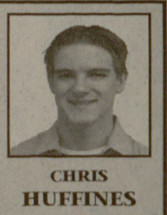


## Fish out of order

Policy changing move-in dates for on-campus freshmen cannot be enforced, lacks foresight



CHRIS HUFFINES



JEFF SMITH/THE BATTALION

could be said that the Texas A&M University administration actively looks for possible opportunities to subject students to "character-building" exercises. Such a statement is, frankly, attributed to a branch of the University that does not deserve the descriptions. Instead, many of the policies most useful to students come about because of a lack of planning, not an excess of forethought. The newly implemented policy of moving most on-campus freshmen wait in shows not only a lack of foresight, but also an apathy toward student needs. Apathy should not be present at Texas A&M University. The new policy, effective beginning next semester, is freshmen who are not members of the Corps of Cadets, rushing to campus, or do not have a valid excuse card, 52, of which most move into residence halls any later than Wednesday of move-in day. The policy was implemented so that a usual glut of parents and students arrive the first Sunday of move-in week will be spread out over all seven days. Supposedly, parking and other student services would not be overloaded on Wednesday. This policy proudly displays the fact that the administration was not looking for a solution. Instead of an overwhelming number of freshmen arriving on Sunday, there will now be overwhelming numbers of freshmen on Wednesday and on Thursday. This is an especially charming move as everyone knows, University employees work on Wednesdays, taking valuable parking spaces that could be used to unload on the weekends. Furthermore, instead of crowds of

freshmen who make up a large majority of students in the residence halls arriving on the two weekends, there would be a very large number of freshmen on just the one weekend. The mob of people was not eliminated by this policy — it was just moved around a little. A prime example of lack of planning in action.

This policy not only tears away a half-week of acclimation time from the freshmen, but it does so without the freshmen ever knowing what they have lost. The first week residence halls are open, the week before classes, is valuable time. Books are bought, friends are made, professors are visited. Freshmen are

away from home for the first time, without the pressures of actual classes. Instead of the seven days they should be allotted, freshmen now get only five, and only two if they move in on the weekend. In addition, this policy makes it seem as if those students excluded from the new policy are more important than oth-

er freshmen. While it can be argued the Corps is important enough to the University to warrant special treatment, allowing fraternities and sororities to move in early simply to facilitate recruitment shows a preference over such equally deserving organizations such as MSC committees, the Residence Hall Association and the Department of Student Activities. The special treatment for these groups is unnecessary and divisive. What is most amazing about this policy is that it was implemented without consulting the freshmen. Neither parents nor incoming students were asked; only current students and administration officials were consulted. While this lack of input does not rise to the level of the "taxation without representation" that sparked the American Revolution, the principle is exactly the same. And while an armed uprising is not the solution to this problem, a protest of a lower magnitude would be in order. In addition to the problems of the policy itself, there also is no good way to enforce it. The University is neither cruel nor fascist enough to turn away little Johnny Fish, who just drove down from Amarillo with his family on the first Sunday of move-in and is two days early. It just will not be done, leaving this policy hollow and meaningless. Worse than no rule at all, this is a rule that does not make sense and cannot be enforced. Fortunately, many students took advantage of this lack of enforcement and did not move in on the days required. In residence halls all across campus, not just Cadets and Rush members moved in on Sunday, avoiding what could have been a very bad situation. Freshmen and older students should let the administration know that this year's mistake should not be repeated.

Chris Huffines is a senior speech communication major.

## Students must think before sex



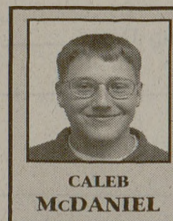
JESSICA CRUTCHER

probably consider finding someone who will. Secondly, before having sex, people should ask themselves what they expect to gain from the relationship. Sex, coupled with a serious emotional attachment, should not be used as a means to stay with someone who might not otherwise remain interested. If a person is more dependent on one's partner than the partner is on that person, the more involved person will probably end up feeling used when the relationship ends. When a person recognizes that he or she is more attached than the other party, it is probably advisable for the person to re-evaluate the relationship. The situation probably won't change, and having sex will only intensify the feelings of dependency. Common interests, or a lack thereof, also play a major factor in most relationships. The false sense of security sex can provide should always be taken into consideration before a person engages in intercourse with a partner they barely know. No matter how good the sex is, couples eventually are going to have to carry on a conversation. If the two have nothing in common, the relationship probably will not last. If this realization hits too late, it can bring mental distress and

disillusionment to both members of the former couple. One other factor to take into consideration is that many people have begun to take sexual relations very lightly. This isn't necessarily good or bad as such, but it can be extremely upsetting to someone if there is miscommunication between the participants in the sexual relationship. Before having sex, both partners should make sure they want the same results from the relationship. If one partner is not going to take the relationship seriously, the other should recognize this and adjust accordingly. Forming, or attempting to form, a serious emotional attachment with someone who has stated a desire to remain unattached usually ends in disaster. Despite the popular myth that people can be changed against their will, the best bet is to find a more like-minded partner. Just as there is no fool-proof method of avoiding an STD or becoming a parent, there is no catch-all way to avoid the mental anguish relationships can cause. However, using common sense and comprehending the true depth of the relationship will help protect a person from serious emotional problems that could have been easily avoided.

