

Mail Call

Library comments appreciated

EDITOR:
Regarding the desire expressed by some of the University's students to have access to the Sterling C. Evans Library's resources on Saturday evenings, we are glad to know the students need the library. We try to be sensitive to students' needs, and, in fact, the current closing hours were determined following a trial period of early opening and late closing times done in cooperation with Student Government about three years ago. It would seem now, however, that needs may have changed, and it may be time to take a new look at the schedule.

The library hours schedule adopted each year is established in an effort to use the library funds in a responsible way, so all services that require cash expenditures are balanced in ways that serve all users as equitably as possible. If limited use is made of the library during late hours for the first few weeks of classes, the funding saved may be utilized more responsibly to provide other services which other students want. It is a matter of trying to make the funds the library has do the best job possible in all aspects of library service.

Now that the need of some students for the library to be open later on Saturday earlier in the semester has been brought to the library's attention, appropriate review of this aspect of the library hours schedule will be undertaken. And if it is determined that this need is greater than some other needs, appropriate action will be taken.

We in the Evans Library want to do what we can to make each student's experience at Texas A&M University as positive as possible, and we assure the students of our continuing commitment to this goal.

Evelyn King
Assistant Director for Collection Interpretation
Sterling C. Evans Library

Street's name change not needed

EDITOR:
The College Station City Council's work of genius last week is completely ridiculous. Changing the name of Jersey Street to George Bush Drive will get A&M the library — hands down.

No, this is no matter of political party. This is a matter of what kind of idiot we take George Bush to be. If Bush wants to give us his presidential library, let it be for what A&M stands for — not for "brown-nosing."

But hey, if we're going to do it in a grovelling fashion, I have some suggestions. Why don't we take down Sully's statue and put up one of George? Let's not stop there — get rid of the 12th Man statue too. The possibilities are endless. I can see it — "Now forming at the north end of Bush Field, the nationally famous Fightin' Texas Aggie Band."

However, these suggestions are probably not needed — seriously, I don't want to give anyone any ideas.

Mark Harmon '91
accompanied by 3 signatures

Traditions and education coexist

EDITOR:
To Mr. Kevin Thomas, guest columnist, I will not tell you, "Highway 6 runs both ways," or, "Take your attitude to t.u.," but I will tell you that you are in error. There are, of course, many legitimate reasons for attending Texas A&M. The quality of education and the traditions associated with this school both influenced me greatly when I chose to be an Aggie.

However, I must protest your personification of Jim Bob. First off, you are obviously unaware that in order to become and remain a Junior or Senior Red Pot, the person aspiring to this goal must maintain a 2.25 grade point average. I'm sure that you'll agree that this hardly constitutes scholastic probation. Second, I consider your article an insult to those of us who have been active in traditions such as Bonfire, Yell Practice, Silver Taps, football and baseball games and Muster, and have still managed to maintain a decent grade point.

For that matter, I was a Senior Civilian Coordinator for the 1987 Bonfire, and somehow managed to take time out from, "hitting cockroaches at a full gallop with tobacco juice," to pull a 3.0 which included classes in wood physics, political science, and an advanced forest ecology course. What! Seems impossible? Well, surprise, some of us feel that it is important to both be active in traditions and get an excellent education. I feel that if Mr. Thomas had taken the time to find out how a majority of students feel instead of expressing his own opinions, he would have discovered that most students don't malign those here only for an education. Rather, we choose to loathe the true two-percenter, the person who chooses not to be involved in traditions, yet sees fit to degrade those of us who are.

Neal Maranto '88

Setting the record straight

EDITOR:
As a representative of the Texas Environmental Action Coalition, I would like to thank both the A&M administration and *The Battalion* for having the courtesy to consider our views of the proposed MSC expansion.

However, I also want to correct a few misconceptions about our group. First, we in TEAC have not yet cast judgment about the administration's expansion proposal. We have tried at all times to be open-minded and objective about this issue. When we learned of the details of the proposed expansion from Mr. Rucker, our first goal was to get the other side of the story before taking any action. *The Battalion* article by Ms. Moody gave the impression that we had already condemned the administration, which we have tried not to do. In fact, our main problem with the administration was their unwillingness to provide us any facts. That situation seems to have changed, and the manager of University Center, Mr. Steve Hodge, has agreed to discuss things with us. A public meeting will take place Thursday, October 19th, at 7:00 p.m. in Rudder Theater and we urge all interested to attend.

Secondly, TEAC has been labeled a "single-issue" group by some because of the publicity surrounding this controversy. This is completely wrong. On the contrary, we are involved in numerous campaigns, including recycling, city cleanup, wildlife protection, rain forest preservation and more recently, the Texas Beach Cleanup. In fact, we have only been working on the MSC issue for the past six weeks.

Elizabeth Edwards
Co-President TEAC

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.

