

**CAMPUS CONNECTION**

# Kids' corner

## University day care center offers important services for faculty, students

Students were filing out of town for Break last day, the foundation was being laid for a new child center on the Drive just before the University Center. When the center opens in 1998, it will address one of the most pressing needs for nontraditional students. While this represents a significant step on the part of the university, it can and should be done.

According to Mary Miller, Associate President for Administration, the center will offer full child care to approximately 160 children six weeks to five years of age. The center will likely be open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., though hours could be expanded with demand.

Although the center's services will be available to all faculty, staff and students, it acknowledges the cost may be out of reach for some staff and students.

"We are going to offer state-of-the-art care," Miller said. "Rather than meeting the minimum licensing standards, we will be meeting full accreditation standards."

To mitigate the effects of the high cost, Miller indicates that scholarships are available.

"We don't want this to be a center for the children of faculty and administrators only," says Rosenthal, Coordinator for



**ADAM COLLETT**  
columnist

Adult and Graduate Student Services in Student Life, agrees with that goal. "We want to work with Mary Miller to ensure that students have a space over there," she said.

As coordinator, it is her job to look out for the needs of student parents, older students, and other nontraditional groups.

Having only been on the job for a few months, Rosenthal is spending most of her time trying to assess what exactly those needs are.

According to her initial findings, foremost among those needs are social opportunities, chances to meet other similar students. Other needs include support groups, peer tutoring, mentoring and of course child care.

In the future, Rosenthal will continue to bring helpful information about existing services to the students she serves, but also plans to help student parents find each other to arrange cooperative baby-sitting, possibly through an Internet information exchange.

That's when the social opportunities become especially valuable, because the parents can then get to know each other and feel more comfortable exchanging baby-sitting duties.

Organizations and departments can supplement her efforts by being sensitive to the needs of these students.

For example, a meeting scheduled for 3 p.m. might interfere with a parent picking up a child from school. Similarly, a late-night speaker or performance might force a student to choose between attending and putting his daughter into bed.

Rosenthal's dream someday is to have an adult or nontraditional student lounge somewhere in the Student Center complex. Although it would have such practical necessities as a computer, phone, refrigerator and microwave, the main purpose would be to give the students a place to find and network with each other. "It would be a living bulletin board."

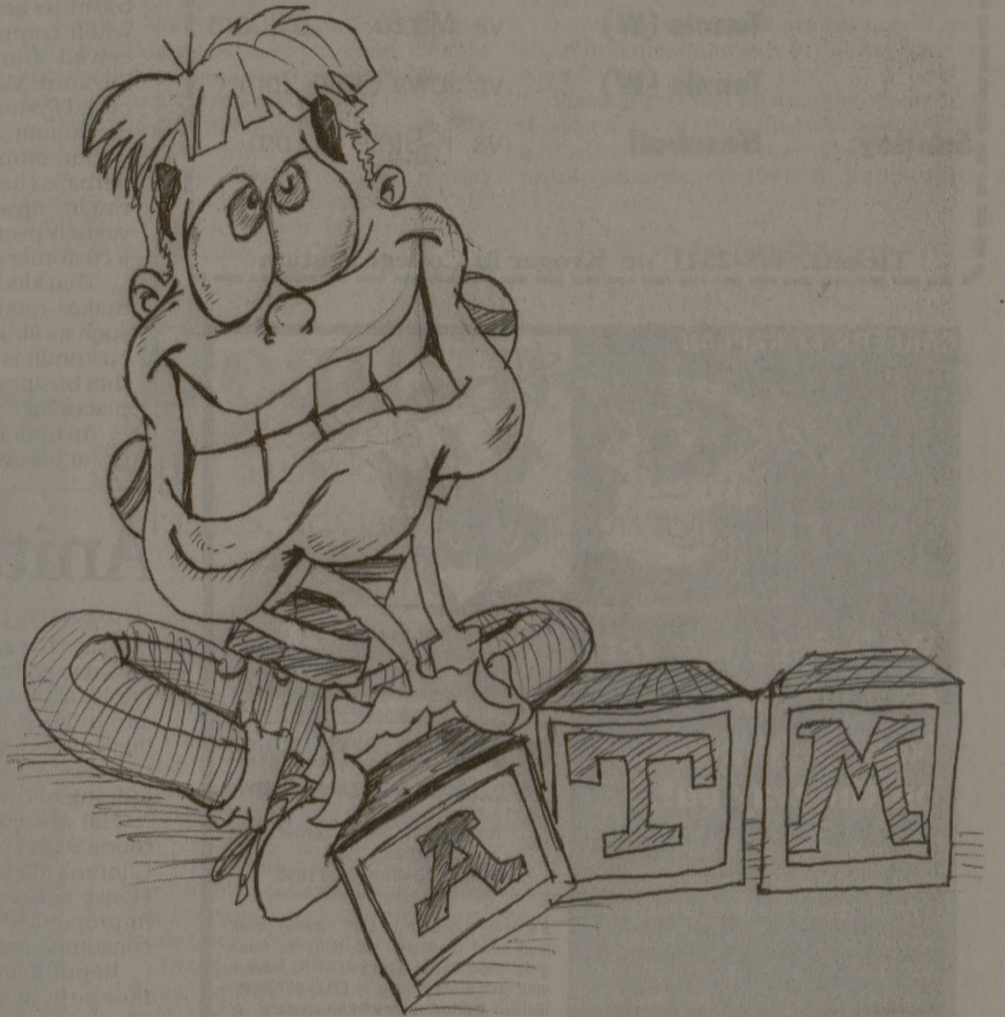
Rosenthal knows this vision is not likely to be fulfilled in the near future, despite the fact A&M already provides more services for adult students than many other universities. "For there to be a full time staff person and a budget [for these services] is very fortunate."

