

Students should get bigger say in decisions about construction

Though it seems to have been overshadowed lately in the media, there is in fact a third parking garage going up in what used to be the visitor parking lot. Granted, parking on campus is a very big problem, but I was very dismayed the other day to see the piled stumps of at least six large post oak trees near the construction site.

How does the Board of Regents justify this kind of destruction to that lovely park area between the president's house and what used to be the visitor parking area? Why was the same effort not made to save those trees as was for the Memorial Student Center trees? My guess is that because they were out of the way, little opposition was anticipated and therefore no pretensions of environmental concern were needed.

But it is not the fate of six trees that is as disturbing as the fact that students and faculty aren't consulted about these things; if they are, their views seem to carry little weight. Our campus is in a perpetual state of construction-induced chaos in which nobody seems to know what's happening or what's going to be knocked down or put up next. All the big decisions and grand schemes are handed down from the Board of Regents and neither the students nor the faculty have much real input.

The Board of Regents run the Texas A&M system with virtually no accountability to those who are affected

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by their decisions. They build monuments to their names all over campus (i.e. William MacKenzie Terminal, David Eller Building, etc.). They increase A&M's prestige by building the best football, baseball or basketball team money can buy, and by wasting money on pet projects like box seats in Kyle Field (\$20 million), or the proposed lowering of Welborn Road (\$50 million). They are all appointed by the governor, answerable only to him and make all the future developmental decisions about A&M, like buildings, new campuses, new programs, etc.

It's not necessarily that all the decisions they make are bad, but they are not always the decisions that we, both students and faculty, would make; and this is, after all, our University. For example, a poll of A&M students and a vote by the Faculty Senate supporting the delay of the proposed expansion of the MSC, but both were nevertheless ignored. I also doubt very strongly that anybody who lived and worked on this campus would support the kind of destruction of its green spaces that the Board of Regents is currently embracing. The site of the third parking

garage is a good example.

Construction is needed, but those of us who have to live with the results should have a say in how it is carried out. Why not build parking into the basements of some of the new buildings? Also, we need a new library to supplement Sterling C. Evans and a College of Fine Arts far more than we need another Events Center or to lower Welborn Road.

How can A&M reach the fabled "world-class" status without its two components, faculty and students, taking an equal part in determining its future. I think the only way this could be achieved is by giving three seats each on the Board of Regents to the students, the faculty and the state.

The politics of power in Texas is such that this column will be laughed at and held up as an example of democratic freedom of speech. But freedom of speech is not the only requirement of democracy; accountability is just as important.

People have been lamenting for years about the increasing level of political apathy among college students in this country. Well, when our universities establish a precedent of political impotence, it is no wonder we give up on politics.

Tim Goodman is a senior history major.

'Official English' legislation would create unnecessary bureaucracy

Damon Arhos was kind enough to rehash all of the simple-minded arguments of the "official English" crowd in his column on March 27. I will try and explain as briefly as I can why I am opposed to making English the "official language" of Texas or anywhere else.

The first and most obvious reason is that it is unnecessary. As Damon demonstrates in the sarcastic introduction to his column, English is already the dominant language in our society and is in no danger of being replaced by any other language in the foreseeable future.

But what if it was? Just for the sake of

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would not? Just flipping through my Webster's Dictionary I found the Spanish words "sombbrero," "siesta," "fiesta," the verb "vamos" and even the word "piñata" which uses a letter that cannot be reproduced on many typewriters. Will these words be allowed in the "official English" dictionary?

We would no doubt have to create a whole new level of government bureaucracy to control which words are "official" and which are not. Otherwise, some bright legislator might try to add the entire vocabulary of the Spanish language to the "official English" dictionary and that would undermine the main purpose of the "official English" movement.

Once the "official English" dictionary has been written the government will have to print thousands of copies of it to distribute to courthouses and government offices all over the state to ensure that some clerk somewhere doesn't accidentally use an unofficial word when typing up some government correspondence. So much for all that money that Damon thought we were going to save by printing everything in one language.

