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Today's media: Good news is no news Papers, television should relate positive stories as well

Reading a newspaper or watching the news can be depressing. Very depressing.

I know that most parents still love their children, most teachers still want to motivate and encourage their students, and most politicians — I may be stretching this one — genuinely want to serve their constituents. Headlines, however, sometimes make me forget.

Thinking about how newspapers affect us daily, I took a copy of this Saturday's Dallas Morning News and labeled new stories with a big blue highlighter. If a story reported something positive in the news, I marked it with a big "G." I used a "B" for stories that revealed some new societal atrocity and "N" for stories that stated neutral facts.

After tallying the marks — excluding the home, auto and classified sections — I found 18 good stories, 34 bad stories and 31 neutral stories. The numbers weren't as bad as I expected. For every positive story we read, we only have to read two negative stories. But not everyone reads every story, and the good news can be more difficult to find.

In the front and presumably most widely read section, 11 stories reported bad news while only four discussed something positive. The more cheerful stories often considered to be fluff by journalists are often tucked away in the Lifestyle and Metropolitan sections.



MELISSA MEGLIOLA
Columnist

Why not run the stories on the front page? Wouldn't we all start the day with a more positive outlook if newspapers were only allowed to print good news on the front page?

We really wouldn't have to censor the media, just rearrange it a little. With some layout redesign, the lead story on Saturday could have run as "Plano Teen Shines on Mickey Mouse Club."

Below it a story about the Granbury coach who was featured in the fourth annual American Teacher Awards would have been appropriate. An uplifting story about a 14-year-old boy who escaped from gang life and recently won the Optimist International Oratorical competition would also have been front page material.

Controversies and scandals undoubtedly sell papers. But if every paper was required to print only good news on the front page, then each paper would be equally affected. Reporters might even search out the unusually good things people around them are doing.

Although the public is not supposed to be interested in news that makes you feel good, I only remember two of the many magazine and newspaper articles I have read in the last few weeks.

The first is an excerpt from a Robert Fulghum book. Someone in the publicity department of a failing symphony had read his dream of conducting Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and thought that Robert Fulghum, guest conductor, might be able to sell some tickets. Little attention was paid to the fact that Fulghum does not read music and that the Ninth is an extremely difficult piece.

With much help from a disgruntled conductor, Fulghum spent months preparing, yet remained inadequate. He went through the

motions for two performances. But on his third and final performance, he apologized to the audience and said that he could no longer mutilate such a beautiful piece of music.

The conductor then led the symphony in a wonderful performance and Fulghum left the music hall knowing Beethoven was smiling. Not currently front page news, but a story I will remember for a long time.

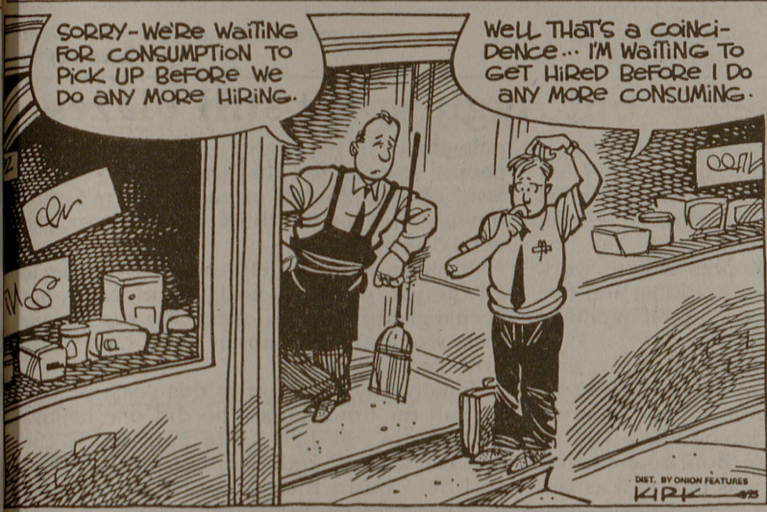
Bob Greene, a columnist for the Chicago Tribune, wrote a story about a young trick-or-treater who returned to the same house several times. Although the family recognized him, each time they gave him a new bag of potato chips. Later that evening the boy came to the door for the fourth or fifth time.

