

History is not going to be kind to us

Every now and again, through the endless blat of fragments of information about first one thing, then another — throughout the jangle of sound bites, of information without contest, of stories without background, of facts without nuance that shape our impressions of our world and our time — comes something with the unmistakable ring of history to it.



Molly Ivins
Syndicated Columnist

Madonna, hurricane, earthquake, have you seen the new Tom Selleck movie, hundreds killed in Indian riots, Congress unable to agree on budget, the president's news conference, the No. 1 best seller, rape, murder, trial, arson, scandal, election, fall fashions from Paris, stock market tumbles, pollution worsens, Legislature takes no action. It all comes tumbling off the presses, out of the television sets and radios like a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.

has known about it for years. In a confession that was so unexpected, Shevardnadze said, "The power of the estroika does not in itself insure against mistakes. It's important to hide them, to admit them and correct them."

"All these years, we have been working hard to keep up the ABM Treaty, a foundation for strategic stability. All the while, there stood the steady size of an Egyptian pyramid, representing, to put it bluntly, a violation of the ABM Treaty."

"At last we resolved this issue, announced we would dismantle the treaty. This has brought some disorientation in the country, as if we were forging our own interests."

"In fact, we are saving the treaty and opening the way to the conclusion of the treaty on strategic weapons, and we're gaining the legal moral right to demand clarity on the question of American installations in Greenland and England, which we modernized, we understand, in violation of the treaty."

The response from the Bush administration is the one we have become accustomed to — petty, shallow and confused. The general line is that we shouldn't get excited about anything much less do anything, because we don't know how long Gorbachev will last. How true. So what? There's a downside risk in negotiating with the Soviet Union: Worst comes to worst we're back to the status quo. Where's all this shuffling and trimming?

One shrewd reading of our current dilemma comes from the Soviet Union specifically, from their leading Americanologist Georgi Arbatov. In a recent interview he said, "The main danger America doesn't come from the extreme right but from the foreign policy and military traditionalists — the establishment center. They are accustomed to the old rules of the game between the United States and the Soviet Union. They may not be the only superpowers in the world of tomorrow. There is going to have to be a perestroika in the whole system of international relations."

We are past the point when glasnost and perestroika are too astonishing for their newness for anyone to know how to react. True, it all keeps speeding faster and faster, while the United States continues this long diatribe, "Uh, uh, uh." However the Soviet changes turn out in the long run, certainly is possible to say now the Soviet Union is being governed by sensible people, in the most profound sense of the word. Our guy, Mr. Smooth, is sitting in deep doo-doo and Confusion on the vision thing. History is not going to be kind.

Mail Call

Is good sportsmanship gone?

EDITOR:

Now, I consider myself to be one of the more loyal Aggies, but there was a moment this past weekend when I regretted, and was even ashamed, that I am an Aggie.

I was watching the halftime show at the Rice game with a good friend of mine. He was both a Rice alum and a former member of the MOB, but said he wanted to see the game from the A&M side, because "the abundance of spirit there would make it more fun." My friend was offended, and I was very embarrassed when the yell leaders started leading constant yells throughout half of the MOB's performance. Both he and I, as well as several other students, were looking forward to hearing the MOB play. Not only did the yells interfere disrespectfully with their performance, but I am afraid it gave the Rice students a false impression of what the Aggie spirit is all about. I thought good sportsmanship and respect were a part of that spirit. Am I wrong?

Lauren Manning '92

Peeved about parking

EDITOR:

As smoothly as most A&M service offices run, I think the Department of Parking, Transit and Traffic Services still needs a little grease.

When I recently received my mid-term grades, a note was at the top stating I was blocked from registration. A phone call to Parking told me I was blocked due to a ticket on my car that I hadn't (and still haven't) seen. She calmly told me it had more than likely blown off my car.

The next issue to arise was a question of if I had two parking permits. I replied "no," not understanding why someone with only one car would need two permits. She said it had probably been mailed to me and I hadn't noticed it.

