

The Battalion Editorial Board

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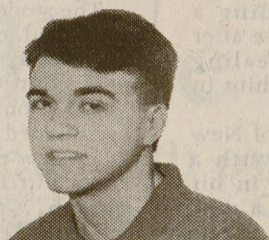
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Son of a gun leaves legacy of laughter Idol's death leads to reflections on life of influential man

DAVE WINDER

Columnist



heated room at my grandmother's house during the middle of winter. Even though I could see my breath drifting past my reading lamp, I kept on reading because he made newspapers sound like so much fun. By the time my mother demanded that I go to sleep, I had already decided that was the career I wanted.

It was not uncommon for him to arrive at the paper at 5 a.m. and not leave until midnight. He gave up his home life, wife and everything else for journalism, his first love.

The stories he told about his experiences in newspapers only made me want to enter the business that much more. His tidbits about coaches, players, editors and other writers told me what a career in newspapers is like. He intrigued me so much, every other profession dropped out of the picture.

His other books also had a great effect on me because they were so personal, they could make you laugh and cry on the same page. Because of books like "Shoot Low Boys, They're Riding Shetland Ponies," and "Don't Bend Over the Garden Granny, Them Taters Got Eyes," I actually feel that I knew the man.

It seemed he wrote a book about everything that ever happened in his life. Because of a troubled love life, he wrote "If Love Were Oil, I'd be About a Quart Low."

He talks at length about losing his high school sweetheart, Paula, then having to go back out on the dating scene. He would marry two more times but he always talked about Paula.

After his father died, he wrote "My Daddy Was a Pistol, and I'm a Son of a Gun." He

told how his father was a prisoner of war in Korea and planned on being a career army man. But his bad memories made him turn to alcohol and caused his marriage to end. Grizzard dedicated it to every child that ever had to live through a divorce or an alcoholic parent that destroyed a good family.

He also wrote a book about his mother and how much she sacrificed for him. He talked at length about all she did but only mentioned once that she spent the last 20 years of her life confined to a bed.

The greatest thing about his writings, though, was his Southern humor. In one of his books, he explained why people in the South use both "naked" and "nekkid." "Naked," he explained, is when you don't have any clothes on. "Nekkid" is when you don't have any clothes on and you're up to something.

He was also a huge fan of country music and even went as far as to write a couple of songs. Though they were not number one hits, they were hilarious. I'd buy any album with songs like "When My Love Returns From the Bathroom Will I Be Too Old To Care?" and "My Wife Ran Off With My Best Friend and Damn I'm Gonna Miss Him" on it.

Even though Lewis Grizzard was 28 years older than I am, I could still identify with him. We both shared a love of sports, a love of newspapers, a love of writing and a love of humor.

Dave Winder is a sophomore journalism major



"PAYING YOUR TAXES? AH, YOU COMMON PEOPLE ARE SO QUIANT."

EDITORIAL

Presidential pick Battalion endorses Brooke Leslie

Elections are upon us. This Wednesday and Thursday all good Aggies concerned with the future of student leadership on this campus will turn out to vote. This year, the choice for student body president is limited to only two: Jeb Jones and Brooke Leslie.

The editorial board of The Battalion has chosen to endorse Leslie as the candidate who can best promote, protect and preserve the best interests of Texas A&M.

The decision was not an easy one. Jones has good ideas — such as promoting across the board guidelines for student adviser qualifications. However, Leslie's experience, knowledge and presence make her the best choice.

Granted, there is only so much that can be gleaned from a 30-minute question and answer session. During this short period of time, however, Leslie addressed several important issues with a clear plan of action.

She is well versed on the origin and importance of guarding the Permanent University Fund (PUF) in the Texas legislature. The PUF fund is a permanent cache set up by the state around the turn of the century which provides millions of dollars in revenue each year for the University of Texas and Texas A&M exclusively.

She also calls for the restructuring of the Senate Finance Committee, such as moving the committee to the executive branch of student government because it currently "has no checks and balances."

Leslie noted that the minority population at A&M fails to reflect society and suggests that the best way of promoting minority involvement is to let other minority members do the recruiting. She also plans to pursue an extension of the number of reading days currently allotted students before finals, noting that A&M is one of only two universities in the nation, Texas Tech being the other, that allows students only one day.

Aside from her agenda, Leslie's record in student government clearly makes her the most qualified choice. She has been involved with all three branches of student government and boasts an impressive list of positions held.

Both candidates are qualified and willing to share their ideas with anyone. But if you make the effort to educate yourself, you will probably find one to be most qualified, most prepared for the considerable task of being Texas A&M's student body president: Brooke Leslie.

