

Tax doomsday

Aggies avoid unnecessary taxes

Columnist



Glenn Janik
Sophomore
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Today marks a stressful and terrifying day for millions of Americans. Income taxes are due, and it is time once again to dig into your pockets to find the money to pay the IRS. In Washington, D.C., only the wealthiest of Americans are exempt from the tax. Meanwhile, in Aggieland, many students live the entire day without noticing the arm of Uncle Sam reaching into their pockets.

Although the problem of taxation in America existed long before the Boston Tea Party, the amount citizens pay today is higher than ever. However, with the help of a powerful former Aggie, the Republicans in Congress developed a plan to reduce taxes and put more money into the hands of Texas A&M students in need. Most students don't spend their days worrying about tax-

low percentage. The plan also would exempt the first \$21,000 of an Aggie's income from taxation. This means most student workers, teaching assistants and even some entry-level professors would have their taxes reduced to nil. After eliminating taxes on the poorest Americans, congressman and former Aggie Joe Barton introduced

Given the perpetual state of partisan bickering, taxes would have very little chance of being raised. The Republicans also offered another proposal to cut taxes for Aggies when they begin their careers. The plan, articulated by Speaker Newt Gingrich last week, would eliminate the capital gains tax. This is a tax all citizens must pay when they make a profit from selling stock or property. Businesses also must pay this tax.

By getting rid of capital gains (like the economic powerhouses of Germany and Hong Kong) not only could Americans sell stock without penalty, but businesses would pay fewer taxes, passing savings to consumers by lowering prices.

The common liberal or Democratic response to these plans to cut taxes is: Less taxes means less money for government to operate. However, this answer is not accurate. When former President Ronald Reagan cut taxes in 1982, the total amount of revenue for government doubled. When people have more money in their pockets, the government always will receive enough money.

Students at A&M work hard to become intelligent, productive members of society. There is no reason for the government to steal the small amount of money most Aggies earn. If the tax plans of the Republicans pass, students will have more money to buy groceries, pay credit card bills, purchase books and eat at the Chicken.

Mark Twain said the only two unavoidable in life are death and taxes. With the help of the Republican party, Aggies could begin to avoid one of those dilemmas.



a bill to help prevent taxes from being raised again by the federal government. Barton's bill requires a two-thirds super-majority to raise taxes. This means Republicans and Democrats would have to collaborate to get enough votes to raise taxes.

Majors create group rules

Night News Editor



Helen Clancy
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It takes more than just the right books and the right schedule to claim a major at Texas A&M. Students actually don't belong to a college when they hit the pound sign and hear the familiar "You have a total of fourteen hours."

There are unwritten rules of conduct and appearance not mentioned in the Undergraduate Catalog. For example, it takes more than a coveted T-shirt to belong to the College of Engineering. With these students, the pencil is everything.

Purchasing a cheap mechanical pencil could mean the difference between acceptance and rejection, and unlightened majors will stare at their neighbor's Parker with undeniable pencil envy.

The "accepted" pencil of choice costs no less than \$20, and it never gets jammed with lead. It also features a built-in state-of-the-art eraser, but the student knows actually using this eraser would be a travesty. To complete the ensemble, the student must have a separate eraser, preferably the clicking, phallic-symbol type.

For students who are in the College of Liberal Arts, certain attire is crucial.

Every "cool" English major

carries a satchel. This isn't your everyday JCPenney earlybird special. This satchel has a history, and no two are alike.

Ask the owner and he or she probably will say it was found on a deserted path in the heart of Borneo, with unauthored poems sewn into the lining. Needless to say, most students still are carrying their humble Jansports, waiting for that elusive satchel.

English majors who have attained "satchel status" also must adopt a fitting code of conduct. Envied by their peers, they kick back in an upper-level Milton class, taking no notes, simply absorbing the words of the professor into memory.

As their peers highlight furiously in their used paperback from Rother's, they read calmly from their leather-bound rare edition of *Paradise Lost*, recovered from a burning library in Montecchio years before their parents were born.

And being caught with *Cliff's Notes* is equivalent to using that built-in state-of-

the-art eraser. Prepare to descend slowly through the circles of hell.

Aside from owning the appropriate writing utensils and sporting the proper bag, anthropology majors have only one concern: hair. For men, the absence of beard growth is acceptable only if the overall hairstyle is unkempt and out of control. To wear both a beard and unruly hair indicates high status among these men — with dreds marking the chieftain of the society.

