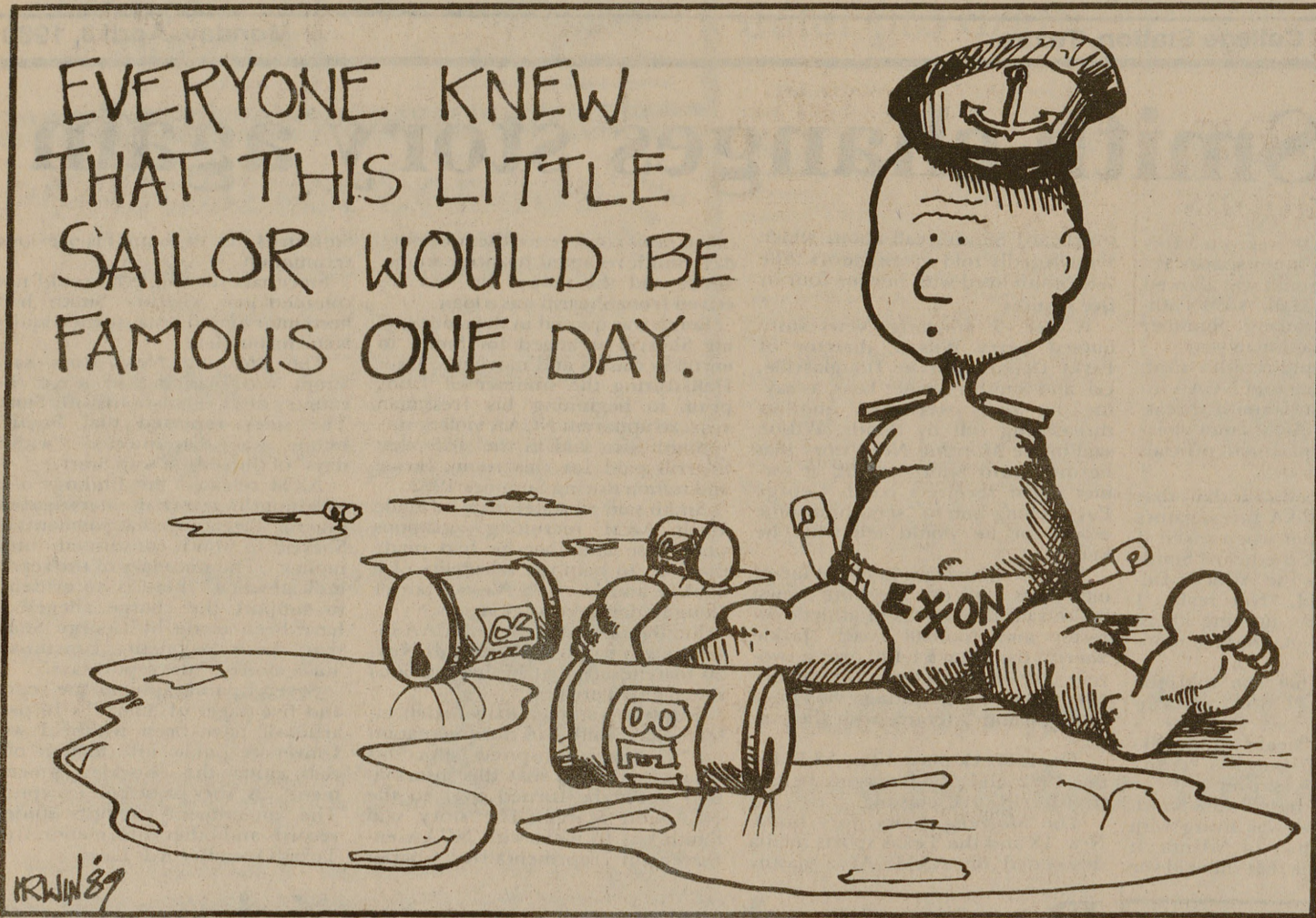


EVERYONE KNEW  
THAT THIS LITTLE  
SAILOR WOULD BE  
FAMOUS ONE DAY.



