

OPINION

Student fees should not be increased drastically

I know that everyone on this campus knows how much more we are probably going to be paying in fees and tuition next year.

Proposed fee increases will cost students as much as an additional \$400 each semester.

These fee increases will definitely tug at a lot of pocketbooks.

There will be a substantial number of students who will need to look in other places for financial assistance. Other places such as federal financial aid, right?

Wrong. The U.S. Congress is proposing major cuts in Pell grants as well as Stafford loans.

Many members of Congress have said these cuts will only cost college students pennies. That is absolutely wrong.

Under the current system, a student can receive two separate types of subsidized loans while students are in school. The government pays the interest on subsidized loans while students are in school.

The student would not be responsible for paying the monthly interest payments while they are in school.

The U.S. Congress is considering eliminating

TOBY BOENIG

GUEST COLUMNIST

the interest exemption on all Stafford loans.

What will happen if this proposal passes into law by our Congress?

If they eliminate interest exemption on all Stafford loans, it will cost students and families \$13 billion over a

period of five years.

This seems like a little bit more than pennies.

There is also a chance that Congress could decrease the funding for Pell grants.

What does all of this mean?

With the cost of our education increasing at a steady rate and the proposed cuts in our financial aid, it could mean many lost chances for young adults to attend college.

I have gone on the record as being against the increase in our general use fee, but I still understand the administration's position and their need to find additional funding.

The sole reason that I am against the increase is because of the adverse effect it will have on our students.

Having said that I understand the administration's situation, I, in no way, understand what our Congress is thinking.

They have absolutely forgotten the importance of higher education.

The U.S. Congress is failing to realize the opportunities that a college education gives to many lower to lower-middle income students who either battle to get out of the inner city or rural America.

At Texas A&M, many of us take for granted this opportunity and forget about the great education we receive.

We also often forget about the assistance we receive through grants, loans and scholarships. We are in danger of losing a

major source of financial aid for many students.

It is time we speak out against this blatant disregard of the importance of a college education.

It is time that you do something about it. Write to our Congressman who represents Bryan / College Station at:

Congressman Jack Fields
2228 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C.
20515

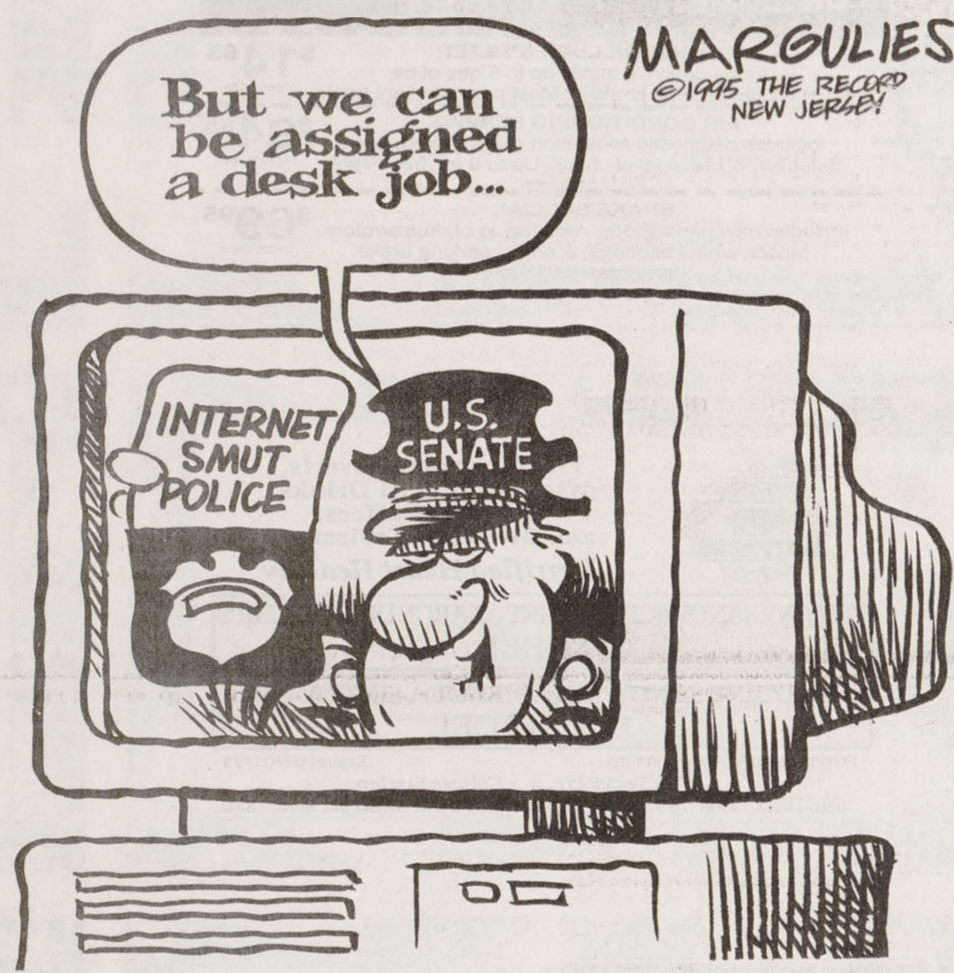
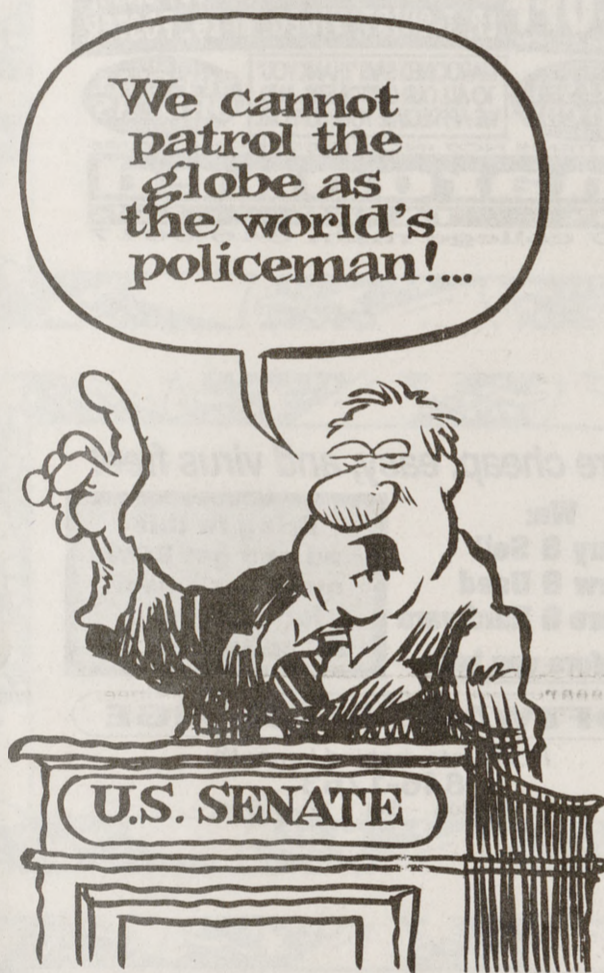
Also write to the member of Congress from your hometown and encourage your family to do the same.

