

ACC: Social security reform

Matthew R. Klatt
Augsburg College Conservatives

DURING THE 1930S, PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D. Roosevelt tried to find a way to gain the support of the working people, who disliked the ongoing depression and the high taxes they would have to pay to fund his New Deal programs.

In 1935, Social Security was created. At the time of its creation, there were 40 tax-paying workers for every retiree. In the 1990s, there are 3 workers for every retiree. When the baby-boomer generation retires, the number will be even less. As you can easily conceive, the amount three workers pay into social security cannot provide for one beneficiary. Well, maybe if you taxed them much more than they already are taxed, they might.

Of course, tax increases have already been tried. A 1983 tax increase was supposed to create a reserve fund of \$10 trillion by the year 2030. However, since 1967, Congress has been spending up to \$70 billion each year from this trust fund to hide their massive deficit spending.

So, the so-called Social Security Trust Fund is filled with IOUs as Treasury Bonds. Of course, the taxpayers have to pay the interest on these bonds. Apart from a tax increase, another option in the past has been to decrease the benefits given to beneficiaries. This should not be considered a possibility. In 2011, the amount paid out to beneficiaries will be greater than the amount coming in from taxpayers and shortly after, the Social Security system will be bankrupt.

On February 6th, my fellow ACC officers and I went to a social security debate sponsored by the

Citizens for a Sound Economy Foundation. This debate was named the "Make it Personal" Social Security Reform Tour which also featured Senator Rod Grams as one of their special guest speakers. The main point of their proposal was to allow American workers to personally invest a portion of the social security taxes we now send to Washington in their own personal retirement accounts. The type of retirement plan you choose is your choice. With this plan, current retirees would continue to receive Social Security payments, with no reduction in benefits. This plan is very similar to successful programs in Great Britain, Chile, and Australia.

The advantages are numerous. First, private investments yield higher rates of return. Instead of losing money, as they are in the current system, they can actually profit.

Second, personal accounts give workers complete control over their retirement. Workers can choose their retirement plans, such as lump-sum payments or flexible withdrawals. Also, Congress can never change the benefits of personal savings accounts. Furthermore, workers have complete ownership of their personal accounts and so any savings remaining in their account after their death would be passed onto their heirs.

This is a feasible plan to fix social security without raising taxes or decreasing benefits, but it's not the final plan. Of course, something needs to be done—and fast—to change social security. If not, we, as well as our parents, will not likely see any retirement benefits.

Letters to the Editors

To the Editors of the Echo:

Thank you so much for giving the students at Augsburg College the opportunity to find out who knows whom at Augsburg College. Apparently, in the February 26, 1999 issue of the Echo we found out that the editors know the enlightened students of the Augsburg College Conservatives (ACC). After reading the highly entertaining and amusing interview with Trevor Johnson from the ACC (ECHO staff writer Jim Webber), I was able to turn the page and receive the wonderful propaganda that his organization is so adamantly against. According to Trevor Johnson, propaganda can be defined as, "They keep pushing stuff on you to try to make you believe things." Apparently, "THEY" can finally be determined to be the ACC. In regards to the article, "ACC: Quotations about gun control," on page 4 of the ECHO, I must say that if I didn't know any better, I would think the ACC was trying to push something on me and make me believe things, as it was so eloquently phrased by Mr. Johnson. It seems as though everyone that I would least want to identify with, such as Benito Mussolini, Adolf Hitler, and Heinrich Himmler, have been associated with depriving citizens of their right to bear arms. Where was the NRA when the Jews of Auschwitz needed them? On the other hand, (the right hand, of course), I'd like to thank the ACC for helping me associate the right to bear arms with great All-American figures such as Thomas Jefferson and George Washington, both of whom were slave owners. Apparently, the firm moral foundation that Jefferson had wasn't enough to keep him from having illegitimate relationships with his slaves, but at least he was able to shoot their husbands if they retaliated against their master. Thank you to the ACC for helping me see the light! I will keep my pistol loaded! Thank you to the ECHO for giving me an unbiased fountain of information to guide me through life. Perhaps in the future you should try to keep the ACC's rhetoric off "the ECHO Opinion" page and try as journalists to conjure up a few enlightened opinions rather than the ACC propaganda.

