

# OPINION

WEDNESDAY  
July 31, 1996

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## WANTED: VOLUNTEERS

### Diversity requires student commitment

On July 1, the U.S. Supreme Court declined to review a 5th Circuit Court of Appeals decision that barred the University of Texas Law School from considering race as a factor in admissions. This case is better known by the plaintiff's name, Hopwood, and the decision affects all state schools in Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi.



**CARL BAGGETT**  
GUEST COLUMNIST

as all applicants. They are as qualified as anyone else to become an Aggie and enrich A&M in the process. The problem lies in the catch rate for minority students. Catch rate is defined as the percentage of students who apply, are accepted, and then choose to attend Texas A&M. The catch rate for minority students is about half what the catch rate is for white students.

I intend to find students who are willing to recruit future Aggies. The best spokespeople for A&M and the best recruiters for students are fellow Aggies. We need to get students involved in talking to potential Aggies about the opportunities and excellence found at Texas A&M. When this happens, the results are impressive.

For example, a group of 50 minority high school students came for a visit during a home football game last year. During the visit, they went to midnight yell practice, stood up during the whole football game, and experienced other great traditions of Aggieland. Of those 50 students, 40 of them are going to be fish this year. Will 40 students make a difference? Absolutely. And they will make an

even greater difference because they have chosen A&M — after being given the opportunity to experience A&M for themselves.

To expand our efforts, we need your help. Nikki Guerra, executive director for Minority Student Affairs, is creating a committee to inform students about the numerous opportunities and unique qualities Texas A&M offers. I am asking for your help in recruiting all types of students for Texas A&M.

A&M was built on hard work and students' ability to succeed beyond what anyone expected from them. This is a merit school that rewards hard work. A court decision cannot take that spirit away from us.

Our goal is to recruit Aggies — those Aggies who love the traditions and have a desire to maintain and build the uniqueness of Aggie culture above and beyond quality education. If you would like to help us achieve this goal, please call either me or Nikki Guerra at 845-3053.

*Student Body President  
Carl Baggett is a Class of '96  
accounting major*

### Escort service needs help

The lack of an escort program during the summer poses a serious danger to females walking alone at night. During the regular school year, the Corps of Cadets takes care of this responsibility by staffing the guardroom with cadets for escort duties. However, during the summer, there are not enough cadets to fully staff an escort program.

**KYLE SPARKMAN**  
GUEST COLUMNIST

To remedy this, the Corps is seeking the participation of campus organizations. We are proposing a pilot program from Monday, Aug. 5, through Tuesday, Aug. 13, for a summer escort program to prepare for summer school in 1997. During this time, the guardroom will be open for escort service from 9 p.m. until 1 a.m.

The guardroom will function the same as it does during the rest of the year — the only difference is other campus organizations will share the responsibilities with the cadets who are on campus during the summer. The four-hour time period each night will be split into two shifts of two hours. During each shift, one cadet and two male organizational representatives will staff the guardroom.

Therefore, each organization partici-

pating in the program will be asked to provide four representatives on assigned evenings on a rotational basis. For example, if 10 organizations participate, then each organization would only have to commit four representatives every tenth day throughout the summer — a commitment of only seven evenings the whole summer. This is a small commitment considering all we will be accomplishing.

This program will be beneficial to all organizations involved because students from all areas of A&M will be working together to solve a serious problem on campus. If this program is a success, who knows what we can accomplish next?

Of course, there is no way of knowing how successful this program will be unless we try it out this summer. At the conclusion of the pilot program, all participants will assess the program to justify its implementation and make any possible suggestions on improvements. Please contact me at 847-0468 to answer any questions you may have and to let me know if your organizations will be able to participate in the pilot program.

*Corps Staff Public Relations Sergeant  
Kyle Sparkman is a Class of '98  
biomedical sciences major*

### Domino's falls to red-lining complaints

We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; among these are life, liberty and pizza delivered in 30 minutes or less.

The San Francisco Board of Directors recently passed an ordinance barring business from refusing to deliver to any part of their normal service area.

The ordinance was passed after the grandson of a board member was denied his Domino's pizza because he lives in an area known for its high crime rate. The area is also predominantly minority, so charges of racism were sure to follow.

This is an example of an overly activist government meddling where it does not belong. A perceived act of racism was turned into a restriction of the free market.

Domino's had a legitimate occupational safety concern. Several of its drivers have been robbed and beaten while on duty.

In response, Domino's identified high-risk areas to protect their employees. The national chain provides a computer software package to color code addresses in their delivery area as safe to deliver (green), curbside delivery only (yellow), or no delivery (red).

These labels are based on crime rates, and areas are only coded red if there is a "reasonable good-faith belief" that delivery to that area poses an inordinate amount of risk.

Since the red areas are largely minority, members of the Board of Directors played the race card to pass this ordinance. While it makes a strong social statement against racism, it makes no sense from a practical standpoint.

The free-market forces will cause Domino's to deliver to the

most extensive area possible. Even if Domino's managers were all inveterate racists, they would have no reason to deny delivery to any area that would increase profits.

