

Opinion

Evans Library's problems being solved

There has recently been widespread discussion, in the press and elsewhere, of the serious situation in the Evans Library. I welcome this discussion over such a crucial issue. Nothing is so vital to a great university as a great library, and in one sense the faculty, the students, and the library are a university.

Dr. Donald McDonald
Guest Columnist

In many ways the interest shown in Sterling Evans Library during the past few weeks is gratifying. Improving the library is a goal toward which many people are working, and faculty support is, and will continue to be, essential. Recent newspaper columns have identified some of the problems in the Evans Library and have offered suggestions, some of them constructive, for improvements.

There are near-term problems and long-term problems. Most of the latter and some of the former could be solved by wise use of a significant increase in the funds available to the library administration. The source of these problems

is three-fold: trying to accommodate 40,000 students in a library designed for a 25,000 student campus; change from a mission as an undergraduate teaching institution with only limited need for scholarly journals and extensive collections in the liberal arts to that of a major research university; and inadequate financial support by the state.

One of the most immediate and obvious problems is excessive noise, which is detrimental to patrons who have need for the library collections. In an effort to provide other locations conducive to individual or group study, a sub-committee of the Long Range Planning Committee has been working for several months to arrange the use of other campus buildings by our students. We expect to have at least one such area open in the evenings early in September.

Improving our library holdings, of course, has been made extremely difficult by the economic conditions in the state. For the first time since the 1930's, the State of Texas cut appropriations to its colleges and universities in the 1980's. Appropriations were cut, enrollment increased, and Evans Library, as well as other areas at Texas A&M, suffered.

Dr. Irene Hoadley, director of Sterling Evans Library, has long advocated increasing library expenditures. She has worked to increase state appropriations for libraries, to solicit gifts and donations of collections, and to stretch limited funds through careful purchases.

Fortunately, Evans Library has enjoyed a significant increase in private gifts during the past four years. For example, in 1984-1985, Evans Library attracted approximately \$175,000 in gifts of cash, equipment and book collections. Giving has increased steadily. Evans Library received more than \$400,000 in 1986-87, and gifts to the library in the current fiscal year are expected to total about \$1 million.

In 1985, with Dr. Hoadley's leadership the library began a series of Excellence Dinners in major Texas cities. These dinners have raised approximately \$1 million in cash and gifts of collections. This innovative program has been recognized with two national awards and is now being adopted by other libraries. In addition to gifts from individuals, Evans Library has attracted support from the Association of Former Students, A&M Mothers' Clubs, and

A&M Clubs in various cities across the state.

Within the past few weeks, Dr. Hoadley and Dean of Faculties Clinton A. Phillips assembled the directors of state college and university libraries to gather information about library conditions to assist the Texas Legislature in their deliberations for the next biennial budget. Increasing state appropriations is just one strategy in the continuing effort to secure funds that can be used to enhance our holdings and to employ more professional librarians.

The library should be commended for its efforts in providing access to materials (not available in our library) through interlibrary loan services, in purchasing microforms of various items that are no longer available at reasonable costs, and in adding various technical improvements to make access to materials more efficient.

The point is that everyone, the library administration, my office, the president and the Board of Regents, is aware of library funding problems. The Regents have authorized use of the Available University Fund to supplement the li-

brary budget as well as faculty and staff salaries throughout the campus. In the last three fiscal years, this supplement has totaled over \$7 million.

It must be remembered, however, that funds are not unlimited. Increasing the funds allocated to one element of the university means decreasing the budget of another. Difficult choices must be made as budget requests are considered. Do we add faculty positions in response to the growing enrollment in the colleges, or do we increase the library's budget? Which is more important, increased departmental operating expenses for staff support and faculty travel or larger library budgets? Such questions do not yield to simple answers.

We will continue to search for innovative ways to improve Sterling Evans Library in order to meet the justifiable needs of our entire academic community. I invite faculty and staff members and our students to join us in this effort.

Dr. Donald McDonald is the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Texas A&M University and guest columnist for The Battalion.

Constant complaints are the norm this fall

This fall there will be more to gripe about on campus than ever before at Texas A&M. From construction to the parking problem, we Aggies have more to complain about than Andy Rooney's most imaginative fantasies.



Timm Doolen

Construction is hitting this campus, and College Station, faster than ever before. And the few thousand of you who have driven on University Drive have experienced that reality. I am awoken at 7 every morning to a chorus of jackhammers renovating the corps-style dorms on the north side of campus; as are residents on both sides of campus where our brand new residence halls are being erected. To add to off- and on-campus inconvenience, buildings are popping up everywhere blocking previously convenient roads and parking lots.

Speaking of parking, this has to be one of the most pressing problems this fall. Almost half of the Commons parking is gone (torn up by construction), so these cars have shifted to the freshman parking lot (if it can still be called that), inconveniencing both on- and off-campus parkers.