Sincerely,
Jeremy Scheller

Band students honored

The Collegiate Honors Band: (from left) Mike Reed, Kelly Taylor, Jamie Kirchofner, Hu Qiu Xia, Cassandra Herold, Chihou Okuizumi, Julie Des Jardins, and Terese Loftesnes.

Katie Koch
Contributor

Eight Augsburg students got the opportunity to participate in the annual Collegiate Honor Band this year.

The annual event was presented as a part of the annual Minnesota Music Educators Association Conference that took place at the Minneapolis Convention Center on Feb. 13.

The eight Augsburg students included Jamie Kirchofner-Oboe (Jr.), Julie Des Jardins-Clarinet (Jr.), Cassandra Herold-Clarinet (So.), Hu Qiu Xia-French Horn (Sr.), Terese Loftesnes-Cornet (Jr.), Chihou Okuizumi-Euphonium (Jr.), Mike Reed-Tuba (So.), and Kelly Taylor-Drum (Sr.).

Of these students, Jamie, Qiu Xia, Terese, and Chihou were principal chairs.

The Honor Band spent three full days in rehearsal for this concert, which included pieces such as Celebration Overture, a 20th century abstract piece by Paul Creston, and Blue Shades, a Big Band piece by Frank Ticheli.

The festival band was under the direction of Janet

Heukeshoven, St. Mary's University; Lee Mendyk Winona State (emeritus); John Tesch, Moorhead State; and Dale White, the College of St. Benedict's/St. John's University.

In the past, the Honor Band has been under the direction of such composing and conducting greats as Frederick Fennell.

The 87-piece band was assembled from Augsburg, Bemidji State, Bethel, Concordia, Hamline, Moorhead State, St. Benedict/St. John's, St. Cloud State, St. Mary's, St. Olaf, St. Thomas, UM-Duluth, and Winona State.

The students are selected and placed according to individual auditions.

Weekly Wine

Cristian Carlson
Staff writer

I LIKE TO BELIEVE THAT SOMEHOW, someday I can make a difference in this world. Unfortunately, the longer I'm on this planet the more I know I'm wrong. I was going to devote this column to praising the men's basketball team and the women's hockey team, but now I think that would be impossible.

I've just come from Augsburg's 66-64 loss to Gustavus, and what I saw there made me sad—and then mad. The loss was not important because twenty years from now I won't remember the score or any ramifications from the loss.

While sitting in the nose bleed section, I started a dialogue with one of Gustavus' junior varsity players. He said, "We have black people on campus but they don't play for us."

"In my nine years, no, I have never had a black player on the varsity," Mark Hanson, Gustavus' head basketball coach said. "Why? What are you asking me this question for anyway?"

This alone probably wouldn't have been enough to wreck my evening, but there is more. With less than one minute left in the game, two spectators, an African American male and a white male, got into a fight.

A security officer was on the scene quickly. Upon arriving on the scene, he asked very few questions and told the African American he had to leave. After escorting the African American male out of the gymnasium the security officer returned to the scene of the incident.

When I asked him, "A black man and a white man get into a fight and you only threw out the

black man, why?" He asked that I point out the white man and then he went to talk to him. By the time the officer asked the white man to leave the game had already concluded.

When I asked him, "is it your general practice to throw the black person out before finding out what happened?" "I went into the crowd to find out what happened," the officer responded. "When I turned around he (the black male) was giving the crowd the finger. Upon talking to him I could smell alcohol on him, which is always a reason to be asked to leave. Later, upon talking to the other guy he also had alcohol on his breath, so I asked him to leave also."

Earlier I stated that I was sad and mad. The reason the first incident I wrote about makes me sad, is because it really doesn't affect me. If people who live in a cornfield want to think like it is the 1850's, let them.

I did a lot of investigation before I chose Augsburg College. I loved its location and I liked the fact that there was an attempt at diversity. When I visited some other schools I didn't find any real attempt at diversity and I didn't want to live in the middle of a cornfield.

However, the second incident just pisses me off. The first time I was ever on this campus was Martin Luther King Day 1995. That day President Anderson, while talking to all transfer students, told of the effort this campus makes at diversity.

What I saw tonight in our gym was a mockery of everything for which President Emeritus Anderson and President Frame stand. Our campus is not in a cornfield and I don't believe we should act like it.

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