

Student Senate laundromat proposal deserves student support

For many Aggies, hoarding quarters is like shouting "Toombs" when the football team is on third down — it is a reflex, a brain-stem function requiring no real thought to execute. However, that may soon change, and for the better.



CHRIS HUFFINES

The Student Senate is voting on a bill Wednesday that would put Aggiebucks readers on washing machines and dryers on campus. This is a good proposal that needs to be supported by students.

Sarah Jackson, a student senator and a junior political science and speech communication major, said the bill will first place Aggiebucks readers in several centrally-located laundry areas, then if the trial run is successful, readers will be added throughout campus as quickly as funds will allow.

Students who prefer quarters (or who have hoarded change throughout their childhood years so they would never run out in these delicate college years) will still be able to use change without a problem.

There is a possibility campus computers will not be able to handle the extra demand on the Aggiebucks system. In that case, Jackson said the Student Senate will propose issuing debit cards, similar to copy cards.

There are two basic reasons this bill needs to be adopted and the student body needs to support it. First, the freedom to use Aggiebucks in laundromats will be extraordinarily convenient. Second, the student body wants this change badly.

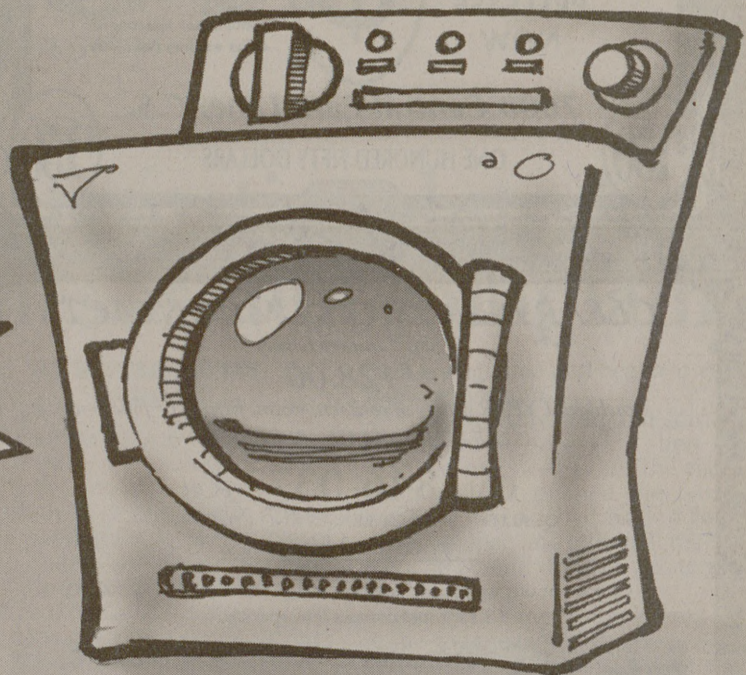
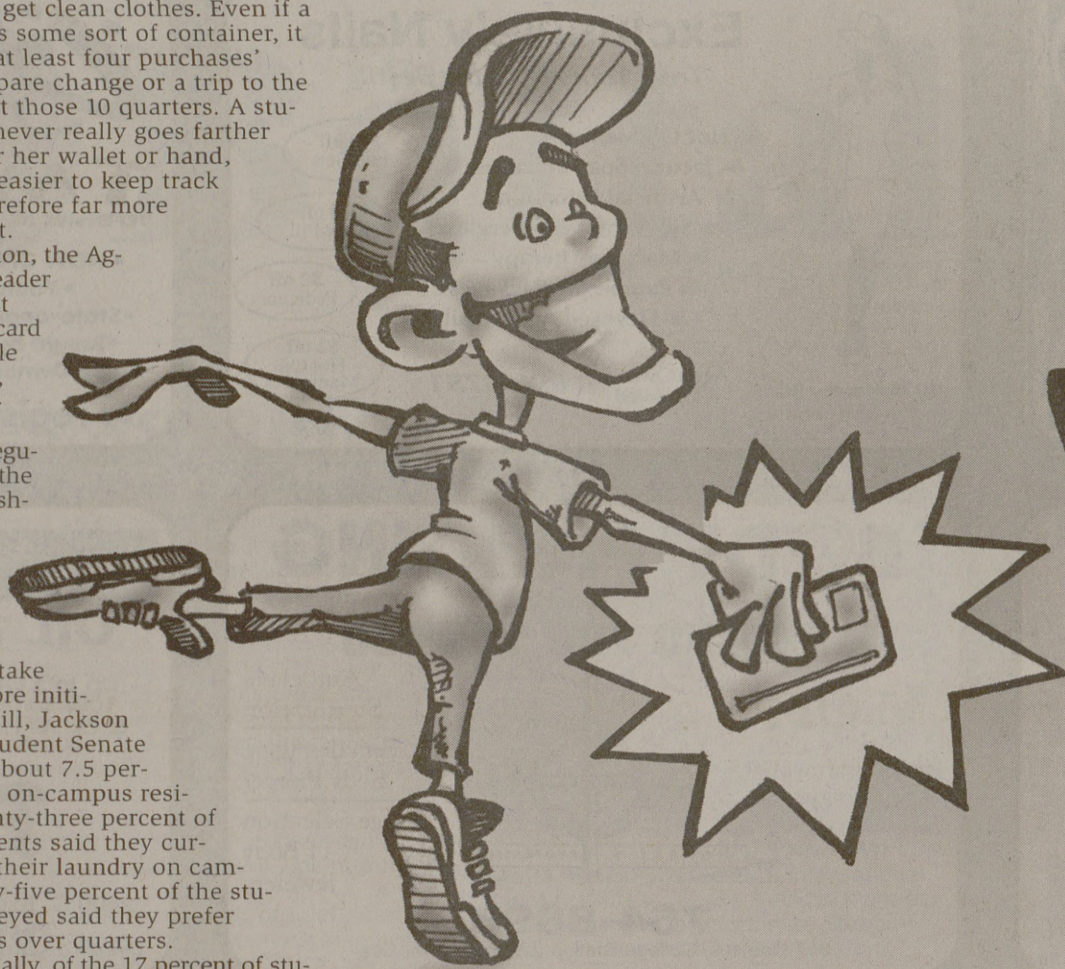
Changing to Aggiebucks will be convenient for students. Between the washing machine and the dryer, an average load of laundry on campus will cost a student \$1.25, or five quarters. Two loads will cost 10 quarters. Students will have to keep track of 10

