

# Opinion

## Noticing dear dad and the dog grow old together

I knew something was awry when our family dog came down with hookworm the same week my dad caught the flu. The Dog is an 11-year-old crotchety miniature schnauzer that we purchased when I was in junior high. He was to have been "my dog," but being an irresponsible kid I left the feeding and walking chores to my parents. My contribution was to teach The Dog to walk backward. My mom took on the responsibility of feeding him once a day, and my dad got into the habit of walking him, once in the morning and again in the evening.



John MacDougall

After being away from home for weeks and months at a time, I began to notice my parents growing older. I would come home Friday evening to the empty nesters — Dear Old Mom, Dad and The Dog in the family den watching "The Nightly Business Report." They seemed to be growing comfortably old together.

My father is in his lean years now. He works as a realtor in Houston's beleaguered economy. Dad puts in a good 10-hour day during the week, puts around the house on weekends and watches football on Sundays. Having accomplished most of the goals he set out to attain as a young man, my father no longer feels any compulsion to experience new things or rethink old ideas. He knows that he doesn't like Mexican or Chinese food, is perfectly happy to wear polyester slacks and refuses to pay more than \$19.95 for a wristwatch.

The youngest of three kids, I bade farewell to my parents and the dog as I went off to college in the fall of 1981.

Like my dad, The Dog has entrenched itself in a domestic lifestyle. He asks very little of his owners. "Walk

me twice a day, feed me that fake hamburger that comes in cellophane packets and let me bark at strangers — especially garbagemen. For this, I will provide you with affection and protection." Not a bad deal.

Of course, there are a few extras thrown in. The Dog thinks our Baldwin piano legs are tree trunks and maybe rightly so. It is strange to consider that my father hates when I play the piano (I am really bad). Maybe The Dog is making a statement. When he was a pup, we used to put his nose up to the dirty deed and spank him. Over the years though, my parents lost their motivation to discipline him and learned to accept it. When I go home to visit, sometimes I'll catch a wiff of dog pee, but my parents can't even detect it. I guess they have gotten used to it. When I bring up the subject with my dad, he talks about putting The Dog to sleep. My mom tries to change the subject. Sometimes she confides to me in hushed tones that she

thinks The Dog is going senile. She gets up before my dad wakes and is always the first to find dog crap on the carpet. She cleans it up before my dad rises.

I never really knew how much affection my Dad had for The Dog until it was running across the street and was hit by a car. The poor pup was lying in the road in shock. It was a hit-and-run — no car in sight. If that were a person lying in the street instead of The Dog, I probably would have felt no more sympathy than I did. We brought him to the animal hospital where the vet removed his spleen and patched him up. I called my Dad from the clinic and told him that the dog had been run over. Dad sounded choked up on the phone. I was moved and astonished. After that, he never let The Dog outside without a leash. His excuse was, "The last time you let that dog run without a leash it cost me \$350, and I'll be damned if I'm gonna pay that again."

Dad and The Dog have come to terms

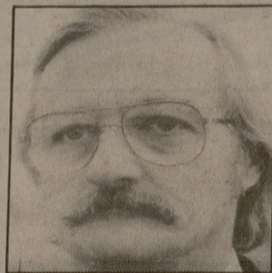
with each other. Dad's says the Dog is a pleasant inconvenience. The schnauzer is content to sleep by my parents' bedside at night. Dad adores loyalty, while The Dog responds hand that feeds him. Recently I gained new admiration from my Dad. The animal has gotten into the habit of barking at the homosexual neighbor who frolics in a hot tub behind my parents' house.

Dad and the animal seem to be more in common now. Both don't move as fast as they once did; their mood is the gamut from slightly perturbed to extremely grumpy, and they have established a home domain. The dog has become a reflection of master, and vice versa. The implications of this are I'm afraid I'll go home one of these weekends and find my father with the rose bushes without a hose. I hope Dad doesn't read this.

John MacDougall is a graduate student and a columnist for The Battalion.

## Firing 'the Greek' strikes out at racism, improves television

When I was but a lad in a Polish neighborhood on the northwest side of Detroit, plotting my escape from high school, I sought out the most respected man in the school, the manual training teacher, and asked:



Donald Kaul

"Why is it, Mr. Wilson, that all the people who run the factories in Detroit have names like yours and live in places like Grosse Pointe while all the people who work in the factories are Polish and live around here?"

"Hereditiy," Mr. Wilson said. "Poles through the centuries have been bred for manual labor. Have you ever noticed what big hands they have, what powerful muscles in their arms and shoulders? Look at a Pole's eyes and what do you see? The steely gaze of a punch press operator. Poles, my son, were born to work."

"And people with names out of an English novel weren't?"

"Not at the same jobs. They don't have a talent for heavy lifting like the Slavs and colored people do. They are more suited for running things."

"I don't see why Poles couldn't run things too."

"If Poles started running things, there wouldn't be anything left for the WASPs, don't you see that? I mean, all the workers are ethnics or people of color. The only thing left for WASPs is running things."

