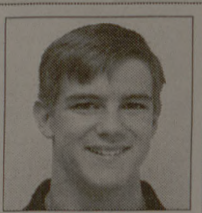


**CAMPUS CONNECTION**

# The origin of THE SMELL

## Malodorous manholes plague A&M campus



**CHRIS HUFFINES**  
columnist

It comes, wafting up from the depths of A&M like a dark malaise. It spreads, carried by the winds. What is it? It is the smell. That mutated, unholy odor that crawls out of manholes and random pipes across campus. The smell is evil, and it has caused much pain and nausea. And, it is the smell that is behind every great mystery at A&M.

For example, Ross Street. Those of you who do not know, Ross Street is slowly sinking. But, don't pay attention to the reports that come out of the Physical Plant. The smell, with the highly corrosive gas that carries it, has been undermining Ross Street for years. It is destroying the infrastructure of A&M. The smell is smart. It is patient.

Also, the Smell has been seeping out of the ground at night, polishing statues across campus. It hasn't been freshmen, but the unminty-fresh scent of the smell, polishing and damaging statues across our campus. The smell is destroying tradition. It knows where we are weak.

The effects of the smell have not been limited to physical damage, the smell is responsible for far more insidious things than statues and streets.

The smell has seeped into the

water supply. You have never wondered why the tap water tastes so bad?

The smell has begun the slow spiral to world domination by entering our very bodies, bending them to its will. The smell affects different people different ways. In some Aggies, it creates the "two-percenter" phenomenon. Ask Old Ags. We used to say "Howdy!" more. Before the smell.

In others, the smell creates an overwhelming urge to drink. The smell likes its beer as much as anyone. Ask Old Ags. Beer used to taste better. Before the smell.

The smell has also moved in on our dining halls. Despite the best efforts of the dedicated Food Services staff, the smell has sunk into all the food across campus. The smell has degraded the taste and lessened the quality of our food, from Sbsa to Duncan. Dining on campus is fun. For the smell.

Most seriously, the smell has begun a campaign of terror against the foundation of A&M itself. It has begun dumping toxic waste into the sacred fountain from which all life at A&M springs. The smell, having entered the bodies of our Aggie athletes, has begun twisting their bodies and minds until winning is a virtual impossibility. The basketball team has already fallen. Who will be next?

What has caused this plague to befall Aggieland? Now, I could make something up, blame the smell on the Board of Regents, or the Corps or Howdy Ags! But that would not



be the truth. That would be wrong.

The smell is caused by our puny arch-nemesis, Rice University. Jealous of the size of our campus and the existence of social lives of our student body, the Rice students and alumni have put their bloated, over-abundant minds together to produce the smell. They are so jealous.

The proof is right before your eyes. The smell has caused one of the greatest tragedies of our time, the destruction of the horseshoe, temporarily placing Rice Stadium as the

largest stadium in Texas. Soon, the smell will begin delaying construction until it becomes impossible to finish The Zone, leaving A&M in a position of inferiority.

The smell is a menace. It must be stopped. Write or call your Physical Plant representative. Stop up the manholes, close the pipes, anything to stop the smell from destroying our campus.

Chris Huffines is a sophomore speech communications major.

**STATE OF THE UNION**

# Judicial power threatens basic American rights



**MANISHA PAREKH**  
columnist

"In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise reexamined in any court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law." Seventh Amendment to the United States Constitution.

When the Seventh Amendment was ratified in 1791, the drafters thought it was necessary to state clearly that all Americans have the right to a jury trial in a civil case, and that the facts of the case were to be decided by a jury of ordinary citizens. The reasoning was that if decisions concerning civil cases were left to judges, the judicial branch would become too powerful and lead to a corruption of the justice system. In order to have a set of laws and decisions that would keep up with the changing times, it was important to have the citizens of the country decide the facts in cases and award damages to the winner of a suit.

207 years later, the civil jury trial has all but become a joke.

The trial and appeals courts, through their rulings upon many cases, have slowly etched away at the very foundation of the Seventh Amendment. Today's American jury finds its power has been slowly taken from them and turned over to the civil court judges.

At this point, it is too easy to say "This has nothing to do with me" and move on. But it is this kind of ignorance and apathy that has allowed one of our most important rights to be stripped away. The right to a trial by jury.

Today, judges are able to single-handedly reverse verdicts made by a jury of 12 people, and then have no one to answer to for their decision. Judges are also allowed to take the monetary damages which juries award to winners in civil suits and reduce them to practically nothing.

It is not supposed to be this way.

The jury was originally created to decide matters of fact in trials; the judge acted as a mediator and decided matters of law. The judge could only set aside a verdict if he felt that it went against the law or the evidence. However, judges were not allowed to set aside the verdict in criminal trials; a person found guilty by the jury could not be pronounced innocent by the judge.

But it does not end there.

Dangerous precedents have been set in various parts of the country that affect the Seventh Amendment. In a New York case, *Gasperini v. Center for Humanities*, Gasperini sued the Center for the cost of 300 transparencies which he had loaned them and they had lost. A jury awarded him \$450,000, or \$1,500 per transparency.

The Center appealed the amount of damages and a federal court judge agreed that the amount was excessive. The judge told Gasperini that if he did not agree to accepting \$100,000 instead of the original amount, the verdict would be thrown out and a new trial would be ordered.

This case was later appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court and the federal court ruling was overturned.

But the number of judges who throw out jury decisions grows every day and every such case cannot be heard the Supreme Court.

