

Opinion

Aggieland's still far away from Wonderland

I never thought it would happen to me. I never thought I'd be one of the victims.

This summer I had an experience which has changed my opinion of "good safety measures" and has decreased my faith in human nature.

The summer was an unusual one for me. For the first time in more than three years, I did not work. For the second half of the summer, I was not even in school. So for five glorious weeks, I was a bum.

But sooner than desired I had to return to responsibility and resume my duties. That's where the vacation ended and the nightmare began.

On a Monday afternoon I arrived back in College Station and took a cab (yes, there are cabs in Bryan-College Station) to the house which I had shared with three girls for the first half of the summer.

As my things were still in the house, I figured I'd just stay there until my new apartment was ready, i.e. gas and electricity turned on.



Lydia Berzsenyi

After I let myself in and put my bags down, I realized none of my roommates was in town and, not wanting to be an unexpected guest, called each at their parents' homes to let them know I was staying in the house.

Few things had changed since I had been there a month before. I stayed by myself in the house that night.

The next day, I put in a twelve-hour day before returning once again to the empty house. This time I had an uneasy feeling about staying in the house alone. Don't ask me why — it was just a feeling.

I stayed up reading that night until almost 3. Finally, I put down my book and went to sleep, but not before turning on both inside and outside lights, and checking and rechecking locks on all the doors and windows. As an extra precaution, I left a low light on in my room to ward off "uninvited visitors."

It didn't help.

I awoke two hours later to find a man sitting on the edge of my bed.

My first reaction was not panic. It's not that I'm used to strange men sitting on the side of my bed, but I had just spent five weeks with my family. My dad, or one of my brothers, often had awakened me in the mornings. And besides, I'm legally blind without my contacts, and they weren't in.

So my first thought was that the man was my dad, and I sleepily asked the man, "Dad, what are you doing? What do you want?"

My panic button went off when a strange voice answered, "I'm not your dad."

Immediately, I realized where I was and that something was very wrong. I kicked the guy in the stomach and screamed at the top of my lungs.

But I soon realized that screaming wouldn't do me any good. I was the only one in the house.

I rechanneled my energy and fought him even harder. It was then I noticed that his hand, which I had grabbed, held a knife. I heard him say, "You'd better stop fighting. I have two knives."

The reality of the danger set in and I decided to be sensible and do exactly what he said. I didn't know what he was going to do. But I certainly didn't want him to use that knife.

He told me to pull the covers up and to cover my face with a pillow. He said he wouldn't hurt me.

"Give me ten minutes and I'll be out of here," he said.

I didn't really believe him, but I did as he said. And then I waited, hoping he was gone. He did not touch me.

During the struggle, I had tried my

best to listen to his voice; to note his physical description. But without those contacts, I wasn't certain of anything — not even the color of his skin. (He had knocked over the lamp I'd left on, so the room was dark.)

I waited what I thought was ten minutes. Then I counted to 300, just to make sure. I didn't know even then whether he was still in the house or even in my room, so I didn't want to call the police from the house.

I quietly grabbed some clothes, changed, snuck out a bedroom window and ran four blocks to a church, where I called the police.

I was lucky. All the man took from my house was some money. I could have come out of the experience much worse. Others in similar instances have been raped, or beaten or even killed. Instead, I simply had a very bad scare.

I'm telling this story for a reason. Before this experience I was one of those who thought there was no crime in Bryan or College Station. At least none that involved students like myself. I mean, we're all Aggies, right? And everyone knows that Aggies don't lie, cheat or steal. But what I failed to fully realize is that not everyone in Bryan-College Station is an Aggie, and even some Aggies are bad apples.

You simply can't blindly trust human nature, even in Aggieland.

Play it safe. Keep your doors and windows locked, even in the daytime. Do not assume that being in a large apartment complex or a busy neighborhood with lots of people around will protect you from becoming a victim.

Anyone can walk into an unlit apartment at 5 in the evening as easily as they can at 5 in the morning. And when all windows and doors are closed as mine were, some people can get in quietly enough not to awaken you.

Make sure your locks are good. Bolts are a necessity. Chains can be broken, as mine were, and other locks can be picked.

If you see any suspicious characters hanging around, call the police. If some reason you feel unsafe at night, call the police to drive through your neighborhood.

And remember your mother's advice. Never let someone in without asking who it is.

Please let this story serve as a warning. It was meant to scare you, because it is a very scary subject. You should think, "It could never happen to me."

It CAN happen to you.

