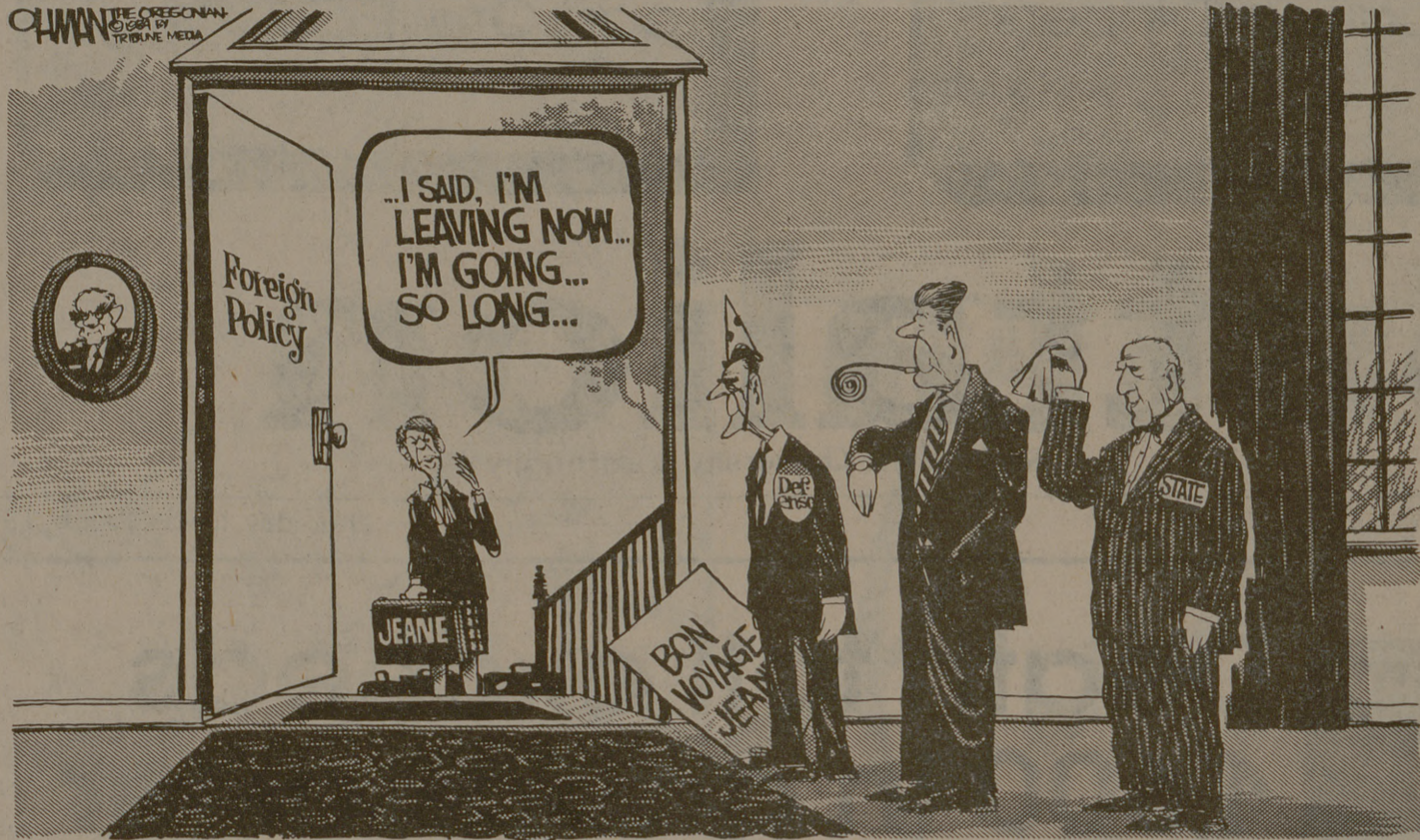


Opinion

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Former editor remembers lessons learned, appreciated

To attempt to condense a whole semester into 16 inches on page two is not an easy task. Particularly the semester I've had — so many things have happened, and I've grown much more than I ever anticipated when I drove my car to College Station for my last semester.

Beginning the semester with a friend and coworker dying in a tragic accident was indicative of what was to come — a semester of learning beyond the usual "college experience."

In his death and absence, Bill Robinson probably taught me more about life than anyone I have known. He taught me that life is precious, even at a young age, and that it should be taken seriously, yet enjoyed to its fullest. It is important to let people know you care.

Texas A&M University and its student body taught me the next biggest lesson — a lesson I learned in a different form weekly. And it was not a pretty lesson. It is that my generation is myopic. We suffer from a serious nearsightedness that makes us inflate our importance and ignore others near us, and the rest of the world.

The first incident that introduced me to the problem is the blind adherence to tradition at Texas A&M, and the unwillingness of students and the administration to question traditions that are dated and have resulted in discrimination and even death.

It is the same illness that makes students not look beyond the city limits to know that millions of people are dying daily in Ethiopia and if they know, they don't really care.

It's the same illness that makes people want to take away other's civil rights because they do not fit into some moral code deemed ethical and proper for redemption.

