

## Textbook selection controversy brews

And the controversy rages on. At the first day of hearings by the State Textbook Committee, once again biology textbooks are being attacked by fundamentalist Christians and by self-proclaimed textbook critics Mel and Norma Gabler of Longview. They are arguing that creationism should be taught on an equal footing with evolution. Another person argued that explicit male and female anatomical models in a proposed text are "totally unnecessary." The consistently ridiculous suggestions that are made for textbooks in Texas come from a few vocal groups. The elected state Board of Education members have been known to bow to pressure exerted by people such as the Gablers, who have had extensive publicity but no qualifications. Each summer the textbook committee hears testimony at the Texas Edu-

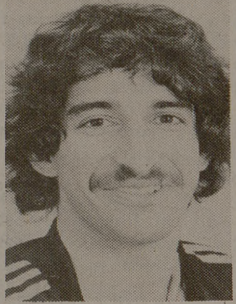
cation Agency's Austin field office. The state Board of Education considers the committee's report in the fall, listening to further testimony. Anyone can testify at either hearing, after requesting an appearance by writing to Raymon Bynum, the state's commissioner of education. More people should take advantage of that to offset the power of people like the Gablers. The political pressure now exerted by small groups should be lessened with the appointed board set up by the recent state education reforms. But only if the governor chooses the most qualified people — not people he owes political favors. There's hope for the Texas system yet — if a competent board is appointed.

— The Battalion Editorial Board



## It's hard to swallow a 72 ounce slab of steak

AMARILLO — "Free," the highway sign said. Just the kind of sign I like to see. "Red meat."



Donn Friedman

The kind that comes from 1,200 pound Texas steers. Big ex-bulls. 72 ounces worth of BEVO. Free at the Big Tex in Amarillo. In small print the billboard added: "If eaten in one hour." Well, I was on my way, a few flat plain miles past Plainview, heading for Amarillo. How hard could it be to devour and digest less than 1/2 of 1 percent of a normal beef animal. That's assuming the animal weighs 1,200 pounds. So, with that assumption in hand, I began to prepare for the meal. Four-and-a-half pounds of heavy Texas beef. My travel schedule gave

me one night to prepare. An extensive stomach enlargement and training regimen would be necessary. I arrived in Amarillo at dinner time. "Huff's — All You Can Eat," the billboard looming above I-40 promised. Within minutes I was gorging myself on greasy fried chicken and slimy corned beef and cabbage. A trip to the salad bar and back to the chicken. A trip to the strawberry shortcake and back by the brown-and-serve rolls. Ice cream and mashed potatoes for the grand finale. "You must," I remembered my coach telling me, "push yourself beyond what you think you can do, if you're ever going to reach your potential." I went back for another helping of corned beef and cabbage — and another piece of strawberry shortcake. After a slightly restful night — I will admit I had a dream involving a giant strawberry, a chicken and a dog named Bill-bo, but that's another story

— I spent the day tagging along with a scientist at the Bushland Research Center feed lot. A day on the range awakens my appetite; I was ready for a 72 ounce steak, medium rare. A giant plastic steer, weighing more than 5 tons — if its insides were flesh rather than air — stood in the parking lot beside tour buses, and campers, and Ryder One-Way Rental trucks with their air-conditioned comfort. A cowboy duded up in a red snap-shirt, kerchief and hat sat on a white horse waving at the I-40 traffic as it sped by. Towering overhead, 25-foot tall Big Tex watched over his homestead. At his belly a sign told travelers, "The Big Texan Steak Ranch. Exit Now." The interior was pseudo-Texan (like the Memorial Student Center). The hostess, dressed in Western attire, led me to a red velvet chair with steers' horns for arms; ice-water was served in a glass boot. I flipped through the menu — a newspaper and a food list in one. It

told of Longhorns, and beds and real Texan food. The bigger, the better, the more Texan. The offer was there: a free 72-ounce steak with baked potato, shrimp cocktail, salad and roll. Easy. Then they came to me. The eyes. Staring at me from behind the metal fence. They stomped about in the feces. How could they live in such filth? They crawled around the compound on all fours. They were no better than animals. The guards marched around the pen barking orders. "Yihaaaah," they said. "Git. Move it. We're going to have fun." "They're only animals," I said. "What?" the waitress asked. The taste of blood filled my mouth. "I want," I said and then the eyes came back begging, pleading for me to spare their brethren. I'm a native Texan; no animal is going to tell me what to eat or not eat.

But I couldn't. I just couldn't. More than my share for sport. "I want the 12-ounce sirloin," I said. "I finished off my steak, paid my bill and hurried on my way. The trophies — the rams, the deer, the lynx — seemed to smile at me as I left the storied dining room. At the entry way, behind an display of steaks, a tote board showed the score for the 72-ounce challenge: 21,784 attempts, 3863 complete meals. Losers are billed \$29.95. A thick slab of beef sat challenging — looking deceptively small. I drifted past the Longhorn shooting gallery in the lobby, past the trinket shop and out the door. I licked the last bit of the tasty juice of the prime steak out of my mustache. That night, I shaved off my mustache. (Donn Friedman is a senior journalism major and The Battalion's roving columnist covering the plains of Texas this summer.)

