

Concealed handguns provide safety

"Laws that forbid the carrying of arms ... disarm only those who are neither inclined nor determined to commit crimes ... Such laws make things worse for the assaulted and better for the assailants, they serve rather to encourage than to prevent homicides, for an unarmed man may be attacked with greater confidence than an armed man."



LYDIA PERCIVAL
 COLUMNIST

ed States' history. Those against the notion of concealed weapons must also not be aware of Thomas Glen Terry, who saved the lives of 20 Shoney's employees.

They were being moved into a walk-in refrigerator by two robbers with stolen pistols, and Terry was hiding under a table in the Anniston, Ala. restaurant. Terry confronted the robbers, killing one and critically injuring the other.

He was able to save the lives of the employees because Alabama trusts its citizens with concealed weapons.

Whether liberals like it or not, concealed weapons save lives. Felons and criminals will think twice before attacking citizens in a state where the people are possibly armed.

The 1991 Justice Department study, "Armed and Dangerous: A Survey of Felons and Their Firearms" found that 40 percent of felons have made decisions not to commit particular crimes because they feared their potential victims could be armed.

Vermont has no laws regarding concealed weapons. Coincidentally, they have one of America's lowest crime rates. A citizen can carry a gun with no paperwork or permit.

In Florida, which has had concealed weapons since 1987, the right to carry has had a great effect on reducing crime. Many of those who originally opposed the law have admitted their fears were misplaced.

According to Unified Sportsmen of America, Florida's homicide rate has dropped 22 percent while the national rate

has risen 12 percent. Remember a few years ago when tourists in Miami were being killed left and right? Several journalists reported that many of the criminals involved said they were choosing to attack people getting off of airplanes because these tourists could not be carrying firearms, whereas Florida residents in general could be "packing."

Shockingly enough, the cities with the strictest gun control, Washington D.C. and New York City, have the highest crime rates in the country.

I lived in D.C. over the summer, and my mom almost came to drag me home because every time she and I talked on the phone, sirens were blaring in the background.

The McDonald's where I got coffee every morning on the way to work was closed a few days before I came home. Three employees were robbed at gun point, murdered and put in the freezer.

I just couldn't understand how this could happen, since it's against the law to own a gun, even in your home, in D.C.

Believe me, I feel much safer here with the concealed weapons law about to take effect than I did in a city which supposedly had no guns. I guess those were firecrackers going off at night, and that's why I was scared to go out after dark.

I'm not going to be fearful in Texas anymore, because pretty soon I will be carrying a concealed weapon myself. Criminals: look carefully at the picture with this column and remember my face, because after January 1, you'd better find yourself a tourist.

