

**CAMPUS CONNECTION**

## Applying for *The Battalion* offers something for all

It is that time of year again. People are graduating, registering for classes and fretting over upcoming finals. As students look ahead to summer and fall semesters, many issues arise concerning where to go, what classes to take and, for many Ags, where to work.

Most students look first to the usual job sources — waiting tables, tending bars and telemarketing. Although these jobs can be good money makers and offer the possibility to interact with other college students, they are not the only options.

Today is the deadline for applications for summer and fall staff at *The Battalion*. The paper is currently hiring for all positions, and applications are open to anyone interested.

Some of you may be asking how working at *The Battalion* could benefit you. For those students who are seeking journalism degrees, the answer is obvious. *The Battalion* provides an opportunity to put to use the skills you have learned in classes. Whether by copy editing, writing feature stories or working as a front-page reporter, working at *The Battalion* offers unlimited possibilities for journalistic experience.

However, *The Battalion* welcomes students from all walks of campus life. From architecture majors to students pursuing poultry science degrees, *The Battalion* has a place for just about anyone who is interested in improving their communications and writing skills.

For those students who are more visually oriented, the newspaper offers positions for you, as well. Open positions include graphic artists, Web designers, photographers, page designers and cartoonists.

*The Battalion* offers students the unusual opportunity to gain professional experience while still having time for school. It is an energetic, interactive environment in which creativity and new ideas are not only allowed, but encouraged.

A position at *The Battalion* also encourages student workers to accumulate a growing network of resources both on campus and beyond. Employees at *The Battalion* have, in the past, been involved with covering football games, meeting presidents and interviewing nationally-recognized artists of the entertainment industry.

So, those of you who are mulling over what to do with all that extra time you have are encouraged to venture down to the basement and pick up an application.

The summer and fall semesters promise to be excellent chances for improvement both individually and for the paper as a whole. New ideas and a more intense focus on covering the A&M community promise to take the paper in new directions and, hopefully, improve upon the solid foundation *The Battalion* has established over the years.

*The Battalion* does not require that you have previous experience, only that applicants have a strong drive and want to do something proactive to improve the A&M community. If you are interested in being a part of this team, *The Battalion* welcomes the chance to work with you. Take the chance to do more than just file mail call — join the team and make a real difference. Applications may be picked up in 013 Reed McDonald.

Mandy Cater is a senior psychology major.



**MANDY CATER**  
opinion editor

**PERSPECTIVES**

## Smoking Joe

*Airlines take sides in debate over in-flight smoking*

Joe Camel, having lost his most recent job, has moved on to international terrorism. On a recent flight, an Italian passenger tried to light up in the bathroom. When he was told not to, several times, he assaulted the flight attendant, forcing the plane to land, forcing Continental Airlines to kick him off the plane. The poor man had boarded the plane in Milan, and hours later, just really wanted a cigarette.

Is it moral to make long-distance flights completely non-smoking? There are two issues to look at here, the economy of air travel and the effects of nicotine withdrawal.

Airplanes have become the most efficient way for anyone to travel between countries or continents. It is usually impractical to drive or take a train, and ships are extremely slow compared to airplanes. And, the cost is pretty competitive.

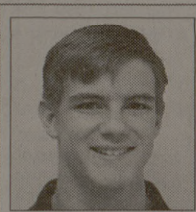
However, international flights can be as long as eight or ten hours.

For those eight or ten hours, the smoker will suffer a variety of symptoms, including shaking, watering mouth, headaches, hunger, nervousness, irritability and the need to do something, anything with their mouth and hands.