## Sushi in the ballpark marks end of nation

**Mike Royko**  
Columnist

In a couple of hundred years, when historians study the decline and fall of the once-great nation known as the United States, they will pinpoint April 1989 as being the beginning of the end.

No, it won't be because of a nuclear disaster, the rise of Japan's economic strength, the free flow of drugs and guns, the flood of illegal immigrants, the communist menace, the greenhouse effect, or even Dan Quayle's IQ.

They will find that the fall began with the deterioration of traditional values, the rejection of our heritage and the plunge into cultural decadence.

And they will be able to look to Southern California to see where it began. More precisely, to San Diego. And even more specifically, to Jack Murphy Stadium, where the San Diego Padres play baseball.

They will find that in April 1989 the San Diego Padres became the first major league franchise in the long history of America's great national pastime to sell — brace yourselves — sushi to the fans.

Yes, sushi in the ballpark. Strips of raw or marinated fish, wrapped around a ball of rice with maybe a dab of fish eggs on top: the preferred snack of the yuppiest of yuppies.

What will the San Diego fans be singing?

*Take me out to the ballpark.*

*Take me out to the game.*

*Buy me some sushi and I'll feel fine.*

*I might wash it down with a glass of white wine.*

I should be surprised, but I'm not. It was inevitable.

Years ago, when the Brooklyn Dodgers moved to Los Angeles, I told my friend Slat Grobnik:

"This is a bad thing for the country. Some day they will be selling sushi in ballparks."

He said: "What's sushi?"

I said: "I don't know. But mark my words, it will happen."

And now it has. And, as I feared, if it happened anywhere, it would be in California, where they have no respect for tradition.

For almost a century, a hot dog was good enough for baseball fans in New York and Chicago, Cleveland and St. Louis, Cincinnati and Pittsburgh, Brooklyn and Boston. A hot dog, peanuts and beer. It wasn't merely good enough. It was baseball food, just as turkey and

dressing is Thanksgiving food. Would you serve Peking Duck on Thanksgiving? Maybe in California.

Don't dismiss the terrible significance of what's happening. This season, they will be fathers in San Diego who will take their 5- or 6-year-old sons to the ballpark for the first time, as fathers have been doing for generations — assuming the surf isn't up, which takes priority in that strange land.

And 20 years from now, when they have grown to what passes for manhood in that sun-kissed place, these young men will recall:

"Yes, I remember the first time my dad took me out to the old ballpark. I remember the smell of the suntan lotion, the nubile young things in their halters. But most of all, I remember my dad buying me my first sushi and Prier. It was tuna with a dollop of caviar. And soon I will take my son, Lance, to the ballpark and do the same for him. However, I'll recommend he try the shrimp sushi, too."

A few years ago, I happened to mention that San Diego was not deserving of a championship because (a) the fans had not yet suffered enough, except when they forgot to put on suntan lotion and (b) they were beach bums, quiche eaters and wine sippers.

They were outraged. Many wrote openly. And some wrote letters defending their manhood. As one of them said: "I happen to be very macho and you are nothing but a puddle of poodle wee, so there."

Now they have sushi in the ballpark. So much for their wet-eyed protests.

Baseball lore tells us that the most famous stomach ache in sports history was suffered by Babe Ruth, also known by baseball scholars as the Bambino or the Sultan of Swat.

He got the stomach ache after eating a snack of 20 hot dogs. The Babe did not do things in a small way.

It made headlines all over the country. And the national reaction to this heroic gluttony was:

"What a guy!"

I can't imagine any such excitement in a San Diego Padre ever eats 20 pieces of sushi. If it happens, the response will be: "What? A guy?"

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## Parks and Wildlife Department improprieties must be corrected

There's been some controversy during the past few weeks concerning the stocking of wildlife by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Apparently, wildlife were stocked on the properties of state officials at taxpayers' expense.

