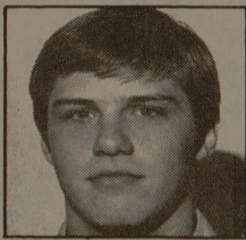


Opinion

Saturday morning television enlightened a generation

Battalion editor Cathie Anderson pointed out what should have been the obvious when going over a recent editorial I had written.



Loren Steffy

"If Congress passed it, and the president signed it, then it's a law and not a bill, right?"

"Oh yeah," I admitted sheepishly. "I forgot the song."

"The song?"

"Yeah, you know: 'I'm just a bill, yes I'm only a bill, and I'm sittin' here on Capitol Hill...'"

The light of recognition flashed in her eyes, and before too long, the entire staff had joined in.

For those who may not remember this educational icon, it was one of a group of two-minute cartoons known as *Schoolhouse Rock* that used to run on Saturday mornings between regular shows.

The particular song in question was a musical documentary told in the first person (or first paper) by a bill who walked his audience through the legislative process of becoming a law.

But the bill was not alone. There were episodes that documented the Ameri-

can fight for independence and various lessons about parts of speech. Even the preamble to the Constitution was set to music.

It is these video grammar lessons that are remembered best of all. Who could forget the classic "Conjunction Junction" or the immortal "Interjections!"? There were tunes for nouns, verbs and adjectives. And who could overlook "Lolly, lolly, lolly get your adverbs here"?

There were mathematical musicals too, such as "My Hero, Zero" and "Naughty Number Nine."

These cartoons managed to teach in a few short minutes what English, history and government teachers tried for years to pound into children's heads.

What's more, it worked. Old school textbooks (and for that matter, current ones) may be a dim memory, but *Schoolhouse Rock*, with its catchy melodies has transcended not only the years but the curriculum.

If any programming could exemplify the benefits of the TV-child relationship, these were it. The cartoons' rewards are as tangible as those of Batman and Robin's demonstration of the Heimlich Maneuver on the "Superfriends." A few years ago a child saved the life of a choking man after learning the life-saving technique on Saturday morning TV.

The tunes of *Schoolhouse Rock* were irresistible, and as a result, so were the messages. We knew this was the latest at-

tempt by concerned-parent types to make us learn, but no matter how hard we tried, we couldn't get those songs out of our heads.

It touched the lives and brains of just about every kid who got up early on Saturdays to watch two and a half hours of *Bugs Bunny*.

Schoolhouse Rock has been missing from the Saturday morning lineup for at least 10 years, but the influence still lingers. Slide into any room of college students and belt out the bluesy lines: "Con-junction Junction, whaaaaat's your fuuuu-unction? Hookin' up words and phrases and claaa-uses" and watch the faces light up.

Bugs Bunny has been trimmed (rather poorly) to half an hour. The *Pink Panther* died a slow and laughless death. The "Superfriends" have been replaced by "Hulk Hogan's Rockin' Wrestling." Somewhere in the shuffle, *Schoolhouse Rock* was lost too. It's not even given the courtesy of immortality through re-runs, but it is far from dead.

Slip into a newsroom filled with up-and-coming young journalists hunched over computer terminals, working to meet ever-encroaching deadlines. You won't find them flipping through grammar books to determine if a dependent clause takes a comma. Instead you'll hear them lapse into a couple of verses of "Conjunction Junction."

Loren Steffy is a senior journalism major and the Opinion Page editor for The Battalion.

Mail Call

No tricks, no treats

EDITOR:

It has come to our attention that the Resident Hall Association has decided that students will not be allowed to go door-to-door when Halloween rolls around. The main reasons cited for this were:

- It is a fire hazard because of the paper decorations set up in the dorm halls.
- The raised drinking age would present problems between the drinkers and the "new minors."

Though these may or may not be valid subjects for concern, they are no reason for canceling Halloween trick-or-treating in the dorms. Many in this area already have started planning their costumes for this much-anticipated occasion.

I heard about this at the dining table one evening, and I was surprised that such a decision was not opened up to the student body for public debate. I have heard of various rules that were being enforced, marveling at their triviality, but to be governed within our living areas without representation seems to be a travesty of what we call "rights."

What legal basis does the RHA have for telling us what we can and cannot do in our rooms? It may have the authority to enforce the drinking age because that is a state law, but I don't recall Texas canceling Halloween.

If the RHA was acting for our benefit, why was this decision going to be hidden from us until it would be much too late to do anything about it? Does our "Big Brother" feel that we are not capable of handling ourselves on this one particular night?

Canceling the evening's affairs may present many problems. The resident advisers and head residents may be intent on enforcing such a ridiculously totalitarian policy, but we are intent on having fun with or without prior approval from our assigned baby sitters. The Moses Hall fourth-floor empire will celebrate Halloween in our normal fashion. Everyone is invited.

Robert Davidson '89

Accompanied by 28 signatures

EDITOR'S NOTE: The reason for the decision is damage caused by trick-or-treaters in past years, according to RHA president David McDowell. Cleanup costs and the increased drinking age also were cited. RHalloween will be held at the Grove on Oct. 30.

In our forefathers' footsteps

EDITOR:

In response to David V. Wilson's letter on Thursday, I couldn't agree with him more. Who do those black South Africans think they are? I mean, where do they get off demanding their — I believe Thomas Jefferson called them "inalienable" — rights from their government?

Yet since they choose to advocate such abhorrent behavior, the United States should not be expected to partake in such radical, irrational behavior. It's not like the United States had to ally with France, Holland, Spain or anyone else to gain their liberty from Great Britain. As a matter of fact, America's forefathers did it all alone.

