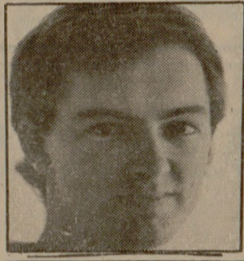


Opinion

So, you want to be a columnist in Aggieland?

Here it is. My last week of college and my last column for *The Battalion*. A lot of people have applied for columnist positions for the fall semester. I have some advice for those adventuresome young people — some tips on appealing or not appealing to what I like to call Aggie mentality.



Mike Sullivan

My friends, as a columnist in Aggieland, you may take one of two paths, as I already have alluded to.

You may choose the high path. And if you choose that path, you must be high

— on Aggie spirit, that is. The high path is littered with no obstacles, no abuse, no irate letters and no fun.

Traveling this path, your pen will lead you on such writing adventures as, "Why I bought a maroon car and came to A&M," "The trouble with yell practice is too many people get drunk and vomit," and, "Let's get the Howdy Tradition going again."

The things you write while on the high path are the kinds of things people want Karl Palmeyer to write. The favorite Aggie question for good *Battalion* columnists is, "Why don't you write something nice for a change?"

I invite you to try it.

And when your pen goes limp from lack of ideas, your mailbox is empty and

you feel like you're melting into obscurity, you'll know you're heading straight down the wide, high path.

Enter the low path. I call it the low path because all good Aggies will call you low if you carefully navigate your way down this path.

While traveling this path, you'll feel compelled to write about some of the more inane aspects of life in Aggieland, like bonfire or the mutt we have for a mascot — a dog whose predecessor's funeral would have been envied by Elvis.

And contrary to what your readers will say, there's a reason for writing about these things.

Aggies read it. They take their maroon pencils in hand and write fiery letters to the editor calling you anything

from two percent to unprintable pet names.

If you think there's a better way to elicit thought from college minds, try writing a solid column about Gov. Bill Clements and the course he's setting for the state where all good Aggies will die. Or try provoking some thought about national issues.

Write about Marines — the pride of America's military — disgracing the United States in front of the world. Or the American military hero who took the Fifth to avoid telling the truth to the people he so boldly protects. Or a president who can't remember if he's president — a president, who, when he does remember his role in national and world affairs, oversteps it.

You'll find that Aggies don't care about real issues. And when you complain about their apathy for those issues, they'll tell you that you can't write.

But don't worry, Aggies are a tough crowd to please. Even nationally syndicated columnists like Art Buchwald and Richard Cohen can't get them going.

And after that issue-oriented column flops, write about something you think is stupid about A&M. Tell them the Corps is full of communist sympathizers — I wish they'd do away with that organization — or that the sacred Memorial Student Center lawn is infested with gophers. Then sit back and wait for the letters to roll in.

You'll get letters scratched out on napkins from freshmen who've never

read such printed blasphemy and want you nuked. You'll get stuffy letters from pompous graduate students, which, after the grammar and spelling is corrected, will relegate you to the ranks of child molester. Measure your success with those letters.

