

Opinion

Drum roll please — and the survey says . . .

"Sometimes the stories and reviews are written on a 3rd grade level."

"Local cartoons should be dropped."

"I wouldn't pay for the opportunity to read the Batt because of your bias."

"To persons visiting A&M, The Battalion makes Aggies seem like morons who care about nothing but sports, because it devotes such a large portion of the paper."



Sue Krenek

which should come as no surprise to anyone who pays attention to how few people vote in Student Government elections and the like. But for those of you — all four of you, actually — who asked about the results, here they are (with a roll of drums and flourish of trumpets or some such rot):

Most of you (you being the 39 who responded) think *The Batt* has done a pretty fair job, although you see room for improvement. Most of the complaints, surprisingly enough, dealt with circulation — you couldn't find a copy of the paper in a convenient place on campus.

In rating the overall paper, three rated *The Batt* poor, 13 rated it "fair" and 17 thought it was "good." Most of you apparently read the paper for campus news and the opinion page, with sports and *At Ease* drawing a small following as well.

After tallying the results, though, I think the most meaningful — not to mention the most amusing — response came in the comments. If you're trying to find out what people really think, comments such as "*At Ease* is a waste of paper" are, well, honest.

One person was equally brutal about the quality of *Warped and Waldo*, but we can't print what he said. The local cartoons, though, did take the worst beating of anyone here at the Battcave: A whopping 24 respondents weren't interested in them, with only five expressing interest.

Several people asked for more arts and entertainment coverage, and a few mentioned minority issues as an area that needed work. One reader requested Calvin and Hobbes. The comments also revealed that readers have a sort of love-hate relationship with sports. Fifteen people said they were interested in sports coverage; 14 were not interested. Some of those said sports should be drastically reduced or cut altogether.

So what's an editor to do? I had intended to use the surveys as guidelines for change, but how do you reconcile the following comments?

"Sports should be more in-depth, especially professional sports. Cover other colleges other than A&M and professionals."

"I say now is the time to overhaul *The Battalion* to reflect the rise of A&M as

an institute of higher learning rather than some outpost with a provincial view of events, that consistently devotes more than a third of its newspaper space to sports. Please get rid of that needless fanatical support for the coverage of sports that does not foster the development of critical thinking. Replace it with more insights into world events, i.e. elucidations of current international events, with accompanying historical development and analysis if necessary.

"I hope in the future that when I read the *Batt* I will be proud to find some substance, some manifestation of a world-class education rather than just a multitude of small voices vociferating their desires to beat our rival teams into an abject submission."

Whew. I'd hate to see what would happen if he put down his thesaurus and told us what he really thought.

Then there's the age-old question of bias on the opinion page. (As if opinions could, by their very nature, be unbiased.) As long as I've been at A&M, the students have accused the *Batt* of being a commie-pinko-liberal publication, and I figured the survey would give people a chance to say it in new and

interesting ways. I wasn't disappointed. The thing I most object to is the liberal bent of your editorials, syndicated columnists and cartoons. In addition to yourself and the University and profession (journalist) you should try yourself to try to be balanced (at least somewhat) in your approach. . . . An unbalanced partiality is a disgrace and poor reflection of all concerned."

But at least the criticism comes from both directions: The "drop Brian Erick" comment was balanced by the numbers of "not Mark Nair" scribbles the margins. And Brian's fans — the one who was "pleased the *Batt* includes Brian Frederick as a student columnist to help temper the views of the overpowering staff" — were no more over the top than Mark's ever-precise groups.

In the end, there was no real consensus in the admittedly minuscule survey we received. For every person who wanted to ditch some part of the paper, someone else thought it was the thing we have.

And so it goes.
Sue Krenek is a senior journalism major and editor of *The Battalion*.

Mail Call

No pain, no gain

EDITOR:

I am writing about a very disturbing article I read in Saturday's *Bryan-College Station Eagle*. The article stated that Aggie offensive lineman Louis Cheek is suing an A&M graduate student for \$750,000, claiming she deprived him of future earnings when she rear-ended the truck he was riding in. The police report states no one was injured in the accident, and the truck Cheek was riding in had damage described as "1" on a scale of 0-7, where 0 is no damage.

