

## Bad days are bad for a good reason Humor, optimism are key to coping with stress

You can learn a lot from stress. After having my car towed for illegally parking in a northside apartment complex, receiving the first of what I'm sure will be many rejection letters from personnel offices across America, and discovering that I have the pleasure of redoing six photojournalism projects, the tendency for me to become a basket case seemed to be at an all time high.



**JULIE POLSTON**  
Asst. Opinion Editor

But I prevailed. For the first time in a long time, I stared stress straight in the face and laughed. And it was good. And I learned that you can learn a lot about yourself and the type of person that you are by your ability, or lack thereof, to cope with stress.

I suppose my newfound optimism concerning stress came to the forefront last Tuesday when I discovered that I needed to redo my last six photojournalism projects because the pictures were all out of focus.

Stress began to rear its ugly head. But I couldn't very well get mad. After all, it is my grade. Besides, the photos were out of focus because of my sheer disregard to wear my glasses when I shot the pictures.

Talk about feeling blonde. Talk about feeling stressed. But rather than rant and rave, I decided there must be a lesson to learn in this photo fiasco. Other than the obvious "wear your glasses when you take pictures" lesson, the greater truth is that sometimes the "noble" way out is best.

I mean, I'm a graduating senior with a bad case of senioritis. And it would be very easy to simply turn in my less than Pulitzer-prize winning photos and take a "C" in the class. But I just couldn't do it. I've come too far and worked too hard to simply take "C" in a class when I know that I can at least try and do something about it. And this is when I began to learn about the benefits of stress. Rule #1: Never give up.

With my photo paraphernalia tucked safely in my backpack, I set out to find my car after a long day on campus. When I arrived at my "No Parking" parking space, I discovered that my Toyota hatchback — affectionately coined "the Putz" for its unique ability to go from zero to 40 in 10 seconds — was, in fact, nowhere to be found. Imagine that.

The tow truck car-napping mongers of Bryan-College Station beat me at my own game, and rightfully so. Regardless of whether parking illegally was the result of a desperate attempt to make it to class after legal parking on campus was clearly out of the question, I was wrong to engage in such

costly behavior, and I deserved to be towed. So I laughed. Now, laughing about having my car towed may not sound like such a great accomplishment, but for those who don't know me, suffice it to say that laughter is a 180 degree turn-around for me. Rather than scream, shout, and jump up and down while inventing four-letter words, I laughed.

"Progress," I thought as I discovered another benefit of stress. Rule #2: Stress monitors just how far you've come. After rescuing the Putz from the napper's untidy pen for the low, low price of \$85, I cruised home — carefully monitoring my speed in order to avoid another fine — and made the mistake of checking my mail.

As I flipped through the "dear resident" ads and mailouts, I saw it: A letter from the Houston Chronicle. "I'm going to think positive about this," I remember telling myself as I tore open the envelope containing the words that would altar my fate as a journalist in Houston.

But given the course of the day's events, the power of positive thinking seemed to be in vain as I received my very first "I'm sorry, but we have no openings at this time," letter.

At this point, I could sense that stress was trying once again to rear its ugly little head into my otherwise eventful day. And in all fairness, it is stressful when you realize that you are going to graduate in exactly 38 days with absolutely no means of future income. After all, loans, grants and money from mom and dad only go so far.

So what's a graduating senior to do? I mean, within a matter of hours, I had managed to check out all of the photo equipment my professor had in store and fork out just enough plastic money to be reunited with the Putz, only to discover that the odds of landing a job to help pay for the additional 20 rolls of film and towing fiasco could be pretty bleak.

Perhaps some of you have experienced a similar hell, in which case, I'm not alone. And that's when I realized a final benefit of stress. Rule #3: We're all in this together.

And because we're all in this together, we can help one another. Or at least, we can be a little more understanding of one another whenever potential stress events occur — and the key word here is "potential."

Like it or not, stress follows us everywhere we go. But just because stress follows us doesn't mean it has to haunt us. Stress is inevitable, so we might as well learn to cope with it — or we will literally die trying to fend it off. Besides, a little bit of humor and optimism goes a long way in learning from the "stressful" events of everyday life.

Think about it.

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The Battalion



100 years at Texas A&M

## EDITORIAL

### Protect personal rights Allowing the terminally ill to die

The Texas Legislature is considering a bill that would legalize physician-assisted suicide for the terminally ill. In recognition of the right-to-die, this bill is a positive step toward the advancement of personal rights.

The bill, sponsored by Sen. Gonzalo Barrientos, D-Austin, would allow terminally ill, rational patients to go to court to obtain permission to have a doctor assist them in committing suicide.

Before the judge can grant the order, at least two physicians must certify that the patient is terminally ill, and the patient must be judged mentally competent to make the suicide decision. Two adults are also required to witness the assisted suicide. Following the suicide, the assisting physician is immune from all civil and criminal prosecution or professional discipline.

