

Opinion

The PTA — a life not meant for everybody

For those of you who missed it, Memorial Day weekend (that one auspicious time of the year, along with the Fourth of July, when everyone who is anyone suddenly has a beer belly, and everyone who is anyone is suddenly quite proud to show it) was the second annual PTA tubing trek down the GWAD-AH-LOOPY river. And, for those of you who are insanely curious, the PTA stands for the more than illustrious, larger than life, Professional Toobers' Association. (NOTE: the PTA was founded a few years ago, basing itself on a few basic premises such as 'Life is my toob, I shall not want,' 'Rubber chaffing is fun' and 'Look, Ma, I'm floating! I'm floating!' To be a member is to belong to a select fraternity of individuals who reside on that end of the spectrum known to the common folk as regrettable idiocy.)

Mark Nair

But back to the point. Memorial Day weekend was happily dubbed "Jambo II," after Jambo, the river god of the PTA, who is usually kept happy with the normal sacrifices of sunBURN lotion (gallons and gallons), noxious liquids and weird and exotic strands of beef jerky. Unfortunately, "Jambo II" would have been more appropriately titled "PTA II, the Wrath of Jambo." Ah, it was a dark and stormy weekend, all right. Call me Ishmael. I am a victim of the cold war. This is my story.

Tubing (or toobing, as the case may be) runs along these lines. You, the foolish youth, grab a mastodontic, donut-shaped rubber inner tube that probably once belonged in the front left tire of a monstrous 40-wheeled refrigerated pickup truck owned by some guy named Mordecai. You place said tube (toob) gently into the pure-tee water of the GWAD-AH-LOOPY. You get ready to go. Your foot touches the water.

Then the cold. You have never felt such coldness. You can see the frost creeping upward on your leg. Ok, no problem. You just have to GET USED TO IT. That's all. Just GET USED TO IT. And far be it for you to be called a WIMP or anything, so you decide to go ahead and sit (adjusting your bottom in the hole of the tube, at the same time and simultaneously immersing yourself — your complete self — in the water).

And then it gets much colder. I suppose you can't really tell how cold it is by just touching the water with your feet, but when you sit in it, now that's cold.

PTA person #1: Holy headcheese! That's cold!

PTA person #2: Nah. You just have to GET USED TO IT.

PTA person #1: GET USED TO IT? This is pain. I mean PAIN. I think all my molecules have stopped moving.

PTA person #2: You do look a little blue.

PTA person #1: Blue! BLUE! I've passed blue. I'm on my way to fuchsia. Ponch, Jon, help me.

Kelvin zero is a terrible thing. My legs and arms were in blocks of ice; my teeth had been filed down from their chattering. And we only had five and a half hours to go. Oh, joy.

And then there are these things called ROCKS. These ROCKS stick out from the water at odd, very sharp, angles. Don't be fooled. The Titanic was indeed sunk by these little buggers. Icebergs, smysbergs.

The common cry when such ROCKS are spotted is "Butts up." When said ROCKS are encountered and when the cry "Butts up" is not heeded, one finds himself in the following situation: SCRAAAAAAPE. The sharks were very attracted to the blood.

BUT, once again, THAT'S NOT ALL!

Because then it started to rain. And



BEN SARGENT
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rain. And rain. And rain. We were in the middle of the proverbial nowhere. We were wet. We were cold. We were suffering the wrath of Jambo. AND IT WAS HELL.

So the story goes. We were rescued from the clutches of the elements and a certain cranky old man who needed his juice at a certain mysterious camp ground (no details, please). The river rose more than ten feet that day. And there was plenty of hail, lightning and thunderous sound effects. It would have been somewhat keen if it were not

for being stranded on a small inflatable rubber tube, floating listlessly, glacier-like, down the river, much like a pitiful, soaked rodent bulging from too many Goobers, floating on a decayed sheet of unhappy driftwood.

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Now, for the real stuff. What does this have to do with the just-happened-a-little-while-ago summit? Nothing. And what does it have to do with that kooky middle east conflict? Nothing. What does this have to do with anything at all? Not a thing.

And sometimes, in College (a.k.a. Hell without an air conditioner), tubing is our last reprise, our only to keep insane. Now, I won't attempt to tie this column in with anything of any significance. I'll use literature cop out and say everything and anything is for the reader to find out, and assume.

And that is the way I like it. Jambo happy, too.

Mark Nair is a bovine brain grad student and opinion page for The Battalion.

If they're saving gas, leave them alone



Lewis Grizzard

A lady, obviously quite distraught, wrote me a letter recently asking that I "write something about all these teenagers sitting on the hoods of their cars at the shopping mall."

