

Opinion

The Battalion

(USPS 045 360)

Member of Texas Press Association Southwest Journalism Conference

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You still can go home again — well, sort of

The slow, steady kiss of the sun drying the laundry on the clothesline. Long walks to the grocery store to get food so Momma could make her magic on the kitchen stove. Sleepy days filled with nothing more than lounging in the shade of the two oaks and one mulberry tree that Daddy had cleverly thought to plant close together.



Cathie Anderson

Long, slow, sleepy days in the country — my memory is filled with these. How is it that days and scenes gone by always seem so glorious? After half a semester at school, all I can think about is back roads and river bayous. Henry David Thoreau, in 1845, built a cabin in the peace and tranquility of Walden Pond where he remained for two years, "living deep and sucking out all the marrow of life."

And though I'm no Thoreau, I can imagine why he would seek such a simple life. I ache for the country.

Funny how I once hated it, and it couldn't be too soon before I shook the dust of Sealy, Texas, off my boots. But now I'd gladly give up my Associated Press Stylebook for the detestable job of feeding the chickens or collecting the hens' eggs.

I'd even be brave enough to face the gouty, old rooster who cornered me, at age 9, in the chicken coop and flapped his superiority. I must admit that my parents came close to losing all the eggs (as well as me) that day.

But as any adventurous child would, I struggled on, which is to say that I avenged myself upon that hapless bird 2,000 times over after I got out of there.

Besides chickens to feed, there was a garden to weed, plant and water, fruit to pick, and trees to prune.

Working in the garden wasn't so bad though, especially when my older brother, rather than my parents, supervised. These were the times for strikes. Unfortunately, our strikes were never of the sit-down variety. I can hear us now.

"Cathie, you aren't weeding that row well enough," David would say. "You'll have to go back through and do it again."

"You're crazy if you think I'm doing this again," I'd tell him. "If you want it done over, you do it."

"Momma and Daddy said we have to finish this by the time they get home, and it has to be done right. You'll just be here when we're done with our parts, doing yours over again."

"Himph, fat chance," I'd say loudly. And after that, jokes about my weight would fly.

Then it was Lance's turn. "I'm tired of doing this. I wanna go play."

"You're not going anywhere," David would insist. "And after this, you're going to go in the house and make up your bed."

Uh-oh, the seeds of rebellion were planted. Lance would insist that David was only supposed to be in charge of us while we were weeding the garden, and I would insist that I wasn't going to clean up that row again.