It all sounds quite harsh and unfair, and I know that generalization is wrong. I admit that I have met some students who do not fit this mold, but they are rare. On the other hand, I have met several students who were constantly angry when The Battalion spoke out against the status quo, and felt offended when someone thought differently from them.

From this sprang another lesson: how to take criticism. From the first days in the editor's chair, I learned quickly how to take the angry phone calls and defend myself and my staff. Trying to show others the value and purpose of differing opinions was a time-consuming task and not always successful. In some cases, I didn't handle the situation properly, for that I am sorry.



Stephanie Ross

Taking phone calls filled with compliments was easier, but those came rarely.

For both sets of phone calls and letter writers, I thank you. We all, I hope, learned something, and that is what education is all about — the meeting of the minds. Too often people forget the goals of education and turn their eyes instead to their resumes and dollar figures for post graduation jobs.

At several points in the semester I let it all get to me. I even told one of my professors that I was embarrassed to be a member of my generation.

But then again there were the people who rescued me from my grossness. And they deserve a thanks. They are the modern-day heroes in my life.

Thank you, the staff of The Battalion. You are the paper, not me. Whenever I received compliments, my first reaction was that it was never me doing the work — but you. That is true. Each one of you is special in your own way, and have each added to my life.

Thank you Donn Friedman. You've never received an award, but if I had one to give, I'd give it to you.

Thank you, my professors who really taught me more than the textbooks ever could. Mr. Bob Rogers listened to my joys and sorrows while offering me more cups of coffee than one could imagine. Dr. Terry Anderson challenged me to learn and look beyond my prejudices — he helped cure me of my nearsightedness.

Thanks to my roommates and friends. They never knew what they got into when they met me and took me on. Countless hours were spent listening to let off steam, and be sad. Cathy, Cathy, Greg, Leon, Al, and the rest of you — you're wonderful.

Thanks to the students who made me proud to be a part of Texas A&M. There are the ones who stood up and said many things. People such as Brian Hay, Pat Wood, Ivo Lopez, Dave Ellis, and Rebecca Davis come to mind as heroes of mine.

Thanks to my family and friends far away who never quite knew what I was doing, but supported me anyway.

Thanks to the person who put the note on my door saying "beware commie editor" — you made me laugh.

Thanks, last but not least, Bill, who should be writing this instead of me. I'll never forget you as long as I live. Even though we were different in many ways, you have left a part of you in me that will never diminish.

Stephanie Ross was the editor of The Battalion for the Fall '84 semester.

Tired of people trying to push values and morality on others

Everytime I turn around, someone's trying to protect me from something. The Citizens for Decency, the Moral Majority, the Moonies, everyone seems to know what's best for me without even asking.

Loren Steffy

A new trend in this country, upheld by groups like CFD and the Moral Majority, is reaching fanatical proportions. Basically, these groups advocate a return to good ol' Protestant morality as a means of saving this country from destruction.

Now a group of politicians in Alabama are trying once again to preserve the country through school prayer. Instead of directly seeking school sanctioned prayer, the group is asking the Supreme Court to allow students to have a "moment of silence" at the start of each school day. A Baton Rouge lawyer named John Baker, Jr. claims that with a moment of silence "no one knows whether fellow students are praying, meditating, or vegetating."

In theory, this argument sounds good, but in reality it holds about as much water as a torn window screen. These self-styled saviors of democracy

realize, just like door-to-door salesmen, that once they have their foot in the door, it only takes a small push to get what they want.

A Mobile, Ala. school principal said on the news Tuesday night that eventually the prayer advocates would like to see school prayer become a law, but the moment of silence was a good first step.

If the Supreme Court grants the state of Alabama this inch, it will take a mile, and it's a mile the general public can't afford to lose.

Sen. Jeremiah Denton, R-Ala., said Tuesday school prayer would restore "morality and ethics as a centerpiece of American democracy."

So Denton is already talking about school prayer becoming a possibility, even before the moment of silence has been approved, which makes his intentions obvious.

Denton doesn't seem to have considered whose morality and whose ethics school prayer would be restoring. Protestant morality and Protestant ethics aren't right for everybody, especially non-Christians.

The Alabama defendants of school prayer should be commended for their

concern for the public welfare, but their narrow-minded approach should be condemned. You may want your child, grandchild, or little brother or sister to pray in school, which is fine. But if you make every other child in school pray because you want your child to, you're breaching democratic ideals.

We must learn to accept people's differences, not make them more difficult to live with. If a teacher asks for a moment of silence, then bows her head and clasps her hands (as in the Tennessee school shown on the local news Tuesday night) she is implying prayer. Teachers play a vital role in child development. If the teacher appears to pray, the child feels compelled to do the same.

Democracy means "liberty and justice for all." Except for the court systems, what more important place to uphold democracy than the schools, where students learn about their rights and freedoms as Americans.

If students don't see democracy at work in their immediate environment, how can they have any faith in it working in the country?

Loren Steffy is a weekly columnist for The Battalion.

