

Opinion

Life's not a beach if you're stuck in this town

It's the Friday before Spring Break and you're reading *The Battalion*. I guess that means you're stuck in beautiful Bryan-College Station over the holiday, just like me. Aren't you sick of hearing about all your friends plans to go to South Padre Island or to go skiing? Me too.



Jo Streit

I was here in town over break about two years ago and it was BORING. I took a walk on campus and I didn't see one person. It was like someone had dropped one of those bombs that kill everybody but leave the buildings. Well, this year it's gonna be different. One of my best friends is staying in town and

we're going to have a productive and fun week. If you're in the same situation, here are a few suggestions for what to do over break.

The most important thing to do is get a tan, especially if all your friends are going to the beach. Don't forget that even your friends who go skiing are bound to get some sun on their face, so don't stay indoors and eat the whole week. It's bad enough you have to stay in town, just make sure you don't advertise it afterwards with a gleaming white complexion.

While you're tanning, whether it's at the pool or in a tanning salon, pray for rain. If it rains not only will your friends come back white, but they won't have any great beach stories to tell you. There's nothing worse than hearing what a great time everybody else had while you stayed home with your hamster.

Another thing you might think about doing while your in town is studying. I know what you're thinking, "Study! I deserve this break and I refuse to pick up a book, much less read it." Believe me I see your point, but just think of the satisfaction you'll get out of making your friends feel guilty for having fun without you. You can tell them that you've finished all your reading for the rest of the semester and leave them the number of the bar where you can be reached.

It's also a good thing to tell your parents. "Hi mom, I just called to say hello. I've been at the library all week while my roommates were in Miami. "No mom, I'm having a great time. Sigh." Look for a check or care package in the mail the following week.

If you're in town over break because you have to work, try to get as many

hours as possible. You'll be getting a paycheck the week everyone else gets back in town. While they complain about how much money they spent drinking beer, you can go shopping at the mall. If you're stuck in town because you were too broke to go anywhere, you might think about trying to make a few dollars this week.

Another good thing to accomplish over break is to clean your room. Of course, cleaning is never fun, but it's one of those things that you have to do each semester. Who knows what you'll find — lost keys, money, your roommate. And if you get the urge, wash your car. Remember, it hasn't rained this month.

If you accomplish all this, here are a few more things to do:

- Write your congressman.
- Teach your pet stupid tricks so you

can be on Late Night with David Letterman.

• Call your parents and tell them don't remember getting this month's allowance. If President Reagan can't do it as an excuse, maybe you can too.

• Leave parking tickets on University Police cars.

Of course if you finish this list you can't think of anything else to do yourself to a night out on the town. After all, you won't have any problems finding a parking space. You can probably have the table of your choice at any restaurant and there won't be long lines for local clubs to get in or get a drink. Even if you don't get anything accomplished this next week, just relax and have fun. You'll have plenty of things to do once school starts back up.

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

Who's running this show?

In 1976, I went to California and, with a colleague, wrote an article for *Esquire* on Ronald Reagan. For lots of reasons — his antipathy towards civil rights, his hostility to the poor and his support of the Vietnam War — I was hardly a Reagan fan. But I was still surprised by what I learned in Sacramento: Reagan had been something of a figurehead governor.



Richard Cohen

"He's a guy who will sit at his desk and look like a president, and act like a president, but he would not be a president and would not think like a president," a Reagan political ally said back then "He's incapable of making a phone call on his own. He makes calls at the request of his staff. My questions under those circumstances would be, 'Who's running the country? Who's the president or presidents?'"

It is convenient now for some to lament the Reagan described in the Tower commission report and say that's not the Reagan of old. And they have a bit of a case. Surely, the president has aged and at 76 can not have the energy he once had. But in general, the Reagan of today is not substantially different from the one who governed California for two terms and the United States for one. He is intellectually lazy.

