

Opinion

Anyone up for some 'Hi, Bob' with prune juice?

I am getting so old.

I'm already 21, and 56 is right around the corner.

I never even realized that I was hitting my Geritol years until I went to Astroworld during the summer. When I was 18 — still just a puppy in the dog pound of life — I could go to one of these places, stay all day, ride every ride, look in every over-priced gift shop and still have enough energy when I got home to play a quick round of 'Hi Bob.'

No more.

When I went this last time, I had to take a rest break between every ride. I wanted to sit in the shade and chug-a-lug Milk of Magnesia with the rest of the dinosaurs. I didn't even buy a souvenir — rent was coming due, you know.

And by 10 p.m. I was ready to go.

Becky Weisenfels
Guest Columnist

OK, I decided I could hang around around for the fireworks IF I could sit down to watch.

But then I got home and went straight to bed. No 'Hi Bob,' not even a 'how 'ya doing.' I was pooped, worn out, tired, dragging my heels.

Since then I have noticed that this was not an isolated event and I am, indeed, getting closer to those senior citizen discounts.

Freshmen are so young. I walk into my 8 a.m. class after a full eight hours of sleep with my hot water bottle. I sit down and elevate my feet (better for circulation).

Then the freshmen come bouncing in — boing, boing, giggle, giggle. They plop into their seats — plop. And proceed to tell each other of their childhood adventures as I check the batteries on my pacemaker.

"Yeah, Susie, last night we went out to eat first and then we went dancing for three or four hours."

"Oh, wow, Janie, so did we."

"Then we went to my apartment, drank a few daiquiris and then went swimming until 4 in the morning."

"Oh, wow, Janie, so did we."

"Then we went to eat breakfast and I got to bed at 6 a.m."

"Oh, wow, Janie, so did we."

I cannot be hearing this right — I check my hearing aide. My idea of a hot evening is wrapping up in my electric blanket while I watch a few hours of TV. A late evening is when I stay up to watch ALL of the 10 o'clock news.

How can these children — these toddling twits — stay up all night long and still be alive for an 8 a.m. class?

I lean over to ask Susie and Janie if I heard them right, checking to make sure my dentures are secure before I open my mouth to speak.

But now they are discussing when they can get together for a game of handball. I drop the subject as I reach

for my Ben-Gay (it was a long walk to class).

I have turned into the average American. I prefer to stay home and watch "Golden Girls" instead of going out to parties. I worry about rent, income tax returns and whether "Cagney and Lacey" will be around for another season. Parties are something I go to when I need to buy more Tupperware.

I never thought in my wildest dreams that I would grow old this quickly — I always thought I would be 25 or 26 before I started noticing the drag that accompanies the golden years. But the years aren't even golden — they're gold-plated. I feel gypped.

Where did the fun-filled, action-packed years of youth go? Whatever happened to my mentors — Eric Estrada, the Village People and Sean Cassidy?

Any how in the world do you explain the fact that I now understand my parents' reasoning? I actually am able to

hold an interesting conversation with them about something other than the fews and school. We just sit in our rocking chairs, sipping on tea and chat about the over-65 magazine. Amazing.

But the worst thing is that young twerps don't even respect their elders anymore. Not once has a boy offered to help me cross the street, even get one of the little imps to pick up the tab on my taxi to the home.

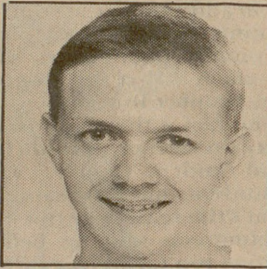
But wait. I am only 21. And I have a few good years left until I slide into a life of bunion pads and Olay (I don't intend to grow old fully). But it still hurts when I think I am too old to do some things I believe me.

Maybe I haven't hit old age. Maybe it is just a mid-life crisis.

Becky Weisenfels is a senior journalism major and managing editor of The Battalion.

Religious sects abuse children through lack of medical care

Normally I don't have too many gripes with religion, but every once in a while something comes to my attention that infuriates me about certain sectors of religion. Two religious communities, both founded in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Jehova's Witnesses and the Christian Scientists, are committing crimes against humanity and their children by not offering them proper medical care.



Timm Doolen

Let me preface my argument by saying that I am not condemning religion in general, Christianity, or all Jehova's Witnesses and Christian Scientists, just those who have ideas similar to the following.

Most Jehova's Witnesses will not allow any of their members to receive a blood transfusion, supposedly because of biblical scripture.

If a Witness receives a transfusion, the member faces the highest punishment within the religion: being disfellowshipped, their term for not being recognized by the religion.

