

Older generations establish living links to history's lessons

Without constant visits to history, it is very easy to forget where we came from. There are children who own every electronic device and contrivance known to humankind, and still act extremely put out when they lack the newest Sega game. These children could tell you how to get to the highest level of "Mortal Kombat," but rarely have any idea how to add without a calculator. In a society of disposable razors, marriages and sometimes children, it becomes vitally important that we remember that things once were built to last. To keep in touch with this time, there is a living database which few of us ever access: old people.

JULIA STAVENHAGEN
Columnist



why, besides the novelty of it actually having endured. To a precious few, the 1966 Volkswagen holds more appeal than a brand new Miata. The survival of Volkswagen engineering older than most college students is fascinating to the new car owner whose car is in the shop because the computer-aided fuel injection ran out of disk space.

In other countries, grandparents are respected members of the family and constantly asked for information about the past. Conversely, America's old people are treated as a medical liability and constantly looked upon as a nuisance. Where will your parents live when they get too old to take care of themselves? Your den? More probably a nursing home. The average family would rather pay for the convenience of having someone else take care of their aging relations. The natural transmission of facts from one generation to another is lost in this scenario. Before books and computers, all knowledge was passed orally to the next generation. Today, these factual stories are replaced by brainless, generalized entertainments that do little to acquaint us with our past. They separate us from personal experiences with history.

Most of the information we receive about history comes to us after skipping a generation or two, perhaps taking a turn in a dry textbook. We learn about Prohibition from "The Untouchables" TV show, not our own grandparents. It's much more exciting to hear your grandfather describe a speakeasy where he actually drank than to see a vague approximation on a movie screen frequented by people you don't know. To feel a connection by blood to a person from a period of history long gone holds its own allure. If you don't know what it feels

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like, you may never really have listened to what your parents or grandparents were saying, thinking they dined on about a subject of no interest to you. It is important to realize that by sharing their experience, senior citizens offer us shortcuts around our own difficulties.

My friend Jeff couldn't realize why he and his girlfriend did not get along. They studied together

all the time and they often watched movies at his house, but aside from the occasional trip to Taco Bell, they never spent much time face to face. Jeff visited his grandfather, who listened to his troubles. "In my day..." he began. Jeff groaned inwardly, but then he began to listen. Jeff's grandfather related insight from his own courtship with his wife of 48 years. Stories of walking together in the park, playing cards or going for a drive surprised Jeffrey into realizing that everything he did with Kim was technology-related. They spent time in front of VCR's, computers and movie screens. Sometimes he forgot what she looked like. Jeff's grandfather's courtship was technology-free, and much more successful. Jeff's relationship took a turn for the better because of his reacquaintance with an old-fashioned idea.

As an exclusive group of young people, college students tend to overlook the wisdom of age, preferring instead the familiarity of their own flock. In such an environment, it is simple to remain in front of the television and absorb the constructed history of other people. This is especially alienating if your culture is not "mainstream." We jab clinically at ancient survivors of time, surprised that they actually lived without VCR's. I wish I had tapped my own grandparents' stores of knowledge before it was too late.

Julia Stavenhagen is a graduate anthropology student

Fathers deserve real recognition

Holiday commercialization ignores true meaning behind celebration

Happy Father's Day, Dad. It may be a week or so late, but that's on purpose. Haven't most of us already forgotten Father's Day? Why shouldn't we? After all, the holiday is out of the way and we are now thinking of bigger and better things.

CHRIS S. COBB
Columnist



These problems certainly can be avoided even if a child has no father, but there seems to be a connection that cannot be overlooked. To use a generalization, the father tends to teach children the more physical things about life and coaches them along. The mother tends to teach about the emotional aspects of life. These qualities are equally necessary parts of a child's learning and becoming a well-rounded person. Of course, both parents take part in every aspect of bringing up their children and are not strictly limited to only one side, physical or emotional.

Fathers deserve the recognition they receive for doing a good job in raising their children. Think of the many dead-beat fathers that don't take the responsibility - who don't love their children enough - to pay child support, or who take advantage of their parental position and use their children. We hear about these fathers on day-time talk shows but we soon forget the many good fathers.