He carried with him four bags of potato chips that he returned meekly. His father waited at the end of the sidewalk. Cautious parents now check their children's candy to make certain it is safe to eat, but this father cared enough for his son to make him return the extra chips.

Stories about maintaining the integrity of the arts and teaching your kids morals will never replace reports of the war in Bosnia, drive-by shootings and parents who starved their 5-year-old child until he weighed only 18 pounds. But maybe we could push for one day a week. Wednesday could officially become good news day.

Maybe on Wednesdays people would start to greet each other on the street, cars would allow one another to merge into heavy lanes of traffic, students would try to help one another find parking spots ...

Melissa Megliola is a senior industrial engineering major



EDITORIAL

A fine job

Volleyball team deserves support

Congratulations to the Texas A&M Lady Aggies as they qualify for the NCAA volleyball tournament.

The football team's three-year Southwest Conference Championship season may have overshadowed this other outstanding group of Aggie athletes.

Despite the lack of attention, first-year coach Laurie Corbelli led the Lady Aggies to an impressive 26-7 regular season record.

Everyone should come out to G. Rollie White Coliseum tonight at 7 p.m. to yell for the Lady Aggies as they host the George Mason Patriots in the first round of the NCAA volleyball tournament.

Tonight's game is Texas A&M's first appearance in post-season play since 1986.

"There was no way they could leave us out," Corbelli said.

If the Lady Aggies advance they will face the University of

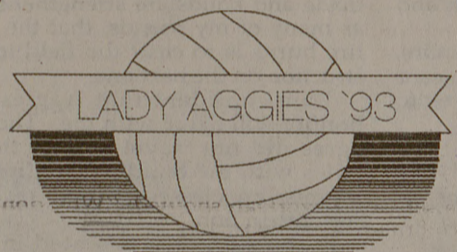
Texas Lady Longhorns in Austin this weekend. Another SWC team, the University of Houston Cougars, also snapped up a spot in the first round.

Corbelli said she hopes to keep the players relaxed and focused on tonight's game. Any team that makes it to the NCAA tournament will be a tough opponent. The games will demand the maximum effort from both competitors and fans.

The Lady Aggies' success tonight will showcase the talent and dedication of players and coaches. The support of every available Aggie fan will make the job of winning the match much easier.

The NCAA tournament match offers Aggie fans an opportunity to see the volleyball team demonstrate that it can play with the best competition in the country.

Pack G. Rollie tonight and send a much-deserved vote of confidence to the Lady Aggies.



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.

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A visit to Normandy brings home the price of our freedom

BAYEUX, France — I remember as a child watching my father leave for out of town trips that his work required of him. Though he was gone for only a few days and took these trips only a few times each year, I remember how my mother prayed each day for his safe return.

And whenever it was our turn to pray, my brother, my sister or I would always end with "... and please bless our dad. Help him come home safe so that we can see him again."

He was in no apparent danger, but we prayed for him anyway.

Touring the war-torn region of Normandy, France, I've learned so much about the thousands of men who stormed the beaches on D-Day as a part of our Al-



ROBERT VASQUEZ
Columnist

lied effort to liberate France and crush the German army — an army that had overrun France and begun the separation and then the extermination of the Jewish people who lived there.

In America, we read books that describe the heinous war scenes that took place somewhere "over there." Americans know that we emerged victorious — right?

It seems difficult to grasp an intimate understanding of a war that happened 50 years ago when there is so little visible evidence of it.

The French countryside is littered with remnants of that war, a war that still looms painfully clear in the minds of people who live here. The shorelines are pocked and scarred from the artillery launched from battleships designed for destruction.

Standing at the sight of the Normandy invasion, one can still see the artificial harbor built hundreds of feet from the shore, where the freezing surf of the English Channel seems forbidding enough to stop any army.

We walked through the concrete

bunkers built atop towering cliffs which rise above the beaches where the Americans landed.

From that vantage point, looking hundreds of feet down at the beaches, I tried to imagine what must have run through the minds of those American soldiers.

