

# Most important reporting left undone, editor says

By ANDY WILLIAMS  
Battalion Staff

The media are so concerned with the gaudy that they ignore the issues the public truly needs to understand, an associate editor of Texas Monthly magazine said here Wednesday night.

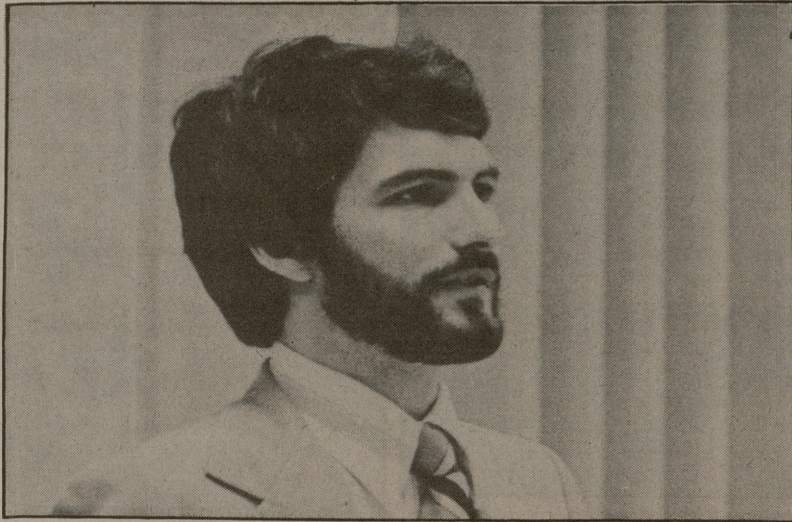
In a speech sponsored by the Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow, John Bloom said that the United States probably has the worst informed public in the world. "Show me one person in 10 — in fact, show me one journalist in 10 — who can explain the meaning of farm parity." He said the public is informed about everything, but knows about nothing.

He blamed that ignorance on the media's lack of initiative.

Reporters generally don't take the trouble to do needed research, he said, because it is easier to write flashy articles to catch the public's eye.

He gave as an example the attention given last fall's firing of Peter Bourne, President Carter's adviser on drug abuse.

While that story was dominating the national consciousness, he said, Iran was "moving silently toward revolution" — silently because no one was paying attention to the political activity there.



Battalion photo by Colin Crombie

John Bloom, associate editor of Texas Monthly, spoke about his magazine and various aspects of journalism Wednesday night to a crowd of about 35 in the Memorial Student Center.

Other issues that were generally ignored then were a price increase by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and the growing poverty of the farmer, which led to the tractorcades to Washington.

He said this laziness in research began in the 1960s, when "the bat-

tle lines were clear-cut and the symbols were large." This was perfect for television coverage, he said, which was emerging in that decade — to be most effective, it needed events that could be shown on film.

But reporters can no longer be just eye-witnesses, he said. "There

is no way to see an energy crisis." And he said that journalists must become knowledgeable about the subjects on which they are writing.

"Perhaps it is too much to expect for reporters to become experts in so many disparate fields," Bloom said. "Who has time for all this study, especially when everyone is happy without it?"

He said the reader is content to believe, for instance, that oil companies and greedy Arabs are behind the oil shortage.

"These are symbols, like those of the sixties."

But, he suggested, maybe this simplistic approach is the main reason the credibility of the media is at an all-time low.

Bloom said journalists must become more involved with their stories.

"We need less accounting and more passion," he said. "What we call objectivity often is just another way of saying, 'We don't want to be involved.'"

The idea that a reporter must be neutral in his stories is a new one, he said, adding that Thomas Paine and Benjamin Franklin had not become famous journalists by being objective.

Texas Monthly was founded more than six years ago for many of the reasons I've outlined here tonight," he said.

He said its reporters write about things they know.

"They are involved in what they write about, both intellectually and emotionally."

## Athletics may benefit the student

United Press International  
COLLEGE STATION — Critics of expensive high school athletic programs claim the extracurricular activities provide little benefit to the average student and the large amount of money — particularly that of football — could be more wisely spent on education.

But a Texas A&M sociologist disagrees.

According to Dr. Steven Picou,

### A&M Press gets trailers for office area

By RUSTY MCDONALD  
Battalion Reporter

The Texas A&M University Press, which was burned out of the old Board of Directors house on Feb. 27, will receive additional working space in the next couple of weeks.