Elk, deer, turkeys and fish were transported to the property of House speaker Gib Lewis despite objections that his ranch wasn't the proper habitat for some of the animals. In another incident, Louis Beecherl, a member of the University of Texas Board of Regents, had antelope stocked on his ranch. Objections that the property was not the proper habitat were again ignored, and within six weeks, 39 of the 40 antelope were dead.

According to an article in the *Austin American-Statesman*, hundreds of rainbow trout were stocked in a pond belonging to the father-in-law of state Rep. Robert Saunders. Gary Matlock, director of fisheries for the TP&WD, said the fish were stocked in a research effort designed to test the heat tolerance of trout.

In a story by the Associated Press, Matlock defended the move, saying "I planned to go back up there after the summer and see if any had survived."

Gee, that sounds like some serious research to me. It must have taken weeks and weeks of planning to come up with that elaborate research scheme.

Of course I'm just a layman in the area of biological research, so I shouldn't criticize the wildlife experts. If I ever had the pleasure of listening in on a conversation between two of these gentlemen, I probably wouldn't understand anything they said.

Would you be able to follow a technical conversation like this?

Wildlife Expert #1: "We're thinkin' of doin' some reesurch this summer. Mebbe gonna figgur out the heat tol-rance of trout. Waddya think?"

Expert #2: "Sounds good to me. Mebbe we could put 'em in a pond at the beginin' of the summer, then go back et the end of the summer 'n see if any of 'em er still alive."

Expert #1: "Damn good idea! If the fish er still alive they must be heat tol-



**Dean Sueltenfuss**  
Opinion Page Editor

runt. If their ded, they ain't got no heat tolrnce. It'll be uh damn nice little piece o' reesurch."

Expert #2: "Plus we kin slip down there on weekends 'n do a little fishin'. We'll have uh bang-up time, 'n git some reeserch dun tuh boot!"

It's easy to see how technical discussions like that could just slip right past the average person.

But it isn't too difficult for the layman to understand that some officials in the Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife are in trouble — big trouble.

In addition to the incidents already mentioned, various department officials have been involved in other questionable operations, such as using taxpayer money to stock quail on the ranch of commission chairman Charles Nash.

The latest occurrence in this story is the indictment of the department's director of wildlife, Charles Allen, on charges of illegally trapping and transporting antelope earlier this year.

In response to the recent scandals in the department, Nash has said he will do whatever it takes to ensure that the stocking of wildlife will be performed correctly from now on.

It seems he has his work cut out for him.

Although there's little doubt the news media has blown some of the allegations out of proportion, it's also obvious that everything in the TP&WD isn't going perfectly. Some people claim the news media has presented only one side of the story — the version that makes the TP&WD look bad. Maybe that's true, but some improprieties on the part of TP&WD officials have certainly taken place.

What's been happening in the

TP&WD is probably not much different than what goes on in many other areas of government. The only difference is that the TP&WD's problems were publicized.

As Parks and Wildlife Commissioner George Bolin of Houston said of the recent problems, "I think just about everybody knew that sort of thing went on, and probably always has in this state and a lot of others."

And although it seems like a bad situation, maybe some good can come of it. By fully prosecuting the people who are guilty in this fiasco, the state of Texas can send a message to others who use improperly use taxpayer money:

"If you screw around with our money, we're gonna bust you."

And that's exactly what should happen.

**Dean Sueltenfuss is a junior journalism major and opinion page editor for The Battalion.**

## Mail Call

### Recycling at A&M

EDITOR:

This is an open letter to all Aggies, professors, and staff members. The Texas Environmental Action Coalition and B-CS ReSOURCE, two new groups here at A&M, have begun a very important program on campus, and we would like everyone's help with it. The program is recycling.

So come on, Ags! Look for those bins for aluminum cans which we are putting around campus. (All of the

profits from the cans are going to fund environmental programs in the B-CS community.) And let's start using the paper-recycling facilities we have in town. We can change our country from being number one in energy waste back to just number one!

**Kirby S. Fry, President T.E.A.C.**  
Accompanied by 17 signatures

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer.

### BLOOM COUNTY



by Berke Breathed

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