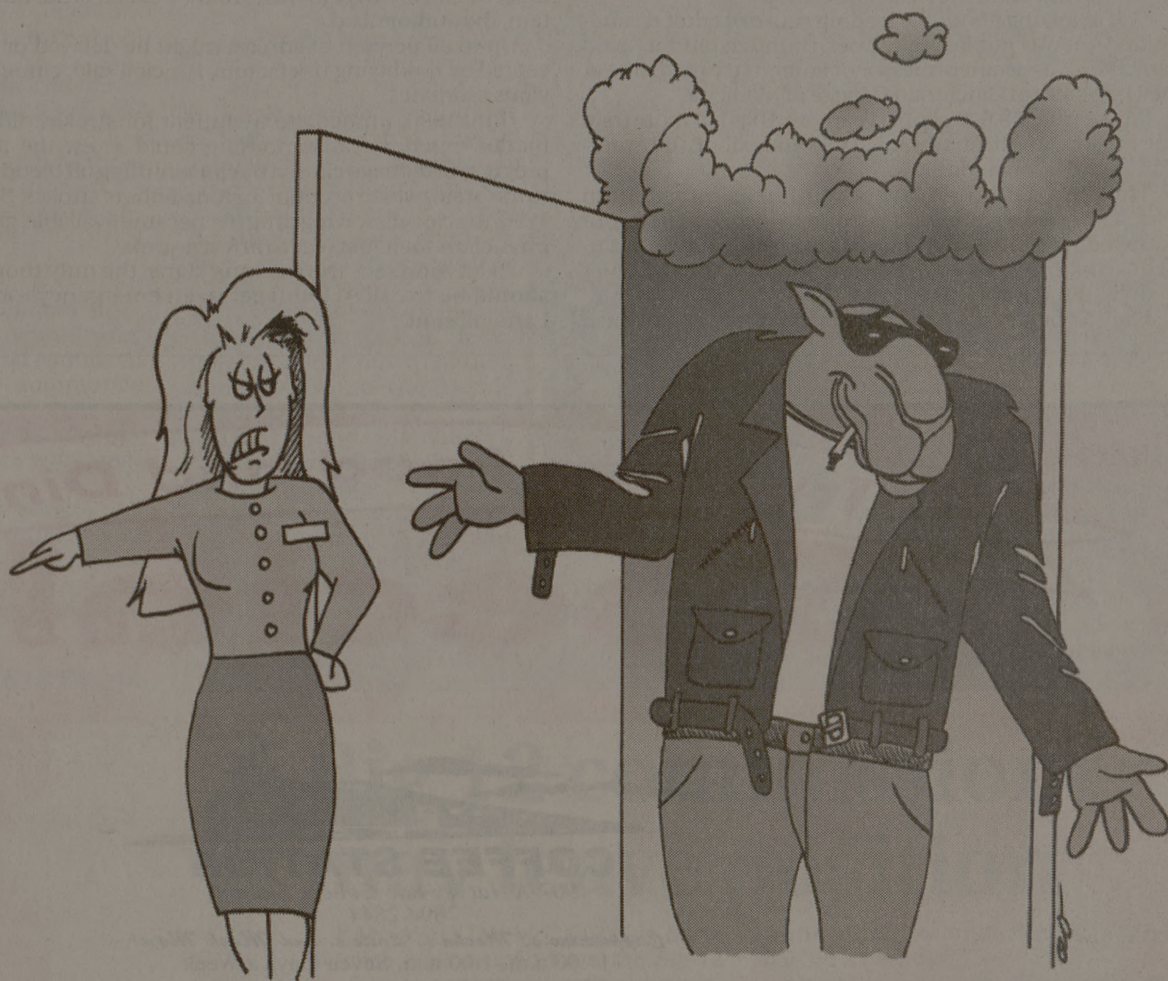
Those symptoms do not sound particularly pleasant to experience, but air travel is the only real way to travel extremely long distances. And it is not right to cause someone physical discomfort if at all possible, in the name of protecting ourselves. That would be infringing on their rights.

Yes, I know you haven't been reminded recently, but smokers do have rights. However, it is also not right for the smokers to endanger the health of non-smoking passengers just for the sake of their habit.

