

# Opinion

## Flying high with Horrible Dangerous Things

Call it the summer of the airline foible. Or, as Newsweek did, the year of the near miss. Whatever it was, I watched it with amusement, thinking it was the latest of the Horrible Dangerous Things.



Sue Krenek

You know, Horrible Dangerous Things. Like crack was last summer. Like apartheid was once upon a time before we all reverted to apathy. Horrible Dangerous Things get some momentum built up — a magazine cover here and there, a special segment on "Live at Five" — and before you can blink everyone you know is living in fear of being attacked by swarms of killer bees while they're on their way to get tested for AIDS.

As a journalist, I had been properly cynical about this Horrible Dangerous Thing. I listened to the newsroom jokes about Delta pilots landing at the wrong airport and heard all the horror stories about near misses.

Just another media trend. Or so I thought.

Then I flew to Riverton, Wyoming. Elizabeth Dole, quit campaigning for Bob and call your office. The crisis is real.

I'm the traveler least affected by airline problems, the vacationer who hopes merely to complete a trip without loss of life or luggage. But during my trek, which involved four flights, three airlines, two schedule changes and one missing piece of luggage, I grew to understand the frustration of the business traveler.

My original flight was delayed, so the ever-helpful airline people arranged a flight that would guarantee my opportunity to do the making-a-connection sprint through the busy Denver airport. I did just that, arriving as my plane boarded through Door 1. Door 1? The door led to a battered van with no passenger door. This was an omen.

The plane was, well, tiny. I had a window seat. And an aisle seat. All at once. During a refueling stop, the passengers giggled uneasily as three airport employees tried to get the gas cap back on the tank by bashing it as hard as they could.

When we finally arrived at Riverton, we sat at the terminal for about 10 minutes before the pilot finally cranked open the cockpit window.

"Hey!" he yelled at the ground crew. "You wanna come open the door so the passengers can get off the plane?"

I had made the trip safely. My luggage wasn't so lucky — it was nowhere to be found and didn't turn up until the next day.

Vowing I would never fly on a small plane again, I left for a week of camping and trout fishing.

I thought my return trip was set. My ticket had been paid for a month ago — what could go wrong? My father urged me to call the airport and verify the flight time. To humor him, I tried. The airport number had been disconnected. The airline I was flying had recently bought out another company, and neither number was listed in the phone book. I gave up.

And so it was that I pulled up into the parking lot just in time to see my flight leave for Denver. Once inside, I promptly did what any liberated woman of the 80s would do. I dissolved into helpless tears. My boyfriend, meanwhile, yelled at various airline personnel until he determined that the flight time had been changed and the airline hadn't notified my travel agent of the change.

Once again, I boarded a tiny plane. We took off during a hailstorm, an experience akin to riding in the back car of a monster roller coaster, only less fun. Just as we got off the plane in

Denver, the skies opened up in a downpour that soaked all of us as we shivered on the tarmac.

Drenched, I did the making-a-connection sprint again, this time carrying a backpack and fishing rod in addition to my carry-on bag full of frozen trout. The gate agent held the plane for me, and the guys in the first class section had a good laugh at the sight of a bedraggled girl trying to get a backpack and fishing rod onto an already-full plane.

I got back to Houston three hours late. But at least I had my luggage in time, and the trout hadn't melted much.

And I guess that's about all you can expect from the Horrible Dangerous Thing that air travel has become.

Sue Krenek is a senior journalism major and the opinion page editor of The Battalion.

## Watching TV Watching TV Watching TV

To say television insults our intelligence is a truism. It's not the mechanical device, of course, or even the broadcast medium. It's the mind-numbing programming that is so offensive.

Jerry Rosiek Guest Columnist

I mean, who invents programs like "The A-Team"? And who writes the Ronco commercials? Better yet, who has kept these things on the air for so long? I think I know the answer to this last question. As terrifying as it may be, it seems no one has ever gone broke underestimating the American public.

