

Is Gingrich in the right, or another Jim Wright

Did he or didn't he? The country sits riveted, hanging on every word. Everyone has an opinion and is ever so willing to share it with us. Millions will be spent trying to prove his guilt or innocence — and who really cares?



DAVE TAYLOR
COLUMNIST

Nope, I'm not talking about O.J., I'm talking about Newt. I've heard all kinds of insinuations over the past few weeks and not a shred of evidence of wrongdoing. In fact, Newt gave \$4,499,999.00 back to the publishing company. So what's up here? Well, boys and girls, its time for a little history lesson. Once upon a time a man named Jim Wright held the Speaker's gavel, which presently belongs to Mr. Newt. One day, Mr. Jim decided to write a book. Problem was, no one wanted to read his book. Sometimes, however, people did want to hear him speak (after all, he was the Speaker). Speakers are paid an honorarium for enlightening their audience, and Mr. Jim loved to enlighten. Unfortunately for Mr. Jim, Congress had ethics rules governing how much members can receive for enlightening.

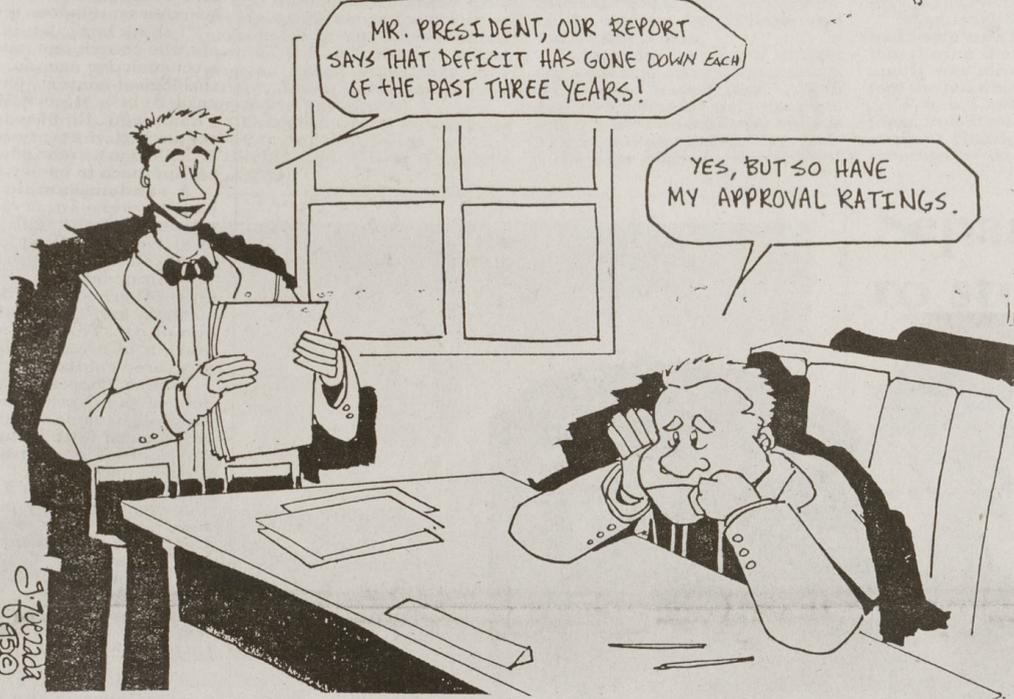
Well, things get funny from this point on. It seems that every time Mr. Jim went enlightening, he would sell a few books — like \$100,000 worth of books. Hmm. Now meet a junior representative from an obscure district in Georgia. Mr. Newt came to the same conclusions that we did after smelling the air. He decided to do some enlightening himself.

In the House, members can give speeches for the record after normal business is over for the day. Mr. Newt shared with the rest of the country some of the things that he had noticed. Normally, no one ever took notice of these little sessions, but this one was different. This one set in motion the chain of events leading to the resignation of Speaker Wright. Newt Gingrich is as responsible as anyone for the flood of new ideas coming out of the Republican camp. The Democratic leadership would like nothing more than to bring the Speaker to his knees. The facts are their only obstacle — it's OK, though, the Democrats are used to that. Let's talk about what happened to Mr. Newt. It seems that a number of people in this fine country