And so, the airline companies are faced with the problem of protecting their non-smoking passengers from the evils of second-hand smoke while also not causing their smoking passengers the discomfort



**CHRIS HUFFINES**  
columnist



previously mentioned. Protecting the flight attendants from irritated smokers and irritated non-smokers is also important.

Many people would say that there is no compromise and, sorry, but the smokers will just have to suffer. This is not entirely accurate, a compromise existed over 50 years ago.

The airship Hindenburg, which flew transatlantic flights from Germany to New Jersey and Brazil, was faced with a similar problem.

During the several-day flight, the passengers wanted to smoke, but the ship was full of hydrogen, which has the nasty habit of burning at the drop of a match. And so, the Hindenburg physically could not fly without hydrogen, but she also could not fly without paying

passengers, most of whom smoked.

The answer was to create an airtight smoking compartment on board the Hindenburg. The compartment was pressurized to keep hydrogen out and passengers entered or exited through an airlock (which doubled as a bar). All this was accomplished using 1930's technology in the middle of a depression-torn Germany with a severe weight restriction on all equipment.

Most of you know that the Hindenburg burned sometime back in the late '30s, which would seem to debunk the whole smoking-section theory.

However, that fire started about 500 feet back, in the tail of the ship, not in the forward passenger compartment, where the smoking

lounge was.

Since then, the severe overreaction to smoking has caused an all-or-nothing approach to solving the problem of how to allow smokers and non-smokers to coexist.

Airlines have sided with non-smokers against the smokers and have banned smoking entirely on flights instead of at least attempting to accommodate everyone.

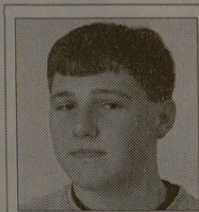
Out there, there is a solution that would be easy to implement, that would make all of the passengers happy, and would keep unfortunate incidents like stewardess assault at a minimum. All it takes is a little ingenuity and the desire to solve the problem.

Chris Huffines is a sophomore speech communications major.

**STUDENT LIFE**

## Upcoming education bill exemplifies dollars coming before people

When the Texas Legislature returns to Austin next year for its 76th session, the House of Representatives will consider a bill that undermines the most fundamental principles of higher education. If passed, Senate Bill 1485 would allow state universities to charge non-resident tuition rates to students who accumulate more than 170 semester credit hours.



**CALEB MCDANIEL**  
columnist

Those students who finish their degree plan with no more than six hours in excess of the minimum number required would be rewarded with a state tuition rebate for their hurry.

For those students who care more about exploring academic interests than about bowing to the mighty buck, this legislation is bad news.

The legislators, forever out of touch with real educational issues, have apparently forgotten that haste makes waste.

The proposed rebate practically bribes students into spending the minimum time and effort on their college education; it pays them to take less courses so that they can be thrown even sooner into the riptides of venture capitalism. It makes learning the lap dog of the markets.

In fact, the Senate's summary analysis of the bill cites financial efficiency as a major impetus for the law: "The longer a student remains in college, the less of a return on the state's investment."

But you didn't realize that the state thinks of you as its commodity.

And the surcharge for students with "excessive" credit hours is founded on entirely faulty premises. The proposal seems to stereotypically suggest that any student with more than 170 semester credit hours must be a lazy leech on the system who is just taking extra country-western dance classes so he or she can waste the state's money.

In reality, students are too often forced to stay for more semesters because they cannot take the courses they need. Faculty cutbacks and poor planning often stagger class schedules so that courses needed for graduation are not conveniently available.

So legislators and administrators force hefty core curriculum requirements on the students, offer fewer courses less frequently, and then complain that those lazy students just refuse to leave campus and get a job. Now that is a nifty piece of legislative logic: make hasty administrative changes and then when they do not work, blame those ungrateful Generation Xers.

But the proposed surcharge is really representative of a much more serious and pervasive mistake in higher education these days.

More and more, stringent pre-professional programs

are being dressed up like baccalaureate degree plans, when they are really nothing of the sort.

