

# Opinion

## Why can't football fans act like human beings?

So here we are, gearing up for bonfire and the big game with Texas. And here I am, praying I don't kill anybody at the game.

You see, it's not that I'm such a rabid Aggie fan that I set out to decapitate any orange-blooded types who have the audacity to venture near Kyle Field. It's just that I'm growing sick of football fans.

Not just Aggie fans, mind you — all football fans. What I've figured out in four years of spending Saturdays at Kyle Field is that most of us are fair-weather fans at best and hypocrites at worst. We expect other teams' fans to be well-behaved toward us, but we reserve the right to be crude and offensive to



Sue Krenek

them. The LSU game this year was a prime example. Some LSU fans got a little out of control and a lot intoxicated. Being rowdy college kids whose team had just won a big game, they stormed the field and promptly got themselves arrested. Some others made nasty remarks to Aggie fans. Come Monday, the population of Aggieland was irate and *The Battalion* was flooded with letters about what a disgrace the LSU fans were to their school and how we Aggies would never show such lack of respect for our opponents or their schools.

Hogwash. I remember the Texas game my freshman year very well, partly because A&M pulled off an upset win and mostly because we acted like complete jerks about it. After the game, there were Aggies all over Sixth Street, and I watched a lot of them say nasty things to UT fans. I watched three or four of them pick fights with UT fans. It

didn't make me feel too proud.

But what's sad is that it wasn't an isolated incident. And our disrespect extends not only to the other team's fans, but also to the other team, the referees and sometimes our own team.

Last year I spent the entire first half of one game trying to keep myself from throwing two senior cadets over the concrete barrier to the first deck. It was tough. The gentlemen in question were having a tough time with the officiating, i.e. the refs were calling the Aggies for penalties we were committing.

"\*%&\*%&#%(% refs!!!" they would yell. "Go back to the &#%&#% Southeast Conference!" Or: "Ref, get your \*%&\*%&# head out of your &#%&# and call 'em right!"

During halftime, these two intellectual powerhouses decided the refs were obviously incompetent and incapable of calling a game correctly. When the second half started — you guessed it — the penalties all seemed to be against the other team.

"Way to go, ref!!!" they yelled. "Way to call 'em!!!"

Don't get me wrong: I don't like to see the Ags called for penalties any more than any other fan. But if we did it, it's our fault and yelling at the ref only makes you look like a fool.

So, for that matter, does the horse laugh. Like I said, I don't like seeing the Aggies get penalties. But even though I know how much I don't know about football, there are plenty of times when

I see the foul they're calling. And I find it ridiculous that some yell leader who's had his eye on the crowd and not the game can decide to get 70,000 people to yell at a ref for what may have been a good decision.

I used to go along with the horse laugh in situations like that. Not anymore. This can cause problems, like at the Arkansas game when I refused to "hump it" for an unjustified horse laugh and the guy behind me said, "Hump it, Ags!" in a highly menacing voice two inches from my ear.

The Arkansas game brings to mind another obnoxious fan: the guy who's out for blood. One of these was a few rows behind us at the game, screaming, "BREAK THEIR LEGS! BREAK THEIR LEGS!" Luckily, one of the guys I was with loudly proclaimed, "What a sportsman we have here!" eliminating the need for me to say something that would have gotten my face broken.

I know, I know, that stuff is all in fun. But I've had too many friends who played football somewhere along the line to be comfortable with people who gloat when the other team has an injured man on the field. I was brought up to believe that this is a game, and that if you're any kind of fan at all you hope everyone stays healthy so they can play a good game. I don't want to be around the kind of people who can cheer at an injury that could end a player's career.

But worst of all are the fans who are all too quick to engage in player-bashing

as soon as someone has a bad game. And the best example I can think of is Craig Stump. You remember Craig, the miracle quarterback who came in after Kevin Murray broke his ankle three years ago and led the Aggies to some great end-of-season victories. Jackie Sherrill even publicly debated about who would start for the Aggies next season. But Stump remained the backup until Murray left.

So what happens at the beginning of the season? The fans label Stump incompetent, boo him; and cry for him to be replaced. Nice fans, those. But beginning two weeks ago, Stump made a comeback, and once again he's the fan's golden boy. I think it's great that Stump's playing so well, and I can't wait to watch him help beat up on the Longhorns. But those fair-weather fans really irritate me.

