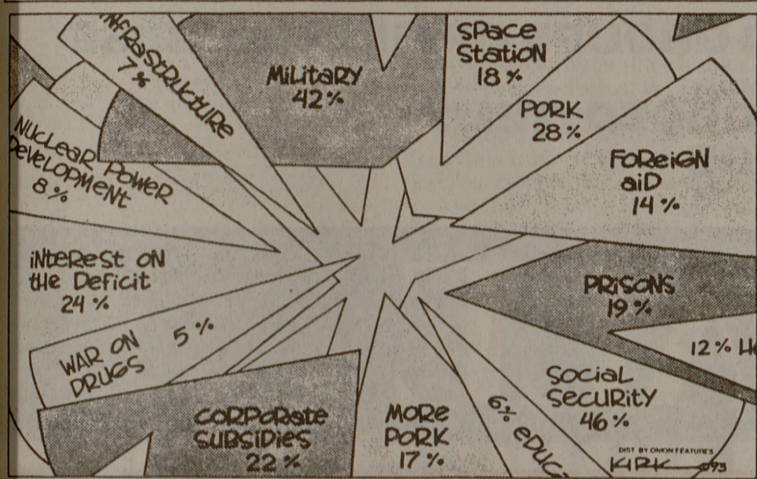
By this time, your spinning head latches on to your distended tummy and begins to twist it about like a wind-up toy airplane. You try and make it home before you start to ponder that Mexican buffet eaten just an hour ago. The two of you will inevitably be parting company very similar to the manner in which you met.

There is nothing innately stupid about getting sick, it's just your body protecting itself. Your brain however, begs forgiveness, realizes how idiotic it would be to ever repeat such a situation, and swears to use better judgment next time. Unfortunately, the "next times" don't really come to an end until you're married.

Most of the other popular episodes of student idiocy include automobiles: driving off in your car with the nozzle still in your tank, having a minor accident from rubber-necking at members of the opposite sex or locking your keys in the car — with the engine running. These are all truly foolish acts, too.

But after having had enough fines to actually purchase my own space, I'm convinced that the stupidest thing a student can do is park on campus without a permit.

Frank Stanford is a graduate philosophy major



The Budget Pie

## EDITORIAL

# A little sympathy

## Students need Dead Week

Professors seem to forget that students at Texas A&M generally take more than one class at a time. Many instructors have no qualms about scheduling a test, paper, oral report or project a week or less before the final exam in that class.

With five or six classes, this can add up to too many things to study for before finals. It's unfair to students, who aren't able to dedicate the time necessary to do a good job on every project.

Students often end up with a low grade in a class they could have done well in given more time.

The administration needs to institute a "Dead Week", rather than just a Dead Day, to combat this serious problem. The Dead Week could forbid professors to assign any tests or papers the week before finals.

