

VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

FRIDAY
OCTOBER 6, 1978

Are 'Animal Houses' taking over

They say this is the era of the individual, of originality and of independent thought. But it's becoming fearfully clear how quickly that "independence" can be squelched by the great celluloid mind-bender, the All-American movie.

John Travolta's case of "Saturday Night Fever" infected an entire generation with disco fever. Before that the "Jaws" super shark was scaring people off beaches coast-to-coast.

It's not even that modern a phenomenon. Alfred Hitchcock's "Psycho" almost ended the shower as an American way of life. Marlon Brando's macho portrayal in "A Streetcar Named Desire" created an entire masculine mystique around the plain white T-shirt.

And now we have "Animal House." It doesn't matter whether this collection of assorted crazies, drunks and wild men has anything to do with art, truth or reality. What matters is that people are imitating those crazies, drunks and wild men.

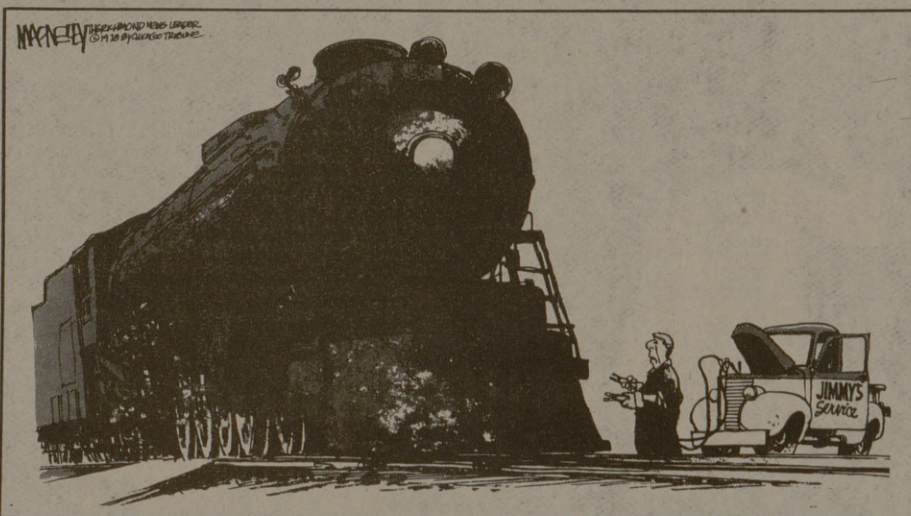
Since "Animal" fever struck we've

seen some of the strangest—and occasionally most disgusting—behavior to ever darken the Texas A&M campus. And that's at a university that places a premium on strange, occasionally disgusting behavior.

"Toga parties" that bring together hundreds of sheet-garbed students are harmless enough. But some of the other "monkey-see, monkey-do" activities are not.

There are not many sights as disgusting as that of one mob of youthful men—under the pretense of a "water fight"—hurling handfuls of hog excrement at another mob of men. Not much better is a movie "audience" that rips, litters and steals various parts of Rudder Auditorium during a midnight movie.

Then there was last Friday's food fight in Sbsa Dining Hall. It's one thing to shower self and consenting friends with chicken, pizza and assorted vegetables; it's something entirely different to do the same to innocent bystanders, including stu-



dents' parents and grandparents. It's a bit frightening to think that a mere two-hour motion picture could turn people into fitting residents for an "Animal House."

George Orwell, in his book "1984", predicted that by that year the citizenry would be controlled mentally and emotionally by regularly-scheduled exposure to movies. It seems his prediction may be coming true.

And it's only 1978.

L.R.L.

Involved in the Russian black market

Last in a 2-part Series

(Editor's note: in the first article in this series, Dr. Loving described the Russian black market. Dr. Loving spent three months last winter in Russia as a Fulbright Fellow.)

By DR. JEROME LOVING

For a number of obvious reasons we determined to have nothing to do with the black market. And when we left Russia in May we gave away to students and friends what clothing items we felt we could spare. But there were, we ultimately decided, a few items that we could not afford to give away—heavy boots, gloves, coats, etc., purchased especially for the snow and minus 25 degree Leningrad weather.

And since we had worn these items over on the plane in February, we had no room for them in our trunk in May. Hence, I decided to take the risk and sell them for rubles at half the price we had paid for them.

But we approached this transaction with the utmost of caution; for soviet officials—if they wished, as I think they did in Crawford's case—could have claimed we were asking inflated prices and thus dealing in the black market.