Sorority members give their side

Anthony Wilson, last week you described to your readers that you were an opinion page editor. You warned your readers against being offended by any of your opinions and stated you and other opinions page editors were lovers of Texas A&M, blah, blah, blah.

Shelly Schluter

Tamara Eicher

Guest Columnists

Yesterday, your opinion was not only offensive but your information was incorrect. In fact, there is not one word of proven truth in the entire column. The lack of truth is due to your ignorance of your topic.

You do not understand Greek Rush. Rush is a time when the sororities try to recruit members like any other organization recruits. We believe your analogy was football recruitment. The sororities are in fear of not reaching their goal of recruiting fifty new members. They therefore, rush every rushee "hard." You used the term "rush hard" in your column Monday but you have little or no knowledge of its meaning. Rush hard is a sorority's attempt to get to know a girl, on a personal level, to further inform her of the purpose, expense, benefits and time commitment involved in the organization.

You stated in your column "They don't know how to get involved in extracurricular activities on a large state university." If these girls don't know how to get involved how did they know how to get involved in rush. Certainly, Sorority Rush 101 is not listed in the fall catalogue. Many of these girls were president of their student bodies in high school, members of National Honor Society, participants in sports and a wide variety of clubs. When they enter a sorority their participation does not end or is it limited. Many sorority girls (if you do a little research you will discover) are involved in Freshman Leadership Dynamics, MSC Hospitality, OPAS, are their class representative, writers for *The Battalion*, participants in intramurals, members of Thirty Love and the Diamond Darlings.

They are far from being uninvolved on campus.

Your column states qualifications needed to be accepted into a sorority.

1. No dedication, basically lazy.
2. No talent whatsoever, beyond putting ones hair in a perfect bow.
3. Lastly, one must lack pride in yourself and the organization she represents.

To disprove your point, organizations such as the sororities at Texas A&M have evolved over a course of 100 years. Such organizations could not have been possible without dedication, talent, pride and determination to build a strong bond created to serve the community, the school and each other.

We acknowledge, we are social sororities. However, what better way to prepare oneself for the "real life" of work and community involvement, which we as college students all anxiously anticipate than by coming in contact with over 150 people a week. Each sorority at A&M offers its members the opportunity to get to know many individuals all with unique and distinct personalities of not only one chapter members but also those members of other greek affiliations. What club on this campus prohibits social activity.

The end of your column is our favorite. Do you recall, Mr. Wilson, when you were a small boy in grade school? Team captains for kickball were chosen and told to choose their teammates. You were not "Joe Kick-ball" and were one of the last standing to be picked! Your suggestion of rush similar to a sports draft would be more humiliating and tragic than the current process of rush. Your second suggestion of a better sorority rush is very familiar to us, maybe because you described the exact process of rush at A&M. You stated we should "divide the number of rushees by the number of sororities and require each organization to choose x number of women." We do exactly this! It is true, some girls do not get in sororities and the sororities are concerned with this fact. As a result they (the sororities) have asked the Bryan-College Station Panhellenic to raise the number of girls to be admitted to each sorority but our request has been denied. Maybe you should discuss your complaint with officials at the panhellenic level.

Again, Mr. Wilson, you are obviously in the dark! Rushees do not lie on their application. If they did lie, get into a sorority, don't you think they would be discovered? We don't recommend lying on a rush application, since the applica-

tion is examined by an alumni in the rushees hometown who is familiar with the individual's background. The soul purpose of rush is to find a group in which you feel comfortable and be yourself. We, as sorority members would never do anything to hurt the self-esteem and integrity of a rushee or make her feel she is any less of a person because she is a rushee and not a member, which you accused us of doing. What would be the purpose of doing this? We want new members to our organization. If we were to humiliate and criticize rushees publicly, our sorority would not be inviting or attractive to its members.

We would like to remind you, the greek system at A&M is a very strong system. It would not be strong if members were publicly humiliating potential members, correct?

What was the purpose of your column? We realize it is a new semester, but do you really have to establish yourself as a writer by causing controversy? Are you calling attention to yourself or are you sincerely concerned with the future of rush and rushees at A&M? If the latter is correct, we suggest you research your topics, speak with Panhellenic, come visit a sorority house. We would be more than happy to explain most every aspect of greek life to you and feel you would benefit from asking questions.

As a journalism major, you should have a copy of Mass Media by Dawson and Wollert. Run to page 31 and read the bottom of the page which states, "When you are writing opinion copy for a broadcast commentary, a review, an editorial, or a personal column, the judgment or opinion expressed is based on a knowledge of all aspects of the issue of situation."

