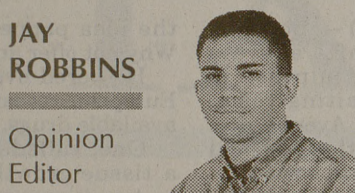


Black or white, everyone's challenges will be equal

Friday night's episode of the TV show "Picket Fences" dramatized the desegregation of schools in a small town. Even though it's my favorite program, I almost turned it off. After living through three days of constant letters and phone calls to The Battalion about "race" at Texas A&M, the last thing I wanted to do was watch such things on television. But, I couldn't find the remote, and never got up off the couch to change the channel. I'm glad for that laziness.



JAY ROBBINS Opinion Editor. The whole community has always shown me high expectations and encouragement. College and a career were never an issue; "Which school?" and "What field?" were all that mattered. If I had been born black, the town would still be small, everyone would watch me sharply if I walked into a store or too close to their cars, and my family — though old — would only gain respect for the current day's work and "not causin' trouble."

to pay for her education at Trinity, or indulge her in a career like journalism. The black me would have enjoyed very few of the privileges and chances that have gotten me ahead. Could I ever have scored in the top percentile on the SAT Verbal if my parents had not spoken with university-educated English? How about being the only black kid in my senior class to take calculus, physics and advanced biology like white me did? If my after-school job had paid for food instead of CDs and trips to the movies, could I ever have devoted 20 or 30 hours a week to every extracurricular activity my school offered? Say, for instance, that my teachers had always told me "good enough" was regular attendance and not fighting instead of perfect attendance and straight A's — would I still have been 4th in my class? A whole book worth of commentary couldn't cover the scope of subtle and obvious discrimination I've recalled. The one thing that shines crystal clear is the truth that if I had been African-American or Hispanic, I probably would not even have dreamed about A&M — just like almost all the minority kids I grew up with.

minority having the same chances along with half the blessings and twice the hardships. Regardless of any advantages I had, I still worked my butt off to get where I am and I'm proud of many things I've done. However, I honestly don't think I could have reached many of my goals if I'd had the additional obstacles added by discrimination and prejudice. Or, for that matter, of being female or being disabled, or being gay, or being extremely poor. I read every letter submitted for Mail Call, whether it runs or not, and the arguments and complaints in the dozens of letters The Battalion has received center around the fear on every side of the issue that blacks or Hispanics or whites or plaid Martians get ahead in the world on something besides merit. No one is getting a free ride from the government, the liberals, the establishment or anybody else. It all balances out. So maybe some black girl got that scholarship I envied when I was 18. I'm sure that when I was 12 or so, I got something — just as valuable in the long run — for which she, in turn, would have given almost anything.

Jay Robbins is a senior English and political science major

Growing up in my hometown has been one of the greatest assets in life. The town is small, everyone knows me, my family is old, established and respected. Store owners and business leaders recognize me and extend countless small favors because of who and what I am.

THE BATTALION Editorial Board: Belinda Blancarte, Editor in chief; Mark Evans, Managing editor; Jay Robbins, Opinion editor; Jenny Magee, Assistant opinion editor.



MAIL CALL logo featuring a clock face showing 29.

Bill on student worker registration criticized

I would just like to take a moment and congratulate Ryan Shopp on the recent passage of his student worker registration bill. Thanks to the remarkable dedication and brilliance of Shopp, all the phone registration problems have been solved. We'll never have to worry about the phone lines becoming too crowded again. Never again will all those poor seniors have to worry about all those darn freshmen and sophomore workers stealing all their senior-level classes. Never again will all the poor little rich unemployed boys and girls have to worry about being forced to take an 8 o'clock class since those worthless student workers won't be in the way. Thanks to the glorious bill that Shopp worked so hard on for four months, (Poor Thing!) students workers like myself won't be able to register for the classes that fit around our work schedules and because we have no choice except to work or starve we will just have to miss the classes we need. Way to go to Ryan Shopp — he's on his way to a rewarding career in politics! If he just keeps on thinking up such pointless garbage for the simple reason that he has nothing better to do then he'll go far. My advice to him is clean up his act and get a job!