Our first Soviet acquaintance—call him Yuri—had long admired our boots and coats and often made us offers, much more than we wanted. I suppose I would have given him many of the items, but I suspected his friendship was mainly based on what he hoped to get from us in the way of



Dr. Jerome Loving

western goods. One afternoon while walking with him outside my hotel, I broached the subject of the sale and he jumped at it.

We completed all of our bartering (such as it was) outside by the Neva River, which runs right through the city, because both of us suspected my quarters had been equipped with secret listening devices.

This is an assumption that all foreign diplomatic people make. I never found any bugs, but once I accidentally broke the telephone and the hotel maids absolutely refused to let me take it apart to fix it. Instead they promptly replaced it. Their service had never been so good!

Once inside my quarters, Yuri silently tried on the items for sale. He was very agreeable about prices, overwhelmed when I threw in a pair of old raggedy jeans to boot. These alone were worth about 50 rubles. But he was still hungry. "Do you have any cosmetics to sell?" he asked in his faltering English. My wife dipped into her purse and came up with an old bottle of nail polish. This too we gave away.

The deal was set but far from safely completed. We still had to get the con-

traband out of the heavily watched hotel and into his one-room communal flat (another story). Because the hotel catered to foreign tourists and guests, it was always patrolled by militia (Soviet police), and the main entrance, the only entrance, was constantly watched by crusty old men who were doubtless KGB agents or informers. Yuri didn't dare walk out of the hotel with a suspicious looking bag. He trembled at the thought of it. No, I would have to deliver the goods another day, something I had not contemplated.

The "drop" therefore was set for the following Saturday. And during that week I backed out of the arrangement vicariously a number of times. I wasn't really breaking any Soviet laws because I was selling at a fair price, but at the same time I realized that I was making myself vulnerable to what had proved during my stay in Russia to be a hostile government as far as Americans were concerned.

If Yuri had talked (and his fear might have made him) and the Soviet officials were so inclined, I could have found myself in the same dilemma as Francis Crawford.

The day of the delivery my son David and I mustered our courage and calmly marched past the doorman and militiaman with a large box and my briefcase filled with another pair of boots. We did not depart without notice, of course, but then any time Americans moved in that city everybody seemed to know it.

We boarded the tram, or trolley, that

rolled by our hotel, transferred to another, and were soon in Yuri's neighborhood. Like the rest of the city proper, the streets are lined with old mansions, now somewhat run-down and divided into small flats. We got off where I thought Yuri and I were supposed to meet, but he failed to appear. David and I must have waited on that busy street corner ten or fifteen minutes.

All the while Russians, curious about my box and David's bright red ski jacket, looked at us out of the corner of their eyes. "Could Yuri have chickened out of the deal?" I asked myself.

"Had he decided to report the deal to the authorities?" "Was Yuri a KGB agent?" I considered jumping into a taxi and getting back to the hotel and safety, but I remembered that most cabs were operated by KGB informers. My actions would seem strange, especially if I had been routinely followed—as I had been on other, rare occasions.

I decided to go one more stop on the tram, just in case I had mistaken the meeting place. We did, and to my relief there was our friend Yuri, smiling and ready to receive the goods. Naturally, we didn't exchange them on the street but walked the three or four blocks to his flat. There his wife greeted us with an unannounced three-course Russian snack—about an hour after breakfast.

Dr. Loving is an English professor at Texas A&M.

TOP OF THE NEWS CAMPUS

Election commission meets today

The student election commission for 1978-79 is scheduled to meet today at 5 p.m. in the Student Government office, Room 216 of the Memorial Student Center. Anyone interested in working on the commission, which supervises all campus elections, is invited to the short meeting.

STATE

UT fraternity members indicted

A Travis County grand jury has indicted a member and two former pledges of a University of Texas fraternity on felony aggravated assault charges for beating and sexually molesting a freshman student. Alpha Tau Omega fraternity member Ron Alan Wilson, 19, of Lawton, Okla., and former pledges James Patrick Hinson, 19, and Robert Taylor Herrin III, 18, both of Houston, were named in the third degree felony indictments Wednesday. The three students were charged earlier with attempted sexual abuse. Michael Froelich of New Braunfels told police he was walking past the ATO house on Aug. 31 when two men grabbed him and his roommate and dragged them into some nearby bushes. The roommate escaped but Froelich claimed he was taken to a garage where he was robbed, robbed and assaulted. Froelich has withdrawn from school because of the incident. Roy Q. Minton, attorney for the three defendants, said he expected his clients to make their first court appearance next week and said they would plead innocent.

Davis defense files 83 motions

Lawyers for T. Cullen Davis have asked a judge in Houston to reject as evidence videotape recordings allegedly implicating the millionaire in a plot to kill his divorcee. The motion was among 83 filed, and will be acted on Monday. Davis' defense lawyers contend the recordings should not be admitted because Davis was not informed of his constitutional rights beforehand.

