

Fo fi fum over fees

Wisconsin students justified in fighting for their say in allocation of student funds



BRANDON MULLEN

The United States Supreme Court is preparing to hear a case involving the University of Wisconsin's allocation of student fees after three students at the university sued the school because their money was supporting organizations they disagreed with.

Scott Southworth, one of the students involved in the lawsuit, said in the Wisconsin newspaper, *The Badger Herald*, "If an organization is getting student money and no one is willing to support them without segregated fees then it is good if they fold."

Southworth is fully justified in his argument and the Supreme Court should uphold the decisions of the lower courts, which felt the current use of the fee was appropriate. If an organization is not strong enough to sustain itself, students do not disagree with the organization and should not be charged with the responsibility for keeping it alive. The present student-segregated fee provides money for everything from the University Health Services to the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) Campus Center.

Currently, students who attend the University pay \$330 in segregated fees. Of this \$30, \$284 is considered "non-allocable fees." The *Badger Herald* reported that this money is used to support "University Health Services, recreational sports and student unions."

The remaining \$46 is allocated by the Associated Students of Madison (ASM) and the Student Services Finance Com-

mittee (SSFC). And this is the money that is used to fund some of the which funds some of the controversial groups, such as the LGB Campus Center.

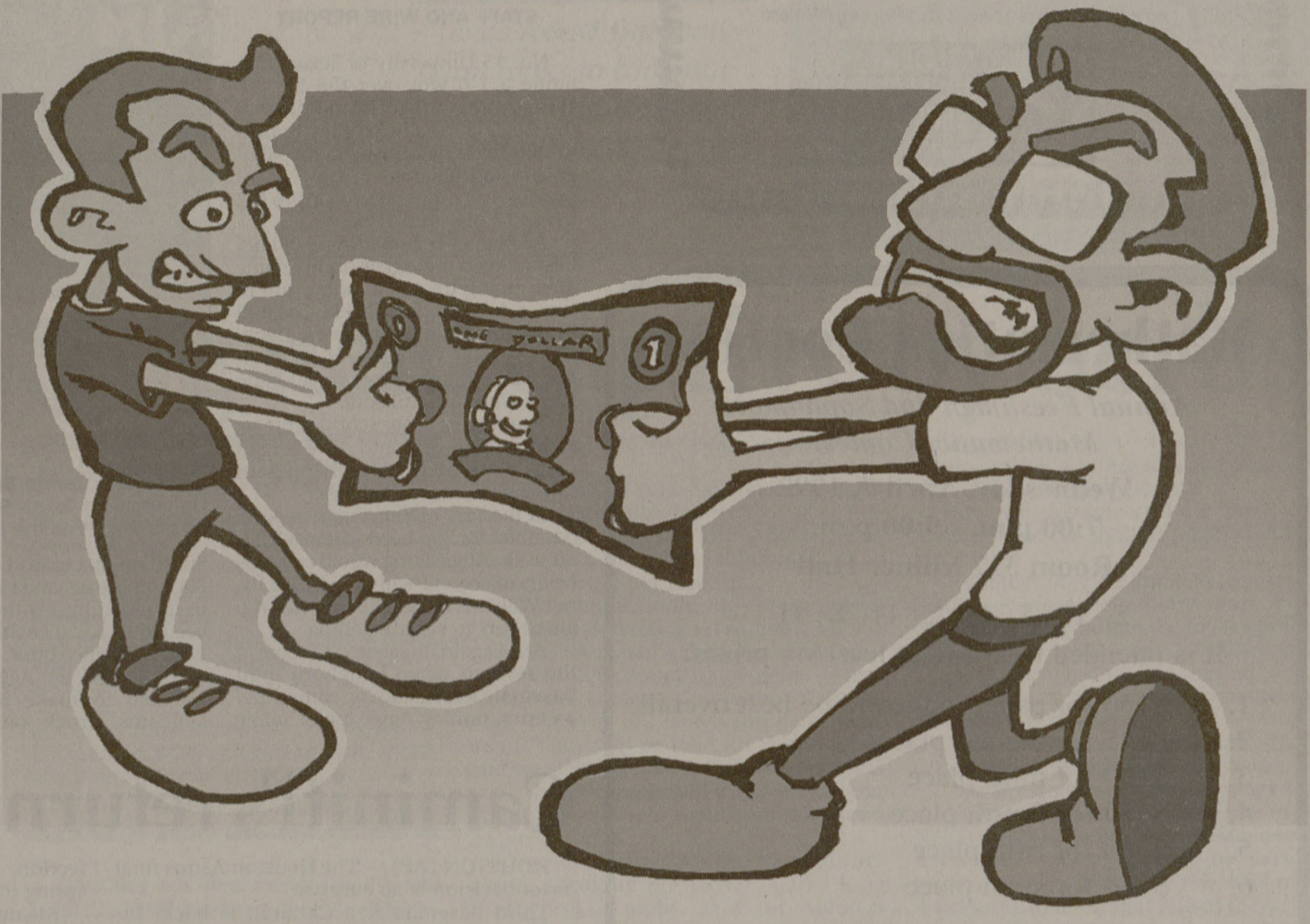
Glenn Grothman, a Wisconsin state representative, has proposed a bill which would give students the option of paying this additional \$46 dollars. This is a reasonable solution because it keeps money from going to any organization that is focused at a specific group of students.

