

**STATE OF THE UNION**

# Trouble for the Twinkies

*Proposed junk food tax infringes on Americans' right to feeding themselves with fat*

America, you're too fat. Not only are you fat, you're too stupid to do anything about it." Blunt as that is, that is the mental behind the newest fad of the Health Police — "Fat Tax."

Well-knowledgeable, all-around social engineering in the counters like Yale biologist Kelly D. Swann and graduate student E. Katherine Battle want to tax junk food, subsidize healthy food and regulate for sugary cereals, snacks and other artificially-enhanced munchies.

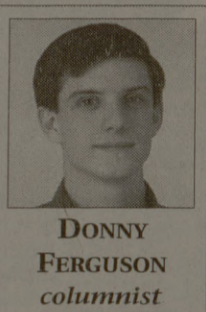
You see, Americans aren't pudgy because they actually like to eat Ding-Dongs and a Skittles and whipped cream pizza, we're portly because a) we can afford to eat fatty food, and b) we're too stupid to know any better.

Enter the "Fat Tax." Inspired by the public health and social engineering success of the phony War on Tobacco, those just to the left of tobacco-phobes are hell-bent on imposing their granola-munching, sweat-in'-to-the-teeth lifestyle on those of us Whataburger eaters know by name.

They don't want a nation of Roger Eberts, Jerry Whites and Liz Taylors who can buy and eat whatever they want, they want to lead a nation of Kate Mosses and Susan Walters by careful manipulation of our collective pudgy pocketbooks.

Hopefully, President Clinton will take action against the Fat Tax and back up his actual statement, "I don't necessarily regard McDonald's as junk food. They have salads."

Giving government the ability to regulate



**DONNY FERGUSON**  
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our daily diets raises some scary questions. Just how far can they go in enforcing the Fat Tax? Will we see headlines like, "Agents Raid Home of Marlon Brando, Seize 400 Kilos of Snickers" and "Mayor McCheese Nabbed in FBI Tax Sting?" Can government really meddle in the everyday habits of its citizens?

What began with an attack on tobacco has grown into a war on junk food. The two operate on the same premise, Americans are enjoying themselves with a product detrimental to their health and something must be done to stop it. Although the assaults on smokers played well in the media, the spaced-out war on snackers has exposed the health police for what they are: meddling do-gooders overstepping the boundaries of government control.

As long as they are turning the government into a national nanny, proponents of the Fat Tax should go the whole nine yards.

We need a Mediocrity Tax to raise prices on John Tesh CDs and Denver Nuggets tickets. After all, someone could easily produce a study showing children who are repeatedly exposed to inferior music and poor outside shooting grow up with lowered expectations.

Hiking prices on Spice Girls tickets and charging a hefty fee to watch CBS programming is the only way to save the children.

A world plagued by lower-back pain needs a Bad Shoe Tax.

Everyone knows Big Shoe has covered up the health risks of bad soles and marketed their products at innocent children with slick Joe-Camel-like techniques like naming them "Hush Puppies" to exploit kids' love of cartoon animals.

Americans should be taxed to the point where we all must walk around in nothing but Easy Spirits and those brown clodhoppers they sell in the back of Eckerd's.

If Fat Taxers give government the power to regulate what we put in our mouths, our lives will be forever changed for the worse. If government were to seize full control of the snack food industry, buying a nine-pack of McNuggets could require lengthy paperwork and a cost-benefit analysis.

The Trix Rabbit could be hauled in front of a Senate committee to testify on sugary cereal and its effect on obsessive-compulsive disorders.

Most importantly, we should tax obsession with power.

By making people who want to tax tobacco, junk food and restrict other freedoms pay higher prices on office space, phone rates and supplies, the rest of us can get on with our lives without looking over our shoulder for a bureaucrat or whiny "public interest" activist wailing about it.

The Fat Tax proposed by pointy-headed, croissant-munching, do-gooder intellectuals has taken the absurdities of government regulation of health habits and thrust it into the spotlight.

If government could successfully manage anything, tax preparation wouldn't require a NASCAR pit crew-like team of lawyers and accountants and Social Security wouldn't be in worse financial shape than an Amish computer company.

After 200 years of fighting oppression, winning two world wars, becoming the planet's leading superpower and inventing arena football, Americans have earned the right to eat whatever they want, no matter how sugary, fatty, gooey or whatever the nugent-to-caramel ratio.

*Donny Ferguson is a junior political science major.*



**PERSPECTIVES**

## Kids are society's responsibility

We are losing our children to violence, and do not know why.

A few days ago, a copy of a newspaper was brought to me to a traffic nightmare when a grue-me shooting at an Arkansas middle school killed five people and injured 10. What is shocking, however, is that the suspects in custody for the shooting are two adolescents, one is 11, and the other is 13. Dressed in camouflage and armed with rifles and pistols, the boys popped the school's fire alarm, then in neighboring woods, fired over shots at students and faculty. Afterwards, the boys were found running in a van stocked with more guns and ammunition.

It is becoming painfully obvious that we are neglecting our children. As Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee aptly stated, "It makes me angry not so much at individual children that have done it as much as angry at a world in which such a thing can happen."

Our society is not progressing when our children are committing



**MICHELLE VOSS**  
columnist

brutal acts of violence.

Our society is not civilized when our children kill.

The fact that the two words "children" and "kill" are found in the same sentence should be enraging.

Why didn't someone know these boys had a van full of ammunition and weapons? Why didn't someone sense they were acting peculiar? Why wasn't someone listening to these children?

