

Opinion

Happy endings are sad comment on Hollywood

Remember the end of "Gone with the Wind," where Vivian Leigh turns to Clark Gable and says: "Where will I go, what will I do?" If that movie was made today, Gable would say something like: "Frankly my dear, I realize that you need a man in your life so I'm going to stay right here with you at Tara."



Karl Pallmeyer

Remember the end of "Casablanca," where Humphrey Bogart tells Ingrid Bergman to get on the plane with Paul Henred? If that movie was made today, the plane would leave and Bogart and Bergman would walk off into the fog to start a beautiful friendship together.

Remember the end of "Bonnie and Clyde" where Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway are turned into Swiss cheese by hundreds of FBI machine guns? If that movie was made today, the FBI men would have missed.

There's an old cliché that says everyone loves a happy ending. Hollywood seems to be taking that cliché too seriously. Several major films released in the past few years have undergone some drastic changes before they were seen by the general public.

In the original version of "Crossroads," Joe Seneca dies at the end of the film. In the original version of "Jumpin' Jack Flash," Whoopi Goldberg never gets to meet the spy she helped es-

cape via computer. In the original version of "After Hours," Griffin Dunne is still encased in plaster and is carried off to an uncertain fate at the end of the film.

In the original version of the new "Little Shop of Horrors," Seymour and Audrey didn't live happily ever after, they became plant food — just like in the original film and the play. In the original version of "First Blood," Rambo grabbed a gun from his Green Beret commander and killed himself — just like in the book. If the original version of "First Blood" had been released, it would have saved us from "Rambo: First Blood II" and the new sequel where Rambo goes to Afghanistan.

It costs millions of dollars to make a movie today, so few producers are willing to put up the money unless they are assured of a multimillion-dollar return. To ensure that their movie won't fail at the box office, producers usually test their movies before they are released.

Before a movie is released, it is shown to a test audience, usually common people just brought in off the street. After the movie, the test audience is asked to fill out questionnaires and give their opinions. If a majority of the test audience didn't like a certain aspect of the movie it is re-edited, re-shot or re-written to make more people happy.

The ending of a movie may determine how well the film does at the box office. It is not enough for a lot of people to see a certain movie, a lot of people have to see that certain movie several times before it becomes a big hit. Most

people aren't willing to go see a movie again if they walked out of the theater depressed the first time they saw it.

When filmmakers are making a movie today, they will often shoot two or three endings. The test audiences are allowed to choose the ending they like best. The most popular ending is the one that is used once the film is released. Some people might be glad to know that Hollywood is trying so hard to entertain, but there are problems with the obligatory happy endings.

Life is not always happy. There are some problems that can't be solved be-

fore the screen goes dark. A good movie should help people understand reality. Reality rarely includes the cheerful glow of a Steven Spielberg kiddie movie or the absolute right and wrong of a Sylvester Stallone action flick.

Too many people have the mistaken idea that movies are just for entertainment. Movies, like books, can be both entertaining and thought-provoking. It's nice to relax and see a movie that's fun and doesn't require much energy to enjoy. It's kind of like a McDonald's hamburger. But a steady diet of McDonald's hamburgers will play hell with your stomach. Just like you need some

real food to be healthy, your brain needs some real stimulation, or it turns into bat guano.

Movies can show experiences most people will never know personally. A person can learn so much about the world through movies that it's a shame most filmmakers are limiting the experiences available through the movies just so that they can make money, even more of a shame that the mass going public is not more demanding when it comes to choosing its entertainment.

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

It's an eerie feeling

I discovered something about myself recently that was quite unsettling. I discovered I have hair growing out of my ears, a sure sign of aging.



Lewis Grizzard

Once I turned 40, I naturally expected certain manifestations of the aging process.

The slight hint of crow's-feet are developing on each side of my mouth, I found a gray hair on my chest the other day, and I dozed off recently while watching the Playboy channel on cable.

But I didn't expect ear hair for at least a few more years.

It probably has something to do with the fact I don't eat yogurt and still prefer white bread to whole wheat.

To be certain it wasn't being caused by something else, however, I called the Dr. Ruth Show, to ask if this condition was connected to any sort of hormonal change in my body that might affect, well, certain activities.

"Of course not, my dear," answered Dr. Ruth.

"Many of my patients have had very satisfying sex lives after the development of ear hair. It is important, however, to keep the hair trimmed, not only to remain physically appealing to the opposite sex, but also to avoid any hearing impairment."

Relieved to hear that good news, I shaved inside my ears, put on my tightest jeans and hit a couple of singles' bars.