coins for however long it takes them to go through two loads worth of laundry in order to get clean clothes. Even if a student has some sort of container, it still takes at least four purchases' worth of spare change or a trip to the bank to get those 10 quarters. A student's ID never really goes farther than his or her wallet or hand, making it easier to keep track of and therefore far more convenient.

In addition, the Aggiebucks reader will not spit back your card as a possible counterfeit, which happens with alarming regularity with the current washing machines.

Secondly, students want this change to take place. Before initiating the bill, Jackson said the Student Senate surveyed about 7.5 percent of the on-campus residents. Eighty-three percent of those students said they currently did their laundry on campus. Eighty-five percent of the students surveyed said they prefer Aggiebucks over quarters.

Additionally, of the 17 percent of students who did their laundry off-campus, 78 percent said they would increase their use of on-campus laundry facilities if Aggiebucks were introduced. Not only do students want this change, but it would be a bad idea to send the message to the Student Government Association they do not need to bother getting student input.



ROBERT HYNCEK/THE BATTALION

Jackson said the Department of Residence Life has wanted to initiate this change for several years, but were waiting for technology improvement in the Aggiebucks system before they began an Aggiebucks-on-washers program. Jackson said this kind of wait-and-see

attitude could drag on for years, so the Student Senate did something now, rather than wait. This is yet another habit the student body needs to encourage SGA to continue. Putting Aggiebucks readers on washing machines is a great idea that not only

showcases what SGA does on behalf of the student body, but should also have the full weight of the student body behind it. Freshly washed, if possible.

Chris Huffines is a junior speech communication major.

EDITORIAL

The Battalion

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Election results reveal Republican party's complacency

Based on this fall's election, maybe the two major parties of our political system should change their mascots. Republicans, instead of the elephant, would be well-suited as a rabbit. Democrats would be more accurately portrayed as a tortoise than a donkey.



ANDREW BALELY

In elementary school, children are taught the tortoise beat the rabbit because the rabbit was not taking his race seriously. Slow and steady wins the race, right?

In truth, the rabbit was not utilizing his skills and higher position correctly. If the rabbit had stuck to the task at hand, the tortoise would have been soundly defeated.

This simple, elementary fable could easily be substituted for the 1998 election. Simply put, the Republicans dropped the ball.

This was supposed to be the election of the Republican's dreams. With a huge scandal in the

opposing party and an existing majority in both houses of Congress, nothing could separate the Republicans from huge electoral victories.