The Battalion does not advocate suicide as a means to escape depression or hardship; however, we do recognize the patient's right to assisted suicide in order to avoid unnecessary pain and suffering.

Although many choose to extend life as long as possible, the terminally ill should have the right to make their own choices with as little state interference as possible. This bill is a step in that direction.

Even though assisted suicide should be a personal matter, some state control is necessary to prevent death-with-dignity laws from being abused by overzealous physicians.

In the same fashion, a required courtroom appearance is also an in-

trusion on a private decision; however, it may be necessary to prevent the kind of legal complications that have become so prevalent today. Protecting the physician from prosecution or discipline is similarly a good idea.

Legalizing doctor-assisted suicide in Texas could prevent cases like that of Janet Adkins, who flew 2,000 miles to Michigan to commit suicide in 1990. She died on a cot in Jack Kevorkian's 1968 Volkswagen van. Bioethicists were alarmed at this instance because there were no procedural protections to guard Adkins' interests.

Such a bill would ensure that terminally ill patients who have decided to end their lives have a humane way of doing so. In fact, the proposed legislation was actually drafted by one of Barrientos' constituents after a neighbor used a shotgun to commit suicide. Barrientos has agreed to introduce the bill to the Legislature even though he has not promised he will support it.

However, Barrientos is demonstrating vision in introducing the bill and sparking public debate. And because the bill is limited to the terminally ill and follows strict guidelines, there is also a greater chance that the Senate will pass it.

From such a start, the Legislature can further investigate the legality of assisted suicide for more questionable cases such as quadriplegics, the comatose and the brain-damaged. Until then, this bill is a big step in allowing individuals greater control over their lives — and deaths.

COLLEGE STATION, TX

APRIL 6

1993

## MAIL CALL

### Battalion blunders with April Fools joke

A stench emitted from the April 1st issue of the Battalion. I must admit to not being much of a fan of Elvis, but I thought the humor, or lack thereof, to be self-defeating. Is not the Battalion editorial board sufficiently clever to treat the readers on April Fools with something other than lengthy, crude and aimless prose full of sexual innuendo? Perhaps the title, "The Battalion," was appropriate. We all know what products exude from the orifice.

David P. Ernestes  
Class of '92

As chairman of the publicity committee for the 1993 Cattlemen's Ball, one of my responsibilities was to place advertisements in the Battalion, issues dated March 31 and April 1, 1993. I am fully aware that this \$30.00/day ad, which was paid for by the College of Agriculture

and Life Sciences Council, did not bring your newspaper the revenue that full-page advertisement would have. However, I was appalled to read your April Fool's Day "Buttsling" pages.

The entire concept was overdone. Surely your staff has the ability to be humorous without being vulgar. Your references to pedophilia and masturbation were truly disgusting. And when did "sonofabitch" become listed in the Associated Press Style Manual—the book no self-respecting journalist would be without? As an advertiser, I was offended that advertising dollars placed under my supervision were abused in such a manner. As an agricultural journalism major, I was embarrassed that my fellow journalism students could knowingly commit such a breach of ethics.

Finally, as an Aggie, I am ashamed that the newspaper which represents Texas A&M University would display such gross vulgarity. Just think, to a stranger or a prospective student reading the Battalion, this is the image of Texas A&M you have presented. I understand

the need for an April Fool's joke, but it is very difficult to change a first impression.

D'Lyn Lloyd  
Class of '93

### Women are not girls, hostess ad offends

I read something in the Battalion a few days ago that offended me. While scanning the pages for something interesting, I came across and as that read something to the effect of "All girls interested in joining Aggie Hostesses meet at..." It continued to list the date and time of an information meeting for the organization.

The part of this ad that bothers me is the use of the word "girl." According to the law, "girl" refers to any female under the age of eighteen. It also has connotative meanings — the words juvenile, dependent and simple come to mind. We were all, male and female, that way once as a consequence of youth. But the quality of being female doesn't make one so permanently. And I don't think the ad was targeted only at young women under eighteen. The purpose of this letter is for me to publicly voice my disapproval of the way some members of society still views women as subordinate. I know I must seem really picky to some people for saying anything about something so subtle. That's part of the problem.

Women deserve to be treated as women, not as girls, and to be spoken of as such. No exceptions. Imagine opening the Battalion to an ad that read "All boys interested in joining the Corps of Cadets..." Not only would this come across as strange, I'm sure more than a few people would find it offensive. Times have changed. I just wish people would think before they act, especially if they plan to put it in writing.

