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EDITORIAL

Take what you read with a grain of salt

An open mind is always a benefit, and in news reporting, the smart reader realizes that even facts can be biased in their context or perspective. Limitations of print-space and time can force a writer to use a personal viewpoint to decide how facts will be presented in the final copy.

Information that is included or omitted can greatly change the impact of a story on the reader. Despite the best efforts of editorial policies and journalistic ethics, media cannot always present a balanced view. For example, the August issue of Ebony was devoted entirely to the African-American family. The articles reported family success stories in the black community.

People who are actually coping with the problems of gangs, drugs, poverty and other threats are addressed through the reports of. The magazine incorporates statistics with explanations and possible solutions to the difficulties.

The Aug. 30 Newsweek cover story delves into the plight of the black family from a different direction. The piece focuses on the

frightening endangerment of the black family.

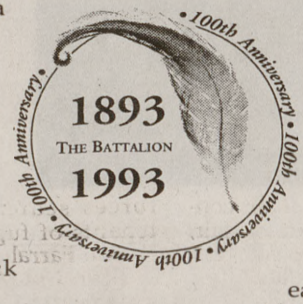
Polls and graphs illustrate the numbers and statistics of social crises. Sidebar articles highlight individual examples of the people who are a part of these tragic numbers.

Essentially, the same set of general facts are presented from two different perspectives. Ebony presented its mainly black readers with a more hopeful picture, while the mainstream audience of Newsweek received a decidedly bleaker presentation.

The saying, "You can't believe everything you read," may be a cliché, but it is also sound advice. Solid, true facts can easily be used to make a wide range of implications.

Think about the issues being discussed and the facts behind them. The Battalion always strives for objectivity, but like all publications, human nature will be reflected in our work.

Regardless of the information source, readers must make themselves aware of the perspective taken in presenting the information as well as the information itself.



Small steps toward life's large goals

Little by little, students carve pathway through college

I just spent three hours trying to find one single parking space in one of the thousands of vast, sprawling parking lots which surround this campus, covering more acreage than do most northeastern states.

College, they say, provides invaluable experience and opens up a world of opportunities. All I want is the opportunity to park my car.

When people think of college, they think of tests and classrooms. They think of all-night cram sessions and struggling to stay awake through lectures. And, yes, they think of beer. Lots of beer.

But as students stumble into the race towards graduation, they learn that long lines, registration red tape and PARKING are the sad reality, and that earning passing grades is merely a formality.

I vaguely remember my first semester of college — which was, oh, twenty years ago — when phone registration was a futuristic luxury predicted on shows like "Beyond 2000." I stood in some line where thousands of other students slept, hoping by chance that it was one of the lines where we belonged.

As the sun set on the campus and the doors were locked, I finally reached the front of the line where the nice lady with the scowl on her face grunted and told me that I was in



ROBERT VASQUEZ
Columnist

the wrong line and should proceed to the line where I belonged, which ended just outside of the building which was now locked but would be opened promptly the following day.

All this hassle is becoming a pain, I thought. I'll never make it. And this was just registration. If and when I finally made it through all this red tape there were still the classes to master, the lectures to endure, the professors to conquer. Why was I doing this to myself?

I survived. I came. I saw. I kicked — well, you know what I kicked. I had slain the mighty dragon and was ready for more. Now, if I could just pass the classes for which I was finally registered.

After I finished my first class and set out on the great hike to my car in Parking Lot Z, I realized I hadn't understood a word my Spanish professor said. And he was talking in English. This college business, I figured, would be a long, hard climb. Uphill. Backwards. In the snow.

It really does get frustrating, I know. I sat through the first week of classes wondering how I could ever survive the first semester, let alone the next three (or four, or five) years.

Spanish particularly posed an insurmountable threat to my success as a college student. It seemed self-defeating just walking to class. I could never pass, I thought.

I'd sit through lecture despairing, mourning the fact that as soon as my grades came out, my parents would realize that my talents were better spent serving Quarter Pounders with cheese.

Instead of graduating from college and

commanding a six figure salary, I would be destined forever to wear polyester uniforms and ask, "Would you like fries with that?"

It seemed impossible. But I did it. This summer I took my last two semesters of Spanish — and I even passed them. Yes, my foreign language requirement is behind me now.