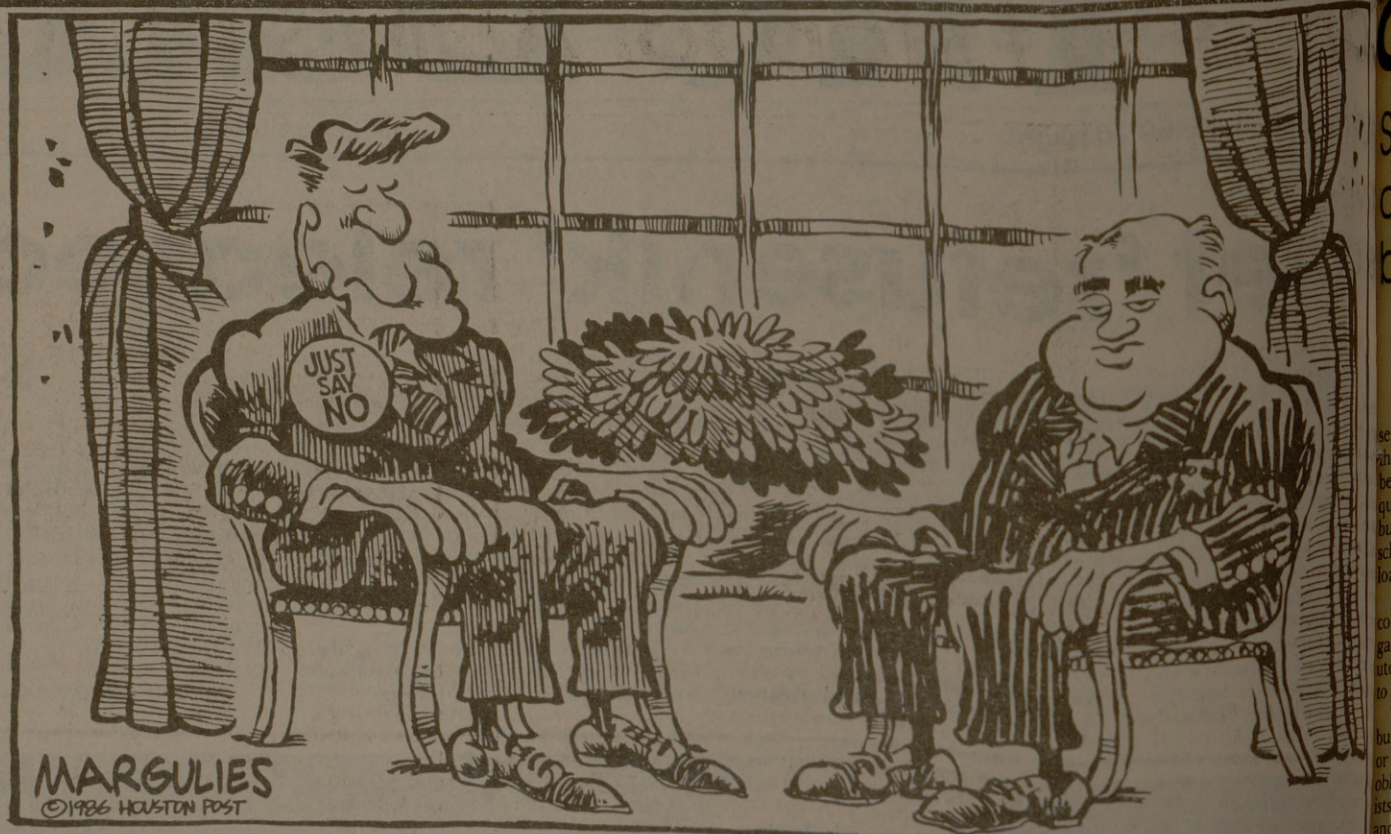
My younger brother Lewis, the soul of obedience, always would take David's side, and depending upon what was nearest, either rocks or water would shoot through the air, along with our cries of frustration and pain.

No matter what tasks we did together, they always ended in pain for us. Take picking fruit, for instance. We would climb the mulberry trees, and then by jumping on the limbs, we'd manage to shake the berries onto a blanket that we'd lain underneath. Picking up the berries would take a while because we'd talk and eat, and laugh and eat, and eat and eat. And at about 11 p.m., the pain would hit.

Ah, the pleasures of childhood in the country.

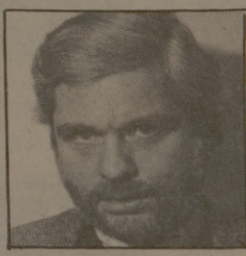
Yes, I ache to return, even though, I won't be able to feed the chickens, stuff myself with berries or quarrel and laugh with my brothers in the open air for these things are no longer there. But I'll go back because although the reality of what I had isn't as wonderful as my memories, it's still worth going home for.

Cathie Anderson is a senior journalism major and editor for The Battalion.



What do we say about Syria?

The queen says Syria supplied the explosive with which a Jordanian attempted to blow an El Al jumbo jet, not to mention his pregnant fiancée, to kingdom come. The queen also says that Syria gave Nezar Hindawi \$12,000, a passport and trained him in the use of explosives. The queen says all this. Her first minister, though, says nothing.



Richard Cohen

The queen, of course, is represented by the prosecutor in the trial of Hindawi in London. Her first (or prime) minister is Margaret Thatcher, the so-called Iron Lady who gave the Argentines a proper bashing over the Falklands and fights trade unions with equal fury. Other than Ronald Reagan and the Israelis, no one is a more militant foe of terrorism — state-sponsored or otherwise — than she.