We cannot rely on our public school system to be the answer to these questions, they are miserably failing to reach out to our children.

The simple fact is, we are not giving our children the attention they need — at home.

Some may call it a decay of family values — whatever that means.

Some might say feminism is to blame, since fewer mothers stay home — that's just being overly simplistic.

Others might point to our violence-saturated media as a catalyst for violent behavior — but that's just a scapegoat.

America has a national crisis, and we do not care.

Regardless of the label one might use to explain our national crisis, it all boils down to the fact we have a lack of love for our children.

But rather than take on responsibility as individuals and communities to give more of ourselves to our children, we have created partisan issues.

Partisan issues that serve as campaign platforms and fuel congressional debates, all to no avail, our children are still suffering.

Pitting conservative against liberal on issues such as national child care or national standardized testing, we think in terms of budgets, popularity ratings and reelection campaigns.

We forget about our children.

Yet, we, our generation, will be starting families soon.

We have the chance to actually change something for the better in America, we can be there for our children.

We can shake the American addiction to materialism by forsaking the BMW and the ritzier neighborhood so one parent can stay home with the children to discipline and to listen, to know what is happening in their lives.

Otherwise, we will begin to fear our own children.

We are not a just society when we rob our youth of love and nurturing.

This is not the job of the state, and we will decay as a culture if we allow our government to raise our children.

We must realize our future will be bleak if we neglect our children.

We cannot allow chaos to be our children's care giver.

*Michelle Voss is a sophomore English major.*

**PERSPECTIVES**

## Entertainment not cause of tragedy

Children screaming. Blood flowing. Lives ending.

It sounded like a report coming from Bosnia, or Rwanda, or any other country that Americans routinely ignore. But something happened that Americans couldn't ignore like they had the all the others. Because it occurred on our own soil — something happened at an elementary school in Jonesboro, Ark.

Fifteen people were seriously wounded, and tragically, five people — four students and a teacher who threw herself in front of the group in order to shield them. They were victims of a seemingly motiveless crime.

I first heard this horrible information while watching CNN. The news anchors repeatedly referred to the boys as snipers. But they were children, just like those they murdered were children.

Then, the news anchors cut to the footage of the scene. It first showed the sheriff. He cried as he recounted what had happened. Pain showed in every crease on his face. Sorrow swam in his eyes.

The witnesses were visible behind him, slowly rocking back and forth, still in shock. Some had blood smeared on their clothes and hands. A few looked out into the surrounding area, but it was clear that they weren't seeing anything. They were reliving it all, mentally.

One of the officers was wrapping yellow "Do Not Cross" tape around the school's brick pillars. Yellow police tape gives everything the impression of being "off"; it casts the look of disaster. But it looked particularly painful on the elementary school.

After seeing the footage a few times, as CNN cycled the story over and over for the rest of the night,



**BEVERLY MIRELES**  
columnist

something close to anger swept over me. I wasn't particularly angry at the two boys, more confused towards them, but I was angry that something like this happened — at a school no less — and that everyday life had once again been thrown into chaos because of a crime without reason.

Perhaps I was just searching for answers. Everyone was. The next day, the governor of Arkansas blamed "a national culture of violence fueled by film and television" for the boys' murderous impulse. It didn't really matter if he was right, it was good politics in a time of moral crisis. People were looking for something to blame, and those entertainments we find so delightful on a normal basis seem foul under the limelight of tragedy.

Blaming doesn't seem to help, though. This is the fourth killing by children/adolescents in the past two years — if movies are truly the problem, the solution to end all this madness is found easily enough.

But they aren't to blame, we are. Lack of humanity does not come from watching television, or movies, or whatever is the fashionable scapegoat these days. It comes from replacing human emotions with televised ones. It comes from making the peripheries of life, like TV and movies, the mainstays. Maybe "Must See TV" isn't to blame, but our fascination is.

We are the ones who made fiction more important than nonfiction. It's the reason why people can watch the evening news without flinching, and yet be moved by a "tragic" episode of "ER."

Being angry at the entertainment industry is very easy, but it isn't effective against tragedies of this magnitude. And as those boys sit in a juvenile detention center, a painful reminder of how murderously cruel we can be to each other, politicians and the rest of us should keep in mind that TV can't cause this kind of damage, only people can.

*Beverly Mireles is a freshman Microbiology major.*



**MAIL CALL**

**Aggie hospitality appreciated by visitor**

I have heard a great deal about Texas A&M, about its traditions and its history. However, since I am not a student here, I have never quite understood the way people revere A&M. I came here for spring break and was shown the Chicken, Kyle Field and most importantly ... the Bird. The people said Howdy to me and I have been really impressed with your school.

When at the Bird for the first of several times to come, I left my purse with all my important belongings and a great deal of cash. It wasn't until late that night that I realized it was missing. When I called my parents in Kansas, I discovered that a member of the Corps of Cadets had found my purse and had notified them. James Eagleeye arranged to meet me and returned the purse without accepting the reward. James saved my trip and for this, I want to thank him and extend my sincere gratitude.

I still don't understand all of your traditions. I hear "whoop" and talk of "good bull," and I don't think I'll ever catch on. But I do know the students on this campus are friendly, honest and proud of their school. I think you have a great deal to be proud of.

Cate Pugh  
University of Kansas  
Class of '99

**Line-item veto not the problem, President is**

I can see how Stewart Patton can come to believe the line-item veto is ineffective. It can be difficult to distinguish the line-item veto's ineffectiveness from President Clinton's ineffectiveness. My advice: keep the policy, lose the President.

Eva Darski  
Class of '98

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