

THE BATTALION Editorial Board

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Love and tennis serve up a new life Family, good fortune lead Ethiopian boy to home in U.S.

One day over Christmas break, I helped my friend Leelie bake cookies to send to her grandparents. Actually, I baked the cookies while Leelie talked on the phone and washed dishes. Leelie's younger brother, Sisay, watched with amazement at my skill. He didn't talk. He didn't even stick his fingers in the bowl to test an unbaked sample.



MELISSA MEGLIOLA
 Columnist

He just grinned a lot as I busily placed perfect tablespoonfuls of batter onto a shiny new baking sheet. After about five minutes, I asked Sisay to help with batter duty. We were making a triple batch, and I thought that alone I might not finish the cookies until New Year's.

I gave Sisay a cookie sheet and a spoon, and soon he was heaving pound-sized masses of dough onto the sheet. The mounds just lumped together and promised to bake into one giant chocolate chip crater. Still, he got the basic idea and was excited to help. Not bad for a boy who had probably never seen chocolate chip cookies.

Sisay was adopted by Leelie's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Selassie, just a few months ago. He spent his first ten years with his mother and five brothers and sisters in Ethiopia. In November, he sacrificed living with his family in order to move to the United States.

In Ethiopia, Sisay spoke Amharic. Now he

sits in a suburban Chicago classroom and is tutored in English only one hour each day. He looks just like the other kids, wearing college sweatshirts and Nikes, but still doesn't say much in class. His new brother and sister went through similar experiences when the Selassies first moved to the United States from Ethiopia.

"My teacher says that I didn't say anything for the first six months when we first moved here," said Bereket, the Selassie's oldest son and a student at the University of Illinois. "And then she couldn't get you to be quiet," reminded Mrs. Selassie, responding from upstairs.

School and homework were never exciting to my friends and me when we were in elementary school. Sisay is no different. Several times during my baking marathon, I caught Sisay watching old gladiator movies on cable in the basement when he was supposed to be studying his spelling words.

When he is not studying or pretending to do so, Sisay is playing tennis.

Last year, while spending several months in Ethiopia, Bereket joined a tennis club. He played often and always had the same 9-year-old boy chase his tennis balls. He later found out that the boy worked at the club every day to earn money to buy food. At night he slept in a bed with his mother and two of his brothers.

Slowly, the two developed a friendship. Bereket noticed that the young boy was very smart. And that he wanted to play tennis. Bereket ordered an extra racket from the States.

He wrote to his parents about his new friend. Somehow, the idea of adoption surfaced. And after months of government pa-

perwork, Sisay flew to Chicago to meet the rest of his new family.

Now, Sisay receives lessons four times a week from a respected tennis pro and has unlimited use of an automated ball machine. His new instructor was so impressed after Sisay's first practice that he expects his new prodigy to be nationally ranked someday.

Sisay is simply happy to play. "I think he was a little overwhelmed at first," said Bereket. "He had never seen so many tennis balls before. But he likes it. The instructor always buys him a Coke after a good practice."

Sisay has been overwhelmed by a lot. "He was confused the first time he went to the grocery store. In Ethiopia, you bring your own containers to the market and fill them up. Sisay had never seen a paper milk carton before," explained Leelie.

Having time to make friends and play is new to Sisay. The lunch that Mrs. Selassie packs for him each morning is a luxury. The abundance in our country allows him to be a kid for the first time.

Yet, I wondered how Sisay has adjusted to his new home. I asked Leelie if he ever cries for his family at night.

"I was surprised that he doesn't," she admitted. "I think he knows that we love him." Last month, almost all of us experienced holiday spirit. We exchanged gifts and cards that made us feel good. But in a home just west of Chicago, that same spirit continues all year.

Melissa Megliola is a senior industrial engineering major



THE TROUBLE WITH WELFARE REFORM IS, SOME PEOPLE JUST DON'T WANT TO WORK.

EDITORIAL

Thanks, Mom Aggie Mother's tackle issues

The university administration finds it easier to pass legislation or make policy changes without much pressure from student-based organizations because, for most students, college is only a temporary stop on the path to accomplishing career goals.

If not for outside organizations such as the Aggie Mother's Clubs, much of the available information about campus changes would not have been brought to light. Such groups have not only the time but also the financial resources to aggressively pursue the administration about the policies they adopt.

The Aggie Mother's Clubs came forward with a letter-writing campaign addressing various allegations of misconduct that forced the administration to take notice. They invested time, money and an abundance of patience with an uncooperative administration.