## Spaced out professor to be Father of World War III

By ART BUCHWALD  
Columnist for  
The Los Angeles Times Syndicate

The successful test of an anti-ballistic missile against a dummy one in space could not come at a better time for President Reagan's campaign to get more funds for his "Star Wars" program. It also vindicated the lifetime work of Professor Grindlewald, who was the first to put forward the theory that anything man could put into space he could also shoot down. Ridiculed in the scientific community for years, Grindlewald may now go down in history as the Father of World War III. I found the old man in his home in Falls Church, Va. He took me into his garage and showed me sketches dating back to 1962 covered with math-

ematical calculations, and then told me his story. "After the Soviets launched Sputnik, everyone in America panicked except me. I went to see Kennedy's people in the White House and said, 'There is only one answer to Sputnik. We have to launch a crash program to shoot it down.' They told me the president had a better idea. America would develop satellites on its own, and compete peacefully with the Soviets in space. "So he created NASA and sent manned and unmanned satellites into the sky, without giving any thought to their military value. Every time I saw one go up I got sick." "Pretty soon there were hundreds of satellites swooping around the sky. It made me furious. "First I went to NASA and asked them if they would finance my research. No one would listen to me.

"Then I went to Congress with my dream. I asked them to let me shoot down one communications satellite to prove that it could be done. My timing was off because our astronauts had just landed on the moon and the country was brainwashed into believing this accomplishment was the dawn of a new civilization. I had to laugh. "What finally saved me was Vladimir Richesky, a Soviet scientist who also had a deep hatred of using space for peaceful purposes. We met at a 'Star Trek' convention at Disneyland and exchanged views. I told him if he would let me steal his anti-satellite weapon plans I could prove the Soviets were going to use space to launch a first-strike attack on the U.S. Then Congress would give me funds to develop my program. In exchange I would let him steal my plans so he could prove to the Kremlin we were working on a

top-secret strategy to shoot down their satellites. Then he could get all the rubles he needed from the Kremlin to finance his research. "He naturally agreed, and now thanks to the meeting the U.S. and U.S.S.R. are on a collision course in space." "You gave the space program a whole new lease on life," I said. Grindlewald said modestly, "I never doubted we could do it. Once I proved the Soviets were to their ears in space warfare research I had President Reagan's ear." "What did he say when you showed him your anti-satellite weapons plan?" "He just smiled and said, 'This is one small step for man and one giant leap for mankind!'"

## Congress needs a studio audience

By DICK WEST  
Columnist for  
United Press International

WASHINGTON — Back in the days before somebody invented C-Span, members of the House had to resort to the printed word, namely the Congressional Record, to pull the wool over their constituents' eyes. The rules were such that congressmen could magically be in two places at once. The Record would make it appear they were on the House floor delivering orations on vital issues, whereas in reality they might be back in their home districts currying favor with the electorate. As three members asserted in a suit to require verbatim reporting on congressional activity, "Speeches are inserted that were never made, while those made are often deleted or substantially altered. Legislative history is regularly manufactured and inserted into the Record after crucial votes have been taken." Yes, but when C-Span began "live" television coverage of House sessions, some of the lawgivers actually started delivering "special orders" in person. The term "special orders" is somewhat difficult to explain to televisioners.

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In general, it means that congressmen have permission to address the House on subjects dear to their heart after the day's other legislative business is over. Until the cameras invaded the chamber, few holders of special orders bothered with an audio presentation of their speeches. They simply had the material inserted in the Record. Even fewer House members stayed glued to their seats during this attitude adjustment hour, thus avoiding the risk that they might be swayed by the power and logic of the oratory, and change their opinions. As long as the cameras remained focused on the speechmakers, rather than panning the chamber, there wasn't much point in providing warm bodies to audit the proceedings. The cameras did, however, confirm certain fears expressed during debate

on the question of whether to permit televised coverage. During these deliberations, the House heard warnings that television would tempt some members of carry issues directly to the great American public rather than try to influence their colleagues. These predictions essentially came to pass. Which is one reason Speaker Thomas O'Neill, D-Mass., ordered that the cameras start showing empty seats during special order oratory. Although certain loquacious congressmen contend the speaker went too far in directing that new camera angles be imposed, I don't think he went far enough. If the House is going to be a television, as well as a legislative, body, I think it ought to go all out and adopt

some of the methods used by the better networks. Studio audiences clearly is one possibility. If there is an understandable reluctance to remain in the chamber during special orders, that disinclination obviously is not shared by the home viewers. So why not invite these public-spirited citizens to attend the sessions when they are in the neighborhood? Many, I'm sure, would jump at the change to sit in on a special order rendition. And when the cameras panned the chamber, few if any empty seats would be visible. If need be, there could even be electric "applause" signs behind the rostrum to indicate the proper emotional response. Admittedly, a non-elected audience might be a bit deceptive. But veteran readers of the Congressional Record probably would accept that chicanery without batting an eye.

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