

## An inadequate library: all A&M deserves

The Sterling C. Evans Library at Texas A&M University is inadequate for graduate study or research.

As potentially volatile as that statement may seem, say it to just about any A&M graduate student, faculty member or administrator — including the director of the library — and they likely will shrug in agreement, albeit reluctantly.

And what will they tell you the library needs to be adequate?

First, books. More books and better books.

Then journals and periodicals.

Finally, staff. Many more people.

You can't run a quality library without quality people and the Sterling C. Evans Library is grossly understaffed.

And what will all that take?

Money. Your money. Dollars taken from state revenue. A greater commitment from Texas taxpayers to support higher education in their state. Or a change of priorities.

The money now donated by former students to be wasted on bell towers and a losing football program could instead be funneled into the library. Those former students suffering from years of Aggie-



Donn Friedman

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loss syndrome could become the proud supporters of an excellent library, a winning library. I can just read it now: The Associated Press announced today Texas A&M has moved four spots up in the national library poll after receiving a \$500,000 gift from Rock A. Former-Student.

But why should our former students spend their hard-earned money upgrading the library or the academic programs here?

Well competition for one thing. The University of Texas now has the eighth best library in the United States based on number of volumes owned. Texas A&M is No. 80.

But there seems to be little reason to compete against a better-run and better-supported institution.

As the late Dean Earl Cook said in a 1983 faculty lecture entitled "Marooned in Aggieland":

"... A&M is not a representative school. It never has been. Does it want to be? Does it wish to copy schools in what it does? Or will it continue to serve students who want to be Aggies, while trying to broaden their horizons, widen their opportunities, and hone their brains."

Texas A&M is a different kind of place than Cornell, Harvard or UT.

"Of the land-grant colleges this was the one which focused most intently on the development of leadership skills and knowledge of applied science as powerful means for ambitious youngsters to rise in American society," Cook said.

Today, it still focuses on the development of leadership skills and knowledge of applied science as powerful means to rise in American society.

Some may criticize this view of Texas A&M as it being a technical school rather than a pre-eminent University.

But as University of Texas President Peter Flawn said:

"The University of Texas should not try to become the Harvard of the Southwest; its goal should be to become the best possible University of Texas."

In the same way, Texas A&M shouldn't try to become what it is not. It should try to become the best possible Texas A&M. This University has a library adequate for a technocratic undergraduate education. Maintaining this adequacy is quite important, but striving to be Princeton-on-the-Brazos is waste of both taxpayers' and former students' dollars.

No doubt, the University now has a library the football team can be proud of. But it needs more, much more. Given alumni preference for games over books, however, maybe that's all it deserves.

Donn Friedman is a weekly columnist for *The Battalion*.

## Texas A&M needs brewskies in MSC

For many years now Texas A&M has been seeking status as the "Top University in Texas."

Traditionally A&M has been fighting the University of Texas for that status. Due to this competition, A&M and UT have become quite similar (despite popular belief to the contrary).

They are both good schools with top-notch faculties. They both have a highly spirited student body. They both have a very generous alumni. They both have a bell tower. They both have great football teams (well, at least one school does).

But there is one thing UT has that A&M doesn't. It is something that would benefit A&M greatly. A&M needs a bar in the Student Center.

I was in Austin Thursday to interview a man for a project for my history class. This man played guitar for a rock 'n' roll band in the 60's and now teaches English at UT. After the interview we left his office, walked past several students who were either sitting, sleeping, throwing frisbees or studying on a nice grass lawn (I would rather not say more about the grass), and went to the Student Union to drink some beer.

The UT Student Union is very similar to A&M's Memorial Student Center. There is a bookstore, a game room, a bowling alley, a cafeteria and a snack bar. But there is one major difference: UT's Student Union has a bar.

The idea of having a bar on campus is one worth considering. Having a nice, quiet place on campus where students and faculty can go to talk and throw down a few beers after class would do a lot for student-faculty relations.