In technical and lucrative fields like computer science and engineering, students are forced into narrow specializations and are encouraged not to take electives that do not relate to their vocations.

The message that the state university system projects to its social security numbers — I mean, to its students — is that the most important goal of their education is to gain the skills necessary to make money.

From the moment many students arrive at college, finally free from restrictive high school curricula, they are forced to hurry and declare a major, then told to hurry and graduate, and then urged to hurry and get a job so the university can quote more impressive numbers in its alumni newsletter.

The students have a right to ask, "Exactly what is the hurry?" Some of us realize that college is the one opportunity we will have to explore diverse academic interests. But policies like Senate Bill 1485 imply that if you are an accounting major, you just do not have the time to take that anthropology class that your friend recommended. If you are a chemical engineer, quit wasting your time on "pansy" Shakespeare classes; you are needed out in the work force.

And to encourage you to stay within the stuffy confines of your department, if you do not take any more than you absolutely must, the State of Texas will

send you a juicy rebate check in the mail.

Policies like this preach education for the sake of economy. What ever happened to education for the sake of education?

The House Higher Education Committee has at least revised the bill to exempt students enrolled in two major programs from the surcharge. But the exception is little more than balderdash. Realistically, consider what a poor student already facing years of loan payments would do if the bill were passed. Faced with the choice between free rebate money from the state or pursuing that genetics and philosophy double-major he or she has always dreamed about, he or she will probably pick the former.

State legislators are wrong to even implicitly discourage flexible degree plans and interdisciplinary majors, which this bill does in spite of the exceptions it makes for double majors.

When legislators see dollar signs, they start making cents and stop making sense. Apparently all the Senate cared about when it passed SB 1485 was the \$4.5 million that the bill would save the state. Now, it is up to the House of Representatives and its interim committees to reject any bill that punishes over-achievers with higher tuition and rewards under-achievers with higher rebates.

Caleb McDaniel is a freshman history major.

**Response in Mail Call:**

I agree with you when you state that science and religion are in conflict in western society.

The conflict you refer to arises due to differing ideas about the origin of the universe and our place in it.

Creationism and Evolution describe the origin of humanity in mutually exclusive terms.

God and Natural Selection are the driving forces of each idea.

To analyze the merits and faults of these ideas, one must determine what constitutes the

"truth" in both philosophies.

You point out that "Christianity is based on objective truth, on actual historical events and communications that were recorded and continue to be supported by scientific evidence."

If this is your criteria of objective truth, then Creationism is indeed valid because it is stated in the Bible that God created man and since the Bible contains many historical accounts that are supported by archeological finds, the Bible must be correct about the origin of man.

Science however, has other

criteria for what it considers objective truth: one states that if observations contradict a theory, then the theory needs to be modified or discarded.

Accordingly, Evolution is the only scientific theory that explains the diversity of life (most of it extinct) found in the fossil record and more importantly, the gradual increase in complexity of the fossils found on different soil layers.

It replaced the idea that species have always been permanent and that none have become extinct since the "beginning."

If you conclude that the scientific method is flawed because it is conducted by humans; do not forget that religion is also practiced by humans who have in the past, fallen prey to their own biases.

Recall that there was a time a few hundred years ago when many European Christians broke away from the Catholic Church to start their own congregations because they disagreed with the Vatican.

Finally, as you suggested, I looked into the history of science and I noted many cases

were scientific theories were discarded and replaced with better ones.

Yet some have never changed: the evidence still suggests that the earth is round with a circumference of 25,000 miles.

Eratosthenes concluded this two thousand years ago after he measured the length of the shadow cast by a vertical stick in Alexandria at noon on June 21.

I do not think that particular piece of knowledge will change for another one hundred generations.

Francisco Pinto  
Class of '98



**MAIL CALL**

**Creation beliefs depend upon individual truths**

Response to Joshua Hill's re-