Ex-mayor to be jailed weekends

A Brownsville federal judge Thursday reduced former Laredo Mayor J.C. Martin's four-year mail fraud sentence to 30 weekends in the Webb County Jail. Martin was scheduled to go to prison today. U.S. District Judge Reynaldo Garza, a longtime acquaintance of Martin, said Martin was in "deteriorating health" and had paid the City of Laredo \$237,838 in restitution. Garza also placed Martin on supervised probation the remainder of the four-year term.

Houston to build air terminal

The Houston City Council Wednesday approved preliminary plans for construction of a fourth terminal at Houston Intercontinental Airport. Terminal D, which would be able to handle 6.6 million passengers per year, will cost \$162.7 million. It will serve as a combination domestic-international flight terminal, and is scheduled for completion in March 1983.

NATION

Food prices increase again

The cost of food, down for two straight months, rose sharply in September to push up all wholesale prices by 0.9 percent, the government reported Thursday. It was the greatest increase since spring and a severe setback to the fight against inflation. The Labor Department's September report said food costs soared by 1.7 percent, the largest rise since April.

Group wants all tires recalled

A public interest group has told government safety experts it thinks all 13 million Firestone 500 steel-belted radial tires should be recalled. The Center for Auto Safety in Washington said Firestone may be trying to negotiate a deal with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration so the tires would not be recalled. Firestone has consistently claimed that none of the tires has proven to have safety-related defects.

WORLD

Khalid well after heart surgery

A doctor attending Saudi Arabia's King Khalid says the monarch is in "completely satisfactory condition" and able to chat with members of his family following open heart surgery at the Cleveland Clinic. Khalid, 65, underwent a six-hour double coronary bypass operation Tuesday for relief from pain and weakness associated with blocked coronary arteries.

WEATHER

Partly cloudy with a chance of showers and cool with winds east to northeast 10-15 mph. 20% chance of rain today decreasing for Saturday. High both days low 80's. Low tonight mid-60's. The temperature for kick off time tomorrow will be 81.

THE BATTALION

LETTERS POLICY

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words and are subject to being cut to that length or less if longer. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit such letters and does not guarantee to publish any letter. Each letter must be signed, show the address of the writer and list a telephone number for verification.

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Letters to the Editor

Fighting over grass 'pretty silly'

Editor: I feel sorry for those people who degraded Lindsay Scoggins in front of the MSC. I feel sorry for them because of their lack of manners, their ignorance, their lack of sensitivity, and their total lack of respect for fellow Aggies. What happened to the friendliness Aggies are so famous for? It was shown Tuesday that this longtime tradition is fading fast.

Since when does sitting on grass make someone a communist? The people accusing Mr. Scoggins of being a communist need to take a trip to the dictionary. Also, these people should know the issues the next time they choose to degrade someone in public.

Why threats of violence? That was uncalled for. If anyone visiting A&M for the first time had seen or even read about the grass incident they would wonder what type of people actually go to this school. Fighting over grass is really pretty silly, and it looks even sillier.

A&M is a unique school. It stands apart from any other university. Maybe that is why so many people choose to come here. However, Tuesday's incident, and the way people behaved towards it only helped to categorize A&M with other schools such as t.u., in how they act towards their school and their fellow students.

—Laurie Abernathy, '80

Immoral deed

Editor: It is a long standing tradition at A&M that people do not walk, stand or sit on the Memorial Student Center grass. All "good Ags" respect this tradition, except for one hippie type who, Tuesday at 10 o'clock, was actually sitting on memorial grass.

About a hundred "good Ags" and I noticed this immoral deed and decided to take action. We decided that anyone who would desecrate our memorial turf should be beaten pulp in the name of God, Jesus Christ, apple pie and Lockheed.

We gathered around this pointy headed liberal, anxiously awaiting his return to his seat. The feeling of comradeship which coursed through the crowd was enough to make an Aggie-Ex's heart swell with pride.

It is these when people should forget meaningless things like the revolution in Nicaragua nuclear proliferation, civil liberties, government corruption and minor details like impending wars and concentrate on important matters such as midnight yell practice, Reveille's funerals and people sitting on the grass (fertilized by tradition).

I should have known better than to expect some sort of worthwhile activity on campus because, after all, this is Aggie-land.

—Mark Konecny

Prove yells safe

Editor: I am writing in regard to several recent articles in the Battalion concerning conduct in Sbsa dining hall. Being a dorm resident for four years and a head resident for three semesters, I know of the importance of dorm unity and spirit in a somewhat civilized manner. Sbsa has always been an exciting place to eat, especially on Friday nights before home football games.