And speaking of saving money, how are we going to be saving money to any significant degree when the bilingual portion or text of our government documents is already printed on the same page with the English text. You can wipe out the non-English text but you will still be stuck printing up the same number of documents. It's not like we have one stack of papers in English and another stack in Spanish.

If Damon is so concerned with saving money at the government printing office, why don't we just pass a law that states that all government documents

must be printed on paper that is no larger than a 3 inch by 5 inch card. Think of all the money we could save on paper and ink! And so what if some people won't be able to read it. Damon doesn't care about people who can't speak English so why should he care about people with poor eyesight.

Damon thinks that everyone who lives in the United States should learn to speak English. I agree 100 percent and I also think that everyone should learn how to read, too, but I don't think the lack of either one of these skills should keep someone from voting. The whole idea behind a democracy is the active participation by the citizens of Texas in

I agree that everyone in the United States should learn to speak English... the lack of this skill should keep someone from voting. The whole idea behind a democracy is the active participation by the citizens in the government process, and if that means providing bilingual ballots in Spanish in some areas and Vietnamese in others, so be it.

the government process, and if that means providing bilingual ballots in Spanish in some areas and Vietnamese in others, so be it. I think democracy is well worth it.

Our language is like a living, breathing organism: It is constantly evolving and growing. Government control of language is a scary thing. If you don't believe me, read George Orwell's "1984." If the founding fathers had declared the king's English as the official language of the United States, it would have served only to stagnate the language, and we would have still been speaking the king's English today.

Mike Thomas is a senior business major.

Mail Call

Graduating senior airs suppressed opinions

EDITOR:

I have been relatively quiet since I first set foot on this campus as a student in 1985. Now it is time for me to walk the stage and I must say I am proud to be an Aggie; however, I would like to dispose of a few parting opinions on some of the more well-trodden subjects of the past few years.

After five years there is no doubt in my mind Highway 6 runs both ways. (I congratulate the Texas State Department of Highways and Public Transportation for this engineering marvel). Come on Ags, let's give this a rest. Also, after five years I have yet to determine why a University noted for its engineering college has what is probably the worst rain water drainage system in the state. After two years of exhaustive study, it is plain to me that the gray at Sbis Dining Hall possesses the same properties as many of the over-the-counter laxatives available today. I was required to complete two years of foreign language studies in high school to be eligible for college; therefore, I shouldn't be asking too much to require foreign professors to complete at least one semester covering phonetic pronunciation of English words. My solution to the parking problem: I think I should be the only student allowed to park on campus. This is probably not an original idea. My opinion on graduating seniors being exempt from finals... you can probably figure that one out. Traditions... enjoy them.

So what is the point of all this you ask? Simple. Nothing in this world is perfect, including this University, but what remains to be seen is that we attend one of the finest schools in this country. Things aren't really all that bad.

Lane Griffin '90

Alma mater insignificant in bid for governor

EDITOR:

What's all this talk about Clayton Williams being an Aggie? It strikes me as funny that every day, at least one Williams supporter makes it a point to tell me that "Clayton is a good ol' Ag." This may very well be true, but isn't it also true that if Clayton is an Aggie and is such a man of truth, integrity and leadership, then I shouldn't have to be reminded of it every day? I would think that through what he says and what he does I should be able figure out whether I wanted to vote for him.

It seems ironic that every one has to show me that he's a "good ol' Ag" when it seems like Clayton should be the one telling me with what he says and what he does. For example, Ross Perot is a man who does not have supporters that come to me every day and tell me that he is from Texas and is a "good ol' boy." But I know that Perot is a good man. He uses his power and influence to promote change. In my home town of Dallas, Perot often advises the city council on his views and tells them the side of an issue that might otherwise be unnoticed. Perot is also the man who was largely responsible for the Texas legislature passing the "no pass, no play" bill.

Perot promotes change and from what I see of him, he is a man of integrity and passion. In a sense, isn't Perot an Aggie? He may not have attended A&M (and no one says that automatically makes you an Aggie) but he stands for the ideal of being an Aggie. I realize Perot is not running for governor, but my point is that no one has ever had to give me an excuse to believe in and support his ideas. Through what he does, and not through the fact that I have some historical link to the man, I respect and support Ross Perot.