Some may think the Dixie Chicken and Dudley's Draw can serve the same purpose. They can't. Although these places are pretty close to campus they are pretty far away from most classrooms. Having to cross University Drive is not much fun either. But the biggest problem is that the atmosphere at Dudley's or the Chicken does not favor scholastic discussions.

It would take just a little renovation to put a bar in the MSC (by now most Aggies should be used to buildings being renovated). Once the bar is open the MSC would benefit from all the money the bar would be taking in. The students and faculty would benefit from having a nice place to discuss classes, sports, life, the universe and everything over a few beers.

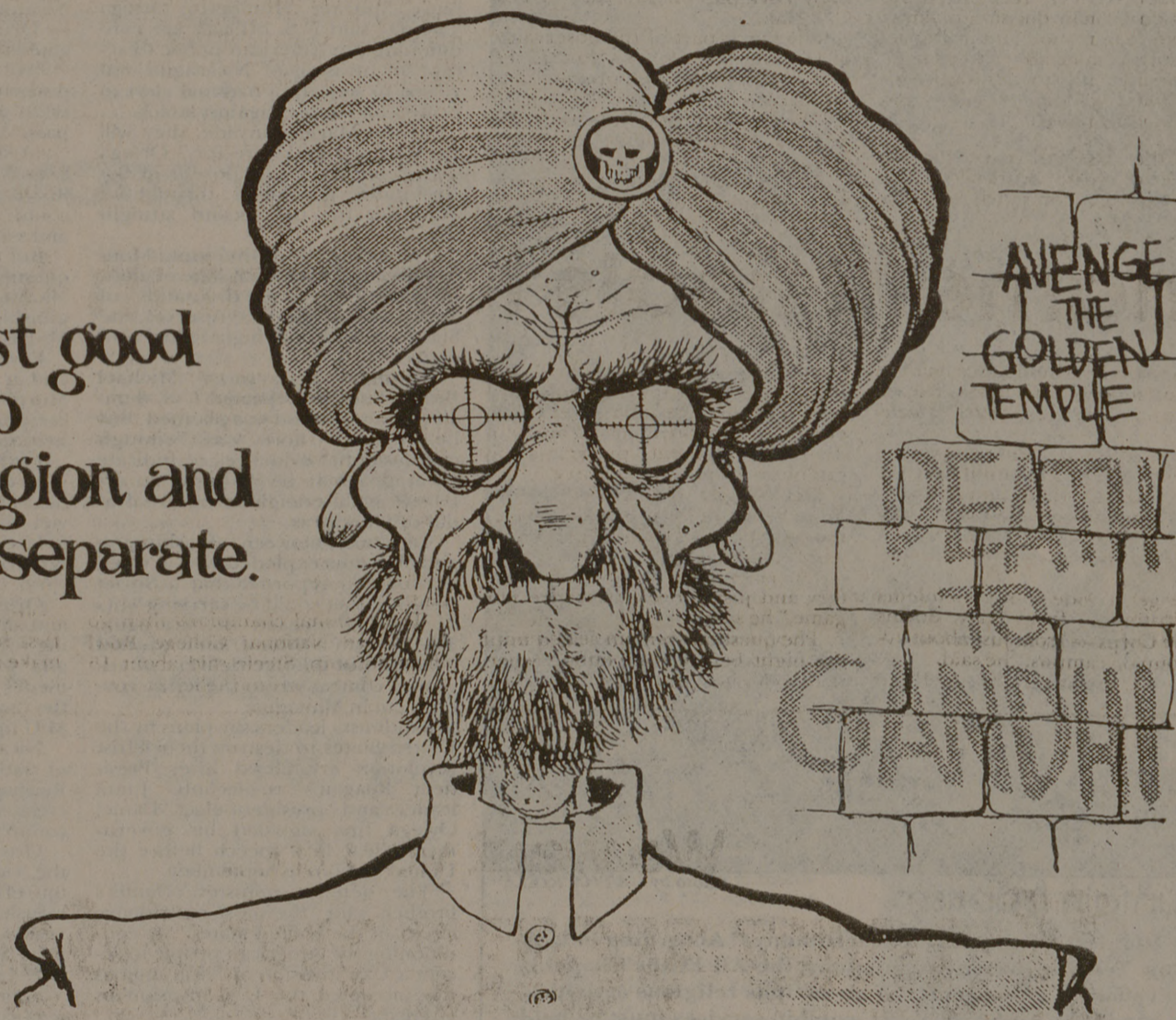
Then why shouldn't the MSC have a bar? Is there a law that says that a state school can't serve alcohol? (Isn't UT a state school?) Since our Student Center is a "Memorial" does that mean it can't serve beer? Is there some tradition that says: "Aggies don't drink?"

