

First chill of adulthood brings childhood memories

ROBERT VASQUEZ

guest columnist

Fall's first chill rolled in today. I watched as the sky — bright and blue only yesterday — turned gray as fall stretched its dark, damp canopy across the Texas sky, cooling the people scurrying below. The concrete beneath them was actually cold at midday when it once had burned through the soles of their shoes.

I say the people were looking up at the dark sea gathering above. I watched them as I had watched the clouds roll in, form the windows of the office where I now work, 14 stories above the downtown streets of our state's capitol.

Yes, I live in TU-ville, now.

I guess my family wasn't too happy when I accepted my job as a public affairs specialist at the office of the Attorney General. The fact that I was willing — and even excited — to leave my life in San Antonio and begin a new one in another town. It wasn't particularly what my parents expected after I graduated and moved back home. But give me a break. I mean, Austin's only an hour away. I'm closer to home now than I have been for the past

four years.

Still, I remember as a child dreading the day when my family would split up, and go our separate ways. I particularly remember one night when my older sister, 9 and my younger brother, 5 and I were drifting off to sleep after talking, staring into the darkness that filled the room around us, lying in the big full-size bed in my sister's room. Though we all had our own beds in our own rooms, each night the three of us would pile into my sister's bed and begin our nightly talks, recounting events of the day, giving voice to thoughts that perplexed us and lulling ourselves to sleep from sheer exhaustion and ultimate boredom.

Well, this one night stands out in my mind, when I lay there staring at the clock radio. My brother had drifted off to sleep long ago. And my sister had muttered her last drowsy thoughts before turning in for the night. I'll never forget the song that was playing. It was one of my favorites. It was a slow, mesmerizing song that at one point turns into a soft whisper. I lay there listening to the words.

"Be quiet. Big boys don't cry. Big boys don't cry. Big boys don't cry. Be quiet. Big boys don't cry."

I thought of my brother and sister lying beside me. We were so close, just as we had always been

I thought of my mom and dad who had kissed us good night. "One day you'll have to sleep in your own beds," they said.

Those simple words bore into me at that moment as I lay listening to my favorite song. I had felt so happy. Everything seemed so perfect. But I suddenly began to realize that the life we knew, the life we shared would not last forever. It couldn't. One day we would separate. My brother and sister would find their own lives. And my parents...

And through the tears that began to well and finally trail down to my pillow, I watched the glowing hand, that tiny ticking second hand sweep another

minute from the clock as it continued its unrelenting journey to nowhere.

Watching the gray skies chill the Austin streets below and the people who scurried and hunched to warm themselves, I suddenly remembered

that night when I lay there in that bed beside my brother and sister, fearing the inevitable.

Now, I realized, my sister was married, raising two beautiful baby boys and slept each night in her own bed with her husband.

