

attention!!

A few weeks ago, I traveled to my parents' home to celebrate getting some time off from school and homework. And when I walked in the door, I felt a sort of tension spring up. Sometimes, it's difficult to keep my "I'm a 21-year-old, independent college student" stance with my parents around. Although they don't exert overt pressure on me to adhere to certain rules when I'm in their home, I know what they expect of me. My parents and I may not view things from the same perspective, but we usually get along.

Late that Saturday night, after everyone else had gone to bed, I pulled a couple of old photo albums down from a shelf and thumbed through them.

That was me in Grandpa's arms. And there I was, sitting on a couch with a bewildered look on my face, holding a tiny person with a little red face and a sleepy smile, my baby brother. Here he was, one year later, his face and both hands smeared with chocolate from the birthday cake set on his highchair tray. It was strange to see myself and my brother so young. But it was looking at the photos in my parents' wedding album that really shocked me.

The black and white photos show a handsome couple. A tall, thin man dressed smartly in a new tuxedo stands smiling by his new bride. Could that really be my father? Just over 22 years later, he's no longer so thin, after sitting down to my mother's cooking for all that time. His hair is thinner, his glasses thicker. And there are lines on his forehead now from worrying too much about all the scrapes his two babies got into. But his blue eyes still sparkle and he's still a young man inside. And, regardless of the package, he's still my dad.

Then there's my mother. At 19, she was a little over four years younger than her groom. Like every other bride, she proudly displays her brand new

wedding ring in one picture. Her smile is as big and bright today as it was then. Streaks of silver in her brunette hair now frame her face, and she has a few wrinkles around her eyes, but raising two kids to adulthood will do that. And the wrinkles don't change the fact that she's still my mom.

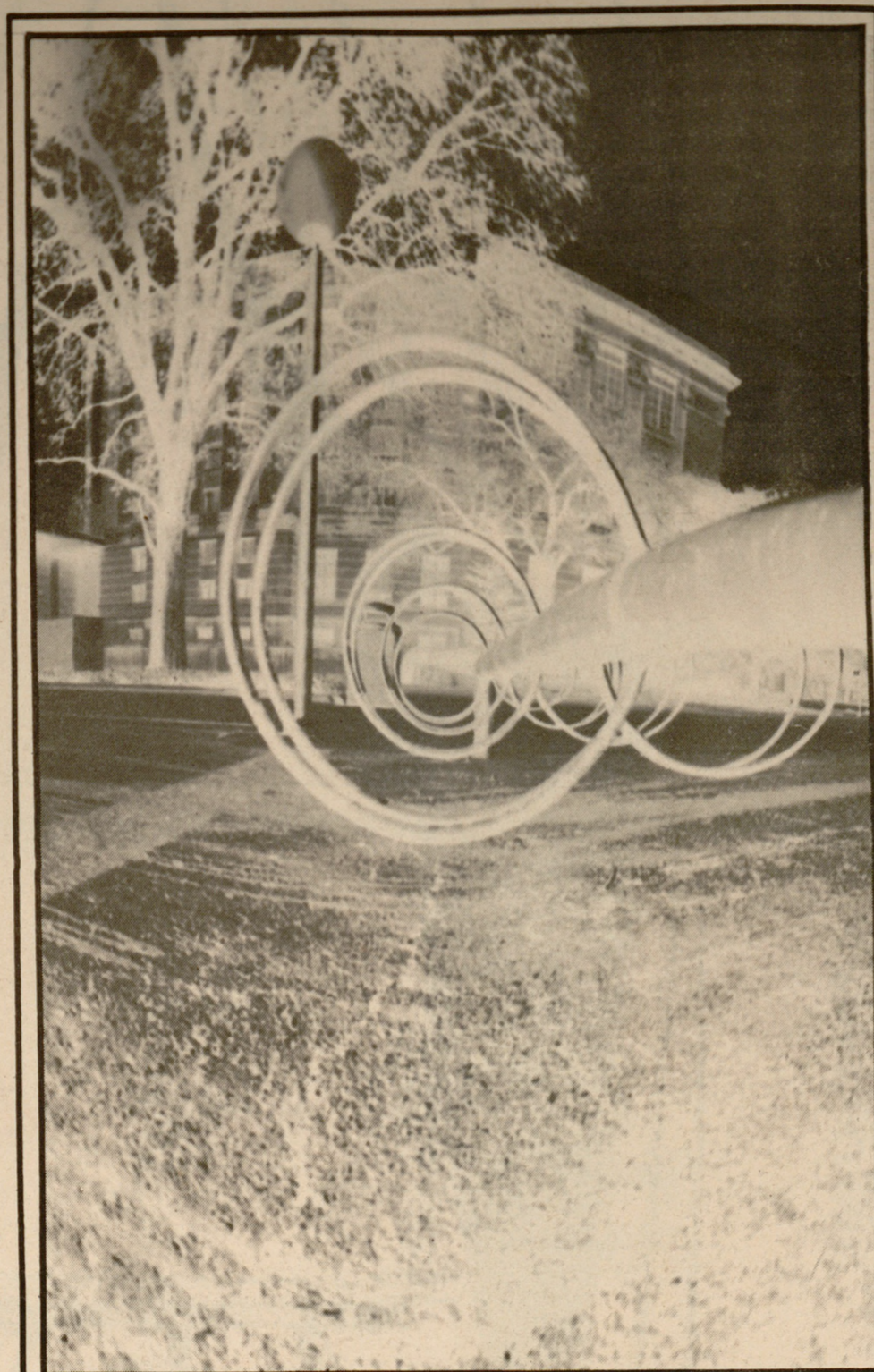
I had looked through their wedding photos perhaps dozens of times, but I had never before realized that my parents had ever been so young. Somehow, they had seemed to me to have always been old. Like every other child, I never thought that my parents could understand my problems or relate to the experiences I uncovered. I had discounted all the suggestions and knowledge they offered because I knew "better" than they did. They were just old people trying to push me around and make me do what they wanted.

