

EVERYONE IN THE U.S. KNOWS ONE PERSON WHO COULD BE OUT OF A JOB IF NAFTA IS PASSED.



MARGULIES

Nicaragua free thanks to efforts of the Contras

This is in response to Humberto A. Jorge's letter on Sept. 22 de-meaning Oliver North and the freedom fighters of Nicaragua. Our wish is not to defend Oliver North, although it would be well worthwhile, but to correct Humberto's warped facts about the Nicaraguan revolution of 1979 and the Nicaraguan freedom fighters.

GUEST COLUMN

JORGE L. WHELOCK

the Sandinistas offered Nicaraguan crops and other natural resources to Eastern block nations. While many Nicaraguans struggled in exile and Nicaragua's remaining population starved in a sacked nation, Sandinista leaders enjoyed ownership of the country's key industries.

Contrary to what was stated in Humberto Jorge's letter, the Sandinistas, who had surged to power in defense of the poor, had completely betrayed them. Under their rule, Nicaraguans lacked food, not to mention better health care or a better education. Sandinismo had not only ruined the country's economy, but also abolished Nicaragua's social freedom.

The military tortured and killed anyone who spoke out against them. They committed thousands of human rights violations, some still being discovered today. Frustrated Nicaraguans took arms against the Soviet-backed Sandinistas.

The "Contras" as they called themselves, fought relentlessly in the mountains of Nicaragua. The U.S. backed Contras were not murderers of farmers, as suggested in Humberto Jorge's article, but instead represented Nicaragua's only hope for freedom.

Overwhelming pressure by the Contras led the Sandinistas to call for free elections in 1990. The result of the election was a victory for democracy. The same Nicaraguan people that had supported the revolution in 1979 overwhelmingly voted out the Communist Sandinista regime, putting an end to the country's darkest era.

Nicaraguan Students at Texas A&M thank God and heroes such as Oliver North, Ronald Reagan and George Bush. For it was their unconditional help that made it possible for Nicaraguans such as us to live in our country again.

Jorge L. Wheelock is president of Nicaraguan Students at Texas A&M

'Don't worry, I can fix it' Yeah, right Mechanically declined learn from maintenance mistakes

What is it that drives men to fix?

Even as a small boy, I remember well my father's response to my mother's most often spoken statement, "Dear, this darn thing won't work any more... I think it's broken."

His reply, which didn't seem to require actual sensory perception of the object, or even knowledge as to what it was, inevitably was, "Don't worry, I can fix it."

Being a prosthodontist, his occupational skill was to repair or replace missing teeth and gums for geriatrics who otherwise had to eat their steak in daiquiri form. As a result, there was always an abundance of what my family simply referred to as "denture material."

It was usually pink, and it was everywhere. Upon close inspection, one could make out tiny oral blood vessels coursing through the knobs of saucpan lids, broken screwdriver handles, door lock thinges on the truck, appliance switches and even shotgun stock alterations. Anything or any part of anything that was made of a plastic, a metal or wood, could be repaired with that stuff. And my dad could fix it. To this day, when asked by inquisitive neighbors, "How'd you fix that?" a denture grin is usually followed by, "Denture material."

As I grew up in this, "Don't throw it away; I can fix it" atmosphere, I discovered amongst my friends and acquaintances that there are



MACK HARRISON Opinion editor

basically three kinds of men. Those who can fix absolutely anything — to whom other men will bow; those who couldn't fix a gin and tonic; and the most common of all, men who think they can fix anything — who after hours of frustrated cussing and super-glued fingers, inevitably worsen, or in a fit of rage, smash that which was repairable.

Although I'm not quite certain where women fit into this "fix it" urge, I'm inclined to think it's a testosterone thing. Women, utilize this primal, male, "I can fix it" momentum to somersault their men into ego-euphoria. Thereby, not only getting many tasks accomplished, but earning many "ego-chips" as well, to be cashed in at a later date. I would guess that even female mechanical engineers balk at minor door hinge repairs to capitalize on a guy's desire to wield his mighty screwdriver and save the fair maiden. Men can be so clueless.

Unlike my father — who can fix anything — I will attempt to fix anything, succeeding only about half of the time. For every incredibly brilliant repair, there is an equally incredible failure — such as a shelf load of books plummeting to the floor, a completely reassembled motorcycle with one rubber piece left over, or a girl's car stereo installation that now sounds like rusted cellophane; she did save 30 bucks however.

As any "fixer" knows, a failure is not just a failure, but also a great way to learn what not to do next time — like remembering to securely fasten the ceiling fan to the ceiling, or making sure you removed all the tools from under your hood before driving off.

In addition, much joy comes from a situation repeating itself that you completely botched the time before. With any luck, the onlookers will be new ones, oblivious to pre-

vious pandemonium. They're always so mistakenly impressed. The only problem with this brand of adulation is that often, because the repair attempt was so ridiculously stupid in the first place, you never ever get another chance to redeem yourself.