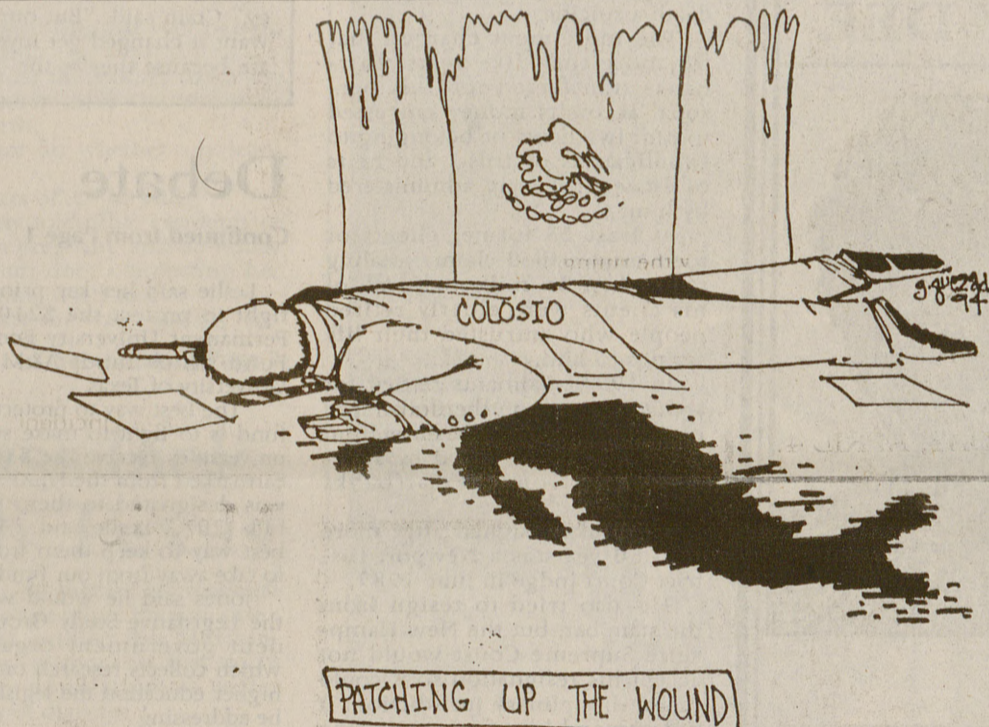
Lewis Grizzard once said that he wished whoever wrote his obituary made a special note about his outline writing skills. I hope whoever writes my obituary makes a note that my columns might have been half as funny as his.

The popular syndicated columnist died last week due to complications during his fourth heart surgery. But he wasn't just a writer of whom I was a fan. He was my idol. It became a goal of mine to come as close as I could to his career accomplishments.

He started out working on his high school paper and continued when he went to the University of Georgia. After graduation he started covering high school sports for an Atlanta paper and worked his way up until he was the sports editor for the Chicago Sun Times. After that he went back to Atlanta and became a columnist and author.

I'm so glad he did because it is hard to picture my life without his influence. I had already read a couple of his books, but my life forever changed when I read the autobiographical "If I Ever Get Back to Georgia, I'm Gonna Nail My Feet to the Ground."

I stayed up all night reading it in an un-



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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.

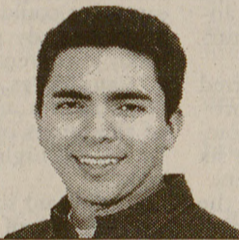
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Program offers insight into France's war experience

ROBERT VASQUEZ

Columnist



"Schindler's List," an aftershock more than a movie, has rocked the world with reverberations set off 50 years ago. In America, the movie acts as a kind of Cliff's Notes for history, teaching a topic that knew little popularity until Spielberg added pictures.

But ignorance has been a luxury France could not afford. To this day, France remains scarred with memories of that war; its beaches are pocked with holes where artillery exploded the arms and legs and lives of soldiers who fought for freedom.

People who live there today remember family and friends who died during that era. They tell their stories and point to

places where homes and palaces and people once stood. They thank you for coming and invite you to stay in their homes, many of which were built before our nation was even a colony.

I'm still amazed that I was able to visit such a land. As part of last fall's Rudder Normandy Scholars Program, a group of A&M students visited the very sites where these wars were fought, these lives lost. Designed to educate tomorrow's leaders, the program targets today's top students. The students are chosen for excellence in academics and for expressing a desire to learn about the causes of war and the casualties that result. To ensure that the participants are the best qualified for the program, and not disqualified due to prohibitive travel costs, all expenses for the trip to France are paid for in the scholarship. The group of students chosen to participate last fall included some of the most intelligent, talented and gifted students at A&M. And they let me go along, too.

For the first part of the fall semester, we studied about the events that led to World War II. What would possibly allow for this war to follow the "War to end all wars"?

What drove Hitler to invade France if he wasn't even interested in their land? We then traveled to France to visit the very sites about which we studied.

The Memorial Museum in France chronicles the atrocities of war, painting a nation's past in black and white detail stained with blood and ashes. The stark white facade of the building follows a steady line that suddenly cracks in the middle. There, where the solid wall disintegrates into fractured stone and panes of glass, lies the entrance, where, each week, thousands of visitors enter the museum. This museum is where the Normandy scholars studied. We watched films and read about the war in exhibits and displays that used actual footage and artifacts from the battles fought there.

