

# Opinion

## So long, shanty

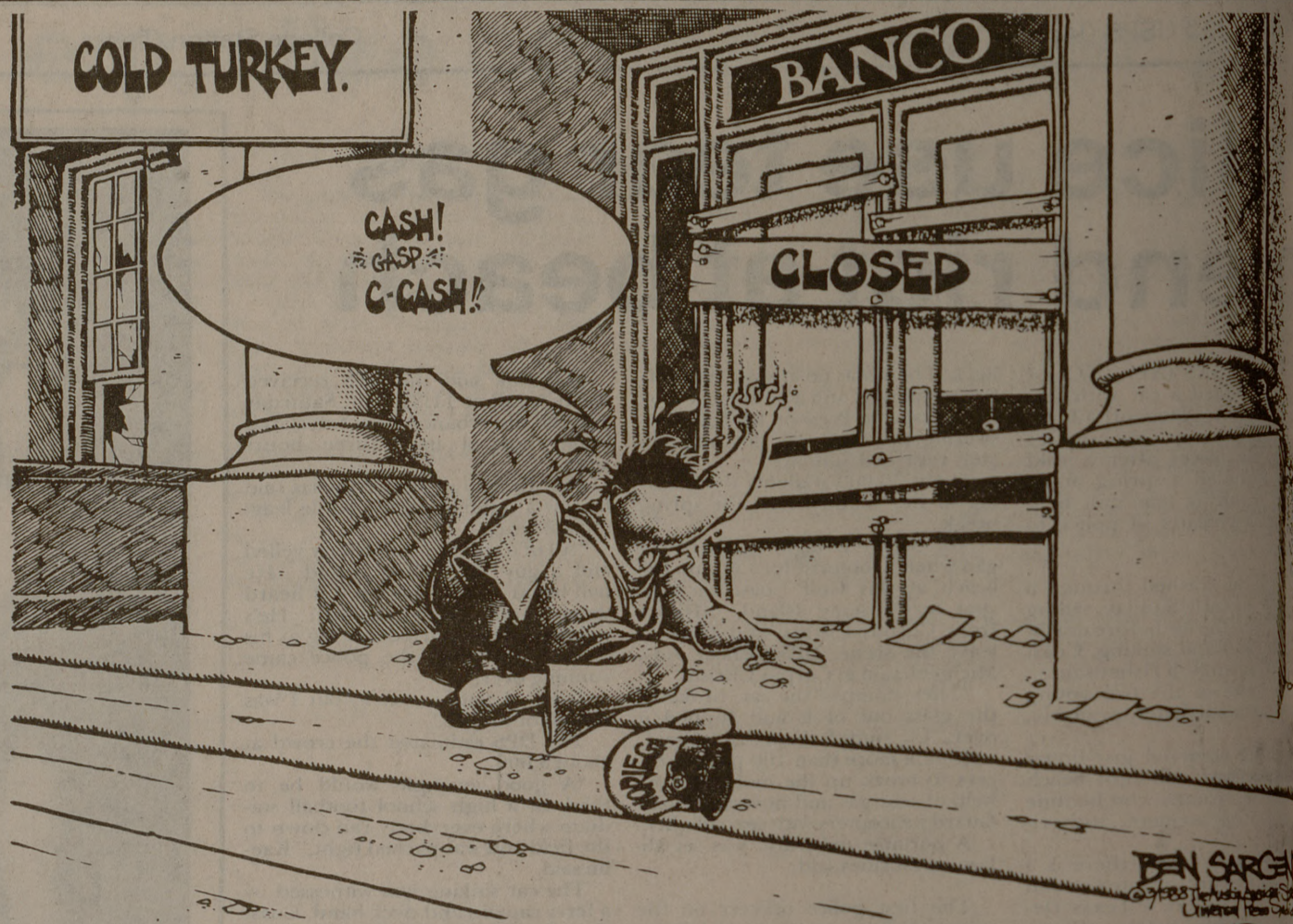
The anti-apartheid shanty, A&M's version of political protest, was sadly short-lived. The "Desmond Tutu Center for the Humanities," which was built by members of Students Against Apartheid and placed near the Academic Building, was overturned and vandalized the first night it was in place. It was back in place the next afternoon.

But the next vandals were more thorough: On March 10 they completely destroyed the shanty, tearing it into small pieces.

And that is a shame. At a time when we should address the atrocities in South Africa and at a time when somebody actually does, the response to such a protest is nothing short of a childish stupidity. Those who argue that the shanty marred the beauty of the campus have a few things to learn. The shanty was ugly because apartheid is ugly. Destroying it may have removed an "ugly shack" from our campus, but in the process it also destroyed some of our integrity and conscience. We blatantly told the world, "Whatever happens, happens. We don't care."

