

# opinion

## Changes needed in crowded library

Something has got to be done about the over-crowding at the library.

I can take the hopeless lines at the xerox machines, the despairing emptiness of the candy machines. I can even cope with the hour-or-so wait to check out a book. But, my God, the other evening I was forced to sit and study at a table with a total stranger—someone whom I'd never even met before! He was pouring sympathetically over an Abnormal Psychology text. Let me tell you, I was scared to death.

But I don't need to go on painting those ugly scenes of the library at around 8 p.m. on week nights; you all have seen them. I'm just humbly trying to suggest a couple of solutions to this problem. How many students are there at this university now? 300,000? Next year it'll be a half-million. Something has got to be done.

The problem is that there are just too many people these days studying at—or, should I say, just coming to—the library. Granted, the percentage of those who actually study has only gone up a fraction. I think the biggest reason that lib-

rary patronage has skyrocketed in the last few years is that the precious word has gotten out that the library is The Place To Go to socialize.

And that's OK. After all, very broadly speaking, the library is a place for an exchange of information.

The first, and more feasible, of my two suggestions (the second one is so impractical that I'm embarrassed to even print it) is that we be a lot more efficient in using the library—space-wise and time-wise. For instance, I know there are a lot of closets and large air shafts that more desks could be crammed into. Certainly half the stools in the bathrooms could be put to better use. And I don't see why—this seems so obvious to me—that we don't arrange the students like the books: stack 'em three or four high and shoulder-to-shoulder.

My second suggestion—and, again, I blush to mention it—is that, well, only those who wish to study should go to the library.

I know, I know. Unthinkable.  
**Dave Spence**

## Lights out dangerous

Editor:

As I was walking to Silver Taps Tuesday night I saw a member of the Corps stopping cars on Houston Street next to Sbisa and instructing the drivers to turn off their headlights in respect for the Silver Taps Ceremony. In the course of about one minute, I nearly witnessed the deaths of a pedestrian and a bicyclist because of these lightless cars.

I feel that turning off lights around campus in respect for the Silver Taps Ceremony is wonderful, but let's have some common sense? Headlights are put on cars for a very important reason; they are not dispensable (not even for Silver Taps!)

I think Silver Taps is a great and honorable tradition here at A&M, but I don't think we should let a tradition blind us of all safety and common sense.

**Rob Farrell '86**

## Save with exchange

Editor:

Students often complain about the loss of money they suffer by reselling their books back to the bookstores. This "rip-off" does not have to happen. Student Government offers the Book Exchange at the end of each semester which not only allows the students to make more from their books but they can also buy new ones for less. The system is quite simple and only costs a small handling fee of 10¢ per book.

During finals week just bring the books you wish to sell to the first floor of the Pavilion. Here, you will fill out a few

forms which will be used to contact you in the spring. Simply set the price you wish to ask for each book and then leave the rest to the Book Exchange. Over the holidays, the books will be stored safely until add/drop begins in the spring. As you find out what books you will need for the semester, come by the Book Exchange and buy them at much lower cost from the other students. You will then be contacted within the next two weeks to come pick up your money.

The benefits this service offers are many. Students can sell their books for what they think they are worth, which is probably more than what they would get from any bookstore. At the beginning of the new semester, books can be bought at lower prices than those set at bookstores. Finally, students are relieved of the burden and worries of buying and selling because the Book Exchange is in the same place as add/drop.

To really make the Book Exchange a success more students need to use it. Please take advantage of this service and encourage your friends, as it was developed for the benefit of the students.

**Michael Mulcahy**

## CCF relay win ignored

Editor:

On October 22-23 five girls ran a 24-hour relay to help raise money for the Christian Children's Fund. To help save the lives of small starving children, these girls forced their bodies to withstand the pain of such a grueling run. And if that in itself isn't incredible, what about the world's record they broke.