And yet the charges of Syria's role in the attempted bombing of the El Al jet have produced not a peep out of Thatcher. The government that was willing to lend its NATO airfields to the U.S. bombing of Libya continues to maintain diplomatic relations with Syria and accords it the same landing rights revoked from the Libyans because of their terrorist activities. Maybe this inconsistency is yet another clever attempt to drive Moammar Gadhafi over the edge.

The allegations concerning Syria came from Hindawi himself and conceivably could be fabricated. But various

intelligence services, doing their own appraisals and investigations, have reason to believe him and, besides, they come as no surprise to the experts. Along with Iran and Libya, Syria is one of the countries mentioned when the term "state-sponsored terrorism" is used.

That being the case, what stops the Thatcher government from treating Syria as it does Libya? In fact, what stops the United States from doing the same? The El Al flight originated in New York and, had the bomb not been detected, the number of Americans killed would have far exceeded the ones lost in the bombing of West Berlin's La Belle discotheque — the incident that triggered the April 16 bombing of Libya.

For some time now, as Thatcher and Reagan have been yelling "Libya, Libya," the intelligence community has been whispering "Syria, Syria." By no means does this signify that Libya is innocent of terrorist activity. But even at the time of the La Belle bombing, there were suggestions that Syria played a role — maybe just a supporting one, but a role nonetheless. To this day, some within the intelligence community consider the La Belle bombing a joint Libyan-Syrian operation. Only one country was bombed, though.

For the West, Syria represents put up or shut up time. Syria is no Libya, an oil-rich but-everything-else-poor sandbox of a nation that can be bombed with impunity. And Hafez Assad, the Syrian leader, is no mercurial megalomaniac, but a twinkly-eyed mass murderer in his own country. Syria is a formidable Middle East power, an ally of the Soviet Union, which supplies it with all sorts of

weapons, including SS-21 missiles capable of reaching Israeli population centers. It is host to terrorist training camps, but, just to complicate matters, it has been occasionally helpful to the United States. If there is any chance of getting the American hostages out of Lebanon, it would have to be with the cooperation of Assad.

But if terrorism is going to be dealt with, then Syria has to be dealt with. This does not necessarily mean a bombing since, to say the least, the Russians might not approve and Assad might respond not by sulking in the desert, but by unleashing more terrorism. In the mean, though, that elemental step must be taken — at the least expressions of indignation and, say, the revocation of landing rights.

Instead Britain does nothing. The West remains mostly mum and, perversely, occasionally praises Syria as being a middle man with Arab extremists, including those holding American hostages in Lebanon. As when a juvenile delinquent is made a hall monitor in school, this is the cynical rewarding thuggery.

The El Al incident was an attempted mass murder and while the target is an airliner of a Syrian enemy, Iraq that is a mere technicality. The passengers were noncombatants, innocents, most of them not Israelis anyway. Intelligence services, not to mention the defendant himself, implicate Syria in the aborted operation. They say it trained the accused terrorist, supplied the explosives, provided his funds and gave him a bogus passport. So says the queen. What — for crying out loud — says the queen? Copyright 1986, Washington Post Writers Group.

Mail Call

Reason for 'running'

EDITOR:

As participants in the Oct. 3 yell practice incident, we would like to clarify a few issues.

Alex Mabry calls into doubt both the motivation and shrewdness of our actions. He depicts the motivation to get beaten with helmets and fists as selfish, the actual running on Kyle Field as disruptive and questions the necessity of the incidents.

As for disrupting a University function, I hope people will consider the underlying reason why stepping onto the field did cause such a conflict. The junior cadets would have contentedly continued their push-ups for the benefit of the spectators, had they not felt the desire to attack the group moving onto the field. The animosity and violence with which we were met was unmistakable to anyone present. This tradition of "enforcement," not the validity of keeping people off the field was the object of our demonstration.

Mabry also questions our motive for running. He asks if we had the objective of ensuring that "future violators will be removed from the field more gently" or just to attract attention. Our response is: attract attention. Past "runners" had failed to do so, yet the Corps had (and has) shown their inability to enforce the tradition in a "gentle," responsible manner. Without bringing attention to the fact, no changes in policy would ever occur.

