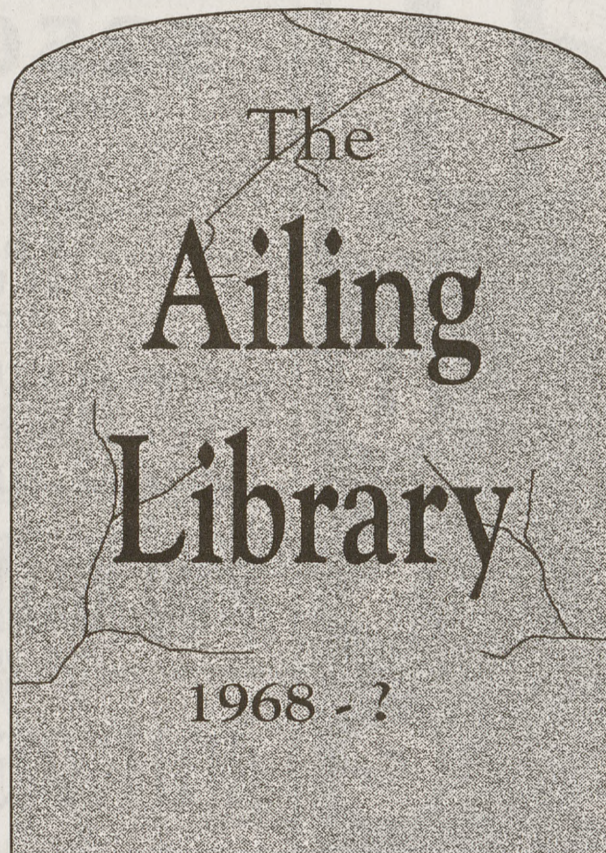


Amy Browning, THE BATTALION



Students express concerns about usefulness of Evans Library

By Amy Protas, THE BATTALION

It has become somewhat of a pastime at A&M — complaining about the Sterling C. Evans Library. Students' grievances range from lack of materials to the amount of time it takes to find a parking space.

Tamara DiLiberto, a senior journalism major, said it takes too much time to find research materials.

"The library is not organized," DiLiberto said. "Whenever I look for a book, it's usually not there. I can find stuff, but I know it's going to take a very long time."

Dr. Fred Heath, dean of the library, said that is one of the most common student complaints.

Heath said a lot of changes are taking place to improve the library. One of these changes is assessing and improving the shelving of books.

"We have two focus groups to look at these issues," Heath said. "We're augmenting our shelving team to be faster. We're also ordering multiple copies of high-demand items."

Another common complaint among students and faculty concerns journal holdings.

Mary Ann O'Farrell, an assistant professor of English, said she often has a hard time ob-

taining journals she needs.

"Journal holdings have been cut in the past few years," O'Farrell said. "Journals are a way for students and faculty to be in touch with what's freshest in all sorts of fields. They are one of the first things to go when funding gets cut. It's the easiest place to make cuts, but it's the area where attention should be paid."

Many students also complain about a lack of quiet places to study at the library.

Hemant Patel, a junior mechanical engineering, said his biggest grievance is studying at the library.

"As far as studying goes, fourth floor group study is always packed," Patel said. "They used to have third floor group study, but they took that away. It's hell to try to find a place to study, and it closes at midnight. It's not like we just stop studying at midnight."

Heath said students complain about the library's hours but it is not open 24 hours because of security reasons.

"A lot of people don't understand that UT has around 40 different libraries, and only some are opened 24 hours," Heath said. "Our

complex is 420,000 square feet, and we can't just close off one part of it. It's for security reasons. We couldn't have only one person at the front desk and other people at remote caverns of the library. It's just not safe."

Complaints against the library are not strictly academic.

Sharon Spies, a senior journalism major, said parking deters her from going to the library.

"I went to the library, and it took me 20 minutes to find a parking space," Spies said. "I don't want to have to park far away and walk at night. It's not safe to be walking all over the campus at night just for a parking space."