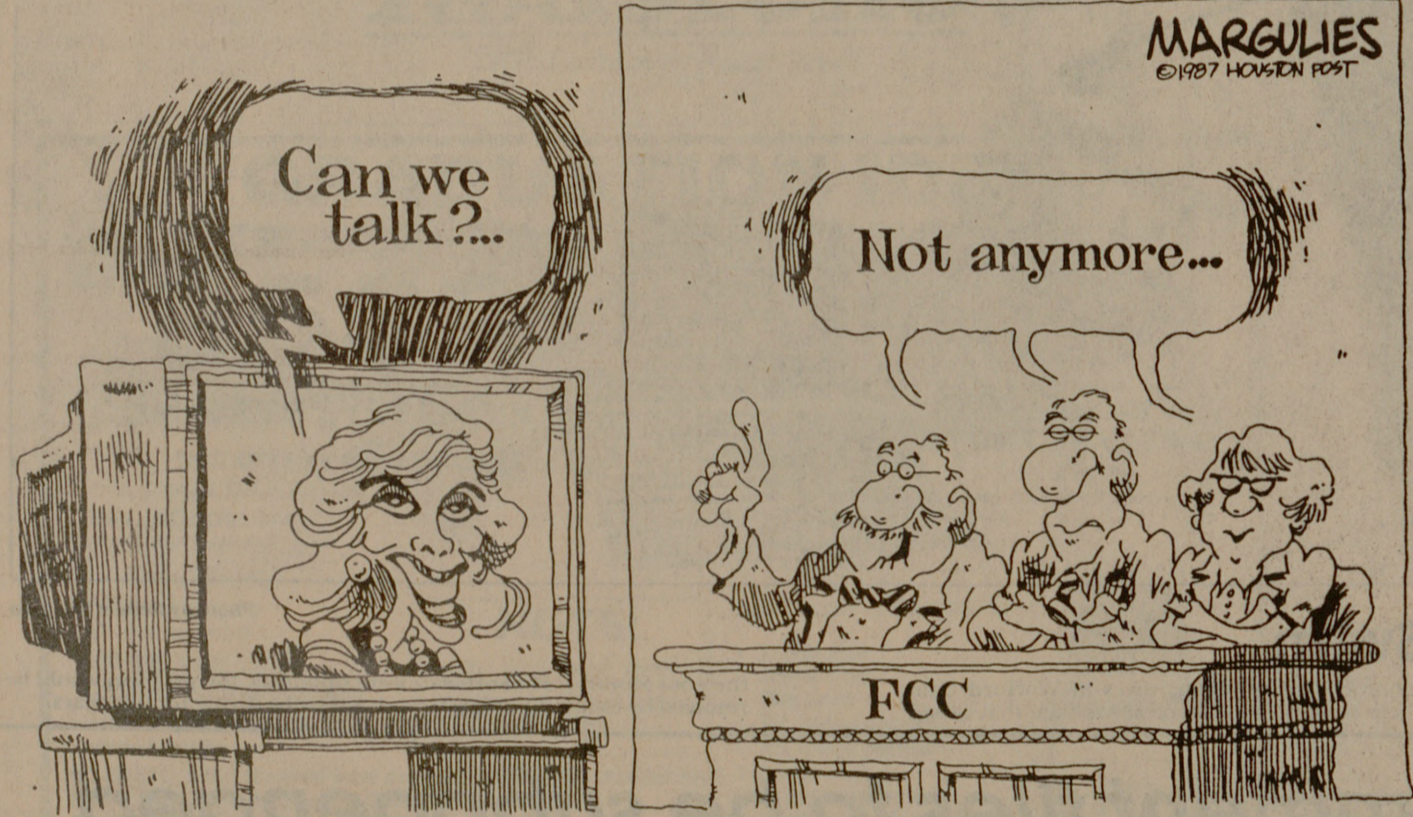
If there's one thing I've learned as a staff writer, columnist and opinion page editor, it's that Aggies (perhaps people in general) love to hate. It gives them something to do — something to think about without really thinking. They feel they can solve the problem you've discussed in your column simply by announcing that you are stupid. Consider yourself a therapist, if you like.

If anything, controversial columnists serve to unite the student body. You're the problem and they're willing to fight you. Considering all the legitimate issues that go unchallenged, it's quite an accomplishment to draw so much criticism from such a satisfied group.

And, let's face it, wouldn't you rather have people hate (a loving hate that is you than be indifferent to you? If they're indifferent to you, you don't exist and you make no difference. That's not a good position for a writer to be in. It's not much of a position for anyone to be in.

So give it some thought before you write your columns, but not too much. You don't want to scare off your readers.

Mike Sullivan is a senior journalism major and the Opinion Page editor for *The Battalion*.



He thinks, therefore, he thinks

I sit looking doggedly across the table waiting for the conversation to find a new topic. It doesn't. I look down at the table and my nerves sit on edge. I'm searching but I can't find anything to say.

Robert Morris
Guest Columnist

Unfortunately, I'm trapped in that twilight zone of DEEP conversation — the abyss of GOD, LIFE, WHO ARE WE, and WHY ARE WE HERE?

I've been here before.

In fact, this scene is remarkably reminiscent of 10,000 others I've played out in college.

Like every other university student in the free world (and probably some communist countries), I've pondered the meaning of life over dozens, hundreds and possibly thousands of beers. And sometimes, against better judgment, of course, other substances (some of which could be called controlled) were involved.

And like every other university student, I've found some answers. Answers that, if espoused on a street corner, would either land me in a mental institution, or possibly, if in California, make me leader of my own religious sect.

I feel comfortable knowing I'm not alone. No, I'm not talking about other beings in the universe — remember, I've misplaced my depth. I am, instead, referring to my friends and fellow world beaters, those neo-hippies with whom I pondered whether J. Edgar was really a fag. And, in some very altered states, whether Hendrix is living on Jim Morrison's sheep ranch in Australia.

In search of solace in this cold, cruel

world, we have turned to our accounting, history, mechanical engineering and in some cases, in utter desperation, our journalism books.

No longer do we search our souls to find if wealth is a sign of decadence or if Plato was a commie.

We now pray for jobs instead of peace, NO AIDS instead of NO NUKES.

Yes, sometimes I do feel guilty. I look back and see myself diligently reaching for that unreachable star and hoping beyond hope that God is a benevolent and forgiving entity who places strength and power in those who believe. Of course, that was Monday through Wednesday — the latter part of the week was devoted to secular humanism — I had to cover my bets.

"We live in an impoverished world," we said, yearning for something more for the poor and undernourished. Now, it's closer to, "They live in an impoverished world and I hope to God Acme Accounting Co. will like the grey paper I used for my résumé."

I remember reading Lenin's "State and Revolution" — vaguely, but I remember it. Yesterday I read the *Wall Street Journal*, and tomorrow it will probably be *People* magazine.