Encourage your parents to write about how financial aid is important to them and about what affects these cuts will have on families

The sole reason that I am against the general use fee increase is because of the adverse effect it will have on our students.

If you, as a student, think your education is important at all, please write to the member of Congress from your district. They are making major decisions that will affect millions and millions of students. They are making decisions that are affecting you.

A&M Student Body President Toby Boenig is a senior agricultural development major



MARGULIES
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NEW JERSEY

Americans obscure justice with thirst for security, retribution

Susan Smith, a woman from South Carolina, was arrested for allegedly pushing her car into a lake, sending her two children to a watery grave.

WES SWIFT
STAFF WRITER



straight to Timothy McVeigh.

One week later, Time Magazine plastered McVeigh's picture on the cover with the title "The Face of Fear."

A bomb exploded in Oklahoma City on April 19, leveling the A. P. Murrah Federal Building. The bomb killed 167 people, including 17 children at a nearby day care center. Timothy McVeigh was arrested for the bombing.

O.J. Simpson, pro football Hall of Famer, was put on trial for the murder of his ex-wife and an acquaintance. The trial has lasted over a year.

Horror stories like these have flooded the media for the last year. Thanks to television, newspapers and magazines, we have a front-row seat to witness the cruel circus of human depravity the American public has become. Every day, we can turn on the tube or check out the front page and see something that scares the tar out of us.

But why doesn't it cease to scare us?

When we are bombarded day after day with reports of haunting acts of barbarism and mental sickness, it only makes sense that we would build up a tolerance, like college students drinking a kind of depraved brew.

Our jaws drop when we hear that Mrs. X has done something horrible. It's like we never learn that we shouldn't be surprised by what our neighbors do.

Maybe that's because the American public seems to have such a knee-jerk reaction to sensationalistic stories.

Frequently, we see a story like Susan Smith's or O.J. Simpson's, and we shudder and whisper, "Oh my God!" Then we hit the remote control button to find something that better suits our tastes.

Denial seems to be the great American way of solving society's ills. We feel too flustered to correct something, so we sweep it under the rug and go on with our daily routine.

After a while, we even seem to forget what horrible things we've seen, so the cycle can start anew.

When a bomb was detonated in Oklahoma City two months ago, Americans were aghast at the carnage buried among the rubble.

We all wanted someone's head on a platter so we could hang the guilty and get on with our lives. We let the FBI lead us around by the nose, and it led us

America found a scapegoat, a fall guy who made us feel better because he wasn't like the kid next door. McVeigh became some paramilitary zealot, and America, convinced that McVeigh was a rare bird, found its security blanket again.

