PINION

Budget burns lifetime legacy

Bills are pushed through Congress with

only special interest support - we don't

Government just keeps spending and spending ...

Stanley S. Newburg died at age 81. At age 2, in 1906, he and his family fled the persecution of Jews in MEGLIOLA his native Austria and came to the United States. Here, he peddled fruit with his father on the Lower East Side of New York. He later attended

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Suffolk Law School in Boston, and then went on to found General Aluminum Corp., a \$2.8 million window and door company He married a woman with three children from a previous marriage. Upon his death he left most of his fortune to the United States government.

"It is my expression of deep gratitude for the privilege of residing and living in this kind of government – notwithstanding

many of its inequities," he wrote in his will.

A true life personification of the Horatio Alger stories, Mr. Newburg spent his life striving to achieve professional success in the land of opportunity. He worked diligently to earn

an education and develop his business into a profitable manufacturer, where he remained chief executive until his death on March 14, 1986. He never retired to play golf, travel the world or simply relax and enjoy his wealth.

When he died, his estate included \$5.6 million in cash, General Aluminum and expenditure. We must make the time. \$350,000 in real estate. His step-children contested the will on the basis of frivolity and recently reached

a settlement out of court. Because the will did not specify exactly where the money should be used, it was forwarded to the Bureau of of Public Debt in Washington and will be used to cover general government expenses. The inheritance will support our national budget for less than two full minutes. Not even 120 seconds of our \$1.5 trillion budget for 1994 will be paid for by 81 years of

struggle, hard work and eventual success.

The magnitude of government spending in the United States is amazing. While politicians like to talk about decreasing the national deficit, they don't like to discuss what that actually means. Each year we spend more money than we collect. In The Budget Message of the President, President Clinton boasts

"In contrast to past budgets, which lacked credibility, we made sure to use cautious estimates and we shot straight with the American people," he concludes. Shot straight?

According to Dr. Thomas Saving, Distinguished Professor and Director in the Department of Economics, the deficit seems falsely low because of current negative interest rates and offbudget items, expenses that are not incorporated into the budget. How many Americans realize that even as the deficit may be decreasing, the national debt is growing rapidly? Besides, to brag about overspending such an amount in one year is ludi-crous. With such a plan, it would take 31,429 donations like

Newburg's to break even for the year.

The problem is not just this year. Our national debt or the sum of all our deficits plus interest is estimated to be \$3.5 trillion, roughly 56 percent of our current Gross Domestic Product. If every person in the United States was to help pay off the

debt, it would cost each of us \$14,000. So, is our country about to go bankrupt?

"No," says Saving. "It's not going to happen."
This is not the first time that we have accumulated a large

national debt. Right now our debt is roughly three times our national income. After World War II, the ratio was five to one. Borrowing is nothing new. After the war, 70 percent of the bud-

get was financed with borrowed money. During the Civil War, the north borrowed 90 percent of its in-The distinguishing fac-

have the time to oppose each additional tor today is that we are in a time of peace and an easy economic solution is not evident. After each war, we won and gained resources. Had we not won, the victors would have inherited our debt. The way out of this situation now will be painful. Either drastic increases in taxes or damaging cuts in expenses would be nec-

> As taxpayers, we need to pay attention to government spending. Bills are pushed through Congress with only special interest support. We don't have the time to oppose each additional expenditure. But, somehow we must make the time. Term limits or a line item veto could help. Or even just organized taxpayer involvement. The debt is not going to bankrupt us. But it is not going away.

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THE BATTALION **Editorial Board**

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faculty or staff.

Columns, guest columns, cartoons and letters express the opinions of the authors.

Contact the opinion editor for information on submitting guest columns.

Texas A&M will not tolerate racism

o fulfill its missions as an institution of higher learning, Texas A&M encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality, diversity, pluralism and the uniqueness of the individual within our state, nation and world."

Texas A&M University Statement on Harassment and Discrimination

The recent events on our campus involving racially offensive music played at the Bonfire site and racially offensive fliers distributed by members of the College Republicans are clearly inconsistent with the University's values.

Such actions create barriers for equality of opportunity and fragment our campus community.

Racial incidents such as these are not uncommon on college campuses across the country, including Texas A&M University. We can no longer hide behind the notion that such incidents are isolat-

ed. While some incidents such as these are expressions of opinion that are protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, they will not be condoned by Texas A&M because they work against the goal of unity and respect we strive for as an institution of higher learning. I can assure you that when racially motivated incidents do violate Uni-

actions and sanctions result. These two incidents are symptoms of larger issues that institutions like Texas A&M are firmly committed to addressing through ongoing dialogue,

versity policy, we will immediately

follow up to ensure that appropriate

education and action. We accept the challenge! Racism exists at Texas A&M University. We all have a responsibility to confront and challenge ignorance, viduals or groups when it occurs.

The leadership of the Bonfire Com-

College Republicans are to be commended for positive responses after the incidents. Proactive measures are being taken by

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J. MALON

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their leadership and by the leadership of several minority student organizations to prevent future occurrences and to make the Texas A&M campus climate one that is welcoming for everyone.

During a recent meeting with members of many of the University's minority student organizations, a plan for the future was presented to me to address issues of campus climate, education and other concerns. A number of very positive suggestions and strategies were offered in the meeting. Such requests are welcome and reasonable for inclusion in the dialogue and processes of the

University at every level. My office will be following up with the student leaders attending the forum as well as the general student

body as plans de-It is our collec-

tive responsibility as a community to challenge our own attitudes and behaviors about people who are "different" than we are. As we move toward the future, let's rethink what the implications are for

Texas A&M. Our enrollment, staffing, programs and climate will need to be open and inclusive.