Most of the articles referenced last Friday evening when an extensive showing of Aggie spirit culminated in the destruction of Sbsa furniture and a pretty large food fight, which resulted in the loss of dining hall privileges for several students. If the privilege of doing yells in Sbsa continues to be abused, we will undoubtedly lose it

in the near future.

Top level management of Sbsa and the Student Affairs Dept. is no longer willing to tolerate massive food fights, broken chairs and visitors getting hit with chicken bones. They have a good case as it has never been Aggie tradition to be destructive or hassle university administrators. However, it is my hope that in spite of last Friday, yells will still be allowed in Sbsa, if they are done without other radical activity.

With the Tech game coming up on Saturday being one of the biggest games of the year, it is very probable that Aggie Spirit will be riding even higher than last week. As an Aggie, a staff member and a dorm resident to confine their actions in Sbsa to dorm and Aggie yells only this Friday, I would like to see yells in Sbsa continued, but it is the opinion of most high level Sbsa and student affair's personnel that it is the yelling that leads to the 'other activity.' If that is the case, we need to change; otherwise, let's prove it's not so.

How about it Ags? —Bruce Klinger, '78
Head Resident, Crocker Hall

P. S. My apologies to Mary Helen Brown. Most of those guys were drunk and did not mean to offend anyone with their yells at Yell Practice.

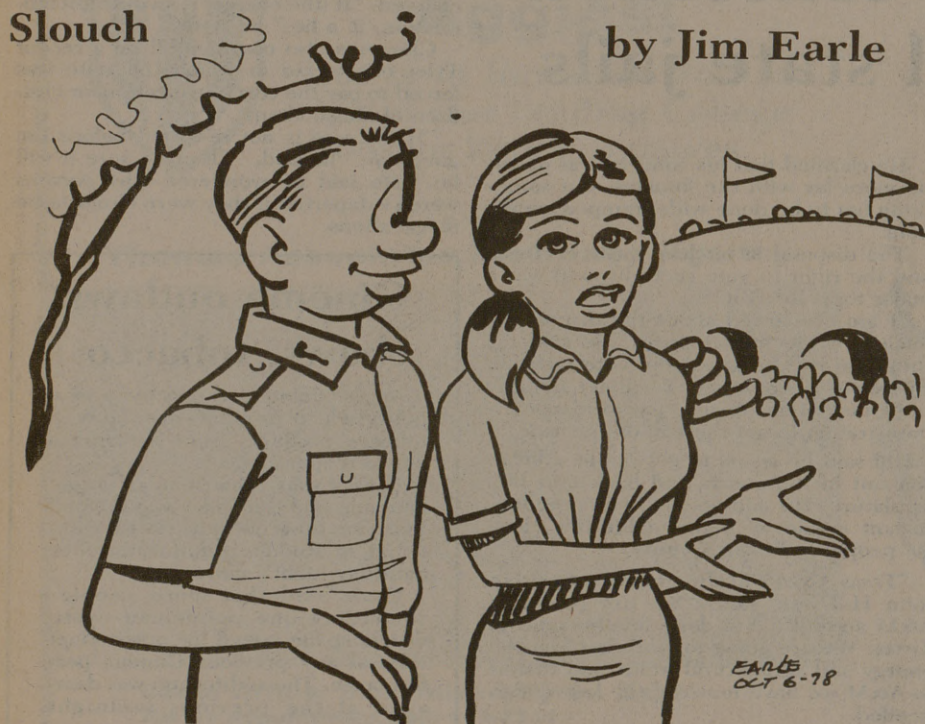
Smoke instead

Editor:

This is to comment on all the "un-Aggie, communistic, pinko, go to T.U." letters and articles I've read. I thought the Aggie traditions were to keep the Ags together. I also thought Ags were supposed to be a homogeneous body who stuck up for each other. I think if there were more "How-dies" (what happened to that tradition?) and less complaining about how un-Aggish everyone and everything is, this childish labeling would stop, and it's about time it did.

—Jenny Hagen, '81

P.S. If more people would smoke grass instead of worrying about sitting on it, we'd all be a lot better "off."



"I HAVE AS MUCH SCHOOL SPIRIT AS THE NEXT, BUT I CAN'T HELP BUT WORRY ABOUT WHAT MY MOTHER THINKS WHEN SHE LEARNS WE KISS AFTER TOUCHDOWNS AND WE'VE SCORED AS HIGH AS 58 POINTS!"

Slouch by Jim Earle