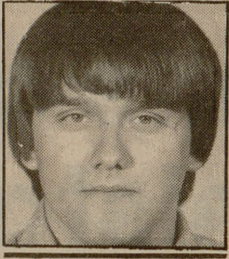


Opinion

Sometimes a little help goes a long way

I have always believed a person should experience everything he can. That's one of the main reasons I went skydiving. I enjoyed my skydiving experience, but I haven't enjoyed the experience I've been having since then.



Karl Pallmeyer

Until a week ago, I was on crutches and got a first-hand glimpse at the world of the handicapped. Stairs, doors, curbs and furniture ganged up on me to make life miserable. It took a lot more than 10 minutes between classes to make it from one building to another.

I'm off the crutches now and am able to limp around some. After a few more weeks, I'll have regained full mobility, but there are those who aren't so lucky.

There are about 20 students on campus confined to wheelchairs. The problems they face every day are much worse than the problems I faced for a few weeks on crutches.

Texas A&M does a good job of providing services for handicapped students. There are 144 handicapped parking spaces on campus. The state issues handicapped parking permits, and the University Police enforce the law on campus. Violators are fined \$50 and their cars towed if an officer and a wrecker are available.

The Handicapped and Veterans Services provides a van service to help handicapped students get to class. They also provide other services including wheelchair repair and tutoring, and they help handicapped students find roommates and scholarships.

But the University is lacking when it comes to providing handicapped access to buildings. Until 1973, when the Rehabilitation Act was passed, buildings were not required to have any special structures to aid the handicapped. Steps and large, ornamental doors might look nice, but they don't allow handicapped

people easy entry to buildings. It's also hard for handicapped people to reach some door handles, water fountains and elevator buttons.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 required all new public buildings to be fully accessible to handicapped people. Most of today's architects keep the handicapped in mind when they are designing a building, but most of the older buildings weren't built with any thought for the less fortunate. To conform to the Rehabilitation Act, older buildings had to have ramps and elevators installed.

Although the Reed McDonald Building meets the Rehabilitation Act specifications, it's not easy for a handicapped person to get up to *The Battalion* office.

To get from the front of Reed McDonald to the second floor, those in wheelchairs have to wheel down Ireland street to Blocker Building, wheel down the alley between Blocker and the Printing Center, wheel through the parking lot to the loading dock at the rear of Reed McDonald, wheel up the ramp, try to get one of the doors open, wheel through the hallway to the elevator, push the elevator button and wait a couple of years while the elevator reaches the first floor. The elevator ride is the scariest part — you never know which floor you'll wind up on. There is no way to get to the first floor from the front of the building, even if you could get up the two steps at the front doors of the building.

Most of the older buildings are just as bad, if not worse, than Reed McDonald, and none of the dorms have elevators. One ramp at an obscure corner of the building and a rickety old elevator aren't much fun for people in wheelchairs. More efforts should be made to make buildings more accessible to the handicapped.

Students could do a lot to help the handicapped as well. It doesn't take much time to open a door or push a button for the needy.

A little more than a week ago, I was hobbling along on my crutches trying to

get out of the Academic Building. A Corps of Cadets member was holding the door for several bow-headed members of the opposite sex while his short-haired buddy complimented him on his gentlemanly manners. By the time I made it up to the door, the bowheads had passed through the door and the CTs let it slam in my face as they followed the cute little pink and silver rib-

bons into the sunset. I hope my reputation had preceded me and that this is not the typical Aggie attitude toward the disabled.

During my stint on crutches, I found there are a lot of people willing to help. I also discovered there are a lot of people too wrapped up in their own little worlds to notice that someone might need help.

It took an accident before my eyes were opened to needs of the handicapped. I hope something that drastic doesn't have to happen to others before they see that some people need a little help sometimes. Handicapped people have a lot to offer the world, so why don't we offer them a little help?

Karl Pallmeyer is a journalism graduate and a columnist for *The Battalion*.