But suddenly, that night when the house was still and I was alone with my thoughts, I found myself relating to my parents. I finally understood the "hows" and the "whys" of raising two kids and how difficult it must have been for them to let their babies grow up. When it would have been easier for them to run to my rescue, they forced themselves to let me try to solve my own problems. Then they picked me up, dusted me off and gave me a hug when I failed, and let me try again. Because of them, I'm a stronger, better person than I might have been.

Now when I go home, instead of seeing two old people trying to enforce outdated rules and regulations, I see my parents as young and happy, ready to pursue whatever further experiences life may offer.

And I am grateful, now, that they did let me grow up.

Robbyn L. Lister is a senior journalism major and news editor for The Battalion.



This week's attention photo of the A&M campus was taken by Fernando Yebra, a senior environmental design major, using a pinhole camera.

Editor's Note: This attention!! page will be used each week as a forum for you, our readers. We encourage you to submit any original work that would be suitable for publication in At Ease.

Pictures should be black-and-white shots that are unique either in content, angle or technique. Columns, essays or poems should be no longer than 500 words, and should relate to an unusual experience, a new perspective on a common experience, or just about anything else you want to share with our readers. Please don't send us your gripes, complaints, or sermons on heavy-duty issues — send those to the Battalion's Opinion Page.

Don't forget to put your name and phone number on anything you send us. Then just drop it off at the Battalion, Room 216 of the Reed McDonald Building. Be sure to specify that it is for At Ease.

In The News

by Karen Kroesche

We have been bombarded lately with news of conflicts in the Persian Gulf, clandestine operations with the Contras and even convergences of the harmonic variety. What could possibly lie ahead?

Well folks, the truth of the matter is, the fun is just beginning.

Fall '87 promises even more controversy in the news as Texas prepares for a papal visit and the nation floats along under the leadership of a president that nobody seems to trust anymore.

As Reagan's popularity dwindles, the 1988 presidential race will undoubtedly heat up in the months ahead. It has been rumored that names such as Donna Rice and Fawn Hall (of whom Bob Hope recently said, "She can shred my cue cards anytime") may be added to the already-lengthy list of candidates, but personally my vote is with Vanna White. She's got charisma, a good "on-camera" appearance and she doesn't say a lot — characteristics that our current president has proven to be effective in the leadership of a country, or at least in winning the popularity polls.

Another political race that's already a hot topic is the Texas gubernatorial race. Our home state made the national news when Gov. Bill Clements and former Gov. Mark White were slinging mud at each other at this time last year. Perhaps things will be a bit more sedate in the coming years. Not likely.

In actuality, the field of

candidates really isn't clear yet. We know who's not running — Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby and Mayor Henry Cisneros of San Antonio. But don't expect Cisneros, who formerly served on the Texas A&M Board of Regents, to fade into the background just because he is not seeking a state-wide public office right now. A recent article in Texas Monthly says that the down-to-earth mayor definitely has a political future.

