

— Palatable Politics —

Another Modest Proposal:

The solution to ending hunger in the U.S. lies in holding politicians to their promises, or else ...

Two summers ago, I took a three week mini-course at TCU on British literature. My main intention was to get enough hours to order my Aggie Ring and to learn nothing.



BRIAN BECKCOM
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While I was successful with the first goal, I didn't quite reach my second.

Although I learned almost nothing, in between sessions of deep sleep and slobbering on my Beowulf text, I actually remember one reading in particular — Jonathan Swift's *A Modest Proposal*. And with that in mind, I'd like to suggest *Another Modest Proposal* ...

What's one of our country's biggest social problems? Not enough food for all the hungry masses, of course. Politicians, pundits and preachers have tried in vain for years to solve this dilemma and have exhausted seemingly every possible avenue.

Well, I have a suggestion they've never tried. But first, a few statistics to strengthen my simple proposal.

Did you know we have more than 600 members of Congress at the federal level? If you figure each state has about 2,000 elected officials, that brings us to a grand total of more than 100,000 politicians (and that's undoubtedly a low estimate).

Let's assume the normal adult eats three meals per day. If our present politicians were to give up their meals to the hungry, that's 100,000 needy people who would no longer be hungry. But what are the politicians going to eat?

Before I answer that question, let me ask another: What exactly do politicians contribute to our society? Some might say legislation, some might say leadership, but I think most sane Americans realize that the political leaders of today provide nothing but hot air and empty promises.

Since America is a capitalist country, and those who can't compete normally don't hang around for too long, how come we've got legislators who have held office for 30 or 40 years? Quite simply, our politicians have avoided capitalism for decades.

What should we, as concerned citizens, do about this?

Consider the following — one 5-pound chicken can provide an adequate meal for two people. If you figure your average politician weighs 170 pounds, you can probably estimate that one politician could feed five to six hungry people.

With over 100,000 politicians, that's 500,000 hungry people with food on the table.

You've probably guessed my proposal by now. I know at first it may seem a bit extreme, but try to get around the initial discomfort of cannibalism.

After all, if we're serious about the hunger problem, shouldn't we devise a serious solution?

I know what most of you are thinking — Jessie Helms' brain could barely serve as an appetizer.

While that's certainly true, imagine how many hungry children could be fed by Jessie Jackson's big mouth.

And imagine how many otherwise starving children could be fed by the Republican windbags in Congress.

Although a Phil Gramm burger would probably be dry and tasteless, the nutritional value could be an adequate substitute for the lack of flavor.

Newt Gingrich could feed a family of five for a week.

However, to answer the question of what the politicians will eat: lobbyists can fatten them up so they are good and tasty. True, the role of the lobbyist changes little here, but they will finally have a desired effect on the political institution.

I realize this little proposal is silly and extreme. However, is anyone else totally dissatisfied with our political leadership?

While we do have some very capable politicians, for the most part, America's leadership is lacking.

Is anyone really excited about another Bill Clinton presidency?

For that matter, is anyone really excited about Sen. Bob "Dull" as the Republican front-runner? What this country needs is a politician leader in the mold of John F. Kennedy or Ronald Reagan.

Regardless of your feelings toward either man, it is evident that both men brought excitement and passion to the political scene.

The current presidential contenders bring nothing but boredom and business-as-usual. No wonder Ross Perot is still considered a viable candidate. Even though Perot is suffering from neurosis and paranoia, his independent party characterizes the mood of the American public.