are interested in Mr. Newt's ideas. When some publishers realized that Mr. Newt would soon become Speaker Newt a bidding war ensued. HarperCollins, a publishing group headed by Rupert Murdoch, won with a bid of \$4.5 million (The next highest bid was \$4.1 million). Here's where the controversy started. Mr. Murdoch owns the Fox network in addition to a number of television stations. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), purveyors of amazingly logical ideas such as the Fairness Doctrine, had been trying to decide if they could find a law that Mr. Murdoch had violated — that's what we keep administrative agencies around to do. To get to the point, they found one (or so they thought) dealing with media ownership and Murdoch's American citizenship (It's not supposed to make sense — it's the federal government). About this time Mr. Murdoch stopped in to congratulate then Speaker-elect Gingrich. No big deal, Murdoch has met every Speaker and President in the last twenty years. Soon after, the Immigration and Naturalization Service issued a ruling on Mr. Murdoch's citizenship that made the whole so-called ethical dilemma a moot point. Rupert Murdoch, it

seems, has been an American citizen since about 1987. (See, I told you it wouldn't make sense). After all the noise and controversy over the past few months it all comes down to this: Newt Gingrich broke no laws and violated no ethics rules — and he gave all, but one dollar back. In other words, that squashing sound you hear in Washington is sour grapes. Some people up there just can't stand the fact that Mr. Newt and the Republican leadership are doing exactly what they promised, not to mention the fact that we voted for it. Speaker Gingrich kept the House in session till two a.m. on the first day in order to make sure everything was accomplished that was promised. What's up this week? Unfunded mandates. Next week? The balanced budget amendment will be debated. A misguided friend claims that the "Contract with America" was nothing but a Republican ploy to get elected ... that, unfortunately, worked. These attacks on the Speaker do nothing but reveal a Democratic leadership lacking in credible ideas. Fortunately, they won't work. I can't say the same for O.J.

Dave Taylor is a senior management major



Losing sight of the problem

Recent proposals to stop plight of homeless wrong answer

In the midst of the endless hot air flying around now about people on welfare — how many children they are or are not having, whether every single person on welfare is truly trying to find a way to get off and if they are as grateful as they should be — we are losing sight of the point of welfare.



ELIZABETH PRESTON
COLUMNIST

When I was 12 years old and still innocent about the troubles of the homeless, I went to New York City to visit my uncle. That was before there were scary-looking panhandlers begging and washing windows on the corner of every busy street in Houston. Before I lost the sorrow and pity and instead began feeling irrationally frightened when I saw homeless people approach me. Before the majority of the American people lost the ability to put themselves in the shoes of the homeless. Walking along the street one night after a play and an exquisite dinner at Sardi's — one of the most exclusive restaurants in New York — I saw something that has been burned in my mind ever since. A beautiful young woman, probably around 20 years old, was sitting on the street with a large dog. At first glance, it seemed that they were just taking a moment out to rest. As I looked closer, I noticed that her clothes were tattered and thread-bare and she had dirt on her face. Young enough to be rude without realizing it, I slowed down and stared openly. She was mumbling to her dog and gazing into the street with blank, unseeing eyes. She was homeless and blind. I was horrified. Growing up in a suburb of Houston, attending magnet schools and worrying if I had enough Esprit and Guess, I had never witnessed this level of despair. I can still remember the feeling in the pit of my stomach. My uncle held me that night as I cried myself to sleep; he tried to explain about unpaid bills, discrimination and just plain bad luck that occurs in the world of adults. None of it made any sense to me. All I knew was that she was sitting on a street corner with nowhere to go and no one to lead her there

except a ragged dog. Meanwhile, I was warm and full. The welfare system in America has plenty of flaws. Then again, so does the defense department — and no one in Congress has suggested that we drop it, or even that we change it drastically. In addition, the welfare department accounts for only one to three percent of the entire government budget — a minuscule cost for feeding and housing the poor in our country. In the "Contract With America," Republicans have laid out plans to deny government services to legal aliens and to deny welfare to unwed, teenage mothers. Thus the gist of the plan would be to punish unborn children and people who are honestly trying to find a new beginning in this country. These are also the people who want to make abortion illegal. Thousands of children, wanted and unwanted, would be starving to death on the streets of America. Teenagers who had made mistakes in their youth would be punished forever. Their children would possibly be put in an orphanage (another idea from those ever-so-clever Republicans). Or, if they managed to find some way to keep their children, it would be impossible to support them while they looked for a job or went through a job training program. The role of the government in a democracy is not to decide who gets to have children, who is allowed to have sex or who starves to death. As the governing body of the wealthiest nation in the world, Congress' most important duty is to take care of the people who call it home. While it is easier to sit back in our comfortable lives and judge those who are not as lucky as ourselves, and easier still to sit in Congress and dole out harsh judgments and punishments to people who are down on their luck, this does not make it the right thing to do. To find the courage to care again, to give our assistance without adding obnoxious and unasked for opinions on how the downtrodden should behave in their private lives, we will have to change our outlook as a nation drastically — and not in the direction that Gingrich and his cronies are leading us. I don't ever want my child to look at a blind, homeless woman and feel helpless, because we aren't.

