

MARGULIES
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NEW JERSEY

Convenience vs. cleaner air Drivers fear consequences of EPA mandate

What you are about to read was a real conversation.

There are no names so the guilty (most car-driving Americans) might find security in their anonymity.

"So, I see you got a ride to work today. Where is your baby?" person A asks as he steps out of his car.

"Well, the poor thing is getting a check-up right now. You know — just a routine sort of thing," person B replies as he shyly waves to the driver of the car as it pulls out of the parking lot.

What we have here is a classic case of "el-carro-broko" deficiency syndrome, otherwise known as the "my car is in the shop, so I have to beg for rides all day" syndrome.

Person B feels lost without a source of transportation. He is trapped in the office all day with no way to escape. He is a prisoner of his own immobility. No quick trip to the cleaner's? No trying out that new deli on the other side of town.

No, person B will be spending the day in his office while person A will spend the day basking in his mobility.

Person A is the reason carpool programs can't get off the ground. Person A slaps public transportation in the face. Person A is the American single car driver.

We Americans love our cars. We ooh and ahh over them. We buy their food. We spend our Saturdays washing them. We are even willing to go in debt to fix them.

But, the sacrifices, whatever they may be, are worth it because cars provide us with the precious ability that we are unwilling to give up: the ability to

change locations. If we don't like our present location, our cars provide a fast, convenient and dry way to find a new environment.

Given the fact that Americans love their cars, and more importantly, that Americans love their own cars, we can discern that the government and the EPA have as much of a chance of getting car drivers — especially Texas drivers — to happily agree to abide by the Clean Air Act programs as Clinton has of getting re-elected.

Part of the Clean Air Act of 1991 that passed under President Bush requires cities whose air doesn't meet the federal standards to reduce ground-level pollution by 1996, or face the loss of \$800 million in federal transportation funds.

When the bill first passed, there were all sorts of ideas to help Texas cities like Houston and Dallas reduce their ground-level pollution. Among these were the employee trip reduction program and the much talked about auto emissions testing program.

On Jan. 16, the Texas Senate, backed by the fearless leadership of George W. Bush, postponed the start of the emissions testing program for 90 days. The program was scheduled to begin on Jan. 2 as part of the vehicle registration process, the rationale being that maybe that big bad emissions testing monster will just go away.

Why is the emissions test such a big deal? Maybe the \$23 cost of the test is too much.

Gas stations have already started selling a reformulated gasoline that contains more oxygen in it so the gasoline burns cleaner. It costs about five cents

more a gallon — which translates into about \$100 annual increase for the average driver's gas budget. Nobody really complained about that.

The emissions test bothers drivers because there is an unspoken accusation that something is wrong with their car. No one wants to admit that her car is emitting anything that may or may not be polluting the ozone. No one likes to admit it when he expels gas either.

But regardless of our personal feelings, vehicle emissions are responsible for approximately 17 percent of the hydrocarbons, 25 percent of the nitrogen oxides, 59 percent of the carbon monoxide, 75 percent of the benzene and 36 percent of the particulates in our air, according to the Houston Chronicle article.

The humor of the whole uproar lies in the fact that most tune-ups include an emissions test anyway.

The emissions test is merely checking to see if a car is burning gas in an effective, efficient manner — which translates into better performance and gas mileage. No big deal, right?

Wrong. Car drivers aren't upset about the emissions test.

They are upset about what it stands for. Person A is scared out of his wits that one day he might have to carpool or ride the bus to work.

Person A isn't necessarily against environmental action. He does his part. He participates in his community's recycling program.

Heck, he'll even include glass and newspapers in his recycling if you leave his "baby" alone.

Jenny Magee is a junior English and Journalism major

JENNY MAGEE
COLUMNIST



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EDITORIAL

USE IT AGAIN

A&M should adopt the new RHA proposal to expand campus recycling efforts.

The Residence Hall Association has proposed a bill that calls for expanding the recycling program on the Texas A&M campus. The University should seriously consider this bill and pass it immediately.

Texas A&M University needs to take a more active role in preserving the environment, and implementing this bill would be a step in the right direction.

While it is true that various dorms on campus already participate in recycling efforts, the campus is not consistent in its efforts. Each dorm has a different recycling coordinator and a different system to carry out the process. The duplicated effort sometimes results in waste, which defeats the entire purpose for recycling.

For example, when students recycle newspapers, they should not mix newsprint with regular white paper. This contaminates the whole process, because the two types of paper go through different recycling processes. When this happens, the two types of paper need to be sorted. If it is not, the paper is thrown away,

resulting in more waste.

Not only would this bill eliminate waste, but it also would save the University a significant amount of money. Sixteen million pounds of garbage are disposed of every year at Texas A&M which costs the University over \$300,000.