Because several members of the *The Battalion* editorial board will be attending the Columbia Scholastic Press Association Conference in New York City from March 11-14, some of the columns this week will not appear on their regular days.

I completely stuck out, but at least I was able to hear when a 19-year-old girl with orange hair, who was wearing high top tennis shoes, looked at me and said, "Like, wow, did you know your ears are bleeding?"

From now on I am going to use a pair of scissors to trim my ear hair and forget the razor.

Too bad Van Gogh didn't think of that before it was too late.

Heavy ear hair does run in my family. My grandfather had ear hair at a relatively early age.

He allowed his to grow unchecked, which probably had a lot to do with the fact that he often suffered sudden losses of hearing whenever my grandmother asked him to perform such chores as putting on a tie for church and spreading manure on her rose bushes.

After much thought concerning the hair in my own ears, I have concluded it is important that I accept the fact I am aging.

I enjoyed the springtime of my life. I made a few mistakes, but I had me some high times, and I made me some memories.

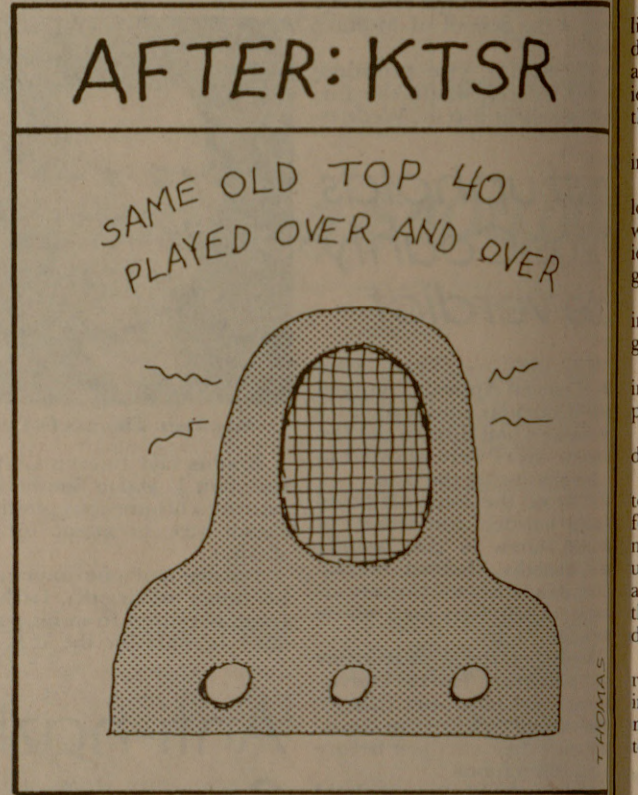
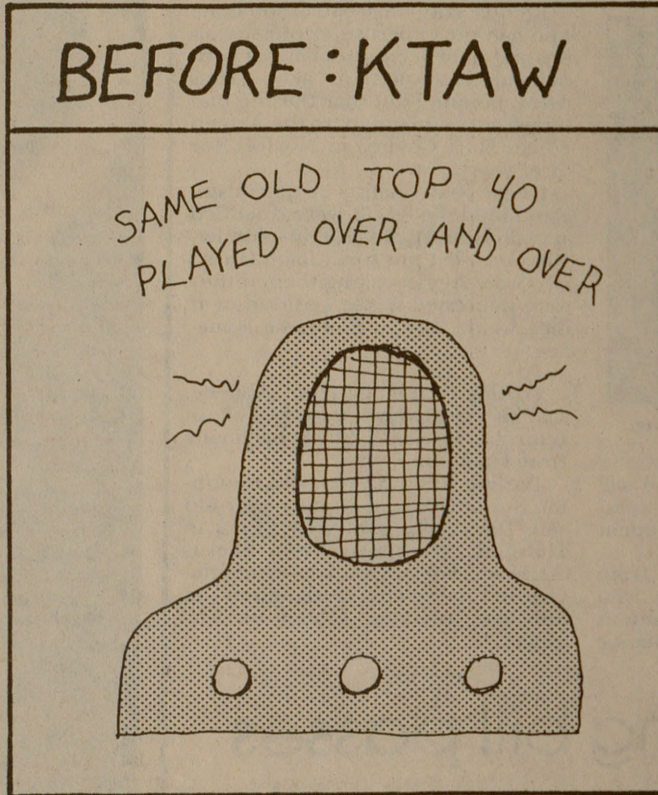
But now that I am entering the autumn of my years, I want to enter gracefully.

