

OPINION

# Picking the cream of the text crop

It's harvest time in Texas once again. Time to harvest the leaves of knowledge and distribute them to the state's youth. That's right, it's textbook pickin' time.

Picking books for school children isn't quite as simple as picking berries. The State Textbook Committee hears testimony from people around the state and then sends its recommendations to the State Board of Education which will choose the books next month.

Naturally, no one seems to agree on what constitutes a good textbook. According to Mary Lassiter of Mesquite, Martin Luther King, Jr. was a criminal. Lassiter claims a book which portrays King as a role model should be rewritten to "eliminate the praise for lawbreaking" in its references to the civil rights leader.

Lassiter's views are more than slightly narrow. Sure, King broke the laws, but they were laws which allowed racial discrimination to thrive. He advocated an equality that was long in coming to American blacks.

Many prominent historical figures broke laws, but the outcome of their actions was the improvement of society. Our founding fathers engaged in numerous illegal activities during their opposition to British rule. The greatness of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and their ilk cannot be denied.

Mahatma Gandhi became famous for his peaceful means of lawbreaking and even inspired King's methods. If King's actions are to be omitted, Gandhi's should also. And what about Henry David Thoreau who developed the concept of civil disobedience while sitting in prison for not paying a poll tax which he found immoral?

A child shouldn't be kept from learning about great men merely because some of their methods of creating a greater good violated some existing laws. Only by being presented with these facts can a child develop a sense of what is right and wrong.

We can't expect to force-feed one person's set of morals to every child in the state. When picking textbooks we must make sure to get the cream of the crop.

The Battalion Editorial Board

## Exotic animals abound

# A day at A&M zoo

I bet you didn't know that Texas A&M had a zoo. Well it does. It is a wonderful zoo, full of interesting, exotic creatures that roam uninhibited across a game preserve that also doubles as the Texas A&M campus.



Cheryl Clark

To identify the animals better, I have compiled a list of the most frequently seen exotic creatures that roam across the preserve.

First is the fish.

Not your ordinary fish, mind you, but a special breed of fish. These fish don't swim, but rather they travel across the preserve on two legs.

Another distinguishing characteristic is the fish's special breeding. It has been raised and nurtured in a maroon environment with a genealogy that can be traced back through several generations of former fish that once had lived on the preserve.

The best place to observe the fish is at the MSC. Find a comfortable bench by the fountain and be prepared to enjoy a colorful array of fish as they wander by.

The fish will be accompanied by their handlers, who surround the young fish to protect them from their natural enemies — those who prey on innocence. The fish also travel in schools.

If you would like to identify the particular species of the fish, just observe the name tag the fish will be wearing. The handlers also wear the same name tag in case you miss the fish.

Also take note of the plastic bag the fish carry all the time as well as the gray folder. I'm not sure what the purpose of these two items serve, but you won't see a fish without one.

If you're lucky, perhaps a fish or one of its handlers will stop and shyly ask you where they might find Rudder Tower. Turn them around and point to the tall building behind them.

Other animals of interest are the bunny rabbits on campus.

The largest concentration of bunnies can be found on the north side of campus. If you want to watch something amusing, watch bunnies.

The bunnies travel in large groups, at least 40 or more and their coats come in a vast array of colors like green, white, blue and red or a combination of all of them.

If you are having trouble telling the bunnies from the fish, just look for white feet. Bunnies always have little white feet with a dash of color on the top.

You can look for bunnies in two particular places on campus. They can be found at the northside dorms in little groups screaming at each other at the top of their lungs, while jumping up and down (they will also be giggling and darting glances at anything male), or you could go to G. Rollie. At G. Rollie they will be doing their bunny dances. Bunny dances should not be missed. The bunnies change into a more colorful coat and proceed to carry out a carefully choreographed dance that only they know the purpose of. They will usually be happy to do a variation of these dances on request if you are male.

Finally, my personal favorites: the wolves in firemen's clothing.

These animals are hard to find at the zoo itself. They have usually escaped from the preserve and are found lurking in local nightspots in College Station.