Leading up to Nov. 3, Republicans — especially House speaker Newt Gingrich — could taste Democratic blood. Democrats, on the other hand, were privately as scared as a whimpering dog. But when the dust settled, both parties' expectations were totally wrong.

The scandal-ridden Democrats did not only maintain their position in the House, they gained five seats. The Democrats won another victory, losing no seats in the Senate.

Some Republicans, under Gingrich's rhetoric, realistically expected and hoped to pick up as many as 20 House seats.

The contrast between expectation and reality shows the Democrats won big and the Republicans lost bigger.

The reason for Republican dismay is obvious to anyone who knows the inner workings of the party political structure. It is all about the votes, and Democrats

are that much closer, not farther, from regaining a majority in the House. Since their 1994 takeover, Republicans — just as the rabbit — have not utilized their majority. In the last year, Republicans have done more mudslinging than policy work.

This week, the Republican party may elect a new House majority leader, and they will put a new speaker in power after Newt Gingrich resigned in the face of party pressure. It is ironic the Republican speaker so far has suffered more from the Lewinsky scandal than the man who did the cheating. Gingrich was the chief proponent of a Republican strategy that backfired.

After Clinton was finally caught with his pants down by Starr, Gingrich proceeded with a mudslinging, hell-bent rhetoric that was out to get Clinton and all Democrats.

The problem the Republicans failed to see was you cannot judge a group by one man. Doing so is called an individualistic fallacy. Meanwhile, the Democrats steadily denied the Lewinsky matter had any importance or rele-

vance in any election. They chose to concentrate on issues. Voters went to the polls and let Republicans know they want optimism, not pessimism.

Through the heavy attacks on the Democrats, Republicans also failed to achieve any policy at all. Voters wanted a big tax cut out of the budget surplus; they got an annual cut of \$8 per person. Also, Republicans caved in to Clinton's request to shore up the Social Security system. Saving Social Security is smart in the long run, but it was not smart in the minds of many Republican voters.

As the new Republican party leaders are chosen this week, they must now begin sticking to policies, not politics. They are still the front-runners in American politics. They can win the race with the resources they have available. They better not stop and nap though, because the tortoise is slowly and steadily gaining ground.

Andrew Balely is a junior political science major.

FIRE ALARM

Inadequate, missing fire equipment endangers residence hall students' safety

Few things are more frightening than being woken by a fire alarm — except perhaps not being woken by one.

During the recent fire in Dorm 9, there were problems with the fire-alarm system, and fire-fighting equipment was unavailable. Many of the same dangers may exist in other campus buildings, and they must be addressed immediately. The Dorm 9 fire should serve as a warning, and campus fire systems should be inspected and upgraded before they are needed again.

The first concern to address is fire alarms. There are conflicting reports of the operation of the alarm in Dorm 9 the morning of the fire. Many residents were not woken by the residence hall's alarm, but rather by fellow residents knocking on doors.

Due to the high number of false alarms in previous years, the alarm system was programmed with a 3-minute delay between the time the sensors detect a fire and the time the alarm begins to sound. Physical Plant officials said a fire may burn for up to 10 minutes before an audible alarm sounds in the building. In the Dorm 9 incident, that alarm came so late nine students were trapped on the fourth floor, unable to access the building's stairwells.

Once the building's fire alarm was finally activated, it only sounded for 30 seconds before the fire damaged the system, shutting it off. A fire-warning system that can be disabled by a fire is useless.

Even if the residents of Dorm 9 had been alerted to the fire as soon as it started, they could not have fought the blaze. As in most campus residence halls, fire extinguishers were not available in Dorm 9.

Fire extinguishers are not publicly accessible in on-campus residence halls. In Residence Life housing, fire extinguishers are located in the rooms of each resident adviser and the hall office. This places at least one extinguisher on each floor, although it is located in a locked room.

In Corps residence halls, however, fire extinguishers are kept with each commanding officer. These officers are randomly placed throughout the hall, meaning some floors may not have any fire-fighting equipment.