Chieftains also wear hiking boots that could weather a 200-mile trek through the heart of the Australian outback. And their clothes are camouflaged in case they are unexpectedly thrust into an aboriginal wilderness.

Although it takes a few semesters to pick up on these subtle mannerisms, once recognized, a walk through the A&M campus can be an intriguing observation. Students in every major are guilty of conforming to standards of style and appearance.

Unless they're journalism majors, in which case you can never tell.

There are unwritten rules of conduct and appearance not mentioned in the Undergraduate Catalog.

Legislation aims to hinder Corps

Columnist



Dave Johnston
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For many years the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets has contributed to our nation's armed forces by training quality leaders. A new proposal by the Army's Assistant Secretary for Manpower and Reserve would place A&M's Corps program on the same level with less rigorous ROTC programs throughout the nation.

Currently, graduates from six senior military colleges, including A&M, receive priority assignment in the Army. The new proposal would end this status. Many Corps members object to less disciplined ROTC programs receiving the same status as A&M.

Sen. Phil Gramm has been campaigning against the Army proposal. At a recent press conference, Gramm said, "We are never going to accept the premise that someone wearing a uniform once a week for an hour is receiving equivalent training to someone who is [wearing one] seven days a week, 24 hours a day in the Corps."

The Corps and other senior military college programs previously have received priority status because of their programs' intensity. Members of

most ROTC programs take one class a week to satisfy program requirements. This standard varies from the Corps, which requires cadets take multiple military science courses and live in a more military-style environment than the typical college student.

Though the Corps has experienced problems ranging from declining enrollment to hazing allegations, it still imposes a high standard of discipline on its members.

Corps members have an established history of outstanding service in the armed forces. The organization also has been able to instill a unique combination of discipline and leadership ability in members, earning a reputation for producing quality officers.

ROTC programs at such schools as the University of Houston cannot make the same claim.

A&M has produced more Army officers than any other school except West Point. Corps members put a considerable amount of time and effort into their duties. The proposed military change would make Corps membership less appealing, possibly affecting enrollment. In recent remarks, Gramm

said, "I believe it takes a unique person to be part of the military."

ROTC programs with weekly formations or low standards of discipline do not give clear representations of military duty. These programs do not provide the same level of military preparation the Corps does, and therefore should not receive equal consideration from the Army.

The majority of Corps members do not enlist in the armed forces, so the proposal might not alter the program radically.

However, with its priority-assignment status threatened, the Corps must work to improve a deteriorating campus image. It should strive to train ethical leaders who will be beneficial to the A&M campus regardless of future plans.

If the Army carries out this proposal, A&M and the Corps could suffer.

By removing one of the features that makes the Corps unique, the University could be affected, but it might be years before its impact could be measured.

Fortunately, Gramm, Kevin Brady and other legislators around the nation are dedicated to preventing this proposal from going into effect. As long as the Corps provides good-willed service to A&M and the Bryan-College Station community, its status as an institution always will be safe.



MAIL CALL

Conformity at A&M results in confusion

In response to Travis Chow's April 14 column:
I'll concede there are many individuals who harbor racist ideologies (by no means unique to this university). However, I take personal exception to the implication Fish Camp promotes this type of backward thinking. As a two-time counselor, I can attest with complete and total certainty that Fish Camp is a time when superficial differences are set aside in order to focus on what can and should bind every Aggie together. Chow sets up a

scenario in which free-thinking high schoolers are "transformed" into boot-wearing, beer-drinking, Rebel flag-toting bigots sometime during their freshman year. I contend that coming to Texas A&M, of all places, actually has broadened my appreciation for people who come from different backgrounds. I also believe I am not a rare exception. If conformity were so strong, there would be no non-regs, Greeks, African-Americans or women here at A&M. If the "conformity" of wearing boots or cutting my hair short makes others feel excluded from part of the Aggie experience, I apologize. I'm sure the local bar owners

meant to offend no one with their "country" decorations.

I encourage Chow and anyone else who feels left out of the equation here in Aggieland to stop focusing on the negative people who will never accept someone who doesn't look like they do.

I believe that we, especially those of us involved in Fish Camp, welcome everyone to A&M on the merit of their character. I do not wish to debate point for point with Chow's column, but I will say that many stereotypes he believes about student life at Texas A&M University are not true. I would also bet many problems on the campuses of the University of Washington and Georgia Tech will never arise here.

I am saddened that many students like Chow dream of better campuses elsewhere due to the actions of a few people. I invite all who feel this way to attend Muster or Silver Taps, and then think about how much more they would be accepted anywhere else.

Nathan Brown
Class of '99