It's about time we wake up and discover that a world does exist outside A&M, no matter how hard we try to ignore it.

The Battalion Editorial Board



## We can only compete if the Japanese pay for their own defense

It was another of those TV shows explaining why the Japanese are outproducing and outselling us. I think I've seen a hundred shows like it and they're always the same.



Mike Royko

We see the young Japanese managerial trainees, standing outside at attention. A corporate drill master shouts something at them, and they respond by screaming slogans about their love of hard work, efficiency and devotion to the company and its bottom line.

He shouts some more and they scream some more, then they all run madly into the building to infuse the workers with their frenzy to produce.

Then we see the workers outside on their frenzy break. They, too, are being shouted at and are screaming back something about how hard work is the greatest thing since sushi.

We then see an American TV commentator who shakes his head in wonderment and says something to the effect that, wow, this is the way we should do it if we're going to avoid being economically buried by the Japanese. Our workers and managers must develop that rah-rah spirit, that love of job, love of work, love of company.

So it's that simple. If we are to make better cars, TV sets and VCRs, what we must do is gather everyone in the company parking lot for what looks like a Ninja training session.

And anybody who believes that is just as dumb as the people who put these TV shows together.

The biggest reason Japan has become an international business superpower, while we have been slumping, has little or nothing to do with brainwashing programs for managers and workers.

It has to do with how Japan uses its money as a nation and how we use our money as a nation.

In 1986, Japan spent between \$20 billion and \$30 billion on its military.

That might sound like a lot. But in the same year, this country spent almost \$300 billion on our military.

Japan puts about 1 percent of its gross national product into its military. About 7 percent of ours goes for the same purpose.

That means Japan can use far more of its resources to develop its industries,

new technologies and so on.

It puts more money into research and development, which is why it stays ahead of us in making prettier TV pictures.

We put a lot of money into research and development, too. But about half of what we spend is for the development of new military gadgets.

Now, we don't spend that much just to defend ourselves. A big chunk of our military spending is for the purpose of defending Japan and Western Europe, which also has been cutting our throat in world trade.

About 16 percent of our military spending goes to protect Japan and other Asian countries.

We do this because after we defeated Japan in World War II, we gave it a modern form of government and a constitution that forbids it from ever becoming a military power.

It turned out to be a great deal for Japan. Since we said it couldn't become a military power, we assumed the job of protecting it. Japan then could concentrate on developing new high-tech industries while we had to get along with old steel mills and factories.

Well, the war has been over for 43 years. And it's about time we stopped providing free bodyguard service for Japan and European countries.

If a city wants a police department, the citizens have to pay taxes. If a factory wants night watchmen, it has to hire and pay them.

And if we're going to act as Japan's international bodyguards, we ought to be paid for it.

If Japan had to foot its share of the bill for its own protection, it would mean we'd have more money for education and economic development. And it would mean Japan would have less. There's nothing unfair about it. When I pay my taxes for the police and fire departments, I have less, too.

The same goes for Western Europe. They're big boys and should be able to look out for themselves, or pay up if they want us to do it.

You don't have to play Ninja school games with Americans to get them to work. All you have to do is give them a job and the right tools.

And the presidential candidate who says he's going to start sending Japan a bill, payable by the 15th of the month, is going to get my vote.

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## Attack of the English mutant

While you were out so much STUFF happened in our wonderful world of politics that I've decided to not write about any of it. I'll save it for George Will. He gets paid more than I do anyway.



Mark Nair

Instead, today's topic is mutation. We all know those famous mutants — The Incredible Hulk, The Toxic Avenger, The Fly, Sports Writers — mutants who have made mutiny into something great.

But forget those guys. The mutation I want to talk about is much more deadly and more dangerous than tea with Ronald Reagan and George Bush. It is the mutation of the English Language. (And from the peanut gallery on sorority lane: Oooooooooooh groooooooooo!)

Example, when words had dignity: "We throw the albatross *through* the window."

Example, today's stripped words: "We throw the albatross *thru* the window."

Ugly, isn't it?

The man responsible for this NEW and IMPROVED economy of language, I'm sure, is none other than Sylvester Stallone himself. Ha! Scoff at me? Well, to put it simply, you doubters will eat your words soon enough. I have proof.

Scene 12. Take 1,242.

Sylvester Stallone: Yo, Adrian.

(Silence.)

Sylvester Stallone: Yo, Adrian.

What Sly conveys in those two simple words, Nietzsche couldn't do in tomes and tomes. We call it the economy of language.