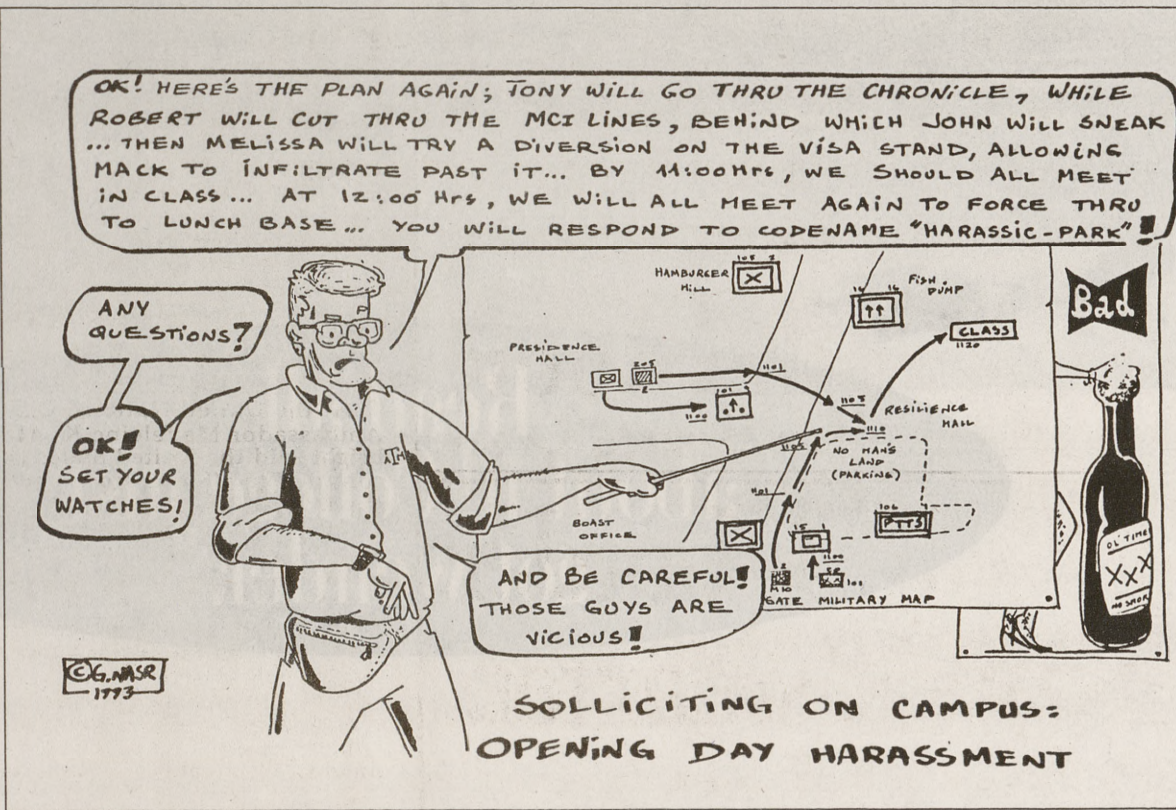
It may sound like a small accomplishment, but it marks the end of a major portion of my college career. You see, somewhere between all the Spanish classes I also completed other college hours. And now there stands eight measly hours of credit between graduation and me.

I am here to tell you that if I can do it, you can too. Yes, there are endless hours of studying to endure and thousands of books to be checked out — fortunately, Evans Library probably doesn't have half of them. And yes, there are countless hours of cram sessions to survive and hundreds of papers to be typed. It's not easy. Trust me, I'm not looking forward to it.

But we press on. And gradually we whittle away the requirements for graduation. I'm amazed when I think how once there were one hundred and twenty hours standing between the unemployment line and me, and now there are only eight. Even now, those few hours sometimes seem impossible to complete.

And there's always the parking, and the waiting and the red tape But it can be done. Thousands of students have done it before us. We can do it too.

Robert Vasquez is a senior journalism major



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Gluttons, dieters or in-between, we're all stuck with the tab

The old saying "you are what you eat" was a mistake. It should have been "you are the way you eat."

In the numerous hours I spent waiting tables this summer, I was blessed with the ample opportunity to observe America at dinner. It was not a pretty sight. However, I decided to turn this sweat and grease-filled menial labor into a productive analogy.

Right now, America is sitting down to a very long and large dinner of gourmet budget deficit, and there are many beliefs and opinions about the best way to consume this meal.

I thought it would be amusing to relate the mass amount of food consumption



JENNY MAGEE
Columnist

that was going on around me to the public reaction to the gasoline tax as a means of generating money for the deficit reduction.

After an entire summer of waiting tables, I found that a lot can be determined by how a person consumes a chicken fried steak platter. As any good observer of human nature, I took the opportunity to distinguish among my customers' eating habits and classify them into three main groups.

