

THE BATTALION Editorial Board

CHRIS WHITLEY, editor in chief

JULI PHILLIPS, managing editor
 DAVE THOMAS, night news editor
 BELINDA BLANCARTE, night news editor
 MACK HARRISON, opinion editor

MARK EVANS, city editor
 ANAS BEN-MUSA, Aggiefife editor
 MICHAEL PLUMER, sports editor
 WILLIAM HARRISON, sports editor
 KYLE BURNETT, photo editor

Grandchildren: The parents' revenge

People have kids, but their folks get the most satisfaction

College students are usually such rational people. They have their priorities and objectives in all the right places. Then they graduate, and suddenly they're overcome by this intense nesting urge.



ROBERT VASQUEZ
Columnist

at a decibel level reached only by 747s, DC-10s and hungry babies. And my mother asks when I'm going to have children.

Can you say "vasectomy"? I remember the days when my mother's only advice to her children was a simple, but solemn, "Don't get married."

She tried so hard to save us from the painful consequences she was forced to endure — namely, kids — by helping us avoid making the same mistakes she made. The simplest way to avoid the pitfalls, she figured, was to get married in those three simple words: Don't get married.

Then adolescence set in and, hormones coursing through our bodies and rational thought hovering just beyond our reach, we subjected her to the horrors of parenthood and instilled in her a deep desire to return the favor.

Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned. Now, my mother is encouraging us to have kids. And, as she watches her children struggle with children of their own, she now whispers three new words: "Revenge is sweet."

So my sister was planning to spend a little time with the family and visit old friends. Whereas once she could have hopped onto a plane and been home in no time, she now has two strollers, two car seats, a playpen, six diaper bags, nine bottles and a million diapers to pack. Oh, yeah, and the kids.

So my dad and I had the pleasure of driving the moving van all 370 million miles to the middle of BFE just to turn around and come back. The road trip was long enough, but now we had two kids whose only mission in life was to make mine miserable.

My oldest nephew, Christopher, is at that

special age that all children reach when they are old enough to walk, in their cute little way, across the house and stick their cute little fingers in the cute little electric socket.

Or they toddle to the edge of the staircase and take that first little step down a winding flight of stairs which ends rather abruptly on the tile landing at the bottom. Meanwhile, adults are scrambling to catch falling vases which were placed so thoughtlessly atop delicate shelves which nobody would have guessed could be toppled so easily by short, little twenty-pound monsters.

Whereas, Christopher once demanded to be held and would screech when released. Now, he flails endlessly, fighting to be put down so he can run to the nearest open flame or heavy-traffic intersection.

Exhausted after the thirty hour drive, we finally reached home, ready to sleep for a week or so. My sister carefully pulled Christopher out of his car seat and handed him to me, careful not to wake him.

"Hold him close to you, or he'll wake up," she said.

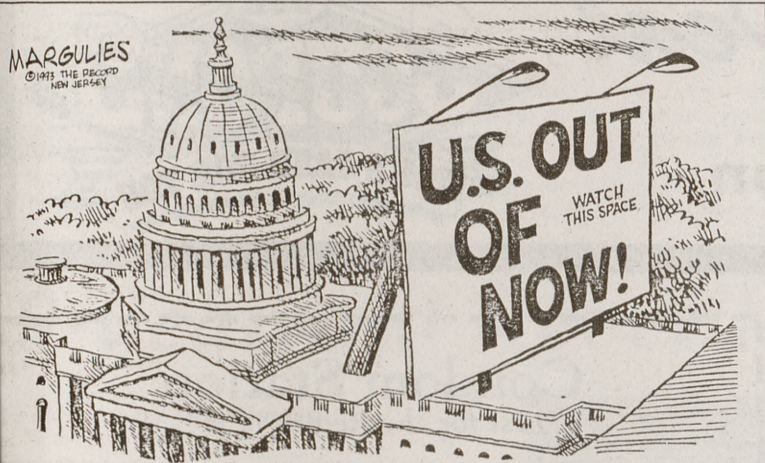
As I walked gently to the house, I watched his face for any sign that I might be disturbing his sleep.

His little round face was so calm and peaceful. It was hard to imagine the little devil who ran around screaming all day was now resting quietly in my arms.

And then he moved. He shifted around a bit. Then he smiled. His eyes never opened. He just smiled.

And for a moment, I thought ... No, I didn't think anything.

Robert Vasquez is a senior journalism major



EDITORIAL

Maroon tape

Students are names, not numbers

Bureaucracy rules. At least that seems to be the case at Texas A&M. The University allowed two students to slip through the cracks of the system by error, and it seems as though the school made no effort to help them.

Wade Graham changed his major last semester from nuclear engineering to business. He said the College of Business assured him that they would process his class changes. They didn't, and he received all failing grades for the engineering classes he thought he had dropped.

The irony is that Graham, a Corps member, was named guidon bearer for his outstanding achievement his first year. Another student, Chris Jakubczak, was forced to leave because of poor semester grades he received after being hospitalized for two weeks during his freshman year.

