

Opinion

Surprise! We really do have culture at A&M

Once upon a time, one of our more subversive communists here on the page of opinion stated something to the effect of, "College Station is a cultural black hole." Understandably, this caused quite a bit of rabble and refutation, i.e. "A cultural black hole? Never! Why, we have the Chicken . . . and . . . and we have Duddley's . . . and they actually make you wear a shirt in Sbis . . . and we won the Cotton Bowl . . . and, did I mention the Chicken?"



Mark Nair

But even with this abundance of cultural variety (if I might be so bold as to call it a veritable overflowing cornucopia of cultivation), I sometimes found myself agreeing with my long gone, although haunting, columnist counterpart. I would look at other comparable universities (what runs both ways?) and say to myself, "Where's all our neat junk? We should have culture too, even if we are just plain-ole, pokey A&M."

So, here I am, about to make a statement of such earth-shattering, dramatic consequences (Walt Whitman revivals, Shakespeare by the utilities lake, Schubert for the whole family) that the whole engineering world will be rocked, shaken down to the rubble from which it evolved. Here goes:

COLLEGE STATION IS NOT A CULTURAL BLACK HOLE; A&M DOES INDEED HAVE CULTURE.

Gasp! My intent today, though, is not to give a run-down of everything and anything that we at A&M could possibly mistake for culture (the sports department at *The Battalion*? Nah). We can find the big things easily enough: OPAS, the Aggie Players, the Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra, the art gallery in the MSC, et cetera. I want to know about the smaller things, the things we complain that we don't have but really do.

OK, then, here's a story about the hidden culture at A&M.

Last spring, I was part of a small group of crazed students called *Die Aggie Komödianten*. We all had this idea

of pushing our dramatic skills to the limit and actually performing a play . . . in German. All in German. Every little utterance in German.

Like I said, we were crazed students. It must have been the caffeine.

But every year since 1981, *Die Aggie Komödianten* has gotten together and performed for anyone and everyone who cared to see a play done completely in German. And as much as I kept calling myself insane, crazy, loopy and other varied things for even attempting to portray an adequate knowledge of German to pull off my part in the play last spring, I was glad to be a part of it. I was glad to work those many lost hours, practicing, practicing and practicing until everything was as perfect as we could get it.

For example, one of my most memorable times on the stage occurred when I, *THE MAN BY THE BRIDGE*, peering down into a deep gorge, uttered those famous words: "TWO THOUSAND FEET."

Stanislavski couldn't have done it better. "TWO THOUSAND FEET." Wow,

I still remember it, just like it was yesterday.

And then there was the time, in the first act, where I, *THE FIRST DOCTOR*, got punched out by *THE SECOND DOCTOR*. My fall was a spinning, Don Knotts, where-am-I, tongue-hanging-out, eyes-rolling-around, kind of fall. Ah, the drama, the action, the adventure. I'm still getting telegrams about that scene to this day.

This all leads up to my point that we, *Die Aggie Komödianten*, had fun showing the A&M world that, yes, there are students here who know there are other languages and other cultures outside College Station. And, yes, there are students who want to show that to everyone else.

This year, I watched the German plays (there were three short plays instead of one long one), and I actually understood them. Amazing. Amazing, and I felt so out of place. I laughed at all the right spots, making many people stare at me oddly. Jeppers, I actually knew what was going on (and for me, that's some accomplishment).

But above all, it was culture. It was a

group of students (not to mention, crazed professors who help put it together) who, although not actors heart, nevertheless stood before a ical crowd and tried their best at the A&M population some little German.

That's the small, hidden culture in College Station. We don't have street artists, the overabundance of eign films (although we do have or the overall ambience of culture found at other places. But we are ing some headway. We've now some managed to shanghai Charles Gomb the Pulitzer Prize-winning play. We've somehow come to realize, yes, there is a College of Liberal here on campus. You can even talk losophy out in the open without being called communist then attacked and left for dead.

Yes, Karl, there is culture at A&M. You just have to know where to look it, that's all.

My, how times are a-changing!
Mark Nair is a senior political science major and opinion page editor for *The Battalion*.

Jesse shouldn't be upset

Once again, Jesse Jackson is unhappy with the way the Democrats will pick their presidential candidate. He thinks the convention will be rigged against him.



Mike Royko

Specifically, he doesn't approve of the existence of "superdelegates."

These are 646 prominent Democrats who will go to the convention without having been chosen in primaries or caucuses, the way the other 3,400 delegates have been.

They include people like former President Jimmy Carter, former candidate Walter Mondale, congressmen, governors, mayors and other established political figures.

The idea of creating the superdelegates was to give a strong voice to professional politicians and established party leaders.

This makes sense, considering that recent Democratic conventions have been dominated by people who have never run for office, never rang a voter's doorbell, and were more interested in pushing narrow causes than in picking a candidate who might win.

