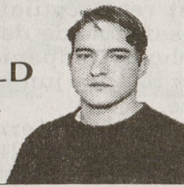


Signing on that dotted line

Paying rent provides valuable economic lesson

Education at Texas A&M begins before stepping into a classroom. And it isn't just students who are being educated; any person who signs their name by the "X" at the bottom of a contract is immediately enrolled in a class.

KYLE LITTLEFIELD
COLUMNIST



The class is economics and it meets before every semester, and then the first of every month after that. It isn't wise to skip this class, because it could affect your credit and you might not have a place to sleep.

Supply and demand. That's your first lesson. This is a college town. If Texas A&M University was not here, College Station — which, would have another name — and Bryan would only be small towns. Trees would flourish where the parking lots of Post Oak Mall were poured.

In short, there would not be that much of a demand for living space in the area. You certainly wouldn't see rent the likes of \$600 and up for a two bedroom-two bath apartment.

The equation is simple: if the demand of students is great the price of rent goes up.

Sure, the rent may not seem that high compared to Houston or other metropolitan areas, but you pay to live in the big city. Although the residents of College Station may think themselves metropolitan, KBTX is a far cry from KTRK.

I'm jealous of a friend at Southwestern University in Georgetown, Tx. She has lived in the nicest apartments and her rent has always been \$100 - \$200 cheaper than mine.

It frustrates me that for the same price that she pays in Georgetown for an apartment, you couldn't rent an outhouse in Bryan/College Station.

I realize that Southwestern is a very small university, and Georgetown isn't much bigger. But it doesn't seem right that some apartment complexes in this area are asking outrageous amounts of money for a few walls of rotting wood. Sometimes I think we are getting ripped-off by people who are trying to take advantage of our helpless situation as students.

This may seem like a very critical view, but it is the result of a particular situation I experienced.

Once when I had waited a little too long to begin my search

for an apartment — a mistake that I haven't been able to stop myself from making — I was talking to an apartment manager in College Station about why it was so hard to find a place to live and why rent was so high in the area. She told me that all apartments in the area tried to keep approximately the same amount for rent of one, two and three bedrooms respectively. She remarked, in a matter of fact way, that the last thing the apartments wanted to do was lower the rent.

She said that expensive rent was needed so "other people" would be discouraged to move in.

This sounds like collectively setting prices — remember your economics class, chapter four — which is a little bit more free market capitalism than the law seems to allow.

I'm not sure why she felt I was privileged enough to hear this information, or why she was just so sure that I would agree. She continued telling me about the problems that "these people" cause compared to students. I left right then, feeling sick to my stomach. This didn't seem like economics to me, but something a little bit more perverse.

I'm sure that all apartments are not like this, and I'm not sure why this particular woman thought she could speak for all of the apartments, but her logic pissed me off.

If her tactic is widespread, then our need for living space as students also serves to keep "other people" out of manager's hair.

She didn't clarify the meaning of "other people," but by the tone of her voice, she wasn't just talking about about non-students. It seems she was referring to indigent people. Why she associates the indigent with problems is beyond me.

But this isn't Philosophy of Ethics; you enrolled in economics.

So as I was saying, large demand = higher prices. Expensive rent isn't in my best interest so I search for alternatives: On-campus housing; um... No, too many restrictions on personal freedom. An apartment in Navasota, or elsewhere: Nah, convenience would be sacrificed.

Basically, the owners have us where they want us.

When you are turned away from the manager's office two to three weeks from now because there are no leases available, you find that students WILL pay large amounts of dollars for rent.

If only economics could teach us how to deal with the frustrations we have, knowing we are the reason for the problem.

Kyle Littlefield is a senior journalism major

THE BATTALION

Established in 1893

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EDITORIAL

PRESIDENTIAL PICK

The Battalion endorses Washington for student body president.

David Washington stands out as the best choice in a field of qualified and capable candidates running for student body president.

Washington's personal convictions, comprehension of Texas A&M's present problems, and visions for the future of the University allow him to offer unparalleled leadership and commitment to all students.

During interviews with The Battalion, four of the five candidates ranked improved cultural relations as the University's greatest need.

Washington's experience and past accomplishments demonstrate his ability to best make the progress in improving communication, understanding and cooperation within the A&M community.

Washington further showed The Battalion that he understands the position of Student Body President and has a thought through the office's role in relation to students, administrators, government officials and the general public. With that idea in mind, Washington has developed very workable guidelines and plans of action to address the issues and problems he would face as president.

Numerous leadership positions around campus — including Student Senator, financial aid advisory committee member, president of Alpha Phi Alpha and Honors Student Council — have given Washington the insight needed to bridge the much-needed gaps between the different cultures of Texas A&M.

With hands-on, factual knowledge of the way "the system" at A&M works, Washington has proposed not

only short-term remedies to many problems around campus, but also stresses the need to be proactive, so as to avoid future problems.

David Washington has an extensive history of involvement with various organizations on campus. His record of leadership shows both his commitment and objectivity.

