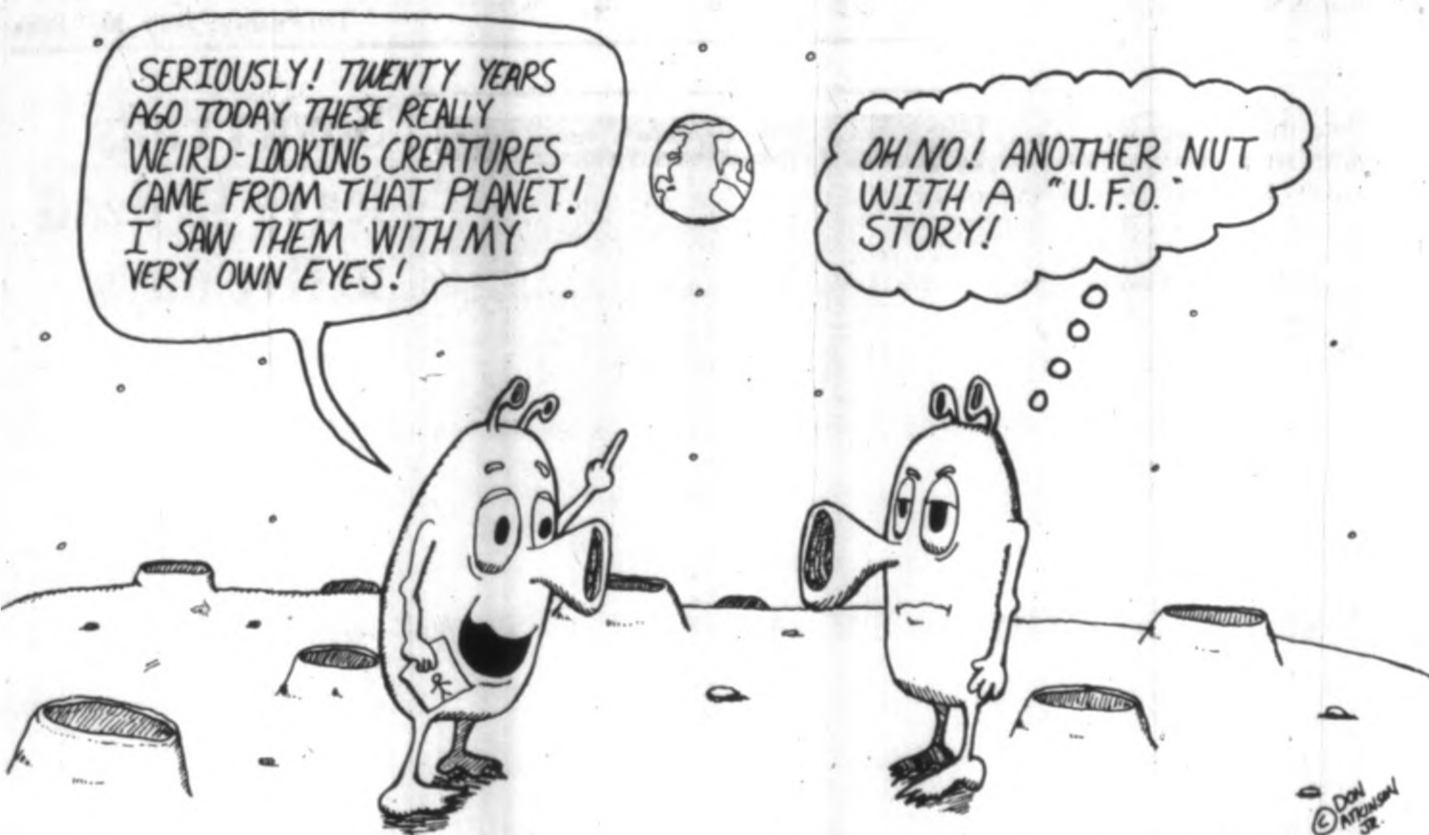


Thursday, July 20, 1989



MSC expansion to benefit students

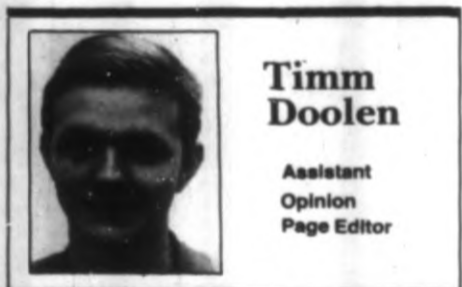
Construction is prevalent at Texas A&M, as anyone who spends any time on this campus knows. Expansion has begun and construction will soon begin on the University Center, including the Memorial Student Center and Rudder Complex. The plans call for thirteen trees to be moved and thirteen to be killed.

Many students and alumni have expressed their concern and disapproval about the planned removal of the trees due to the construction.

But what we need to keep in mind is that the expansion of the University Center is for the students, present and past. The Memorial Student Center is just what the name implies — a memorial for those former students who have died in battle, and a student center that is designed for us, the students of Texas A&M.

Many students are unaware that A&M's Memorial Student Center is the largest college union in the United States and probably the best college union in the world. The MSC contains a hotel, post office, lounge, bookstore, art galleries — just about everything one could expect from a student center and much more. Students at other universities are envious of A&M because of our student center. When visitors come to our campus, the MSC is shown to them with pride.

Unfortunately, what the MSC has to offer to our 40,000 students as well as faculty, staff and alumni is being overtaken by the physical space restraints of the MSC. The MSC is presently too small for the overwhelming needs of our campus, and it has been for several years.



Timm Doolen
Assistant
Opinion
Page Editor

Any of you who eat in the MSC Cafeteria during lunch hour know this is true, as well as anyone involved in the Student Programs Office. Our Student Programs is one of the best run large-scale student organizations of any university in the nation, but its growth has exceeded its means. There are roughly 40 organizations in the Student Programs Office, a space the size of an average-sized classroom.

And cramped on the second floor of the Pavilion is Student Activities, which includes the offices for the Residence Hall Association, Off Campus Aggies, Student Government, Interfraternity Council, Fish Camp, KANM Student Radio and a host of other organizations. When the new additions are completed, Student Activities will move over to offices in University Center, thus helping to bring Student Activities and Student Programs closer together in many ways.