"That doesn't seem fair, somehow."

"I know, but as a great American will say someday, life isn't fair. There's another factor in this too. I don't want to engage in racial slurs, but the fact is that WASPs are lazy. Have you ever seen a Pole not working; working or bowling? No. He keeps practicing work until he gets good at it. What does a WASP do? He puts in his hours, then plays golf — from a cart. He goes sailing; he dresses for dinner. And while he's fooling around, the Pole is out there perfecting his craft. That's why the Pole is the better worker and that's why it would be foolish to let him run things."

"Gee thanks, Mr. Wilson, I never thought of it that way before."

And I haven't since, to tell you the truth; Mr. Wilson was a dunce. But no bigger a dunce, it seems, than Jimmy "the Greek" Snyder, the CBS football "analyst" who got fired last week after making similar comments about why

blacks shouldn't be given coaching jobs.

To me, the most shocking thing about the Jimmy "the Greek" Snyder affair was the revelation that CBS had been paying him \$400,000 to \$500,000 a year. If that's the level of competence that a half-million buys these days, maybe congresspeople are worth \$90,000 a year.

I never understood Snyder's success. His greaseball charm left me totally unmoved and the insights he offered into games were negligible. Fifty grand I figured they were paying him, not 500. I'm glad CBS fired him if even for the wrong reasons.

Snyder performed a valuable community service by speaking out as he did. In saying that blacks are better athletes than whites because slave-owners bred the blacks' ancestors for physical attributes, he did no more than give voice to conventional wisdom. You can't correct wrong-headed conventional wisdom until you bring it out into the open.

The truth is that slavery isn't a long enough chapter in our history to bring about the genetic changes in blacks that Snyder claims for it, no matter what the breeding practices, and those practices were, in any case, less calculated than he thinks.

I confess that I don't have an answer to the question of why black athletes — both men and women — seem to be more prepossessing physical specimens than their white counterparts. Perhaps you could make a case for the filtering out of the less hardy by the spectacularly cruel voyage into the New World typically suffered by new black slaves. I don't know what that would have to do with a 42-inch vertical leap, however. Perhaps the incomparable grace of so many great black athletes finds origin in African tribal roots; I don't know.

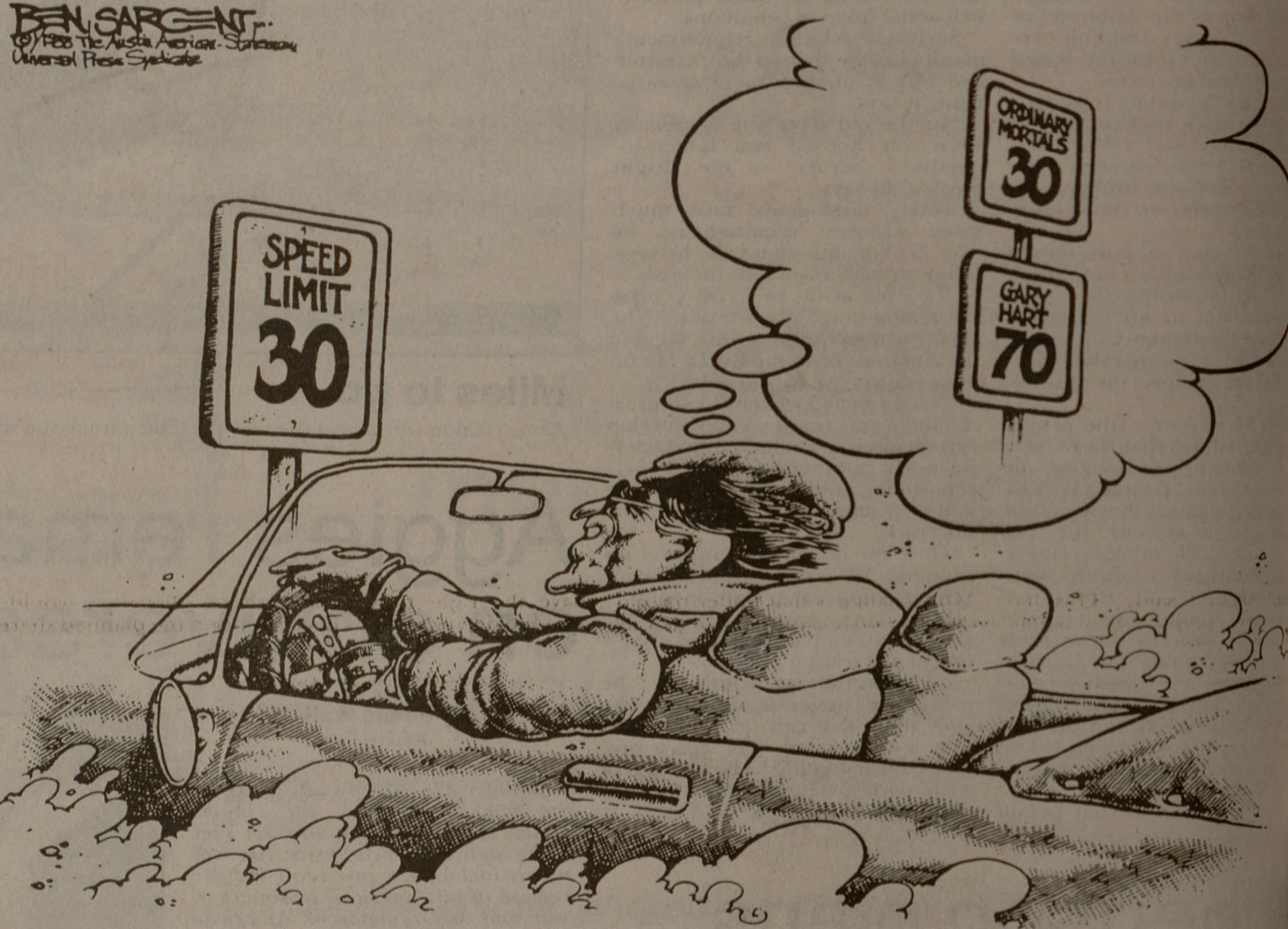
The point is, the physical prowess is an asset, not a liability; it shouldn't be held against them. Just because there are a lot of black athletes doesn't mean that there aren't a lot of blacks who are smart. There's no connection.