He has strong relationships with many of A&M's top officials and continually communicates with them to better the environment of the campus.

Washington also has consistently shown much initiative while at A&M. He role as a student leader has allowed him to venture outside his organizations' interests and work to remedy numerous problems.

His platform is indicative of his bold vision for the future of our University.

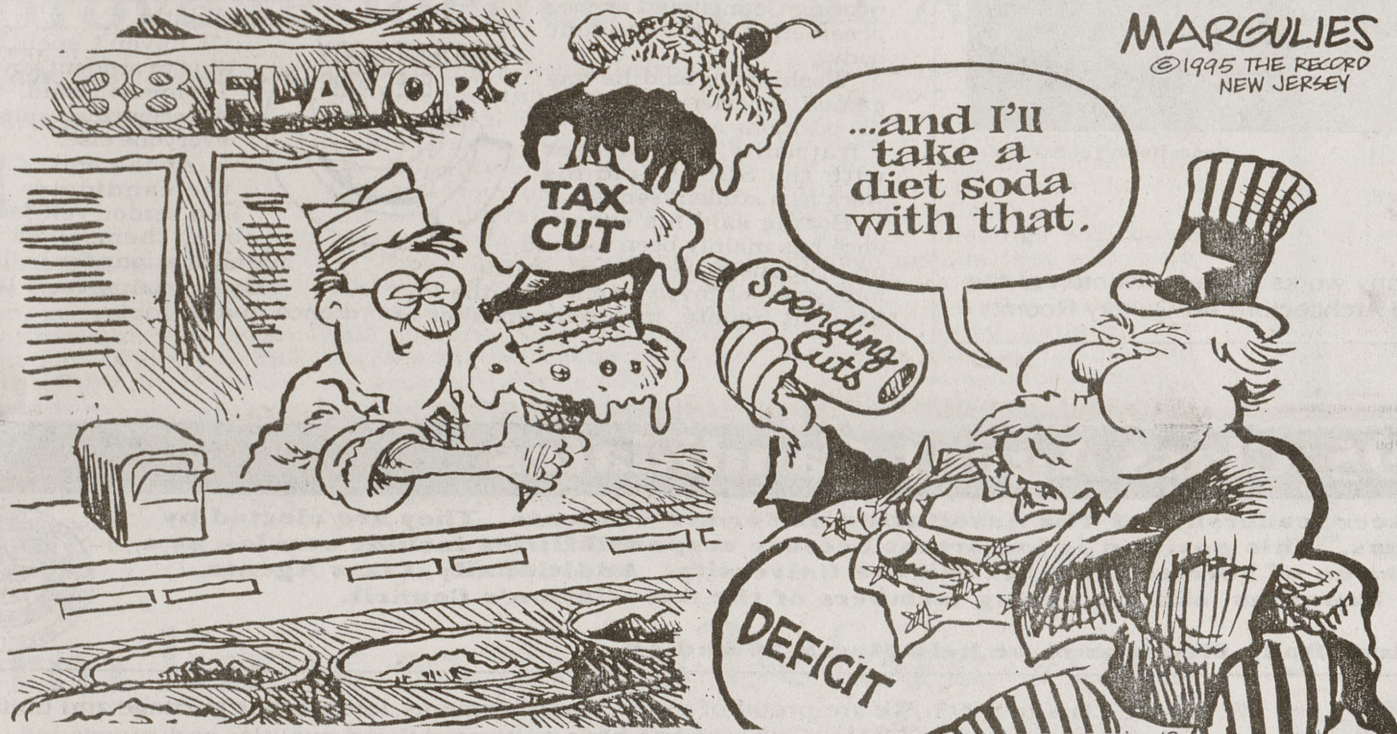
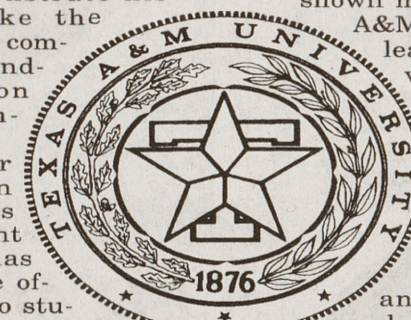
His agenda is a balance of attainable goals and proactive policies.

Washington's most emphasized issue is that of communication. He will seek to make sure that all organizations and interests on the A&M campus work together in order to understand each other.

He also realizes the need to bridge the communication gap between the students and the Administration of Texas A&M.

Washington noted that, "Rhetoric and results don't go together. Leadership and results do."

David Washington is the candidate who can best bring that leadership and those positive results to Texas A&M University.



Quest for break from daily responsibilities leads to frustrations

I had just finished two back to back tests. I went back to my dorm, relieved that I had finally finished.

The week and a half of stress about these two tests — half of which was during spring break — was finally over.

However, no sooner had I sat down at my desk, than I remembered that I had a computer project and speech analysis due in two days.

My feeling of relief had been short lived; I now had to force myself to work on these two projects even though I had no desire to ever see another text book again.

Well, I coerced myself to work, spending all of both nights working on these assignments. Thursday slowly came around and I finally turned in my work.