The space that Student Activities vacates will be filled by other departments within the Pavilion that are sorely in need of the space, and the Pavilion will then become the focal point of the administrative departments.

These are just a few of the examples of the many departments on campus

that will be gaining much needed space at University Center and elsewhere.

Yes, trees will die because of the expansion. But anytime a building is expanded, or a new building is built, some trees or foliage have to go. I sincerely hope that all those involved in the planning try to formulate a creative way to avoid destroying as many trees as possible. But short of calling off the expansion, it is virtually inevitable that most of the 26 trees will not be spared.

Some people, including our own editor, have brought up the point that our campus is becoming ugly because of the rise of new buildings and the fall of old trees. I say to them, go to one of the higher floors of Rudder Tower, a building that surely caused the demise of some trees when it was built, and look out across our campus. One can barely see the buildings for all the trees. The point is that there are hundreds, maybe thousands, of trees here on our main campus. So although we will lose a few trees during the expansion, we are far from losing the beauty of our campus.

It's ironic, yet sad, that the same oak tree that General Rudder fought to preserve when the Memorial Student Center was originally built will have to be moved. Yet, men like Earl Rudder and Wayne Stark, the man who originated the idea for the MSC, were men who wanted what was best for A&M and its students. In the long run, the benefits of the expansion of the University Center will greatly outweigh the cost of losing the trees.

Timm Doolen is a junior computer science major and assistant opinion page editor for The Battalion.

Save the whales

Michael Worsham

Whaling Campaign Coordinator

Populations of whale species throughout the world are declining to critically low levels, and commercial whaling operations are primarily to blame for the decline. At the annual meeting of the International Whaling Committee (IWC) held June 12, the results of eight years of research on whale populations in the southern hemisphere were made public. The results of the report were very grim.