Snyder is the second Greek-American to be done in by his racist views on sports in the past year. Last summer Al Campanis lost his job with the Los Angeles Dodgers for saying that blacks seemed to "lack the necessities" to manage baseball teams. That lit up the sky and, according to Harry Edwards, the long-time black sports activist, sparked an improvement in baseball hiring practices.

One hopes the Snyder affair does the same for professional football. It's already improved television.

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## Mail Call

### A senior guinea pig

EDITOR:

I'm a graduating senior, and I feel like a guinea pig in this "finals experiment." Actually, I didn't mind it — until the faculty proposed that finals extend from May 9 through May 13, and only seniors who would graduate despite the outcome of their final exams would receive their diplomas at commencement.

That is ridiculous! Many of my classes count the final exam as one-third of the grade. That means that even if I have a high B average before the final, I can still fail. Thus, my grandparents will have traveled 1,800 miles to watch me receive an empty tube.

May I suggest leaving the schedule as it is? Flight and hotel reservations have already been made by many. Better yet, let's accept the student compromise: having seniors finish with finals by the 11th and everyone else by the 13th so the campus won't be empty during commencement... and my grandparents won't have to take pictures of my empty tube.

Bonnie O'Donnell '88

### Show your support

EDITOR:

Hats off to the Texas Aggie Band for its outstanding performance at G. Rollie White Coliseum last Wednesday night. It surprised everyone when it broke from its traditional style and played such hits as "Louie Louie." It's good to see that the band is willing to adapt to the needs of a basketball game.

As Aggies, we stand during all football games in support of our team. Yet, if you attended Wednesday's game,

you noticed a group of people who did not stand up during the yells. Although I am sure some were not, many of them were members of our football team. I am sure the basketball team would appreciate you standing during the yells as so many others do for y'all.

Kevin McGinnis '88

### Angry at an attitude

EDITOR:

The other day, I was in a local business when a middle-aged, mentally retarded man came in to do some business. I was shocked, in fact angered, by the attitude of the owner and his employees toward this man. Because of this I feel it is time for all "normal" people (if there is any definition of that term) to learn something before they pass an unkind and unfair judgment on one of these people.

You need to remember that the mentally handicapped are human beings just like you and I and deserve the same kindness, respect and compassion that we expect, if not demand, for ourselves. Before you let slip a cruel comment you should remember that it could have been one of your or one of your children who was born with this handicap.

Fellow Aggs, take what I say to heart and be thankful that you've been blessed with the gifts that you have. And the next time you meet one of these kind, gentle and special people, treat him or her with the dignity and compassion that you want shown to you and your friends and family.

Paul B. Woodard '89

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)

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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, 230 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-1111. 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.

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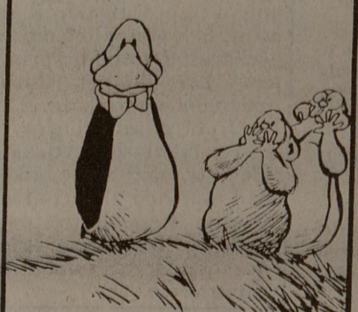
YA KNOW, THE FAR RIGHT'S DECLINING INFLUENCE OVER THE PRESIDENT REMINDS ME OF A FAVORITE METAPHOR:



"YOU CAN LEAD A YAK TO WATER BUT YOU... UH... ER..."



"YOU CAN LEAD A YAK TO WATER BUT YOU... UH... ER..."



"BUT YOU CAN'T TEACH AN OLD DOG TO MAKE A SILK PURSE OUT OF A PIG IN A POKE."