The Blizzard family, devout Jehova's Witnesses since childhood, had to be forced by a court order to allow their 6-week-old daughter to receive a blood transfusion. Several years later she died; an earlier blood transfusion would have saved her life.

Soon after, Mr. and Mrs. Blizzard converted to the Baptist ministry.

Yet Jehova's Witnesses look like saints when compared to the Christian Scientists. The only type of outside medical help allowed by the Christian Scientists is the setting of a broken bone.

All other diseases, caused by the devil, of course, can be cured by praying and a strong dose of faith healing.

A tragic story concerning Christian Scientists is that of the Swan family and the death of their 15-month-old son.

The baby had been running in excess of a 100 degree fever for twelve days before Rita Swan and her husband rushed the almost-dead child to the emergency

room of a hospital. They were greeted by a shocked and startled doctor who could not believe that the parents could be so cruel as to deny the dying child any medical care during his sickness.

Despite medical treatment, the baby died within a few days, and the parents were ostracized by their congregation for going to a doctor.

According to the Swans, the congregation felt that the baby's death was a result of taking him to the hospital, and that the original sickness resulted from Mrs. Swan's removal of a tumor a year earlier.

The problem in both cases is that the people in the hierarchy of the religion threaten the loss of eternal life and excommunication from the religion as a penalty for disobeying the religion's edicts.

Yet the edicts of the Jehova's Witnesses and the Christian Scientists are disobeying common sense and the realities of biological science.

If the Jehova's Witnesses would realize that blood transfusions are not inately evil, and the Christian Scientists would realize that disease is caused by virus, bacteria, and subcellular organisms, rather than Satan, then the children of both sects would be better off.

You may ask why I mention only the children of these people.

Well, I feel that an adult can deny himself whatever medical care he needs, but when an innocent child cannot receive proper medical assistance because of the parent's peculiar outlook on life, then the parents have improperly conceived their duty as a parent.

The parents of a child accept the responsibility of taking care of every reasonable need of that child throughout its infancy and youth, yet some parents unreasonably deny this responsibility to themselves. The innocent child has no higher appeal, for if you can't trust your parents — well, who can you trust?

In this state we are lucky, because Texas is one of the few states that does not exempt religions from the letter of the law concerning child abuse.

And child abuse is the proper name for deprival of proper medical care for children. There has been talk of federal legislation which would force parents to

give their children proper medical care in many cases, even if it goes against their religious beliefs.

Critics of the legislation say that it violates the First Amendment, which guarantees freedom of religion, but the law would not.

The parents are depriving their children the right to a healthy life. That human right is more basic and undeniable than the civil right of freedom of religion. In other words, child abuse is child abuse under any name, religious or otherwise.

If the legislation passes, I say more power to it. But mandating health care won't work when parents can conceal their child's sickness in their own home. And the thought of numbers of posthumous cases being tried in our courts sends chills up my spine.

That's exactly what the nation saw last May when CBS aired the movie "Promised A Miracle", which showed how the Parker family allowed their adolescent, diabetic son die by cutting him off from his insulin. Despite intense praying up until the last moment, the boy died without his much-needed medicine.

And Mr. and Mrs. Parker were found guilty of the murder of their own son. They were sentenced to five years imprisonment, but were put on probation and served no time in jail. After realizing what they had really done, they suffered greatly.

What is the answer? Jehova's Witnesses and especially Christian Scientists need to wake up and jump into the twentieth century. Modern medicine is one of the greatest miracles of our age. Don't consider it Satanic.

I'm sure most Jehova's Witnesses and Christian Scientists are good-hearted people, doing what they were brought up all their life to do.

But I direct this only to those who stick blindly to their doctrines: When you or your children fall sick, for the sake of you and your child's health, please think logically about what you are doing before invoking your religion.

Timm Doolen is a sophomore computer science major and columnist for The Battalion.

Mail Call

Stop apologizing for those GOPers

EDITOR:
In Timm Doolen's column in the Sept. 7 of *The Battalion*, he made several false assertions which need to be addressed.

Most outrageous is Timm's claim that Mike Dukakis has run a deficit in Massachusetts. This is completely untrue. As governor of Massachusetts, he has submitted eight budget proposals and all have been accepted and balanced.

The score is: Mike Dukakis — eight balanced budgets, Reagan-Bush — Timm also misrepresents the Dan Quayle controversy. The issue was not whether or not joining the National Guard was an honorable way young men could serve their country.