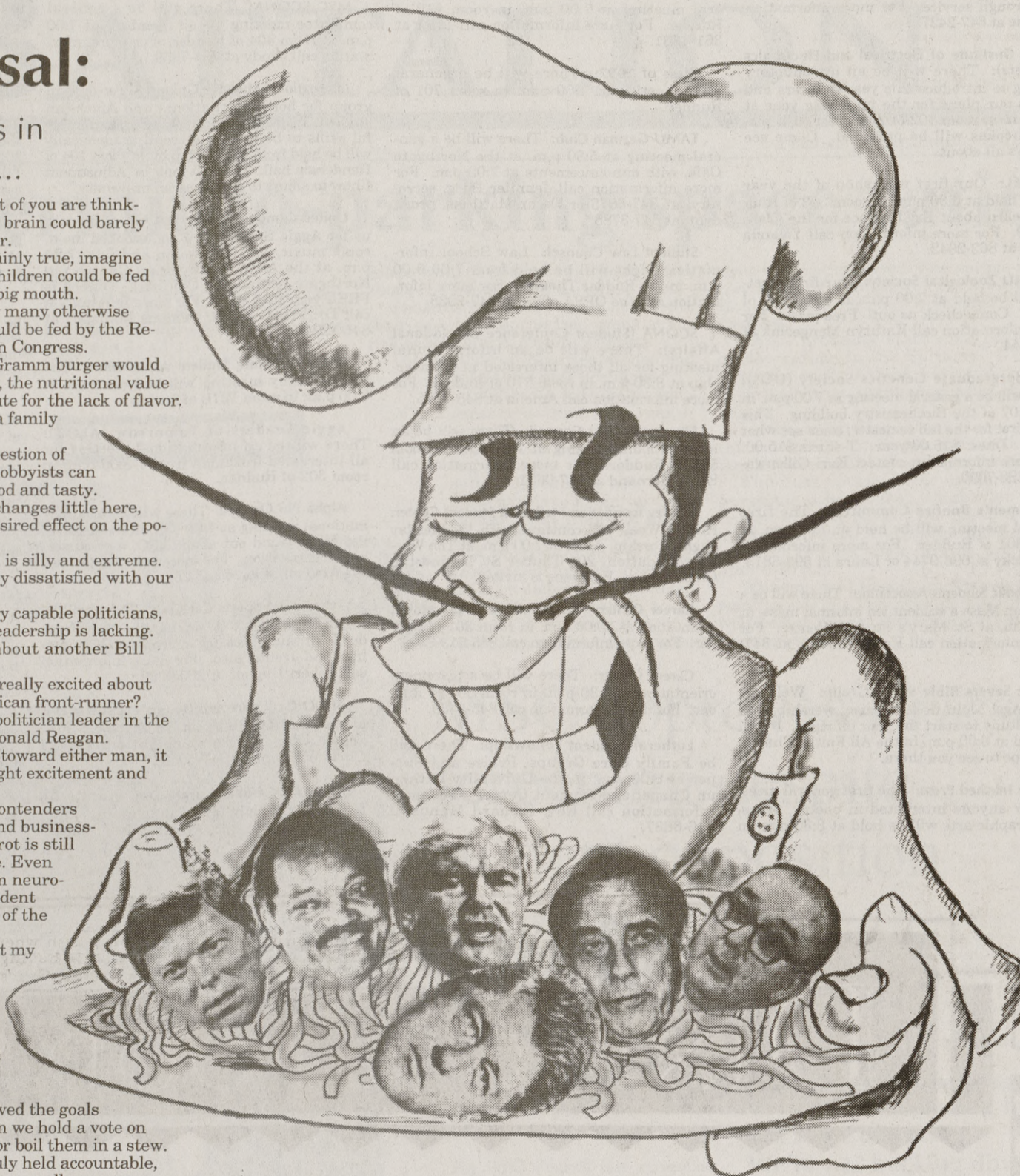
At this point, I think I'll cast my vote for P.J. O'Rourke.

But what do we do when our current crop of politicians has been devoured?

Well, it's simple. Every time a politician runs for office, we give him or her one year to make good on their promises. If they haven't achieved the goals set forth by their platform, then we hold a vote on whether to keep them around or boil them in a stew.

That way, politicians are truly held accountable, and we lick the hunger problem as well.

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Eating your cake now, paying later

Clinton supporters are nowhere to be found when budget cuts draw near

"If you never budge, don't expect a push."
 — Malcolm S. Forbes



ALEX MILLER
 COLUMNIST

Times are tough. Across this broad nation there are signs of strain: O.J. Simpson T-shirt sales have topped off, President Clinton is being forced to hang out with veteran's groups and students may have to start footing the bill for the national budget deficit.

That's correct. If you paid attention this summer you are certainly aware of the fact that Congress is trying to slow the money leak that threatens to sink the federal government.

A difficult task indeed has been assumed by the mostly-Republican 104th Congress.

Forty years of neglect by Congressional Democrats has left a wasteland of unfunded mandates. Each year these mandates consume more than \$200 billion not allocated to the government.

By the end of the 1980s there was no longer an arms race or a strong Soviet Union to justify budget overdrafts, thus the Presidential election of 1992 became the race to control the budget deficit.

Those who supported budget cuts so vigorously when Clinton promised them want nothing to do with them now.