Terri Boatman Kimmel  
Class of '93

### PTTS payment mess is one big headache

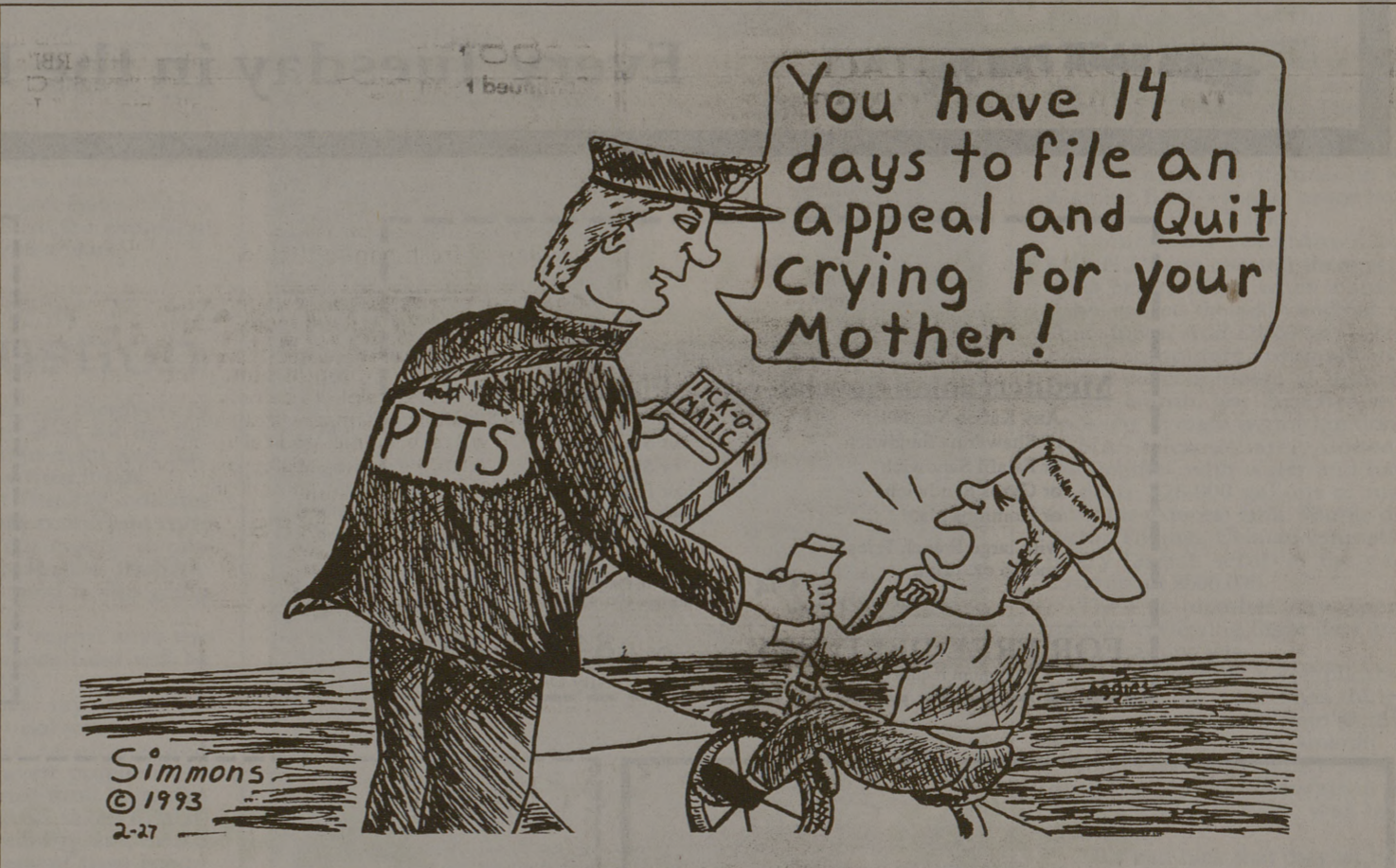
I've just been billed (again) for someone else's \$30 parking ticket. I guess I should know by now not to get upset when I receive that bill in the mail, that it's probably just another ticket I inherited from someone A&M can't get to anymore, like my brother, sister-in-law, or neighbor's second cousin. PTTS and at the Student's Attorney's office. I learned that this practice is probably illegal, but that it's okay to treat your students like second-class citizens as long as you can get away with it. I recommend, however, that you stop consoling students by suggesting they contact their parents to see that the bill gets paid since this isn't an option for most of us. To the shrewd Bar-

ney Fife(s) in charge of this scam: don't you think I resent being billed like this? Don't you realize I'll one day be an alumnus of this institution with memories of this injustice? Finally, to anyone who receives similar tickets: please go by PTTS and fill out a complaint form. Apparently, no one at PTTS will discuss the issue personally with students. PTTS justifies using personal information to pass along tickets to catch those few students using non-student cars. However, no university I know of holds its students in such contempt that it would consider threatening to bar them for others' offenses. For most students, it's not as simple as making a (long distance) phone call to get someone to pay for their own ticket. PTTS doesn't seem to appreciate this fact.

Tim Wilson  
Graduate Student

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