The statistics for the blue whale, the Earth's largest animal, were the most alarming. Before the advent of widespread commercial whaling, there were an estimated 250,000 blue whales in Antarctic waters. Recent estimates had put their numbers at 6,000 to 11,000. The new study estimates the new figure to be 453, but possibly as low as 200. Roger Payne, a research scientist for the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), said "Where we are is far, far worse than any of us had foreseen. I now think that the question of whether the blue whales will actually survive has suddenly come open again."

Statistics like this should cause anyone to be repulsed by the notion of slaughtering these and other depleted whale species for economic gain. Unbelievably, Iceland, Japan and Norway are doing just that. Iceland is hunting finback whales as you read this. The fin whale population was estimated at 500,000 before widespread whaling by the WWF, and in recent years had been thought to number about 100,000. The new report estimates that there are 2,096 to 4,000 fin whales left. Iceland plans to "take" 68 whales during their current hunt. The IWC has repeatedly asked Iceland to call off their whale hunts. Icelandic whalers have tried to pass off their whaling as research, but in reality the whale meat and byproducts are sold to Japan for profit.

Japan has been killing smaller minke whales under the guise of research, and there is now fear that this species may not survive. The larger minke whales are now off-limits even for research because their populations have been so depleted. This has been the pattern for whaling nations. Whalers have progressively gone from larger to smaller species, depleting each species along the way. Japan has also begun to kill porpoises as a substitute. In the last two years, the Japanese have caught about 50,000 of a species of porpoise that numbers 105,000. Roger Payne says "it's plain and simply a disgrace."

Norway kills a small number of minke whales under its "research" whaling program. Recently the WWF has been successful in encouraging Norwegian whalers to use their vessels for whale watching tours, rather than for whaling.

The IWC has no enforcement powers to stop the whaling. The United States could do something to stop this senseless annihilation of these beautiful and graceful creatures, but has thus far failed to take any action. According to the Pelly Amendment to the Fisherman's Protective Act, the United States can ban the fish imports of any country that acts to diminish the effectiveness of an international fisheries agreement. The United States has failed to ban fish

imports from any of the whaling nations, and in the case of Iceland, the reason is very clear. The United States has an airbase in Keflavik, Iceland, and the Icelandic government has exerted pressure on the United States not to impose sanctions. The decision by the U.S. State and Commerce Departments not to impose sanctions may have violated U.S. laws, which prohibits foreign policy considerations to be taken into account in an ecological issue. The United States did use the Packwood-Magnuson Amendment in 1988 to deny Japan's request to catch 3,000 metric tons of sea snails and 5,000 metric tons of Pacific whiting in U.S. waters. However, the Japanese had already decided to limit fishing in U.S. waters, and due to the enormous profits from the whaling industry, the sanctions had little impact, evidenced by Japan's continued whaling.

Frustrated by U.S. government inaction, the environmental organization Greenpeace decided that grass roots economic pressure would be an effective way of reaching the Icelandic whaling industry. Iceland makes at least \$7 million annually for exporting whale meat to Japan, but the country's fish exports to the United States are worth about \$400 million annually. Greenpeace has organized a "People's Pelly Amendment" campaign, asking consumers to pressure schools and restaurant chains into ceasing purchases of Icelandic seafood until Iceland stops whaling. As a result of cancelled contracts to U.S. and West German markets, Icelandic companies have so far lost about \$50 million. The campaign has been successful in convincing Iceland to call off its planned hunt this summer for sei whales, another endangered species, but not the finback whales. Iceland's current finback whale hunt is a last attempt to squeeze economic gain from poor defenseless whales before the boycotts and cancelled contracts become too large to ignore any further.