"They just sit there at night and play their car radios loud when they should be home," the lady continued.

What is important is that I do, in fact, write something about teenagers sitting on the hoods of their cars at shopping malls, which occurs, I suppose, all over the country.

I think it's a great idea, and I don't know why my generation didn't think of it.

What we did when I was a teenager was drive around the Dairy Queen.

I don't mean we drove around the Dairy Queen once and then drove somewhere else. I mean, we drove around and around and around the Dairy Queen, and I'm still not sure why.

It wasn't to locate any of our friends so we could converse with them. They were driving around and around and around the Dairy Queen, too.

It seems that once during all those years somebody would have had the good sense to ask, "Hey, guys. What are we doing driving around the Dairy Queen? I'm getting nauseous."

But nobody ever said that, so here we would go, buring up no telling how many gallons of gasoline.

During the oil crunch of the '70s, I thought of all the gasoline we wasted as teenagers driving around the Dairy Queen and figured we probably were the ones who at least started the ball rolling toward an oil crisis.

Teenagers are going to hang out somewhere. In biblical days they probably hung out over where the goats were being watered. The problem there was all the flies.

In the Old West, they hung out over at the livery stable. Me, I hate liver, but I didn't grow up in the Old West.

Our parents hung out down at the corner store eating penny candy on their six-mile walk home from school.

I say let today's teenagers hang out sitting on the hoods of their cars at shopping malls if they want to.

Think of the precious gasoline that is being preserved, and as long as teenagers are sitting on the hoods of their cars, they aren't going to be out terrorizing the roads and highways.

It is basically impossible to terrorize on a road or a highway while sitting on a road or a highway while sitting on the hood of your car at a shopping mall.

I do admit young people have a tendency to turn up the sound on their car radios as far as it will go.

What I do when I am confronted by a young person playing loud music on his or her car radio is drive as far away from them as I can.

Which is what the lady from Tampa should do. Drive far away and let the kids enjoy being young so they won't grow up to be old goats like her.