That is a harsh assessment, to be sure. But there is plenty of evidence to back it up — and it has been there all along. From his early days as president, almost every Reagan press conference has been followed by a press briefing in which his statements have been clarified or corrected. Some of them were whoppers, but we were assured they hardly mattered. Inexplicably, this president did not need to know his facts — everything from what exactly was in his tax program (he said Don Regan would explain) to the essence of his arms negotiating position (he said George Shultz would explain.)

Reagan has consistently concocted figures and facts to suit himself. In 1976, he asserted that baseball was interpreted through the efforts of baseball announcers. As president, he desegregated by rhetoric a racially segregated South African society, deprived the

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.

Russian language of its word for freedom by claiming its nonexistence, submitted unbalanced budgets while saying otherwise and, just recently, seemed to be the last person in Washington to learn that the Israelis were instrumental in the Iran arms deal.

Until the Iran-Contra affair, thought, no reports of Reagan's lack of attention or his penchant for whacky anecdotes seemed to matter. Congress passed a Reagan fiscal program that then Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker called a "riverboat gamble." He threw the dice anyway and it's been snake-eye deficits ever since. Earlier, George Bush vetted Reagan's economic proposals, and called them "voodoo economics." Elevated to the vice presidency, he tailored his math to fit Reagan's assertions.

Where Bush and Baker led, much of Washington followed. With little faith in Reagan's intellectual abilities, the political community nevertheless pronounced as sound programs that were merely popular. The budget deficit, the trade deficit, the debacle in Lebanon and, indeed, in all the Middle East, got measured only by Gallup. As long as the president remained popular, Washington went to his party.

Take "Star Wars." The use of that pejorative makes conservatives scream, but it's a useful way of ridiculing Reagan's inflated idea of what is possible. No one argues that the Strategic Defense Initiative could be of limited use. But almost no one thinks it can do what the president says it can; render nuclear weapons obsolete. Yet Republicans and Democrats who know better support the program for their own reasons, not caring that they lend support to Reagan's fantastic and unreal concept.

For Reagan, movies are the ultimate reality. So let me cite one — "Singing In the Rain," a classic about the early days of talking-pictures. The last scene of the movie takes place at a film premiere where the star, a former silent-screen actress with a screechy voice, is asked to sing before a live audience. She agrees only when the person who had always dubbed her movie voice, Debbie Reynolds, is placed behind the curtain to do the actual singing. The actress mouths the words, Reynolds sings and then, to the shock and delight of the audience, the curtain is pulled. The actress is unmasked.

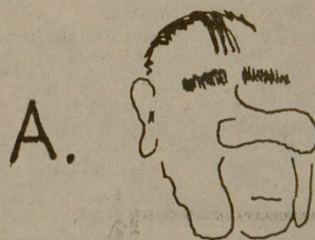
The Tower commission pulled the curtain on Reagan. But no one is entitled to feel surprised, nor is there any cause for glee. A popular president is what he has always been — more popular than presidential — and not substantially different from the man who once governed California. Back then, even his friends wondered who would be running the country. A decade later, the Tower commission supplied the answer: a lieutenant colonel named North.

Copyright 1986, Washington Post Writers Group

PRESIDENTIAL QUIZ *

1. WHICH PRESIDENT BROKE THE LAW? _____

2. WHICH PRESIDENT MADE A "MISTAKE" ? _____



NIXON



REAGAN

* MORE THAN ONE ANSWER MAY BE CORRECT

Mail Call

We're not Geeks!

EDITOR:

Once again, *The Battalion* has lived up to its reputation as a liberal rag, resorting to cheap shots and bias reporting in order to achieve some unclear objective. I am referring to the recent wave on negativism printed here toward Greek Organizations on campus. (Notice that I spelled Greek correctly, not forgetting the "r") Two examples painfully stand out.

