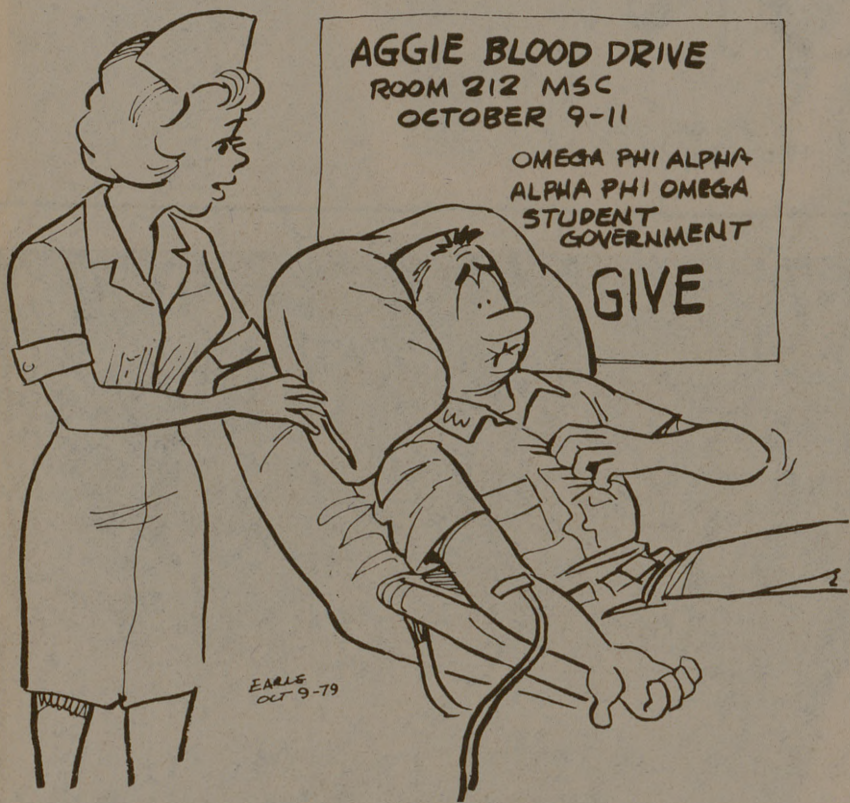


SLOUCH by Jim Earle



"Maybe if you relaxed, we could get a flow started."

OPINION

At 103, A&M learns new (good) tricks

After 103 years, it seems a university should be able to figure out all the angles to serve its students better.

But Texas A&M — which turned 103 last Thursday — missed some of the finer points.

Now, however, the administration is catching up. A couple of examples are the service units new this semester — Academic Services and the International Center.

Both should have been created long ago. But when enrollment doubles in less than a decade, it's understandable some refinements are left behind in the rush.

The idea behind each unit makes sense: Establish one central location where students and faculty can go for related needs.

In the past, for example, a student interested in competitive scholarships — the Rhodes, Rockefeller or Danforth awards — had to go to three different places on his own. Now Academic Services can give that type of information to students or direct them to it.

The same was true with international programs — find the opportunities, spread across the University, on your own. Those were wasteful, discouraging "non-systems."

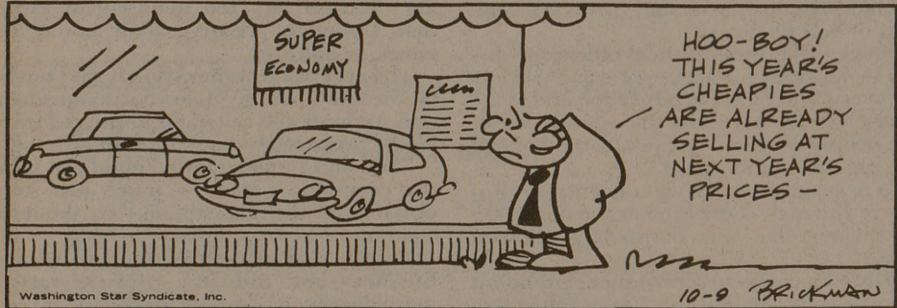
The new consolidations should help students and faculty. Students can go to Academic Services, 100 Harrington, for questions about General Studies, careers, preprofessional advice and academic testing.

New and old faculty can get help there on how to advise students and teaching.

And on the first and second floors of Bizzell Hall, both students and faculty can find out about international programs.

After 103 years, it's about time.

the small society by Brickman



THE BATTALION

USPS 045 360

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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VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

TUESDAY
OCTOBER 9, 1979



What about the architecture at Texas A&M?

Present growth is misguided

By MARK DENISON

In my two years at A&M, I have watched with much consternation as campus planners have torn down, painted over, covered up and replaced many of the older and richer elements of the physical campus.

