

Slouch By Jim Earle



"I can't think of a thing to say that wouldn't make you madder than you already are."

Can there even be life after Pac Man?

by Dave Spence

It was my last dollar that I fed to the bill-changer in the basement of the MSC. My last hard-earned dollar, but I sacrificed it ungrudgingly because only a Coke from the Talking Vending Machine would quench my Monday-afternoon thirst.

But ... my thirst was not to be quenched. After the machine greedily sucked up George Washington and in return spit a handful of change out of its tray and onto the floor, I noticed, as I chased down the coins rolling about, that they weren't U.S. coinage at all. That rotten machine had given me four lousy video-game tokens! It had always gratefully traded me quarters and nickels for a dollar, but not this time. In return for my last dollar, I was stuck with video-game tokens.

I detest video games, and in a rage I marched toward the girl behind the game desk seeking immediate reimbursement.

"Excuse me," I said politely. "Yah?" she answered and punctuated with a bubble gum smack. "I feel a bit silly, Miss. But that change machine over there - well, it always was a change machine - it gave me these video-game tokens instead of quarters and nickels to put in the Talking Coke Machine."

"Yah." (Smack!) "Well, I can't buy an ice ... cold ... Coke with these. Can you please give me my quarters and nickels instead?" My voice cracked weakly with a parched throat.

"What's wrong with you? Don't you like video games?" she asked me like I was socially deficient.

"I'm just not very good at them, that's all."

"Well, now you can practice," and with that, she swung around on her stool. (Smack!)

"But please -" I didn't continue. She was already renting someone else a ping pong ball.

That wasn't the first time I'd had a run-in with the Institution of Video Games. Since the prehistoric days of clumsy pin-ball machines, we've been at odds.

Even as a small lad, barely able to reach the bumper-buttons, I felt alien to that blinking and clanging machine towering above me. I'd toss in bed night after night, tormented by nightmares of embarrassingly low point tallies. Signs flashed at me in my sleep, "GAME OVER! GAME OVER! GAME OVER!"

And I was always the one on the block who couldn't handle a simulated-race-car game. I was around fourteen when those came out and they were powerful macho symbols. So I palled around with another outcast, Lambert Hiney - a scrawny, greasy boy whose defect was that he threw a baseball like a girl. We lamented all through our fourteenth summer over how we couldn't join the gang in baseball and 'lectric games. Then Lambert, by accident that fall, discovered he had a natural talent for the new video baseball games. No one ever mocked him again.

I had a badly damaged ego coming into college.

When I came to Texas A&M, I knew it was a do-or-die situation. Either it was I who would conquer the video games, or, heaven forbid, the video games would pound me into a quivering fruitcake and seize my scholarship.

The first semester was rough. I went about it all wrong. I was the typical freshman you see out on a Saturday night - slovenly clutching a "Space Gobbler" machine, awkwardly compensating for my low tolerance by over-indulging. Sheer suicide. I was a mess.

Then, luckily, I discovered a group that meets once a week on campus - a group of electrophobiacs who lean on each other for support and guidance.

I found that I wasn't alone in neurotically eschewing video games. I fact, many of the students in the group are worse off than I am. One guy breaks out in hives at the sight of an Atari set. Another blew his every penny on juke boxes. One poor fellow is convinced that the entire earth is but a minuscule circuit in some grand, cosmic video game.

However, we are all improving with one another's help. "Wow," exclaimed a new member at the last meeting. "I think I'm actually gonna make it through Pac-Man Mania!" Then we all embraced.

And so, I stood trembling with anxiety in the basement of the MSC - seemingly stuck with a handful of video-game tokens. Unless ...

I took a few deep breaths. Be strong, be calm, Dave, I whispered to myself. I'd beat these machines!

"Four tokens here!" I yelled in the midst of a thick crowd of video game patrons, thrusting the coins above my head like football tickets. "Four tokens for the price of three! Buy'em here! Buy'em here!"

Dilemma of date conversation

by Denise R. Patton

Dates. They start out as rare events that we look forward to and anticipate, yet they sometimes end up being complete and total disasters! If it is the first date, we could find out (too late) that accepting the date was the wrong thing to do. How many times has your roommate come home, slammed the door and said, "I thought I was going to die!" As time dulls these memories, we tend to laugh about them, but as they are happening, they seem like the crisis of our lives.

Sometimes, by some bizarre twist of fate, we find ourselves out on a date with someone with whom we have absolutely nothing in common with. What on earth would a mechanical engineering major and a political science major find to talk about? Well, you don't have to talk about your major, although in some cases, it does help to have a point of common interest with which to begin. Conversation tends to lack substance if you and your date find that the only thing that you have in common is that you both have experienced the same weather that day.

