

Opinion

Mail Call

Angry Aggie withdraws support

EDITOR:

Each year, I have given \$100 to the University as a gift to support Texas A&M. This year I refuse to support A&M until the editor of *The Battalion* has been taught the finer points of loyalty, dedication and responsible journalism. The article condemning Jackie Sherrill and the Aggie football program was a perfect example of irresponsible journalism. If Jackie is indeed guilty then by all means he should be fired or he should resign, but only when proven guilty.

Jackie has resigned. If Jackie is proven innocent of any wrongdoing in this latest "National Enquirer" episode, I hope he sues the hell out of some of the irresponsible journalists that printed stories such as the one in *The Battalion*. If he is guilty I hope he gets what is due.

If the University supports irresponsible journalism then it could do without my donation.

John R. Cobarruvias '78

God bless you, Jackie!

EDITOR:

Beat the hell outta Jackie Sherrill! This has surely been the chant of the news media for the past several weeks. Just as they worked to influence and make our political decisions in November, the media has now endeavored to replace Texas A&M's football coach and athletic director. When the news of the George Smith calamity broke, the various news media across the country tried and convicted Jackie Sherrill before the investigation had even commenced. Television, radio, and newspaper reporters were announcing when he would resign, who his replacement would be and what penalties would result. We were under the impression that the job of a "professional journalist" was to report the news, not "create" it.

Now Jackie Sherrill has resigned. Something anyone with his class and great character would do in this predicament. While not above following the rules, the facts should have been clear before a decision of this magnitude was expected from Jackie Sherrill. Right or wrong, however, Mr. Sherrill obviously realized the amount of damage that negative reporting could do to the University. Jackie Sherrill has always had Texas A&M's best interest at heart. Over the brief period he spent with us he gave all Aggies much to be proud of; an outstanding athletic program, many remarkable football teams, and FIVE straight victories over t.u.

Jackie, Thank you! Good luck!

News media, back off!

Huey Grant '87
Taffy Grant

Good Ags are loyal Ags

EDITOR:

I have read with interest the varied opinions expressed in *The Battalion* regarding the latest problems of Coach Sherrill. I have tried to remain neutral and listen to all sides of the discussion. However, the opinion expressed by Dean Sueltenfuss in the Dec. 1 edition has forced me to reply.

What Mr. Sueltenfuss and your editorial staff have failed to recognize is that most people (myself included) are tired of newspaper people hiding behind an argument of "people have a right to know." Sensationalism and printing only the facts which support a predisposed opinion just doesn't work anymore. We are more educated and are intelligent enough to read through self-serving articles and sensationalized headlines. Your initial headline of "Ags Deserve Death" (Nov. 18) is a good example. The article was reasonably well done, but the headline was presumptuous, biased and not fully supported in the story. I would have hoped for better from *The Battalion*. However, I suppose that you've learned your lessons well and are now ready to work for the *Dallas Morning News*, *Houston Chronicle*, *Miami Herald* or maybe even the *National Enquirer*.

Mr. Sueltenfuss' remarks as to the credibility of the *Dallas Morning News* are extremely alarming. He obviously doesn't understand the newspaper market in Dallas. Mr. Bedell is in his business for notoriety and money. If he prints a story which is sensational, he helps sell newspapers which also makes his reputation grow. This allows him to command more money. Who cares if the story is only half truth or not thoroughly researched. His interests are totally self-serving. Additionally, Mr. Smith is obviously willing to say anything for money. I believe this statement is true whether you believe his first or second version of what happened. These factors are a dangerous combination when one's reputation is at stake.

Even more alarming than Mr. Sueltenfuss' reliance on any media without understanding all the facts is his definition of "good Ags" and "bad Ags." If Mr. Sueltenfuss wants to make a business decision on instinct before the facts are known, let him do so. If he chooses to determine someone's guilt or innocence before all ascertainable facts are available, that's scary. Also, no one will dispute that integrity and honesty are an integral part of a "good Ag." However, so are loyalty and a belief in the American system of justice. Making statements about any Aggie before all the facts are known is at the heart of my concern. Sensational headlines and comments about "bad Ags" lead one to believe that what Aggies really believe in doesn't exist on campus anymore. If Coach Sherrill is found to be guilty of the allegations, then all the mentioned sanctions should be invoked. I think most people do agree with this. However, crucifying him in *The Battalion* serves no good purpose. As Aggies, we suffer enough in the outside press and public through jealousy, bad jokes, etc. Internal bickering only brings us down to the level of the outsiders.