Our better-than-average commitment thus far, however, is not a license to sit on our laurels. Adult learners continue to become more of a presence on campuses across the country. The child care center's predicted capacity was limited by the amount of capital available to construct the building and is not expected to even come close to meeting the university community's need.

The University should identify other capital outlay funds and be prepared to use them to expand the child care facility. Additionally, the administration should support staff efforts to expand the scope and nature of nontraditional student services.

Finally, other departments and organizations can increase their awareness of barriers that they may unintentionally include in the format and timing of their meetings and programs. Aggies, even the nontraditional ones, deserve no less.

*Adam Collett is an educational*



**CAMPUS CONNECTION**

# Dorm rape board provides look into campus problem

With me, it's same old, same old. I am very routine oriented. Every morning I do the same thing: drag myself out of bed, brush my teeth, get dressed and walk hurriedly to class, already. Then on my way back, I walk hurriedly through the Commons, not being very sociable before noon. So it isn't a huge surprise that I don't really notice anything, or anyone, on my dash to get back to my warm bed.

Perhaps I should be more observant. The other day my roommate pointed out there were two new ones on the Brazos County Crime stoppers billboard in the Commons, bringing the total to eleven.

It was just an offhanded comment, something not mentioned and not really heard. It stuck with me, however.

The billboard she was referring to houses the visages of men in all different shapes and sizes. They do



**BEVERLY MIRELES**  
columnist

have one thing in common, though — they have all sexually assaulted someone or harassed them, and are alluding prosecution.

Not exactly a cheerful thought, is it? Knowing "the ways of the world," it really shouldn't have come as a surprise to me, with a campus this big. Aggies don't lie, cheat or steal, but apparently some do rape.

Perhaps I had just been naive about the whole situation. People had always told me I shouldn't go walking around campus by myself at night, but the hard truth behind those remarks never really hit me until my roommate brought my attention to the board.

At first, I felt a little lied to — as if A&M should mention sexual assault in the campus brochure. Quickly, I disregarded that senseless thought. Rape happens everywhere, regardless how safe the campus is, or how steadfast the moral code might be. But why? Why does rape happen everywhere?

With all these questions surfacing, I decided to find a few answers. Here are some of the disturbing facts I found:

• According to an obstetrical and gynecological study done in 1993, sexual assault is the crime grow-

ing most rapidly in America.

• At least 20 percent of women, 15 percent of college women and 12 percent of adolescent women have experienced some form of sexual abuse or assault during their lifetimes.

• About 20 percent of sexual assaults against women are perpetrated by strangers, meaning the other 80 percent are committed by friends, acquaintances, and family members.

• Now, as horrible as these facts are, they get worse. It always gets worse before it gets better, right?

• In a survey of male college students (not specifically A&M), 35 percent anonymously admitted that under certain circumstances they would commit rape if they believed they could get away with it.

• Exactly what circumstances lead to rape? "Well, I'm bored, the only thing on TV is 'Teen Jeopardy' — I feel like raping someone." Or maybe, "Hey, she's passed out, she won't mind, or even remember, a little forceful coercion." Any man who tries to rationalize the crime by saying the circumstances forced him into it is more than ludicrous, he is without conscience.