There are also those that don't know who their fathers are. One of my best friends was never given a chance to know his father. After searching for his biological father, he found him six years too late. He feels robbed that his father died before even meeting him, let alone getting to know him. I am sure to remember my friend on days like Father's Day because I know he thinks of the father he was never given a chance to know. His loss may be greater than those that know their dads. Unfortunately, what happened to him is not uncommon.

I feel lucky to know my father. I'm even luckier to know that he cares for me, has made sacrifices for me and prays for me. I'm so busy that I don't see him much or even talk to him very often but I am proud of my father and I miss him.

People who miss the original intent of this day belittle it. Shouldn't this day be to honor and thank our fathers for all they have given us? Let's not be cliché to say that everyday should be Father's Day, but instead ask ourselves, why limit our thanks to only one day...?

Chris S. Cobb is a senior English major



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EDITORIAL

COTTON BOWL MOVE

Game should relocate to Texas Stadium

The plan to move the New Year's Day Cotton Bowl football game from Dallas Fair Park to Texas Stadium in Irving is a good one and deserves the support of Texas A&M football fans.

Moving the site of the annual post-season classic is advantageous for all involved. For Cotton Bowl officials themselves, relocation will help ensure that the game remains a top rank game. For the teams who play there and their many fans, Texas stadium is a much better place to watch a football game. Suburban Irving is a much safer and accessible neighborhood than the Fair Park area. Traffic and parking problems are much more severe at the old Cotton Bowl, and the stadium is badly in need of repair.

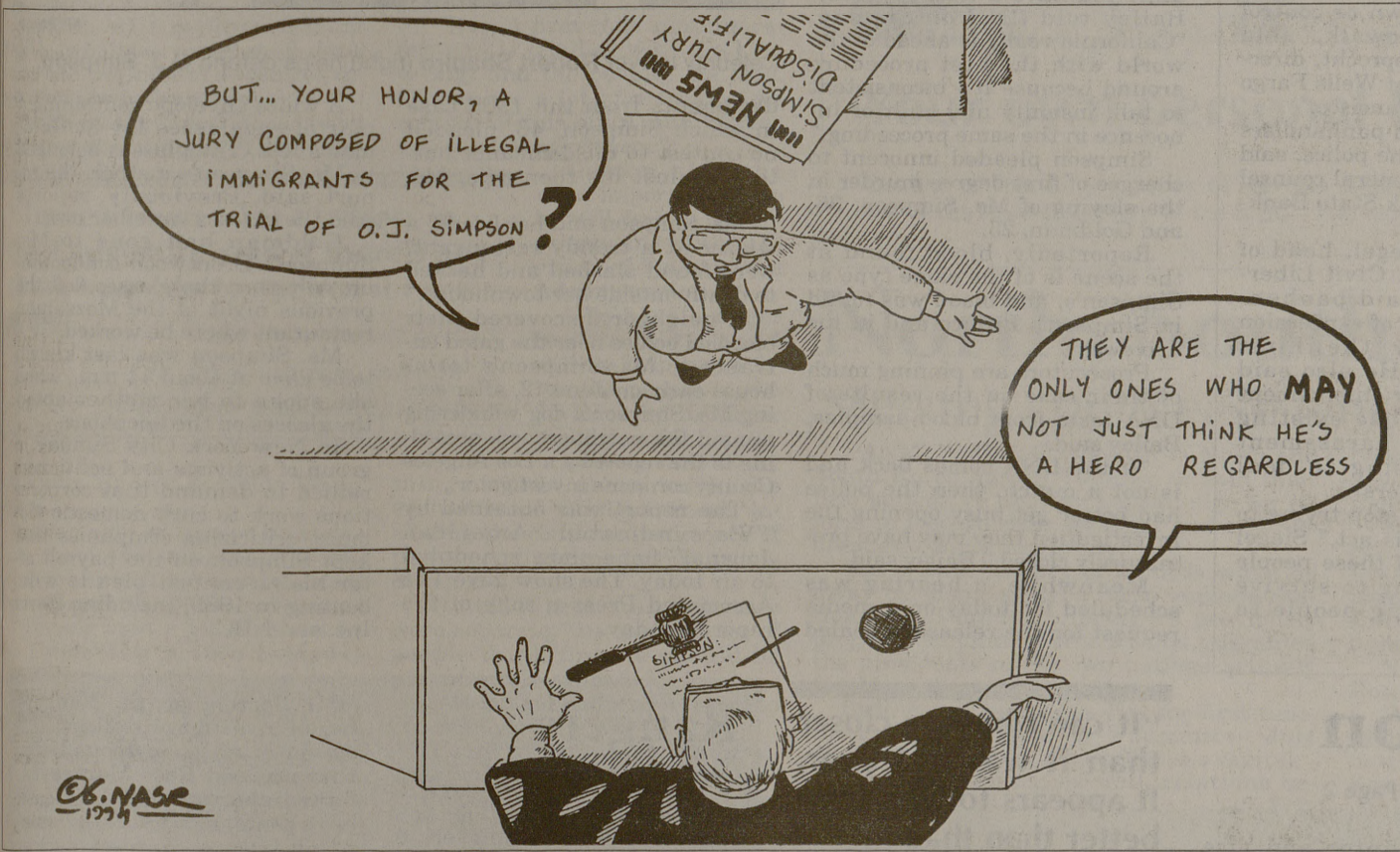
John Crawford, president of the Cotton Bowl Athletic Association, said, that a major factor in the decision was the "perception" among college football and network television officials is that the Fair Park stadium is too exposed to inclement winter weather. The proposed installation of a retractable cover for the famous hole in Texas Stadium's roof should eliminate this problem.