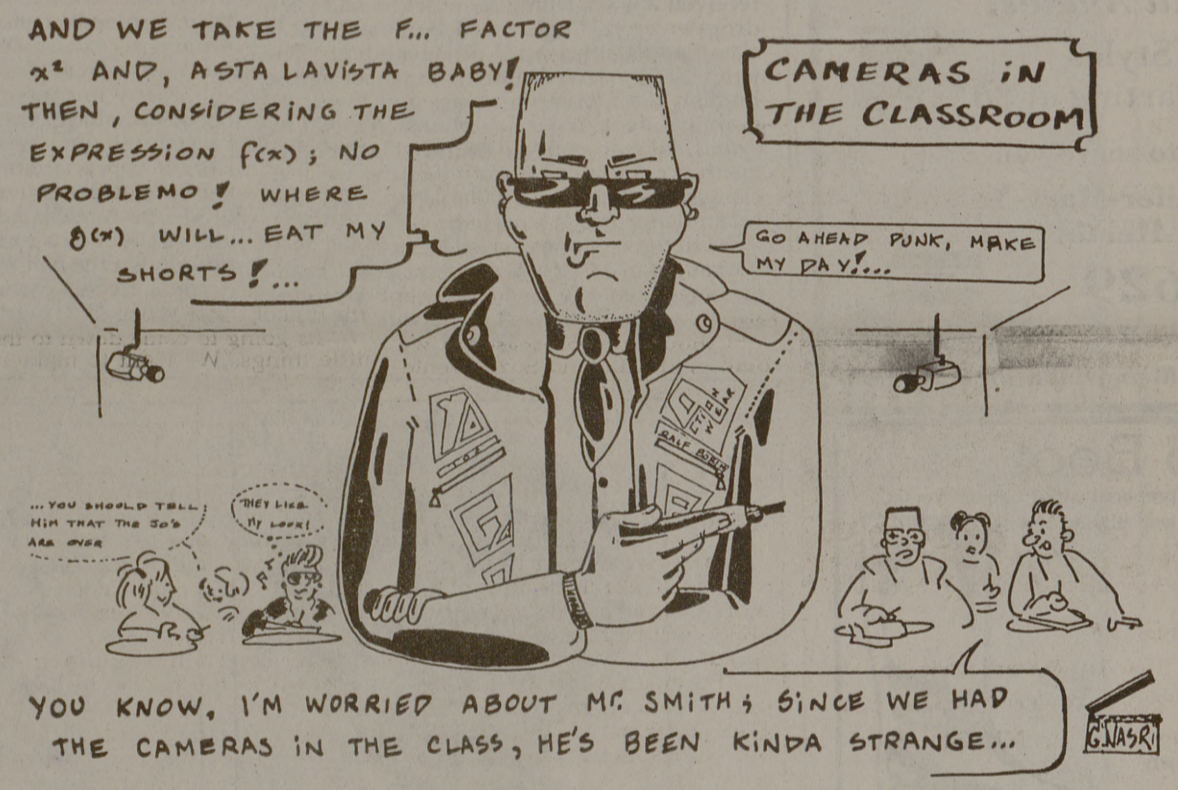
I once took a girl, her visiting brother and his friend night-sailing in the dead of winter on a windy lake. They were awed by my navigational skills. Basically, when the land starts looking bigger, I turn the boat.

We were drinking ice cold beer "stealth-sailing" in total darkness — due to earlier electrical wiring repairs — and were a tad chilly... okay, frostbitten. I decided to dazzle them further and rig the gas stove to not only light the cabin but heat it as well. After the fire — you could see it from shore — I knew that my pale, shivering, saucer-eyed friends would never give me the chance to prove what an idiot I wasn't.

The saddest fixer of all however, is the one who won't. These are the individuals who love duct tape, and they are extremely easy to spot. Scotch tape, masking tape, duct tape and staples are used to repair almost everything. Although that gray tape is possibly the greatest invention of the century, it was never meant to hold a windshield on a car or a leg to a table. Disaster is eminent.

The other tool for the non-fixer is the hammer. If something is not working properly, just beat it a few times and presto, no repairman is necessary. This method is particularly effective on Nintendos, alternators and even this computer, which is not working properly. I'll be right back...

Frank Stanford is a graduate philosophy major



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The scapegoat as the U.S. national symbol? Don't blame me

In a few short years, the bald eagle, America's national symbol, will be extinct. As long as the National Rifle Association is around, this is guaranteed. After all, idiots, guns and wildlife don't mix very well. We'll have plenty of time to mourn these majestic creatures.

GUEST COLUMN

MIKE MORRIS

What America needs to do is start planning for the future. We're going to have to find a new national symbol soon. With all of the bureaucracy that's plaguing the federal government, we need to start the search for our new symbol now.

The big question is, "What's it going to be?" I'm sure everyone has their personal favorite. Benjamin Franklin wanted the turkey, but that would screw up Thanks-

giving. The conservatives would probably vote for the elephant, but that's no good either because the elephant will also be extinct soon.

I figure the liberals would have a couple of ideas as well. Their first would be the donkey, but that one's no good. The rest of the world already thinks Americans are a bunch of jackasses. There's no sense in proving them right. Another choice could be one of the many serial killers they've gotten released, but American money would not be worth much if it featured a picture of a tattoo-covered guy with a pickax in one hand and a scalp or two in the other.

