

# Opinion

## Northgate incidents troy Aggie spirit



CORRIE CAULEY

encouraging students from coming forward, the problem remains buried beneath the floor mats, left in the dark with no chance of being resolved.

What complicates matters even more is that many international students are not comfortable speaking English. The language barrier only encourages separation of the international students and acts as another obstacle standing in the way of voicing the truth.

Attempts have been made by police to cut down on the problem by placing additional security in the Northgate area. Although the intensity of problems decreased with extra officers in the area, the problems surfaced again as soon as the additional security was removed.

Police efforts to cut back on student harassment are only a temporary answer to an ever-present problem. It is up to the community to see that this problem comes to an end. And it is up to the victims to take that step of courage and come forward to give voice to this issue.

The decision to correct the problem has to start somewhere. And if Aggies really are about helping Aggies, then they will not tolerate oppression of their own kind.

An Aggie is an Aggie, regardless of race or culture. And an Aggie who participates in any activity that demeans his or her own kind needs to reevaluate what exactly it is to be an Aggie. And so does the Aggie who witnesses an incident of racial harassment and chooses not to stand up for his or her fellow Aggie or fails to report the incident to the appropriate authorities. Witnesses who remain silent are just as guilty as the perpetrators.

The change needed is not a change in security measures. It is not a change in counseling services available to international students who become victims of racial harassment. It is a change in attitude.

It means recognizing that as an Aggie, you are a part of a diverse, multicultural, unique community that should unite together in the common spirit and passion of being an Aggie. It means recognizing that the individual is part of something bigger and greater, and every Aggie is entitled to that.

Corrie Cauley is a senior journalism major.

## Budget shortage leaves Bus Ops in crisis Student apathy prevents campus mass transit improvements



CALEB MCDANIEL

Kathie Mathis, associate director of Parking, Traffic and Transportation Services, says the University bus system is in a state of "crisis."

Those who frequently ride the bus to class from off-campus locations will probably agree with her.

This semester, bus schedules have been erratic. Bus pickup times are unpredictable, and once the bus arrives, it is often too full of irritable Aggies to admit any more passengers. The passengers who do cram into the prehistoric vehicles swelter the whole way, and by the time they arrive at class — often late — they are generally angry with the world. It is not the best way to start the day.

But students ought to know, the good Ags at PTTS should not be blamed for the sad state of Bus Operations.

In this instance, as in general, a little investigation will discover the root of all evil has something to do with the almighty buck. Bus Operations has a problem with money — they do not have enough of it.

Since 1983, the price of a semester bus pass has risen only five dollars. But the same period has witnessed "a constant erosion of bus pass sales," Gary Jackson, Bus Operations manager, said. The math is easy. Less sales plus stagnant prices equals trouble. Revenue is in a rut.

Bus costs, on the other hand, continue to skyrocket. The majority of the bus fleet is made up of ancient, gas-guzzling buses from the Reagan era. About \$1 million a year are put into repairing buses that are about as reliable as the Happiness Hotel shuttle in *The Great Muppet Caper*. Many of A&M's current buses were picking up Ags when you were still wetting the bed. Most of them ought to be condemned or burned — or both.

It is not hard to see why maintenance costs are so high. The buses were built before the Flood. Many of their parts are no longer even manufactured. Bad engines have to be completely rebuilt because they cannot be replaced.

Several years ago, one bus was out of commission for months for nothing more than a broken axle. The necessary part was no longer produced, and it took five months to track down the materials. It does not take an accounting major to figure out that this kind of maintenance does not allow an efficient budget.

Speaking of budgets, the amount of funding Bus Ops receives from the powers that be is laughable. Here is a lesser-known fact about the other school in Austin — its bus system has an annual operating budget totaling \$7.3 million. The bus system in Aggieland, on the other hand, walks a tightrope budget of \$2.7 million. Longhorn buses operate with three times as much money as Aggie buses. And remember that a million bucks of that budget is tied up in repairs.

The situation is painfully clear. Bus Operations needs money. They do not get it from students or regents. Ergo, crowded bus benches. Impatient passengers. Uncomfortable riding conditions. Inconsistent schedules. Crisis.

