

## The Battalion Editorial Board

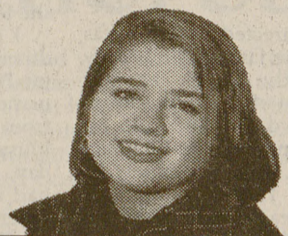
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## No French fries in this restaurant Eating experience nearly destroys cool time in California

LYNN BOOHER

Columnist



All the leaves are brown ... and the sky is gray. I went for a walk ... on a winter day.

My sister and I repeatedly sang the words to this old Mamas and Papas song in awful harmony on our first trip to California. We visited sunny San Diego expecting beach bums and beautiful sunsets. We got more than that. We got "Petit Louis."

Our parents rented a motel room (if you can call something with two bedrooms, two baths, a kitchen and a living room a "motel room") in La Jolla for our stay. The first night there, after watching the sun set over the Pacific, we decided to eat somewhere within walking distance.

This meant our choice of restaurants with pretentious names and overinflated prices. We chose one that looked like it had pretty good ambience — the aforementioned Petit Louis. As we walked in, the maître d' sidely glanced at us and then proceeded to ignore us for as long as it was covertly possible to do so. We looked around the mostly empty restaurant and decided a table by the window would provide a nice view for the meal. He seated us near the kitchen.

The young Californian waiter who finally came to serve us obviously had been instructed to speak with a French accent. It was more than obvious that he didn't know a word of the language. He didn't bother to hand us menus until someone pointed out that there was only one on the table and it looked silly to have four people sharing it.

After perusing the small selection of entrees, I chose the one called "poulet au champignons" because it said something in the English translation about having half a chicken in it. Since my parents were paying, I was hungry. My dad decided to go with the special, perhaps because of its low, low price of \$14.

When the waiter brought out the wine my parents had ordered, some 30 minutes before we got our food, he had my dad taste it and inspect the label. I found this event highly amusing because of the combination of the guy with the bad French accent saying in a snooty voice, "Is it to your liking, sir?" and my not-always-suave dad acting like this was what happened every time we drank wine.

The best part was when our waiter tried to make conversation. The sound of his speech changed from French to British to American so often that we had to wonder if he was multinational. He tried to make it sound like normal conversation when he asked my dad if we were on "holiday." I had to suppress a snort.

Soon after, we were brought a basket full of bread in the shape of large pretzels. Old crumbs and flour on the cloth in the basket indicated that we were not its first users. We assumed this was not a hint to leave because we couldn't have possibly scared anyone away as

there were no other customers in the restaurant.

When our food finally arrived, it was just as I had suspected it would be: virtually nonexistent. The chicken I had ordered obviously had not lived to adulthood. My dad's seafood special could have fit in a saucer.

Fortunately, I had ignored my parents' pleas to avoid eating the bread as it would surely spoil my appetite. Trust me, that didn't happen.

As our waiter set the paltry amount of food on the table, I envisioned someone along the lines of Boss Hogg from "The Dukes of Hazzard" sitting where my dad sat.

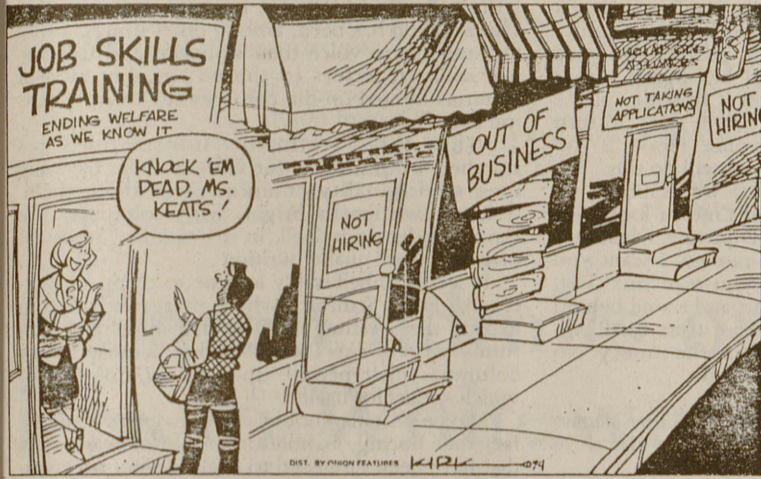
"Son," he would have said in his thick Southern twang, "son, you and I both know that you're not French. So why don't you stop talkin' in that silly accent. And bring me some fries with that."

It could have happened. We would have been a lot less hungry after \$100.