Now McVeigh has told Newsweek in an interview that he didn't do it. I hope he's lying, because he probably won't get a fair trial anywhere, regardless of whether he's guilty.

During the Simpson trial, the media bombarded us with information about every plot twist, scene, verse and two-bit player in the tragic drama. It was riveting for the first month or so, while the shock of everything still held watchers and listeners.

But what happened when the shock value ended? People began complaining that they had O.J. overkill.

They blamed the media *ad nauseum*, complaining that coverage of the O.J. trial was taking away from their "Days of Our Lives" time. Comments such as, "Just fry him, and get it over with," and "Everyone knows he's guilty, why have a trial?" were overheard frequently.

Perhaps Simpson's story touched a raw nerve in the American public, the fallen hero with the Achilles' heel. Maybe we didn't want to confront one of our greatest fears — that those we put on a pedestal can easily fall off — and found an easy excuse to get back to normalcy.

It's revolting that we pass judgment on someone for the sole purpose of reassuring ourselves that our country is A-OK. In our quest to make our backyards feel safer, we're willing to sacrifice others.

It's time America got its head out of the sand and developed a backbone. We need to stop believing life is a rose garden and everything is hunky-dory.

There are some sick bastards out there, the kind who would bomb a building in Oklahoma City or take the lives of two, young children.

But what's more disturbing, the sick people who commit these acts or the sick people who fail to deal with them?

Wes Swift is a junior journalism major



MAIL CALL

Children must be taught abstinence

I am responding to the June 28 column by Margaret Gordon titled, "Schools must teach children about sex."

She presented the ever-present and ever-wrong view that kids are going to have sex anyway, so they should be taught about sex in school.

She makes the statement that, "... today's youth aren't given enough credit," which I know is true. However, she has the audacity to ask, "... how realistic is abstinence?"

I think that teaching sex education in school can be appropriate. However, we must teach kids what is right and true, not what is a lie.

The simple fact is that Gordon has been hurt by friends "who have had abortions or gone in for AIDS testing."

So she blames the so-called "religious right."

I am truly sorry that Gordon and others have been hurt, but

the simple fact is that "safe sex" — using condoms and other contraceptives — is a big lie. Gordon states that, "teaching our children about sex, contraception and STDs ... will only help reduce the numbers (of teenage pregnancy and diseases)."

That has been said for more than 20 years. It is and will remain wrong. This is so obvious, too. Just look at history.

If you look at how our country is now, compared to how it was 35 years ago before contraceptives were available and somewhat reliable, you can see a huge difference.

Yes, we have to teach children about contraception and STDs. We have to teach them that condoms fail sometimes — even when used properly.

We have to teach them that STDs kill. But most importantly, we must teach them the only answer is abstinence. Therefore, the "safe sex" lie must not be taught.

I have talked to many grade school and high school students about chastity and abstinence, and I can truly say that kids do

agree with the values of abstinence a lot more than adults do.

This is partially because of the fact that young children are not yet addicted to sex, as are many adults in our country.

On the one hand, kids know that abstinence is right.

But on the other hand, television bombards them with blatant promiscuous, sexual images and messages.

So they are torn by what their conscience tells them and by what the other forces tell them.

It is no wonder they are confused. Kids do deserve much more credit than they receive.

Please, all they need is some encouragement about abstinence.

*Thomas Ashour
Graduate student*

IRA should stop playing politics

Having visited both Dublin, Ireland and Belfast, Northern Ireland, I find it necessary to respond to Alex Walters' June 28 column regarding strife in Ireland.

While Walters does an excellent job of pointing out historical reasons for the division of Ireland, it also is important to recognize the current reasons for this separation — democracy and economics.

Given the option of voting to remain with the crown or join-

ing the Republic of Ireland, the six northern counties voted overwhelmingly to remain loyal to the crown and become Northern Ireland.

Why did the vast majority of Irish citizens in these northern counties reject the idea of severing ties with the United Kingdom? The answer is simple: money.

You see, those Irish who reside in the Republic of Ireland generally have a lower standard of living and are saddled in debt, unlike their northern brethren.

In fact, with taxes in the Republic of Ireland in excess of 50 percent and no socialized higher education or health care, it is no wonder Northern Ireland refuses to give up its standard of living merely to appease a radical group such as Sinn Fein and the Irish Republican Army.

Finally, due to the economic conditions of the Republic of Ireland, there has been a mass exodus of youth who can make a better living elsewhere.

This migration, I might add, is larger than that spurred by the potato famine of the 1840s.

Unfortunately, until Sinn Fein and the IRA stop playing politics and recognize the right of Northern Ireland citizens to choose their own destiny, as opposed to being bombed into submission, there will be no lasting peace on the emerald isle.

*Brian Bullard
Graduate Student*

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