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The Battalion

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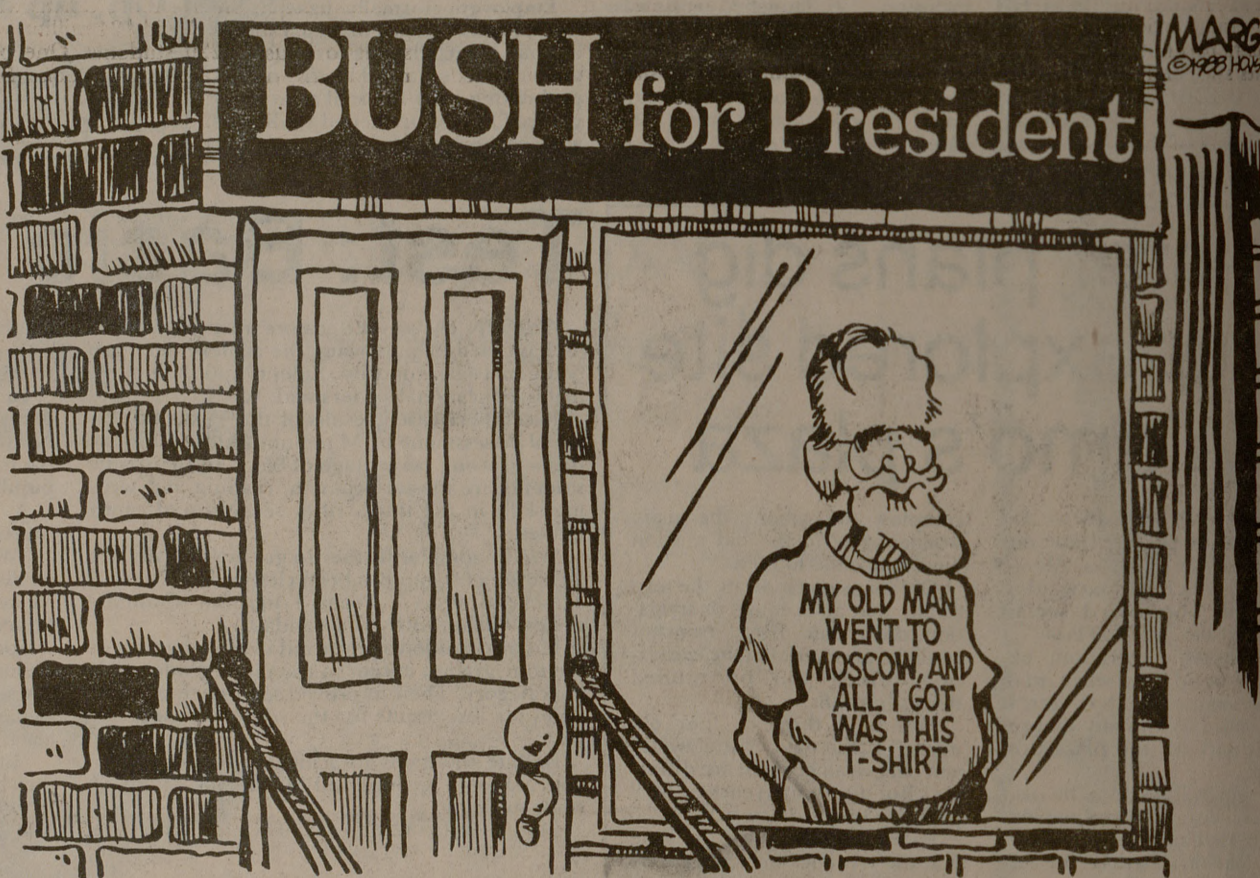
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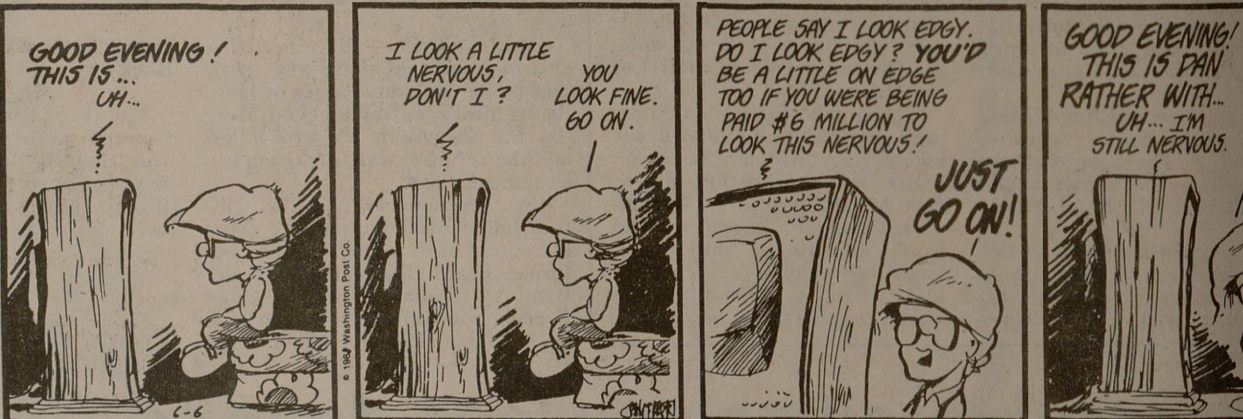
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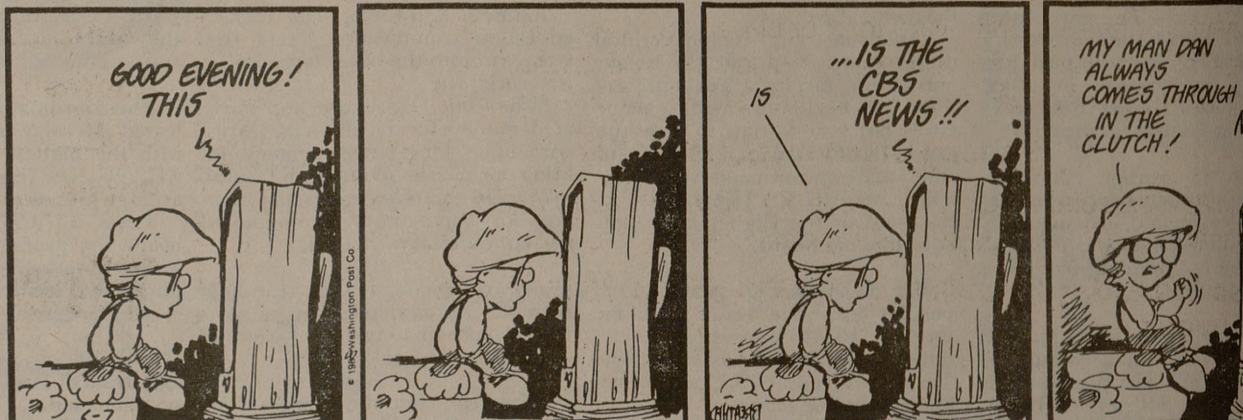
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