Incoming students will soon never know the original wooden doors that once graced the older buildings.

Inexpensive aluminum windows that do not open have replaced wooden double-hung windows with panes. Simple plaster trim covers up ornamental cornices on some buildings like Leggett and Bolton halls. Paint covers the once red brick and white-trimmed Analytical Services Building with a monotonous beige.

The list goes on. One can look anywhere on campus for more examples and more is planned. The Agriculture Building, the Animal Industries Building and Scoates Hall are eventually to be torn down.

I think that A&M's zeal to erect the new and cover-up the old is born out of a pride in itself and its present growth. I also think it is misguided. The construction of a stadium costing \$113 million is alone an act few universities can afford today. That is almost the entire annual operating budget of the northeastern university of 16,000 students I attended. And, their actions are a rebellion against, a rejection of those symbols of established academia: Harvard Yard with its stately and exquisitely preserved buildings; Cornell's Arts Quad where students shun the single library building built this century; Jefferson's recently restored Rotunda at the University of Virginia; all symbols of academic excellence.

When Texas A&M was built, it was natural for a rural agricultural school to look to established schools as a model. Not long ago, the campus looked not unlike a northeastern university with Beaux-Arts, Victorian and Revival style buildings arranged in quadrangles with grass. It is delightful that this university once aspired to be as great. It now should be but it is not.

A&M's recent prosperity has created an administrative bureaucracy more interested in continued influence, self-preservation and growth than in the quality of the institution. In turn, they build and rebuild the campus in order to justify their jobs and more money to build and rebuild. They have dressed the campus in blue jeans and t-shirts, thrown away the silk ties it once wore and cannot see that it is ill-dressed among the dark pinstriped suits that this country's universities wear. They suffer a critical myopia; they see the University's virtues, and there are many, but cannot see its glaring faults. Its campus once would have impressed any visitor as a university that at least aspired to be a first-rate institution if not actually one. Today, it looks like middle-class high school USA, anything but a place of established knowledge and scholarly research.

It is an obvious truism that the campus reflects the quality of the institution and not vice versa. If A&M's changing campus reflects the trend from the rigors of traditional academics to an academic program geared mainly to self-preservation and growth, then perhaps little can be done to preserve the campus's past. But it is tragic for a university with A&M's resources to neglect one of its most valuable assets. As a university that reveres in tradition, we have almost lost the most visible, material and perhaps sacred one.

Mark Denison graduated from Texas A&M in 1978 with a degree in architecture, and is now working in Houston.

Buildings reflect character

By DR. CHARLES McCANDLESS

Mr. Denison's chief concern seems to be that the Texas A&M campus does not resemble the campuses and structures of the East and Northeast. The fact that the Texas A&M campus does not resemble those of Harvard, Cornell and the University of Virginia is entirely natural — Texas is not Massachusetts, New York or Virginia.

It seems fundamental that the architecture of a building or a complex of buildings should reflect the character and indeed the spirit of its environment, physical and social. To attempt to transplant the Harvard-Yard atmosphere (which is entirely appropriate for its environment) to College Station would be as inappropriate as to transplant the Alamo to Boston or to expect Faneuil Hall to be replaced by the Astro dome. In short, functional architecture is, we believe, that which grows from its surroundings, not that which is grafted onto those surroundings from another locale quite different in style, culture, and tradition.

In addition, Mr. Denison seems to equate age with richness, a process which in some instances may be true but not in all. Anyone who walks across the Texas A&M campus need only pause before Sully's statue and look to see that the park-like quadrangle formed by Nagle and Bolton, the "Y" and the Academic Building stands a continuation of the rich history of this university.

Certainly new buildings have been built and old buildings have been reconditioned, brought from a near-decrepit state into a usable, livable status. These buildings were built, and continue to be built, reconditioned or preserved not as the playthings of bored administrators but to meet the needs, both quantitative and qualitative, of the growing institution of which we are all a part.

Some buildings have, necessarily, been demolished. Even the best of buildings have an age limit and, like all of us, become nonfunctional when that limit is exceeded. As a matter of fact, in the past nine years only two major buildings, Guion Hall and Mitchess, have been demolished; one (Guion) became totally inadequate for its function and the other gave way to the need for an expanded, modernized, centrally located health services building.

As far as we know there are no plans in the foreseeable future to demolish the Agriculture Building, the Animal Industries Building, or Scoates Hall. We do not know where the \$113 million figure quoted by Mr. Denison as the cost of the stadium came from. The actual cost of the expansion is far less than this amount and includes a major expansion of G. Rollie White Coliseum.