I have to admit there have been times when I haven't cheered for Craig Stump, but that was back when I was in high school and a Port Arthur Jefferson team led by Stump and Shea Walker regularly pounded my beloved LaPorte Bulldogs. I think that's a pretty good excuse. But come Thursday night, I'll be out there yelling for the Aggies — not yelling at the refs, not seeking the other team's blood.

Now, if I can just refrain from bludgeoning any other fans...

Sue Krenek is a senior journalism major and opinion page editor for *The Battalion*.

### Mail Call

#### 'Slander about Arabs'

EDITOR:

*The Battalion* published on Nov. 19 a most disturbing and insulting interview with the consul of the Israeli Consulate in Houston. The topic was terrorism, but it would have been better labeled "Slander about Arabs." How this interview passed the review of the editorial staff is incomprehensible. The staff has seemingly lost that most valued of news-reporting qualities, objectivity. It is mentioned that the consul was in town "to meet with several groups and discuss international terrorism..." *The Battalion* did not bother to cover this event or even to mention which groups he met with but leapt at the opportunity to meet personally with him and quote word for word foolish untruths about Middle Eastern society and politics, going so far as to say that terrorism is an integral part of Arab society and that Arabs have been used to it for hundreds of years. That is preposterous! Furthermore the staff's slanderous intent is made further obvious by its highlighting of one of the more ridiculously sensational of the consul's statements. *The Battalion* appears to be losing its sense of responsibility for reporting news and events. This man's opinions are better placed on the opinion page or even better in the sewer. An apology from the *Battalion* staff for slandering the Arab people everywhere would appear to be appropriate at this point.

Tarek Dahdah  
grad student

#### Behind the times

EDITOR:

Hitler had once mentioned that the first step in exterminating a group of people is to dehumanize them. This concept had resulted in some of the ugliest atrocities of this century. Ironically, some of the people against which this principle was applied are utilizing the same principle to achieve their own means. On Thursday, in an interview with the Israeli consul general in Houston published in *The Battalion*, dehumanization of Arabs was the main objective. Arabs were portrayed in a highly racist and stereotypical manner resulting from a mentality full of hatred and intolerance. In the article's headline, *The Battalion* suggested that the consul general had some answers to some of the world's problems.

What really shocked us is that the article causes more problems than it solves. It is really disturbing to read such remarks coming from what we expect to be a respected diplomat at times when he should be talking of peace and mutual co-existence. No matter what the future holds, the Israelis will have to live with the Arabs side by side under some format. Such an attitude shown by an official representative of the Israeli government doesn't help much in fostering any chance for promoting peace and co-existence. We are sure that any person with some common sense is capable of distinguishing that what was reported is nothing but low-level name-calling and racist slander that is totally unjustified and serves no useful purpose.