So basically what has happened is that the Board of Directors passed an ordinance mandating that Domino's do what it normally would to improve business.

This controversy does bring up a valid concern that should be addressed, however. The practice of red-lining a zip code or specific area is a generalization. Denying pizza delivery to a specific area because of a few thugs results in an unfair inconvenience to law-abiding citizens who live in the same area.

While the red-lining does inconvenience some people, it is not a violation of rights.

If public services like the police or fire department refused to protect the area, that is a serious matter of discrimination. But we're only talking about pizza here.

A private company must base its business decisions on generalizations. Their numbers showed that delivering to certain areas was not profitable. So they did not deliver there.

The fact that the area was minority was not relevant to their decision. Unfortunately, it provided the driving force for the municipal government to jump on their backs.

Fortunately, this particular situation turned out well. After the ordinance was passed, Domino's re-evaluated its designations and decided to expand delivery in the area by nearly 33 percent.

While the ordinance ended up benefiting both Domino's profits and the residents' desires for pizza, such an ordinance is not within the appropriate scope of municipal government.

Government should spend its time correcting true injustice and let private companies solve their own problems.

*Jim Pawlikowski is a Class of '96 chemical engineering major*



### Restaurant chains shackle cities to cultural abyss

A trip to the "big city" used to be a big deal. Not only did it mean getting to see a town that actually had places worth visiting, but it meant that we were going to get to eat out.

Sure, we often went to local restaurants and had our fair share of the native meatloaf, but the chance to eat at one of the restaurants that could only be found in big cities was rather exciting.

These chain restaurants, formally the exclusive domain of large metropolitan cities, soon realized that people from small towns across the state were willing to drive 100 miles just to get a basket of complimentary bread sticks. This resulted in a mass expansion of food chains throughout the country that even Wal-Mart would be proud of. Pretty soon, it seemed every city with a population of over 5,000 had a main street decorated with a Chili's or an Applebee's.

Unfortunately, this expansion comes at the expense of the distinctive local restaurants that are particular to each town. Whether they are unique because of the waitress who pinches everyone's cheeks, or because they serve the best barbecue/steak/lasagna you can't get anywhere else, these small restaurants are what forge America's culinary identity. Yet as soon as the newest corporate cookie-cutter restaurant opens nearby, we choose the generic plate special.

But why are chain restaurants so popular? Some believe the main benefit lies in their consistency. Granted, consistency can sometimes be beneficial, but it must be put into perspective. As soon as one realizes that the same chicken alfredo is ordered from the local Olive Garden is interchangeable with the one being served in Beaumont, consistency soon passes into terrifying monotony.

Besides, consistency is something that comes with mass production, so unless people want their food to be made on the assembly line, then variance should be seen as a benefit.



**STEVEN GYESZLY**  
COLUMNIST

Another common justification for chain restaurants involves the worn "at least I know what I'm getting" excuse. But just because one already knows that the food and atmosphere are mere replicas of 50 other restaurants, it doesn't make it any more exciting. The whole point of dining out is to gain a new experience, so why delve into the same old rut? One of the many benefits of eating at a one-of-a-kind local restaurant lies in the spectacular deviation from the norm. Even though the salad may be just three pieces of lettuce covered in orange dressing, the mashed potatoes or the apple pie just might be the kind that's better than homemade.

Perhaps the main fault with these massive chain restaurants lies in its lack of authentic atmosphere. Though a Mexican restaurant chain may design their locations to look like some Disney version of a Mexican adobe house, it just cannot hide the fact that the burrito recipe comes straight from corporate headquarters in Lincoln, Neb.

But the lack of authenticity and atmosphere is evident in more than just the food. A small neighborhood restaurant relies on a unique and memorable experience to keep customers returning. Therefore, the proprietors are going to make sure one's meal is a singular experience, whether it be through the decor they choose or the stories they relate while talking to each patron.

Yet for a chain restaurant, relying on its name to bring in people, the focus is providing indistinguishable service with no complaints, leading to an atmosphere that is both bland and imminently forgettable.

Chain restaurants are fine if the only goal in dining out is merely to avoid starvation. But for something unique, where deviation and experience are just as essential as the food itself, why not try eating at the local restaurants that can provide it?

Even though road trips to the big cities are still exciting, eating the local outlet of some national restaurant chain is something we can all outgrow no matter how old we are.

*Steven Gyeszly is a Class of '99  
finance and sociology major*



### MAIL CALL

#### Graduation incentives might hurt students

I am writing in regards to the article, "Regents discuss early graduation incentives." While reading the article,

I noticed the proposals were not "incentives" at all. Demanding that students be required to take 15 hours to be full-time students and/or mandating summer school are potentially harmful restrictions that might be placed on the student body. These restrictions are some-

what negligent of the time needed for our students to get a quality education.

Better incentives would be scholarship money for students on track to graduate early, financial aid dedicated to students to enable them to take a heavier course load, etc. Dr. Bowen states that "qualified students can't get in because there's no room." The solution is not to place demands on the "qualified" students who are already here.

Plus, it is already incentive enough to graduate as soon possible when we see our fee statements every semester.

*Lanessa D. Bass  
Class of '98*