Individuals who have been here for many years do not recall that this campus ever looked like a northeastern university. The aging pictures in the Texas A&M archives show a few buildings on a barren prairie that gradually developed into an institution which has its own unique character, style and presence. It is entirely possible, may we suggest, that blue jeans and t-shirts more accurately reflect the character and tradition of Texas and the Southwest than do silk ties and pinstriped suits. Established knowledge and scholarly research do not reside only in a Brooks Brothers suit. Moreover, educational institutions are more accurately judged by the quality of their students, faculty, and programs than by their architecture.

We are in basic agreement with Mr. Denison that we must strive to keep the best of what we have, but we must also provide for growth and change while being diligent stewards of the taxpayers' dollars.

Dr. McCandless is the director of the Office of Planning at Texas A&M University.

LETTERS Library leaves lots to be desired in the area of student lounge decor

Editor:

I love the new library. Two of my favorite features are the who-really-cares-what-time-it-is-anyway clocks and the quasimodo-closing-time chimes. But the big one in my book is the beautiful student lounge and refreshment center, no doubt sight of the recent Idi Amin summit for the librarian-boat-people refugees; the area has been sufficiently raped and pillaged.

You haven't heard about it? Well no wonder. You probably haven't even heard of the student lounge. Lord knows how Idi found it. The directory says second floor west. Second floor west? I can't even tell which way is up in the library. I suppose I should have followed the sun past the government files, through the brown doors and up the stairs into that giant vacant room.

But for what? Exciting tan vinyl chairs? 1960s-decor broken tile floor? A symphony of vending machines maybe? Sure. Our refuge, the library student lounge where the walls look like a 10th grade geometry book fly leaf — just what I need when I take a break from studying; Pythagorus en lounge.

OK, I realize much of the library is still under construction and I hope that's the case with the lounge. But for now, some pictures would be nice. A little music would be wonderful; an AM transistor radio would be better than the prelude to Dr. Pepper's last stand.

So, to whoever is responsible for all this, I appeal, put some color in my lounge. Because I really do love the new library.

— Robert Earl Keen, '79

— Lyle Lovett, '79

Stick with Pasta's

Editor:

I have eaten in Pasta's (formerly Mama's) for the past two-and-a-half years and have always enjoyed a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. The pizza is the best anywhere. Recently, I heard that Mama's Pizza is

coming back. Well, I don't know how that's possible when the Aggies at Pasta's are the ones that owned and operated the franchise since July 1977. The people at Pasta's are responsible for building that name in the area.

I would like to know how Mama's Pizza, a Fort Worth TCU graduate-owned company, can advertise that they are coming back when they were never here in the first place.

Support the Aggie-owned Pasta's, not the TCU-owned Mama's Pizza that is advertising that they were once in College Station.

— Barbara Jones, '83

Cut spending, taxes

Editor:

The main cause of inflation in this country is the government's bulging budget deficit. As the government spends more than it takes in, it must finance these projects by printing up more money. As a result, each dollar you possess becomes worth less because of the flood of surplus money enter-

ing the American system.

I propose that we cut the budget in this country by 40 percent and taxes by 25 percent. What would this accomplish? Well, for one thing, instead of a budget deficit, there would be a budget surplus. The surplus money would be reimbursed to the banks whom the government owes \$855 BILLION. Once the government returns to fiscal sanity by printing less paper money (no need to print much money when there's a budget surplus), inflation would slow down rapidly.

I also propose that we get rid of most of the federal regulations that strangle American business. Once red tape is lessened, businesses could afford to hire more people, thus reducing welfare. With fewer people out of work and more off welfare, we could eliminate the welfare, housing programs, federal grants to states and cities, Medicare, Medicaid, ad nauseum. To me, non-disabled welfare people are like leeches who drain the American financial system.

Only by electing conservatives can we preserve the American work ethic and thriftiness that have made this country great. The present Congress only rewards laziness, since they continually give more

money each year to welfare-associated projects.

— Richard Leonard

Dissatisfied ... still

Editor:

After almost four-and-a-half years at A&M, the one thing I will not be satisfied with is the mess GTE calls its phone service.

During these years, the trouble with long off-campus numbers has not increased. Why, with the addition of 600 people on the north side of campus does it still take six to eight calls before outside line is reached (especially after p.m.)? Why, when calling long distance does a busy signal start in the middle of phone number or why do I just get cut off? Why did I have a "conversation" with four people (one of them in Leggett, another in Walton) when I called the operator for help tonight since GTE deliver enough phone books to the dorms and I didn't get one?

What a sorry service to put up with these years!!

Goodbye GTE! Hello Ma Bell!

— Lydia A. Mall

by Doug Graham