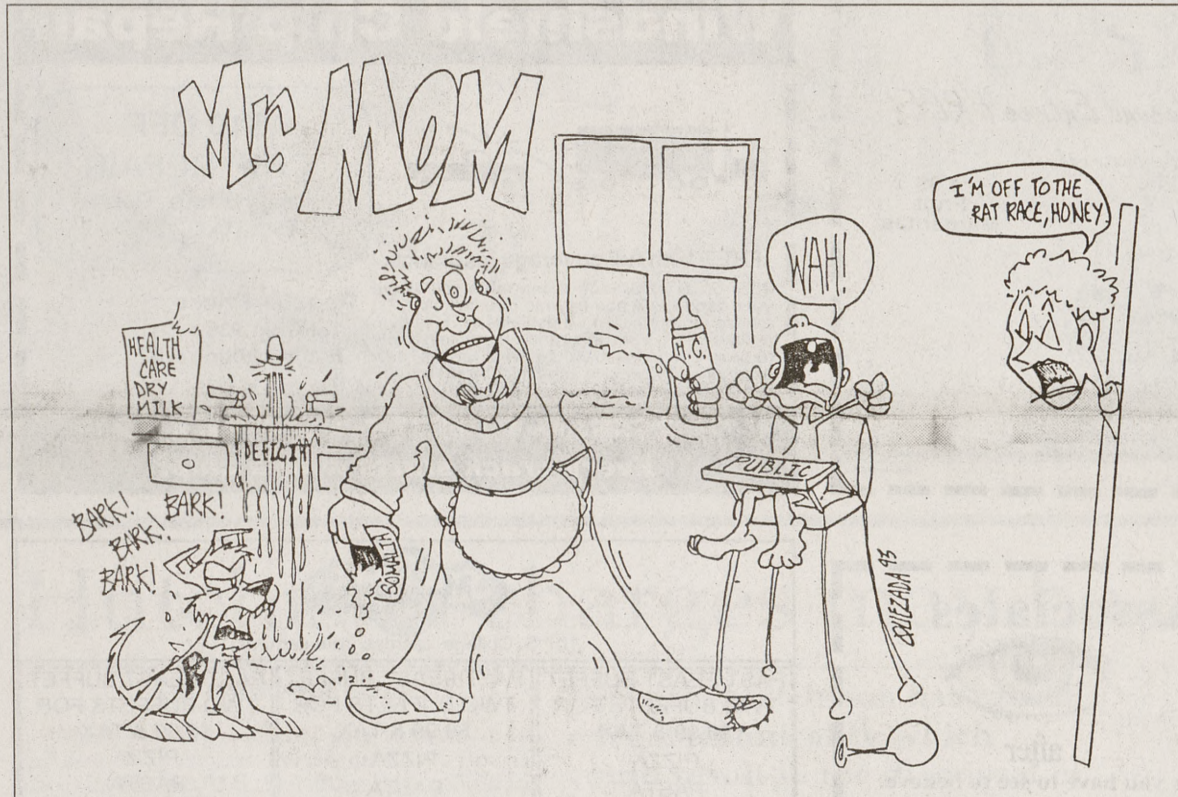
When he went to the College of Business to erase his grades, advisers told him there wasn't enough evidence that he had been hospitalized, despite the doctor's notes and billing statements he produced.

No one ever told Jakubczak that he could have withdrawn from classes for medical reasons. Jakubczak said Les Fiechtner, the director of undergraduate programs for the College of Business, told him that it would take too much time and effort to wipe out his file for that semester. Fiechtner denied making that statement.

What can be done in the future to prevent more students from being swallowed by the system? Graham and Jakubczak probably should have double-checked administrative work or gotten help at the first sign of trouble. But is it really fair to expect them to have taken action when they didn't know what options were available?

The University needs to set up a program during freshman and transfer orientations to inform all incoming students of University policy regarding changing majors, adding and dropping classes and withdrawing from the University.

Texas A&M also needs to do what it promises students when they get here, which is to treat students like individuals and not like numbers.



Editorials appearing in The Battalion reflect the views of the editorial board. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions of other Battalion staff members, the Texas A&M student body, regents, administration, faculty or staff.

Columns, guest columns, cartoons and letters express the opinions of the authors.

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor and will print as many as space allows. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class, and phone number.

We reserve the right to edit letters and guest columns for length, style, and accuracy. Contact the opinion editor for information on submitting guest columns.

Address letters to:
 The Battalion - Mail Call
 013 Reed McDonald
 Mail stop 1111
 Texas A&M University
 College Station, TX 77843
 Fax: (409) 845-2647

Obesity no laughing matter to those with weight problems

Weight is a central issue in some young men and women's lives.



TRACEY JONES
Columnist

Some weight problems are genetic. However, others seem to be a learned behavior. In a sense it can be a consequence of low self-esteem.

To those of us who have never had a problem with obesity, large people are funny. They are more or less a joke to us. It seems hilarious that some people cannot lose weight because we imagine this huge person laying lazily on the couch with a bowl of chips on one side, a cake on the other, a hoagie in the left hand and some cookies in the right.