The bottom line is we may have to go to J.C. Penney's or K-Mart and catch a University bus to campus. This ingenious solution to the parking problem concocted by the University has but one major flaw: If I'm that close to the mall before I board the bus, and given the choice between shopping and chemistry, well, I'm only human.

There are no more green parking stickers, so while freshmen and sophomore guys get close parking, their female counterparts will be walking back in the dead of night from the "fish" lot. Or should I say the "freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior lot for those who get back to campus late."

We could try parking illegally, but watch out. The University Police Department has raised the fines for parking tickets from \$10 to \$15, and \$25 if you don't pay the ticket within 10 days. Maybe they did this because UPD just wasn't turning enough profit.

In the dorms (oops, sorry, I mean residence halls), the staff is beginning to

lock the main doors at 7 p.m. for "our own protection," i.e. mainly because of burglaries.

Yet I would wager that the majority of the thefts occur because residents leave their door unlocked. Locking the main door may limit thieves' access, but it doesn't solve the core of the problem — residents' unlocked doors.

And is it worth the hassle to those residents with frequent night visitors? Off-campus living is starting to look really tempting.

Of course there are the perennial controversies plaguing the campus that will draw many complaints from many students. These include: women working on bonfire, food services, trying to call in to register without a redial button, trying to get a necessary class that's probably closed (a tricky thing to do), and the better conditions that athletes and coaches have as compared to students and professors.

The freshmen, and some sophomores, will probably complain about the new core curriculum. Some people will complain about the traditions, and most students will complain about those people. A lot of Aggies are still griping about why Jackie Sherrill didn't put Lance Pavlas in much sooner — as in before the final gun in the Nebraska game.

Members of the Corps will say that fraternity members buy friends they normally wouldn't have, and the Greeks will say that cadets are paid to have friends they normally wouldn't have. Non-regs, non-Greek students will wonder why cadets always talk about the military and Greeks always talk about themselves.

And some right-wing students will complain if Students Against Apartheid does anything, though I doubt these complaints will carry enough force to get a Students For Apartheid formed.

All in all, this semester comes complete with something for everybody to gripe about. The only advice I can offer is this: the situation can only get better than it is now. And still, this fall we can look forward to a few bright things: George Bush being elected in November, the Aggies' fourth straight Cotton Bowl, and George Will appearing on this page in *The Battalion*.

Timm Doolen is a sophomore computer science major and columnist for The Battalion.



Students should endure capital punishment

You no doubt heard the bad news that a survey revealed America's youth doesn't now diddle about geography.



Lewis Grizzard

I was watching television and there was a follow-up to the survey in which a reporter asked some kid in New York City how many people he thought lived in the entire United States.

He answered, "Like, you know, about a million and a half."

There were a million and a half people trying to cross the street in front of this brain-dead bozo.

But kids aren't the only ones who don't know anything about geography, and I'm not talking about being able to locate the Caspian Sea.

There are adult human beings in this country who can't name five states capitals outside their own state.

The reason I know this is I am the greatest living expert on state capitals, and for years I have been amazed how

otherwise intelligent people think St. Louis is the capital of Missouri.

The reason I am probably the world's greatest living expert on state capitals is because my parents gave me one of those United States map puzzles when I was 6. I didn't get what I wanted - a pony - so all I did was mess with this puzzle.

I don't care where you went to school or how much money you've made. If you think St. Louis is the capital of Missouri (unless you're a Missourian, of course) you are a geographic bimbo.

Many have tried and many have failed to stump me on a state capital question. It's like trying to stamp Isaac Newton on gravity.

Think you know state capitals? OK, a little test. Grade yourself honestly:

1. The capital of Florida? You thought it was Orlando? It probably would make sense to have the capital of Florida in Orlando, but it's in Tallahassee.
2. The capital of Illinois? Chicago makes sense, but it's in Springfield.
3. California? No, it's Sacramento.
4. Washington? Not the one on the Potomac, the one where apples come from. Olympia. It's also the name of the local beer.
5. Kentucky? Frankfort, and they don't hold the Derby there.
6. South Dakota? Pierre where bowling is a favorite pastime.
7. Montana? I have an ex-wife who lives there. I got ex-wives living everywhere. Helena is the capital of Montana.
8. Nevada? They don't have time for much of the state's business in Las Vegas. The capital is Carson City.
9. New York? You really didn't say New York City, did you? How embarrassing. It's Albany, where Mario Cuomo lives.
10. Four American state capitals begin with the same letter as their state. Can you name them?

Was your first answer, "Philadelphia, Pa.?" Harrisburg is the capital of Pennsylvania, dummy.

The correct answers are: Oklahoma City, Okla.; Indianapolis, Ind.; Dover, Del.; and Honolulu Hawaii.

As far as Missouri is concerned, if you don't know the state capital, it's your duty as an American to go somewhere and find out.

I'll expect your answers in a week.

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