What is more frightening than the behavior of civil court judges is the behavior of some criminal court judges. In the case of Louise Woodward, the British au pair accused murdering the infant she was taking care of, a jury found her guilty of second degree murder and sentenced her to life imprisonment. The judge in the case, however, threw out the jury's verdict, pronounced Woodward guilty of involuntary manslaughter, and sentenced her to time served.

In effect, Louise Woodward was found not guilty by the judge even though a jury of 12 people had found her guilty of murder.

This case, which is under appeal to the Massachusetts Supreme Court, is just one example of how judges are turning juries into bystanders and ceremonial decision-makers instead of allowing them to do their jobs: deciding the facts of cases and rendering a verdict. If cases like this are allowed to stand, with the judge having the final say, what is the point of having a jury? Why bother to ask 12 citizens to put their lives on hold, earn less than minimum wage, and listen to a case in which they have no influence?

The Seventh Amendment and the American jury system are in serious jeopardy. People need to speak out and let the judges and lawmakers know that they will not allow this type of injustice to continue.

The courts are supposed to protect our civil rights from being infringed upon by others. But if we allow those who are supposed to protect our constitutional rights to trample on them, then we might as well not have any rights.

Manisha Parekh is a sophomore psychology and journalism major.

**PERSPECTIVES**

# Teacher's actions display crumble in moral fiber

In Des Moines, Wash., a 36-year-old teacher and mother of five has announced that she is pregnant with the second child of one of her 14-year-old students.

She is currently serving even-and-a-half years in jail for a conviction of second-degree rape of the 14-year-old father of her child.

News such as this is evidence of a slow decay in the moral fiber of this country.

To be moral is to be concerned with the judgment of the goodness or badness of human action or character. The principle of morality has seemed to wither away in America.

Everyday, America's newspapers are filled with similar sensational stories of perverse actions by members of society. The culprits of these perverse actions range from society's drags to this country's president.

Shockingly, it was this president who gained election to this position in 1992 over George Bush who campaigned for the revival of family values. Each new accusation serves as a reminder to this country that maybe the practice of family values is dormant and maybe even dead.

Family values and morals are two princi-



**MICKEY SALOMA**  
column

ples that have slightly evolved through time. Yet, the overall ability to differentiate what is right and what is wrong is something that is set in concrete.

It is a parent's responsibility that each of their children grows in age, wisdom, grace and character. These are all important qualities, however, character is something that everybody must seek to find within themselves in their every action. It is this principle that a parent must instill in his or her child since birth.

It is sad that a role model such as a teacher can hop into bed with a child and not see how wrong an action such as that truly is. A teacher has a huge part in molding the future. They serve as the most visible role models for a child besides a child's parents.

Having good morals is a quality that enables one to have a conscience. It is this conscience that allows one to think not only before one speaks, but before one acts as well. President Clinton should definitely be reminded of that.

It is mind-boggling to believe people don't know it is wrong to ask a co-worker to perform a sexual act.

Having a good sense of morals enables one to think when it comes to all situations, especially when it comes to sex.

The sexual revolution brought about many issues that were both good and bad. The scariest thing that was not settled was the image that people have about those that are sexually active.

It is still perceived that a man who engages in

sex with multiple partners is a stud while a woman who does the same is a slut. Morality plays a big part in one's decision to be sexually active. However, it is immoral to judge anybody. Who are we to judge anybody?

Morality extends beyond the bedroom. It serves as a guiding star in all people's actions.

It is not difficult to uphold high morals, and it is never too late to start practicing them. Morality must somewhat be defined on an individual basis. Everybody is raised differently, yet everybody must know the right way to conduct themselves.

Maybe some people don't know the Golden Rule. It states that people should treat others the way they want to be treated. This is a tenet of morality.

It is wrong to judge people. It is not right to harm others. It is not right to discriminate against other people. It's not right to make others feel uncomfortable. It is not right to be married and to sleep with a 14-year-old boy and mother his children.

Moral choices constantly confront everyone, but by thinking them through with both the heart and the brain, people may be more successful with their decisions.

When it comes down to it, people should respect one another and themselves. This advice, along with the Golden Rule, can set anybody straight when a moral issue arises.

Mickey Saloma is a senior journalism major.



**MAIL CALL**

### Movie's worth not determined by theater

In response to mail call letter in March 26 Battalion:

There was a letter printed on March 26 by a Ms. Bleifeld that I found very amusing. Ms. Bleifeld

implied in her letter that the movie *Eve's Bayou* must not have been very good because she didn't remember it being at Hollywood 16.

She also said that *Amistad* was not a memorable movie, which is ludicrous.

While our beloved Hollywood 16 does have the power to control what movies we can see, it does not have the power to make a movie good or bad.

In fact, our theatre notoriously weeds out controversial films by either not having them or not promoting them.

Case in point, *Amistad* was not released here until a month after its nationwide release.

The fact that it was shown at all is probably due to its multiple

Golden Globe nominations.

Movies such as *Mississippi Burning*, *The Color Purple*, and *Boyz in the Hood* would not have been shown here, does that mean they are bad movies?

Also, is there anyone who thinks *Amistad* was not both moving and memorable?

Instead everyone has hopped on the *Titanic* band wagon. Yes, it was a very emotional tale, but I found it lacking suspense or drama.

I knew the boat was going down before the script was even written.

Jason Kearns  
Class of '97

PLEASE SEE MAIL CALL ON PAGE 12.

