

THE BATTALION Editorial Board

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The life and times of a college paper An editor looks back on a semester of accomplishments

So, this is it. Three years on The Battalion, and its come down to one last word. But doesn't this get tiring? I mean, every December and May, the newest departing editor gives his or her "farewell" to Texas A&M. I know I get sick of it. I can imagine how everyone else must feel. Therefore, I'll try to avoid wallowing in melodrama and stick with something a little more profound.



CHRIS WHITLEY
Editor in Chief

Looking across the newsroom here in the nuclear fallout shelter of the Reed McDonald building, I see that the faces of those I work with have become drawn and colorless. They move slower, and they talk an octave lower. It has been an excruciatingly long semester. While most of you were sunning your fannies back home, we arrived on August 15th to a mostly deserted town (although I can't complain too much — there were no lines at Duddley's). We spent that two weeks before school doing some fine tuning to the paper while at the same time preparing for the Back-to-School edition, the largest paper of the year. When that was done, we turned right around to working on The Battalion's 100th Anniversary Issue. We spent weeks planning, researching, writing, editing, designing and stressing. The day it went to press, five staffers had been up over 36 hours straight. The next day, we were making last-minute arrangements for the 100th Anniversary Reunion that weekend. We even put on a banquet for all the returning editors of The Battalion. The spectacle received coverage from The

Houston Post, The Austin American-Statesman, The Bryan-College Station Eagle, The Associated Press and KBTX-TV.

By the time the tumult had died down, everyone was hurriedly cramming for midterms. We had forgotten that we were also attending classes, and the schoolwork had piled up over the previous five weeks.

Then came the stress that accompanied our controversial story about the 12th Man Foundation. Then came the investigations from the Board of Regents, the Office of Finance and Administration, the Food Services Department and the Athletic Department. It was next to impossible for us to get solid information about all these goings-on.

But we were always there. We might not have gotten the story on Monday, but we made damn sure we got it on Tuesday. Wednesday, we might have scooped the world, but on Thursday, we missed a story everyone else had. That's the news business.

This semester, we have played with the big boys. We have gone to relentless pursuits to get news so that people on this campus can be informed about what's going on. And I mean, everything that goes on — the good and the bad. We owe the truth to the readers, and they should expect nothing less.

But I believe that through all of the experiences we've had, good and bad, we were all kind of hoping that this last issue would hit the stands. We really haven't had a break all semester long. And dammit, I think we deserve one.

I have heard a lot of praise about The Battalion this semester, and for that I am grateful. I have also heard a lot of criticism about The Battalion, and for that I am also grateful. We'll never know where to improve unless we look at what's wrong. Fortunately for me, the people who consistently attack us unjustly have been few. But I hope they realize that, hey,

we're learning, too.

Although it goes along with the stereotypical "cheesy farewell column," I would never forgive myself if I didn't thank the people that helped this paper out the most. Bear with me.

Thanks to Dr. Charles Self, Robert Wegener and Bob Rogers for giving us criticism and praise when we needed it.

Thanks to all of the former editors who came back to the reunion in October. The people who have carried on this often-forgotten Aggie tradition for the past century have inspired us to work even harder.

Thanks to Duddley's for its fine work as a stress-relieving mechanism.

Thanks to the people before me who gave me a chance: Alan Lehmann, Scott Wudell, Timm Doolen, Doug Pils, Steve O'Brien, Stacy Feducia and many more.

Thanks to the best damn editorial board in the world (in budget order): Mark Evans, Dave Thomas, Belinda Blancarte, Mack Harrison (whom I can't imagine NOT working at The Battalion), Kyle Burnett, Anas Ben-Musa, Michael Plumer and William Harrison.

