

CAMPUS CONNECTION

Enter an action code now...

Scheduling classes through phone registration comes complete with many headaches

They are the best of times, they are the worst of times. They are the phone registration times. They are the best of times because they signal the semester is almost over and summer is almost here. They give us the opportunity to pick classes for next semester, allowing us a momentary escape from the subjects and stresses of our current schedules. But, as any Aggie knows, they are also the worst of times. You know how it goes. The evening for registration finally arrives, and you have your schedule all set out, code numbers neatly penciled beside each of your dream courses. All that remains is to get through to the phone bank, tap a few digits, asterisks, pound keys, and just like that, you are registered. But you also know it ain't that easy. There is the wrestling with your roommate for dibs on the phone for the hour of free-for-all redialing. Once you finally get a hold of the receiver, you are your roommate's "you can't use the phone when you pry it from my dead fingers" looks. But the fun has just begun. You settle comfortably into your chair, prepared for the best but expecting the worst. Apprehensively, you punch 260-12 and brace yourself for the inevitable.



CALEB MCDANIEL
columnist

Ring, Ring, Beep, beep, beep. With the ever-annoying, everlasting busy signal still ringing in your head, you hang up and punch redial. Ring, Ring, Beep, beep, beep. Gratuitous violence, loud shouting and general condemnations of university administration ensue. Beep, beep, beep, beep.

An hour passes. A pot of coffee empties. Nature is calling, but you cannot abandon the phone to the clutches of your roommate, who is sitting with bloodshot eyes and a kitchen knife in the corner, secretly plotting to take over the phone. An Aggie's got to do what an Aggie's got to do.

And then, after several hundred million redials, just when your eyes are starting to glaze over and your thumb is beginning to cramp from pushing phone buttons, the heavens open and a ray of hope recalls you from your catatonic state. Suddenly, the phone is ringing and you are not getting a busy signal. Hallelujah, you whisper to yourself, scrambling to wake yourself up enough to read the codes from your paper. Hallelujah, the computer is answering. You are finally going to get regis —

"All phone lines are presently busy. Please hang up and try your call again in one hour."

Curses, foiled again. Depressed and dejected, you get back to the hard work of pushing the redial button, which will probably fall off of the phone by the end of the night.

You have the Bonfire registration system displayed on your computer screen, and you watch in agony as the last avail-

able spots for the only course you need for graduation drop quietly into oblivion.

Your roommate has a can of hair spray in one hand and a lighter in the other, and he is starting to look like he means serious business. It is every Aggie for himself during phone registration.

And you are starting to get the feeling that if you hear a busy signal one more time, whatever he has planned might not be so bad.

Your hands are starting to twitch uncontrollably, and you find yourself humming along with the dial tone just to entertain yourself.

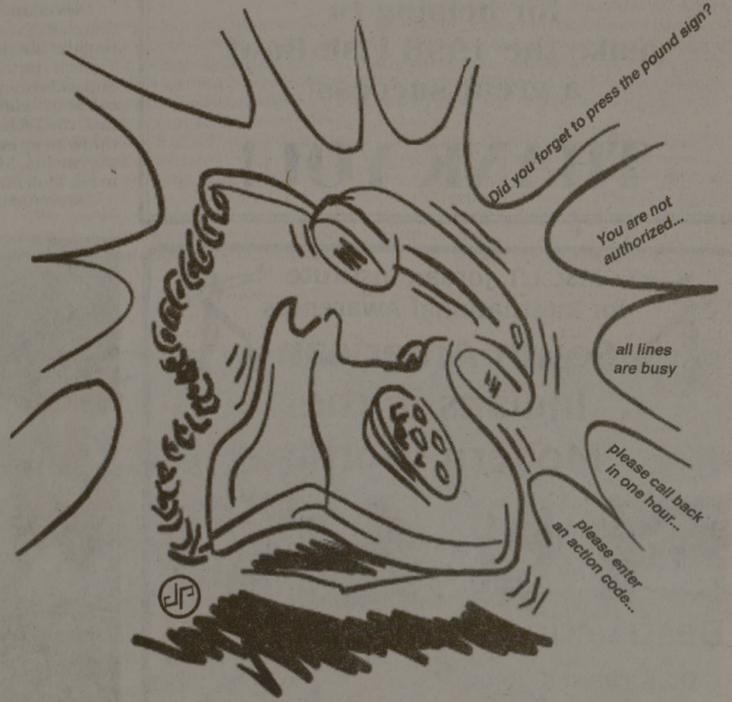
And then, at long last, you hear the sound that is almost as dear to the Aggie's heart as the distant honking of a hulla-baloo in the night. "Welcome to the Texas A&M Student Information System."

Pinching yourself to make sure that you are not dreaming, you waltz through the system, entering in numbers with childlike glee. And then, as you near the end of your last course code and start to celebrate, an evil voice interrupts your reverie to inform you that the class that you have entered is full.

Oy vay. It is back to the drawing board for your schedule, and given the fact that your roommate is starting to foam at the mouth, it will probably be tomorrow night before you set out on your next phone registration adventure.

On second thought, maybe they are not the best of times at all. Just the worst. Beep, beep, beep, beep.

Caleb McDaniel is a freshman history major.



PERSPECTIVES

UT students' Hopwood protest fails thanks to bad planning

Last week, some University of Texas students had a demonstration to protest the Hopwood decision. These students



JOE SCHUMACHER
columnist

such as the voters. The idea is not to change the mind of one man, but bring attention to an issue to as many other people as possible. Any true politician will listen to voters' opinions, not that of an angry mob. Chances are these protesting students did not have high visibility by the public hanging out in Morales lobby.

