

EDITORIALS

Dear John

The standard wheelchair is 25 inches wide. The standard bathroom stall is not wide enough.

The complexity of attending to one's needs when three feet separate the flusher from the instrument of flush is enough to furrow a man's brow. Under certain conditions, it's enough to make him cry.

Where wheelchairs are concerned, the average John can't get to the average john on this campus, and that doesn't seem fair. A resolution before Student Congress attempts to improve the situation.

Authored by Jim Hayes and sponsored by Courtney Roberts, the measure also asks that "signs be constructed stating elevators are . . . for those . . . dependent upon them," and that "the various ramps declining and inclining to and from the streets onto the adjoining sidewalks be leveled to promote non-obstructed passage."

The elevator question's a bit tricky, for no simple sign will keep the car free for those who really need it. When elevators were new here, they were intended for faculty members and the handicapped, and a sign so stated. Now everyone rides.

If enough elevators were available, there'd be no problem (except maybe one of health for the non-handicapped — better to walk than be carried). There aren't enough, though, in the Engineering Building (one), Science Hall (one), Business-Life Science Building (two). Hayes, a junior and past president of the Texas Junior College Student Government Association, has a point.

As for ramps, UTA's done a good deal already. Goaded for two years by the Handicapped Students Association, the administration came through with an efficient network of curbside concrete insets. But an access is still needed from the mall to the Brazos House-Health Center block; at the Science Hall curb where Second hits Cooper; between University and Davis halls.

These latter two proposals, on the elevators and ramps, bear investigation. The other, calling for "the reconstruction of at least one bathroom stall in each restroom," bears implementation soon. It's ignoble to architecturally bind a man thus.

Be it noted that this school was thinking of handicapped students before they had crossed the collective controlling minds of other institutions. Convenient parking was set aside more than 15 years ago; classes have been moved to better accommodate a student; the majority of personnel, from administration to Exchange Store and maintenance employes, have been helpful in every way.

UT Arlington has been and is a leader in this concern for handicapped students. Action on Hayes' resolution will keep it there.