

PRO CON

Should students vote for or against the library fee in this week's referendum?



CHRIS WHITLEY
Columnist

"A good library is an invitation to learning."

— Sterling C. Evans

This message is inscribed on the wall of the library that Evans founded. However, today's Evans Library does not take these words to heart.

Rather than an invitation, the library has become

In this week's "Hey - Someone's Gotta Pay for It" file, voting on a referendum on Wednesday's election will determine whether students want to add yet another fee to their already top-heavy statement. The referendum on the ballot is based upon the quality of the Sterling C. Evans Library.

While the library is in dire need of improvement, increasing student fees beyond the present level is ridiculous.

Student senators have devised a plan whereby students would pay \$15 per semester, beginning next fall, to help fund the library.

The argument made by those supporting the referendum is based upon statistics comparing the libraries at the University of Texas and Texas A&M. Sterling C. Evans Library ranks 70th in the number of total volumes, while Texas' library ranks fifth. Simply put, to increase the total number of volumes, the library needs more money.

Unfortunately, our student government has shown little creativity in dealing with the problem. By using a little common sense, student government officials could allow students to enjoy greater parity with that other school in Austin.

The reasoning that should be employed is this: If UT can have enough funds for a world-class research library, why can't we?

The answer is: We can. By employing the same standards for accessing library funds that UT uses, A&M could obtain a library of similar stature.

Other than private sources, possible funding mechanisms for the UT Library are the Available University Fund (AUF) — money made available to A&M and UT as land-grant colleges — and student fees.

First of all, UT receives two-thirds of the AUF per year, while Aggies are stiffed with a paltry one-third. Officials from the Ad Hoc Committee on Libraries, as created by the Texas A&M Faculty Senate, should investigate this disparity. Although this money alone would not be enough to increase dramatically the number of volumes in the Evans Library, it would be a nice place to start.

Second, if government officials find it imperative to use student fees to support the library, they should find some other fee to cut in efforts to gain the funds needed.

Students should take the initiative to vote against the referendum on Wednesday and Thursday, and let student government officials know that the days of adding fee after fee to our statements are over.



RICH HENDERSON
Columnist

Henderson is a sophomore political science major.

Squid, snails and puppy dog tails

That's what malicious, modern menus are made of

I'm kind of grateful for my ranking as one of the larger links in the food chain. I wouldn't want to be a head of lettuce, or a lobster, or a snail.

Snails must be delicious. Why else would someone knowingly order a slimy little mollusk that costs as much as two Quarter Pounders with cheese? I mean, I couldn't enjoy looking down at my plate and thinking how my dinner once dragged itself across the dirt in a garden — where fertilizer is considered desirable ground cover. No, these aspiring appetizers didn't walk, or crawl or even slither. They became one with the ground, touching it with every slimy centimeter of their butt-foot and leaving a gleaming trail of who-knows-what to mark their paths, should they choose to come back the same way.

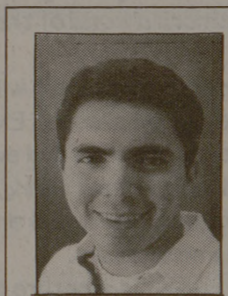
Eating lobster raises other concerns. OK, so maybe they did live in the ocean where millions of other, very UGLY creatures live and breathe and eat and poop and reproduce each day. And, yes, maybe they would rip your big toe off if given the chance. But do they really deserve to be conscious when dropped into a pot of boiling water? I mean, isn't there a more "humane" way to kill a creature, simply for the sake of eating it?

Granted, sodium pentothal is out of the question — anesthesiologists are too expensive. The price of lobster is already outrageous. But a little sedative couldn't hurt. Maybe we could marinate 'em in beer or a nice wine. Get 'em a little sauced before dropping 'em into the big bucket in the sky.

There are accounts of lobsters "crying" in the first few seconds as they sink to the great beyond. Maybe it's the blinding white light they see in the twilight moments. Maybe, it's the huge tunnel and the pearly gates at the end — oh, that would be the oysters, never mind.

Many say it's not the lobsters "crying" but their claws scraping the metal pot as they fall to the bottom of their boiling coffins.

Not that I have anything against the senseless (read



ROBERT VASQUEZ
Columnist

"cruel and unusual") killing of lobsters. In fact, I, myself, have eaten my share of poor, little, innocent sea creatures.