Freshmen are lucky; they all have at least some thing in common, and that is the still warm memories of high school

days. Prom night and graduation day are always particular favorites among freshmen. These two subjects lead to a general recap of entire high school careers, including sports, honors, grades and club memberships. Once freshmen get started on this subject, both people can relax and leave the conversation to drift down memory lane. Sometimes, the memories can produce a situation where one person doesn't even listen to what the other person is saying, so busy are they trying to outdo the other, or to remember the ultimate wild high school experience.

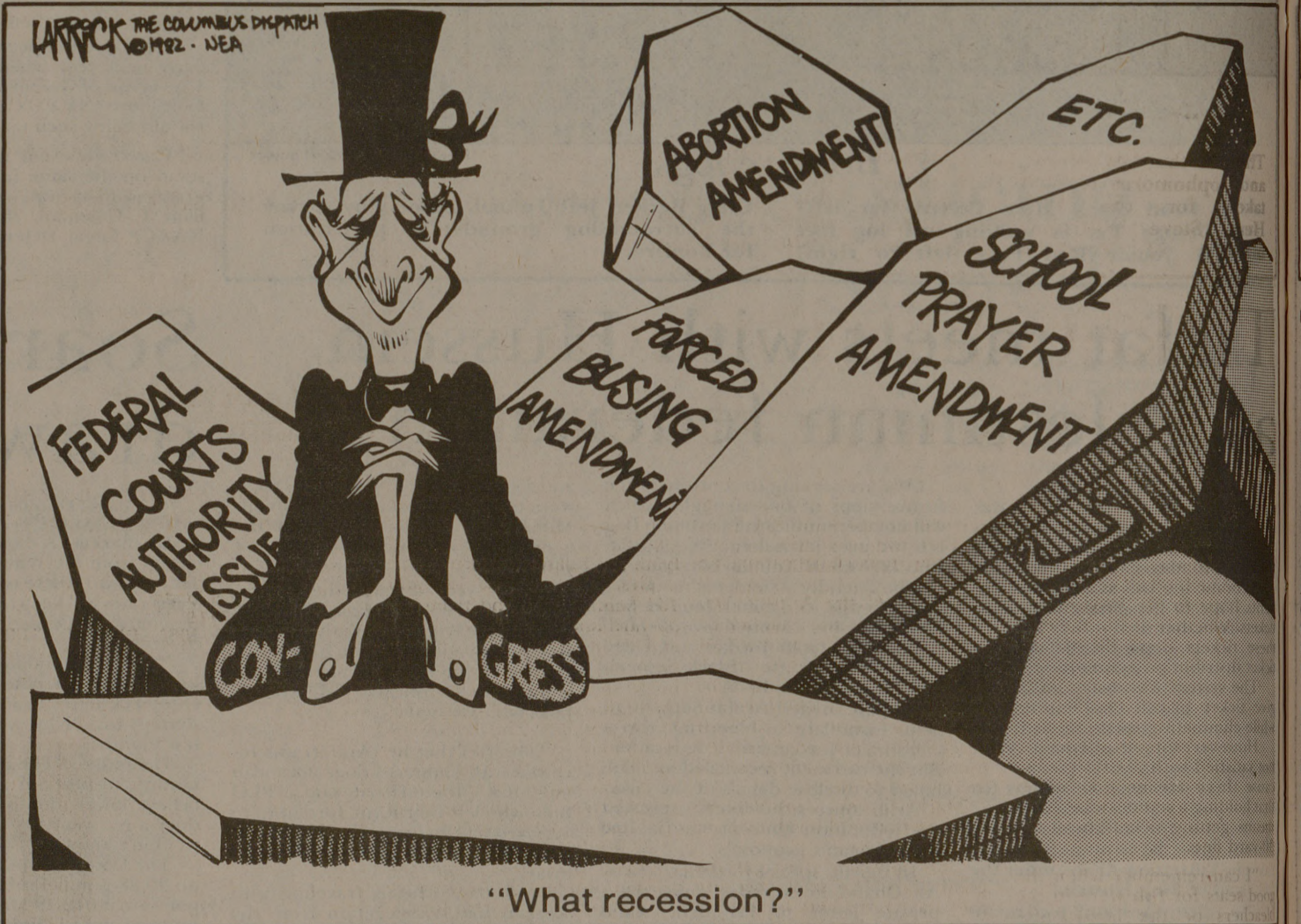
Going out on a date with a cadet in the Corps is an entirely different matter. A brush-up course on military terms is strongly advised, (entire dictionaries on this subject can be found in the library!). Skimming the dictionary before hand does not always do the trick though, as these fellows are inevitably going to use the terms "really red" and "good bull." There is not a dictionary in print that will give you a definition of these phrases. They seem to be unique to Texas A&M (the Corps in particular!). In fact, ask

your date what they mean and even he will be hard-pressed for an answer.

