

EDITORIAL

Library losses

Must change priorities to stop them

Currently, a 38-page list of journals targeted to be cut from library shelves is circulating among faculty members. The library, like nearly every research library in the country, has been forced to cut back on serial subscriptions as publishers raise costs and library budgets fall. Though library and faculty committees have cooperated to choose which publications will get the axe, the task is unpleasant for all concerned.

Even after most of the journals on the 38-page list are cut, saving approximately \$350,000, the library will still have a budgetary shortfall on the journals they will continue to subscribe to because of another 20% cost increase in subscription rates over the past year.

Unfortunately, it's too late to save the journals. However, it is in everyone's best interest to begin planning for the future and avoiding further budget cuts for our library. Our library already ranks abysmally low among American Research Libraries; if we continue to make cuts we can only move down.

Our many academic programs that rank in the top ten in the country cannot continue to achieve such successes if our library continues to deteriorate.

As the library adds its two-millionth volume this year it is interesting to consider the exact make-up of our collection. The prices of books are going up along with serials prices. Obviously, the library doesn't cut books, but it is unable to

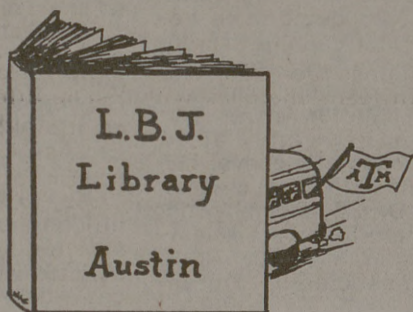
meet all the acquisitions needs of a major research university. As a matter of fact, our library often buys surplus books from other major universities, including the University of Texas. Just because we have 2 million volumes doesn't mean they are the most important, up-to-date 2 million.

Interestingly, the library only gets approximately \$4 per year from student fees, whereas students pay over \$40 per semester for a computer use fee. The library does receive donations from former students and the Friends of the Library, but it's not enough to keep up growth. The state budget is not likely to increase significantly, so the future looks bleak.

If the university does not direct funds from some other area to the library, things are unlikely to change.

The problems facing our library may seem overwhelming, but there are things that can be done. Former students or even current students can provide the purchase price of a book as a tax-deductible donation and have their name inscribed on a book plate inside the book. Books may also be bought as a memorial to a deceased family member. Student organizations could donate serial subscriptions.

Aggies should consider taking part of the responsibility for raising our university to world class status. A donation to the library may not be glamorous, but it is one of the most important contributions one can make to Texas A&M.



'Boer War III': alternate reality

Columnist took liberties with history, responsibility

As I read Anthony C. LoBaido's column concerning South Africa on Monday, September 7, I kept looking for the punch line to what I was sure was a tongue-in-cheek satire. To my horror, I realized about halfway through the piece that Mr. LoBaido was indeed serious. I honestly don't know which shocked me more: LoBaido's unabashed admiration for the Afrikaners or his convoluted and often bewildering arguments.

In the past, LoBaido has shown a somewhat faulty grasp of history. A recent column of his claimed Alexis de Tocqueville was an observer of colonial America when in fact de Tocqueville toured Jacksonian America nearly sixty years after the United States had proclaimed its independence. LoBaido's piece on South Africa shows a similar ignorance of or disregard for the historical record.

LoBaido accurately notes that South Africa was a member of the Allies during the Second World War. For that matter, so was the Soviet Union. However, he fails to mention that no South African could be coerced to serve outside of South Africa during the war. Those who did volunteer to serve with British combat troops in Europe and North Africa were given red shoulder tabs to differentiate them from the rest of the South African soldiers who chose to remain inside the borders of South Africa (and out of combat.) Granted, LoBaido is trying to distance the Afrikaners from inevitable comparisons to the Nazis. Yet, given the swastika-like emblem and Hitlerian race-purity rhetoric of the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (Afrikaner Resistance Movement), a growing right-wing group dedicated to armed resistance against any liberalization of apartheid, comparisons with the Nazi are not only inevitable, but somewhat justified.

Regarding the retreat of Cuba and the Soviet Union from Angola, LoBaido castigates NATO for failing to help push the Communist forces out of Africa. Of course, he fails to consider that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization has no mandate to act outside the bounds of its members' territories (and neither South Africa nor Angola are members.) Furthermore, LoBaido's claim that South Africa was single-handedly responsible for the removal of foreign troops

from Angola is patently ludicrous. Internal economic forces in both the Soviet Union and Cuba figured prominently in the Soviet decision to withdraw from southern Africa.

LoBaido's biggest historical inaccuracies occur when he compares the recent Los Angeles riots to the disturbances in South Africa. As events over the weekend demonstrated, South African security forces still do not know the meaning of the word "restraint." The horrible beating of Rodney King seems almost trivial in comparison to the machine-gunning of protesters in Ciskei. In addition, however disenfranchised and ill-served African-Americans may be by the American system, that system at least acknowledges their right to be included. Black South Africans are still struggling for that acknowledgement of inclusion.