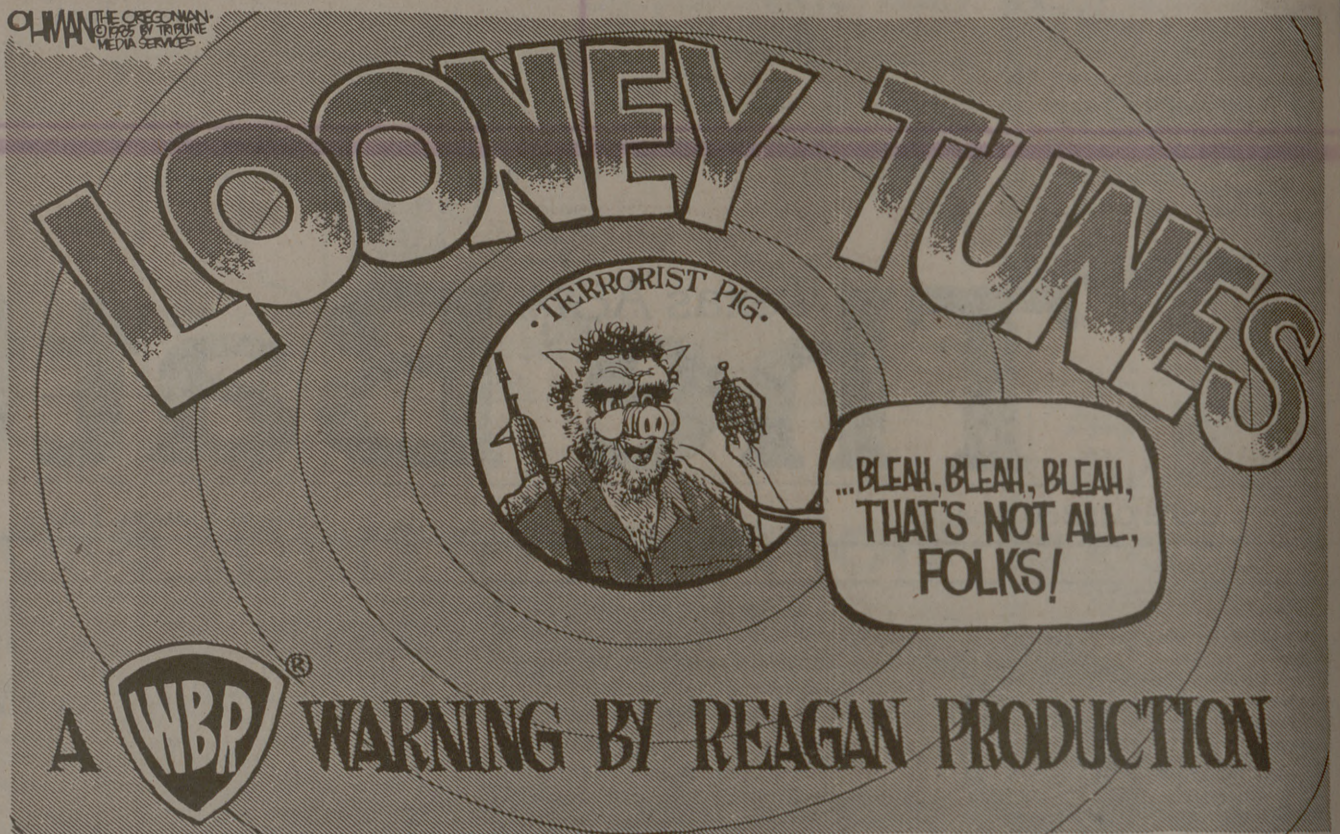
Wolves are hard to identify from the normal patrons who hang around in the local nightspots. But if you look carefully, you can spot one. Look for unusually boisterous behavior, loud voices and hyperactivity. The wolves also have a low tolerance for alcohol, a tan line around the left ring finger and average dancing ability.

Wolves tend to stalk the females in a club with total disregard for the proper social etiquette, they have also been known to bother male patrons as well by disturbing a domino game, interrupting conversations and inducing volatile situations.

All of these animals can be found at the game preserve on campus. All you need is to look carefully around you and you will be amazed at how many of these wonderful animals surround you.

But remember what you mother always told you when you visit the zoo. Don't feed the animals.

Cheryl Clark is a senior journalism major and a columnist for The Battalion.



## What the library needs

# Library lacking materials

This is the second in a three-part series on what the library needs.

Charles Schultz  
Guest Columnist

Since the area in which the Evans Library ranked lowest in the latest Association of Research Libraries survey was total holdings, one might conclude that the library's greatest need is more books and journals. Certainly a good case could be made for this, but it is really necessary to keep in mind all the needs and to endeavor to solve all of them simultaneously. To provide a clear understanding of all the needs, however, it is necessary to describe them separately.