"He (Cisneros) does indeed

Controversy plagues papal Mass site

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — The rolling terrain that will serve as the site for prayers and thanksgiving at Texas' first papal Mass Sept. 13 so far has been the focus of controversy and concern.

There have been complaints that officials are ill-prepared to handle the crush of people, concerns raised by residents in the surrounding neighborhood about possible property damage, and fears that many may be injured in the crowds or become ill in the heat. There aren't even enough toilets at the site, critics say.

And there are too many fire ants. But planners of the Mass, which is expected to draw 500,000, say their plans are adequate and the problems will be resolved.

Thirty-six first-aid stations, some staffed by doctors and nurses, will be posted around the 144-acre site west of downtown, and emergency vehicles and Army medical helicopters will transport anyone who is seriously hurt to area hospitals.

More than 600 medical volunteers, hundreds of church volunteers and local, county and state law enforcement officials will be at the site to help control the crowds.

Recently, Dr. Katharine Rathbun, the city's former health director, charged that hundreds of people could die because organizers of the Mass were ill-prepared. She had already planned to resign, but decided to quit earlier in protest of what she called poor planning.

"It's just hard to believe if you've never dealt with disaster work that a church service could kill people," she said after her resignation. "There's nothing in the fact that it's a church

service that is going to do away with the heat and sun of a San Antonio September."

City and church officials have countered with recommendations that children, the elderly, the obese and those with medical problems not attend the Mass because of the expected hot weather and claustrophobic-like conditions.

"I think there's a fairly good control of the situation," said Dr. Fernando Guerra, the interim director of the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District. It took church officials several months to find the right piece of land for the Mass, to get water and utilities to it and to coordinate the logistics of moving throngs of people in and out of the residential area without trespassing through private property.

The Rev. David Garcia, chairman of the Mass site committee, said 750 portable toilets and three large latrines will be available. Also, more than 800,000 gallons of drinking water will be supplied, although individuals are encouraged to bring their own supply of food and water, Garcia said.

After the Mass, the site will be home to a new development in the growing area, where other new homes are being built. Residents have voiced concern about the huge influx of people damaging their property.

Deputy Police Chief Robert Heuck said, "There have been some concerns but you've got to remember that this crowd is going to church. It's not like a sports event and we don't anticipate any problem with the people getting overly excited about the thing and not respecting the owners' property."

The number of people expected to attend the Mass is uncertain. Early estimates put the crowd at 1 million, but church officials, saying that they did not want to scare anyone away, reduced their estimate to 500,000.

No private vehicles will be allowed within a two-mile radius of the Mass site and many worshippers will arrive in more than 1,500 city and school buses that will take them to within a mile of the location.

Rathbun, the former health director, wanted to adhere to the state's Mass Gatherings Act, which would limit the size of the crowd and specify the number of toilets.

She recommended the crowd be limited to 125,000 to adhere to the 50-square-foot-per-person gatherings act recommendation.

Garcia said the Catholic church is trying to adhere to the act, but is not bound by it because the event would not go beyond the 12-hour limit.

"My understanding is that this unique papal Mass event really is so different from what the law was written for that it seems that the application is not pertinent, but we have met every standard but that footage," Garcia said.

Garcia said the size of the site should allow for about 12 square feet per person.

The Rev. Larry Stuebben, chairman of the papal visit committee, said he hoped Rathbun's criticism would not scare away worshippers.

"Something is going to happen in San Antonio that has never happened before and may never happen again," he said. "I think a significant disservice has been done to a great many good people due to alarmists."

sporting for years and becoming popular again. It seems people have begun flocking to the barber for the "Ollie North" look. I guess it's the patriotic thing to do these days.

It will be interesting to see what becomes of Lt. Col. Oliver North after the investigative smoke clears. People are already sporting "Ollie for President" buttons and T-shirts. Only time will tell if he can compete with Vanna's charisma.

Finally, the harmonic convergence and the return of the mini-skirt could only mean one thing: Disco music will live again. Yes, we will once again bob to the beat of groups like the BeeGees, KC and the Sunshine Band and the Village People.

I can see it now, Ollie North on the television screen in a campaign commercial, dressed in full military uniform with an American flag in the background, singing "Macho, macho man, . . . I want to be your macho man . . ."