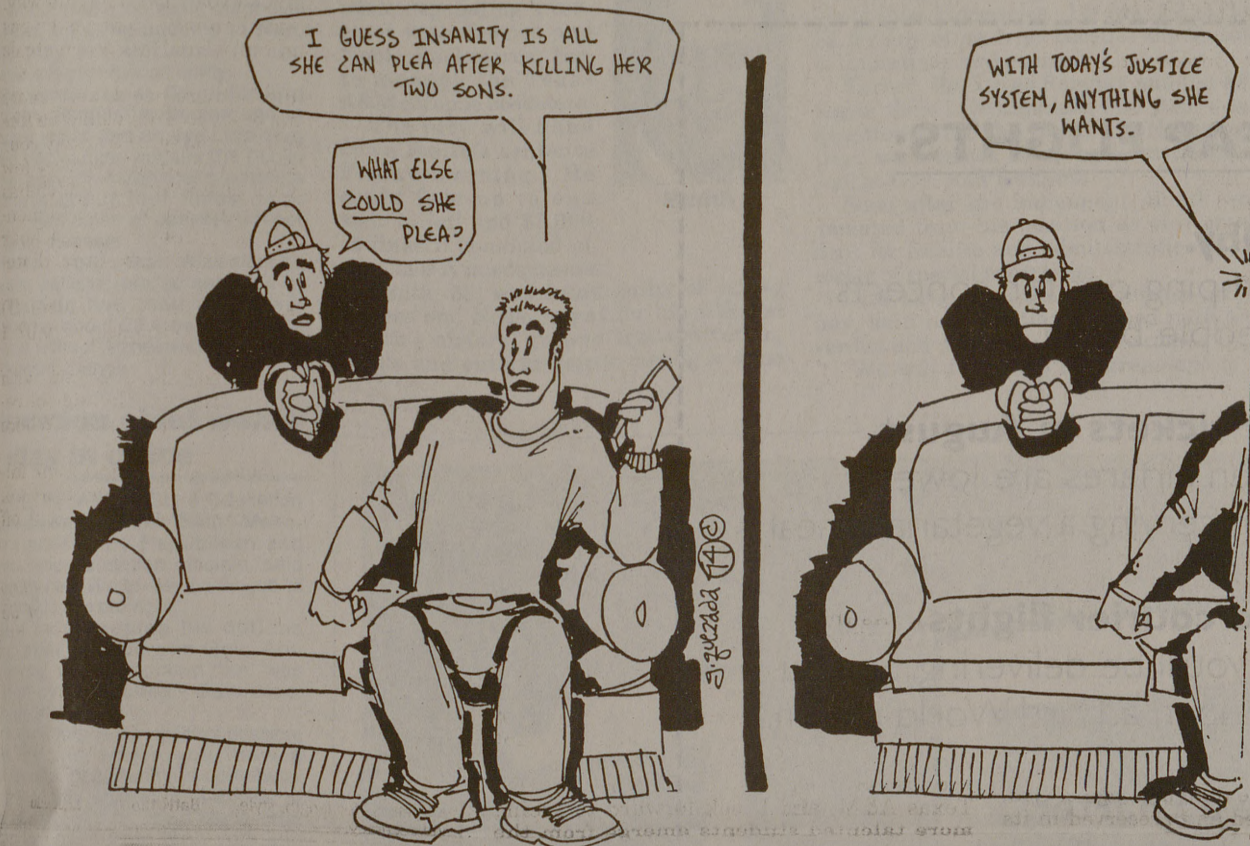
My brother was now a police officer in San Antonio. Living on his own, he had moved away a long time ago. And there was no telling who he slept with him each night.

And as I stood looking outside my office window, comfortably insulated from the winds blowing in, a sudden chill filtered through my body. I could turn to the left or to the right, or look behind me. There would be no one there to warm me. And it occurred to me that the slow unwinding of the clock, the inevitable separation that terrified me on that lonely night so long ago, had come already. I hadn't even noticed.

Almost frozen by that sudden realization, my breaths grew shallow and labored. And I stood suddenly still. Very quiet. No one could see what I was feeling. I wouldn't let them. I told myself, "Be quiet. Big boys don't cry. Big boys don't cry."

Robert Vasquez is a public affairs specialist at the office of the Attorney General

I suddenly began to realize that the life we knew, the life we shared would not last forever. One day we would separate and find their own lives.



No one wants to die a mess Traditional Elephant Walk embodies true spirit of event

It was just about a year ago. My arms were draped around the shoulders of my very best friends, the ones I made way back at Fish Camp. Laughing, we walked through campus reminiscing about all the craziness we'd gotten into over the years.

MELISSA MEGLIOLA
Columnist



Each cadet let one arm hang down, swinging like the trunk of an elephant. Led by a few members of the band, the cadets walked with their outfits through campus, across University and even through the Chicken. There was no ketchup, flour or syrup in sight. Waiting for them to pass, I saw what Elephant Walk was meant to be and I became sad for the first time.

