

Opinion

So is it declared by the Almighty, so shall you be bald

I'm a firm believer that God has a good sense of humor. Every morning when I look in the mirror I see proof of one of God's jokes. I'm going bald.



Richard Williams

Some people think that God is the reason for so many of the bad things in the world. I think God is responsible for most of the better jokes we have.

I can see God sitting around in his celestial living room with all of the angels. They're all bored because the Writers' Guild is still on strike and no more plots are being written for "Highway to Heaven."

I can almost hear the conversation. God, always the life of the party, says to his next to favorite angel, Mack, "Hey, how about one of my great jokes to liven up the party."

Mack bolts upright and starts to smile.

God begins to think and then wonders aloud if he can find a joke to beat the time he made Bill Clements governor again.

Mack: "How about making a crook attorney general?"

God: "I've already pulled that one."

Mack: "This is going to be tough. Do you have any great ones in the works?"

God: "Would you believe I'm going to give the PTL back to Jim and Tammy Faye? That one is going to be better than the Jimmy Swaggert joke I pulled earlier this year."

Mack: "That's good, but do you have anything better?"

God: "How about if I let a Democrat back in the White House?"

Mack: "Don't you think that's just a little bit too cruel? Hey, what do you really think is the best one you've ever pulled?"

God: "Gee, I don't really know. I think it's a toss-up between making men go bald and the trips I keep giving Elvis back to earth."

Making men go bald is God's way of evening out the pain during that child birth thing. Baldness is one of God's more cruel jokes.

It's not that going bald is such a bad thing. Many bald men I know wear (or don't wear) it well. It's just that it happens so slowly that men have a hard time accepting the fact that one day sunlight will bounce off their head and blind a motorist. This will, of course, cause a major interstate accident.

It wouldn't be so cruel if you could just wake one day and find your hair is missing. If that happened, men would adjust quicker.

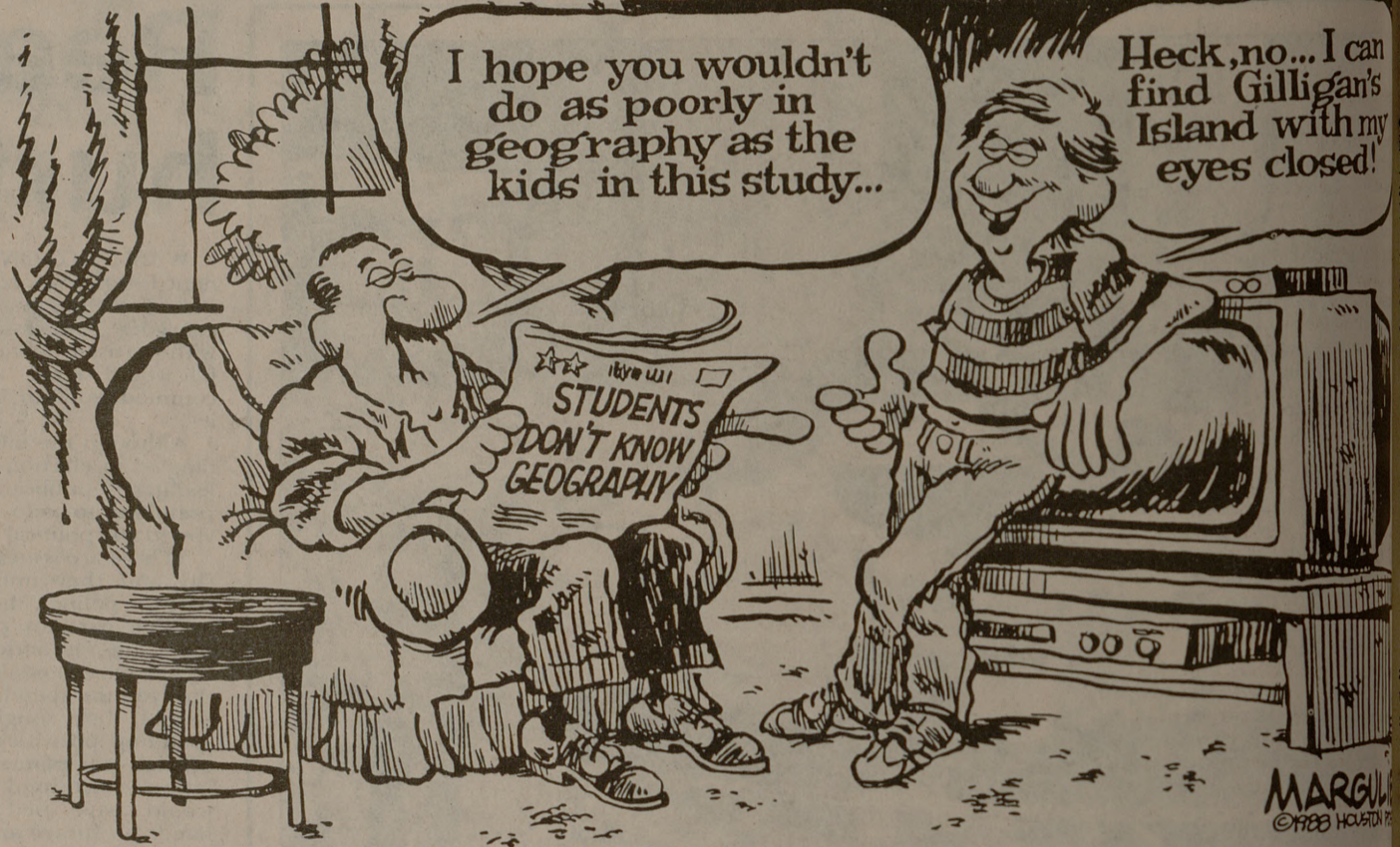
As it goes now, men go bald over a very slow period of time. At age 17 I noticed my hair was thinning. Personally I've never found this to be much of a problem. Other men haven't handled it so well.