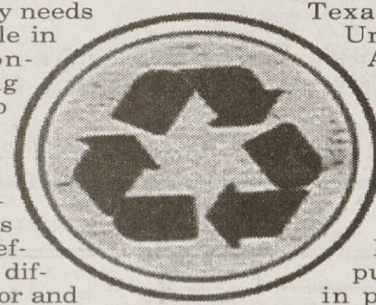
An expanded recycling effort would help decrease the amount of money currently being spent for garbage disposal.

The student body should make a greater effort to recycle. The Recycling Center on campus is taking an active role in preserving the environment, but greater funds and more manpower the program could do even more.

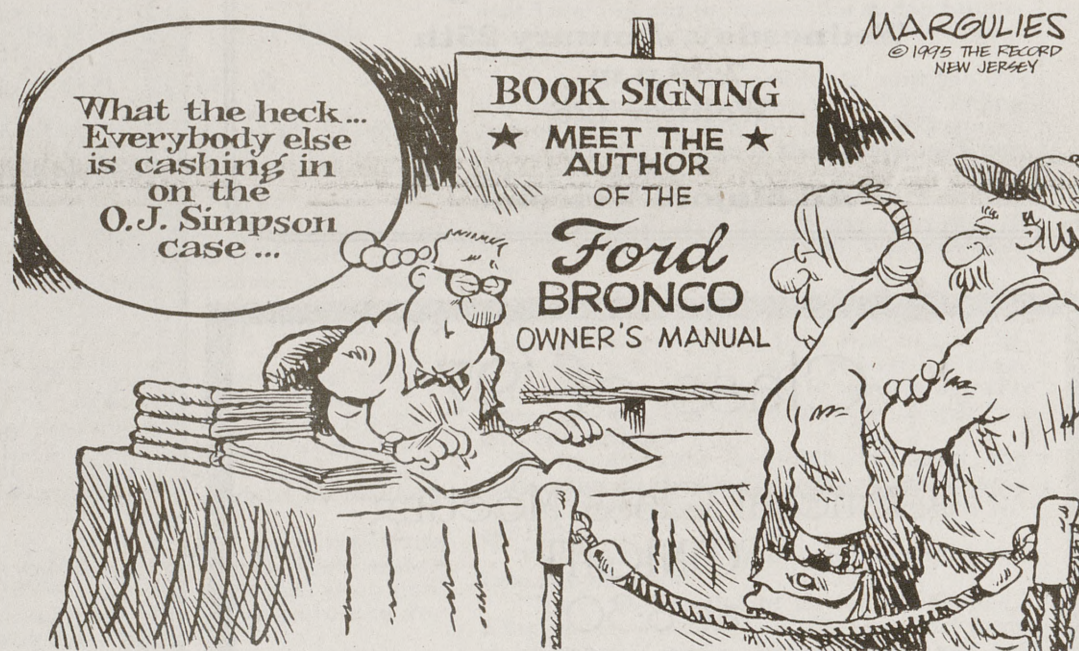
The environmental issue has been criticized in recent years, but it still remains a vital issue.

Every step should be made in helping to preserve it and students at A&M can be a part of this effort.

At an institution as large and as advanced as A&M, it seems only fitting that more effort be made to recycle and preserve our environment.



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MAIL CALL

Student upset with SBSLC coverage

I am a student that has been greatly affected by the Southwestern Black Student Leadership Conference in the most positive way possible. I don't understand why the only feedback I received about the conference was negative. Where was the information about the dynamic speakers and workshop presenters or the numerous praises the executive staff and workers received.

The staff of this year's conference deserved much praise for their hard work and diligence. Why should all of the esteem that goes along with SBSLC go to waste because of a headline that doesn't represent the conference in its true light?

I understand gunshots on campus is news worthy, but did it have to be related to one of the most positive experience a collegiate student, Black or White, could ever experience?

Mosadi Porter
Class of '97

Cowboys out, but will be back next year

This is in response to "Rowdy" Robert Rodriguez's on Jan. 18th attack on the Cowboys. To be with you, you should realize that not all Cowboys fans like owner Jerry Jones. Personally, I wouldn't throw water on him if he was on fire! I agree that they Cowboys got too much media coverage. But who do you think hates it the most? The players themselves were disgusted at their reporter shadows.

And even you, "Rowdy" Robert, ad-

mit that the fourth quarter no call was bad. It would have changed the game. Your rebuttal is that the Niners could have easily scored again too — they were "scoring at will." Actually, they scored only seven points in the entire second half "at will."

Yes, Switzer coached absolutely stupid football just before half-time. And calling a draw on third and 10 from the San Francisco 12 yardline in the first half was moronic too. I have to believe that Jimmy Johnson would have won that game! Nevertheless, the Boys will be back! I never thought I would be a Charger fan.