• Unfortunately, rape victims aren't helping the sit-

uation. Only about 16 percent of victims report rape to the police. Perhaps this is because their rapist was a friend or relative, perhaps it is because they are afraid people will think worse of them for getting raped. Either way, rapists go without punishment everyday because their victims are too traumatized to report the crime.

• Rape is not about sex, but power and control. Rapists aren't after the act of intercourse for pleasure. Rather, rapists do it for the sole purpose of bolstering their ego by bringing the victim to humiliation and submission through means of brutalization.

• In other words, men can be sexually assaulted as well. One survey found at least half of convicted rapists don't care what sex their victim is, they would rape both men and women.

• Consequently, when it comes to sexual assault, both men and women have to be very aware of their surroundings and be prepared if the situation arises.

• Innocence and naivete don't come in handy in cases of sexual assault. Unfortunately, too many people have had to learn that the hard way.

*Beverly Mireles is a freshman microbiology major.*

**STATE OF THE UNION**

# Line-item veto sets dangerous governmental precedent

History has shown time and again that dictatorships are detrimental to the freedom of the citizen's subjects. Even so-called "benevolent dictators" are bad because they are the targets for the ever-hungry and benevolent s.



**STEWART PATTON**  
columnist

Give it or hate it, bureaucracy works, the over two-hundred-year history of the United States stands as living testament to its effectiveness.

The framers of the Constitution were allowing one person or "faction" to gain an excessive amount of power and to a free republic, so they created a system of government characterized by separation of powers and checks and balances.

Bill Clinton is the first president in history who threatens to end all that. To the old the freedom Americans hold so

dear, the Supreme Court should declare the line-item veto unconstitutional and a dangerous move toward a near-dictatorship where almost all governing power is in the hands of the president.

This is how the line-item veto works:

- Congress passes a spending or tax bill and sends it to the president.
- The president has five days to list his objections to the bill.
- Congress then has thirty days to accept the president's decision or pass the offensive provisions again by simple majority vote.
- If Congress does pass the offensive portions again, the president can veto Congress' action. Congress can override the veto with a two-thirds vote.

The Supreme Court chose to hear the case after U.S. District Judge Thomas Hogan ruled that the line-item veto wrongly "crosses the line between acceptable delegations of rule-making authority and unauthorized surrender to the president of an inherently legislative function; namely, the authority to permanently shape laws and package legislation."

Hogan said the line-item veto forces

the president to assume the role of a legislator — a role for which the office of president was not designed.

Proponents of the line-item veto have lauded the program because it allows presidents to cut the "pork" from the federal budget.

They believe the line-item veto stops the usual presidential excuse: "Well, I really didn't want to subsidize the only two watermelon farmers in Alaska, but it was part of a larger essential bill."

On the surface, it appears these conclusions are well-founded, for since its inception in 1996, Clinton has used the line-item veto authority 82 times. Since a two-thirds vote in Congress is a near impossibility, the vast majority of the cut items will not be restored.

How much effect does the elimination of a few pork-barrel projects have on the national budget? The estimated \$10 billion the country will save from the cut items represents a whopping one percent of the annual federal budget, and with a national deficit of almost \$5 trillion, the savings from these cuts are only a teaspoon in the vast ocean of government spending.

The much-ballyhooed line-item veto is therefore not the knight in shining armor of the national budget for which presidents since George Washington have been pining.

The line-item veto may allow a president to trim some unnecessary programs, but the trimming has virtually no effect on the federal budget as a whole. The line-item veto bill does not allow the president to really stop the most massive of the massive spending programs: entitlements.

Getting a handle on the nation's true, long-term spending problems are outside of the scope of the line-item veto. The aging population of America is now entitled to benefits for which there are insufficient funds. The most budget-eating of all benefit programs — Social Security and Medicare — claim almost two-thirds of all government spending (nearly \$600 billion), are impervious to the line-item veto, and any president who wants to be re-elected (or wants even to be able to show his face in public) will not touch Social Security with a 10-foot pole.

Proponents of the line-item veto ar-

gue many state governors have had the authority for years, so the line-item veto should be extended to the president. The taxing and spending methods of the national government and state governments, however, are so fundamentally different a line-item veto in the states may be tolerable while it must not be tolerated in the national government.

Additionally, the Constitution explicitly describes the roles for each of the branches of the national government while stating much less stringent requirements of the states.

For nearly two years, the United States has allowed the separation of powers so vital to the freedom of our nation to be blurred by tainting the executive branch with the burden of legislation.

The inconsequential sum saved by the line-item veto is surely not worth the dangerous precedent it sets for further power consolidation in the office of the presidency.

*Stewart Patton is a junior sociology major.*