

Opinion

The Battalion

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The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting newspaper operated as a community service to Texas A&M and Bryan-College Station. Opinions expressed in *The Battalion* are those of the editorial board or 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 Journalism. The Battalion is published Monday through Friday during Texas A&M regular semesters, except for holiday and examination periods. Mail subscriptions are \$17.44 per semester, \$34.62 per school year and \$36.44 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request. Our address: The Battalion, Department of Journalism, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-4111. Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Battalion*, Department of Journalism, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77843-4111.

Insult to injury

Gaylon Fallon, president of the Houston Federation of Teachers, said the Texas Supreme Court's decision upholding the state competency exam for teachers is an insult.

Had the court ruled in favor of the Texas State Teacher's Association, however, taxpayers would have been equally insulted — the only difference being that they would have paid five million hard-earned tax dollars for the insult.

If TSTA had won its way, 2,000 Texas teachers who were fired because they couldn't pass a simple reading and writing test would have been allowed to return to the classroom. Forcing Texans to knowingly finance the long-term destruction of their school system transcends the definition of "insult."

Teacher union leaders claim the mandatory testing lowers the profession's esteem. While testing the basic skills and measuring the academic competency of people who have perhaps the greatest impact on the developing minds of young people may not contribute to the teaching profession's esteem, it serves a much greater purpose. It fights the spread of ignorance and promotes competent education — the primary purpose of an educational system.

Though the morale of teachers has a definite impact on the quality and effectiveness of the educational system, the breakdown of that morale is more likely linked to the idiotic proposals to raid the teachers' retirement fund and cut education in general.

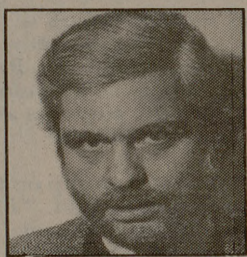
It seems the most difficult thing for Texas government to understand is that improvements always involve tradeoffs. Certain professions shouldn't have to suffer continually for the good of the majority — the people who stand to gain the most.

If Texas truly wants to improve its educational system, it cannot afford to demand its teachers to submit to a test while at the same time it cuts into their financial security.

It would be insulting to insist that Texas can't test the minds of its educators, but it also is insulting to repeatedly tap the resources of those whose mental welfare benefits us all.

There's no substitute for loving parents

They met at a summer resort. He saw her down by the lake and approached, unasked, to make conversation. Soon he took her rowing and, soon after, to a party. By the fall, they were engaged and by the winter married. The precise date was Feb. 20, 1937. Soon, my parents will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary.



Richard Cohen

She was so lovely. There are snapshots of her taken around the time she married. She is wearing a dark coat, and around the coat is draped some sort of fur, probably fox. There were maybe a dozen of these pictures, each capturing a different expression — coy, friendly, coquettish, sexy. As a boy, ignorant of Freud and therefore uninhibited, I would sit on the floor, take out the photo album and swoon over my mother. I was five or six and deeply in love. Make of it what you will, I still am.

He was handsome. In the same photo album, there were pictures of him. I can recall one still — my father in his riding outfit. He is so strong, so big, so dashing — a character out of Fitzgerald but really out of an orphanage, a succession of foster parents, a mother dead in a tenement and a wayward father with bad hearing who never heard the truck that killed him. In the pictures, my father holds the reins of a horse.

My mother says it was love at first sight. We were driving up to New England some years back and passed near the resort where my parents met. "Tell me the story," I said. She did. She recounted the lake, his invitation to go rowing. "What were your first words?" I asked my father. He smiled mischievously. "You row," he said, and my mother laughed. We drove another mile or so. "From that day on, I never saw another man," she said.

Their relationship is a mystery to me.

They never fought. If they did, I never heard them. They seemed never to disagree. If my sister or I made a request, my mother would say she had to ask my father and my father would say he had to ask my mother. Soon the decision would come down. It was always unanimous. There was no playing one against the other. There was no prying them apart. They were, they remain, indivisible.

What is their secret? I don't know. Maybe it is that they started with so little. Maybe because they were both born in poverty, my father in a New York tenement, my mother above a store in Poland. Maybe because they had to work hard for everything they got and because there is no happiness that is not earned. Maybe because they valued the fundamentals — family, loyalty, love, health — and they protected these things fiercely.

When I was young, I thought my parents knew everything. When I got older, I thought they knew nothing. Now I know better. Their very life is instruction. Always, they conducted themselves with honor, with integrity. They made mistakes, had their failures, committed the usual unforgivable sins of parenting, but never once did they do the wrong thing in a moral sense. Their simple stroll through life has been a lesson and an example.

Years ago, my parents retired and moved to Florida. They took up golf, and my mother tried to learn to swim. Of course, they work. They don't know how not to. My father has gone door to door as a pollster. He has taken inventory. For a time he was a doorman and, more recently, he was hired to be a Santa Claus at a shopping mall. During a heat wave, they ran an air hose up his back and under his costume to cool him. Kids sat on his lap as the air swished under his jacket. He smiled for the camera. He made the kids smile. That is his talent. He could always make a kid smile.

I read of people who reject their parents. I cannot imagine it. I hear people

Highway 6 runs both ways.