Doctors have all sorts of explanations about why men go bald. I've heard the hat theory, the chemical theory and the genetics theory. I'm about to give you the real reason. Knowing that God has a sense of humor allowed me to figure out this baldness thing.

Boys who make jokes about bald men catch some virus that God created to make people go bald. The virus can only attack those that make jokes about bald people.

Some people will wonder why women who make jokes about don't go bald. That's easily explained by the child birth thing.

I've accepted the fact that I'm going



bald. My wife, my friends and my parents have all accepted the fact that I'm going bald. My hairstylist (never call them barbers or they'll give you the Don King haircut.) has not accepted the fact that I'm going bald.

I think my hairstylist is in on the joke. Everytime I get my hair cut he tries to leave the hair on the back of my head long enough to pull over the front of my head. If I don't stop him from doing this I end up stepping on my hair after a strong wind blows.

I don't mind being bald because it's

supposed to be a sign of maturity. Not that I'm mature, but I at least have a sign that I might become mature one day.

Sometimes I wonder if God didn't get tired of the joke and decide to liven it up by coming up with the hair growth industry.

I can just see God and the angels laughing about the new super-duper natural quick growing hair replacement formula from the University of Bullanquak in Finland.

I can just see God telling the angels

about this great joke.

God: "Hey guys I've finally figured out a way to improve on the bald thing. I'm going to get these television preachers to start selling ter that will stop hair loss."

Mack: "Does it work?"

God: "Of course not. All it really is cause women to look at you funny."

Richard Williams is a senior agricultural journalism major and editor of The Battalion.

Our Evans Library needs some desperate help

Dr. Irene Hoadley points with pride (*The Battalion*, Aug. 2) to the fact that between 1974-75 and 1986-87 the Evans Library moved from 87th to 48th place among university libraries, and to the fact that its budget was substantially increased during that period. She also reminds us that the University experienced a considerable rise in enrollment during that period.

Dr. Larry Hickman
Guest Columnist

But it is important to examine those figures more closely. It is true that the library experienced a period of considerable growth from 1974 to 1984. But then what happened? The picture is not a pretty one. The chart shows figures based on official Texas A&M University budgets between 1981-82 and 1988-89:

Note that the proposed expenditure for books and periodicals for 1988-89 is \$2,142,884. This represents 0 percent growth over the budget for 1987-88. It is necessary to go back to 1981-82 to find a lower dollar amount budgeted for books and periodicals.

But matters are even worse. A conservative estimate puts inflation from 1981 to 1988 at 25.18 percent. In other words, it takes \$12.52 in 1988 to buy a book that cost \$10 in 1981.

How does that compare with Dr. Hoadley's budgets during that same period? Her total library budget for 1988-89 is only one half of one percent (0.45 percent) ahead of inflation. This means that there has been no real growth of budgeted library funds during the past seven years.

Her budget for books and periodicals, however, lost 22.79 percent during that same period. In other words, if she immediately asked for another \$488,363 to supplement her request for 1988-89, she would then have a budget equal in constant dollars to her budget for 1981-82. This would represent zero

growth, but it would at least return the library to its status in 1981. The sad fact is that Dr. Hoadley has overseen the loss of almost a quarter of her budget for books and periodicals during only seven years.