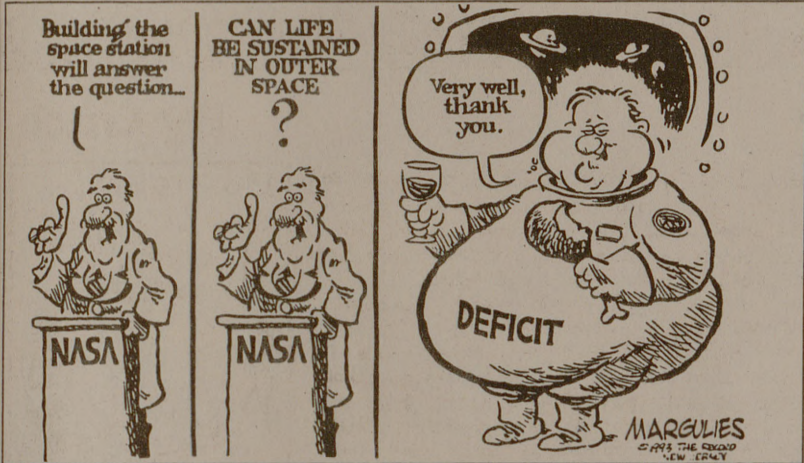
Thanks to Juli Phillips, the best damn managing editor and soon to be the best damn editor in the world.

And finally, thanks to the 82 people that bust their butts to put this thing out every day. It was a pleasure to work with each and every one of you.

But alas, do not shed a tear for this red-head, I still have 12 more credit hours before my day is done. Texas A&M isn't through with me just yet.

So wherever you see news happening; wherever you smell newsprint; wherever you hear frustrated editors screaming, I'll be around.

Chris Whitley is a senior journalism major who will spend next semester loitering in the newsroom



EDITORIAL Just one more time Before the diploma, there's finals

Congratulations to the graduating seniors.

The Aggies about to become members of the Texas A&M Association of Former Students deserve great praise for their accomplishments.

But we don't have time to give it to them yet. Once again, like malaria in the jungle, like frostbite during a blizzard, and like that irritating rash that just won't go away, FINALS HAVE RETURNED TO AGGIELAND!

It's not a dream, it's reality. You cannot procrastinate another minute. You have to read those books or you may end up enrolling next semester at the All-American Grocery Sackers Academy.

So, to prevent the loss of all the good Ags that we would like to see again next Spring, The Battalion would like to offer some traditional words of finals — taking advice.

1. STUDY — this one is not optional.

2. Get plenty of rest — you will feel better if you don't stay up until 3 a.m. watching reruns of "The Mary Tyler Moore Show."

3. Eat good food — the human body cannot subsist on cold pizza and marshmallow cream for more than two days without brain damage.

4. Be on time — nothing starts off a test worse than having to run from Fish Lot to Zachry.

5. Get your stuff together now — go buy your bluebooks and scantrons, make sure you have a good pencil, get some Kleenex and cold medicine, and know when and where to go for your tests.

6. REMEMBER — a hangover is not a good thing to take to a final. Finals won't kill you, no matter how bad they may seem. So don't panic, calm down and get the job done. If you do your best, then no one will criticize the results of this week's agony.

So make plans to have a blast on Wednesday night, but until then just remember that college life does include your classes.