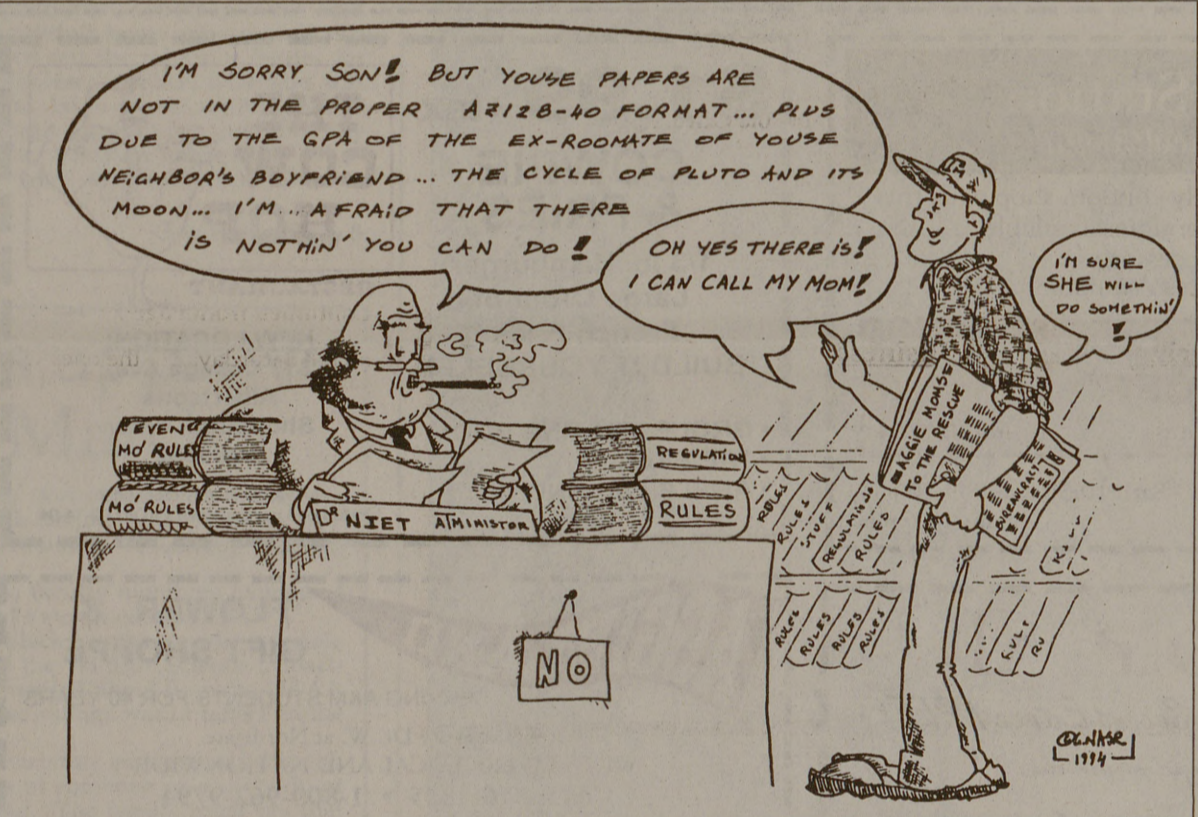
Aggie Mother's Club members discussed several issues with President Gage and Chancellor Mobley. Among the issues addressed were the Barnes and Noble Bookstore contract, the controversies involving the privatization of Food

Services and other alleged issues of administrative misconduct.

While in school, students tend to focus on things that affect them directly rather than larger, more complex issues. In addition to attending classes, many students work or participate in extracurricular activities. With all of these constraints placed on the time of the students, coupled with the financial burdens that exist, few student organizations can force the administration to account for its actions.

Yet another advantage university officials have over students is time. The average student attends college for four to five years. If there is a significant amount of noise made by the students over a particular subject, such as the controversy over the privatization issue, the administration can simply wait the problem out.

The members of the Aggie Mother's Club should know that they are appreciated and thanked for their efforts. These women should be applauded for their efforts in bringing out information that affects not only their children, but every student that eats a meal at this university.



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New columnist takes an existential approach to the issues

Why am I here? The only opinion I have that most people can generally relate to involves the Porky's trilogy. (All of us agree that the final movie totally ruined the plot structure set up by the first two films.) But that's about the only opinion I share with the rest of the world.



DAVE WINDER
 Columnist

I'm not a Democrat or a Republican. I'm not a liberal, moderate or conservative. I'm not a little bit country, and I'm not a little bit rock and roll.

I form my opinions by relating them to past experiences, not political affiliations as most people do.

Take the troubles of Kay Bailey Hutchison for example. Guilty or not I can't bring

myself to like the senator because she looks too much like my third grade teacher. This is the same teacher who gave us assigned seats at lunch and forced me to sit next to Allison Potts, who had a scorching case of the cooties. I still get jumpy every time I enter a cafeteria.

In my early years (Circa 1978) my parents tried to help me learn about world events, but I had too many other things going on in my life.

Mom: David, who's the President of the United States?

Me: Jimmy "Welcome Back" Koter
 Mom: John, you're letting him watch too much television.

Dad: Don't blame me Linda; we're always watching "Starsky and Hutch" when that show comes on.

I'm just not at ease discussing anything that would come up on the Rush Limbaugh or Jerry Browne shows. I'm more of a guy who can identify with comedian Steven Wright. "Yesterday, thieves stole all the furniture out of my apartment and replaced it with exact replicas."

My friends hate to talk to me, because they feel I bring down the intelligence level of the whole conversation.