The Battalion

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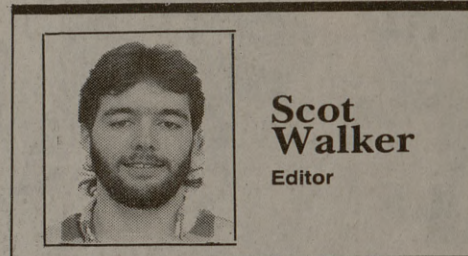
Today's problems could be solved by better education

The problems facing the United States seem overwhelming at times — drugs, crime, teenage pregnancy, the trade deficit, the homeless, sexually transmitted diseases, prison overcrowding. The list goes on and on. I believe that we have the power to take a gigantic step toward solving all of these problems, and others, by making major improvements in the quality of our public education system.

The big hurdle, as always, is money. We should take some of the money that we are throwing at all of these problems separately and funnel it into the education system. Results would not be immediately apparent, but we would come out way ahead in the long run.

President Bush has announced that he is going to commit billions of dollars to the fight against drugs, with huge chunks of that money being used to turn Colombia and other drug-producing countries into a battleground. It makes more sense to use that money to educate our own people about the dangers of drugs, thus reducing the demand for them and thereby, according to the laws of economics, reducing the supply.

Drugs and the widening gap between the rich and poor also are contributing to the continuing increase in the level of crime in the United States. All the money and new laws and extra police are doing nothing except turning us into a police state where we give up our own rights to try to combat crime. The prisons are so full that most have a revolving front door that lets convicts out



Scot Walker
Editor

as fast as the courts can put them in. If all of society were better educated — not just us non-poor non-minority types — then people would have a way off the streets, and wouldn't be stuck in the trap of being too uneducated to get a decent job, and too poor to afford a decent education. That will be even more important as we move further into the information age, when the best jobs will require strong minds and not strong backs.

The only way we will ever put a dent in the number of teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases is to educate our children about them, despite the illogical, nonsensical ravings of many self-righteous conservatives. No problem has ever been solved by burying our heads in the sand and hoping that it goes away. And the problem is not one of morality, either. Society in our grandparents' time was a lot more moral, but young girls still got pregnant before they were married. The grown-ups just shipped the kid off to an aunt's house for nine months or so, nobody talked about it and we still have the problem today. For centuries, we have been trying to stop the problem by preaching morality. It hasn't worked,

it's not working and its never going to work. Isn't it time to start teaching control instead? Education is the key to prevention.

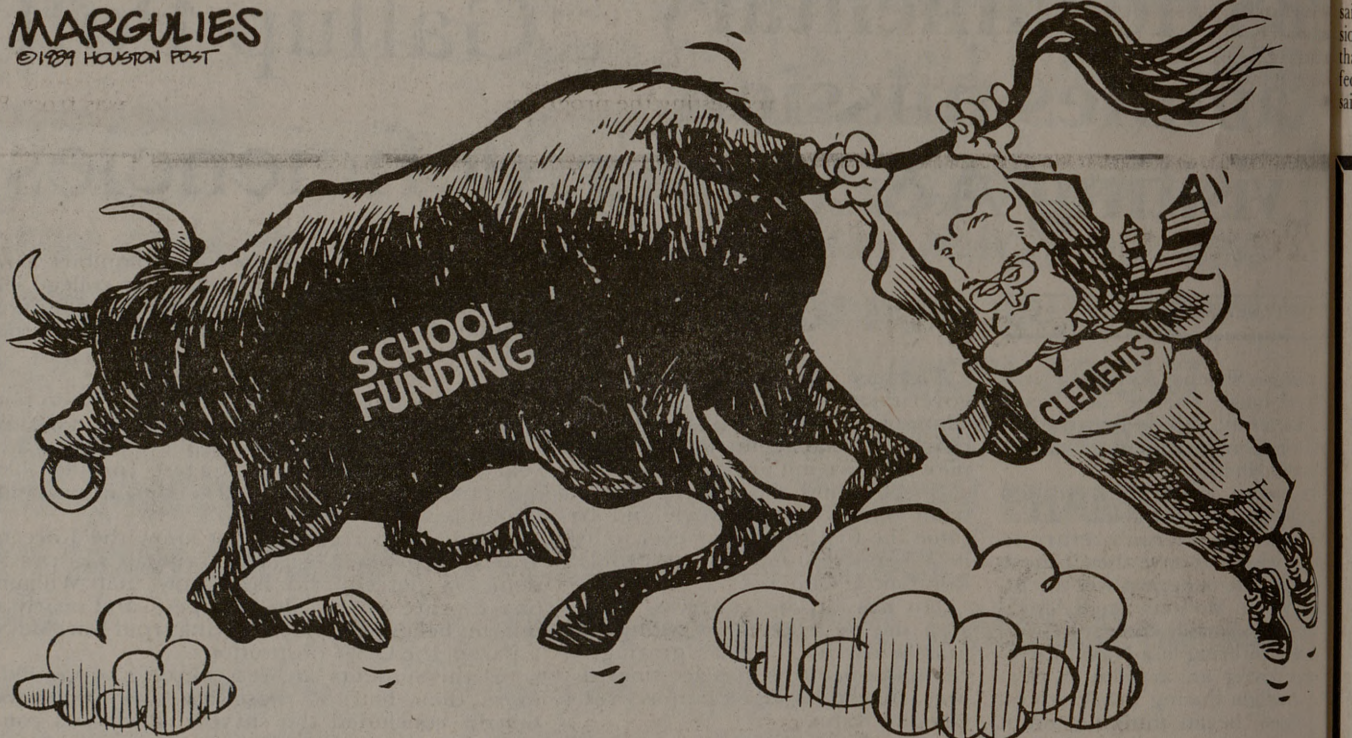
A lot of "experts" are continuing to scream that the imbalance of power between the United States and Japan is threatening our position as leader of the free world. But how can we ever hope to compete with the Japanese (or the Soviets or the West Germans or anyone else) if they take the education of their youth more seriously than we take the education of ours? A story on the front page of today's *Battalion* details some embarrassing findings about education at the college level. If things are any worse near that bad, then we are currently witnessing the fall of the American Empire.