I've joked about it. My friends have joked about it. I've even heard Mama say

something to the effect that "so and so needs to pull away from the table. I would have to hurt ya'll if you got that big."

Just this weekend at Baylor, a friend of mine made oinking noises at an obese girl who passed by as we sat on the suspension bridge.

There is a young man who I meet frequently now who has the most God-awful shape. I laugh and joke about him all the time, along with many others, because it is humorous to us.

But below the surface, it is not a laughing matter. I imagine it is not funny to be encumbered with 35, 55, 75 or 100 extra pounds. I imagine the high blood pressure, the aching feet, the heart complications that may result from obesity.

And it is not a problem of just "pulling away from the table." It is not a matter of willpower. It is a matter of learning to feel good about yourself. If the reason for the low self-esteem is due to verbal and/or emotional abuse, it is a matter of relearning what you have previously been taught about yourself and your worth as

a person. We don't always eat because we're hungry.

People often use the relationship between themselves and food to compensate for feelings of emptiness, worthlessness or guilt. Even fear.

Not everyone can be a size five. It just isn't possible. However, it is possible for you to be the size that is appropriate for your bone structure and genetic make-up.

A lot of times, we eat out of habit — because we're bored, because we're depressed. Maybe we're studying and want some popcorn, or maybe we didn't do so well on our first round of tests and need something to make us feel better.

It's important that the people who are

experiencing this problem know that there are alternatives to eating. There are activities such as speed walking, jogging, reading or talking to someone about the problem that can relieve stress and anxiety.

I can't stress this enough: Your weight is not what is most important. It is the way you feel about yourself. I've known large-boned people who would be considered fat, but they always looked nice. They kept their appearance neat and clean.

Not everyone can be a size five. It just isn't possible, even though magazines present this image. However, it is possible for you to be the size that is appropriate for your bone structure and genetic make-up.

Most importantly, stand up for yourself. If someone is saying things to make you feel inferior or worthless, leave the situation. Say, "Excuse me," and walk away. It is not rude on your part to do this. You are not obligated in any way to laugh at a comment that hurts your feelings. You are not obligated to stand and take it.

If you are experiencing health prob-

lems because of your weight, consult a doctor about what can be done to alleviate these complications. His advice is something that is meant to help you. So, in essence, you are doing something good for yourself by losing weight. But the key is to do it for yourself — not anyone else.

I guess I should say something to those of us who have been guilty of poking fun at obese people. They are people with feelings. And while we are not responsible for how they may look to us, we are responsible for the way we treat them. That's not to say that you have to make friends with every obese person you see or that you have to like him or her. Just be polite and move on if that's the case.

I can safely say that if the situation were reversed, I wouldn't be happy. I wouldn't think it was so funny.

All who can say the same thing, let's try harder to consider the feelings of others who might be hurt by our words and snickers.

Tracey Jones is a senior psychology major

COLLEGE STATION, TX
 OCT 19
 1993
MAIL CALL

Courtesy impresses visitors to Aggiland

On the weekend of Oct. 9, my husband (Charles E. Wyatt, Class of '43) our daughter, her husband and our almost 16-year-old grandson, Jeff, came to A&M for the A&M-Houston game. We came also to

show Jeff A&M. He hopes to attend A&M. I am writing this letter, as I was so impressed with all the courtesy we received from the students we encountered. "Yes ma'am, no ma'am." "May I help you?" "Excuse me, please." Both my husband and myself are on canes. The young people helped us every way they could. We cannot express our appreciation enough. What a joy to see

such young people in today's world. Thanks, Aggies.

Mrs. (Charles) Joyce Wyatt
 Bandera, Texas

There's a face behind the parts you stole

To the person who stole my bike parts: I am writing to attach a bit of humanity to the non-entity from whom you stole. My name is Eric Madsen, and I'm a 24-year-old graduate student in mechanical engineering. I PAID for my bike, as well as the handlebar extensions, the bike pack and the repair tools with my meager assistantship salary. That means Mom and

Dad won't be replacing what you took. So, if your conscience is starting to twinge, call me at 268-0234 or write me via e-mail at epm5369. All I want is my stuff back, and you can go your anonymously merry way.

Eric P. Madsen
 Graduate student

Please give credit to events' organizers

This letter is in response to the article, "Officials at forum question benefits of NAFTA," written by James Bernsen. I am the Secretary and one of the many members of Texas Environ-

mental Action Coalition (TEAC) that worked hard to help bring this event about. In the past two weeks, we made flyers, a banner and manned two tables in the MSC. Everyone in our organization participated in this event.

It is inconsiderate and unprofessional to cover an event and not mention who was responsible for making it happen. The article made no mention of our advisor, Dr. Gary Varner, who put this whole event together, or the three organizations, the Brazos Sierra Club, the Rio Brazos Audubon Society and TEAC, who sponsored this event.

In the future, please be considerate enough to mention the people behind the events as well as in them.

James Rohrer, TEAC Secretary
 Vanessa Traylor, TEAC President