

OPINION

Prejudice behind the printed pages

Because of journalists' roles as social monitors and governmental watchdogs, it's easy for them to feel removed from problems that plague other occupations. With self-images of guardians against social injustice and protectors of the "little guy," journalists often fail to realize that mass communications is not above social problems such as discrimination.

The September 1985 issue of the Washington Journalism Review says 40 percent of minority newspaper journalists "expect to leave the profession because of (the) lack of opportunity for advancement."

A study by the Institute for Journalism Education at the University of California — Berkeley found that the total number of minorities in journalism was on the rise. But "relatively few have risen to positions of significant influence." The study found that the reasons for the lack of upward mobility are being "pigeonholed" in race-related assignments and institutional racism.

Newspapers, like other businesses, are concerned with hiring minorities but seem to forget about them once the quota is filled.

As more women and minorities enter the news industry, this hire-and-forget attitude will have to change. Journalism is no longer an all-male, all-white profession. Discrimination is distasteful and in an industry that prides itself on bringing such discrimination to the public's attention, it is especially revolting.

The Battalion Editorial Board



Putting a little happiness back in the Big Apple

By ART BUCHWALD
Columnist for The Los Angeles Times Syndicate

(Whilst Art Buchwald is on vacation we reprint some columns from the past.)

I was in New York recently and took a ride with a friend in a taxi. When we got out of the cab, my friend said to the driver, "Thank you for the ride. You did a superb job of driving."

The taxi driver was stunned for a second. Then he said, "Are you a wise guy or something?"

"No, my dear man, and I'm not putting you on. I admire the way you keep your cool in heavy traffic."

"Yeah," the driver said and drove off.

"What was that all about?" I asked.

"I'm trying to bring love back to New York," he said. "I believe it's the only thing that can save the city."

"How can one man save New York?"

"It's not one man. I believe I have made that taxi driver's day. Suppose he has 20 fares. He's going to be nice to those 20 fares because someone was nice to him. Those fares in turn will be kinder to their employees or shopkeepers or waiters or even their own families. They, in turn, will be nicer to other people. Eventually the good will could spread to at least a thousand people. Now that isn't bad, is it?"

"But you're depending on that taxi driver to pass your good will to others."

"I'm not depending on it," my friend said. "I'm aware that the system isn't foolproof. I might deal with 10 different people today. If, out of 10, I can make three happy, then eventually I can indirectly influence the attitudes of

3,000 or more."

"It sounds good on paper," I admitted, "but I'm not sure it works in practice."

"Nothing is lost if it doesn't. It didn't take any of my time to tell that man he was doing a good job. He neither received a larger tip nor a smaller one. If it fell on deaf ears, so what? Tomorrow there will be another taxi driver I can try to make happy."

"You're some kind of a nut," I said.

"That shows how cynical you have become. I have made a study of this. The thing that seems to be lacking, besides money of course, for our postal employees is that no one tells people who work for the post office what a good job they're doing."

"But they're not doing a good job."

"They're not doing a good job because they feel no one cares if they do or not. Why shouldn't someone say a kind word to them?"

We were walking past a structure in the process of being built and passed five workmen eating their lunches. My friend stopped. "That's a magnificent job you men have done. It must be difficult and dangerous work."

The five men eyed my friend suspiciously.

"When will it be finished?"

"October," a man grunted.

"Ah! That really is impressive. You must all be very proud."

We walked away. I said to him, "I haven't seen anyone like you since

'The Man of La Mancha.'"