President Bush insisted during his campaign that he wanted to be known as "The Education President." Unfortunately, that takes a lot more than calling an "education summit" and spouting off a lot of meaningless rhetoric.

Education is as close as we will ever come to any sort of universal cure-all for what ails us. What we need now are parents who get involved in their kids' education, instead of just accusing schools of failing at their job; teachers who do more than just collect a paycheck and politicians who approach the education issue with half the intensity and fervor with which they spout sanctimonious pseudo-patriotic flag-burning rhetoric.

Scot Walker is a junior journalist, major and editor of *The Battalion*.

MARGULIES
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"There comes a time when we must take the bull by the tail and face the situation." — W.C. Fields

Somebody call 1-900-HELP!

It can't be too far in the future — a 1-900 telephone number with silence on the other end for people who like to talk to themselves.

In case no one has noticed, telecommunications companies are making it very easy for people to run to their phones and run up sizable bills without even realizing it. A few pennies here and there can turn into big bucks by the end of the month.

This 900 nonsense is really quite sneaky. With each passing day, subversives are out there thinking up new and innovative ways to get those phone receivers up to ears and fingers to dialing or punching buttons.

It started out in a small way. The television industry did its part by creating situations that would have viewers on their phones. These audience-participation situations include opinion polls (Should members of Congress get a raise or be boiled in oil?) that let the people have a say — and pay for their right to what otherwise would be free speech. If a caller feels politicians deserve the extra bucks, they can call one number. If they want to flush aforementioned lawmakers down a toilet, they just call another number. Either way, the phone company and its conspirators in a particular scheme are reaping the benefits.

Televised sports events have become

Ken Brodnax
The Odessa American

gold mines from a phone-in standpoint. If a fan, or better, wants to hear the latest results, he or she simply can dial a number and get the poop.

Now some networks are letting viewers pick the most valuable players while watching an event. It's diabolical, especially when the list of players for, say a college football bowl game, is long and varied enough to attract callers from a wide geographic range.

Now the so-called tabloid news shows have gotten into the act. Just bring up a controversial issue, invite a couple of guests with differing viewpoints and then let all the couch potatoes get their daily finger exercises while they're "deciding" the issue.

As the practice has evolved, television advertising has become an important tool.

For example: Lonely people have become prime prey. Just call a 900 number and get the golden opportunity to converse with others who suffer from the same affliction. What's left unsaid but understood is that one phone call could result in a great romance.

But if it's not traditional romance a person is seeking, there's always one of

those services that offers a voice on the other end of the line whispering those sweet nothings — and maybe a few suggestive suggestions — for the price of a call. The ideal employee for such a service would talk real steamy and real so as to keep the caller on the meter the maximum amount of time.

Even worse, kids are being dragged into the bad habits of their elders. Just pick up the phone, call a 900 number and receive a message from a famous rock star. But be sure to ask the parent first. Right.

The latest scam is a recorded message. All those Virgos and Libras who there have their own 900 number, which they can call daily to find out how to proceed with the remainder of the hours.

Naturally, religion has become a part to expand the phone flock. Just after the Jim Bakker scandal broke, the Bible Club had a number with a daily message for those who still believed.

Now, they say, there's a 900 number offering a daily inspirational message from none other than the pope. And a caller's choice of languages, to boot.

So it shouldn't be too long until some body forms a self-help group for phone junkies. Call 1-900-GET-HELP. Just 95 cents for the first minute and

Ken Brodnax is a writer for *The Odessa American*.