By the Clapp-Jordan Formula, the most widely accepted mechanism for determining the quantity of books an academic library should have, the Evans Library should have around 4 million volumes rather than the 1.5 million it now has. It took 64 years after the first library was destroyed when the Main Building burned in 1912 for the Evans Library to acquire its first 1 million volumes. To reach 4 million volumes by the year 2000, the Evans Library will have to increase its annual growth from the 62,000 volumes added in 1983-84 to 170,000 volumes per year. If the average cost per volume is \$30, adding an additional 118,000 volumes per year will require supplementary funding of \$3.5 million annually. Any of you who have purchased textbooks lately will know that \$30 is not a high figure for a new book. It is definitely a low figure for out-of-print titles, of which the Evans Library needs to purchase large numbers to adequately meet the research needs of students and faculty in the arts, humanities, and social sciences.

It does not matter whether the books are new or old paper copies or microformat or if they are recorded in some form of sophisticated new technology such as laser disks, they will still have to be located, acquired, cataloged, labeled, and shelved, all of which takes staff time. Even with the additional 120 faculty and staff members mentioned in my previous column, it would not be possible for the Evans Library to increase its growth by 250 percent without additional extra librarians and support staff. The library would either have to hire extra staff over the next 15 years or would have to contract out much of the work.

There has been a great deal published over the past decade that implies that traditional libraries with miles of shelves full of books will cease to exist. While it is possible that a number of journals might be available in machine-readable form so that a prospective reader can dial up a database and have a particular article displayed on a terminal, there is absolutely no reason to believe that any of the many millions of books and journals published in the past will ever be treated in this fashion.

To put the 20 million books in the Library of Congress on videodisks could require as many as 10,000 disk. The simple matter of transferring the image would cost untold millions of dollars.

No one can imagine what the access charges would be. If one were to sit at an online terminal and read a whole article or book, the fee would be astronomical. The only alternative would be a paper printout or a duplicate disk to be read on a local or personal machine. Thus the bookless library and the paperless office are about as likely to hap-

pen as a paperless bathroom.

The equipment needs of the Evans Library will be determined to some extent by the format in which materials are acquired and by how the library's users gain access to information about holdings of the Evans Library and other libraries.

The first and probably most pressing equipment need is a more adequate computer. Other academic libraries of less stature than the Evans Library have purchased for them by their university administration with supplementary funds, not acquired out of funds appropriated for books and salaries as was the Evans Library's present computer. The computer now in the library is and will be taxed to hold the necessary bibliographic data and other information necessary to handle the library's 1.5 million volumes. The possibility of including the necessary data on microtext materials, government documents, archives, and learning resources materials — to say nothing of an additional 2.5 million volumes — does not exist.

Because the existing equipment cannot provide access to even half of the current library holdings, a more adequate computer is an absolute necessity. Judging by what engineering colleagues say, one new computer in the next decade and a half is probably not going to be adequate if the Evans Library is to provide the best available service. Two or even three new computers might be needed to keep up with the latest technological developments.

When the fully integrated on-line system that has been proposed to provide author, title and subject access to all the library's holdings becomes a reality (Even I, a traditionalist historian with fondness for paper card catalogs, know that this is the logical way to go because of the improved access available through such a technologically advanced system that is properly conceived and implemented), many more terminals will be needed.

Those terminals can be distributed throughout the campus so that a user will not actually have to enter the library to see whether or not the Evans Library owns a particular title, whether or not the book is on the shelf, when the book is due to be returned or how many other users have placed a hold on a particular book.

As the size of the library faculty and staff increases, the library will have to acquire more equipment such as desks, chairs, computer terminals used in cataloging materials and microcomputers used in office automation. A year ago the Evans Library purchased 32 microcomputers to start an office automation system. At least 50 more are needed to have an adequate number. The equipment to link them into a system is also needed.

The use of microcomputers for instructional purposes has increased tremendously. As it grows in the future, the library will have to add additional micros to its Learning Resources Department to meet the demand. In addition, every few years, engineers tell me, it will be necessary to replace the old ones with new, more sophisticated micros so that our students entering the real working

world will not be hampered by unfamiliarity with the latest equipment.

If the past growth in use continues at the present pace, it seems reasonable to expect that by the year 2000, whole floor of the library could be devoted to microcomputers for students' use.

As materials come out in new formats such as videodisks and laser disks, the library will have to acquire more and more types of equipment enable users to read the materials in these formats.

As more and more materials are acquired in micro format, the library will need to acquire additional readers and reader printers and to replace much of its older equipment. Right now the library needs to replace all its reader printers and several of its readers.

Considering the amount and variety of equipment needed by the library, it is not unreasonable to conclude that an average of \$1 million year over the next 15 years could easily be expended upon equipment in order to develop a Class A undergraduate library. Thus, annual supplementary funding of \$4.5 millions needed for materials and equipment.

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