In the *At Ease* edition focusing on Greeks, the staff tried to present an unbiased report on Greeks. The social aspects and financial responsibilities were well reported. However, the community activities of the "social" fraternities were not cited. We offer much more to the community than empty beer cans. What was more appalling was the uncalled for, juvenile jab in the Mar. 4 *Battalion*. In the IFC advertisement, the word "Greek" was printed "Geek." One of two things happened: It was simply a misprint, proving the incompetence of your proofreaders or it was a sophomoric attempt by the advertising staff to get a laugh. I suggest from now on you leave the snide, unappreciated comments to Mike Sullivan, of anti-Corps fame.

Fon Avant '89

Good job

EDITOR:

Bravo, Jo Streit, and, indeed, the entire *Battalion* Editorial Board for a splendid commentary on the object narrow-mindedness of "so many people at this University." As scrupulous, reputable journalists you have again proved your integrity to be above question by printing the utterly deplorable and "meritless complaints" of so many mean letters written to *Mail Call*.

The misled people who believe the sun rises and sets on the A&M campus would have to be blind not to see the burning importance of cultural tolerance at Texas A&M, which you and your sensational cohorts have so inessantly fanned over the years. As long as mule-headed Mail Callers keep bragging about bad condiment advice and offensive air traffic, all of us tolerant Aggies deeply hope you keep kickin' 'em in the mouth to shut 'em up and open their minds.

If not for your controversial spur to prick fightin' Aggie opinions about fightin' Aggie traditions and fightin' Aggie lifestyles and fightin' Aggie foods and the Fightin' Aggie Band, "restless" Ags might give to condescend to write Mail Call about irrelevant world and national events or the clouded future of our generation. Indeed, our reputation as a world-class university would be threatened by such degradable ideas because in the eyes of the world Aggies are above such quibbling profundities. Thank you,

Jo Streit, and the rest of the *Battalion* Editorial Board for giving journalism honor and prestige at Texas A&M.

Dale Poage '88

Bad Ag

EDITOR:

If I recall correctly, the Aggie Code of Honor is based on a doctrine which has been an unwritten law of Aggieworld for many years. It states: an Aggie doesn't lie, cheat or steal and will not tolerate those who do.

Recently, I was studying in the study lounge by Dorm 8 on the Quadrangle when I decided to take a study break. When I returned, much to my dismay, my two most expensive books had been stolen. In no way am I blaming the Corps of Cadets, (because civilians study there, too), or anyone for that matter, but it really upsets me that this happened. Whoever took my books had the chance to take my checkbook, credit cards, cash, two pairs of silk sweats, softball equipment, not to mention all my notes to accompany the stolen books.

Whoever and wherever you are, I hope you enjoy them because I did. Besides, it cost me a fortune to replace them.

Moreover, a good friend of mine recently had his books stolen from a LOCKED locker in the Commons.

I often wonder what has happened to this campus — the friendliness, honesty, and the conduct of the students I hope those of you who have taken these books enjoy yourselves, because it's BAD BULL and in my book you're a BAD AG!

Terri Hester

No tooth fairy

EDITOR:

Last September, I went to a dental office advertised in *The Battalion*. The dentist informed me that I had a cavity and because it was on a surface with another tooth facing it, the cost would be higher than normal — \$50.

I did not get it filled last semester, so this semester I went for another cleaning before having my cavity filled. I went to a friend's dentist this time and was amazed to discover that I had no cavity.

So, whenever you go to a dentist, look at X-rays and ask questions to make sure you are being treated honestly.

Carmen Currie '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

(USPS 045 360)

Member of Texas Press Association Southwest Journalism Conference

The Battalion Editorial Board

Loren Steffy, Editor
Marybeth Rohsner, Managing Editor
Mike Sullivan, Opinion Page Editor
Jens Koepke, City Editor
Jeanne Isenberg, Sue Krenek, News Editors
Homer Jacobs, Sports Editor
Tom Ownbey, Photo Editor

Editorial Policy

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. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Battalion*, Department of Journalism, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77843-4111.