Thanks to Petit Louis and its friendly wait-staff, my first impression of California was not a pretty one. It took some effort to shake off the image of all Californians as snobby, pretentious and self-absorbed, especially since to amuse ourselves during the drive, my sister and I noted that every third car was a BMW, Mercedes or Porsche. And almost all of their license plates were personalized.

After three days of touring beautiful San Diego, however, I changed my mind about it. I think I'd like to visit California again. I'll just avoid French restaurants.

Lynn Booher is a sophomore English and journalism major



## EDITORIAL

### Separate worlds Self-segregation is self-defeating

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had a dream. Imagine what he must be thinking today about the newest trend on college campuses around the country: "self-segregation." Students have the choice to live in dormitories comprised of students of the same religion, sexual orientation or color. Now, the work toward reaching a common ground that has been underway for decades is being destroyed with the effortless stroke of a pencil on a housing application.

Students today are in the position to meet students from all over the world and every cultural background as well. Instead, this trend allows students to isolate themselves, rather than face ideas and cultures different from their own. Of course everyone wants to be able to go someplace where they feel at home, but if this self-segregation continues, then it will become easier and easier not to confront anything that falls outside of preset comfort zones.

Students attend college to be exposed to new ideas, new people and new cultures. What's the reason for attending a multicultural institution if you don't take

full advantage of the opportunity?

If students think they would be more comfortable living with people exactly like themselves, then they can make those decisions; but no university should promote widespread self-segregation. In a global economy, the most successful businesses are the ones that have expanded to meet the needs of several different cultures. When students don't learn to communicate with cultures other than their own, the chances of succeeding outside one's own little world drop substantially.

Our parents and grandparents fought — and sometimes died — to ensure a chance for equality for all of their children. As a society, we are capable of accomplishing more than anyone ever thought possible, but it must begin with each of us.

If we can't learn to live together, and appreciate the differences that make us individuals, then the people who fought for the right for us to live together will have wasted their time. Dr. King had a dream. This wasn't it.



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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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## Our government: of the people, by the people, for the people

JOSEF ELCHANAN

Guest columnist



While the sun was blazing and the young people of America were frolicking as far south as their cars and credit cards would take them, I took more of a north-eastern route to a place where one can feel the world flow around him and history energizes the imagination.

Washington, D.C., our nation's capital, has come under fire for 200 years for being a place where our representatives sneak about, dodging cameras and reporters. The city has made headlines recently as a place where drug dealers whip around the curves of dark alleys, spraying deadly bullets at their economic rivals.

I went there as a student representative to the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), and I knew that I would come back to Aggieland feeling worse for having proven that all my impressions of the Capitol were true.

Within moments of entering the hotel, it occurred to me that I might have been wrong, and severely so. Racing from room to room came streams of Jewish adults and students, 2,000 strong, whose sole purpose was to assist a small country far away to retain its security, while bringing peace to that vital region. I joined in enthusiastically, and found my feelings toward the world forever altered.

For two days, our total focus centered around the discussion groups who presented a variety of topics on the problems of peace in the bloodied lands of the Middle East and how the Jewish community might be able to assist in this process. We also looked at the worldwide rise of anti-semitism and racism. We listened to impassioned speeches from U.S. representatives John Lewis and Major Owens on the importance of black - Jewish relations. There were discussions amongst military per-

sonnel and civilian analysts on how to maintain security in a world filled with nuclear weapons and unstable politics. I met Knesset members and U. S. Senators. Vice President Al Gore and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, two of the most respected and powerful men on earth, each separately called on AIPAC members to make some sort of difference in a world filled with dangers and hatred — and we listened.

The last day was reserved to meet our own senators and representatives and to relay what we had learned. I stood in awe of the great buildings that hold the leaders of the free world, leaders who are responsible to all of us.

We Americans are the final check on a government — our government — that leads the free world, and we are rightly distrustful of many aspects of government. Yet I have to say being in a room with the same people who make laws to govern and better our country was an exciting experience.

I have not always agreed with those individuals' policies, and I have not always believed that they were morally correct. But they are our government servants, and the large

The United States is a country controlled by its people, but only the people who are willing to go out on a limb for their beliefs. We are the final check on our government.

majority are well-educated and articulate. They told us of their grand schemes to improve the world and asked us, their awed employers, what we felt was the best course to take.

I was amazed at how any concerned citizens could simply walk into any of their representatives' offices and make an appointment to see these people to discuss important topics. The United States is a country controlled by its people, but only the people who are willing to go out on a limb for their beliefs. I did not get everything I wanted, and I realize that our government has many problems which need to be addressed, but it is my government.