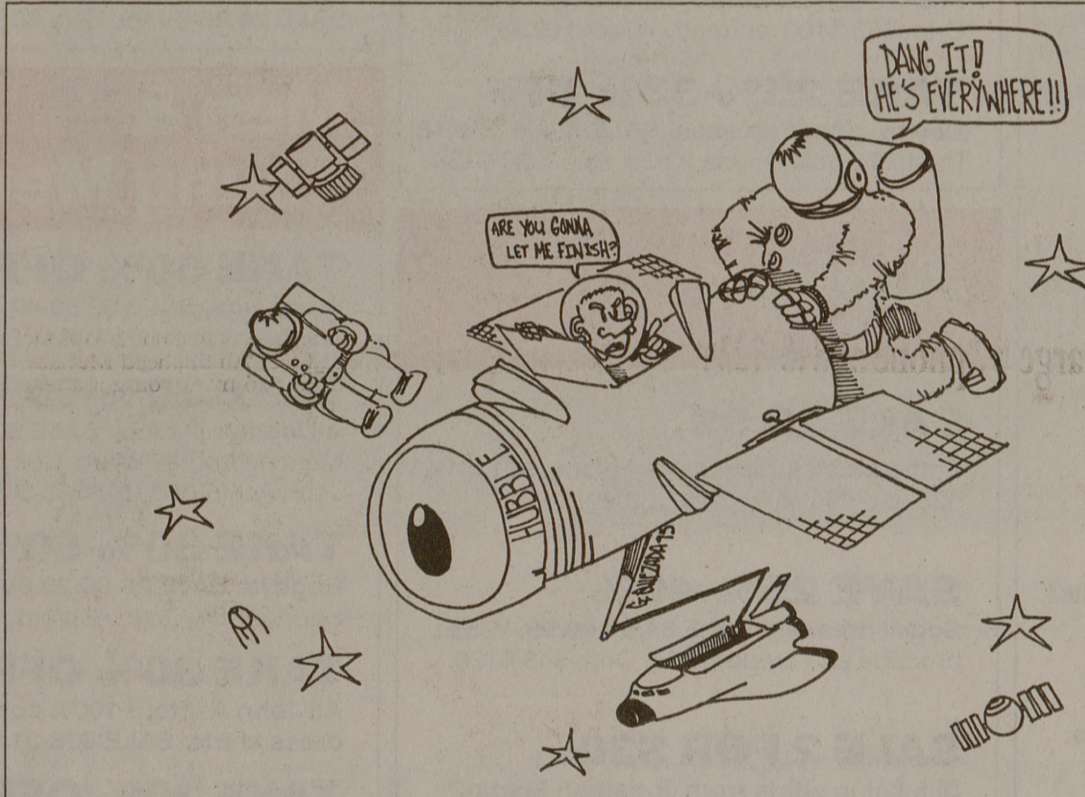
Better yet, the University

could provide a project schedule much like the finals schedule to keep students from having tests and projects in multiple classes on the same day.

For instance, all Monday-Wednesday-Friday 8 a.m. classes could have tests or projects due the Wednesday before Dead Week, while all Monday-Wednesday-Friday 10:20 a.m. classes could have them that Friday.

Rather than having a two tests and a paper on the same day, students would be able to deal with them in a less abrupt manner.

We hope the powers-that-be at Texas A&M will take this matter into consideration and find a way to ease the strain on students. If not, maybe professors could have a little more sympathy and arrange their due dates so that everything doesn't hit students at once.



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The Battalion encourages letters to the editor and will print as many as space allows. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class, and phone number.

We reserve the right to edit letters and guest columns for length, style, and accuracy.

Contact the opinion editor for information on submitting guest columns.

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## COLLEGE STATION, TX MAIL CALL DEC 9 1993

### No excuse for errors in Silver Taps notice

There is no excuse for the major errors found in the Silver Taps notice in The Battalion on Tuesday, Dec. 7. The subheading wasn't even correct: "Ceremony honors six"? Also, this is not the first Silver Taps Ceremony of the fall semester. Found incorrect: "...but tonight's ceremony will honor those who have died since Aggie Muster last April."

This clearly evidences a lack of concern with what I consider one of the two most important Aggie traditions: Aggie Muster and Silver Taps.

My sister, Lisa Karle, was honored in the September Silver Taps Ceremony a year ago. I still have the newspaper clipping from that day and attended the ceremony, even though I wasn't a student at the time.

It would make me sick and angry to be one of the loved ones of the two Ags honored in tonight's ceremony because they may be led to believe, as I do, that the staff member in charge of the notice does not realize the importance of having a loved one remembered in the Silver Taps ceremony.

A year ago, when I stood there with the statue of Lawrence Sullivan Ross behind me, I felt that the people out there in the darkness truly cared and also felt loss of my sister and the five other Ags that had passed away over that summer.

I'd like to feel that the loved ones of those honored tonight also understand that Aggies truly care about each other, and that the memory of a gross error in their Battalion clipping of the event will not lead them to feel neglected. I'll never

forget Lisa. James Linenschmidt and Craig Fischer will never be forgotten.

Michelle Karle  
Class of '97

### Some Aggie moms attend classes here

As a member of the Class of '95, I am proud to be able to juggle the roles of mother, wife and student. I have always had the desire to be an Aggie and am glad to have been on our campus these last three years. I am looking forward to my future and my daughter's on this campus.

I would like to address those Aggies who feel that being a mother means I cannot be an Aggie. I have felt as if I do not belong at A&M this semester. Let me explain. I know that I belong, but after being asked if I am taking classes at the minimum of ten times a day (I'm taking 15 hours this semester), I feel as if people do not think a mother is capable of going to college. After all, no one asks my husband if he goes to school when they see him with our daughter.