Texas A&M University cannot solve all of society's problems, but as an institution of higher education, we have a responsibility to uphold the highest ideals of access and equity.

There is no race greater than the human race and I challenge and encourage us to explore and appreciate the value of diversity in bringing us together as a community.

> Dr J Malon Southerland is Vice President for Student Affairs at Texas A&M University

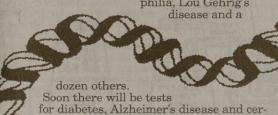
SHOULD COUPLES KNOW IF THEIR FUTURE HILDREN COULD HAVE GENETIC FLAWS?



During World War II, the Nazis were very interested in eugenics — controlling hereditary factors in order to create a superior species. Their goal was to eradicate genetic "deficiencies" and isolate a superhuman Aryan race.

Today the idea of altering genetic make-up is a hot topic. U.S. News & World Report dedicated a cover story to "Tinkering with Destiny" a few months ago. While it's not likely that the United States government will ever attempt to alter its citizens' genes, the same cannot be said for overworried parents.

Already, the demand for genetic counselors is increasing. These counselors can administer a variety of tests to screen parents for such mutant genes as the ones that cause cystic fibrosis, hemophilia, Lou Gehrig's



tain cancers. Genetic counselors advise future parents on the likelihood that they carry these genes and may pass them to offspring.

There is no doubt that knowing they don't carry certain mutant genes is a comfort to parents. When people find out they do carry one, however, problems arise. Many are prepared only to hear that their children will be OK, and finding out otherwise can have drastic consequences.

For those whose children are as yet unborn, these consequences can mean either choosing not to have children at all or choosing to abort a cur-

The ethics of screening fetuses for possible abortion is questionable at best. Parents want what they consider to be best for their children, and often will





get it. Now that they have the option of screening their future kids for defects, but one must wonder where the screening will stop. It is only a matter of time before parental demand

will inspire geneticists to discover other tests for "defects" like obesity, shyness, short height and even the "wrong" eye color. This parental eugenics has already manifested itself in New York, according to the U.S. News & World Report arti-

cle. Four of Rabbi Josef Ekstein's 10 children were stricken with Tay-Sachs disease, a disorder that caused them to gradually lose muscle control and eventually die in childhood, blind and paralyzed.

The Rabbi founded Dor Yeshorim, a program to screen children of the New York community for the disease, and then encouraged those who were discovered to have the disease not to have children of their own.

Now Dor Yeshorim's efforts have evolved to include screening cystic fibrosis and Gaucher's disease, two illnesses that can often be treated, unlike Tay-Sachs. Young adults found to carry these genes are also encouraged not to have children.

The efforts of Rabbi Ekstein's program could coerce many parents into preventing healthy offspring from being born, all in an effort to create a defectfree generation.

By taking genetic screening into their own hands, parents are playing a dangerous game. If screening isn't carefully controlled, the nightmare of eugenics could become a reality.

Lynn Booher is a junior

At what price knowledge? Time and time again, I

have had to grapple with the decision of whether to know about something unpleasant. We all have. Sometimes it's as simple as opening that envelope from A&M's admissions office or finding your social

security number on a posted list of grades. But sometimes it's a matter of life or death. In the last few years, geneticists have uncovered

and are continuing to uncover detailed information on what makes a person an individual. This means that not only can a scientist determine what eye color your offspring is likely to have,

but also their chances of developing a slow, painful, deadly disease. This sounds like a great medical accomplishment at first, but is an ethicist's nightmare.

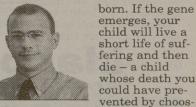
There are many problems associated with "knowing" so much formerly undetected information. We have to determine if knowledge is worth the pain of knowing.

First, let's assume the knowledge that you DON'T have the gene for a deadly disease would be a load off your mind. What pain can come from knowing you carry a cancer gene? Remember, you don't need to have the disease, you just know you have a good chance of passing it on to your offspring.

What if your spouse has the same "bad" gene and significantly increases your future offspring's odds of having ... leukemia? A deadly, incurable disease. Now some serious decisions have to be made by prospective parents.

Oftentimes, determining that both parents have the same "bad" gene only increases chances of passing it on; there is almost no "sure thing." But, as a parent, do you take the chance? If you risk it, English and psychology major and beat the odds, a normal healthy child may be





fering and then die - a child whose death you could have prevented by choosing to adopt a child who's already in the world.

This possibility and others have always been considered as "chance" or from a "higher purpose" perspective. In fact, insurance companies can accurately figure the odds of certain diseases such that they can carry everyone. But if a person is known to carry a deadly gene, insurance companies could drop them from coverage. Can we blame them? And if through genetic testing you discover your offspring are

at high risk, but you chance it anyway, aren't you to blame? The child pays the price before it's even born. And.

> even if there are things we "aren't supposed to know," then how can we now know them? If genetic testing can lessen or even

theoretically eliminate entire strains of deadly diseases, why shouldn't we try? The results would be fewer and fewer young deaths with each

passing generation and probably higher adoption rates. Remember, choosing not to check your posted grade or college admissions reply doesn't in any way change the outcome. Good news or bad, it's

better to know

Frank Stanford is a philosophy graduate student.