But Jackson thinks it isn't fair to let anyone be a delegate if they weren't chosen by the voters. And what bothers him even more is that most of the superdelegates, being practical politicians, might not want him to be their presidential candidate.

That just shows how Jackson's thinking has changed over the years.

I'm thinking back to the 1972 Democratic Convention that nominated George McGovern. Jackson was a delegate to that convention.

And who elected Jackson a delegate? Basically, Jackson elected himself.

That was the year the McGovern liberal wing decided that the party should be reformed.

And part of the reform was to require that each state's delegation have a proper quota of minority members, women and young people.

In Illinois, of course, delegates are chosen by the voters. And voters don't necessarily vote for quotas.

As it turned out, the delegates chosen by the voters in Cook County weren't satisfactory to the liberal reformers.

The voters had chosen Mayor Richard J. Daley and most of the other well-known, established professional politicians who held public office.

Jackson and his friends thought this was just terrible. So they rounded up a

crew of delegates of their own.

Most of them were people who had never run for office and never held office. Social workers, teachers, students, welfare recipients and a few who listed their occupations as "unemployed."

They even had a registered Republican who was an active campaigner for the Republican governor of Illinois.

Some of them had run for delegate but lost. Others hadn't even bothered to run.

In Jackson's case, he not only didn't run, but he didn't even bother to vote. In fact, he couldn't have voted, because he hadn't bothered to register to vote.

Yet, the McGovern crowd, which had seized control of the party's convention rules, decided that Jackson and the other losers or non-runners, should be part of the Illinois delegation.

This meant that those who had run for delegate in Chicago, and had been elected by the voters to be delegates, weren't the delegates.

But those who had run and lost, or hadn't even bothered to run, were the delegates.

At the time, this seemed perfectly fair to Jackson. In fact, he hailed it as a triumph of good (meaning Jackson and his amateurs) over evil (meaning Daley and the other professional politicians).

Jackson went to Miami as a co-leader of the Chicago delegation. He had a fine time, strutting and posturing for the TV networks.

Meanwhile, Mayor Richard J. Daley, the most popular politician in the history of Chicago, stayed home and watched the shindig on TV.

So did dozens of other established Chicago officeholders, whose only political credentials were that the Democratic voters of Chicago kept electing them to public office.

At the time, it struck some of us as an odd arrangement. While Daley's delegates might not have been noble statesmen, they were the people's choice.

On the other hand, Jackson's delegates were the choice of nobody but themselves.

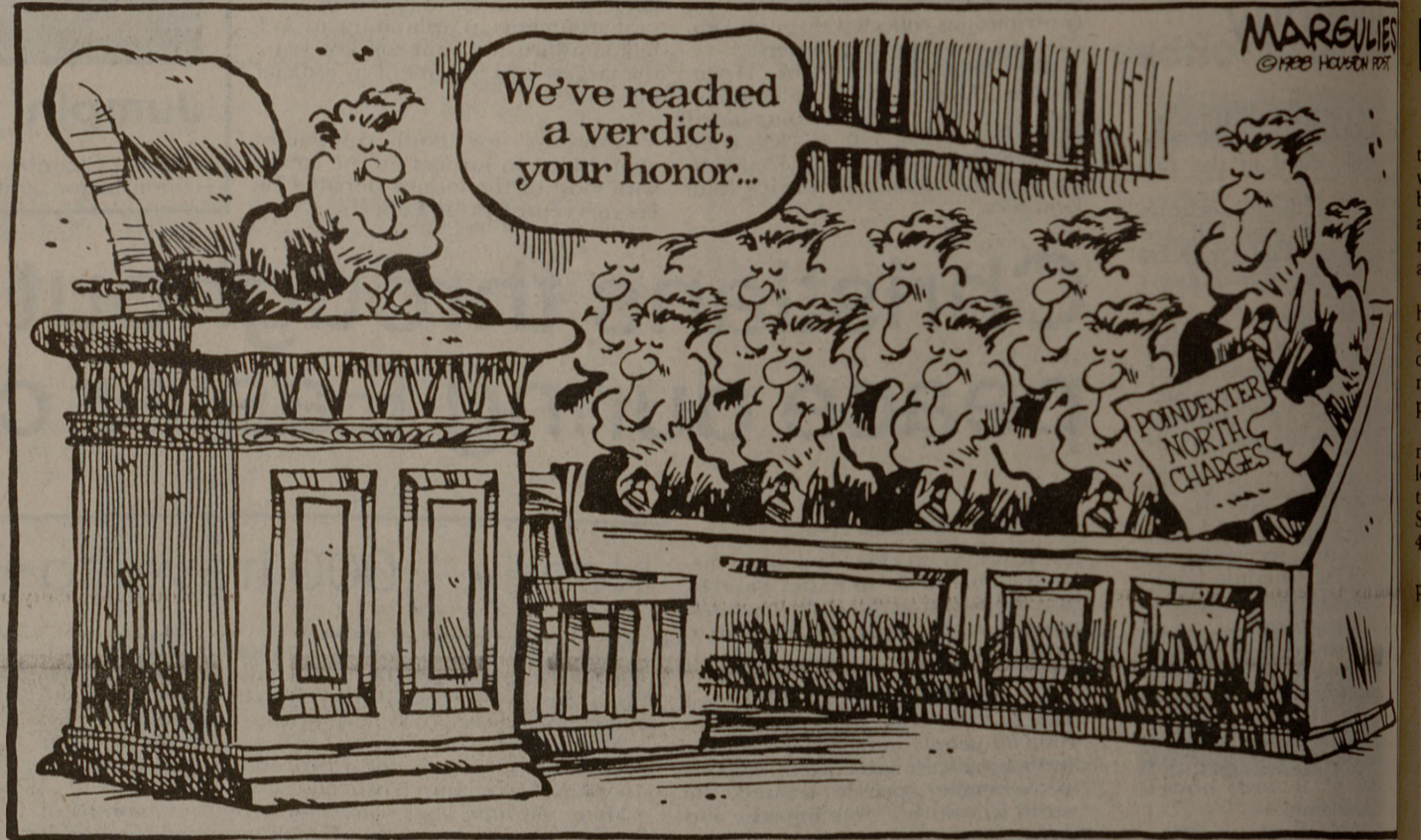
Of course, when the convention was over, McGovern eventually came around begging Daley and the other worthies to get out the Chicago vote for him, which they did.