As stressed and as tired as I could possibly be, I returned to my room and slept the rest of the afternoon.

My nap was rudely interrupted by

ZACH HALL
COLUMNIST



the realization that I still had more work to do. I had a physics lab due the next morning, and I would be gone all Saturday on a field trip.

This meant that I would have one day to write a paper, visit relatives, wash clothes and attend my numerous weekend meetings.

To top things off, I had a week full of academic and Corps activities staring me in the face.

That one chance I was looking for to slow down and unwind had eluded me for yet another week.

I know this situation is not all too different than situations many of you go through on a daily basis.

The scenario is basically the same: having more things to do than you have time while always searching for that one moment when everything is completed — that moment when there are no assignments, no responsibilities, no deadlines and no one wanting or expect-

ing something of you.

It's a moment that I cannot say I have ever experienced, a goal that always seems to linger just in reach of attainment.

No matter how hard I work or how much I get done, I can never actually achieve it.

While discussing my plight with a friend — who related to my situation —

I always long for a brief moment of time when I've accomplished all that lies before me, a time when I can sit and revel in being doing with everything I have to do.

she told me that what I was experiencing was a part of life that we all go through.

She said that we are all faced with never-ending tasks and responsibilities, from paying bills, to studying for tests, to taking care of kids.

She pointed out that as we get older

we will be faced with even greater responsibilities, jobs, projects and that we may never experience the satisfaction of complete achievement of all we do.

What she said made a lot of sense.

I began to realize that the desire to reach that point of achievement was part of what keeps me motivated.

Motivated through the endless string of duties, assignments, projects and responsibilities, even though I realize that I may never reach that point.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not a no-good, lazy slacker who doesn't have

or want any cares at all. In fact, just as most people, I'm quite the opposite.

I do care very much. There is a challenge and satisfaction in taking on and completing jobs, assignments and responsibilities.

It is a fulfilling aspect of life.

It is what makes life so interesting.

However, I always long for just a brief moment of time, a week or weekend, when I have totally accomplished everything that lies before me.

A time where I can sit and revel in actually being done with everything I have to do.

As I thought more about it, I came to the decision that instead of thinking so much about something almost impossible to achieve, I should instead focus more on accomplishing the tasks and responsibilities at hand.

Maybe one day we'll not have any jobs, assignments or responsibilities to worry about, but that may not be until we're dead.

Until then we should undertake and achieve what we have to do, one assignment at a time, even if we feel there is no end in sight.

We will at least be satisfied in accomplishing what we can.

Zach Hall is a junior mechanical engineering major

MAIL CALL

Beutel victim of too much bureaucracy

Although increasing the cap on the fee for the Beutel Health Center sounds like a good idea, we would like to point out a few inconsistencies in the proposal.

First of all, look at the "consolidation" of the \$15 student service fee and the \$25 health center fee into a \$40 fee.

Unfortunately, the administration thinks that the students are too stupid to figure that out, even though the health center gets the same amount of money under the proposal, the infamous student

service fee does not disappear.

Um ... sounds like an administrator is trying to swindle funds again.

Our second point is that the administration is saying that the 10 percent increase is the maximum per year, and won't probably not be increased by that much.

But when is the last time a governing agency has had the power to raise money and not used it to its fullest extent?

Maybe this suggestion might upset Hillary a little, but has the Administration thought about privatizing the health center?

We hope the student body will look into this with the help of their friendly administrative official before voting on this issue next week.

Shanna Nugent
Class of '96
Alan Watson
Class of '97

Aggie Spirit found in diversity of university

This is in response to Kristafer Y. Jarboe's March 27 "Aggie Spirit" letter. Since when is our Aggie spirit defined by what political figures you agree with?

I thought that our Aggie Spirit came from the fact that we all attended Texas A&M University.

This spirit doesn't come from the majority of the students being Republican, or all of us having the same political beliefs.

It comes from believing in the University, and all of the diversity which is encompassed in it.

Therefore, I don't think that the "Aggie Spirit" could ever be corrupted by "ever-increasing political education

and awareness."

If we "headily accept people into the A&M family," then why is "Aggie spirit" brought into a political debate?

We are all individual people and have our own opinions. The thing that makes us a unique university is that even with all of our diversity we are all Aggies.

Christine Seward
Class of '97

Affirmative action can unfairly discriminate

Amy Uptmor totally contradicts herself. First, she says, "as a woman, I see affirmative action as a safeguard that potential employers see a qualified individual and not just a woman."

But then she states "women need affirmative action to continue advancement."

If you are qualified, why must you rely on your sex to get promotions? Affirmative action gives jobs based on race and sex, and NOT merit.

Such a policy can discriminate against the best candidate to fill the position.

Angie Perryman
Class of '95

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 for length, style, clarity and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald. A valid student I.D. is required. Letters may also be mailed to: The Battalion - Mail Call Fax: (409) 845-2647 013 Reed McDonald E-mail: Batt@tamvm1.tamu.edu Texas A&M University College Station, TX 77843-1111