

Baby on board

Children add challenges to student life

Some students at Texas A&M are more than just students — they're parents, too. However, in the bustle of being students, trying to get papers written and preparing for exams, they should not forget to cherish early moments in their son or daughter's life.

On Dec. 19, 1996, at 2:56 a.m., at the age of 22, I became the father of an 8 pound, 11 ounce son, Benjamin Davier. As a student, I run into a lot of people my age who are thinking about having children in the future.

They ask many questions and I am always surprised at what they ask and how they think things are supposed to be (I know I certainly had misconceptions). Now, it's different for everyone, but this is how things are for me. Feb. 19, 1997 — Since becoming a parent I've realized progress is a fickle and fragile thing. What seems like progress often slips into regression — end of progress.

Benjamin, being only two months old, typically sleeps for two to three hours at a time during the night. However, this past Friday he slept for six hours straight. My wife and I thought it was a miracle. We joked he would compensate the next night by waking up every hour.

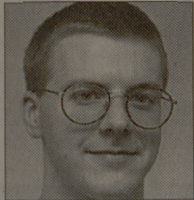
But on Saturday he slept for seven hours straight. Could it be true? Our lives would be radically changed — no more trying to reason a way out of feeding him; no more stumbling out of bed in the dark to warm his bottle; no more spilling milk; no more going to bed at midnight, waking up at 9 a.m., and only sleeping six hours; no more feeling tired all the time. We had blissful uninterrupted sleep, like we used to get.

But Monday night he was back to sleeping in three-hour shifts — total regression. End of progress.

A couple of weeks ago I shared with my wife the realization that I had not been peed on in three weeks, and did not poop on in almost a month.

There were only two pooping incidents: once on my favorite flannel shirt and another time on my Nine Inch Nails t-shirt. The poop on my flannel shirt was disheartening but was nothing in comparison to the blood on Benjamin's heelsticks. The poop on my NIN shirt was around less tragic, blending right in with the other poop-like stains that are part of the design. On the other hand, I've been peed on

Columnist



Chad White
Senior
English major

countless times.

His timing always struck me as highly ironic. Almost invariably he would pee when we were changing his diaper and giving him a bath, thereby thwarting our efforts to keep him clean.

I remember on one occasion while I was changing him that he peed and I blocked, deflecting his pee back onto him. This, of course, resulted in a bath for him. During the bath, I lowered my defenses thinking that he was out of ammo, and he fired again. This, of course, resulted in a bath for me.

Anyway, after weeks of not peeing on anyone while I was changing his diaper, he misfired and sprayed himself in the face. He was immediately incensed, no doubt because the pee was burning his eyes. I couldn't help but laugh, thinking that justice had been served. Meanwhile, my wife rushed over and started wiping him off and stripping him for a bath.

During the bath, Benjamin peed on his mother. Again, end of progress.

This past week Benjamin went through a period of constipation where he would strain most of the day to have only a couple of bowel movements — a couple of atonic bowel movements. Yesterday was no different, except that after straining all day, he exploded three times within two hours, dirtying three outfits. This morning, my wife woke up wet; she

sleeps with Benjamin lying on her chest and somehow he had managed to mystically pee through his diaper all over himself and her.

My wife read in Dr. Spock's *Baby and Child Care* that momentous changes frequently are preceded by a loss of bodily control. She's sure that he's on the verge of something, but I'm not excited yet. I'm sure that whatever it is will come and then go. I'll wait for it to come around again, and even then I'll be skeptical about this thing called "progress" — perhaps preferring him without it.

So, those of you who are in my shoes, and those who might already wear them, remember to not be preoccupied with your studies or work, and to stop and smell the poop.



Insensitivity improves campus

Youth is a time to experiment and make mistakes — mistakes that prove to be valuable learning experiences.

In a university setting, students and administrators should tolerate mistakes, even when some students fail to be politically correct or to show proper sensitivity to a certain person or group.

While many college campuses might accept unconventional ideas from socialism to drug legalization, others tend to have no patience for political incorrectness. Students and professors across the nation have been disciplined or forced to take sensitivity classes because someone was offended by their words or actions. Texas A&M's diversity task force announced last year it would not tolerate intolerance.

Matters of insensitivity frequently cause pain or alienation, but so do other problems which Aggies accept every day.

When any mistake is made, it affects people across this campus. Even a matter as simple as printing the wrong meeting time on a flier can cause problems for hundreds of students.

While a politically incorrect act might offend a large group on campus, a personal attack can cause more pain than a generalized attack against a group. Because of the impact of a personalized attack, the pain runs deeper than a miscommunicated meeting time or an angry message on the answering machine.

Columnist



David Johnston
Junior
mathematics major

The University seems to reserve its largest punishments for political incorrectness. When insensitive flyers are posted or a fraternity performs a racist skit in black face, administrators consider removal of the campus organization and expulsion of its members. The University's actions and the students' reactions to the incident are usually excessive and unwarranted.

College is the one place students can afford to be insensitive. In school, a flippant remark directed toward a supervisor will not damage career advancement or have any other lasting impact — that is, unless the administration takes drastic measures.

It is proper to explain to offenders why their actions might have been inappropriate or ill-received, since someday students will have to fit in to a society concerned about insensitivity. Any real punishment, however, does not show consistency on the part of the University.

Even requiring students to attend cultural awareness classes shows the University is more concerned with political incorrectness than other problems the school faces. No one has requested religion awareness

classes for professors or speakers who offend other people's faith. No one asked for accounting classes for A&M officials who came up several million dollars short on the Reed Arena. These priorities seem skewed.