One day as we studied in the Memorial Museum, a siren screamed out. It was faint as it blared from a horn in the distance. And for a second, my mind raced, preparing for the worst. The films we had seen in the months preceding our trip to Normandy had acquainted us with the sights and sounds of war. That screaming siren warned of incoming enemies, planes drop-

The joys, fears and trials we witness in America are derivatives of a society aspiring to a Mickey Mouse ideal. Such idyllic perspectives don't meet with much success in Europe.

ping bombs, aiming to kill. That was the horn I heard at this moment.

For one second, I thought, "We're going to die." In the theatres and classrooms, the sound was an effect, the result of some technician whose job was to scare me. This time, it worked.

I looked up and listened for the sound to stop, but it didn't. And then I realized it was only another recorded sound for a film, some stray effect from one of the multi-media displays in the museum. In America, such a thought would have never crossed my mind. But we weren't in America. And that made all the difference.

The joys, the fears and trials we witness

in America are derivatives of a society aspiring to a Mickey Mouse ideal. Such idyllic perspectives don't meet with much success in Europe, which has seen so much more of death and war without benefit of celluloid. It was subtle differences like these that struck me most.

The Rudder Normandy Scholarship Program is taking applications for students who are interested in participating this fall. Participants are chosen based on various criteria including academic achievements, extracurricular activities and expressed interest in the program's purposes. If you're interested in applying, go pick up an application at the Bizzel Hall West near the MSC. Juniors and Seniors are given priority, but everyone is encouraged to apply. Hurry, the deadline is fast approaching.

I'm grateful that my experience with war and death comes largely from the small and silver screens. To me, like most in my generation, it all happened a long time ago in land far, far away. But once, just once, I saw it up close. And I'm grateful for that, too.

Robert Vasquez is a senior journalism major

COLLEGE STATION, TX
 March 29
 1994
MAIL CALL

Student views Texans as racist, uncivilized

I used to go to a local club, but quit after knowing how rude the staff of that club is. On several occasions the porter rejected my European Community passport as a valid identification when according to the U.S. immigration service it is the right form of identification everywhere in the United States. He also claimed it was not written in English when, being a passport of a European community, it was written in three European languages including British English. He interrupted me when I was telling him that and reluctantly let me in. I was then required to pay \$3 cover and was later

shocked when I met another student who entered an hour after I did and did not have to pay cover. Later I met a rude waitress who collected brandy glasses at 1:30 a.m. She violently grabbed my glass, pulled strongly and almost started a fight.

If you are used to dealing with civilized people, you will never find your niche here or anywhere in Texas. This confirms the awful reputation Texans have worldwide of being uncivilized, wild and primitive. Both my parents, who are Continental Europeans and my British friends tried to persuade me from coming to Texas, claiming that Texans are racists and haven't evolved in 100 years.

All European public schools have the same budget per student regardless of whether they are located in posh areas or

slums. Health care is free and the same for all citizens. More people were killed in Houston last year than in any Western European nation. The death penalty was abolished 40 years ago. European Community jobless benefits are twice as much as in the U.S., and these benefits last forever.

I have never met more uncivilized people. An English friend once told me, "Don't go to Texas because you are not going to learn anything, and you are going to have the worst time of your life as if you had traveled 100 years back into history." His words turned out to be prophetic.

Humberto H. Jorge
Graduate student

Columns appear on opinion, not fact page

As I was walking across campus browsing the Mail Call Friday afternoon, I had to walk to the nearest computer lab to write in response to Aimee Llewellyn and Kelly Dodd. OK, look at the top of the page where Dave

Winder's article appears. Now what do you see? Wow, look-ee there, it's the "Opinion" page. What is an opinion? Well according to those little quizzes I took in elementary school, a fact is what is based on facts, and an opinion is not based on fact but rather what one believes to be true. Now I have to fully support Winder's article because not only do I believe it to be mostly true, but it is his right to believe anything he wants. Do you have facts based on why you feel certain ways or is everything factual? Anyway, I disagree.

This is for Winder. His columns are not unintelligent. They are entertaining in an otherwise drab news system which only reports horrid statistics and occurrences for ratings. Throughout the history of journalism, there have been writers with a humorous, entertaining side. However, his writing style is very monotonous. Try something different before you run it into the ground. Remember, people like best what they don't get very often, (i.e., as with food and college students).

Kevin Stewart
Class of '96

Men's group valid as any minority group

Well, since all of the women are going to be busy during their national week, we men need to have something to do as well. So, let's have a national "Men's Week!" This can be a time when our oppressed minority can come together and get in touch with our inner selves. We can learn about contraception, prostate cancer, eating disorders, self defense, hate crimes (Lorena Bobbitt for example), and give out awards to men with outstanding commitments to male issues.

We should call ourselves "male-inists" (taken from the word "feminists"). After all, every other prejudice-oppressed person is jumping on the bandwagon forming their own "minority-based" groups, so should we. We don't need to have different societies based on color, religion or race. Agh, you're our future, stop this ridiculous fad of isolating ourselves from one another.

Aaron Tuttle
Class of '96