Things will only get better if I get involved.

After the conference, I made it a point to see some of the monuments that have been placed around Washington to make us remember who we are and where we have been. I finally found my way to the Jefferson Memorial. I have often wondered what Jefferson would think of what we have done with his grand ideas. Would he still look out proudly to the West, seeing a future filled with equality and peace for all Americans and the world? Or would he sit down and shake his head, taking with him the Constitution so that he could give it to a more deserving people, a stronger breed?

The AIPAC conference not only served America and Israel by building better relations and promoting peace, but it also helped to give me a renewed sense of awe at our country's potential. While I can only hope that I made some difference at the conference, I know it made an impact on me and all my fellow Jews and Americans who attended.

Josef Elchanan is a senior business management major

class individual. That sentiment is even shared by the majority of observers from the Democratic party.

When the Republican party (justifiably) criticized Hillary Rodham Clinton at their national convention in 1992, Mrs. Bush quickly came to her defense demanding that the campaign focus on Bill Clinton and not Hillary.

Mrs. Bush's primary sentiment is that choosing to be a homemaker is every bit as honorable as choosing to be a lawyer. That thought is repugnant to feminists, which indicates a certain intolerance on their part. Just because Mrs. Rodham Clinton has had an apparently successful career as a lawyer does not make her any more valuable a person than Mrs. Bush. Familiar liberal arrogance implies that Mrs. Bush cannot think for herself because she is not a career woman. Publicly, the first lady should be a supporter of her husband, even though she may disagree privately. They also criticize Mrs. Bush's motivation in adopting illiteracy as her personal philanthropy "as a campaign vehicle" to get her husband elected. What was Mrs. Rodham Clinton's motivation for suddenly assuming her married name to help get her husband elected? She had gone by her maiden name for years.

Colin Killian  
Information Rep II

### Those funny Regents

There should be a weekly column or maybe a cartoon in The Battalion called "The Regents were drunk when ..."

This could be a regular litany on idiotic decisions made around this campus. Surely you can find enough good ideas to last 10 or 12 years. Also, Tubularman should be appointed to the Board of Regents as special cartoon representative. He seems very well-qualified to sit on that board.

William Godwin  
Graduate student

### Question, don't ignore student candidates

It is that time of year again. Texas A&M has gained a reputation for having some of the finest student leaders in Texas and the nation. In an attempt to continue this tradition of excellence in student leadership, I feel compelled to offer you all a little friendly advice.

During the next couple of days you may be approached by an individual seek-

ing to represent you in campus decision-making, and representing our fine institution as an ambassador. Rather than taking their flier and tossing it after they have disappeared from sight, take a minute to stop and speak with that person to see if they are really willing to represent your best interests. Furthermore, do not hesitate to question them. After all, they approached you first, right? I have found that there are two sure fire questions that tend to provoke extreme thought for the aspiring candidate: "How do you plan on representing my interests?" and "What makes you any better than the next guy?" These are sure to get them thinking, and for you candidates, now is the time to brush up on these kinds of questions.

A single undertaking such as the aforementioned only shows that you have a genuine interest in who represents you — and you should have an interest. Tell these perspective candidates that you will personally hold them accountable for their actions when it comes to representing their constituency. I encourage you not to just vote, but to vote for the most qualified candidate. Don't forget that elections are March 30 and 31.

Raymond Boney  
Class of '96

COLLEGE STATION, TX  
March 24  
1994  
MAIL CALL

### College Republicans present truth as it is

As a member of the College Republicans, I feel obligated to respond to the letter from Matt M. Murphy. College Republicans, are "national Americans" and we spread the truth whether it is good or bad. The truth can be interpreted as an attack on one's character. However, the truth stands on its own merit, and we, as College Republicans, do not fabricate it, nor do we create it. It is the result of one's own actions, and we merely put it to the public for their judgement. We don't, as a group, subscribe to views which are merely popular in this age of "political correctness."

We represent a segment of our population which is changing America for the better with beliefs in the American work ethic, fam-

ily values and the moral constituency to which this country was founded, and it is these values which we base our daily lives on and not the latest fad to which many people associate themselves with because it is "politically correct." We are not only fighting for a change in today; we are fighting for a change in tomorrow as well.

Richard Holt  
Class of '97

### In defense of Barbara

Can Katherine McCalmon and Kingsley Ross find anything of substance to whine about besides Barbara Bush? Every account I've ever read of Barbara Bush by anyone who knows or works with her is that she is a first-