Now, I'm not here to suggest we remove the marketing major from the school curriculum. Nor am I interested in passing laws restricting the Madison Avenue moguls that marketing majors grow up to be. As far as I'm concerned, the First Amendment to the Constitution is a good thing, and advertisers come under its protection.

So quit whining and just turn my set off, right? I agree. This is probably the best option. It is the option I take as often as possible.

Every once in a while, though, a flower pushes its way up through the cracks in the parking lot of television programming.

And then there is always the problem of the addicted roommate.

But the biggest problem with just throwing the TV in the trash bin forever is going to show up later. We don't talk about it much, but most of us are going to be parents someday. And who among us, besides a few flipped-out fundamentalists, are going to be so cruel as to deny their children the basic human right to watch television?

No, if not for our own sake then for our kids' sake we must learn to live with Ronco commercials. What we need is a way to watch television without being hypnotized by it. And I think my roommate and I have stumbled on such a way. Seriously.

Last semester the only TV my house had was a twelve-inch black-and-white set. After the semester break, my roommate returned from home with a brand-new RCA eighteen-inch color set that promptly replaced the small black-and-white set in our living room.

Since we didn't have cable we had to rely on those primitive signal receptors, rabbit ears. And, as it turned out, the new set wouldn't pick up NBC, but the old set would. So the little black-and-white set made it back into the living room setting on top of the new one.

When a friend of mine asked to store his eighteen-inch Zenith color set at our house while he moved, it became obvious what we had to do. We placed the third set on the bottom of our stack of televisions. It looked like an electronic snowman with long thin metallic arms and ears sticking out from behind.

Then we turned all three sets on at once.

At first we tuned them into different channels. This creates many interesting effects. Unless a show is extremely well-made and uninterrupted, your attention wanders between sets, mixing up plotting and formats. You may find sinister intent in a bird's flight on a PBS wildlife program because you're listening simultaneously to the theme from "Miami Vice." Or you might find yourself wondering just who George Bush is sleeping with because "Dynasty" is on the other set while he gives a speech.

The most wholesome effect of multiple watching comes, however, when all three sets are tuned to the same channel. Television shows we know are put together — color schemes, camera angles, dialogue, the whole bit — to string us along and keep us watching through the commercials. But they are put together on the assumption we will be watching only one set at a time. When you watch three screens full of "Three's Company" or Juicy Fruit commercials, the contrivance and the repetitiveness of this type of programming is emphasized. And without any real effort on the viewer's part, television's hypnotic effect evaporates.

Now if we can only figure out how to multiple read.

Now if we can only figure out how to multiple read.

Now if we can only figure out how to multiple read.

Jerry Rosiek is a senior physics and philosophy major and a regularly appearing guest columnist for The Battalion.



"We struck a deal with Ted Turner...He agreed to colorize this year's crop of candidates..."

### Mail Call

#### Belated thanks

EDITOR:

In the September 4 issue of *The Battalion*, an ad appeared thanking the counselors and staff of A&M's newest tradition, Student "Y" T-Camp. The ad was ordered on September 2, but a counselor's name was left off the ad.

I would like to thank Leah Hanselka, a counselor from the Camp Kyle Komrades of T-Camp, for her contribution to the camp.

I am indeed proud to have had the privilege of working with all those people involved with putting on Texas A&M's first orientation camp for transfer students. I would like to thank all those people directly and indirectly involved with T-Camp (too numerous to mention here) and all of you who have been supportive of our program. Most importantly, I would like to thank those transfer students who attended T-Camp '87. They made the staff's job a pleasure and made T-Camp '87 an overwhelming success. Thanks again and have a great semester! Gig 'em!

Diamond Dave Mendoza '88  
Director, Student "Y" T-Camp '87

#### Ad follies

EDITOR:

I am the Alpha Tau Omega Rush chairman for Fall '87. Included in the duties of my office are placing advertisements for our parties in *The Battalion*.