I have also had the traditions of A&M explained to me hundreds of times in the last three months. I have known the traditions of A&M for most of my life and do not need them explained to me.

I just wish people would not assume that I am not an Aggie just because I am a young mother. So, to all you Aggies, I would like you to know that I am not alone. There are many women who feel the same way. Please, remember that having a child does not mean we cannot have an education, and the next time you see a

woman with a child, do not assume she is waiting for her husband.

Michelle Edmundson-Reynolds  
Class of '95

### Jury verdict says it's OK to resort to guns

This letter is a follow up to an Associated Press article in the Battalion on Nov. 30, over the racially charged trial of a black Grapevine high school student accused of trying to murder a white schoolmate, my brother, Martin Moberly. On Aug. 24th of this year, Martin was shot in the chest with a .38 caliber pistol.

The defense attorney claimed dissatisfaction with the jury pool even when there were three minorities chosen. The minority lady who was selected forewoman — leader of the minority march after the recent "skinhead trial" just weeks ago — was surprised she was even on the jury per her own comments on television: "...because of my extreme activities as an activist."

On Dec. 1, the jury returned a verdict of not guilty on charges of attempted murder/aggravated assault, claiming the accused had a right to self-defense due to past racial threats, NOT given by my brother. The defense put my brother on trial and (due to outright lies by the defendant) slandered his outstanding reputation as a diversion to the real issues in this case.

In my opinion this verdict sends a terrible message to the community: If you feel threatened, it is okay to shoot before you think or take any action other than deadly force.

I would just like to express my disgust at the manner in which the defense attorneys misused the trial system by bringing up allegations of racial involvement as a diversion to the real issues at hand.

Racial prejudice, racial epithets, and bigotry are sad commentaries on our society, but it does not grant permis-

sion for a youth to use deadly force through gross negligence to innocent victims like my brother, especially when there are clear alternatives available (eg. calling police).

Kevin E. Moberly  
Class of '94

### Don't count students out of history just yet

Eliot Williams, wherein lies political power in America? You write that students traditionally "move" and in fact "drive" national politics. More than two centuries after our first year as a sovereign republic, there is little evidence to suggest students drive national politics. They answer the telephones of national politics.

In the span of three centuries, we can only point to Vietnam when students were mortally affected by policy and considered in the sympathies of many older Americans. Even this power was challenged, and overcome only by the course of frustrating military conditions that taxed the nation's will. Though it is difficult to penetrate your mind, perhaps this single episode in history delineates your views.

I commend your honorable attempt to stimulate action at A&M. Both conservatives and liberals should be so for reasons, not for seasons. However, you give the political activists of the 60s too much credit and those of the 90s too little. I doubt that many hippies knew much about Somalia either.

Your blanket statement about campus political activity is only partially true. The sixties saw deep divisions within the parties over many issues, whereas today, the NAFTAs are few and far between.

Furthermore, the "third" party — I assume you imply the Libertarians — has much more than a pot-toting platform. They believe in the ideals of classical liberalism that seek to minimize government intervention in the lives of others while al-

lowing the free market to flourish. More research would show you that such major issues as the deficit were Libertarian issues well before they were national issues.

It is right that you encourage your comrades to take interest in their nation's future, to avoid complacency, and to shun apathy, but we have yet to prove ourselves the great disappointment that you have pessimistically and prematurely judged us. History alone will judge.

Andrew J. Nelson  
Class of '92

### Don't deface campus buildings with chalk

I am an out-of-state student from Louisiana, and I feel tremendous pride when someone back home asks me where I am attending school. Since almost all of my high school classmates attend LSU, I hear about the zany experiences happening at LSU. Two weeks ago, I came upon a sight at A&M that caused an immediate flash of LSU to occur to me.

Under the covered entrance of Harrington Education Center, a "Happy Birthday" message was written all over the outside wall in many different colors. I couldn't believe how tacky it looked! Then soon after, I came across graffiti covering the side of Heldenfels.

I think we have a little more respect and class for our school than to deface a building. Writing on the sidewalks is one thing since after a week it seems to wear away, but on the side of a covered wall? Bad bull!

No matter how hard the rain falls, the messages still stands clear on the walls. No one has come back to wash off their "works of art" either. So, Alissa, I hope you AND your talented friends have had a great birthday bash ...for two weeks running now!

Julie Averett  
Class of '96