"Calamari" they called it. It sounded exotic, but I didn't know what it was. So I consulted the menu. "Ocean-fresh calamari, deep fried and seasoned to perfection" it said. What a great answer.

Stupid American: "What is 'calamari'?"

Devious Restaurant Owner: "Oh, calamari is calamari."

Stupid American: "Oh. Could you be a little more specific?"

Devious Restaurant Owner: "Um, it's delicious."

Stupid American: "OK, I'll have some."

For the record: Calamari is SQUID, the snail's ugly, sea-faring cousin. Like snails, squid are small and slimy, and would appear edible, if it weren't for all those tentacles that taste like rubber...

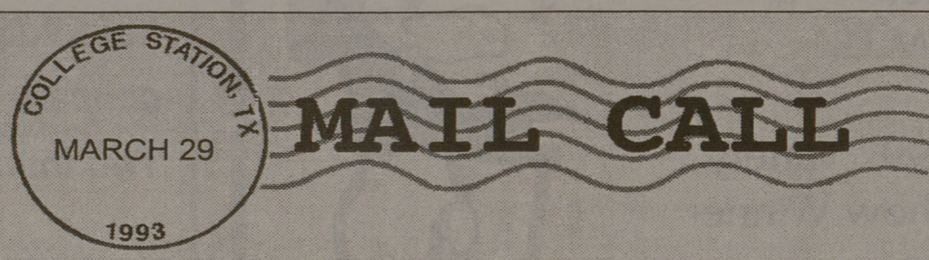
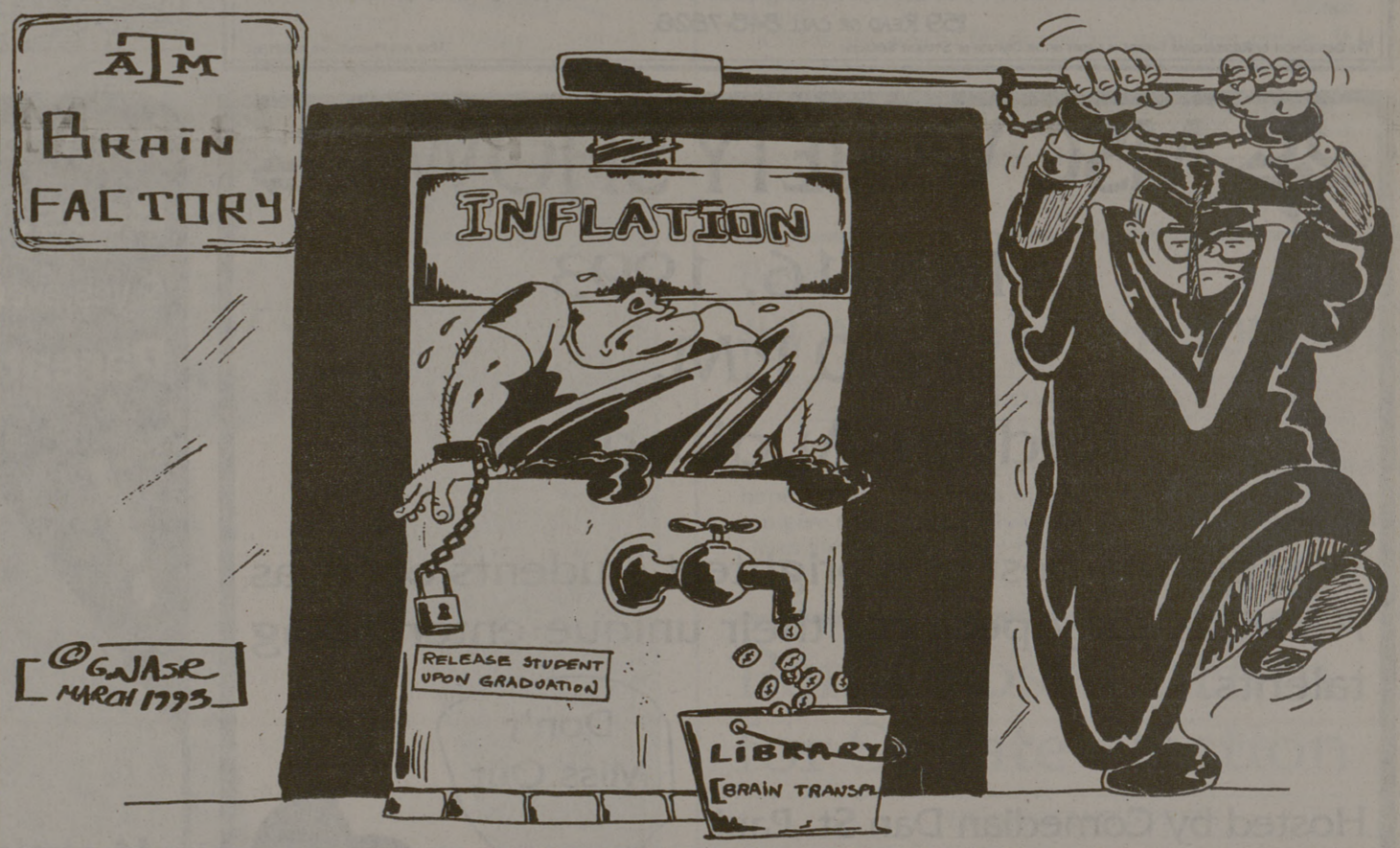
So, yes, I've eaten squid. And, in all honesty, it really wasn't that bad. Some people who have eaten "calamari" never knew it and have responded with, "the onion rings weren't bad, but they tasted a little fishy."