Naturally, for our first party on Thursday, Sept. 3, we wanted to take out a large ad. One of our alumni, Pat McCauley, spent more than a day drawing a beach scene to appear in a half-page ad on Thursday the 3rd. I brought

the drawing in, showed a member of *The Battalion's* advertising staff how I wanted the ad to appear and agreed to pay \$220 for the ad.

The purpose of having open parties is so that we can meet rushees who don't already know an active. Therefore, we depend heavily on *The Battalion's* circulation for the success of our party.

Furthermore, this semester, Jolt Cola is sponsoring our rush. Part of the agreement was that we would mention Jolt Cola in our advertisements and serve Jolt Cola to all the people who saw the ad and came to the party.

Our ad didn't appear in Thursday's *Battalion*. That's why I, and the rest of Alpha Tau Omega, are very hacked. Not only will the attendance at our party be severely lessened, our sponsor is going to be very upset with us.

I thought that explaining the ad and checking on its progress was sufficient to ensure that the situation was under control. I have been proved wrong by the most blatant example of mismanagement and disorganization I have ever heard of.

Because we are a recognized student organization, I think legal action will be difficult, but I assure you that were possible we would pursue it. However, I do expect *The Battalion* to attempt to make some restitution. You can start by printing this letter.

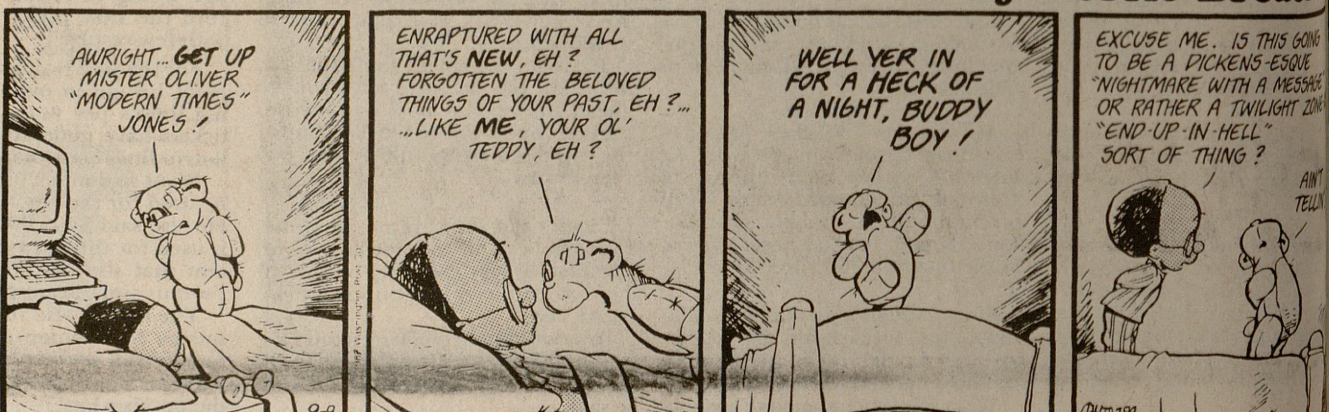
Craig Klein

Editor's Note: Once again, we'd like to clarify that advertising for *The Battalion* is handled by a professional staff and is completely separate from the student-run news operation.

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 author's name, address and telephone number of the writer.

### BLOOM COUNTY

by Berke Breathed



### The Battalion

(USPS 045 360)

Member of Texas Press Association Southwest Journalism Conference

#### The Battalion Editorial Board

- Sondra Pickard, Editor
- John Jarvis, Managing Editor
- Sue Krenek, Opinion Page Editor
- Rodney Rather, City Editor
- Robynn L. Lister, News Editor
- Lloyd Brumfield, Sports Editor
- Tracy Staton, Photo Editor

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, 216 Reed McDonald, 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*, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77843-4111.