I think it would be great to have a tradition where professors and students can talk over a beer instead of over a desk.

Karl Palmeyer is a junior, communist, pinko, atheist, bleeding hearted liberal, journalism major and an alcoholic.

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### Europeans full of questions

## Learning from overseas travel

The German boy had a wholesome appeal as he leaned forward toward me, trying to understand me.

I must have looked pretty stupid sitting there with a frozen smile wiped across my face while I pretended to understand his thick accent.

The riverboat "Lichtenstein" — rented for this private party — sailed on. The conversation was predominantly in German, and there I sat, with one semester of introductory French to my name.

George (pronounced Gay-orgh) tried to make me feel at ease. He talked about his favorite music and spoke of rappin', poppin', breakin', and especially of funk.

Maybe we should have stuck to discussing books.

"Have you heard this new song?" he asked me, struggling with every English word. "It's called 'F--- You?'"

I looked at the floor and tried not to laugh.

"No—I haven't. Not yet."

George was just one of the friends I made on my trek across Europe this summer.

From the European teens I met on the trip, I discovered the differences in cultures that made my travels so interesting.

These students darted off to exotic places like the Italian Alps for snow-skiing

and the Spanish mountains for historic trekking on routine school field trips.

School wasn't always fun and games, however.

Most European schools have a program containing "A-Levels" of science, math, literature, and English. Students have to complete a specified number of extremely difficult levels with a required grade to be accepted to college in a course of study.

The phrase "blow-off course" is unknown. European students enter college with a competitive advantage due to years of discipline.

I also learned that many of my German friends are opting for careers in medicine or economics after serving a mandatory time with the German military.

In spite of the pressures of studies and careers, the students were carefree. Take, for example, the surging popularity of breakdancing. Switzerland, Germany, France and England all have their own troupes of breakdancing youth glittering the sidewalks. One of my friends saw the new dance style as an improvement.

"I would much rather have a guy off the street do a controlled spasm in my face than threaten me with a club and chain!"

It was an experience to roll up my sleeves and let my hair down at the awesome German drinking tavern, the Hofbrau House.

This was like no bar or local club I've seen before. Take the Dixie Chicken and its drinkers and multiply this 100 times and you have Munich's Hoffbrau House.

Here, hundreds of smiling, larger-than-life Germans and a number of American tourists — complete with the necessary Bermuda shorts and cameras — tout tankards of ale large enough to fill a fish bowl.

My German friends informed me that it's legal to drink beer at 16 and hard liquor at 18. Their problem with drunk drivers is not as great as ours. I guess seat belts and no alcohol is a must when you're travelling at speeds of 90 m.p.h. plus.

Everywhere I went, European students bombarded me with questions about the United States, from Michael Jackson's latest endeavor to what Southfork really looked like.

One cause of personal anxiety was the increasing number of punk rockers in the slimy underground stations of Paris and London. A few notable ones — sporting chain-mail and hot fuschia spiked hair — carried live rodents on their shoulders.

I had always heard Paris was the pulse of the arts and nouveau culture, but this was not what I expected.

I did a double-take and then tugged on my dad's sleeve.

"Hey Dad! Can I hang out with them?" I asked.

By the end of the trip, I had a new motto. It came from a song by Frankie Goes To Hollywood, and in almost every store we saw oversized shirts that screamed it in foot-long letters.

"Relax-Don't Do It!"

Gigi Shamsey  
Class of '86

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In memoriam  
Bill Robinson, 1962-1984, Editor

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

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Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length. 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 be signed and must include the address and telephone number of the writer.

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