First, there is the "Slop-Hound" group. This group consists of the people who, with utter disregard for the separation of the entree and its complimentary vegetables, are content to mush the entire meal into a heap of dog food-like mess. "Well, really it is all going to the same place anyway." A noteworthy feature of the Slop-Hounds is that for all practical purposes, silverware is not necessary. Using a biscuit for the transportation process is both convenient and edible.

For the sake of my little game, this group can easily translate into those citizens who are not bothered by paying a

few extra cents in gasoline tax. They realize that, like a biscuit, it is the easiest way to soak up some of the money that is desperately needed to reduce the deficit.

Next, there is the "On-The-Side" group. For the members of this group, the main concern is control. They have a strong need to possess the ability to control the amount of gravy they put on their

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mashed potatoes or the amount of ranch dressing that goes on their salad.

This sort of philosophy best fits the person who opposes an increased tax on gas. Primarily, because needing gas for your car in America is pretty much like needing blood for your body — it is not

exactly a gray area. The On-The-Siders would prefer that the money they contribute to the purpose of deficit reduction come from other sources, such as a sin tax. If the money was extracted from the sale of cigarettes and alcohol, these people would have the power to control their taxability.

Finally, there is the "Accessorizer" group. These people are the reason the condiment industry is what it is today. I witnessed a man dose his chicken fried steak with ketchup, Tabasco sauce, and honey mustard dressing before happily devouring it.

The Accessorizers represent the people who are out of touch with reality. They may have ordered deficit reduction but it is not what they really want. And they sure do not want something as blatant and obvious as a gasoline tax to solve it.

No matter what the plan of attack may be, it is important to remember that we are all sitting at the same table with the same dinner on our plates. Everybody gobbled up the buffet during the '80s, and now everyone is squabbling over who's

going to pay the tab in the '90s. But America's debt is everybody's problem.

We are all citizens of this country, and with citizenship comes responsibility — regardless of economic prosperity or debt. It is sort of like marriage — for better or for worse.

We have wasted time trying desperately to ignore the fact that this debt exists or by trying to place the responsibility on only a portion of the population. Both methods have proven to be absolutely ludicrous. The debt is here to stay. And obviously, the tab is too monstrous to be paid for by only a few pocketbooks.

It is time to face up to the fact that any American who tries to pass off the deficit as someone else's responsibility is just trying to hide the green beans in the left-over mashed potatoes on his plate. If everyone would just grab a biscuit and pass the basket around, we could all do our share and get on to dessert.

Jenny Magee is a sophomore English and journalism major



Radio station playlist needs improvement

Austin and Dallas native students who are accustomed to a consistent alternative rock station are out of luck in the B-CS area. KKYS (104.7), in particular, has a serious programming mess (for lack of a better word), their so-called

"Mix" is just that, a mix of every type of music. It should be renamed as the "Switch" because students are frequently switching the channel when they hear a song they don't like; or switching to CD or cassette.

Recently, KKYS played this sequence of songs: The Red Hot Chili Peppers, Kenny G, Sisters With Voices, Dada, followed by Restless Heart ... whew, makes

you feel like a roller coaster ride. I don't know a soul who wouldn't have changed the channel, or put in a CD or cassette.

It's a simple music choice (programming) problem: people who prefer alternative rock change the channel when Kenny G, Sisters With Voices, and Restless Heart come on and vice versa. This clash of different types of music happen over and over everyday at KKYS.

I have yet to hear from any student who thinks highly of the stations here. Even the local cable company is monopolizing on the fact of poor local programming with their own DMX system. KKYS needs to take a stand and choose a type of programming — it's easy, just go down to a local music store — they've done it for you: Alternative, Rock, Jazz, Soul, R&B, Easy Listening, Country.

Quit trying to please everybody - because you are pleasing no one! Meanwhile, fellow Aggies, keep buying CDs and cassettes, because there's no KNAC or KDGE here!

Edward Ham
Class of '94

Aggie spirit shines through once again

I want to thank the individual who returned some lost money to me last week. On Saturday, August 21st, I withdrew some money from an ATM machine at the First American Bank on University Drive. There was another guy waiting in

line to use the machine, so I quickly grabbed the money and drove away. Only I realized when I was down the street that I was \$15 short.

I turned around and went back to the bank to see if the guy behind me had found it in the drawer, but he had already left. I figured that this person would probably use the money to get \$15 drunker that night, but he did not. Instead, he returned to the bank the following Monday, took the trouble to find out who the money belonged to and had the money re-deposited in my account.

I don't know who was honest enough to do this, but I greatly appreciate it! Once again the Aggie Code of Honor has been upheld.

Hiram A. Hodges
Class of '93