I got the extra permit taken care of by reporting it lost/stolen. I got the bill today. I was told I needed to pay my "never seen" ticket at the Southwest Savings building on University, quite a hike for a Southside resident.

I walked over there only to be told I had to pay at the Pavilion. By the time I made it back to the Pavilion, it had closed.

Incidentally, my ticket on appeal has the wrong car make, color and license plate, but the woman at the Department told me there was no way the officer had made a mistake.

I know they have a huge job to do, but it should be done accurately. After all, isn't \$982,000 in parking revenues from tickets enough for one year?

Susan Spence '93

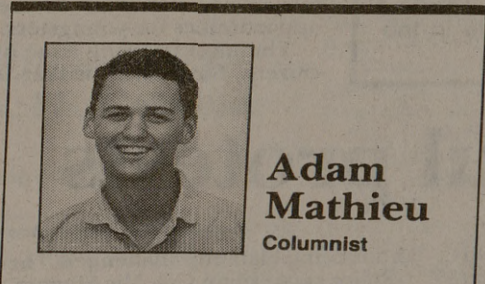
Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer.

Develop your own political beliefs

I was desperately looking for column material on Sunday before the REM concert. Much to my delight, I found that material at that very concert. I am not a music columnist and this is not the entertainment section, so I will not discuss how much I hate "Stand." I want to focus on some of the attitudes that were exposed during the concert.

The first thing that upset me was the prostitution that ran rampant at the concert. There were whores on the stage and in the audience. The band sold itself through some ridiculous pandering to the audience. We, the audience, paid so we could learn we "are the everything." These, however, are rather trivial matters, although I had hoped REM would avoid this showbiz crap. The most terrible act of prostitution occurred when many in the audience paid for some of lead singer Michael Stipe's attention with their integrity.

I am sure many people did this without even realizing it. The situation was simple. When Michael Stipe began (properly) bashing George Bush, the audience exploded in one of the biggest ovations of the night. This is fine until one realizes the members of this great institution overwhelmingly supported, and continue to support our august national leader. This may not appear significant, but it underscores the importance of politics in most people's lives. These people would forsake their beliefs for some mythical acceptance by one simple music performer.



Adam Mathieu
Columnist

My second complaint relates directly to this lack of interest in politics. First, however, I would like to write a formal declaration of protest about Michael Stipe's condescending attitude. He spouted a rather sickening load of good, but highly trendy, environmental politics. Then he had the unmitigated nerve to point an accusatory finger at the audience before "Begin the Begin," implying, of course, that no one in the audience had any sense of "personal or political activism." I was offended and made this known. He then had the gall to dictate to each of us what our politics should be. He referred us to the tables in the back for information about his favorite organizations. Why would he want a bunch of people with no sense of personal activism polluting these noble causes? He truly thought he could tell the audience how to believe. On this point, sadly, I think he was probably correct. This represents a fundamental problem.