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## Results of straw polls irrelevant



CALEB MCDANIEL

Every four years, GOP presidential hopefuls flock to the Midwest to participate in the meaningless and virtually defunct Iowa straw poll. As one of the more sophisticated products of representative democracy, the straw poll features tents in which candidates serve free barbecue, host bluegrass bands and shuck corn while sucking fund-raising dollars from the pocketbooks of avid Republican voters. After the fun and frolicking, campaign supporters buy the right to cast a vote, either for the candidate with the best bluegrass or the one who paid for their bus ticket and lunch. The dubious results are then spun to the snoozing world as important landmarks on the road to the party nomination. But if anyone doubted the irrelevance of the Iowa straw poll before last weekend, a similar event in Alabama should prove once and for all that the potluck polls are not accurate barometers of party opinion. The straw poll does not exist that can break the candidate's back. Apparently, Alabama Republican Party officials had been eyeing the Iowa shindig for some years, and they finally decided they could not pass up a good excuse to eat ribs and have a hoedown. So last weekend, for the first time ever, Alabama had a straw poll of its very own. In lieu of any corn to shuck, organizers offered live-elephant rides and a dunking booth featuring a Clinton impersonator. How urbane. But as entertaining as these diversions may have been, it was the outcome of the Alabama vote that was most comedic. Alan Keyes, a former talk-show host turned Republican radical, won the poll. Orrin Hatch followed in second place with George W. Bush, the national front-runner for the nomination, in third. Gary Bauer took home fourth-place honors — if a trophy at the

first inaugural Alabama straw poll can be fairly dubbed an honor. The strange fallout from the poll has political analysts falling out of their chairs laughing. First of all, Keyes and Hatch, the first- and second-place winners, were the only major Republican candidates to attend the poll, rendering their supposed victories empty vanities. Since voters at the poll must pay to cast a ballot, the booths were stacked with the supporters of Keyes and Hatch, many of whom had their tickets paid for by the candidates. But more ridiculous is the national media's coverage of Keyes' victory as if it mattered. In the 1988 Iowa poll, for instance, Bob Dole won the vote but George Bush ended up with the party's blessing. The point is the polls have the predictive power of one of those "psychic eight balls" with the little message thingy floating inside. They are out of touch and out of reasons to exist. In spite of the fact the straw polls are inconsequential, the national media continue to lend them an air of legitimacy. Even in downplaying the significance of the polls, their coverage of them necessarily makes them seem significant to voters who may not know better. The Capitol Watch obviously did not see the irony in its headline, "Keyes wins largely ignored Alabama straw poll," which gave the poll attention in the very act of saying it was ignored. The media give the polls their undeserved steam, and ridiculous outcomes, like the one in Alabama, only prove the straw votes are really circus media events thinly disguised as viable forums of political discussion. Unfortunately, the press love affair with the straw poll only reveals the media's typical willingness to take vacuous polls for a roll in the hay. These days, presidential campaigns are covered, if at all, as horse races. Instead of reporting what candidates believe, they merely report who is in the lead in the latest poll. This needless apotheosis of polls must end. Rather than informing readers that Alan Keyes won some barn vote in Alabama the media should tell voters he wants to eliminate taxes altogether. Surely the latter fact about him is more important than the former. As it is, finding out what a candidate believes from a news story is harder than finding a needle in a haystack — and almost harder than finding a justification in a straw poll.

Keyes, by his own admission, is a fringe element in the Republican Party. He wants to abolish the Internal Revenue Service, a dramatic slash-and-burn suggestion that almost makes Steve Forbes look like a liberal. In his speech at the Iowa straw poll, Keyes even compared taxing the incomes of the middle class with African slavery. He is hardly representative of mainstream Republican opinion, and he knows it. In what the Associated Press tentatively called a "stirring speech," Keyes urged the Alabama pollsters to cast their vote based on their true feelings instead of voting for Bush just because he is popular, an implicit admission Keyes' own views do not resonate with conservative voters. At any rate, it is not surprising for a straw poll to go to the candidate who ultimately proves to be unpop-

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