Lydia Percival is a senior political science major

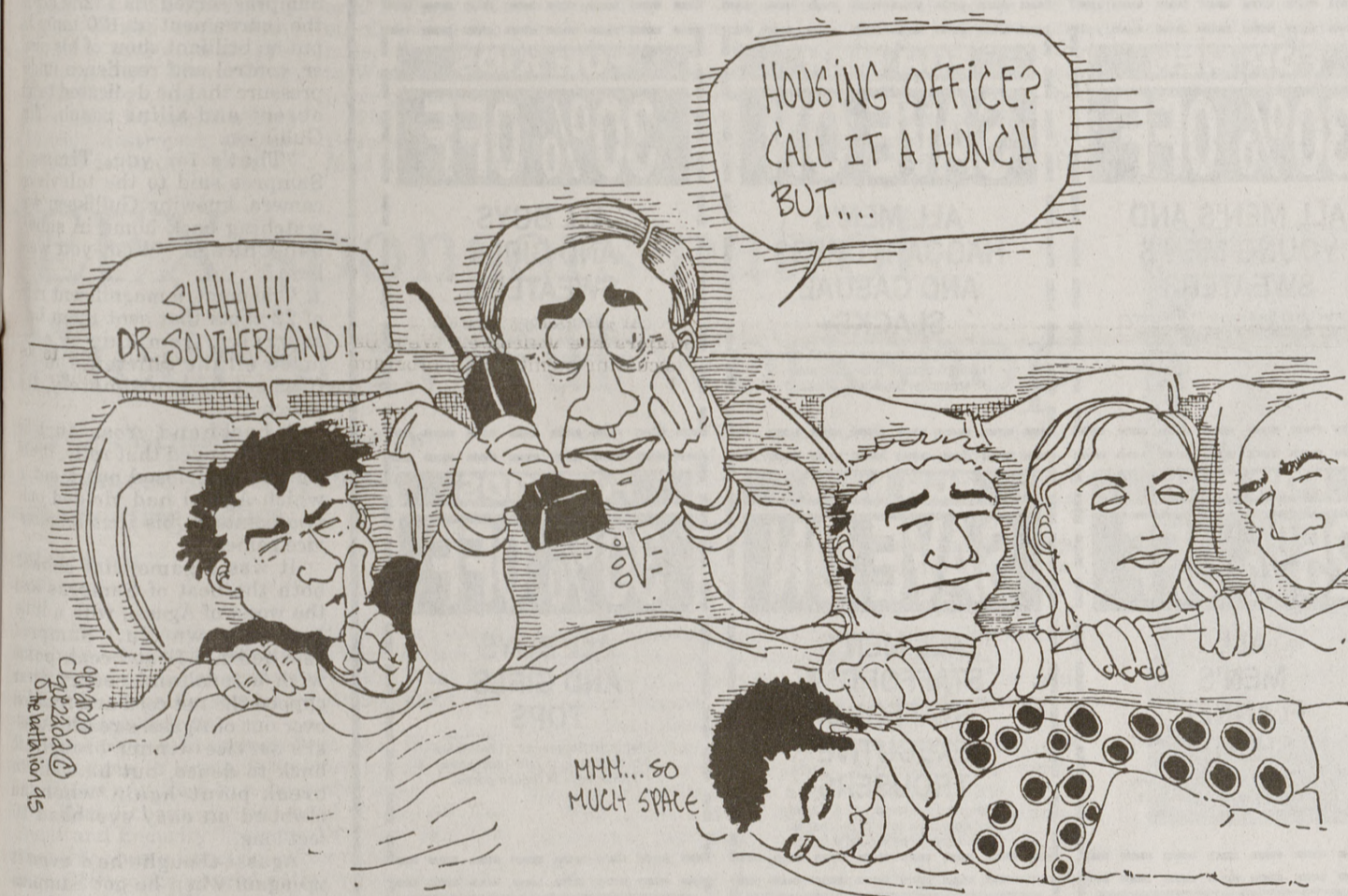
—Thomas Jefferson

As of 11 days ago, Texans all over the state are applying for a permit to carry concealed weapons. Many liberals have the impression that carrying concealed handguns will contribute to increased murder rates, shooting sprees and a society that makes *Pulp Fiction* seem non-violent. Surprise, surprise — the liberals are wrong again.

Every person should be able to apply for a concealed handgun permit and be trained according to the law. We all desire a society with less crime, and concealed weapons are a means to that end.

Some may scoff at the idea of concealed weapons saving lives. Maybe they aren't familiar with Dr. Suzanna Gratia, who watched the massacre of her parents and twenty other people at a Luby's in Killeen four years ago. Gratia has been one of Texas' strongest proponents of concealed-carry permits.

She notes that if only one person had possessed a weapon, the lunatic who murdered more than 20 Texans would have been killed before he had a chance to set the record for the largest massacre in Unit-



Two's company — 400's a crowd

Residence hall overassignments should share their burden, teach lesson

Along with such professions as shepherding and candle-dripping, the art of assigning a group of people to the correct number of dorm rooms seems to be dying a slow and painful death.