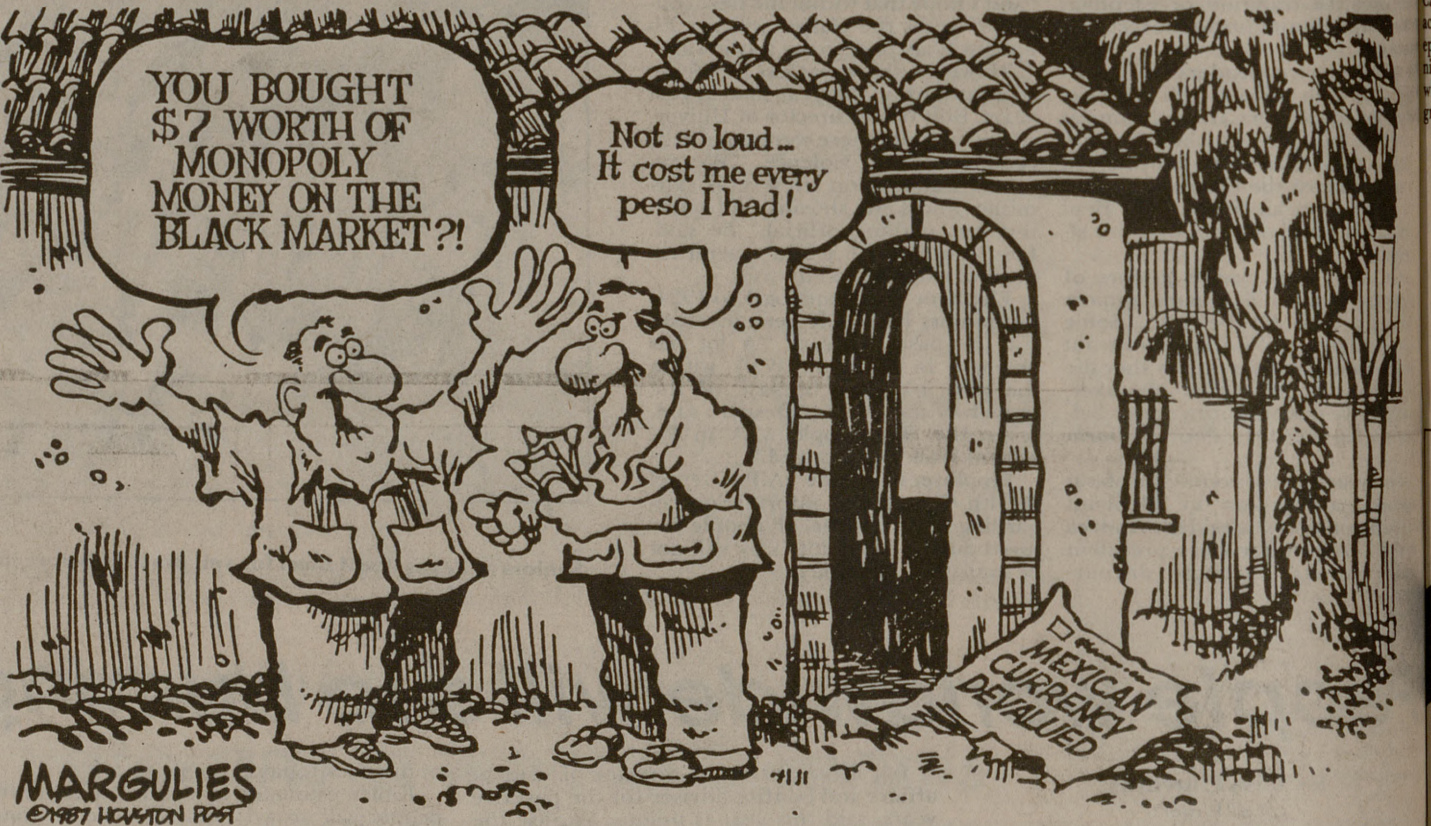
What disturbs us even more is *The Battalion's* sensational portrayal of such remarks. *The Battalion*, as a newspaper that projects and serves the intellectual environment of this University, should promote an environment of tolerance and tranquility, not racism and stereotypes. As a part of both this University and the Arab community in this town, we were really shocked and offended by this article. We would hope that *The Battalion* would be more forthcoming in promoting intellectual and useful dialogue rather than sensationalizing slander and racism.

Wael A. Massarweh  
grad student  
accompanied by four signatures

*Editor's Note: Two headlines were printed with the article on the Israeli consul. One said, "Israeli suggests solutions to world problems," and the other read, "Consul discusses causes of terrorism." Nowhere did *The Battalion* suggest that Shmuel Ben-Shmuel had the answers to the world's problems.*

*The Battalion was given the opportunity to interview a prominent official considered an expert on the Middle East. Whether the official was Arab or Israeli was not an issue — either one would have received equal coverage. Because of the controversial subject and to ensure objectivity, *The Battalion* chose to use a question-answer format, which clearly distinguishes the reporter's questions from the consul's answers. The statements made by Ben-Shmuel are his own opinions, not those of the writer or of *The Battalion*. The publication of the article was in no way aimed at any particular group, and its intent was to promote an exchange of ideas on a controversial subject, not to slander any group. An apology from *The Battalion* to the Arab people is unnecessary and far from appropriate.*

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.



## Get those cute pets outta here!

Pet peeves.

Just about everybody has one. Some have many more. I have two.

No. 1 on my pet peeve list is the word "cute."

Cute is such an innocent little word. Trouble is, I can't stand to hear it.

I guess I've gotten burned out on the everyday use of the word cute. Stop for a minute and think about how it's used. How do people usually describe a puppy? Or a baby? Or anything small, for that matter? That's right, you guessed it — "Oh, it's so cute!"