People can help halt the whaling by writing the U.S. Secretary of Commerce and asking him to immediately certify Iceland under U.S. laws until Iceland stops whaling. Also, Greenpeace can furnish a list of U.S. companies that purchase seafood from Iceland. People can also write to President Bush and ask that he invoke the Pelly Amendment and ban a large portion of Japan's fish exports to the United States until Japan stops its whaling. Japan has already been certified by the Secretary of Commerce under the Pelly Amendment. Many environmental groups across the country include whaling issues in their work, and concerned people should contact their local group to become involved.

As with all columns, opinions expressed by Guest Columnists are not necessarily those of The Battalion. Persons interested in submitting guest columns should contact the Opinion Page Editor at 845-3314.

Tomatoes, true love go together

I have a thing for tomatoes. Not the kind you ordinarily find at your grocery store that have been grown in some contrived environment and shipped in from mile away.

I am speaking of the kind of tomato somebody grows in a garden, the "home-grown" tomato, hallowed by its name.

Home-grown tomatoes are so delicious they once inspired a songwriter to pen this line: "Ain't but two things in the world worth havin' and that's true love and home-grown tomatoes."

I think the absence of home-grown tomatoes in people's lives has been responsible for a number of the world's problems.

If somebody had regularly come around with home-grown tomatoes for Hitler, he probably wouldn't have at-



Lewis Grizzard
Syndicated Columnist

tempted to take over the world. It's simply difficult to think anything but pleasant thoughts while eating a home-grown tomato.

The last time I did anything remotely connected with agriculture was when I was 12, and I concluded anything involving dirt was not for me.

But as the years passed, and my feeling for home-grown tomatoes increased, I began to have second thoughts about my pledge to avoid any personal involvement with agriculture.

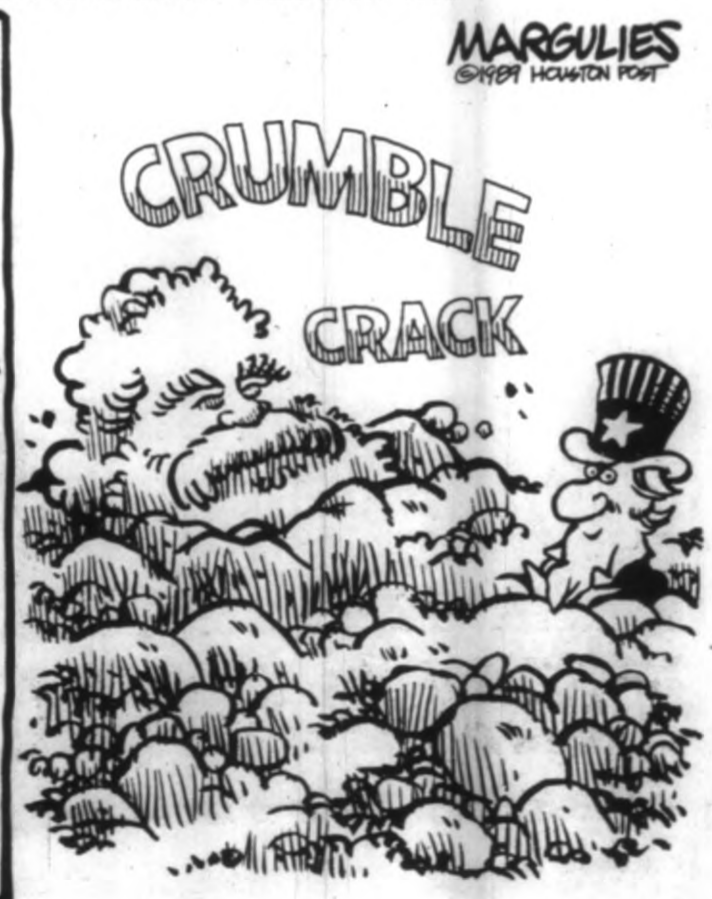
Lord willing, I soon will have my own personal home-grown tomatoes.

As a boy, I dreamed of Kathy Sue

Loudermilk, the eighth-grade sex object. As a middle-aged man, I dream of home-grown tomatoes.

To tell you the truth, mellowing hasn't been that bad an experience after all.

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(USPS 045 360)

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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.