Secondly, it's not like the founders of this country ever had to contend with oppression. But then again, I don't suppose that having a government — in which you are not even allowed to help decide who will represent you — dictate where you eat, live, work and even go to the bathroom could possibly compare to taxation without representation.

And finally, Wilson's absolutely right in saying that to abolish apartheid would only yield civil war in South Africa. I'll bet that's exactly what King George III and his parliament said about those irrational, radical colonists who wanted either equal treatment or independence! And it took a while, but they were probably right. Look at this mess we've made.

Dawn Toi Haynes '88

Safety tips for football fans

EDITOR:

I'm writing to "defend" the policies of crowd control at Texas A&M football games, as presented at Sully's Symposium by the yell leaders. Many fellow Aggies seem to get upset about restrictions placed upon them at home football games.

I agree with four points presented by the yell leaders on Wednesday:

- 1) You cannot bring signs into Kyle Field. Even though everyone in the state knows that Aggies cannot spell (read any bumper sticker in sight), we don't want to give our "little secret" away during nationally televised games.
- 2) You cannot bring any beach balls or...
- 3) any alcoholic beverages into Kyle Field. First beachballs, then flying disks. Pina Colodas would be next in this natural progression of BEACH FEVER. The Aggie Band would look slightly more relaxed in beach shirts and grass skirts, but then senior boots would become optional attire. What about Senior Flip Flops...? Maybe Jackie Sherrill could schedule a home game against the University of Hawaii and beach fever would be allowed for one game?
- 4) No hissing or booing at games since Aggies are above this type of behavior. This rule goes without saying. I'm just glad I don't have a lisp! Maybe the yell leaders could hire off-duty campus police officers to enforce these rules. I would feel so much safer!

Tim Shull
Graduate student

Wait your turn

EDITOR:

This letter is written in response to the letter published about senior privileges on Thursday. I couldn't agree more with the four seniors who wrote that letter because I found myself feeling a little bit cheated by non-seniors also.

My complaint about the underclassmen is that many of them participate in one of the most significant traditions here at Texas A&M — Boot Line!

In case you didn't know, Boot Line is reserved for seniors only. If underclassmen "pull-out" and stand in Boot Line before they're seniors, it won't mean much to them when they do become one. In addition, if they stand in Boot Line, they might be tempted to say "Hey!" like the seniors, instead of whatever it is they're supposed to say.

Underclassmen should wait until their senior year to participate in Boot Line. Meanwhile, let the seniors enjoy what is rightfully theirs. After all, we deserve it, we've been here longer.

Mary Garza '87

Tradition troubles

In regard to Friday night's yell practice, let me begin by saying that I have lost what little respect I had for the Corps of Cadets.

Let's face it, a piece of carpet or some lame-brained tradition is not worth a trip to the hospital. Does holding people down when they are trying to get away and beating them with the help of 50 buddies make cadets feel "red-ass"? If the University wants to avoid any more physical or legal confrontations it should keep the juniors off the track.

Now for you dumb fools that ran out on the field knowing full well what would happen, all I can say is that maybe you needed 50 cadets to beat some sense into you.

The highest honor goes to the cadet who tackled the girl who ran across the field. Why don't you try out for the Twelfth Man. Tney probably need macho men like yourself.

Craig Browning

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 classification, address and telephone number of the writer.



Speed demon's auto-biography

From what I read and hear, it appears the nation may soon get its old speed limit back, or at least one that enables motorists to drive — legally that is — faster than the present snail's pace of 55 mph.

Lewis Grizzard

Regardless of what happens to the speed limit, however, I remain convinced it was a good thing my old friend Raymond (Double-clutch) Norsworthy never lived to see the federal government demand a speed limit of 55.

Raymond couldn't have handled it. Speed was his life, his car, his mistress. Trying to slow down to 55 would have been like taking away Picasso's brush, Van Cliburn's piano or Jack Nicklaus' putter.

The day Raymond turned 16 and got his driver's license was the happiest day of his life. It was also the day his parents tried to do away with him.

For his birthday, his parents gave him

a souped-up '55 Thunderbird, knowing their son immediately would drive it as fast as it would go and probably kill himself.

The Norsworthys, Betty Jean and Frank, had had it in for Raymond ever since he was 11, when he put his little brother, Arnold, into a dryer down at the coin-operated laundry and dropped in a dime.

Little Arnold, who was 4 at the time, lived through the experience, but it was weeks before they could remove all the lint from the various orifices of his body.

Raymond defied the odds, however, and managed to live several years driving at top speed all the time.

When he arrived at school each morning, the entire faculty and student body would gather outside to see if Raymond could get his T-Bird stopped from the 120 mph he was doing when he pulled into the parking lot.

Most of the time, Raymond made it.

Occasionally, however, he didn't. One morning he drove through the door to the school cafeteria and his car came to a halt only when about 100 pounds of rice pudding clogged his carburetor.

Raymond also continued to terrorize little Arnold, once tying him naked to the T-Bird and using him as a hood ornament.

Raymond also continued to be stopped often by the police. He was driving through a nearby small town one evening and was stopped for speeding.

"How much is the fine?" he asked the officer.

"Ten dollars" was the answer.

Raymond handed the policeman a 20 and said, "Keep the change. I'll be back through here in a couple of hours."

I think of Raymond often, especially now that Americans likely will soon be able to drive faster.

As you probably guessed, Raymond finally did get it in an automobile accident.

He was walking back to his car after buying a new set of foam rubber dice to hang on his rear-view mirror, and a woman attempting to parallel park backed over him.

The blind girl sang Raymond's favorite song, the immortal "Dead Skunk in the Middle of the Road" at his funeral, and little Arnold delivered the eulogy entitled, "The day my big brother went to that great speedway in the sky. I got my first decent night's sleep in years."

There wasn't a dry eye in the church.

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The Battalion

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