Me (during group discussion at lunch): We know Dallas is going to be there, but I don't know who else is. Excuse me, waiter, can I have another glass of water?

Rick: Speaking of water, what do you guys think about Whitewatergate and

Take Kay Bailey Hutchison for example. Guilty or not I can't bring myself to like the senator because she looks too much like my third grade teacher.

what it could do Clinton's political career?

Jason: I think it could ultimately hurt his chances of getting re-elected if it is found that either he or Hillary broke the law. What do you think, Dave?

Me (feeling uncomfortable): I think

Clinton done real bad. Jason (puzzled at answer): Have you guys been seeing what that guy Zhirinovsky says he's going to do if he becomes the leader of Russia?

Rick: Yeah, he says he's going to create new Hiroshimas and Nagasakis. He's a real weirdo. What do you think Dave?

Me (feeling extremely uncomfortable): I think I'm going to be really sick.

Jason: So, Dave, did you read "Calvin and Hobbes" today?

Me (feeling a lot better): Yeah, man, wasn't that hilarious?

That's about how far the extent of my knowledge goes, but here I am — an opinion columnist who knows very little about the issues.

NAFTA — I still don't have any idea why Al Gore and Ross Perot would go on Larry King to have a debate about Nabisco snack treats. I think Fig Newtons would have been a much more timely subject.

Gun Control — Wouldn't touch this one with a ten-foot pole.

Violence on television — Everybody is

making a fuss about all the assaults and murders that occur nightly in prime time. But nobody seems to care that "Full House" is in the middle of its eighth season.

Economy — All the college graduates I know are sweeping up at Taco Bell and living with their parents. I get free food though, so I really can't complain.

Abortion — Wouldn't touch this one with a hundred-foot pole.

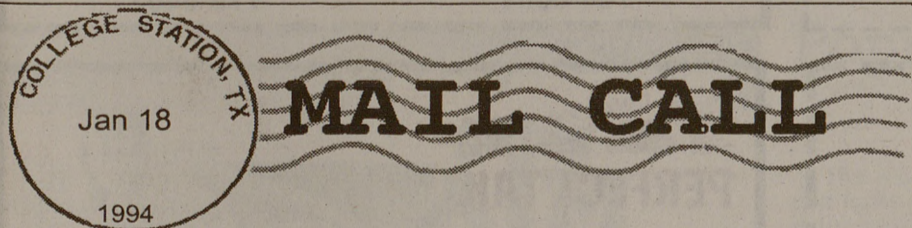
National Deficit — Why doesn't the U.S. government just print up some bills, pay off their debts and start from scratch?

Russian Summit — Clinton and Yeltsin have talks as Moscow McDonald's reports a record-breaking week.

Senator Bob Packwood — He already does too much touching.

My opinions may not cause people to reshape their thinking or change world events, but they were never meant to. I'm not exactly sure what they were meant for.

Dave Winder is a sophomore journalism major



Student service first priority at library

In rebuttal to RanJan Natarajan's Mail Call letter of Dec. 8, I would like to defend the library administration.

As a student worker in this office, we do more than just set library hours. Students who need or want to reserve a group study room come to our office, where we help them as much as possi-

ble. The only reason why a student cannot get a study room on demand is because another student got it first.

Granted that everyone has a right to their opinion, a petition signed by approximately 100 students does not pull much weight when there are between 43 and 44 thousand students in this world class university.

If these 100 or so students need a place to study, surely they live off-campus or they have friends who do that would not mind them coming over to

study. Perhaps you don't realize just how valuable some of the books, etc. are in this library. After checking with a faculty member in this office, I learned that many of the books on the shelves are irreplaceable because they are no longer in print.

Have you come to the library at 8:00 when most of the faculty and staff get here? I don't know about the rest of the library, but the sixth floor looks like a hurricane hit it at times. There have been potato chip bags and coke bottles and cans on the tables.

Contrary to what you may believe, service to students is the top priority of the administration of the Sterling C. Evans Library.

Jennifer Brownlee
 Class of '97

Alumnus objects to non-contract Corps

I recently read about the "dilemma" facing Texas A&M involving the decline of the Corps of Cadets. I wish to express my utmost joy of this news. To counter the opinions expressed in a recent class newsletter, I am writing as an alumnus who does not agree that the non-contract Corps is worthy of more funding, resources, etc. In fact, as long as this group exists on campus I refuse to make any financial contributions to Texas A&M.

Let me explain my stand. During my four years at A&M, I saw very little constructive nature within the "training" received in the Corps, outside of the traditional military training for

those who would become officers. Actually, I saw many incidents that showed the organization to be an out-of-date, nonacademic, superficial institution where immature, irresponsible behavior was not only tolerated but condoned.

Certainly, the contract portion of Corps is excluded from this characterization. I believe this portion effectively provides professional training for military officers.

However, the latest efforts directed at rebuilding that portion of the Corps which serves as a glorified fraternity is in my opinion a misguided allocation of funds at a time when academic programs are suffering.

Dr. Daniel J. Thiel
 Class of '85