What we're concerned about is why the accomplishment of these girls has been overlooked. The relay was just one

attempt to help raise the \$25,000 A&M pledged to CCF to feed and care 125 children.

A number of universities nationwide are looking to start their own projects such as ours. Whether or not we succeed will have a big impact on the enthusiasm and success of their projects.

We are also concerned about something. The athletic department, through much negotiation, agreed to announce the success of the 24-hour relay at the A&M-tu game. However, they are not doing so because the game is televised. What's really strange about appointing to us is that the relay was on Kyle Field, the girls representing student body, the glory is A&M's athletic department couldn't announce it to their own people? An ABC commercial break, "Sports World Magazine" and "Sports Illustrated" were excited about this enough to print it and announce it nationwide. We are sure that the attendance at the game would have been enough to know that such wonderful humanitarian efforts are being made by our alma mater to save the lives of children.

Even though we are disappointed we have not lost faith in our fellow CCF Village of Hope will have a great time during dead week at the M. We encourage everyone to go by and contribute what they can. We'd also like to thank those who have supported the relay, including the athletes. We need to make a difference in the lives of children.

**Selina Mendieta**

(Editor's note: This letter was signed by 30 signatures.)

## Nuclear war caused when nobody blinks

By Art Buchwald

I have to apologize for being so late with my piece about the TV film "The Day After," but I've been thinking so much about it I haven't had time to do anything else.

ABC, which produced the picture, went out of its way not to take sides as to who was responsible for trashing Lawrence, Kansas. They spent \$7 million showing us what could happen after an area was mushroomed, but not one buck on what caused the holocaust in the first place. I think they owed us just one scene between a few survivors discussing the why of it all.

The scene could have taken place between Jason Robards, who played the role of a doctor, and the last political science professor alive at the University of Kansas.

The men, covered from head to foot in atomic ash, are sitting on a pile of rubble that was once a nursery school.

"What the hell do you think happened?" Jason Robards asks the political science professor.

"Nobody blinked," the professor replies.

"What does that mean?"

"Well, it all goes back to the Cuban missile crisis. Remember when Dean Rusk said the Soviets would always blink before we did."

Robards says, "I guess we miscalculated."

The professor, looking over the desolation, says, "That would be a fair statement. What the people in Washington refused to take into account was the Soviets considered the missile crisis the biggest defeat they suffered since World War II. They booted out Khrushchev and vowed they would never blink again."

"Do you want an orange?"

"No, for some reason I feel nauseated. In order not to blink, the Soviets started

an unprecedented nuclear arms buildup. Soon, the military on both sides insisted the other side had nuclear superiority, so the arms race was on. The thinking in Washington and Moscow was the more deterrents they had, the less chance there was of someone starting a war."

"Why didn't it work?" Jason says.

"It worked for a while. But then the arms talks came, and both sides engaged in playing the numbers game. We promised not to put any cruise and Pershing missiles in Europe if the Soviets reduced the SS-20's. The Soviets said we had to include British and French missiles in the talks, and we refused. When neither side would blink, we started deploying our new missiles, and the Russians walked out of Geneva."

"Why the hurry?"

"Because our credibility was at stake. Had we not gone ahead with the threat, the Soviets would have said Reagan blinked. If they hadn't walked out, we would have said Andropov blinked."

"And that's when the missile race began in earnest?"

"You could say that. They surrounded us with all their nuclear warheads and we surrounded them. We got ourselves in a spot where any spark could set off Armageddon."

"Didn't both sides realize this?"

"The leaders were assured by their experts that the other side didn't have the guts to use their nukes because they knew they would also be wiped out in the process. The only way to keep the peace was to build more horrifying weapons until the other side came to its senses."

"So why are we sitting on the rubble in Lawrence, Kansas, full of gamma rays?"

"I guess we'll never know," the professor says sadly. "It might not even have been a human decision. With a response time of only six minutes to react, the whole thing would have been started by a faulty computer that wouldn't stop blinking."