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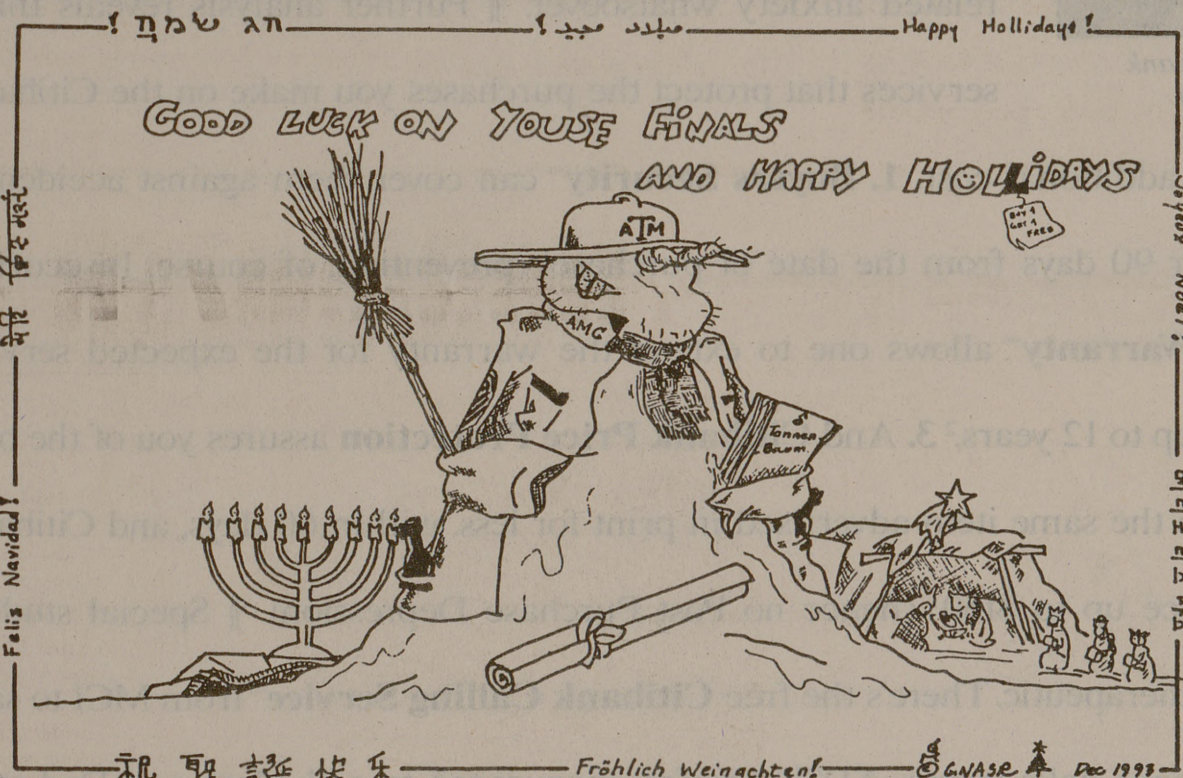
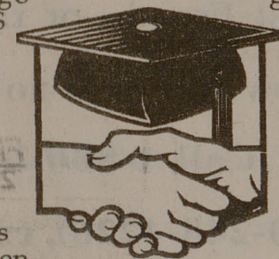
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Editorials appearing in The Battalion reflect the views of the editorial board. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions of other Battalion staff members, the Texas A&M student body, regents, administration, faculty or staff.

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
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After years of blood, sweat and tears — heeee's outta here!

As I graduate — finally! After seven years, four schools and four majors, I'm ready.

Although by the time you read this, I'll be knee-deep in an animal science final, I still haven't suffered from the usual end-of-semester sense of doom I usually get this time of year.

I've completed all my projects and papers, so I won't be rushing the last day of finals at 4:55 in the afternoon to get that report — which was due six weeks ago — to the professor before he leaves his office.

Sure, I've got a little — all right, a great deal — of studying to do, but for the most part I managed to put my homework ahead of beer drinking. Those who know me — and even some who don't — often remark that I seem to spend a number of hours at a certain watering hole across the



MACK HARRISON
Opinion Editor

street from campus, and I don't mean the Chicken.

And by the way, those rumors are false. I don't have a room at this establishment, nor do I receive any mail there. And no, I do not have a card in my wallet that reads, "If found, please return to Duddley's Draw."

Duddley's is an interesting place. In this bar you can find professors, grad students, frats, freaks, hippies, rednecks or just about anyone else. In fact, I even saw my old adviser in there one day.

A few weeks ago, The Battalion ran a rather biting editorial about how the University treats students like numbers and allows some of them slip through the cracks. A few days ago, I was eating lunch in Dudd's when I ran into my former adviser, who commented on the editorial. He was unhappy that we pointed out one negative story and neglected to stress the majority of faculty and administrators — those individuals whose main concern is their students.

"I read that 'Maroon Tape' editorial you guys ran," he told me. "That really hurt me."

He has a point. For the most part, advisers and faculty members at this school go

out of their way to help their students. They take a genuine interest in their students' successes.

"If you have any problems about anything, please come talk to us," one teaching assistant told our class. "It doesn't matter what your major is; we're here to help."

And they do help. The adviser I mentioned bent over backward to keep me in school. Unfortunately, I worked even harder to get kicked back out. I didn't care.

Those who know me remark that I spend a number of hours at a certain watering hole. No, I don't have a room at this establishment, nor do I receive mail there.

"There will always be Duddley's," I told myself.

Not always. Last fall, I got booted for good from the College of Liberal Arts. I deserved it. My grades had dropped too low after too many semesters on academic probation in my journalism major. My study habits weren't bad — they were nonexistent.

I had used up all my excuses and appeals. I left College Station last Christmas extremely depressed, knowing I would never be a student at Texas A&M again. Visions of living with my parents and working the late shift at Whataburger danced through my head.