LETTERS:

Coach Sherrill says thanks to 12th Man

EDITOR:

To the students at Texas A&M: On Saturday following the football game with the University of Texas, I spoke with the media about people "jumping ship" this season. I spoke about how some of the media and some of the former students had given up on what they considered a sinking ship. You, the student body of Texas A&M, did not.

As much as the victories over TCU and Texas will be a source of pride to our football team, so will the steadfast support of the students.

Over the last two weeks of the season, we talked to the team about dedication and determination. It was a lesson that you the students have already learned well and you have shown your dedication not only on the Saturdays of celebration but the disappointing ones and the weeks in between.

You have demonstrated your determination in many ways. You were there at Kyle Field for the home games; you were there in the freezing rain at Fayetteville; you were there at bonfire last Thursday and one the Capitol steps Friday. You truly honored the 12th Man tradition on Saturday night at Memorial Stadium and you joined together back on campus later that night for a "Howdy" that only Aggs can shout; you wore "Horn-buster" shirts and sang the "Spirit" loud.

Aggies truly know the meaning of being loyal to each other in all that we do. Your loyalty to our program is a personal source of strength to me, my family and the entire athletic program.

The 1984 Texas Aggie football team is proud of the way it reacted to adversity this season. It is also proud of its partner in battle, the student body. "We are the Aggies, the Aggies are We." G'ig 'em.

Jackie Sherrill
Head Football Coach
and Athletic Director

Law-breaking bikes carted off by cops

EDITOR:

Today we noticed the most flagrant example of the KK (Kampus Kops) wasting time in recent memory. They weren't writing tickets for illegally parked autos or towing away cars parked in handicapped zones. They were carting away, yes, carting away bicycles not locked to permanent bicycle racks. This was done between Haas and McFadden halls because the bikes were on the grass obstructing justice. Shouldn't the KK be out using their time more efficiently instead of carting away bicycles that are doing no harm?

Juan Correa, '86
Mike Kenney, '88

University police not making friends

EDITOR:

Our illustrious Texas A&M University police force! On Friday night, Nov. 30, we were pushing Rob Jones' car (which had run out of gas, but that's a different story) along Ross street. In the process we were passed, or more accurately — ignored by two University Police patrol cars, one of which flipped on its flashing lights just so it could legally ignore a stop sign. These are the same dedicated professionals who will bend over backward to give tickets to bicyclers who ride through stop signs on campus. Is it any wonder that many A&M students hold the campus police in less-than-high esteem?

Otto Corday, III, '86
accompanied by 5 signatures

P.S. If anyone cares, we did manage to push the car off of the street and into a parking lot.

Student fed up with registration problems

EDITOR:

Last Friday I went to check on my fees, and found that my registration was messed up. I now have no classes set aside, and can't register until January 7. What's worse is that two of my classes are filled to capacity. I have been promised that I'll maybe, possibly, probably be able to get into the classes. I just have to wait a month before knowing if I'm in or not. So much for the modern registration process.

What bothers me the most is that since Fall 1980, every one of my registrations has been messed up in one way or another. I received a scholarship that allows me to pay in-state tuition, but no matter which list I sign, how many letters I submit, the fiscal department always has to redo my fees. Of course, it doesn't matter that I lose 1-2 days of drop/add in the process. And they always promise me that they will fix it "next time". Well, next time has never

come around, and I'm getting fed up with the inept job that all of those involved are doing. Let me repeat: INEPT!

I don't know why they can't register me right now. Is there some problem just walking to Heaton or the Pavilion somewhere and just registering my hand? They admit to their mistakes, why can't they fix it now? Why should I have to wait so long? I'm only one student. (By the way, at least two other students also have the same problem.)

Before this University can attain any kind of status, it had better be able to learn from its mistakes and correct errors, not ignore them.

Benito Flores-Meath
Class of '83

President Reagan defending freedom

EDITOR:

Why do people criticize President Reagan for strengthening our defense system? This letter is in response to Loren Steffy's article that appeared in your paper on page 2 on 11/28. The article about Reagan's proposal for a space-based defense network to eliminate ICBM's in mid-flight, stated he was worried that it will be as an offensive weapon, but if we take the initiative and build it first, one else will. Much like the question whether or not to drop the atom bomb on Japan. If we had not, the war would have lasted much longer, and we would all be speaking Japanese today. We not build our defense system and put it to the limit by going into outer space, someone else will beat us to it and we power us. Right now it looks like the viet Union is the only other country cause a serious threat to our freedom and existence, by building a defense system that would be impregnable. If Soviets build a space-based defense work before we do, would they share with us? No, they wouldn't, and I tell you what they will do. Their government is based on converting the world to a communist society, so they will give us two alternatives. The first alternative would be surrender and convert to communism, and the second, simple, DIE. I don't know about you, but I feel many if not all Americans our freedom, and would rather defend our defense greatly, and is trying to prevent something like that from ever happening. He is securing freedom that our forefathers died and died for. So let's give him more support and less criticism.

Brian Duffy
Class of '88

The Battalion

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Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the Editor, the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty, or the Board of Regents.
The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Communications.

Letters Policy

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the address and telephone number of the writer.
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