CHRIS STIDVENT
 COLUMNIST

Year after year, the question springs to mind. Can it really be this difficult? Add up the available number of dorm spaces. Send out letters to that many students telling them they have a room reserved for them. If students cancel, tell the next students on the waiting list that it's time to move in to their new place.

But, every year, the automatons in charge of housing either assign students to non-existent rooms or leave vacant rooms empty for weeks while they try to figure out how to force the computer to admit that nobody is living there.

This year, 700 people began their semesters classified as transients, vagrants and gypsies. As shabby consolation prizes, they have been set up in study cubicles, television lounges and packed into dorm rooms that are comfortable for two, crowded for three and a sick joke for four people.

The staff over at the Department of Residence Life and Housing didn't quite catch on this year.

Promising imaginary rooms to hundreds of surplus students and then hoping that they won't show up just isn't good policy.

As of early last week, about 400 students still suffered on in this nomadic state. Sleeping next to ice makers and floor waxers, they hold out the faint hope that one day they will get to sleep in their very own beds.

While they wait, these homeless masses give our campus the ambience of Mexico City

or Bangladesh. Lest they fear that this situation will continue indefinitely, Dr. J. Malon Southerland, Vice President for Student Affairs, has graciously guaranteed that all of these student housing woes will be solved by the spring semester.

Boy, talk about a speedy reaction. I guess he figures this faint glimmer of hope will be enough to sustain the students through the cruel winter spent rooming with 12 other people in a broom closet.

If a student decides that this situation is intolerable, they always have the "option" of moving off-campus. Never mind the fact that living off-campus usually costs quite a bit more.

Alternatives offered at prohibitive costs are not alternatives at all.

What's the explanation for all of this nonsensical logic?

According to Ron Sasse, director of the Department of Residence Life and Housing, "This year we had ... fewer cancellations because residence hall life is so attractive to students."

Gosh, I guess living in a bathroom stall with 17 other guys does have a certain glamour about it.

I might have stumbled onto the solution to all of this madness. To beat this dormitory drought, we're just going to have to build some new housing.

And what better place to put it than on the front yards of Dr. Southerland's and Mr. Sasse's homes?

It's time for all of those students who are currently receiving their mail at a laundromat to pack up their precious belongings.

Let's take your problem to the front doors of the people who don't seem to care

all that much about the dilemma they created for you.

First, it's off to the new trillion-dollar Recreational Sports Center. I'm sure they have some tents and sleeping bags floating around somewhere that can be rented.

Now it's time to set up camp. We can name the two new dorms Refugee North and Refugee South. If we're lucky, maybe the Red Cross will come by and provide us with some free food and medical care.

Establish a hall council, work up some yells, and elect some yellow pots. Notify the Residence Hall Association that there's a new dorm on campus.

When 4:30 in the morning rolls around, be sure to wake up Dr. Southerland and Mr. Sasse, and bring them along to cut with you.

About this time, these two gentlemen might start taking a legitimate interest in your housing situation.

They might even take steps to see that it doesn't happen again.

Let them know that when you get your dorm rooms, you'll put out your campfire and pack up the picnic tables.

Until then, lay back, roast some marshmallows and enjoy the starry nights of the great outdoors. The bathrooms and showers can be found just inside their front doors, down the hall on the left.

Until the administration starts acting like it cares about the students, do your best to make your troubles their troubles.

One way to do this is to move out of your overcrowded room onto their big, vacant front yards.

In the process, make your insignificant problem into one of their big worries.

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THE BATTALION

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EDITORIAL COOPERATION

The Corps and MSC Council should be commended for their efforts.

For the first time in years, the MSC Council and the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets are working together this semester to increase Corps of Cadets representation and participation in all MSC activities and organizations.

This new spirit of cooperation hopefully will establish a relationship between the two organizations that emphasizes unity and understanding.