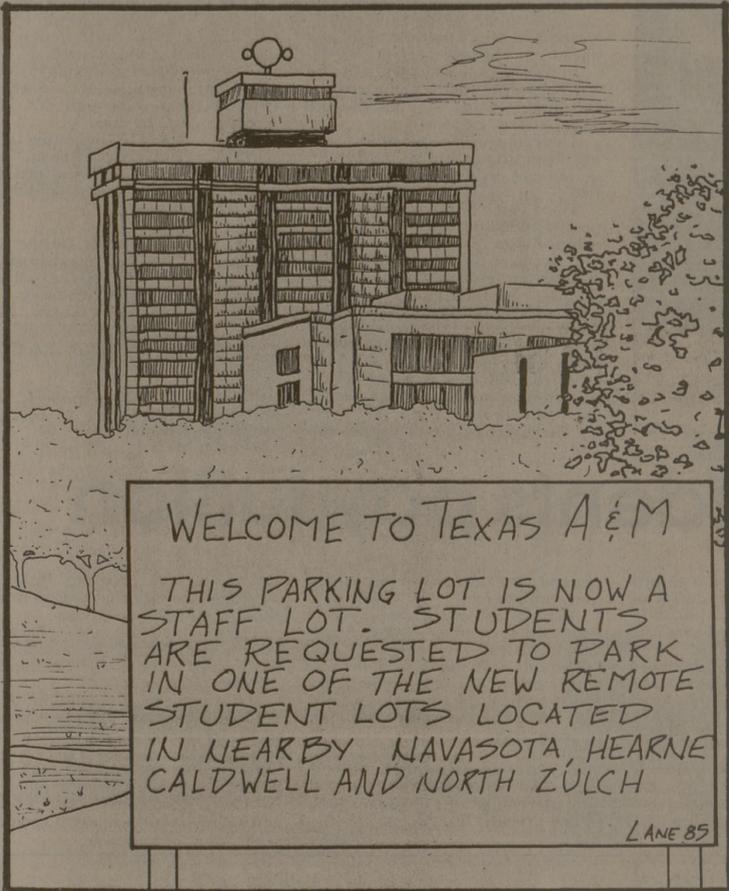
"When those men digest my words they will feel better for it. Someday the city will benefit from their happiness."

"But you can't do this all alone," protested. "You're just one man."

"The most important thing is not to get discouraged. Making people in the city become kind again is not an easy job, but if I can enlist other people in my campaign..."

"You just winked at a very pretty-looking woman," I said.

"Yes, I know," he replied. "And she's a schoolteacher, her class will be in for a fantastic day."



Column writing isn't as simple as it sounds

The first day at the new job.

Panic. Strange thoughts begin to meander through my brain.

What am I doing here? My God! Do I really have to dress like that? When does the first happy hour begin in this town anyway?

These thoughts, and a few I refuse to acknowledge, came to me when I sat down to write this column. Oh, I suppose most people think writing off the top of your head is easy and I agree — to a point.

I don't see what is so hard about sitting in a slightly uncomfortable chair in the newsroom designated by some ancient Trekkie as Captain Kirk's Chair, compiling a concise set of thoughts and word processing them into comprehensible statements.

No problem. Ha!

First of all, I'm no newshound. Sure I followed the summer's major stories such as Ray Childress's childish antics with the Oilers and Rock Hudson's health dilemma. Of course, I found out about these things three days after the rest of the world.

Second, I do all my complaining at the scene of my distress. Several people witnessed this when I discovered the

"slight inconvenience" bestowed upon my bank account by the Financial Aid Office. Oh, I'm sorry. My grant isn't here because I neglected to turn in a form I didn't know existed. Silly me.

Heaven forbid anyone attempt to cross my path and evade the inevitable question. "What can I write my column on?"

This week, my first as an honest-injun columnist, I asked that question a lot. Answers ranged from the recognition of fraternities to a column on nothing. One discussion began on voicing my opinion of Childress and his inability to accept the bunch of bucks placed ever so gently in his oversized lap and, by way of tangents, ended with the realization

that the last remnants of cereal are seldom eaten due to an excess of goo.

Despite all of the wonderful suggestions I received I still don't know what this column is actually about.

Childress reared his ugly head a few times, and Rock made an appearance

along with the Financial Aid Office.

Funny how writing off the top of your head turns out sometimes.

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