WOULDN'T YOU KNOW?... WE GO TO ALL THE TROUBLE TO ADOPT A CABBAGE PATCH KID... AND THEN I GET PREGNANT

## Election year appointments set stage for conservatism

by Maxwell Glen and Cody Shearer

Washington — Election-year appointments generally offer presidents the chance to repay political IOUs and collect new chits as well. For Ronald Reagan, however, they may also help to lay a conservative foundation for the future.

That possibility was suggested by two appointments in particular: those of R. Bruce McCollm to a seat on the Inter-American Human Rights Commission and J. Harvie Wilkinson III to a seat on the fourth Circuit Court of Appeals. Both encountered negligible opposition in receiving confirmation.

Critics have questioned the qualifications of both McCollm and Wilkinson for the posts they've snared. The human rights commission, which functions under the aegis of the Organization of American States, normally includes members who have a deep background in international law; likewise, trial experience is generally a prerequisite for federal judgeships. The appointments of McCollm, a staff writer for the conservative group, Freedom House, and Wilkinson, a law professor and former editorialist with no trial background, go against tradition.

Yet the administration's intent behind these appointments may involve more than filling vacancies. Anxious to leave a legacy that will outlast his administration, Reagan will be looking during the next year for vacancies in offices that are immune to the usual quadrennial housecleaning. He can also be expected to put a premium on youth and ideological commitment.

At the OAS, McCollm, only 33, will serve a four-year term, with an opportunity for re-election. Wilkinson, only 39 himself, can serve for life. If they are an example of what Reagan has in mind of the next year, the president has already begun to sow ideological seeds for the

rest of the decade, and perhaps the century.

Filling a vacuum? No single theme has emerged for the 1984 campaign, a fact that plays into the hands of both Ronald Reagan and conservative activities. Much has already been made of Republican Party plans to inundate the airwaves with footage from the president's "heroic" efforts in such places as Grenada and South Korea. Meanwhile, independent groups are massing war cheats for pro-Reagan hops.

The National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC), by far the wealthiest "independent" group, has already produced a 30-minute movie hailing Reagan's record. It also plans a 200-page book (tentatively titled "Reagan: A Presidents Succeeds") and television commercials involving various celebrities.

Ronald Reagan, the actor-turned-president, now stars in a weekly review of his activities broadcast on a closed-circuit channel throughout the White House and to selected Executive Branch offices. Compiled by a navy film crew, the hour-long tapes will eventually rest in a Reagan presidential library. The White House has no exact figures for the production costs.

Part of the nation's student loan machinery came to a standstill Nov. 1, as Congress refused to approve further relief funding for graduate students who have unusually high debts. Under the affected two-year-old program, called "loan consolidation," some 32,000 students have been able to repay their loans in 20 years instead of 10.

Despite lobbying by the higher education community, Congress may not change its mind. One Senate critic of the loan consolidation program, Republican Robert Stafford of Vermont, says it favors would-be doctors and lawyers over other students, and costs too much.

The price of deficits: Treasury De-

partment figures for federal spending during the 1983 fiscal year, which last month, reveal the dramatic increase in financing on taxpayers. As last year's departmental report, the spending categories were Social Security (\$141 billion), interest on the debt (billions), Medicare (\$35 billion), operations and maintenance (billions).

The report also noted that spending levels had increased by at least 20 percent in 20 of the top 35 programs. Agriculture price supports, up more than 60 percent over the last year, enjoyed the largest increase.

## Slouch

by Jim



"I think we should stand front of these wheels gets dark so no one can see our hubcaps have been

## The Battalion

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The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Communications.

Questions or comments concerning any editorial matter should be directed to the editor.

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Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length, and are subject to being cut if they are longer. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must also be signed and show the address and telephone number of the writer.

Columns and guest editorials also are welcome, and are not subject to the same length constraints as letters. Address all inquiries and correspondence to: Editor, The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843, or phone (409) 845-2611.

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