The issue was the fact that Quayle used his wealthy family's influence to get into the home-based Guard while thousands of less-privileged young men were being sent to fight and die in Vietnam. All the while, Quayle and his multimillionaire publishing family implored the need to fight communism — as if someone else was doing the fighting.

Furthermore, Timm's assertion that, by picking J. Danforth Quayle, Bush cast off his image as a wimp is nothing more than laughable, wishful thinking.

What is most objectionable about the column is that it masquerades as an impartial account of the presidential race. What purports to be an "objective" assessment of both Bush's and Dukakis' campaigns, turns into a barrage of Republican propaganda.

In the spirit of fairness, I believe that all future Timm Doolen columns on presidential race should contain the following tagline:

Timm Doolen is a sophomore computer science major, columnist for *The Battalion*, and apologist for George Bush, Dan Quayle and the Republicans.

Mark Artlip '91

Ode to Jackie

EDITOR:
Jackie Sherrill is a coach that we all know. How much I like him, I'll try to show. He's just so honest, gosh what a guy, I love the way his nose twitches when he's telling a lie. "My assistants were lying? Gee, I never knew." Yeah, and the grass isn't green and sky isn't blue. An Aggie doesn't cheat, lie, or steal. Except for the coach, who's playing "Let's Make a Deal". "Come on big boy, why not play here, I'll give you a car and ten thousand a year. I'll buy you new clothes and give you a loan, "And how 'bout a new cellular phone?" "We'll win a conference title and go to a Bowl, "And together in fame and glory we'll roll." I used to think Rice was a loser 'cause they seldom win a game. But at least they can walk onto the field without shame. I'll end this poem since I'm running out of wit. Do us all a favor, Sherrill, and go back to Pitt!

J. Thomas Dirges '89

New dorm policy won't work

EDITOR:
I would like to address the new policy of locking the outside doors of the residence halls and escorting the opposite sex after 7 p.m.

I understand that one student was raped and two others were assaulted during the summer. I also understand that the University wants to stop theft in our halls. But seriously, if someone really wants to steal something, or for that matter just wants to wander aimlessly around the halls for a while; does the University actually believe locking the doors is going to solve the problem?

Another large complaint I've heard is leaving the lights on 24 hours. Keeping the lights on isn't going to keep someone from setting a trash can on fire.

Thirdly, why must we escort a member of the opposite sex in and out of the dorm, each and every time she simply wishes to visit? Why not lock the women's halls, and leave the men's open?

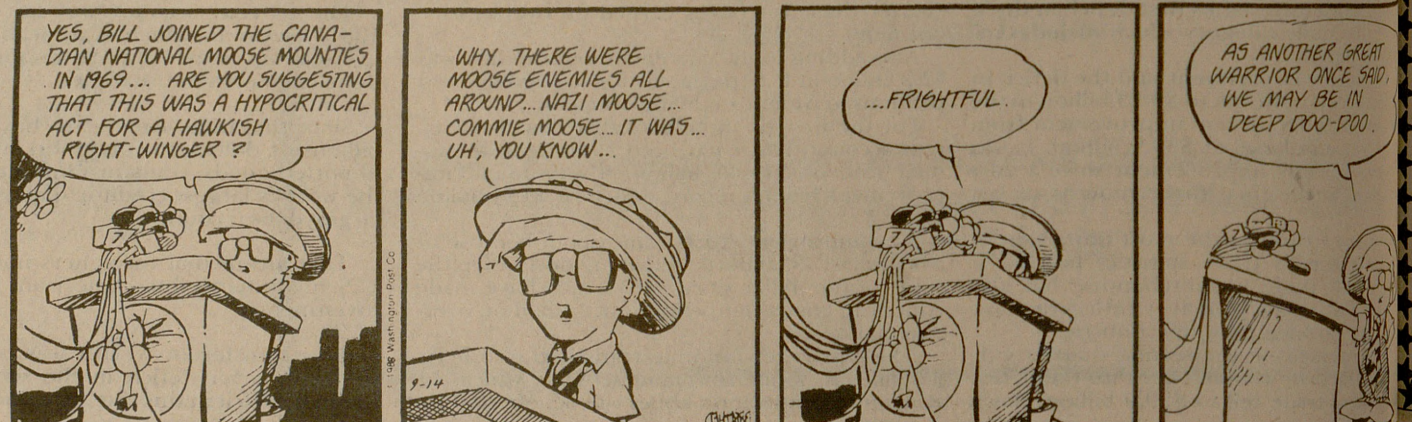
I applaud RHA for pushing for extended visitation hours. But locking the halls hardly seems like a way to promote visitation.

Matt Flanagan '90

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters and 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 Breath



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