But I wasn't completely out. I had one chance. When I came back in January to bring my furniture home, I talked to the adviser for the agriculture journalism department. Yes, there was a chance I could enroll in the College of Agriculture and Life Science. No, it wasn't definite.

I called her the next day, eager to know one way or the other. Evidently, I had a lot of people put in a good word for me. "Congratulations, Mack," she said. "They've decided to let you in."

It wasn't quite that simple, however. They put me on double secret probation: mandatory attendance, regular meetings with my adviser, academic and personal counseling and worst of all — for me at least — I couldn't work on The Battalion.

The Batt has been a major part of what passes for my life for about three years now. From my first story as a nervous rookie reporter to this, my farewell col-

umn. I have always dedicated a great deal of time and effort to this newspaper. That's one of the reasons my grades had slipped. Who wants to go to a sociology class when you're about to break a major story?

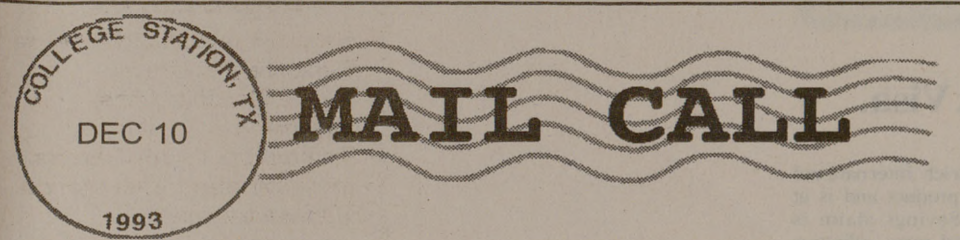
Well, the break from work did me some good. I turned my life around, went to class and managed to meet my probation requirements. I'm proud that I lived up to the expectations of those who had faith in me. The various faculty, staff and advisers, who shall remain nameless for their own protection, believed in me — even when I didn't believe in myself.

There were times when I felt like quitting, but someone — an instructor, a coworker, a friend — would remind me of my potential and the high regard in which others held me. All of these people, along with my family, have my eternal gratitude for their support through the years.

Times were tough and I'm not out of the woods just yet; but I know that whatever happens, I can handle it.

And you'll still see me at Duddley's.

Mack Harrison is a senior agricultural journalism major who hopes like hell he passes his animal science final today



Victims don't cause crime, criminals do

There was a hilarious misquote in Monday's Battalion. In the article about crime on campus, a quote from Bob Whitt said that most misdemeanor crime on

campus is "...caused by the carelessness of the victim." That's a real knee-slapper. Last time I checked, crimes were caused by CRIMINALS! I'm sure he meant that victim carelessness often enables criminals to commit crimes. But, I'm tired of hearing about how we should accept the fact that law enforcement really can't protect us. I'd

like to see a return to the days when laws and law enforcement personnel could protect, to some extent, citizens from criminals. In my opinion, when a person commits a crime, law enforcement officials can piss on his civil rights. I've got an idea to help deter crime in our society and it doesn't involve the police having to hurt anyone. From now on when someone is arrested and found guilty of a crime of any type, he is to be returned to the victim's home or any other place the victim chooses, handcuffed to a sturdy object, and the police car back in about an hour. Hey, I just want to enjoy my rights, too.

Test standards unfair criteria for acceptance

Back in 1989, I sent in my application to be admitted in the "fish" class of '93 with high hopes that I would be fulfilling one of my lifetime dreams of coming here. A few weeks later you sent me a letter saying in essence that I did not meet your standards. In short, I was not good enough to attend A&M. I was devastated, of course. After spending a year at a junior college, I sent my application to transfer admissions, and it was accepted. I did not just "squeak" by here either. I had two distinguished student awards and several

semesters with a 3.0 or higher.

As I walk across the stage in G. Rollie White on Dec. 17, I will remember when you told me I was not smart enough to receive a degree here and realize that I have the last laugh after all.

The point of this letter is that test standards shouldn't be the only criteria to decide who's accept. Many students are late bloomers and are just as capable as national merit scholars in succeeding here. I understand that the job of screening applicants is difficult, but you should reconsider your criteria to spot students who are smarter than their high school grades.

Joseph White
Class of '90

Mary Thedford
Class of '93