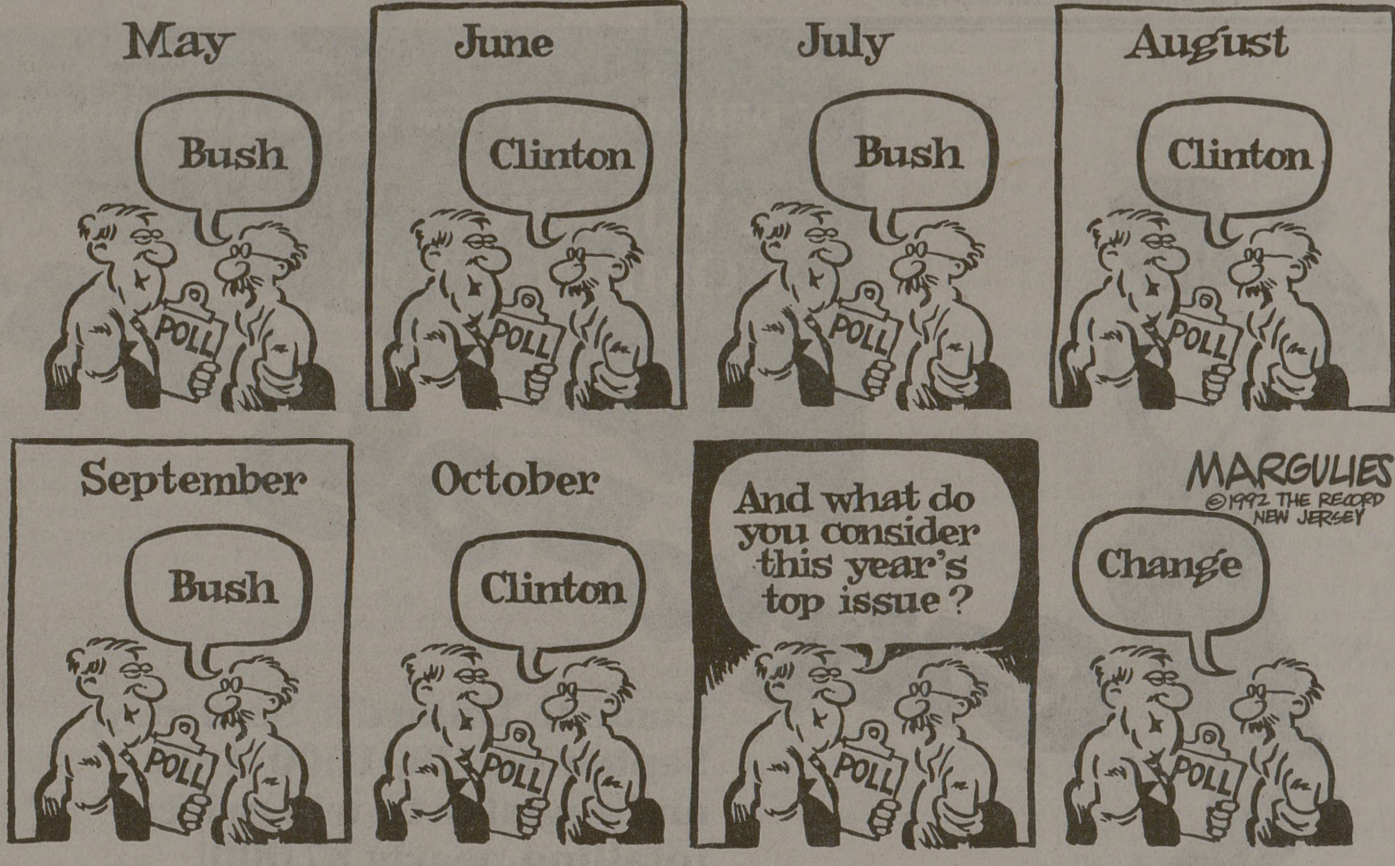
The logic LoBaido uses is at best convoluted and often rather confusing. I still cannot figure out what role he feels AIDS has to play in this Wagnerian scenario. As for his praise of South African pornography laws, I can name several other similarly "enlightened" governments that outlawed pornography: Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union, and the People's Republic of China. I doubt, however, that the Republican Party would like to get spokesmen from any of them to trumpet family values.

Although LoBaido's anti-communist rhetoric makes one wonder if he has paid any attention whatsoever to the dramatic developments in eastern Europe and Russia over the past two years, what disturbs me even more than his cavalier disregard of the historical record is his tone. The entire piece, especially near the end, sounds like a paean to the necessity and desirability of a South African race war. While I would be the first to agree that free expression is an unalienable right that should be enjoyed by all, I would remind you that as the editor of a responsible media organ you have the duty to ensure that the opinions of your editorial staff are logical, factual, and above all responsible to the needs and concerns of society. If you were to print an editorial advocating the use of force to overthrow a duly elected government (say that of Texas or College Station,) you just might find yourself charged with sedition or inciting a riot. The convoluted and often contrived ramblings of Mr. LoBaido make me wonder if your staff exercises any editorial control whatsoever.