Shelly Schluter, a junior journalism major, and Tamara Eicher, a senior political science major, are guest columnists for The Battalion.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Anthony Wilson's column on Aug. 29 never warned readers to not be offended by any opinion which appears on page 2. On the contrary, the basic nature of an opinion is such that it is impossible for everyone to agree on everything. His column on Sept. 5 also never stated any qualifications to be accepted into a sorority, especially not laziness and a lack of talent and pride in oneself.

Mail Call

Rush can be harsh, valuable lesson

EDITOR:

I must admit that your editorial concerning sorority rush at A&M raised a timely concern that ought to be addressed by the Greek community. But your pathetic attempt to criticize the very nature of these social organizations failed to address reality.

Certainly each "rushee" should carefully examine her own motives as well as those of her prospective sisters. But the flaw in your reasoning rests with your assertion that these social organizations should accept any interested rushee in order to promote social justice. On the contrary, natural social groupings, unfair though they may be, often prove to be the best solution for all concerned. To use your words, "They deserve each other."

If you are really concerned about the fairness of the system, then leave it alone. Those who are rejected by it most likely will have learned a harsh but valuable lesson about life. It's a lesson we all have to learn sooner or later anyway.

Paul J. Underbank
Graduate student

Black Greeks are different

EDITOR:

I resent the article you wrote in *The Battalion* concerning sorority rush. First of all, not all sororities are as Anthony Wilson describe in his article. Maybe the white ones are, but black sororities are different.

When a young black woman chooses to be a part of a sorority she decides what one of four she wants to be a part of. After the young lady has chosen one, she goes "on line" (the pledge period) for about four to six weeks. During this time, she engages in activities that will help her learn more about the sorority in detail.

Also in your article, you mention that (white) sororities are just social, but black sororities it's more service than social.

Yes, black Greeks have "mixers" but the money raised (or canned goods donated) are given to charity organizations.

Joy L. Marshall

Yes, Greeks do deserve each other

EDITOR:

Anthony Wilson's narrow-minded, tunnel-visioned defaming of sorority in his column is much more discriminating than the rush process itself. Although his opinion was well-written, it cannot be deemed responsible journalism to treat sororities as unfair social clubs.

Deriving from Mr. Wilson's inexact statistics (there's some responsibility), at least 70 percent of the girls involved in rush were extended bids to join sororities. Does the *Battalion* editorial staff allow 71 percent or more of the students want to write columns or articles do so?

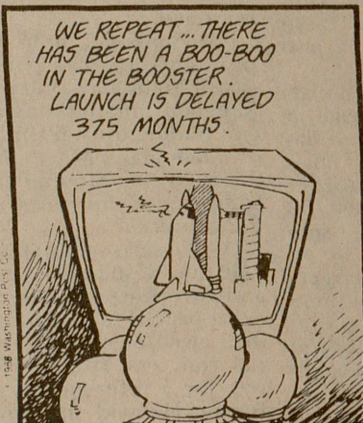
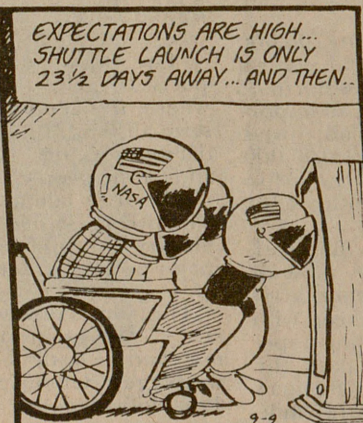
His comparison of sororities to clubs such as the Water Ski Club is incorrect because the latter are strictly local interest clubs while the former is a nationally recognized organization with designated criterion concerning eligibility and participation. It sounds as if Mr. Wilson has jumped on the anti-Greek bandwagon as many have here at the home of the Fightin' Texas Army. Most of the sorority girls that I know aren't the social-crazed, identity-seeking chest beaters that Mr. Wilson alludes to them as, but they are intelligent, good-looking, and have wonderful personalities. I do agree with one point Mr. Wilson made. Members of sororities should stick together because they do deserve each other.

Gary Price '90

Editor's note: The figures quoted in the article were obtained from Panhellenic which did not have the exact numbers available. And *The Battalion* does encourage anyone to submit guest columns.

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include classification, address and telephone number of the writer.

BLOOM COUNTY



by Berke Breathed

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.
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