That old college try

Bubba and Earl, who live in Forsyth County, Ga., were sitting in the truck the other day and they struck up a conversation regarding one of their favorite topics, college football.



Lewis Grizzard

Although neither graduated from high school, they both have a keen interest in college football.

Bubba's a Georgia fan. Earl likes Auburn. They argue a lot. But this time, they were in agreement.

"Did you read what the paper said?" Bubba asked Earl, as Earl spit tobacco juice out the truck window.

"Bout how they want to change the state flag so it don't look like the rebel flag no more?" Earl asked back.

"Naw," said Bubba. "You know I don't read nothing but the sports page and Grizzard if he's writin' about barbecue instead of Goochie shoes."

"What kind of shoes?"

"Goochie," said Bubba. "They make 'em in Japan."

"Oh," said Earl, spitting out the window again.

"What I read," Bubba continued, "is that they used to run a lot of (a term Bubba and Earl use when the rest of us say, "blacks") out of college football."

"Do what?" asked Earl.

"Said it right there in the paper," Bubba explained. "You know how everybody's been hollerin' about college players not being no good in school work?"

"You mean like that fella with the Auburn Tigers who never did go to no classes?"

"Something like that, Earl," Bubba said.

"Long as he plays good on Sardy, I don't care what he does the rest of the week," said Earl, searching for a George Jones song on the truck radio.

"Well," Bubba went on, "they got this new rule now that say if you don't make 700 on some fool test, you can't go to school and play football."

"Do what?" asked Earl, as he found George singing "He Stopped Loving Her Today," his favorite song.

"Yeah," Bubba continued, "and here's what else: The paper said there was 53 that got turned down by Southern schools this year because they messed up on that test and 50 of 'em were (blacks). And Georgia has done lost 23 ball players and all of them was (black)."

"But I thought we didn't like (blacks), Bubba," said Earl.

"Don't like havin' my daughter marry one, but if they don't let the Dogs have them good (black) players they ain't gonna be much account no more, Auburn neither."

Earl scratched his head and then said, "Ain't somebody who don't let (blacks) in school cause they ain't no good at some test the same they called us up here in Forsyth County — 'racers'?"

"It's 'racists,' Earl, and dang right that's what they are."

"What we gonna do about it, Bubba?"

"Next time Hosea Williams (former aide to Martin Luther King) comes here to protest, we'll tell him to do something about (black) football players gettin' a bad deal. He'll get on Dan Rather and that'll be that."

"That's a good idea, Bubba. Ol' Hosea won't let us down."

"Go Dogs!" whooped Bubba.

"Tigers!" cried Earl.

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A rave

EDITOR:

Karl Pallmeyer's review of the Hersh concert was perceptive and intelligent. It showed the benefits derived from some hard, concentrated, conscientious listening. Sensitive, well-written reviews of this kind are a key part of building an informed audience on this campus for music and art. Thanks for your help.

Dan Fallon, Dean of Liberal Arts

True Aggies

EDITOR:

I am a full-time staff member of this University and I have been for a good while now. Being a previous student in hope of completing my degree, slow but sure, I still read *The Battalion* quite often. I am writing to you concerning a column by Jo Streit entitled, "Opposing Points of View are Threatening at A&M." As a former student and as a staff member who spends 90 percent of her time associating with student traffic, I see and hear all kinds of opinions, criticisms and also praises. How about you — do you hear all sides, or just the "opposing" ones as you have labeled them? More than likely, you are one of these individuals who shares a different opinion compared to others. This is nothing to be ashamed of, but then again, it is nothing that should be preached to others, either.

You have to realize that the A&M system was around long before your "opposing opinions" were established. If you were a true Aggie — by this I mean one who bleeds maroon — you would probably sit back and realize how the little things do become irritating. For instance, the gay rights movement on campus, the idea of non-regs being yell leaders (and let's give praise to David Lawhorne. He did an outstanding job,) and the women in the band or Ross Volunteers, which I still disagree with. I can remember when women who even thought about being in the band were convinced not to say anything before the words came out. At that time, women were still thanking the University for being allowed to enroll as students — let alone thinking about ruining the unique tradition of the band.