Elephant Walk started with the class of 1926. On the day of Bonfire, "Piccolo Red" wandered around campus playing "Pop Goes the Weasel." He was joined by a bass player and a drummer. Together, they produced a solemn, mournful sound. Other senior cadets fell into place walking just like the cadets I saw last year.

Then, Elephant Walk was such solemn ceremony that other students were not allowed to watch. They certainly didn't throw things. The seniors went off to wander aimlessly around campus and reflect on their lives at Texas A&M, and then find a place to die. Just as elephants return to the boneyards of their ancestors when it is time for them to pass on.

Elephant Walk was never as important to our campus as Silver Taps or Aggie Muster. Nor was it as solemn. Elephant Walk is simply a unique chance to reflect on the past and prepare for the future.

It is a tradition meant solely for seniors.

In spite of my experience with Elephant Walk last year, many campus officials stated that it was much cleaner than years in the past. Hopefully, the trend will continue this year.

Assuming that is true, many of the seniors walking this year did not ambush my class last year. Those students deserve an Elephant Walk like the original in 1925.

Both the 1995 and 1996 class councils have worked to plan activities so that all juniors and seniors will be able to experience Elephant Walk in an appropriate and nondestructive manner.

By attending these activities, allowing the seniors to reflect on their time at A&M and not defacing the campus, we can make one of the most significant contributions to campus since the first Aggie Muster, the 1939 national championship and the recent rebuilding of Bonfire.

Melissa Megliola is a senior industrial engineering major

There was the time we got caught sneaking into Kyle Field to watch a lightning storm, the roadtrip to Houston that began with my car going into a ditch and the late night philosophical discussions that were used to avoid studying. After about 20 minutes my arms started to hurt — when you are 5 feet 2 inches it's hard to keep your hands around other people's shoulders for extended periods of time. But, I hardly even noticed and definitely didn't care. I had waited for over three years and four football seasons to take part in Elephant Walk, nothing would spoil it.

I was prepared to be ambushed with flour, ketchup, shaving cream or chocolate syrup by some overzealous junior. I hated the idea, but I was fairly certain that in spite of the large amount of publicity about the need to "keep it clean" and "preserve the tradition" that the expected ambush would occur.

So, when it happened — some unknown obnoxious junior girl threw flour at me and started to open a bottle of maple syrup, aiming my direction — I surprised myself by attempting to take it from her and throw it away. Our struggle resulted in a huge mess. Even more maple syrup ended up on my clothes, down my back and in my hair. Flour went everywhere as I called her a few less-than-flattering names.

I finished Elephant Walk about half an hour later, covered in the flour and syrup combination. I stopped in the bathroom in Zachry to clean up a little and then had to go straight to class to take a quiz. I was annoyed at my physical state, but I wasn't particularly angry. Unfortunately, this is what Elephant Walk has become. It really wasn't that fun, but it wasn't horrible, either. Besides, I could take a shower in an hour anyway.

After class, I walked across the academic plaza and headed toward my car. I was forced to stop as a group of the Cadet Corp walked in front of me in a single file line.



Lady Aggie swim team deserves recognition

On Monday night, the Lady Aggie

swimming and diving team did what few teams in the country have been able to do for over 20 years, they beat the national powerhouse and perennial conference champion — the Lady Longhorns.

This feat was a big accomplishment for the program and Coach Mel Nash. However, our wonderful school paper, with its goal to support and report ALL of the accomplishments at this University, felt these ladies deserved only a photograph and a caption.

Congratulations to all the Lady Aggie swimmers and divers on an out-

standing performance.

Beating a team the caliber of Texas was a just reward for all of their hard work during a grueling workout schedule.

For all the students here who like to think they support all of the athletes who represent A&M, and not just the ones that might make millions of dollars, I encourage you all to get out to P.L. Downs Natatorium at the next home meet to see some amazing athletes give their all. It's even free.