These figures are very conservative. As Dr. Hoadley frequently reminds us, the rate of inflation for domestic books and periodicals has been substantially higher during the past few years than the consumer price index for all goods and services. In addition, the weaker dollar has made the prices of foreign journals rise even more steeply. In light of these facts, a more realistic estimate of the erosion of the library's budget for books and periodicals would have to be put somewhere between 30 percent and 40 percent. I should mention, parenthetically, that the library's software acquisitions are counted against the budget for books and periodicals.

Addressing the noise problem, Dr. Hoadley uses the passive voice twice in one sentence. "It is hoped that some progress will be made..." George Orwell, who was well known for his sensitivity for the English language, reminded us that the passive voice is the voice of anonymity, of reluctance to assume responsibility. I believe that responsible action by the library director is required in three areas.

• **Budget** — The budget must be restored and improved.

1. The director should mount an aggressive campaign to alert the University community to the extent to which the library has been gutted. The director should be more aggressive with the University administration regarding her

| | 1984-85 | 1987-88 | 1988-89 (proposed) | Percent change |
|--|-----------|---------|--------------------|----------------|
| Total library dollars budgeted per student | 188 | 171 | N/A | -9.04% |
| Book/periodical dollars budgeted per student | 72 | 55 | N/A | -23.61% |
| Total budget | 6,943,728 | | 6,718,955 | -3.23% |
| Budget for books/periodicals | 2,635,442 | | 2,142,884 | -18.69% |

budget requests.

2. The considerable talents of the University Development Foundation, a major fundraising arm of the University, should be brought to bear on library funding. Our former students, our friends, our benefactors need to know that the library, one of the most vital organs of the entire University, is not receiving proper nourishment. We need a sizeable endowment for the library.

• **Noise** — Noise levels must be lowered. There are several ways in which this can be done.

1. Signs requesting silence should be put at the entrance to the library and at appropriate places around the library. This works for hats in the MSC, and it can work for noise in the library.

2. Library staff should conduct their business in quiet tones and insist that library patrons do likewise.

3. Group study areas should be isolated from those utilized for individual study. This separation should be enforced.

4. Alternative study halls should be provided for those who do not require the use of library materials. A recent informal survey done by library staff indicated that on any given evening between 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. about 70 percent of those surveyed were not in the library to use its materials. The Pavilion would provide a good study hall for these stu-

dents.

5. All food and drink vending machines should be moved out of the library and into the Pavilion. There is no reason why serious scholars should have to do combat with empty Coke cans and roaches. Since vending machines come under the purview of the office of the president, he should be apprised of the difficulties and asked for his help.

6. The custodial staff should be instructed on procedures for doing their work quietly. Members of the custodial staff routinely hold loud and lengthy conversations on all six floors. *Incredibly, the library now serves as a training laboratory for the University's novice custodial staff. This is an outrageous violation of the concept of the library as a place for study. Some other building should be utilized for such training.*

7. Custodial work should be done during hours of low usage. It is unreasonable to expect serious scholarly work to be done in an area where carpet is being shampooed.

8. The uneven pavers at the head of each flight of stairs and elsewhere should be carpeted. Dollies, vacuum cleaners and other wheeled appliances create intolerable noise when they come into contact with these pavers.

9. The library should be retrofitted to insulate public spaces from study spaces.

• **Staff** — Library staff must be enlarged and steps taken to improve its morale.

1. What appears to be a *de facto* freeze on tenure and promotion of li-

brary faculty should be lifted. It should be brought to the office of the Provost for tenure and promotion during 1989 and "deferred" should be acted upon soon as possible.

2. Library faculty salaries should be increased. The library is apparently unable to attract and keep younger faculty members because of low salaries and poor working conditions.

3. The cadre of professional librarians should be enlarged. A 50 percent increase in their number would not be unreasonable. The 50 or so professional librarians on the staff of the library are not expected to do the work required to run a library as large as the Evans library. A recent external evaluation of the Department of History was tremendously critical of the small number of professional librarians employed by the library. The conclusion of the report was that the library needs a substantial increase in the number of its librarians. Though they have been repeatedly asked to do so by the department, library faculty should not be expected to do the work of professional librarians.

Texas A&M University will never be a first-rate university without a first-rate library. There is no reason why the Evans library should lag behind the University of Texas in this area. It is essential that the entire Texas A&M community reverse the recent deterioration of the Evans library and that we enter a period of reasonable growth. We must act quickly, or it will be too late.

It would be a shame if the direct result of the library in the year 2050 were to write in *The Battalion* that the little that can be done because of poor foundation laid during the 1980s and 1990s.

Dr. Larry Hickman is an associate professor of philosophy and humanities.

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