The sea wall that had been fortified by the Germans appears impenetrable to this

These beaches stand today as a reminder of the victorious invasion. But resting on the cliffs where Germans once stood are thousands of white marble crosses.

day. Boats had been tossed. Many troops had to swim ashore, their bodies weighted by their own drenched uniforms and gear.

And as they reached the shore, they were shot at by men who sat hundreds of feet above them behind concrete walls.

And then what were these American

soldiers to do? Only cross the beach, scale the cliffs and overtake the enemy, who was waiting for them at the top — that is, if they weren't picked off in the water before they made it to shore.

What could possibly make the men think they could accomplish such a task? The cliffs were draped with mines set to explode when the soldiers scaled the walls. If they reached the top, they found barbed wire, more mines, and Germans aiming to kill them at any cost.

But the Allied Forces — Americans, English and Canadians — kept on coming. Men were dropping on every side, but those who could pressed on.

The odds were impossible. The Germans knew it. They had made sure that no force could penetrate the defensive wall they had formed. And yet, they lost. Little by little, the American invaders advanced on the German occupied territory, now known as the Omaha and Utah beaches — the code names used when planning the invasion.

These beaches are where America proved her military might. They stand today as a reminder of the victorious in-

vasion, the grandest display of amphibious warfare in the history of the world.

But the symbols that mark this glorious moment in history are bitter reminders of the price that was paid for such a victory. Resting on the cliffs where the Germans once stood, there are now thousands of white marble crosses.

The Normandy American Cemetery stretches row after row across 200 acres of French soil. Buried here are nearly 10,000 soldiers who lost their lives in the battle.

The field of crosses, which seems only to end where the sea begins, is a silent memorial to the soldiers. Visitors walk quietly past, knowing that each cross represents one human life.

Less clear, but more moving, is the thought that each life here represented so many more lives. Each soldier probably had somewhere a mother or a father or a family hoping, praying that one day he would return safely. Just so they could see him again.

Robert Vasquez is a senior journalism major

COLLEGE STATION, TX
 DEC 1
 1993
MAIL CALL

Poor management killed Koriyama

As a person who participated in the Koriyama pilot program as a teaching assistant and who has maintained interest in the campus throughout its developments, I believe it is a mistaken and

simplistic assessment of the unfortunate outcome of A&M's venture in Koriyama to say that lack of Japanese funding is closing the campus (Battalion editorial Nov. 30).

The Koriyama campus has been closing since the day it opened. A&M from the very beginning approached the project with a naivete about Japan in general and Koriyama in particular that led

many in Koriyama to question both the commitment of A&M to the project and the large amounts of money coming from Koriyama citizens' taxes to pay for it.

With few notable exceptions, the staff A&M sent to Koriyama to manage the project had little or no knowledge of Japanese culture, the Japanese way of doing business, or the Japanese language.

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Many never tried to overcome these deficiencies. This sort of one-way approach never did settle well with the conservative community of Koriyama, just as it would not in a conservative community such as Bryan-College Station.

In the views of many associated with

the project, both Japanese and American, the poor management (with the exception of Dr. Norris), repeated gaffes, and the seeming lack of effort to bridge the cultural gap on A&M's part doomed the much-needed image promotion the former mayor of Koriyama tried hard to accomplish, not to mention risked the futures of the students involved.

Given this, any sort of decision on the present mayor's part to withhold funding may be seen as a response to the mandate he is given as mayor of a community having a hard time justifying the project.

Granted that it was rumored in Koriyama that there were questionable political and business dealing by the former mayor and local construction com-

panies, a lucid and cognizant approach by A&M might have saved the political implications of this for the Koriyama campus. A&M apparently remained largely ignorant throughout.

Also granted that American universities have had a very hard time establishing branch campuses in a country with social views of education greatly foreign to our own, Texas A&M at Koriyama may have never survived anyway.

But to lay blame for the closure simply on the recent withholding of funds by the Koriyama city hall is to reaffirm the simplistic approach of Texas A&M towards the Koriyama campus.

Tom C. Hilde
Graduate student