Ryan Goodwyn
Class of '95

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EDITORIAL CALIFORNIA CRACKDOWN

Texas should find other feet to follow

Proposition 187, also known as S.O.S (save our state) promised to save billions in tax dollars by restricting government aid to the estimated 1.7 million illegal aliens who live and work in California. Unfortunately this proposition will deny immigrants the right to a doctor in non-emergency situations and the right for illegal immigrants to attend public schools and receive federally funded immunizations will also be taken away. As this proposition passed in California, more problems will be created than fixed.

Now that illegal immigrants will be denied the right to attend public schools, illiteracy rates will increase, leaving them at a disadvantage should they become U.S. citizens. Now that illegal immigrants will be denied immunization shots and medical treatment, the chance for diseases to spread will increase.

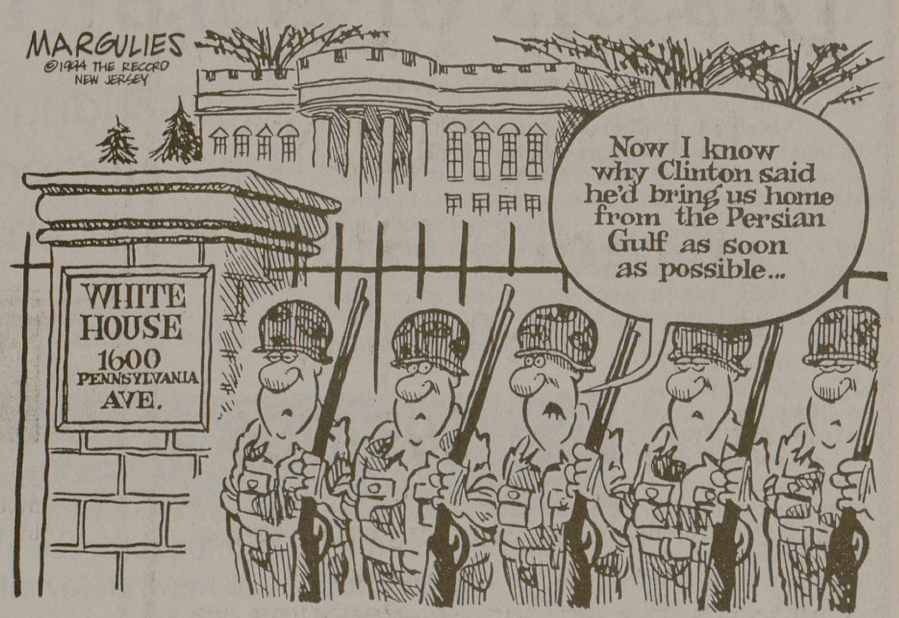
This country was founded upon immigration. But times have changed since the birth and early development of our country. Jobs have come and gone and always will. But we must enforce some type of control over immigration. However, proposals similar to proposition 187 are not

the answer.

Scholars and politicians will disagree on what the solution to immigration problem is. But, until there is a feasible proposal where the possible outcomes have been evaluated and rationalized, no changes should occur.

Instead of slapping a quick proposal together in time for the elections, current laws on the books should have continued to be enforced, rather than creating new ones. Patrols on the borders should be increased and illegal immigrants should be properly deported once they are caught. But to create a fair chance for legal immigrants, the application process for citizenship should be sped up.

With Texas trailing a quick second in the number of illegal immigrants, it is important for Texans to understand that the problems of immigration will not be solved with a similar proposition for our state. Granted the proposition was meant to serve as a deterrent, but illegal immigrants should be prevented from entering the country directly, instead of trapping them inside and creating new problems for those who are citizens.



Fast-moving vehicles pose threat to walkers

This is just a quick little note to complain about the recent surge of fast-moving vehicles on pedestrian pathways on West Campus. I have been obliged to rapidly get out of the way of state vehicles that make no attempt to slow down for people of foot. I think that some effort should be made to restrict these vehicles, or at least to return the right-of-way to the pedestrian.

I admit that these pathways appear to be convenient short-cuts to drivers, but the increasing congestion warrants attention before someone gets hurt.

Emmy Morrison
Class of '96

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