The way out of the crisis is more complex. It is difficult for the bus system to generate more revenue from

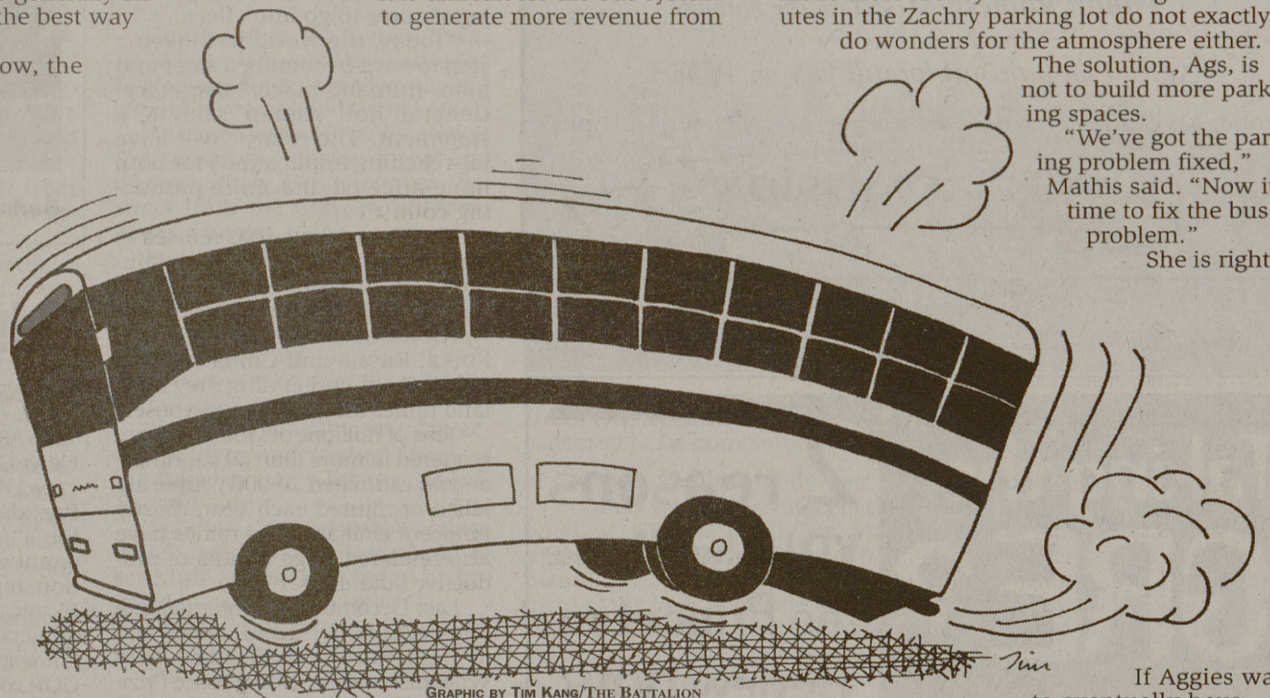
pleasure with the buses by not riding them at all. They choose to drive to school, and driving to campus means parking on campus. So students lobby for more and more parking lots. They wait in line for 40 minutes to find a parking space when they could have ridden the bus in a comparable amount of time.

The excuses for driving are typical. "The buses are hot and sticky. They make my hair wilt," some might say. But as long as this attitude prevails, the buses cannot raise the money needed to upgrade in the air-conditioned luxury vehicles we unreasonably expect.

"The exhaust the bus belches out is so disgusting," says another student with a wrinkle of the nose. But the buses cannot be made more environmentally conscious until they make more money. And cars idling for 30 minutes in the Zachry parking lot do not exactly do wonders for the atmosphere either.

The solution, Ags, is not to build more parking spaces.

"We've got the parking problem fixed," Mathis said. "Now it's time to fix the bus problem."  
She is right.



GRAPHIC BY TIM KANG/THE BATTALION

the students. Bus management has considered lobbying for a flat transportation student fee that would cover costs, but Aggies need another student fee like they need another sequel to *Free Willy*.

Nevertheless, the present program is not working. Bus passes are not selling well because better service is needed to attract more riders. To provide that better service, more revenue from more riders is needed. These two economic axioms put PTTS in a perpetual dilemma.