GUEST COLUMN

DAVID A. SNYDER

Snyder is a doctoral student in history



MAIL CALL

School should offer a real firearms course

In the last couple of months, eight burglaries have taken place in my apartment complex. The management posted notices on our doors asking us to call the police if we see suspicious men walking around with TVs, VCRs, etc. They allegedly sell these appliances to support their crack habits. We also received a notice warning us of newspaper salesmen forcing themselves into people's apartments.

For obvious reasons, I am concerned for my safety and I am considering buying some type of firearm, most likely a pistol, for my home.

Rifery is currently offered at A&M as a kinesiology course but a class teaching the use, safety, and laws concerning firearms in the home is not. Mr. Jay Merkeley, my riflery instructor, said several students have come to him

with these same concerns. He said he had brought up the idea in the past but there was not enough support in the department.

I am proposing that the university consider offering a kinesiology course on pistol use and laws concerning the use of a firearm for protection. Since four kinesiology courses are required of all students, I think students should at least have the choice to take a kinesiology course that will be useful to them for the rest of their lives.

Michele Brinkmann
Class of '94

Batt interview biased against Clinton

I am disappointed that Battalion coverage of the North American Free Trade Agreement has been dominated by front-page interviews with pro-FTA Texas A&M marketing or-business professors, but the Sept. 10 article went overboard by including asinine and highly partisan criticisms of Bill Clinton.

Economics professor John Hanson's statements that Clinton "has been ignoring the issue" and "has no excuse for not knowing what is in that agreement" are idiotic.

Hanson also said of Clinton: "when

he says he hasn't read it, he is being completely insincere."

How can anyone, particularly a presidential candidate busy campaigning, be expected to read and digest a major treaty thousands of pages long, which has been kept secret by the Bush administration during negotiations, in just the few weeks the proposal has been out?

No person can accomplish this feat, a requirement for the thoroughly informed opinion necessary for support or opposition.

It turns out that in fact Clinton has endorsed the concept of the pact and his desire to make sure the FTA protects the environment, consumers, and workers.

These are the issues which Bush is avoiding, just like he has been doing throughout his presidency.

Congressional leaders have voiced their complaints about the FTA proposal so why should Clinton or anyone make premature decision until congressional hearings are completed at the end of September?

For the record I am not defending Clinton or the FTA, which is a primarily a bald-faced movement by largely unaccountable American and multinational corporations to exploit cheap natural resources, labor and the environment.

Michael Worsham

Aggie Republicans anger former student

This summer I watched the Republican convention as I'm sure many of you did. I was shocked at what I saw. I listened to Republican Pat Buchanan extol the virtues of a "Judeo-Christian heritage." The Republican Party platform mentions the need to promote the "Judeo-Christian heritage" as well.

A few days ago I stopped by the MSC for the first time as a former student. As I entered the newly remodeled building for the first time in over a year, something caught my eye. There, adjacent to the Battalion newspaper rack, was the Aggie Republican. I decided to take a copy to read at home. I began to browse through the pages and was shocked at what I saw. The Aggie Republican made references to the dangers of "multi-culturalism." That's a shame.

Aggies, ask yourself what they mean by "Judeo-Christian heritage" and being opposed to "multi-culturalism." If they are against multi-culturalism, then may one draw the conclusion they support mono-culturalism? I don't know about you, but to me that sounds like something you would expect the leader of the KKK to be saying.

And what exactly is meant by "Judeo-Christian heritage?" Well, it certainly doesn't mean folks of African-

American heritage or Asian-American heritage or Arabian-American or Native American heritage. Let's face it; what they're talking about is honest, hard-working, God-fearing white people!

If I were a member of a minority ethnic group in this country, I would be listening very carefully to what the Republicans are saying. This is not some fringe group or David Duke talking, this is stuff in the national Republican platform.

I am not a "yellow-dog" Democrat. I am able to cast a vote against a Democrat whom I don't like; however, after reading the Aggie Republican and listening to the Republican convention, I will certainly never vote for a Republican again.

Greg Buford
Class of '90

Editorials appearing in The Battalion reflect the views of the opinion page staff and editor in chief only. They do not represent, in any way, the opinions of reporters, staff, or editors of other sections of the newspaper.

Columns, guest columns, and Mail Call items express the opinions of the authors only.

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor and will print as many as space allows in the Mail Call section. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name. We reserve the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy.

Letters should be addressed to:

The Battalion - Mail Call
013 Reed McDonald/Mail stop 1111
Texas A&M University
College Station, TX 77843