Regardless of the motives of anyone who "ran," the actions of the Corps speak for themselves. Perhaps if the Corps is restrained and individuals ignored, the need or the will to enter the field will diminish. Personally, we hope it is not necessary for any individuals to sustain "civilian-cadet friction" in future yell practices.

David Kohel
Andy Vann
Jeff Newberry

Boycott RHAalloween

EDITOR:

I believe the Resident Hall Association's decision not to sponsor trick-or-treating among the dorms this year is a big mistake. The dorms should have Halloween exactly the way they did last year — with or without the official blessings of the RHA. RHA's alternative program at the Grove can never be argued

as an equal substitution for the trick-or-treating, only a weak replacement which will have a far smaller turnout and will not be nearly as much fun.

In response to the problem of cleaning up debris and trash around campus, I believe that RHA could partially fund the additional money (in cooperation with all the dorms to contribute also) to pay the University personnel for the extra clean up. RHA receives a sizeable amount of money each year (in the neighborhood of \$8,000), raised by RHA Casino Night through the hard work of more than 500 residents of dorms. This money is used for the support of RHA programs. The chief purpose of RHA programs should be to enhance dorm life for the residents and coordinate interaction among dorms.

In response to the "alcohol problem," it is clear that only a small percentage of the residents on campus are of legal age, therefore the ability for undergraduates to get liquor is much more difficult. How, then, could the residents who do get the alcohol be expected to be serving it so freely when it is so hard to get?

I was a member of RHA for three years, was president of a dorm and co-chairman of Casino Night. I always thought that RHAalloween was one of the best programs going and all the residents of our dorm really looked forward to it every year. This decision is a major mistake for RHA, but the people who stand to lose the most will be the residents — the very people RHA should be serving! More importantly — where will these people go when they can't find anything fun to do on campus?

The dorms should have Halloween (without the RHA in it) and boycott the Grove to show their disgust!

James Gehan '85
Graduate student

RHalloween not banned

EDITOR:

On Oct. 7 a letter was printed chastising the Residence Hall Association for altering the format of RHAalloween. It is important to know why we changed the program and why the Oct. 7 letter was inaccurate.

The RHA modified RHAalloween for one reason — safety. In the past two years at RHAalloween, there were people arrested for assault and battery, numerous fights, one individual attempted to scale down Hart Hall, starting on the third floor. The damage and

cleanup costs were enormous, and the time-honored tradition of handing out shots of alcohol instead of candy during trick-or-treating was well revered.

RHA felt it would be highly unprofessional if we stuck with the same format that caused so many problems two years in a row. Events over the past two Halloweens made us aware that we were fostering an environment conducive to tragedy, and the mere fact that one has yet to occur does not guarantee one will not occur. Also obvious is that all of our difficulties stem from alcohol.

The program we are sponsoring this year will not only be safer but more enjoyable. RHAalloween kicks off at the Grove on Oct. 31 at 7 p.m. with yell practice for the SMU game.

The Residence Hall Association has not banned trick-or-treating as the Oct. 7 letter stated, we simply are not sponsoring a massive one as we have done in previous years.

The author of the Oct. 7 letter also mistakenly noted that our decision was made "without representation" of the residents. First, all on-campus residents are members of RHA; the author apparently has never exercised his membership. Second, each hall has a president and delegates that serve directly on RHA's general assembly who are kept informed. Furthermore, each hall president was specifically asked for input on the subject. Third, the author decided to go to *The Battalion* with his concerns, not RHA.

In the final analysis, we are extremely excited about this year's program, and are confident that all those who attend will have the best Halloween ever.

David McDowell, RHA President
Carla Carey, RHA Vice President

So little

EDITOR:

In response to all the comments about our running on Kyle Field at midnight yell practice Oct. 3, I will simply paraphrase the man who said: Never have so few received so much attention from so many for so little.

Chahriar Assad '87

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 publication, address and telephone number of the writer.