Cute is defined as being attractive, especially in a dainty or delicate way. In that sense, describing babies or puppies as being cute is very appropriate. But think about this: how many times have you heard a small car or truck described as cute? "Oh, that car's so cute! I want one!" If I had a nickel for every time I heard that phrase...

My No. 2 pet peeve is how people act around pets. What is it about pets that turns otherwise normal adults into babbling idiots?

John Jarvis  
Guest Columnist

I have a theory to explain this, and an example to support my theory cropped up in the newsroom of *The Battalion* one night.

A friend of mine was sitting in the newsroom with her cocker spaniel, Sebastian.

In the space of less than five minutes, I saw four people either talk baby talk to Sebastian, run around the newsroom with him, or bark at him.

I know I was amused. And I guess it's just our way of trying to relate to Sebastian — and to pets in general.

It seems nobody's faultless on this one. I've even babbled to animals a time or two. But we usually don't need an excuse to talk like babbling idiots — at least not here in the newsroom of *The Battalion*. The pressures of working on stories and going to classes at the same time do that well enough.

I'm curious, though; what exactly is it that makes humans think they have to babble for pets to understand? I'm sure that if Sebastian could have spoken, he'd have told people to speak coherently, because nobody could understand what they were saying to him.

But when I think about it, it makes

sense not to make sense to animals. The darned things can't understand us anyway, can they?

Before the animal lovers string me up by my thumbs for saying that, let me defend my reasoning.

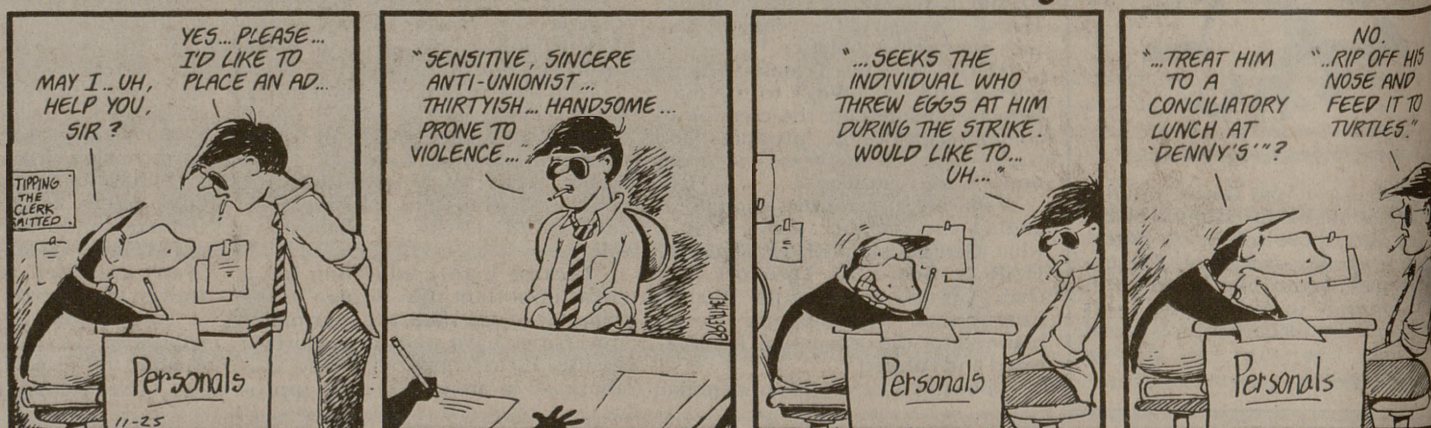
Take Sebastian as an example. About the most that dog understands is, "Blah, blah, Sebastian, blah, blah, blah..." You get the picture, right? Words don't mean a lot to him.

But Sebastian does understand the tone in the voice that's talking to him. He does know if he's been a good dog or a bad dog. That's what's important. And believe me, Sebastian found out both ends of the good-bad spectrum many times when he was in the newsroom.

But I guess I can live with my pet peeves. When I think about it, it was kind of humorous when everybody was going wacky with the dog in the newsroom. And though I hate to admit it, I actually enjoyed it when I heard some of the people who were talking to Sebastian. I wish you could have heard them too. They sounded so cute!

John Jarvis is a senior journalism major and managing editor of *The Battalion*.

### BLOOM COUNTY



by Berke Breathed

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