More proof? This is an excerpt from... ahem... Death Race 2000. I... um... I never watched this... um, I never watched this movie. Well, ok, maybe a little... just a little... All right! I was drugged, I tell you, drugged! They made me do it! They put these things on my head that held open my eyelids, and I couldn't move my head. They made me do it!

Sylvester Stallone (to navigator): Some people think you're cute, but I think you're just a big baked potato.

Translation: Of all the gin joints in the world, I had to meet you, you crass, fatuous, nitwitted poor example of a brainy baked potato.

But back to the point. Everywhere you go these days, or at least everywhere I go, traveler that I am, the word "through" has been mutilated into the word "thru." You see it — NO THRU STREET, DRIVE THRU, OFFER GOOD JANUARY THRU MARCH, I THRU AN ALBATROSS THRU A WINDOW SAYS CRAZY ASTROS PITCHER.

Call me a purist, call me a radical, but I prefer "through" to "thru," "night" to "nite" and "spud" to "baked potato."

On Monday of Spring Break I watched television for the first time since The Beav went off the air. Jeopardy was on. By the way, to our above list of famous mutants, add Jeopardy contestants. I dread to think what would happen if all that trivia locked in their little brains ever escaped. It gives me goose bumps.

It didn't take long for it to hit. On the answers on the Jeopardy Big Book had the word "thru" in it. I can't remember the answer; I was in agony "thru."

"Aaaaaaargh!" I said. I wanted strangle the host. "Alex, Alex! I can't believe it!"

"Yo?" said someone from the kitchen. I ran to the dictionary. Was "thru" a real word? Sure enough, there it was sandwiched between "throw up" and "thrum." Thru — var. of through.

Ugh. Variation of "through?" The like saying Spam is a variation of ham loaf. "Thru" is a mutant, exposed to many gamma rays or something. The same thing happened to "shoppe" had to have been exposed to something.

Now, I admit, I like the word "shoppe" compared to "shoppe." I've grown with it. But sometimes I think, would it be fun to say: "Oh, dear, I'm going to ye ole shop-eee. Need anything?"

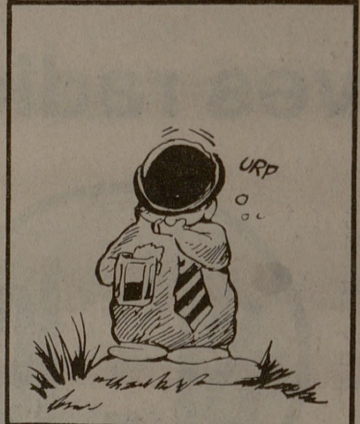
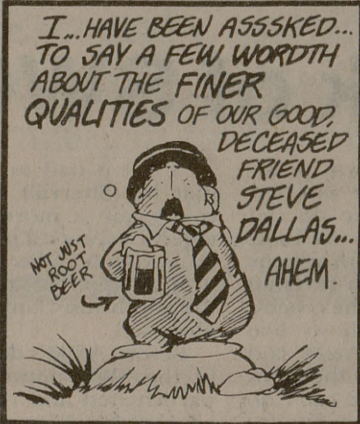
But I don't think it would be fun to say: "R u almost thru?" It especially would be fun the way you would have to purse your lips when saying "thru." You'll see — thru, like moo. Be careful not to pronounce the "r" too heavily. Say it more like "thwee."

This economy of language, it's tearing apart our very fabric of reality, our being (a few Star Trek quotes also come in handy when pontificating large crowds). We have to rebel against the slaughter of millions of innocent vowels and consonants every year. So yourselves, prepare yourselves. It's up to us to stop the mutation before it's too late.

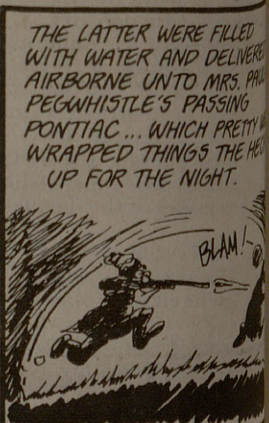
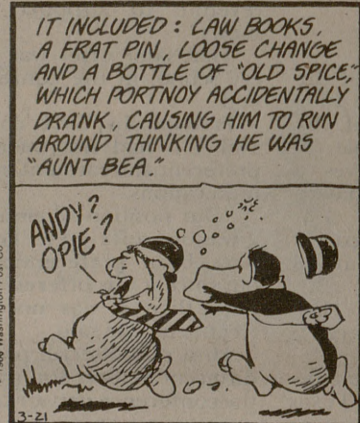
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by Berke Breathed

### BLOOM COUNTY



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