Another representative, Tammy Baldwin, opposes Grothman's bill because she believes it is not democratic. The *Badger Herald* reported her as saying, "Student government, chancellors and the Board of Regents have ensured that segregated fees are not allocated frivolously." Most of the people against changing the current policy believe it would decrease the amount of democratic choice the students have.

But the current policy is not democratic in nature, in fact it is closer to communism. By collecting student money, pooling it together and then distributing it to various student organizations, the current system is ignoring one of the pillars of democracy, individual choice. Why should a members of the College Democrats' money be given to the College Republicans?

The advocates of the current system further argue that the students do have a choice. The *Badger Herald* stated that the ASM and the SSFC are elected by the student body. And therefore the students can elect representatives who support their views. This still does not justify the absurdity of making a college student, who may be on a fixed income, to support an organization they are ideologically opposed to.

One can only imagine the uproar at



ROBERT HYNCECK/THE BATTALION

A&M if student fees were distributed to student organizations. Just picture the scene on campus if members of Aggies for Christ realized they were supporting the Aggie Atheist and Agnostics.

When considering Grothman's proposed bill, Baldwin also stated "This will leave many student activities unfunded, depriving students of important student life." But how important is an organiza-

tion that cannot fund itself. An organization must look to its members and supporters for this. In expectation of the change in policy, one student said, "The only difference is that the people who fund the politically active groups now are the ones who WANT to fund them."

Regardless of the Supreme Court's decision, the students' lawsuit will have some effect on the university. Hopefully, the

Supreme Court will rule in their favor, and the current system will have to change. But if they do not, the lawsuit has brought to the surface a sensitive issue, and it should spark students to want to change the system from the inside.

Brandon Mullen is a senior history and English major

NATO's mission in Kosovo pointless, reasoning inadequate



ZACH HALL

NATO is in its second week of war in Kosovo. Wait, did I say war, I meant peace-keeping mission. No, not a peacekeeping mission, how about a "peace-keeping" mission — though that sounds like an oxymoron.

Forcing peace in the Balkans, is that possible? After all, the world wars were started here, and the people of the area have been killing each other for hundreds, if not thousands, of years.

If the recent events in Kosovo seem all too much like another conflict that this country was involved in but did not belong in, then you are not wrong.

Ironically though, the same country that fought so hard against the propaganda machines of enemy countries like Vietnam, Iraq and the former Soviet Union is now engaged in the largest mass production of the same type of propaganda that it has fought against for so many years.

You may remember the first days of this conflict, when spokesmen from both the Pentagon and NATO said that this action was not meant to be more than a one- or two-day action. Yet in our 13th day of bombings and air raids the Serbs have neither budged nor flinched, but NATO and the United States continue the spin.

Case in point: soon after the bombings and mass exodus of ethnic Albanians began, NATO spokesperson Jamie Shea, as quoted in a March edition of the *Houston Chronicle*, said "I'd stress that the current campaign is not a spontaneous outburst following NATO's operations. It looks much more like a planned, conceived and executed ... campaign against the civil population."

Shea does not even sound very convinced himself. President Clinton has made similar claims.

Yet, only since the bombing began have as many as 4,000 refugees per hour crossed into neighboring territories such as Albania. Nice try spinning the facts, but there is a direct correlation to the bombings and a mass exodus.

The only remotely legitimate reason the United States has in being involved in this war is to protect against the supposed ethnic cleansing being conducted by Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic and his forces. Yet we have been shown no concrete proof that he is conducting a wide ranging massacre of ethnic Albanians; there have been only rumors of executions of prominent figures that are opposed to Milosevic. Not that this is by any means correct, but does Clinton plan to start a war against China or North Korea, countries notorious for their human rights violations. The hatred between Serbs

and Albanians is much deeper than what Clinton and NATO try to make it out to be. Most importantly these are two groups of people with very different religious beliefs. The hatred between the mostly Greek Orthodox Serbs and Muslim refugees is not going to be resolved because of long-term bombing. Just look at the situation in the Middle East. For that matter, we Aggies cannot even get through Resurrection Week without conflict.

Over a week and a half into the exodus of refugees, the Clinton administration finally decided to begin relief aid to the refugees, yet another attempt at making his cause look legitimate. Perhaps Clinton should offer to move some of the hundreds of thousands of refugees to America. He certainly seems to think that the other Balkan countries have plenty of room for them.

Then Bill Clinton had the gall to tell the parents and friends of American soldiers that the reason their sons and daughters have been sent to and remain in the Balkans is because of Slobodan Milosevic. The nerve of this gutless bastard to blame Milosevic for American presence in this conflict is despicable. To further the complications in Kosovo is the capture of three American soldiers being held as POWs in this war that does not exist. They will soon be tried by the Serbs, probably for war crimes. While Americans hope and pray for their safe return, Clinton and his machine have used this as another propaganda tool for support of his non-existent cause.

