

April 1, 1988

Dear Mr. Burns,

I've a few suggestions about the solution to the grackle problem. One way to make the grackles uncomfortable (as well as make the trees healthier) would be to pump  $\text{CO}_2$  (carbon dioxide) under the trees. Trees love the stuff. Birds, as well as all mammals and reptiles, can't breathe it. The birds would therefore fly away from the trees to get more oxygen. Carbon dioxide is inert for all intentions concerning the birds, yet makes the air stuffy and unbreathable. A steady, slow current coming from the base of any tree in question would do the trick.

Perhaps putting plastic tarps over the trees might do the trick? In any event, the birds would not litter the sidewalk with their poop. Depending on how bright they are, they might cease flying to the campus.

Perhaps there is a certain frequency of sound which grackles do not like. A speaker in each tree could produce that frequency. Speakers might also be able to produce the sounds of grackle predators (like eagles, falcons, or cats, etc.).

Seeing as how the birds only come at night, if you made it "day" with spotlights, they might be discouraged. Try lighting a tree brightly one night. See what happens.

If there is a certain smell grackles dislike, give it to them. Furthermore, if you could produce grackles-in-heat smells, they could be tempted to leave campus and follow the smell to wherever you lead.

Although "killing" the birds is illegal, wouldn't it be nice if you were to adopt a few dozen cats from the Humane Society? They might enjoy themselves a feast or two, in the meantime frightening the rest away.  
I appreciate your time. Thank you.

Sincerely,

[ \* ]

(Electrical Engineering)

[ \* ]



UTILITIES DIVISION

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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P. O. Drawer 7580 • Austin, Texas 78713-7580 • (512) 471-6241

January 9, 1990

TO: Mr. John Burns, Grounds Maintenance

FROM: Miles Abernathy *MLA*

SUBJECT: Repelling Birds with Sprayers in Trees

Yesterday you and I were discussing the idea of spraying water into trees to repel the grackles. You said that ordinary water causes a salt buildup on the leaves, which will eventually kill the tree. I consulted with Herman Stepherman of Continental Water, to learn the price of using purified water for the purpose. I assumed (very optimistically, perhaps) that we would spray only 8 gpm per tree, for 2 minutes, 8 times per night, 7 days a week. That works out to 900 gallons per week per tree.

The simplest method would be to use a mixed-bed demineralizer, which is available on contract from Continental Water. Unfortunately, the cost would be high, about 9¢ per gallon. A "large" unit, which can supply 8 to 10 gpm, has a total capacity of about 1000 gallons. It would run about \$80 per tree per week!

Things get **much** cheaper if you get larger equipment. Herman says that large reverse-osmosis units could supply water for a little as 1/10¢ per gallon. That brings the cost down to 90¢ per tree per week.

This does not include piping, controller, reverse-osmosis unit, etc. If you would like assistance or further information, please call.

xc: Homer Ward

[FERA ]

[ \* ]

December 4, 1989

Dr. William Cunningham  
President  
University of Texas  
Austin, Texas 78712

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U. T. AUSTIN	
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Dear Bill:

I have recently finished a Master's Degree and have applied for the PhD program in anthropology. As a result I find myself on campus with regularity and I have suffered along with everyone else from the grackle problem. I would like to offer some constructive suggestions.

In San Antonio, we fight the same problems along the river and in our plazas. Last year the situation got really out of control and the city launched an all out offensive. They tried everything under the sun and finally learned how to get control of the problem. This year, although the problem is not totally eliminated, the grackle infestation along the river and in the plazas is under control. I am enclosing an article that I found in this morning's paper.

I spoke last week to Ron Darner, director of Parks and Recreation for the City and the City's point man for the grackle problem. They have a specific grackle control program that they have developed from the lessons they learned. He tells me that he has not spoken to anyone from the University about grackles although he would be most willing to do so. I would be happy to arrange a meeting for someone from the University to talk to Ron and learn what he is doing. It may be too late to affect the problem this year, but next year, with proper planning and for very small expense, you can get them under control. Please let me know how I can help. I feel that playing a small role in getting the grackle problem at the University under control would be a humanitarian gesture on my part of real significance. Please get in touch with me at the address below. I look forward to hearing from you again.

Sincerely yours,

[ \* ]

[ \* ]

*Handwritten notes:*

- Send him a thank you note.
- Put article in the paper.
- Mr. Darner will ask Mr. X to call Mr. Ron Darner about the grackle problem.

[FERBA ]



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
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VICE PRESIDENT FOR BUSINESS AFFAIRS
U. OF TEXAS
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*Please call me to discuss*

[ \* ]

Dear [ \* ]

Thank you for your letter of December 4 and the enclosed article regarding grackles from the San Antonio Light. As the piece indicates, there are no easy solutions. However, I appreciate your bringing this information to my attention, and I will ask Mr. Jerry DeCamp, The University's Assistant Vice President for Business Affairs, to call Mr. Ron Darner to discuss the City of San Antonio's grackle control program and the "clow guns." We would like very much to resolve the grackle problem on our campus.

Your interest and support mean a great deal. Best personal regards.

Sincerely,  
  
 William H. Cunningham  
 President

WHC:mk  
 cc: Mr. G. Charles Franklin  
 Mr. Jerry DeCamp ✓

PHYSICAL PLANT
GROUND MAINTENANCE
RECEIVED
FEB 15 1990
TO: <u>JH</u>
<u>JDK</u>
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DEC 11 1992

XL: Howard Wilson 74

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
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President for Business Affairs - The University of Texas at Austin

Director to: \_\_\_\_\_ Pending \_\_\_\_\_

Handled \_\_\_\_\_ Filed/Discard \_\_\_\_\_ Comment & Return \_\_\_\_\_

Received: DEC 10 1992

File: Physical Plant - General

Keep in Active File Discard at End of Fiscal Year

P. O. Box T • Austin, Texas 78713-7389

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*Grackles*  
*Grackles*

[FF-88A 2 pages]

December 8, 1992

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[ \* ]

Dear [ \* ]

Thank you for your recent letter about the grackles. Yes, the University did have a problem with grackles in the past, much like the one the city of San Antonio seems to be experiencing, but I am happy to tell you that we launched an attack and seemingly drove them away--down toward the Governor's Mansion, as it turned out.

Anyhow, I think we have solved the problem for the time being. Thanks for writing.

With very best wishes.

PHYSICAL PLANT GROUNDS MAINTENANCE RECEIVED DEC 15 1992		
TO	<u>JB</u>	_____
	<u>JH</u>	_____
		_____

WSL:ew

Sincerely yours,

*Bill*

William S. Livingston  
Acting President

\* PS So my great diary I was informed this morning that they may be coming back. I'll hang onto your letter.

bxc: Vice President G. C. Franklin

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