In the fall 1988 presidential election, Yale University overwhelmingly voted for Michael Dukakis. George Bush, who ironically is a Yale graduate, found little to no support on his "home" campus. Not only did the Yale student body fail to vote for an alumnus, they voted for Michael Dukakis, a Harvard graduate. The Yale/Harvard rivalry is one of the oldest and fiercest rivalries in the country, but when it came down to supporting a man they believed in, the students at Yale ignored all the immature, childish rhetoric.

Let us forget what school Clayton Williams attended and look at what he has done and can do for the state of Texas. If Williams does stand for the ideals of being an Aggie, then his actions will show it and no one need remind me of it.

Steve O'Brien '92

Cartoons 'refreshingly funny'

EDITOR:

With reference to the letters critical of Don Atkinson and his "Adventures in Cartooning" (like Pablo Pissanetzky's of April 12). It is time someone showed some support in favor of Atkinson. The comic strip attempts to write on issues of interest to everyone, and some jokes end up being at the expense of others.

The two-percenters, those in favor of tradition, the drinking habits of the fraternities, phrases such as "Highway 6 runs both ways" need not be converted into major issues for disagreements among ourselves; they needn't be taken any more seriously than the treatment they have received in the comic strip. His jokes are neither offensive nor inappropriate in their role in a college newspaper. What really counts is that most of us enjoy his refreshingly funny ideas.

So let our senses of humor prevail and may "Adventures in Cartooning" boldly go where no Ag has gone before.

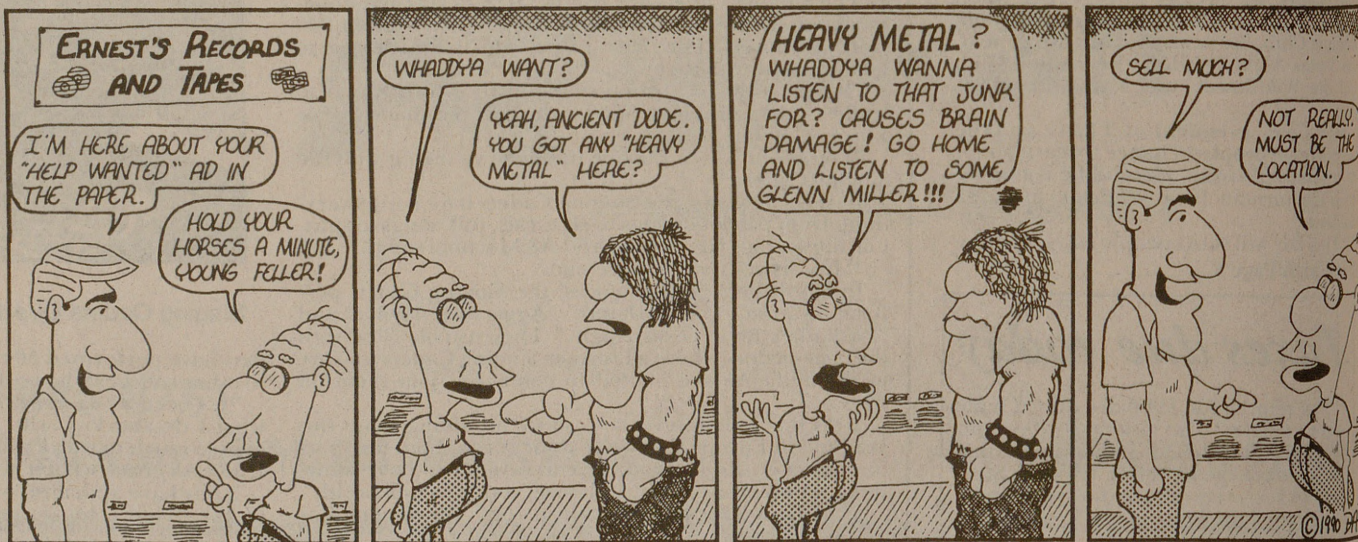
Shahriar Khan
Graduate student

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Adventures In Cartooning

by Don Atkinson Jr.



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