Is there meaning to all of this? Maybe. Maybe not.

I'm holding staunchly to my Mondale/Ferraro bumper sticker, and Jimmy Carter is still my hero. But a young college liberal can often become an upper-middle class non-entity in today's "money is the root of all happiness" society.

I'm still striving for meaning in the swirling mass of humanity in which I live. But I find myself searching for it in reality instead of surreality. Perhaps that's the distinction between UNDERSTANDING life and comprehending day-to-day living. It's simply the dividing line between looking for answers that don't exist and scouring a closet looking for a tie that matches an incredibly uncomfortable dark suit and, at the same time, one that will impress the balding man who will be interviewing for ACME on Thursday (formerly my secular humanist day).

Then again, maybe I've reached a transient stage of mental development. Something akin to puberty (God help me) and something from which I will emerge with grand revelations of scientific creationism and interpretations of the doctrines of Tommy Aquinas.

As I wait for my metamorphosis to reach its conclusion, I long for something more than I've found. I'm just not sure where to look.

Upon completion of my four-year journey through higher education, I hope I have more to think about than the price of a trendy apartment and whether it is still fashionable to have *Interview* magazine on my ever-so-chic post-modern coffee table.

I pray that I don't fall victim of that immutable disease — the Yuppie syndrome. Yet, I feel its pull. Sometimes I think I'm just growing into what God meant for me to be — quite simply, a Yuppie in a Yuppie's world.

Perhaps I have in fact found my new religion. The Supreme Being has given me something in which I can believe. I think I received a sign just the other day. It came in the form of mail, but, as I contemplate its true meaning, I know it must have been . . . the American Express card from God. I think I'll begin tithing for my Neiman's card from Buddha tomorrow.

Or maybe I'll just sit in a field of dandelions, watch the sun set and think about what it all means as an old Arlo Guthrie cassette plays softly in the background.

Robert Morris is a senior journalism major and a staff writer for *The Battalion*.

Mail Call

Just had to say it

EDITOR:

I have read *The Battalion* since I was a freshman but had never responded to the articles I disagreed with — until now. Before I graduate, I want to issue a plea in favor of Texas A&M's traditions.

I guess that, since I'll be a "former Ag" soon, I'm feeling a little anxious about leaving A&M's traditions in their present precarious position. Every semester another tradition is altered or eliminated. I agree there are some traditions that are no longer appropriate or that may be unsafe. However, within the past few years, a trend toward mass extermination of traditions has appeared. What would A&M be without traditions?

- The echo of Silver Taps and a 21-gun salute at Muster or Silver Taps would never be heard by the families and friends of fallen Ags.
- Visitors walking across our campus would never be greeted with a friendly, "Howdy!"
- The Aggie ring would be left to become a high-school imitation.
- Half-time at football games would become a battle between two high-school band look-alikes without the Fightin' Texas Aggie Band.
- A&M would never have been founded without the Corps of Cadets, since they were the original students.
- There would be no symbol of our burning desire to beat the hell outta t.u. without bonfire.

For those of you who do not wish to participate in A&M's traditions — fine. However, if you say you are here only for the education, you could be missing out on some memorable, unique experiences.

For those of you who want to convert A&M into a liberated, "world" university without traditions, there is another university just down Highway 6 in dire need of your efforts!

Jennifer Bordeaux '87

Ever suck your thumb?

EDITOR:

This letter is written in response to the two letters written in *Mail Call* about "bowheads."

We have been "bowheads" all our lives. It all started that first day of school when our mothers put bows in our hair and sent us off to face the world. So why now, when we're in college, should we be ridiculed into shedding our childhood habit because someone feels that it is ridiculous? How about rolled-up jeans or moussed-up hair? Why is all the fashion uproar always directed toward the female gender? You can't tell me the fashion faux pas of males aren't just as ridiculous as bows — and, Karl Palmeyer, maybe a bow would improve your fashion sense. Remember, once a bowhead, always a bowhead!

Missy Dill '90
Jennifer Sauter '90

Lose the pride, ladies

EDITOR:

Pride has been the tragic flaw of protagonists in many a tragedy and is one of the "seven deadly sins." Yet it is an attitude which greatly characterizes the members of the A&M chapter of the National Organization of Women (NOW). An article in the April 27 *Battalion* stated that this group is threatening to picket the business of a local Christian man because he has, outside his establishment, an anti-abortion sign.

This is a country of freedom of expression. If a man feels that he can make a difference in his little corner of the world, let him. Anyway, I doubt that it will be Christian influence on governmental policy that will take their precious abortion away from them. It will most likely be the desire of Congress to further itself from the areas of money and prestige.

At any rate, you ladies still have the right to put your unborn babies to death anytime you like, so get off your soap boxes and lose some of that pride. It is not required in America that everyone agree with you. Remember that your zeal, if acted upon, may sometimes take away from others the right to freely express themselves.

Darrell Dotson '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

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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.

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