Honesty, integrity, loyalty. We should remember all three. Once this is done, we can go back to living up to the words in "The Spirit of Aggieland": "After they've boosted all the rest/Then they will come and join the best"

Let's stop the bickering. Give the situation time and let the chips fall where they may. I can live with the truth. I have trouble with sensational, misleading headlines and opinionated people who wish to hang someone before a trial. Our history is filled with stories of people pre-determining someone's guilt. The outcome usually isn't something to be proud of. If someone doubts this, let them visit Salem, Massachusetts sometime.

Michael L. McDonald '73

MARGULIES
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Santa Cruz is awfully nice

Christmas vacation is something to look forward to, right? BUZZZZ! Wrong. Maybe for most of you lucky people who get to stay in Texas it is, but for me, it's hell. Pure hell.

I've lived here for the last 16 years, but my parents moved away last year. No more weekend visits. No more home-cooked meals. And worst of all, no more free laundry. That was a bite.

So of all the places in the continental United States for them to move, where do they go? The one place in this country that requires a passport—California. The land of fruits, fruit flies and earthquakes. Oh boy.

And they didn't even pick a good part of the state to live in. They could have moved to Los Angeles or even San Francisco, but that just wouldn't be good enough. They moved to the middle of the state—where the kids are mutants and the parents are hippies.

I confess. My parents live in Santa Cruz.

Now maybe I haven't seen a representative sample because I've only spent a total of a month and a half there, but the place is just flat-out weird. I'll never make fun of another environmental design major again as long as I live. Just keep the hippies away from me.

See, most people don't understand when I describe the place. If you've seen the movie "The Lost Boys," then you know what the Boardwalk looks like. My brother works in an arcade there. Talk about ambition.

They don't drive cars in the Cruz; everybody has a skateboard and they juggle through the streets. Except it's illegal to ride the skateboards in certain places, so the police ticket you for it. You think it's embarrassing getting

pulled over on a bicycle? Just try taking a citation for standing on a board with wheels. Our police here do a much better job, because I hardly ever see anybody on a skateboard around here.

Also, I think there's a hippie magnet in the downtown area. The city has a huge homeless population, something no self-respecting Texan would allow to happen. Anyway, this magnet pulls all

Steve Masters
Senior Staff Writer

the hippies and druggies from the 60s right to Pacific Garden Mall, an outdoor mall littered with a bunch of no-account, homeless, long-haired hippie-freaks who refuse to go anywhere else. Authorities in the town have recently passed an ordinance forbidding these dangerous persons from sleeping in cars. Not other people's cars—their own.

The police are always trying to run them off and keep them from pestering visitors at the mall. But the cops don't do quite as good a job as ours do here in Texas, because there they keep coming back. It's good to see our tax dollars do go to some worthwhile causes.

After the no-sleeping-in-cars law was passed, those troublemakers tried to get up a protest, and they had a petition to sign. But somebody told me it was for membership in the Communist party, and I wouldn't have anything to do with it after that. If I can keep my mind shut to that Communist stuff, you better believe I will.

Even their colleges are messed up out there. They make you pick your major

your freshman year and go up on a mountain to your respective college and you stay there with the same people for four years. I don't know how anybody ever gets anything done, it's so lonesome and quiet up there.

They have no football team at all, and their mascot is (I'm serious as sin, on this) the Banana Slug. It's a real thing, about an inch long and stinks like you wouldn't believe. The students just laugh at their teams, and don't ever cheer except as a joke. Talk about a lack of school pride.