Three mobile home-type trailers, with a total 2,160 square feet of area, are to be moved onto the east end of the lot on the corner of Asbury and Hogg streets. This is the same lot where the Board of Directors house is located.

Press Director Lloyd Lyman said, "This is the best possible temporary solution for us. It will give us space for our offices."

The project has been awarded to Design Space International of Houston. It will cost about \$25,000, said Gerald D. Scott, manager of engineering design and energy in the department of physical plant.

The press is now operating out of the shipping warehouse, also located on the lot.

"We will continue to use the old shipping room for the press," said Lyman. "Moving the new buildings onto this lot is good because it will give us almost the same location as before, we can use the same phone numbers and we'll still be close to the press in the shipping warehouse."

The Texas A&M University Board of Regents has appointed a committee to decide what to do with the damaged Board of Directors house, but no decisions have been made.

disadvantaged high school students are more likely to attend college and get a better job if they participate in high school athletics. And when secondary schools cut their athletic budgets, Picou said, they're getting rid of something that enhances ambition and gives support to lower-class blacks, females and rural youth.

"Participation in interscholastic athletics seems to be beneficial for the development of attitudes that promote achievement in education, occupation and eventually income," Picou said.

"The high school athlete has the experience of operating under situations where they have to perform. These past experiences enhance their achievement behavior later in life."

The sociologist based his assumptions on a survey of 3,248 Deep South high school seniors. He also found:

— Participation in athletics tends to reinforce certain values for white males. According to Picou, white athletes generally lean toward college anyway and athletic participa-

tion puts them in contact with an achievement-oriented peer group.

— Black male athletes tend to have higher levels of educational ambition than black non-athletes.

— For female athletes, achievement is more important than the sport itself. According to Picou, the girl who makes an all-district, all-region or all-state team is more likely to go on to college than a non-athlete woman.

— Rural athletes who participate in high school athletic programs also have higher levels of educational aspiration than similar urban kids.

"Athletics do have positive effects on the development of educational ambition," Picou said. "We know educational achievement leads to educational achievement which in turn leads to better jobs and higher incomes later on in life."

"And it's pretty clear from my research that the athletic participant in high school actually receives traits that promote education, better occupations and more income over the long haul than non-athletes," he said in defending high school athletic programs.



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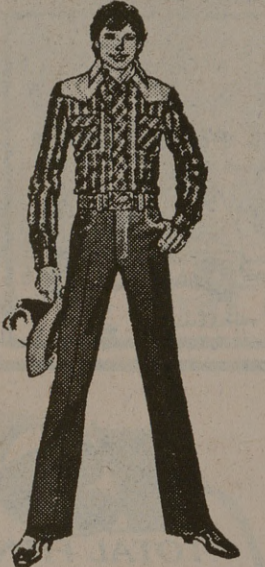
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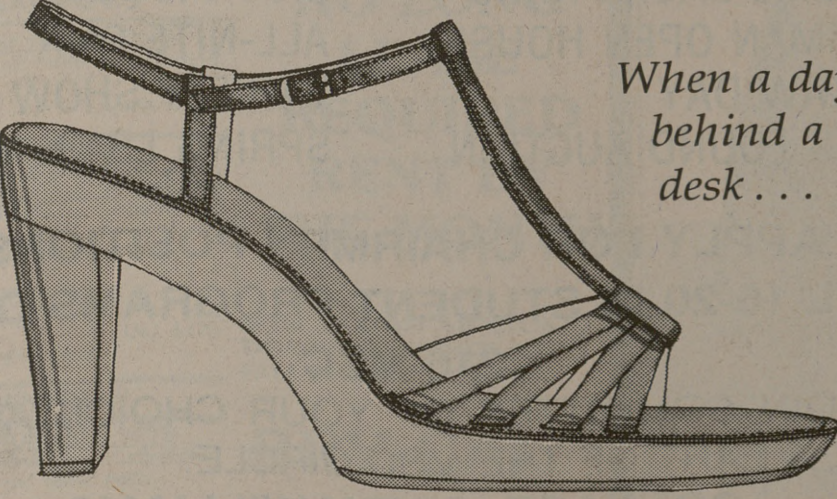
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