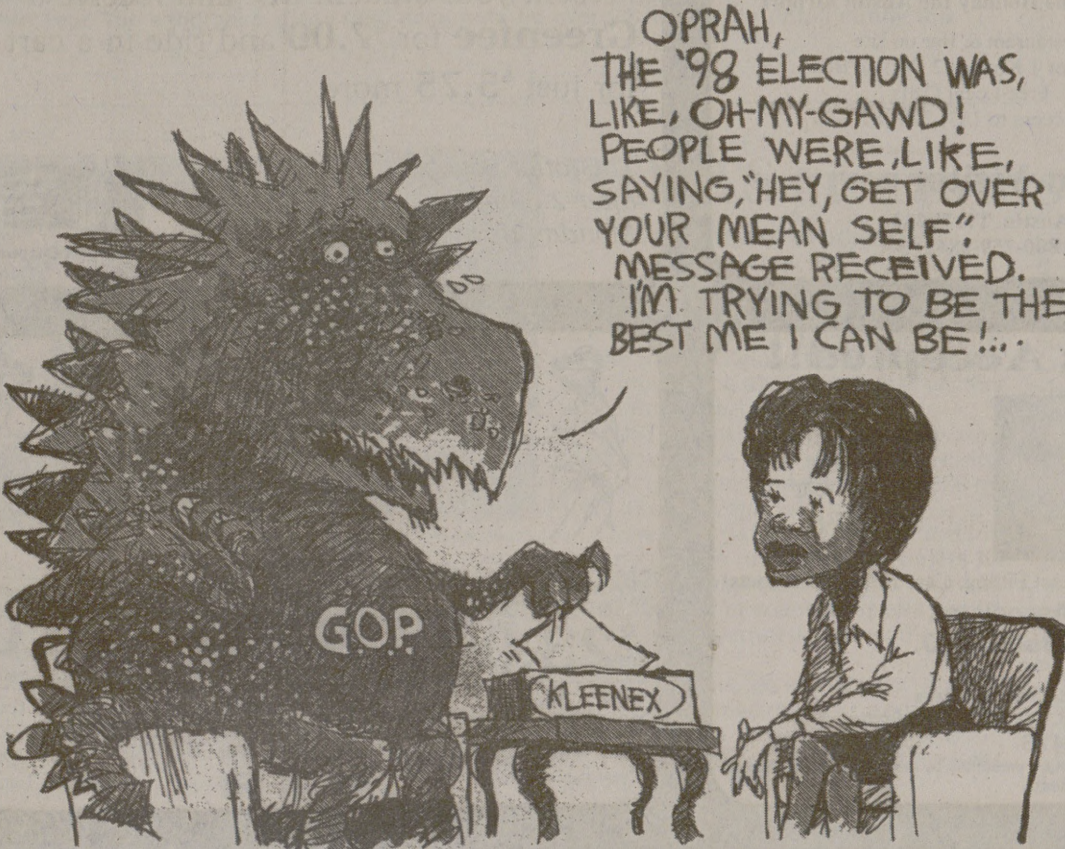
As with the 3-minute delay, the fire-extinguisher regulation is designed to prevent pranks. Unfortunately, in attempting to curb these inconveniences, University decision makers are risking students' lives. A fire extinguisher could save personal items, prevent serious building damage or make the difference between escaping safely or being trapped on the fourth floor.

In addition to these concerns, University officials must be sure residence hall staff and residents have appropriate fire training. Prior to the fire, most hall residents were not aware of the alarm system's 3-minute delay. Many residents still do not know where to locate a fire extinguisher.

Residents must be aware of evacuation procedures, staff must understand how the alarm system works and everyone must have access to a working fire extinguisher.

The Dorm 9 students were fortunate. The only injuries were two cases of smoke inhalation. Next time the results could be far worse. The responsible behavior of the Dorm 9 residents has given the University has a second chance to improve campus fire systems. They must not waste that chance.

MIKE LUCKOVICH ATLANTA CONSTITUTION 09/18



OPRAH, THE '98 ELECTION WAS, LIKE, OH-MY-GAWD! PEOPLE WERE LIKE, SAYING, 'HEY, GET OVER YOUR MEAN SELF!' MESSAGE RECEIVED. I'M TRYING TO BE THE BEST ME I CAN BE!...

MAIL CALL

Needless question annoys student

You are sitting at your desk with your Scantron, and your test includes a true/false portion. Someone asks, "Is 'A' true and 'B' false?" Of course it is. In my years of school, A has always been true and B has always been false.

Once I would like the prof to answer this question with "I'm feeling a bit like a renegade today, so B will be true and A will be false." Maybe then this question could be justified.

So the next time someone takes up test time with this annoying question, restrain yourself. You do not want to overreact or anything.

Andrew Kresse
Class of '01

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