I think the thing I hate worst is the weather. You don't have but two nice days before it gets all foggy. The water stays below 60 degrees all year round, and if you want to even think about getting out on a surf board you have to pay \$20 a week just for a wet suit.

The other thing you've got to look out for is that AIDS thing. Last time I was there I heard a rumor that the whole thing got started after the hippies started staying in the mall. That's another reason why I don't go near them.

I probably could have learned about a lot more reasons to stay away from that horrible place, like all the hills you have to climb just to get home (our driveway is a right turn on a 45-degree incline). You can lay a neat skid mark right in the driveway and not go anywhere.

Somebody told me they take drugs out there too, and listen to heavy metal music like Poison and Bon Jovi, but I didn't stick around long enough to find out, because I was longing to get back to a good state like Texas.

Boy, it's a good thing I didn't stay the other 13 days.

Steve Masters is a senior journalism major, senior staff writer and guest columnist for *The Battalion*.

Who says television is stupid?

This summer I worked with a guy—let's call him, uh, Eugene. Eugene was about 33 years old and seemed to be just an average person. But underneath this otherwise normal appearance, Eugene had a terrible, haunting secret.

Actually, I'm not sure if there's any way to say what I have to say without offending some of our more sensitive readers, but here goes. The plain truth of the matter is that Eugene, well, he shot his television. Twice.

It's hard enough to accept the fact that some people watch only five hours of television programming per day. But when a person actually shoots a TV—well, that's just downright un-American.

Let's analyze Eugene's case together, shall we, and see if we can determine where this otherwise productive, responsible adult turned onto the path of raving lunacy. We'll start by taking a look at Eugene's childhood.

There's no question in my mind that he had a deprived youth. Eugene's parents, no doubt, spent much time with him doing such things as participating in community activities, reading books, or (brace yourself) having family discussions. It is obvious that in this type of environment a youngster could easily be deprived of childhood's important television-viewing opportunities—opportunities that are the bedrock upon which all of life's experiences rest.

There is another possibility which I hesitate to mention, but in view of the extraordinary circumstances of this case I feel that I must. Again, I warn our



Dean Sueltenfuss
Opinion Page Editor

more sensitive readers that due to the nature of the following statement they may want to skip to the next paragraph. Simply stated, the second possibility is this: Eugene's parents might not have even OWNED a television set.

Unlikely? Of course it is. Frightening? You bet. But in a society as mixed up as ours almost anything is possible.

And what, you may ask, is the end result of such a shattered childhood? Who bears the burden when a kid, such as Eugene, deprived of that life-enriching sustenance we call television, goes bad? The answer is that we all must bear that burden. Yes, when irresponsible parents carelessly rear their children, it is society that must pay the price.

Oh, you think that Eugene may have had a valid reason for shooting his television? Perhaps he knows something that the rest of us don't? Perhaps he's not completely crazy after all?

Well, I thought of those things. I even asked Eugene some of those questions.

"Why, Eugene?" I asked. "Why'd you do it? Why'd you shoot your TV set?"

As I asked him those questions, I

hoped that he'd somehow give me an intelligent, rational answer—an answer that would show me that he wasn't insane after all, that he *did* know something about TV that no one else knew.

"Well," he said, "I'll tell you. I shot my TV because I finally came to the realization that it was starting to control my life. I would go home after work and just automatically turn on the old tube, even when there were no good programs on. At night, instead of going out with my friends, I would just sit there watching that damn box. Television had literally started rotting my brain."

It was at that moment, after hearing him speak those final, demented words, that I realized Eugene was completely, irreversibly insane.

And yes, it's too late to do anything for poor Eugene now. However, we can help all of those children who, still in the midst of their formative years, are currently not viewing enough television.

What we must do is start a grass-roots campaign to inform parents, clergy, and educators about the evils of television deprivation. It will be an uphill battle, one which will not be easily won. But with God's will and a little bit of luck we can win the war and help television retain its role as the principal instigator of creative thought in this country.

That's it for today. If you'll excuse me, I have to go watch *The Wheel of Fortune*.

Dean Sueltenfuss is a junior journalism major and opinion page editor for *The Battalion*.

The Battalion

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