O'Farrell said funding is the main problem.

"The funding seems to be inadequate to the size and research aims of the University," O'Farrell said.

"For being the third largest university in the nation, we have an undersized library. Our collection isn't up to our size and status."

Funding has improved over past years.

This semester, the \$2 per credit hour student library fee went into effect. The money will be used to make improvements and ad-

dress complaints from students.

Heath said in the next 15 months, the Evans and Cushing libraries and a parking lot near the library will be transformed into a "library village."

There will be a new facility that will be geared more for undergraduates.

There will also be a reserved reading room, group study areas and the Learning Research Division.

Evans will have an Advanced Studies Complex for upper-level studies. The stacks, journals and microfilm will be located there.

Cushing will become a rare books and archives building. Heath said the undergraduate building will have extended hours.

Heath said it may take a few years, but students will see improvement in the state of the library.

"Two years ago, our library was ranked 50th in terms of materials budget, now we rank 25th," Heath said. "We won't make progress by getting into a shouting match. We just need to keep pushing until the value is on intellectual concerns."



By Amy Uptmor
THE BATTALION

A group of students is shacking at Rudder Fountain this week to raise awareness of the housing problem.

Shack-a-thon, a fundraiser for the Texas A&M Habitat for Humanity, is a three-day-long, around-the-clock vigil held in a makeshift shack.

Todd Townsend, Shack-a-thon coordinator and a junior bioenvironmental science major, said the shack is meant to raise awareness just as much as it is meant to raise funds.

"The shack is a symbol of substandard housing in America," he said.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Local group holds Shack-a-thon to raise awareness for local project

Students have the opportunity to buy a nail for \$1 that will actually be used in the construction of Habitat for Humanity's house. Funds are also raised through business sponsorships.

Last year, Shack-a-thon raised approximately \$2,000, \$400 of which was raised through nail sales alone.

Bryan Embrey, construction coordinator for Habitat for Humanity and a junior construction science major, said Shack-a-thon is a successful fundraiser.

"It's the best fundraiser in terms of publicity, but it's a good way to get donations, also," he said.

Townsend said two or three members are in the shack during the day, and as many as five or six stay overnight, "even though it seems to be everyone's busiest week of the semester."

The money being raised will

go toward Aggie Habitat's second house. Their first house was started in September and is already paid for through fundraisers and donations, Embrey said.

Twelve houses have been built in the Bryan-College Station area by Habitat for Humanity. The original Texas A&M chapter was started seven years ago, but died out due to a lack of interest.

The new chapter was started three years ago and has steadily grown in size, Embrey said.

Volunteers work every Saturday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the Habitat house on Luther street in College Station. The site was donated, and the family was chosen by a committee through the

B-CS Habitat for Humanity.

"We never have a shortage of volunteers," he said. "Thirty to 50 people show up every Saturday to work, which is almost too many people, but it's hard to turn away people who want to help."

"It's the best fundraiser in terms of publicity, but it's a good way to get donations, also."

— Brian Embrey
construction coordinator, Habitat for Humanity

Tom Argue, project leader for Shack-a-thon and a junior mechanical engineering major, said anyone can help, regardless of skill.

"We like people with skills, but it's not necessary," he said. "Free labor is free labor."

Aggie Habitat's first house should be finished in April. Embrey said the project will hopefully become an annual event.

"We broke ground in September and hope to hand the keys over in April," he said. "Hopefully we'll break ground for the second house in September."

Embrey said he has learned a lot through his involvement in Aggie Habitat for Humanity.

"I've learned quite a bit, not just about construction, but about dealing with people and organizing," he said. "I didn't know we would have so many people willing to help out with the house."

Argue said is glad he got involved.

"I like that it's not a handout," he said. "The family puts in sweat hours and actually pays for the house. I've enjoyed it. I've made a lot of friends in it."

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