But now Jackson, once an unelected delegate himself; is miffed because someone like Jimmy Carter, a former president, is an unelected delegate.

He is talking about how this violates the principal of "one man, one vote."

Jackson should think back to 1972 when his approach has "one man, no vote." And he was the man.

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Mail Call

We want him out

EDITOR:

Brian Federick has demonstrated over and over again that he is not fit to be a columnist for the daily paper of a respected university. His column about apartheid was the last straw. We want him out, Brian's articles are an "eyesore" to our campus newspaper!

Saeid Minaei
Graduate Student

Think about it

EDITOR:

The shanty is ugly. Apartheid is ugly. Anyone see the connection? Does ANYBODY get the IDEA? Yes, it's a "blight" and an "eyesore." Do you think that racism,

poverty, tyranny, and oppression are beautiful? Thank God for people like Students Against Apartheid. They are a "part of the solution," not a "part of the problem."

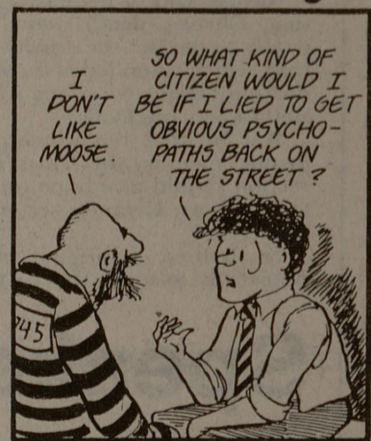
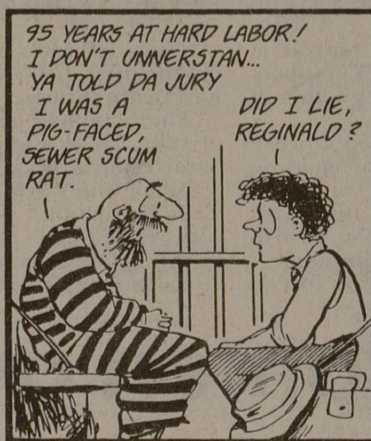
How many people here remember Bob Dylan? He sings a song that contains the following words. If you know it, sing along. "How many times can a man turn his head, pretending he just doesn't see?" Think about it.

Nancy Tanner '88
Amy Wood '90
Cathy Mosier '89
Terri Maggard '88

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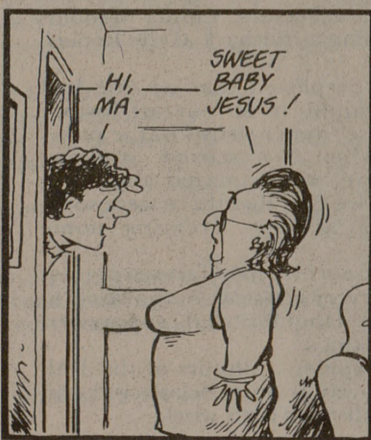
BLOOM COUNTY

by Berke Breathed



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(USPS 045 360)

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Opinions expressed in *The Battalion* are those of the editorial board or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty or the Board of Regents.

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

The Battalion is published Monday through Friday during Texas A&M regular semesters, except for holiday and examination periods.

Mail subscriptions are \$17.44 per semester, \$34.62 per school year and \$36.44 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.

Our address: *The Battalion*, 230 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-1111. Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Battalion*, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77843-4111.