Naturally, you will have to prepare to "ooh" and "aah" over the number of pushups he did in just one day (if he is not a Senior, that is), or over the mileage of the outfit run, conducted (naturally) before breakfast. In a case like this, if you have not fallen asleep, and you want to really impress your date with your knowledge, you might say something along the lines of, "That is good bull," or "You must be in the reddest outfit on the quad!"

Also, what seems like a major crisis to you - like the fact that your roommate took the Lord and Taylor bargain blouse and wore it before you could even take the tags off of it - this will not seem like a crisis to your date!

If you notice that things are going from bad to worse, maybe you should talk about the weather, or revert to high school experiences - even better tell your date about your worst date, previous to this experience, of course. Maybe that will perk things up. If all of the above fails, order another beer and look into the future, when you will be able to laugh about this date.



"What recession?"

Letters: Blacks at Texas A&M

Editor:

This letter is in response to Rob Drury's letter Oct. 7.

Mr. Drury: Your letter appearing in the Battalion had it's pluses and minuses. The pluses include the fact that you referred to me as Mr., you presented your side of the argument, and you pointed out some things I had hoped would be pointed out. Your minuses include the fact that you diverted attention away from the points I made in my first letter, and you said without proof that my argument was irrational.

To make my first letter more clear, let me say that slavery in this country, in this part of the country and between the years 1600 to 2000 was confined to one black race of human beings. The slave sale was thus associated with the most recent and closest-to-home case of slavery. Furthermore, one does not have to read a European history book in order to learn about earlier cases of slavery. There is a Black American history book which contains that information. I know the word "slave" comes from the latin word slavicus which means "slav". "Slav" of course refers to the Slavic people who were enslaved by the Germanic people in the days of the Roman Empire.

Since the reference "Blacks" is applied to a group of human beings, the manner in which these people are addressed is more than a "simple matter of colloquial diction."

The name Lawrence Sullivan Ross was not mentioned in my first letter nor did I excoriate his reputation. The implied reference to this man was contained in the words, "... some honor the statue of a confederate ..." if being a confederate brigadier general constitutes an excoriation of Ross's reputation, then his reputation is excoriated, but don't blame me.

Also, why did you, Mr. Drury, refer to the Europeans as "European expeditors" and to the Africans as "African natives" ... colloquial diction?

Kevin Johnson '84

Misunderstanding

Editor:

The conflict here is the result of a misunderstanding. People do not understand nor do some people care to understand the afflictions put upon a race of people for more than 300 years. From this lack of knowledge people are filled with anguish and many frustrated or hurt.

The point being made is that when slavery is spoken about, black people do not think of medieval Europe, they think of their forefathers and the agony and pain they suffered as slaves to this great nation. When people say confederate, this race of people do not think of the great state of Texas, they think of the great state of oppression. Whistling Dixie is not music to these peoples ears, it's pain and anger in their hearts.

Lastly, Lawrence Sullivan Ross did not establish this fine institution of higher learning for blacks. Prairie View A&M was established in 1876 also, as an "agricultural and mechanical college for the benefit of Colored Youths". This race of people was not admitted to Texas A&M University for several decades later.

Why should these people honor what is their demise?

Yes ... There is a definite misunderstanding.

Terry Vance '84

Change necessary

Editor:

I am writing in response to the letter written by Rob Drury in the Oct. 7 issue of The Battalion.

Mr. Drury: This letter is in response to the ridicu-

lous rebuttal that you made of Mr. Kevin Johnson's letter in the Oct. 5 issue of The Battalion.

To start with, Mr. Johnson was not interested at all in the history of European slavery which you insisted on discussing. Mr. Johnson's point was that Black men, women, and children were sold on the auction block in the United States of America. It is very distasteful for Blacks to be reminded of this whenever they pass Sbisla while there is a mock slave auction going on.

As for the subject of the library file, you were right Mr. Drury. It is absurd for a library worker at Texas A&M to waste his time changing file headings from "Negro" to "Blacks". But at other institutions of higher learning such as the University of Houston and t.u. this is not so absurd.

And finally, there is the statue of Lawrence Sullivan Ross: It doesn't make any difference if he was governor of Texas or president of this institution. The main point was that he was a slave owner, and any man that believed in slavery is no hero to Blacks at Texas A&M. How can you conceive that a man, who was a slave owner, had anything to do with Blacks being at Texas A&M.

Mr. Drury, there are still some things that need to be changed in the world and at Texas A&M.

Jonathan Branch '84

Faith continues

Editor:

I still believe in Jackie.

Pat Pearson  
Student Body President

The Battalion

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