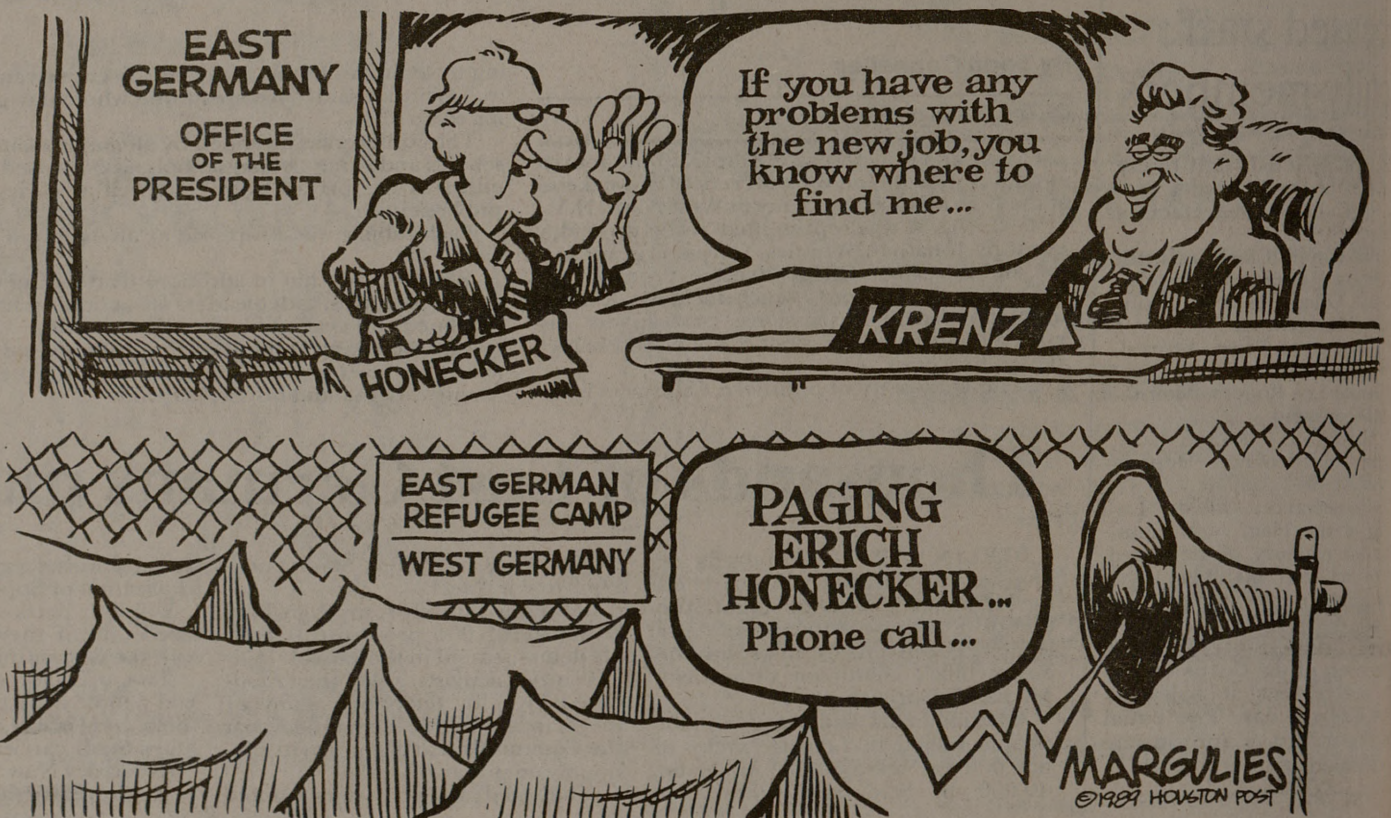
There were people who went to those tables, and for many this was a good thing. But I believe there are people

who collect Greenpeace brochures at every concert they attend and never once act on it. I wish these people had the guts to refuse the lead singer and proudly pass these organizations. The politics are unimportant.

Every election day the phone lines hum with students calling their parents to ask them how to vote. If people do not mature in college, will they ever? Probably not. These are the people who go on in life to vote against Michael Dukakis because his eyebrows are too bushy.

Not everyone needs to be political. Political inactivity is perfectly acceptable, and, according to some political science professors, laudable. It is a viable alternative for someone who simply does not like politics. I wholeheartedly recommend it to all those who currently bastardize the process through lack of information, interest or intelligence.

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The Battalion

(USPS 045 360)

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The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Journalism.

The Battalion is published Monday through Friday during Texas A&M regular semesters, except for holiday and examination periods.

Mail subscriptions are \$17.44 per semester, \$34.62 per school year and \$36.44 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.

Our address: The Battalion, 230 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-1111. Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77843-4111.