Even when students offend others repeatedly or intentionally, there seems little cause for disciplinary action. For one thing, their actions are likely protected as free speech. But even if punishment is legal, these offenders basically have a character flaw which no one approves. It hardly seems proper to punish someone for being offensive. This type of path could lead to punishing people who are just annoying.

Universities are an environment for pushing the envelope and developing new ideas. They should not be in the business

Matters of insensitivity frequently cause pain or alienation, but so do other problems which Aggies accept every day

of punishing students who legally and safely act outside social norms.

Students who are insensitive to others eventually will suffer for their behavior. They will have a hard time communicating or getting their ideas accepted, and people will have a hard time getting along with them. This type of problem punishes itself. There is no reason for a university which tries to encourage free thought to punish the insensitive. It's time to show a little tolerance.

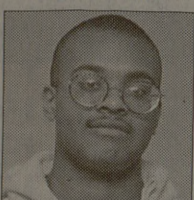


Custodial, food service workers ensure smooth day-to-day operation at A&M

Books, professors, courses and parking tickets are what shape this institution and interactions within it, but it is the earnest dedication and diligence of custodial and food service workers who transform the iron bureaucracy of college into a hospitable environment for over 9,000 campus dwellers.

The typical first impression of a school may seem daunting, cold and impersonal to the newcomer, but probably feels like a tiny part of a huge monolith. But beneath the intricate layers of bureaucracies, administration,

Columnist



General Franklin
Sophomore
English major

and procedure lies the stabilizing influence of the other faculty — the hundreds of custodial workers who toil at the most menial of tasks to make Texas A&M more livable.

This corps of diligent people includes janitors, groundskeepers, trash collectors, cleaning people, cooks and repairmen. Theirs is the important and often unheralded task of keeping the University functioning, not only as an institution of higher learning, but also as a home with running water, electricity, immaculate bathrooms, dust-free carpets and plenty of food.

Indeed, many of the custodians recognize the cohesion they add to campus by maintain-

ing the facilities with expert care. For this reason, they are extremely proud and committed to their jobs and go to great lengths to accommodate the problems and unique situations of the students.

Because of the importance of service workers in the homeostasis of A&M, students should make more overt gestures of appreciation and gratitude towards the service workers of this campus. At the very least, be polite to them greet them — lest you find yourself responsible for a backed-up toilet or mildew-covered shower stalls. In these matters, the smallness of the tasks serve only to amplify the people behind the mops, brooms, spatulas, and wrenches who bring their hearts and minds to the task of

providing a more human touch to the sometimes robotic function of the University.

Since it is obvious how the role of these workers enrich the lives of students in some fundamental way, it is imperative the University and the students grant more than token appreciation and respect by paying them more. The woefully low salary of the service personnel is a huge factor in determining College Station's terrible rankings in average income. If we are to truly maintain the highest standards of sanitation and comfortable living afforded us by these dedicated workers, we must back up their multitudes with much deserved respect and gratitude.



MAIL CALL

Evolution, creation debate continues

reference to Joshua Hill's Apr. 4 column on evolution. While the idea of evolution vs. creationism has plagued our society for decades, Hill's false impressions on evolution taint the very idea of life existence.

An open-minded person, one who has thoroughly listened to both sides of the argument could clearly draw certain conclusions, such as the fact that creationism and evolution can coincide. While evolution may not effectively explain the origin of all life on this planet, creationism accomplishes this task perfectly. Evolution does, however, explain the reasons for such

diverse species in the same class. According to creationism, a dog is a dog no matter what kind or breed, but evolution explains that one breed survived in one region, while different breeds had characteristics to survive in a different region. Darwin did not develop "the theory as an attempt to explain the world without God." He was a theologian, which all scientists were at that time. It was when he traveled to the Galapagos Islands that he noticed several birds, finches, that looked similar but were also different. It was then he developed the ideas of evolution and natural selection. This debate will continue, but one should listen to the arguments of both sides and realize both have merit. As an institution built to further the knowledge and ideas of students, it is Texas A&M's responsibility to

teach students the scientific theory of evolution and natural selection. However, it is the student's responsibility to keep an open mind. Shalon Smith Class of '00 Like most creationist essays critical of evolutionary thought, Joshua Hill's recent editorial resorts to out-of-context quotations and the same stale, inaccurate arguments such as the "lack" of transitional fossils and how evolution apparently "violates" the laws of thermodynamics. Hill ignored the compelling evidence for evolution and has persisted in perpetuating the canned creationist party line; only someone with a weak case would resort to such a fallacious approach. This is a disservice to evolutionary bi-

ology, religion and to the student body at Texas A&M University. Despite the creationist claim to the contrary, the fossil record is not indicative of "intelligent design." This claim is based upon the well-known fact that the fossil record is incomplete; transitional forms between different groups are often unavailable. This is not surprising when one considers the nature of fossil formation, preservation and discovery. Also, the "punctuated equilibrium" model can account for some of the apparent incompleteness of the fossil record. According to this model, long periods of no change (evolutionary stasis) in species are "punctuated" by periods of relatively rapid morphological change during speciation. Thus, the

"lack" of transitional fossils may simply reflect the relatively short period of time in which transitional forms exist. David W. Hale, Ph.D. Lecturer in Biology Editor's Note: In yesterday's Mail Call, Mike Spiller's letter dealing with an apparent lack of dedication on the part of non-regs was incorrectly edited. The edited version of the letter implied Spiller is a member of the Corps of Cadets, therefore angering non-regs. Spiller is a non-reg who resides off campus. We apologize for any misunderstanding.