I can't run as fast nor jump as high as I once could, but in the immortal words of my grandfather, "The best thing about getting older is you don't have to put up with nearly as much manure as you once did."

So, onward on my voyage to senior citizenry despite the fact I may follow my grandfather's footsteps and allow my ear hair to grow unchecked.

When you get really old it doesn't matter if you have so much hair in your ears. They both resemble a picture I saw once in a history book of President Rutherford B. Hayes.

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Mail Call

Crank it up!

EDITOR:

This past weekend I went to a movie at the Memorial Student Center. I am grateful that I have the opportunity to view movies at this economical price and convenience. In spite of this, I have one complaint: the volume was too low. I understand the need for the students to be quiet, but half the fun is enjoying the crowd's energy. Unfortunately, the sound is so low that if someone coughs, you miss the plot. Lately, the only sounds that are being heard in the theater are the brave souls screaming, "Turn up the volume!"

Catherine Schmidt '80

Pinko press

EDITOR:

I wish to add my support to those extremely well-reasoned words of Mr. Slobey in his thorough analysis of communism. I agree that we are far more likely to be too generous toward the communists than too condemning. The problem, of course, is that our liberal press is unwilling to give us any details about the atrocities that the communists commit (I haven't heard any updates on the victims of the KAL or the Chernobyl incidents in almost two months). And yet the papers are filled every day with vicious rumours of the CIA using the KAL airliner as a spy plane, or of the "atrocities" our own dictators are committing in the Far East or Central America. I say we leave our government to fight for peace in the way it knows best! And hooray for programs such as "Amerika" that are not afraid to fan our mistrusts in the protection of the truth!

Joseph Kachmar, graduate student

Questionable quotas

EDITOR:

Referring to Cynthia Green's response to a minor point in my letter, how can she say that quotas are set to make chances fair for people? Quotas are set so that a person's race can have more importance in selection than his or her abilities. She says unqualified minorities sometimes "slip through." I explained in my letter that many minorities were held in advanced programs despite their failing grades, while academically proficient white students were denied entry. She claims as an excuse that these minorities are "the cream of the crop?" Sorry, but I don't call that equality nor "fair chance." Reread her words: "nothing in life comes free."

I reaffirm that ambition and perspiration are important, despite her denial. If she wants racial quotas, then why not have nationality quotas, sexual quotas, handicapped quotas, homosexual quotas, quotas for people not named Jim Bob, etc. Then we can forget abilities and personality altogether. Green says, "opening closed, biased, discriminatory minds" helped America come far. Quotas act in the opposite way, however, and add a new facet to discrimination. When a car has a flat tire, do you

slash the other tire, or do you work to fix the flat?

My main point of that letter was to say that people's attitudes are changing, but it will take time, not forced reverse discrimination to affect change in attitudes. I mentioned my parents because they came here with less than most slum dwellers have, including lack of English. Yet they overcame discrimination and intolerance and narrowmindedness.

By the way, Green's assumption about my parents was also incorrect. They didn't come here with \$50 when her parents were "riding in the back of the bus and drinking from a 'black' water fountain." We arrived just as forced integration was beginning in Houston, large black political factions were gaining power, and over 80 percent of Houstonians were native Texans.

Paul Svacina '87

Can't ignore debt

EDITOR:

The *Battalion's* editorial of Feb. 25 displays a serious disregard for reality. *The Battalion* says that there is nothing serious to fear about the Latin America debt. But ignoring reality is no solution to the problem of Latin American debt. Here are the facts:

— Brazil owes a \$108 billion foreign debt. In 1983, it had a GNP of \$272 billion.

— Argentina owes \$52 billion and had a \$56.5 billion GNP in 1983.

— Mexico owes \$100 billion and had a \$158.2 GNP in 1983.

Look at the numbers. These countries will never pay off their debts owing such large percentages of their GNP's. Anyone who has followed this situation for the last few years knows that these loans have been bad for years. Year after year, these countries have come to the bankers to have their debts refinanced, having been unable to meet the original terms of the loans. Lacking the means to pay the interest let alone the principal, they have sought further loans to cover their interest payments. Forced to comply with these requests to maintain the appearance of solvency, the bankers have continued to send good money after bad. Argentina's recent warning that it will suspend payment unless the banks lend \$2.15 billion more is the most recent example.

The money is gone for good. The international banking system is in dire straits and can stand only as long as it retains the confidence of its depositors. When it crashes, we shall all suffer. The statements of *The Battalion* and others to the contrary cannot change this reality. Ignorance of economics will not help, either.

Brian Arthur Frederick '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 classification, address and telephone number of the writer.

The Battalion

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