Then you discussed the issue of Silver Taps. Have you ever had an Aggie die, Streit? Well, if not, you should personally live through an Aggie death, and then tell me that Silver Taps is not a very important demonstration that the whole world shouldn't stop and listen to. I agree that there is nothing we can do about the air traffic, but it is so special to those of us who have lost an Aggie that it is a good idea. And as for the sun setting and rising on the A&M campus, well, once again, from the day that your Aggie dies, you feel that the sun sets and rises on the campus because all Aggies are one big family.

Finally, there's the idea that *Mail Call* is for everyone to express all feelings. They may be mental to you, but perhaps extra important to the writers. You need to learn to be objective in that manner, or don't read *Mail Call*. Tell me something, Streit. Are you a real Aggie, or do you just attend the University for the name? I will admit that as sad as it is, there are people who never have and never will see Texas A&M for what it really is. Streit, I am not criticizing you for your opinion, but I just wish you could share and feel the unique feeling of A&M like we, the true Aggies do. Then, perhaps, you too would understand the purpose of speaking out against the little things. It's the little things that make Aggies one of a kind. Every school has books, profs, staff members, a football field, homework and tests, but only the school that runs along Highway Six (the highway that runs both ways) has Aggies.

Sonya Brewer

Mail Call

Greek party

EDITOR:

I'm pleased that *The Battalion* "tried to be objective" in its portrayal of Greek life (*At Ease*: Feb. 19), but I must comment that it fell noticeably short of this goal.

In addition to the six brief paragraphs that were critical of greek life (which were also immediately shot down) there's a hidden and not so pleasant aspect of the Greek world that needs illuminating.

Allow me to describe a private party this month at a local club for the Beta Theta Pi fraternity and the Zeta Tau Alpha sorority. The theme was "Soul Train" and its purpose was, perhaps, to celebrate Black America. But rather than portray the countless (and underemphasized) contributions that blacks have made to society, it was nothing more than a minstrel masquerade in racist stereotypes.

At the party, there was a man dressed as a pimp and another with a pillow stuffed in the seat of his pants. On the wall was a black stick man holding a watermelon and a basketball. The poster that said "Black is Beautiful" was probably not meant to flatter, I'm inclined to suspect. Further, their efforts at black English were about as crude as the atmosphere itself.

Yes, this was probably all innocent fun and games, and I'm sure that they thought no harm would come of it, but more importantly, what this incident reveals is "group-think" and the mind of the conformist. For if someone had the audacity and boldness to suggest that this party might contribute to the still existent racism and discrimination in this country, they might just have found themselves fratless and temporarily friendless.

I applaud those sororities and fraternities that do have blacks as members, but I use this example to illustrate the problems that arise with any group that has such rigid codes of conduct and such strict limitations on dissent.

Let's remember that when we swap our individuality for security and jump into the "mold" that the article referred to, we might also get some of our integrity squeezed out as well!

Steve Ridge

Greek life

EDITOR:

Reading the article on the "social" Greek system in the Feb. 19 *At Ease*, I found it hard to reconcile that Lydia Berzsenyi was able to have published an article so completely biased in an issue whose purpose seems always to have been to present pleasurable, relaxing material for the reader. It simply did not put me "at ease."

Anyone taking an objective look at fraternities and sororities on this campus could not hold the same lofty notions of them as presented in the article. All one has to do is meet some members of these organizations to realize that they are, for the most part, the most self-centered, egotistical people in the A&M student body. I admit that this is a stereotype and not all of them fit this mold; however, the ones who do not are rare. Of course, it must be very difficult to abstain from idle selfishness when one is able to live off the products of someone else's work. My advice to the "social" Greeks: Get a real life. The school and the world will be a better place for it.

Robert S. Walker '88

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.

The Battalion

(USPS 045 360)

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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.