What would these students have said if Dan Morales had come out to address them, anyway? Given the lack of planning that seemed to go into this demonstration, they probably hadn't even planned that far ahead for this scenario, and they would have looked even more ridiculous if it had occurred.

If Morales would have addressed these students, it would have set a horrible precedent. Other groups would give up the useless, civil means (such as calling ahead and setting an appointment) of getting their concerns voiced. If the Attorney General had seen these students, no doubt a mob of tobacco company lobbyists would be there protesting the very next day, demanding to see Morales, because if anyone feels wronged by the state of Texas, it's the cigarette industry.

So these students hung out in the lobby for a little less than an hour, "protesting," if that is what you would like to call it. According to an AP report, these students held dollar bills up to imply that Morales was up for sale. If the Attorney General was up for sale, even if those students pooled all their money they probably would not have enough to meet the offers that he probably receives on a regular basis. Did it ever occur to these students that maybe the tobacco companies had already tried that, and it obviously did not get them very far.

While protesting, these students chanted something along the lines of, "Dan Morales you can't hide/ we

have justice on our side." While catchy, this little limerick lacks one little grain of truth: justice is NOT on their side. It sided with Cheryl Hopwood in the case of *Hopwood v. The State of Texas*.

After protesting for almost an hour, the students then decided to leave. Obviously these students felt very concerned about this issue to take an hour out of their busy schedule to protest. Apparently the fervor of their cause was quelled by some sort of time constraints. Maybe these students had to go back to class, maybe Jerry Springer was on or maybe they were facing legal ramifications for their protest: perhaps incarceration for disturbing the peace. Whatever it was, these students left after an hour. Again, the zealotry of their cause was displayed by not going to jail. Obviously they can do more good for their cause, like maybe planning another protest.

So here's what can be learned from this protest: first, a protest takes some serious planning. It is not just a spur of the moment thing. It might also help to make an appointment. Timing is also really important. So plan accordingly, and be sure that everyone has the day off to show up and stick around. Finally be prepared to go to jail for your cause. It makes you look really dedicated to your cause. Students getting arrested also grabs more headlines and attention than "students protest for an hour then leave in time to go to class." Besides it makes a really cool story and you can impress all your friends by telling them about the time you went to jail.

So while this protest was a bust, if these UT students learn from this experience, perhaps they can have another one some with a little more success.

Joe Schumacher is a junior journalism major.

PERSPECTIVES

Marketing Diana dolls shows tasteless money-making tactic

I guess my opinion of human decency is just too high. For years, I have thought that there were a few lows that normal people, just like you and me, would not sink to. I was wrong.

Hasbro, Inc. is currently in negotiations with the Princess of Wales Memorial Fund to get the rights to make dolls, jigsaw puzzles, board games, and collectibles based on the now-deceased Diana, Princess of Wales. This situation is a travesty that not only highlights the slimy moral underbelly of humanity, but demeans the reputation of a profound public figure. Now, don't get me wrong. I am a good capitalist. I believe in violent strike-breaking, sweatshops — as long as they are foreign, child labor, merchandising of death, and in general exploiting the lesser classes. That's all good bull.

However, even with capitalism's extremely tainted image, it has better sense than to take a public figure and exploit the death of that figure for their own profit. The Lady Di dolls are not that bad; Hasbro has good intentions, but all roads from this point are paved with good intentions. If this is allowed, what won't be done for a quick buck? Mother Teresa action figures with kung-fu grip? JFK Cuban Missile Crisis play sets? The Abe Lincoln teddy bear with realistic bleeding head wound? Maybe bloody glove O.J.? How about World War II G.I. Joe's with flamethrower burns. Or, even more emotionally charged (and therefore, better selling) Oklahoma City Bombing victim dolls. You could run the gamut from the elderly to babies. Collect the whole set. They will be collector's items in a few years.

And before you get angry at me for thinking this kind of thing up, look around. It has already begun.



CHRIS HUFFINES
columnist

In England, the general populace has already begun responding to the wave of "Unauthorized" Lady Di products. Most of it is directed to Flora margarine, which bears Lady Di's signature, Princess of Wales Butter. Yes, a margarine company exploiting the death of the Princess. Here in the good old U. S. of A., there has been a beanie baby made with the Princess's white rose symbol. It is being marketed as the Diana Beanie Baby. If this were a movie, it would be a comedy. Instead, we are faced with a real-life tragedy.

Princess Diana was a woman who embraced worthy causes a sought for solutions. Unlike many of today's public figures, she found unnoticed tragedies and brought them into the public spotlight. She used her fame with wisdom and humility.

And now she has been reduced to a tub of butter substitute. Or a bag of plastic beads. Or a figurine. Why don't we let dogs dig up her bones for chew toys? That way, we can completely humiliate her image. No sense doing things halfway.

Unfortunately, it is, by and large, American business fueling this movement.

America is in need of soul searching. If this country has the gall to exploit the image of a dead woman who was cherished around the world, and then go home and wonder why values in general are deteriorating in the United States, we are begging an and all gods to bring down punishment on a biblical scale, punishment that would make nuclear war look like just a slap on the wrist. And America would deserve it.

There are a host of reasons to preserve the image of Princess Diana, and later public figures from being dragged through the muck of corporate exploitation and only one reason to do it: money. Which is more important to you?

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