Cecil A. Cheshire Class of '96

Ticketmart offers good alternative to scalpers

As a brother of Alpha Phi Omega, I participate in numerous projects bene-

fitting the community, our school and the chapter itself. One of the projects that we do is called Ticketmart. This is a service to the students, alumni and other people who just want to come and watch an Aggie football game. We set up in the MSC flag room before every home game and sell tickets at face value for students who are unable to use their tickets or those of alumni or family members who have extras. We not only sell tickets for the student section but for the alumni side as well. This is not a ticket exchange, but an opportunity for people to get money for their otherwise useless tickets. This service gives people an alternative to the sometimes outrageous prices that scalpers charge. There have been those that charge in excess of one hundred dollars for two seats. On some weekends, the going rate is more than \$30 per ticket. Not too bad, but still more than the price set by the University. While walking toward Kyle, I noticed a sign that warned scalpers from doing business on "any land connected to the field." I'm assuming that there are reasons for this; can't the University just ban scalping totally? This would not only prevent a possible loss to the University for unsold tickets, but it would give the volunteers at Ticketmart more opportunities to meet people. Don't allow people to inflate ticket prices that possibly prevent Aggie fans from seeing us beat the hell out of the next team.

Jennifer Schmidt Class of '95

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor... Address letters to: The Battalion - Mail Call 013 Reed McDonald Texas A&M University College Station, TX 77843-1111 Fax: (409) 845-2647 E-mail: Batt@tamvm1.tamu.edu

And we'll have fun, fun, fun — not

College offers few wild times along with hours of studying

Every time my older sister entered a new phase of life she filled me with stories about all the exciting things that went on. In every stage of growing up I planned excitedly for the next, envisioning parties, gossip, cool friends and tons of worshipping admirers. In middle school and high school, my hopes were continually shattered. While I had friends, and we certainly gossiped, my life was nowhere near as exciting as my sister's seemed. Still, I fought back doubt and gamely entered college, planning on living it up during the "most exciting four years of my life."



ELIZABETH PRESTON Columnist

This "college is a breeze" myth is laughable. All I remember of my first three semesters is the fourth floor of Evans Library, the Study Lounge and an occasional run to Bernie's.

Two and a half years later, the doubts are giving way to certainty. Either my sister is 100 percent more exciting than I am — a distinct possibility — or college is not everything it is cracked up to be. Let's dispel the myths. First of all, it is much harder to make real friends in college than at other times. Though I did actually make one good friend at Fish Camp, she came down with mono and had to drop out of school. Then I only saw people in my classes two or three days a week, and the other standard high school meeting places — lockers or cafeterias — are either nonexistent or worthless. Sbsia never once provided me with a lasting friendship. Clubs seemed intimidating and filled with upperclass students. Homesickness was rampant the first few months of college. I don't think I spoke to anyone but my roommate the first two weeks of school — unless you include my old high school flame who was trying to find his own path, separate from mine. When I finally did make good friends, it was practically time to go home for Christmas. In addition, in high school, if you had a fight or a petty disagreement, you saw each other every day and as a result were forced to deal with it. In college, especially on a campus as big as Texas A&M, if you decide you are mad at someone, you may not see them for

months. With a temper like mine, this was bad news. Arguments didn't just fix themselves. Instead one person had to actually call the other and — gasp — accept blame. Also, this "college is a breeze" myth is laughable. All I remember of my first three semesters is the fourth floor of Evans Library, the A-3 Study Lounge on Northside and an occasional midnight run to Bernie's. I could not believe that those textbooks I always ignored or used as coloring books in high school were now actually required reading that would be on the test. I would lie awake in bed at night and wonder how people survived four years of studying four to six hours a night. Depression and worry were the order of the day for the beginning of my much anticipated college experience. Then the aforementioned high school flame, Jeff, dragged me to a college party in a misguided attempt to broaden my horizons and show me the joy that college could bring me. He left to get beer — I don't drink — and I stood alone surrounded by around a hundred people to whom I had nothing to say to. I felt goofy, out of place, intimidated and lonely. Without telling Jeff, I caught a ride back to the dorm and spent the evening wishing I was still in high school.

Now that I am an "experienced junior," I do have great friends, but everything else has remained static. College still takes more effort than I ever expected, though now I have learned to put time aside to join too many clubs. Parties, dancing and random mugging still leave me completely cold, and it looks like the hundreds of fawning admirers will always remain one of my faint dreams. Thus, I have decided that college is just not my cup of tea. It is too much of a transitional state. No one knows exactly what they will be doing in four years. I don't live at home anymore, but my mom still supports me. I don't know which of the friends I am making will last, and I have no idea with whom I will spend the rest of my life. Today a friend in her early 30s with two beautiful children, a good job and a happy marriage was speaking about the trauma of the college years. She said you couldn't pay her to trade places with me. That really is too bad, because I offered her my net worth...

Elizabeth Preston is a junior English major