Once the politicians had their say, businesses would probably be next in line. Exxon and Kellogg would probably want the tiger, but neither the NRA nor Alaska would stand for that. The tuxedo syndicate would want the penguin, but few people would like a bird with useless limbs for a national symbol. It would remind them too much of the disabled, and America has done such a good job of ignoring the disabled. The lawyers and doctors would want their symbol to repre-

sent the nation, but how do you put a picture of a dollar bill on the dollar bill?

None of these ideas are really good. America is going to need a symbol that will be truly appropriate. America's deserve a symbol that they can relate to. The symbol has to have a mystical quality to it. It must be something that the rest of

The scapegoat is something to which every single American can easily relate, and it has the lofty, mystical representation that our national symbol deserves — it's mentioned throughout the Bible.

the world can respect. I've got the perfect idea for our new national symbol. It should be the one, the only, scapegoat.

You may ask, "Why the scapegoat?" Why not? It's the perfect symbol to represent the true modern America. The scapegoat is something to which every

single American can easily relate, and it has the lofty, mystical representation that our national symbol deserves — it's mentioned throughout the Bible.

The scapegoat really does represent America. Nothing is ever our fault. It's always someone else's fault.

"Don't blame me. I voted for the other guy."

Democrats blame the Republicans. The Republicans blame the Democrats. Congress blames the President and vice versa. We always lay the blame at the other guy's feet.

The scapegoat can also represent the little guy. If you don't believe me, just watch the news. A few months ago, a man was tried for the murder of a highway patrolman. He was videotaped committing the crime, yet he claimed he was innocent. It wasn't his fault. It was rap music that made him do it. The jury didn't buy it, but the officer's widow sued the artist and his label anyway.

This isn't the first time music has been blamed. The group Judas Priest was sued by the parents of two teenagers who killed themselves. The parents claimed

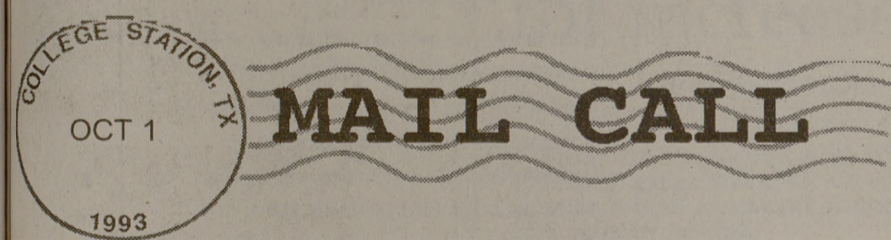
that the subliminal message in the music — which allegedly said, "Do it" — made the kids commit suicide. I guess the fact that the guys were high school dropouts addicted to alcohol and drugs had nothing to do with it.

The world will also find the scapegoat symbol acceptable. They will finally understand Americans. After all, it has been the cheap labor of the Japanese that makes their products sell so well. It certainly isn't the fact that the Japanese make better products.

Texas A&M was recently visited by a national hero, Oliver North. I truly believe he is a hero. The Iran-Contra affair does not make him a hero in my eyes; the fact that he took the blame for everyone else makes him a hero. He truly represents what America has become, and I salute him.

By the way, if you don't agree with me, it's not my fault. The devil made me do it.

Mike Morris is senior teacher's certification major



Watch where you're sticking those labels

This is my third year of Batt reading, and I have to say that many times I have been amused, disgusted, horrified, an-

gry, depressed and impressed by letters that have appeared in Mail Call. Never have I laughed as hard as I did, though, as when I read the letter by Joel Dunn (Sept. 24).

In it, Joel criticized Anand Patel for criticizing those anti-Clinton shirts that have been seen around campus. Then

Joel goes on to say that "bleeding heart liberals are all the same." Hmm... sounds like we have a vicious little cycle of passing judgment here.

I would just like to clear up a few things here. Yes, I think of myself as a liberal. (Actually, open-minded is the term I like to use.) And yes, I think those T-shirts are in bad taste, not because I support Clinton but because I respect the president as the leader of our country, regardless of party. However, more than that, I respect freedom of speech, and realize that my opinion is my own, and I cannot force anyone to stop expressing their views simply because I do not agree with them.

See, we "bleeding heart liberals" are not all the same. Perhaps this is

nowhere more apparent than in gender. I am a female, and "Ms. Patel" is a male. Maybe next time, Joel Dunn will write a more cautious letter when faced with an unfamiliar and non-gender specific name instead of labeling people falsely. Or maybe that is not possible — Joel Dunn seems to like labels.

Lisa Ranallo Class of '95

Smokers: watch your butts outside dorms

The new campus non-smoking policy has spawned a new problem. The

smokers may not be fouling the air inside buildings anymore, but they are polluting the ground with the ends of their cigarettes.

There is an abundance of cigarette butts littering the areas outside of the residence halls.

The smokers must make an effort to dispose of their litter properly just like they would any other trash, or maybe the University can provide ashtrays outside of the buildings. Just because cigarette butts are small does not mean that they are not polluting our beautiful campus.

Kristen DeRocha Leah Smith Class of '96