Zach Estes
Class of '96

Attack on Gingrich about partisan politics

I would like to respond to Sterling Hayman's rambling diatribe about what a mean, cruel individual House Speaker Newt Gingrich is. Hayman seems to strongly object to Newt's book deal since it first included a \$4.5 million advance.

I was wondering why I have not read any of his columns criticizing Senator (and now Vice President) Al Gore's similar book deal that has now generated him revenues over \$1 million. Seems to me your real problem with Newt has nothing to do with ethics, rather is has to do with partisan politics.

Newt scares all liberals because he is going to dismantle their New Deal and Great Society bureaucracy.

It was liberals like you, who created a welfare class that's enslaved by the very government subsidies you thought would help them.

The Democrats had 40 years to vote on term limits. I understand the bitterness about the November election results, but at least you can find a substantive way to criticize the Speaker.

Back up, it's only the beginning. Republicans control the agenda.

Jim Staley
Class of '95

Math class dropped again

Required course manipulates first week of Spring classes

I've never accused myself of being a realist. Although I do possess some of the redeeming qualities of a realist, I am by nature an idealist. As an idealist, I find myself chronically trapped in a world of fantasy, a world where I believe things will turn out for the best.

Throughout the course of my two decades of existence on this planet, fantasy has propelled me into action, thus warping my decision making.

This warped decision making has been known to slap me in the face in the past. I like to think of it as a 'poor decision-subsequent self-reprimand' cycle.

Friends and neighbors, the dreaded cycle crept up on me again last week. A poor math student by trade, I found myself dizzy with anxiety as I sat through my first and last quiz of the semester in Math 141.

Math 141! Don't laugh at me, please. I am poor with a capital P in the field of mathematics.

Sure I can balance my checkbook, but that's not too hard when you don't have any money.

Way back in ol' army days (that was November when I registered), Drew the Idealist figured he might as well get Math 141, a required course, out of the way. After all, I'm a junior; seeing as I would like to one day graduate, it would probably be in my best interest to get the math monkey off my back.

Drew The Chronic Idealist was way off base in fantasizing that he could handle Math 141 while taking a full load (14 hours).

Better judgment suggested I should postpone the class until summer when I could balance it with Suntan 101 and Girls 105.

Unfortunately better judgment is not one of my strong points — not that girls are — and I went ahead and signed up for the dreaded math class.

Wednesday Jan. 18: Off to another stellar start in the long line of eventually less than stellar days, I arrived at my first session of Math 141 approximately 20 minutes late. No clue as to what was going on, I sat spellbound through the remaining half hour of class.

DREW DIENER
COLUMNIST



Kicking myself for signing up for the class, I decided to work extra hard to not only pass but to pass with flying colors. I was determined to go home that night and put in two hours into Math 141.

I had homework, and by golly I was going to do it. Good gosh all things was I setting myself up for a fall.

Some things happened between Wednesday at 11:10 a.m. and Friday at 10:20 a.m.

Unfortunately, one of the things that did not happen was a good two hours of studying Math 141.

I got in a good two hours of Beverage Appreciation 215 Wednesday night and a good hour of Roundball 102 Thursday night. Somehow, some way, Math 141 got lost in the shuffle.

After laying a goose egg on my quiz Friday, and once again arriving to class late, I had an inspirational talk with myself.

There was a lot of yelling, screaming and kicking during the conversation, but fortunately I came away with minimal physical and mental scars.

Drew the Idealist was not going to give up. The struggle was now not so much with the class. It was with convincing myself to take the initiative to succeed in the class. I went so far as to visit my professor Friday afternoon during his office hours. He was not there.

OK, I decided I'd set aside the entire day — or at least a part of the entire day on Sunday — to focus on Math 141. After an 11 a.m. breakfast I thought I'd have the inspiration to study Math 141, after, of course, reading an article in my new issue of Rolling Stone.

1:30 p.m. I am awakened by the sound of my roommate. I slide out of the recliner that I have been sleeping in for the past two hours and try to find my math book.

2:15 p.m. My roommate wakes me up, again. Someone is on the phone for me. Twenty minutes later I realize I have to be at a coat and tie function in an hour — no time for Math 141.

8:45 p.m. Back at home, Drew the Idealist has given up. I plan to wake up at 7:15 a.m., go to my advisor's office, go to the Pavilion and complete an add-drop by 9:00 a.m.

9:30 a.m. After a two hour battle with the snooze button on my alarm clock, I stagger to the shower.

11 a.m. I am a brand new man. I am no longer Drew Diener Math 141 Student, but unfortunately I'm still Drew Diener Chronic Idealist.

Drew Diener is a junior English major