Traditionalists may decay moving the game from its location for 57 years for the sake of convenience and escaping the freezing cold. Seeing the Aggies travel to what is known as "Kyle Field North" on New Year's day has become somewhat of a tradition that will be missed.

However, pragmatic reality must outweigh sentimentalism for tradition in this case. Crawford correctly observed, "I think it's important that we be clear that the tradition is the game itself, not where the game is played." He continues, "The bottom line is, if we don't have a game, we won't have to worry about where to play it."

The Cotton Bowl is competing with other bowls for the right to remain a top rank, New Year's Day college football bowl game. Crawford said, "It's become abundantly clear that if we were to make the first cut, we had to consider moving the game to Texas Stadium."

Hopefully by moving the Cotton Bowl to a better stadium in a better location, it will remain a top ranked bowl game and Texas A&M tradition in the future.



homosexuals have certain images associated with them. This is why homosexuals should not serve in the armed forces.

Jim Fyffe
Class of '97

Cartoon needs facts on Indonesia, East Timor

It is fairly unusual to see articles about our beloved country of Indonesia in American media and in The Battalion. However, on June 16, there was a caricature about "Techno-butcher" wearing a T-shirt with Indonesia written on the chest and slaughtering some objects labeled "Timor" and "Human Rights."

It took us a while to comprehend its

meaning. For the record, the eastern half of Timor had been occupied by a foreign country for hundreds of years. In December 1975, the Indonesian government decided to help the people of East Timor achieve their wish to become united with Indonesia and to end the atrocities of communist movement in that area. Since the integration, that area has enjoyed significant progress never before seen.

We feel somewhat offended by that caricature. We realize that some people are still not happy with the integration process, but we don't think the label "Techno-butcher" fits anything that we stand for. In fact, the situation in East Timor is not as bad as foreign observers acknowledge. We are not convinced that the artist had all the facts.

It is sad that a small part of the country has become the focus of international

monitoring while the beauties of the rest of Indonesia remain untold.

One of the things that bothered us was the fact that the artist's name was not even shown on the caricature. Was this an act of cowardice or was the artist just too busy and forgot to sign his "masterpiece?"

Agus Kristijono
Class of '93

MAIL CALL

Gays portray 'wrong image' for U.S. military

All the letters and articles I have read in this paper dealing with the issues of homosexuals in the military have never addressed the main point. Homosexuals are not and should not be welcomed in the U.S. armed forces because of the image it would portray.

Our armed forces are not institutions for social experiments, they are not politically motivated nor are they governed by the rules of the politically correct. The peace is held by the image and reputation of those who have served our country in the past. In defense, image is everything.

If someone has broken into your home and is about to kill you and torture your family, do you want a toy poodle or a pit-bull between you and the attacker? Both dogs will defend your family and bite the attacker, but which dog will make the attacker think twice? On the same token, do you want a man who takes a submissive position, both emotionally and sexually, defending your nation and its hard-earned image? Before anyone flies off the handle, I am not talking ability. Anyone can aim a rifle and pull a trigger. Bullies, pitbulls, U.S. Marines and ho-

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