But when students spend 40 minutes waiting in the rain for a bus, they do not see these financial troubles below the surface. So Aggies voice a few complaints to their fellow benchwarmers, who nod their heads in sympathy. They fire broad curses at PTTS — the perennial student scapegoat — and then go along their not-so-merry way. They might even cash in their bus passes, which only exacerbates the problem.

Most students have shown an active dis-

If Aggies want to eventually have workable buses, they have to work with the buses as they are now. Things must be worse before they can get better.

The student body must make a concerted effort to get behind the bus system instead of whining for more parking. You would not have parking tickets if you had good buses to ride instead. Do not rue the day PTTS was created unless you intend to do something to improve it.

And something definitely must be done. "The students have got to get behind this or else this tradition is going to bite the dust," Mathis said.

If students will rally around Bus-Ops instead of lining up for parking, someday Bus Operations will have enough money. But given the current student apathy or outright hostility towards PTTS, do not hold your breath. Unless, of course, you happen to be walking behind a 15-year-old diesel bus.

Caleb McDaniel is a sophomore history major.

### MAIL CALL

I would hate for this attempt to unify the Greeks to bring about resentment and feelings of exclusion by non-Greeks, some of whom already have a negative view of fraternities and sororities.

So, all of the best to the Greeks who work hard to represent A&M, but we ask that the council find a different place to create Greek unification and leave the football games to unify Aggies.

Natalie Dometrius  
Class of '01

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class and phone number.

The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:

The Battalion - Mail Call  
013 Reed McDonald  
Texas A&M University  
College Station, TX  
77843-1111

Campus Mail: 1111  
Fax: (409) 845-2647  
Email: batt@tamvm1.tamu.edu

## Gov. Bush brings Hispanics to GOP

About five years ago, the Texas tourism committee ran a memorable advertising campaign. "Texas," the commercial said. "It's like a whole other country."



BEVERLY MIRELES

The tourism board was right. Texas has country fields, big cities, scenic parks, NASA's Johnson Space Center and soon, it will hold claim to the next president, George W. Bush.

Perhaps that is an audacious claim. But probably not as much of one as people might think. The odds are in his favor. People are lining up to support him, and even most Texas Democrats are generous with praise. The governor's race, at the moment, is less like a competitive campaign and more like one really long debutante ball for Bush. He probably even looks good in a white dress.

George and Barbara must be proud. Their eldest is a sure bet against Land Commissioner Gary Mauro. Bush is so far ahead in the race that Mauro's campaign motto might as well be "Mauro: He doesn't know who you are, either."

So what is Bush's big secret? Why is he so popular when politicians everywhere are generally hated by the public? Is it charm? Wit? Name recognition? Strength of policy?

Possibly. But the one thing George W. Bush has that many other Republican politicians do not is a chance at winning the Hispanic vote.

This August, Bush presented what is largely thought to be the most aggressive campaign to reach out to Hispanic voters in the history of Texas.

The Hispanic campaign consists of Spanish and English radio advertisements, outdoor billboards and television commercials featuring the governor relaying his campaign theme to the public, "Depende de nosotros," which means, "It depends on us."

Smart move, George. Last week, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that since 1990, Texas has had the nation's second-largest increase in Hispanic residents. To put a numerical value on it, Texas now has a reported 5.7 million Hispanic residents. Needless to say, that is a large chunk of the voting population.

Even if he does not have the majority of the Hispanic vote yet, he is well on his way.

It is beneficial to Bush's reelection campaign that he can speak Spanish well enough to conduct television interviews in it.

He has become a very public fixture in the Hispanic community. Just try and find a recent picture of the governor without someone of Latino or Hispanic descent in it.

Another winning strategy is his extremely careful approach to historically Hispanic causes, such as bilingual education, which he has stated he would support if students keep passing state exams like the TAAS.

Bush also has said he would allow the use of state funds to educate the children of illegal immigrants and to pay for emergency medical care for them as well.

This makes Bush a redeemer of the GOP's damaged image after the disgusting display of anti-Hispanic legislation headed up by California Governor Pete Wilson.