No, I don't feel guilty that I've eaten poor, defenseless creatures. Maybe I should. There are those who would argue that eating any meat is wrong. I've known people who refuse to eat eggs or milk products because "the eggs were supposed to become chickens, and the milk belonged to a baby cow and not to the farmer who took it away." To them I say, "more power to ya'."

People should have the freedom to choose what they eat and don't eat. I refuse to eat hot dogs. I used to love them. But I couldn't bring myself to eat another when I learned that they were made from innocent cows and pigs... and chickens... and turkeys... and the occasional rat.

So, what? Should we eat meat? Is it wrong to kill animals for the sake of consuming them? I don't know. I prefer not to know what I'm eating. It's easier on the conscience. I just eat at McDonalds, instead.

Vasquez is a senior journalism major.



Got a few questions for ya', Aggies

It's happening to me. Just like it's happening to thousands of other Ags this semester, whether we like it or not. We're graduating. I'm down here at the ACC at three in the morning with the rest of the procrastinators, numb with the wonder of it all. I have more questions about A&M than I have answers. Bear with me. Was the English Annex built on purpose?

What the hell do they put in that pudding at Sbsia, anyway?

Will the Battalion print the word "hell" if used in the above context?

What is so complex about the "microphone on a neck-chain" concept that none of my profs are able to understand it? Just put it around your neck! Don't put it around your neck AND hold it up to your mouth!

What sort of person would leave underthings in a dryer, on campus, unattended, in front of God and everybody, for upwards of four hours?

How do they decide which CT stands and blocks traffic while the rest run by?

Why are the sprinklers always on when it's raining?

Who designed the drainage system for campus? And when is he or she up for parole?

Why does it always take the bus longer to get to my spot when it rains?

Why is it the bus always drives off just as I'm about to reach the stop, but never pulls up just as I get there?

Why do freshmen get younger every year?

But this is the one that REALLY gets me. WHY, in the name of all things holy, were bike lanes put on Joe Routt in front of the MSC? When was the last time you DIDN'T see a car, usually a University vehicle, parked in the bike lane? Traffic is forced left; bikers have to move into traffic; pedestrians have to come out from behind cars... It's just dangerous.

Well, I hope you've enjoyed my little catechism. Keep looking up Ags, I love ya.

Pat Dowling
Class of '93

Unhappy with Corps handling of problem

In the past, the rape of the enemy during war was seen as a sort of reward for the invading soldiers.

At that time rape was not seen as much of a crime, obviously. It is also obvious to me that to certain groups in the military, neither sexual assault nor sexual harassment, are crimes worthy of punishment.

Two very recent examples are the Navy, and even closer to us, the Corps of Cadets.

Allowing the Corps to be judge and jury of itself seems bad enough.

However, I believe that the decision to leave it up to the Corps was even worse since the punishment is merely the dismissal of the alleged offender from this institution.

To me this depicts two problems. First, that women do not have the confidence to press charges leaves the offender free to do it again only with more confidence. The second problem is again our judicial system.

People who evade paying taxes have a longer sentence in jail than rapists do. Not only that, but here at Texas A&M if you are in the Corps you can rape someone and merely get grounded from A&M. I bet you this harsh punishment will convince you not to do it again, eh?

Kristi Hamilton
Class of '96

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