If that's not enough, Cheek filed the suit in September 1987, almost a year after the accident, and Cheek went on to play in ALL A&M games, including the Cotton Bowl.

The lawsuit alleges that Cheek "sustained injuries to his spine, back, neck and other parts of his body in varying degrees of severity."

Mr. Cheek, I think the part of your body most injured was your brain. What are you trying to pull off here? The blows you receive as an offensive lineman are much more severe than anything you received in that accident. You're eligible for the NFL draft in April, right?

Let me just leave you with a bit of advice: It would be a shame and an outrage for you to sue this girl for \$750,000 just so you can ensure your financial stability (\$750,000 is pretty stable) in case you don't make it in the NFL. Accept the fact that your injuries came from playing and not from that accident — don't blame an innocent person.

And if you do make the NFL, I have a bit of advice for all the NFL teams you play against: Take out an insurance policy in case Mr. Cheek feels that one of your defensive guys hit him too hard.

Jacque Coleman
graduate student

What, me care?

EDITOR:

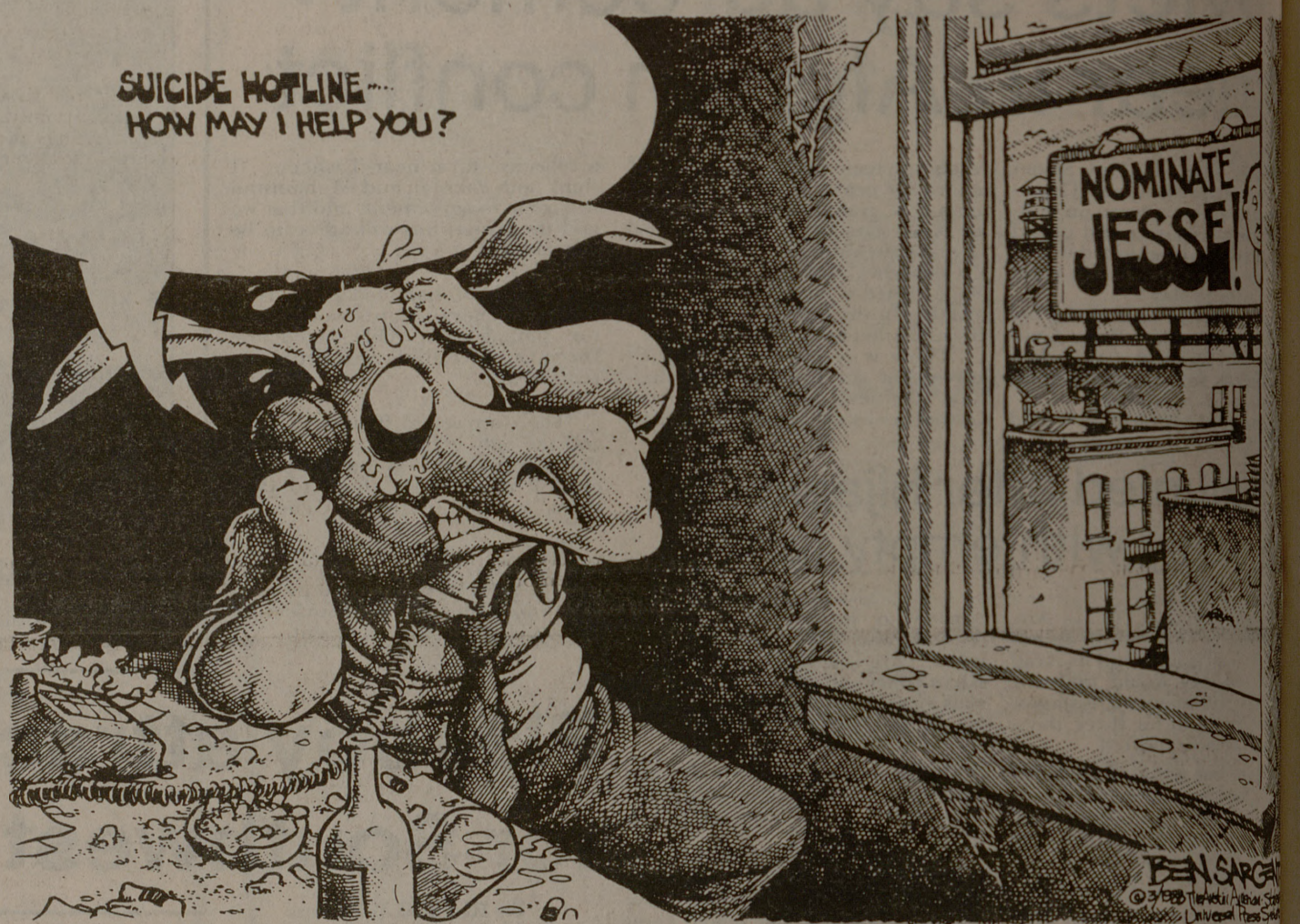
Apathy (as defined by *The American Heritage Dictionary*) — lack of emoting of feeling. In other words, who cares? This letter questions why everyone is criticizing the United States for sending troops to Central America. I am tired of everyone saying let's get out of Central America, we don't belong there. It's not our problem, it's not our fight, and the list is endless. Well, we do need to be there and we do need to support the contras. The main reason, obviously, is to stop the spread of communism. But, what about the other factors such as political and personal oppression — i.e. volunteering (?) to become a member of the Sandinistan army. The fact that the Sandinistas have held some political prisoners for nine years should cause us to ask ourselves why not, instead of why. People should not be jailed simply because they speak out against their government.