Finally, a Republican who deserves the public's vote. Texas Democrats seem to agree. Across the state, they are lining up in support of Bush. Ann Richards and Hillary Clinton may have publicly backed Mauro, but Bush has the full-fledged support of Democratic Lt. Governor Bob Bullock, who is popular in his own right. Also, Bush has traveled to El Paso, a Democratic stronghold, many times this year, and has won the support of the city's Latino mayor.

If Bush can secure the Hispanic vote in Texas, he certainly has a chance of winning more Hispanic votes than any other Republican presidential nominee before him.

Nationwide, Republicans have never won more than 37 percent. If Bush can pull it off in Texas, the Republicans may once again have a shot at the growing blue-collar ethnic Catholic vote.

Of course, he does have to decide to run for president first. Though he has expressed some tentativeness about running, having the chance to become the second son in history to follow his father into the White House is almost too much for anyone to pass up.

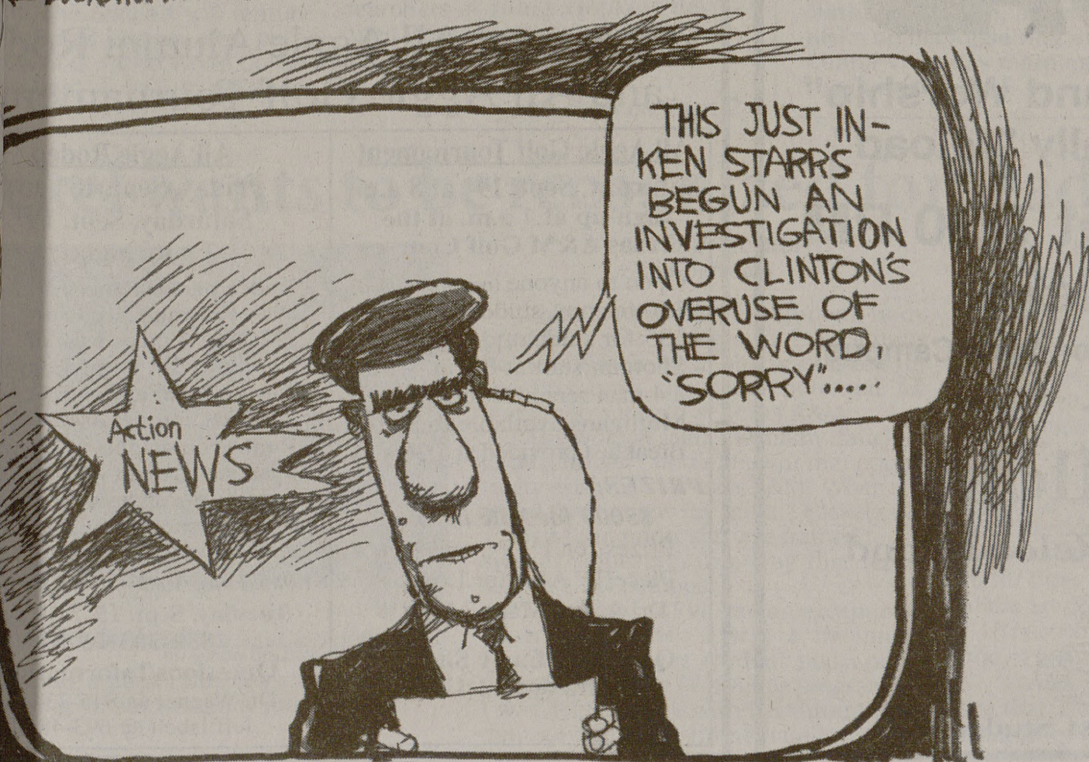
With the political luck Bush has been having these days, and with the strength of the Hispanic vote, a place on the Republican ticket is not far out of his reach.

Beverly Mireles is a sophomore microbiology major.

### Fraternity seating regates campus

unification of the Greeks of block seating at football games could lead to further segregation of the A&M campus. has become too segregated because of the groups to make themselves and grow individually. s have become divided tions like "Corps" and "," and tragically, by race

### LUCKY RICHLANDIA CONSTITUTION



Action NEWS

DUNK WY ROGE