If I hear that one more time I think I'm gonna scream. It seems every argument that appears in *Mail Call* tells the opposing person why they're wrong and then ends the letter with a cry to get outta town. It amazes me that there are so many people at this University who believe there is only one way to do things, their way. The worst thing about this attitude is it leaves no



Jo Streit

room for individuals who have different viewpoints. In response to Mike Sullivan's column recommending elimination of the Corps, one student wrote, "The only thing I have left to say to Sullivan is, Highway 6 runs both ways." So what? That's not much of a concluding statement to convince Sullivan to reconsider his opinion. Apparently, more students need to take a logic course so they can develop an argument instead of recommending banishment of their opponents. Another student suggested Sullivan take "his great journalistic abilities" to the University of California, Berkeley, because they have an outstanding liberal arts program. Good idea. God forbid anyone who didn't vote for Reagan or accept this University unconditionally should attend here. Unfortunately, people like Sullivan and Karl Pallmeyer who take on controversial opinions aren't the only ones asked to leave A&M. Tolerance at this University must be at an all-time low because even the guy who wrote in that he liked ketchup on his steak was told, "that may be true at t.u., but not here. And before you try to pass out condiment advice again, remember, Highway 6 runs both ways."

I must admit, the first time I read this I laughed because the guy who wrote it couldn't be serious. Unfortunately, his response epitomizes how people at this University react to different opinions. If the guy was serious, I feel sorry for him because with this kind of attitude he couldn't possibly have a friend in the world. He must eat alone. Naturally, *Mail Call* isn't just an arena for telling people to leave town. It seems more and more letters are written to complain about everything and anything. Too bad the topics that are discussed have little merit. For example, the letter complaining about the air traffic during Silver Taps suggested we talk to someone at Eastwood Airport about redirected or de-

laying planes during this solemn ceremony. When I read this, I honestly could not believe there was someone at this University who had nothing better to do.

Let's be realistic. It's hardly insensitive for the airport to conduct business as usual while Aggies honor their dead. The air traffic is that offensive, maybe we should hold the ceremony indoors. But asking the rest of the world to accommodate the needs of Aggies going overboard. I suppose there's someone out there who believes a blackout during Silver Taps is appropriate. Granted, the ceremony is beautiful and meaningful, but probably only Aggies and the families of the deceased. In case some of you have been misled, the sun does not rise and set on the A&M campus.

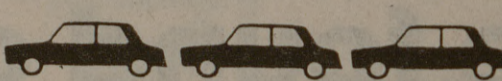
As long as I'm focusing on merited complaints, let's not forget all the ones about the outdoor sculpture exhibit. A cadet wrote in stating the exhibit was art, that it was embarrassing to the University and even mentioned his fear of what visitors might think about it. Realistically, I think visitors would realize that A&M is not the cultural desert many people believe it to be and that the letter is more of an embarrassment than the art work. I'll bet this cadet didn't even go to the more "traditional" art collection of Italian paintings in Rudder Exhibit Hall.


Of course, I'm not suggesting that all complaints are worthwhile, but I hope more people at this University should focus their energies on substantial issues like the cuts in student aid by the government, Gov. Clements' plans for higher education and world issues such as hunger, nuclear war and AIDS. I also think people here need to learn tolerance. The only hope we have to prevent a nuclear war is the ability to deal with all types of people, cultures and dissenting opinions. Learning to deal with another person's right to disagree won't hurt you, but help you. The best way to learn this is to open your mind and shut your mouth.


Jo Streit is a senior journalism major and a columnist for *The Battalion*.


American Exports

MARGULIES
© 1987 HOUSTON POST

Cars 

Steel 

Wheat 

Hostages 

Opposing points of view are threatening at A&M

Mail Call

Like, what's your major?

EDITOR: Do business majors know how to walk and talk at the same time? If they do, I've never seen it. Every time I try to get to my class in Blocker Building I have to weave my way through halls choked with people standing and talking. They don't think to use the benches kindly provided by the University. They continue mindlessly chatting away, oblivious to the chaos they're creating. On the other hand, I can see what contributes to their indifference. They've got the most difficult curriculum on campus, so I'll allow them a little disorientation every once in a while.

Robert Dowdy '87

I am woman, hear me roar

EDITOR: Attention females 18-20: When you enter a dress shop, do you head for the ladies' department or wander around the little girls' section? Would it interest you to know that the Rox-z still considers us "girls?"

I would like to make a comment regarding two ads printed in *The Battalion* by the Rox-z, one last week and one this week. Both ads stated, "Thursday Ladies Night. Ladies No Cover," but the ads don't mean what they say. On Thursdays, the Rox-z only lets in free those females over 21 years of age. After the first misleading ad, the manager insisted it was a misprint by *The Battalion* staff. However, no correction was made in the next issue (like *The Battalion* usually does for misprints) and the second ad was printed identically to the first. After reading the second misleading ad, I spoke with the manager again and was informed that the Rox-z "considers those over 21 ladies, the others just girls."

I think many 18-20-year-old females on this campus would agree with me that it is an insult to be labeled "girls." I thought I outgrew being a "girl" when I graduated from high school and moved away from home. Perhaps we "girls" should find somewhere else to go where we can be accepted as ladies.

Karen Kosub '90

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.