There are rights and freedoms man inherently possesses which should be upheld. And it is the natural role of United States, as the largest free nation (as well as the one with the most resources), to protect and support law and order everywhere — especially in our hemisphere!

This entire "who cares Nicaragua is not a threat to us" attitude must go. That is not the point. The point is these people need help to become a nation free from these oppressions. The United States can give them the opportunity for freedoms which should not be confined — press, religion, speech. Helping our fellow man attain such a state should be a common goal for all. If we do not take a stand as the superpower which advocates individual rights, then all countries susceptible to an overthrow by communist, or any force supressing these rights, will be successful — but then again WHO CARES.

Jeff Boglan '90

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.



Can't get rid of those first day jitters

I drove into a McDonald's and pulled up to the machine where you place your drive-through order.



Lewis Grizzard

"Welcome to McDonald's," the voice inside the machine said. "May I take your order, please?"

"Yes," I said. "I'll have an iced tea and an order of french fries."

A few minutes passed. Then the voice said, "Welcome to McDonald's. May I take your order, please?"

I repeated my order.

"Yes, I'll have one iced tea and an order of french fries."

"One cheese and an apple pie," said the voice.

"Please listen to me carefully," I said. "It is very hot out here with my window rolled down, talking to a machine. I'll have one iced tea and an order of french fries."

"And what would you like to drink with that?" asked the machine.

"Young lady," I said (the voice seemed to be that of a young female approximately 16 years of age with zits and a mouthful of gum). "I don't think you are really trying here."

"I realize you probably get orders that are very complicated, requiring you to retain at least three or four facts at once."

"But this is not one of those orders. This is a very simple order, one an 11-month-old orangutan could handle."

"It involves only two items. I would like to have an iced tea to drink, second I would like to have an order of french fries to go with it."

"Would you like sweetened or unsweetened tea?"

I thought to myself, "God, I have broken through?"

"Unsweetened," I said.

"And would you like some french fries to go with that?" the voice asked.

What one must do with rage is fight it off and never allow it to reach a point where it boils over, causing one to do something like rip the damned machine off its foundation and render it unrecognizable with a tire tool from one's trunk.

"Yes," I said, finally in control of self again. "I would like some french fries to go with that."

The voice quoted me a price and advised me to drive around.

So I drove around, ready for a confrontation, only to be greeted by a pretty, smiling face of a young girl or 16.

She handled me my order and took so long understanding you, it was your first day.

The first job I ever had was bagging groceries. My first day I was taking my grocery bags to her car and dropped the bag that included her. I just stood there frozen with fear.

"It's your first day, isn't it?" she asked. I nodded yes.

"Don't worry, you're just nervous and you'll get over it," the lady said.

"Don't worry, you're just nervous and you'll get over it," I said to her at McDonald's.

I drove away with my iced tea and french fries, feeling very small.

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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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