Well President Clinton, the lives of those three servicemen rest on your head.

The fact that NATO is violating international law by taking offensive actions against Yugoslavia has not even begun to be discussed. But because NATO is nothing more than a puppet for the United States, little has been said. Furthermore, the other European countries, who have needed the United States to bail their asses out of every conflict that has arisen in this century, are not complaining either, nor are they taking a very active role. They would much rather the Serbs hate the United States than themselves.

Unfortunately, we are too far advanced in this operation to succeed or back out without sending in ground troops. Though Clinton has maintained that he will not send in ground troops, any person who has actually had experience in the military will say that our goals (whatever they may be) cannot be accomplished without ground forces.

For now, we can only pray that this "military action" was not started so Clinton could save face on his already pitiful presidency. It is so very unfortunate, though, that this doubt even arises in the first place.

Zach Hall is a senior philosophy major.

Editor explains purpose of photo, addresses readers' concerns, qualms



AARON MEIER

Last week, the campus of Texas A&M experienced one of the most difficult ways to lose a fellow student. Tuesday afternoon, William E. Berry Jr, known to his friends as J.R., apparently took his own life, leaving his family, friends and the student body shocked.

The next day, *The Battalion* along with *The Bryan-College Station Eagle*, and later the *Houston Chronicle*, ran stories on Berry's death. As editor of *The Battalion*, I made the decision to run a photograph of a clean-up crew scrubbing the portion of New Street where Berry fell.

As I sat looking at the page before it was sent to the printers, I knew the campus reaction to such a picture would be strong. However, after the flood of telephone calls, e-mails, mail call letters and personal visits, I feel an en masse response is warranted.

First and foremost, let me extend my sincerest condolences to the family and friends of Berry. The loss of one so young is difficult enough to deal with, but when that loss comes in such a quick and horrifying manner, it is that much more difficult to comprehend.

With that said, however, I cannot apologize for the photograph that ran. The night Berry died, a student

called, asking that I not run a story on Berry's death, saying that it would desecrate his memory.

To this I responded with one simple question, "Is this story news?" The answer is an unqualified "yes."

This is the reason it was covered in *The Battalion* and the reason the accompanying photo ran next to the story.

Examine any photojournalism book and stronger images can be seen. One used by the department of journalism shows a picture of a young boy being placed in a body bag as his father cries over his son. Images bombard us on the television every day of gang victims in Los Angeles or dead bodies in Israel following a bomb explosion.

Are these images any different? The answer is yes. They are different because they do not hit so close to home. That is why the image of water, bleach and men cleaning is so disruptive to our lives.

"Tacky," "tasteless" and "total disregard for human life" — these are some of the terms I have read in the letters that have passed across my desk. My own father said that the picture was something he expected to see in the *Houston Chronicle*, not a college newspaper.

But why shouldn't such a picture appear in the student newspaper? Suicide is a horrible tragedy that doesn't simply end with a person taking his own life. As editor, I made a conscious choice not to flinch from the harshness of this incident.

One e-mail to me said, "Is this the image you want to present of the University?"

The Battalion is not meant to be a public relations tool for the University. We are not the campus newsletter, we are the campus newspaper.

As a journalist, I am here to accurately portray the events that happen on this campus whether they be good or bad.

Romanticizing such a thing as a suicide is not only a betrayal of every lesson I have learned during my three years at *The Battalion* but also as a human being.

Everyone would like the world to be a place where smiles and howdys follow us wherever we go, but such a fantasy will never exist.

This has been a difficult semester for the campus of A&M. With the alcohol-related death of Barry Vail, the cocaine overdose of former student Mark Eisemann and now Berry's death, it has proven the small-town spirit of College Station is not immune to big-city problems.

The anger directed toward *The Battalion* is understandable, but if we want to prevent a further death, the energy placed into writing mail call should be redirected to assisting our severely taxed counseling department or simply lending an ear to a friend.

There are people on this campus who need our help. To deny this fact truly is a dishonor to Berry's memory.

Aaron Meier is a senior political science major

MAIL CALL

Student counseling services in need of more promotion

I am writing in response to the photograph accompanying the article on William E. Berry Jr, in Wednesday's edition.

In my opinion, *The Battalion* chose the most tasteless and disrespectful picture to place with the article showing workers cleaning the street where the young man died. It makes me very angry to see that our campus newspaper has shown this tragedy in such an inhumane fashion, where it appears at Texas A&M, we look at someone's misfortune as something that stands in the way of our own progress.

I am sorry if William Berry's parents have seen the picture, and I hope they do not think less of A&M, because of it.

An issue that concerns me even more, is the fact that our campus does not make a decent effort to reach people who are in need of help; great or small.

There are hundreds of promotions for organizations and events, which are widely distributed and costly, but there is a severe deficit in promoting student counseling and help.

I think it would be a good idea for the University to start placing flyers, or for *The Battalion* to put in ads, informing students of easier ways to find help.

Brad Woods
Class of '02

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:

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