Patrick Conway, MSC Council president, and Tyson Voelkel, Corps of Cadets commander, both should be commended for recognizing the need for better relations.

In the past, cadet representation in MSC activities, as well as in other campus events, has been lacking because of the time demand of the Corps.

Cooperative rhetoric is nothing new to either organization; however, Voelkel is supporting his words with immediate actions.

As testimony to his intentions, every freshman cadet was required to attend this se-

mester's MSC Open House. Also, Voelkel has filled the once empty Corps seat at MSC Council meetings.

This increased representation in MSC activities and organization will surely benefit both organizations.

The cadets will have more opportunities to expand organizational and leadership horizons. And the MSC council will have the advantage of better representing the make-up of the campus.

Between the two organizations, thousands of Aggies are actively participating in campus activities. The partnership of these two large, motivated groups will undoubtedly strengthen both.

As our University grows more diverse, unity among campus organizations is a necessity. And the Corps of Cadets and the MSC Council have recognized that need.

Both organizations should be commended, and hopefully their new relationship will serve as a model for all of Texas A&M.



MAIL CALL

Parking remains a problem at A&M

This letter is in reference to the front-page article on parking spaces that ran Sep. 7 in The Battalion.

In the very beginning of the article it said: "... A&M has the largest ratio of permits to spaces of any university in the nation," and "Texas A&M has the best permit-to-parking space ratio ..."

These two statements don't mesh. The best ratio would be the lowest ratio of permits to spaces. Do we have the highest ratio or the best? I don't consider an almost 30 percent oversell of available spaces a good ratio.

Tom Williams, Parking, Transit and Traffic Services director, was quoted as saying some rather ridiculous things.

He states, "a student space typically turns over three times a day," and then goes on with, "a study in conducted in the Zachry lot proved this. One thousand spots accommodated 3,000 students over the course of the day."

I doubt that the turnover rate in the Zachry lot is representative of the turnover in all commuter lots on campus. As the lot closest and most accessible to the greatest number of classroom buildings, it is one of the most sought-after lots.

There was also a reference to the additional 1,500 spaces added for the Recreational Sports Center. These spaces are being used by patrons of that center, thus they are not really addressing the need for more parking for classes.

Williams is then quoted as saying, "if students do not want to ride the bus, they should arrive well before their classes to start to find a parking space."

Some students don't live on a bus route, and others simply don't have the time to wait for a space or walk from Fish Lot to class.

Bus passes are expensive compared to parking permits, and buses run limited routes with long waits between pickups.

I hope that these statements and others like them were not representative of how PTTS feels

about the students. If it is, this is just another example of how Texas A&M is failing in its quest to be a "world class University."

Tye Botting
 Graduate Student

A novel solution to dorm shortage

Overassigning students to dorms has crippled Texas A&M, with students shacking up everywhere from study halls to library bathrooms.

At the same time, jails have lots of vacancies. Police are looking for ways to offset the costs of maintaining space while alleviating the loneliness they face without walls of despair from the cells.

Since, as Quatro pointed out in his comic strip, dorm rooms and prison cells have the same dimensions, I propose that students be moved into these vacant jail cells.

While some students may be intimidated by the "dangerous" atmosphere of prison life, I have no doubt that both food service and health care are of high quality in prison, especially if one is lucky enough to score a bed in a minimum security facility (aka "country club prisons").

Shuttle bus service could easily be extended to the Brazos County Jail, which could also bring in less violent offenders to use the new Recreational Sports Center.

The beauty of this solution lies in its economics. The jails use student dorm fees to offset operating costs, thereby eliminating bureaucratic middlemen.

A&M could solve its over-booking problem while the money gained through the Recreational Sports Center Prison Outreach Program would more than pay for the added shuttle bus service.

I think this plan should be seriously considered. It may have been spawned from the comics page, but after all, it was Mickey Mouse logic that created the housing crunch in the first place.

Bob Crow
 Chemistry staff