Generation X turned out for this election like no similar age group in the history of democratic elections.

Rock stars, sports figures and even MTV encouraged every legal voter to educate themselves and exercise the right to vote.

Boy did they.

Sound bites of George Bush breaking his famous "no new taxes" promise skated in our heads, while Bill Clinton, with his promises of extinguishing the deficit wild-

fire, skated into the Oval office.

Three years later, President Clinton's promises appear destined to be broken.

According to the figures from the Presidential Budget Office, President Clinton is perfectly comfortable with overspending his budget by at least \$190 billion every year for the next seven years.

That is unless the Republicans, led by Speaker Newt Gingrich and Sen. Bob Dole, have their way.

Ironically, the Republicans are now fighting to fulfill the President's own campaign promises by trimming federal spending down to a tolerable level.

This summer the budget ax-wielding Republicans debated defunding numerous government organizations, including the National Endowment for the Arts, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and many other nonessential programs.

In each instance, screams resonated from the Generation X culture junkies. In addition, the liberal elite decried these programs as necessary.

Most recently, Congress entertained the idea of reducing spending in the area of college loans.

College loans would still be substantial and numerous; however, the government would no longer pick up the monthly interest due until graduation.

If enacted, students will assume payment on educational loans immediately, just as any other loan requires.

This again brought about much ado from the twenty-somethings and raises two pertinent points.

First, it is possible to give someone something long enough that they soon believe it is owed to them.

Secondly, when all these Generation X, loan-holding, culture freaks voted for Pres-

ident Clinton, did they think they would not have to sacrifice anything in the name of spending reduction?

I'm left pondering the question: Did my generation waffle en masse on beliefs held so dear three years ago, or did Congress actually strive for the last year to make "Generation X" synonymous with "senseless"?

Many of the same individuals who supported budget cuts so vigorously when President Clinton promised them want nothing to do with them now that they seem imminent.

President Clinton told us there would be a need for sacrifice, but only Congress and a few others believed him.

Apparently, we have been brought up with a "what we want, when we want it" attitude that may prove as disastrous to public policy as 40 years of Democratic dominance has.

We want to eat our cake and purchase it later. We as a generation, I gather, will cease to exist if the government doesn't provide us with Sesame Street, subsidized ballet and our education all at the same time.

It may be time for us to stop and decide what is important.

I for one would rather spend money on the defense of our nation and the education of our people instead of paying for someone to arrange poetry on various parts of their body under the auspices of "art."

Call it "cultural censorship" or anything you like.

We as a generation overwhelmingly supported the idea of fiscal responsibility three years ago, and it has come to bear.

Hopefully, we can sacrifice some of the extraneous expenditures and save the college loans from the cuts.

However, we must begin to rely on someone other than the United States government for what defines and educates us culturally.

We simply cannot afford it anymore.

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THE BATTALION

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EDITORIAL

CINEMATIC SIN?

The MSC Film Society should show the controversial film about priests.

One purpose of a university education is to encourage an open exchange of thoughts and ideas. For this reason, the attempts by members of the Catholic Student Association to prevent the MSC Film Society from showing the movie *Priest* are misguided.

Priest features one priest who sleeps with his housekeeper, another who is homosexual, and raises the issue of breaking the confessional vow of confidentiality. It has offended many Catholics, who interpret it as being anti-Catholic.

Others, however, argue that it is not anti-Catholic, but rather that it criticizes certain elements of the church's beliefs.

Nevertheless, conflicting interpretations of the movie should not discourage the MSC Film Society from showing it. On the contrary, the debate it has created should encourage the presentation.

Just as people protested *Priest* when Miramax released it earlier this year, some Texas A&M students do not want the film shown

at the University this Friday. Unfortunately, those who argue against the showing of *Priest* are, in effect, trying to stifle a legitimate debate over controversial elements of the Catholic doctrine.

The committees should be commended for engaging in thoughtful discussion during the selection process. In fact, the MSC discussed potential concerns before approving it unanimously in the Program Review Committee and the entire MSC Council.

The film society's efforts to accommodate the concerns of many should be commended. The proposed open forum to discuss the issues raised in the film, as well as distributing a survey at the film, are both good ways for viewers to discuss their reactions to the movie.

Not everyone who sees *Priest* will like it, but that doesn't matter. The important thing is that Texas A&M students have the chance to see it and make a judgment for themselves — not allow others to do it for them.