Elizabeth Preston is a junior English major

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EDITORIAL

BRANCHING OUT

Texas A&M should use much caution when deciding whether to expand the System.

Texas A&M University should use extreme caution when considering the addition of new schools to the Texas A&M University System. The University is now considering the inclusion of both the Baylor College of Dentistry and East Texas State University within the System, and at least one other school has expressed interest in joining.

of new schools and programs, but attention must not be diverted from the problems at hand. If top officials cannot manage the University's financial affairs, as demonstrated in the latest audit results, they should not be attempting to expand the System. The Addition of the Baylor College of Dentistry, no doubt, would provide



EXPANSION

While the addition of both schools would expand A&M's horizon and opportunities, many things must be considered. As the latest state audit concluded, the Texas A&M System has encountered many structural and organizational problems which must be resolved. The expansion of the System would further add to the complexity of such problems. The Board of Regents should seek to increase the System, but at the same time, ensure that present problems are dealt with in an efficient and expedient manner. If such additions provide more structural complications, then these additions should be either carefully analyzed or postponed until the problems can be effectively handled. Barry Thompson, A&M System chancellor, would like to see the University continue to grow with the addition

A&M with a much needed branch in the field of medicine. It would also increase opportunity for A&M students wishing to pursue a medical career. East Texas State University would also be an asset to the System. The addition of the two schools would provide needed diversity and also increase the power and credibility of Texas A&M. But regardless of all the advantages the expansion project might bring, attention must not be diverted from the present problems at hand. And any addition to the System must be handled with much caution and care. Some may believe that Aggieland is perfect in all respects, but it is by no means. Texas A&M is a great university, but it has its own share of problems. The System must not make any decision that jeopardizes our strength or increases our problems.

MAIL CALL

Hall far off base in attacking other A&M System schools

I am a loyal Aggie and I love this school and its traditions. But Zach Hall's column on Jan. 20 was off the mark. There are seven smaller schools in the system, and the good they bring outweighs the

bad. The system has had problems getting respect as a powerful education force because it was always overshadowed by the UT system. The Texas legislature always thought of that system when referring to higher learning. The addition of the system schools has given A&M the political clout it needs to receive attention from the legislature. Many of the things Hall writes are either wrong or taken out of context. For example, he states A&M-Kingsville admits unqualified students and brings them up to speed in remedial classes. A&M-College Station also accepts provisional students who haven't quite met the University standards. Hall brings up our established reputation and our need to uphold it. Judging from the newspapers, perhaps we should worry about the main campus, not the system schools. Let's concentrate on the advantages of a large system; I think the name "Texas A&M" can only benefit from it.

Student upset at racist graffiti written on Harrington stairs

This letter is written to the individual or individuals who chose to write the racist comments on the underside of the stairs to the Harrington Building. First of all, the comments were derogatory and directed towards fellow Aggies. I find this disgusting. Their racism only perpetuates their ignorance. They can now say without any reservation, "I am an ignorant racist." My second gripe is their cowardice with their comments. If they're going to publicize their

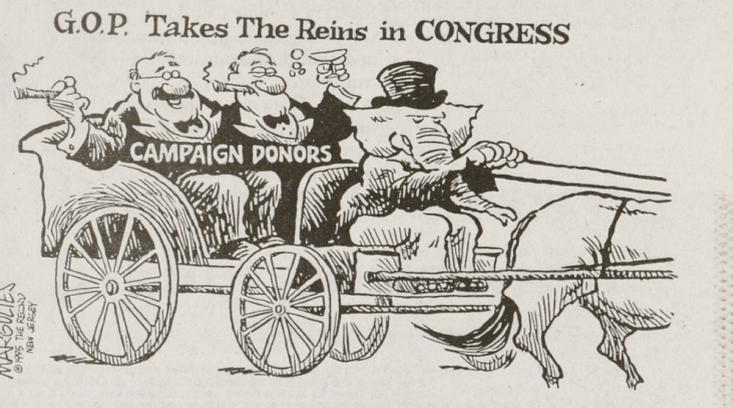
comments, why not where everyone can see it? I'll tell you why, because deep down inside they know that their racist views and attitudes are wrong. I know this because in my past, people have pointed out that some slang phrases and jokes I use are in poor taste. I have sought to correct these, I hope they will also.

Michael J. Carroll
Class of '95

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