

Parades halt the traffic on the drive through life

Avenue continues unchanged, regardless of who's driving

Because I live only a couple of blocks from Texas Avenue, I am constantly reminded of the hustle and bustle of a main thoroughfare. It's not that Bryan-College Station has so many cars, or that Texas Avenue is a "big" four lane highway — that stuff is all relative to other towns — but rather, that all the cars, trucks and buses are all hurriedly on their way north or south, one way or the other.

FRANK STANFORD
Columnist



They enter the avenue, they exit the avenue; it never, ever stops. Cars wreck sometimes, and passengers get hurt sometimes, but the mess gets cleaned up fairly quickly. The avenue always stays intact, however. In fact, just a few hours after a most horrible accident, you'd never know by looking that a life was endangered, re-routed or lost.

The entering and exiting continues just the same. I guess it's mainly the noise that keeps the avenue ever-present in my mind. Oh sure, like everyone, I use it almost every day; but even when I'm sitting at my desk it's active presence remains. The screeching halts, the squealing starts, the unceasing whizzing of cars and gear-

changing of big diesel engines permeate my eardrums and never let me forget the avenue. Last Sunday there was a parade. A Christmas parade. Part of the avenue was temporarily detained. It strained at the barriers like a bronco at the gate. It was obvious that high-ways don't like being blocked off. No cars were allowed and everyone behaved, but policemen were still necessary to make sure.

Can people have a parade without police? Most everyone liked the parade. I could tell. The curb teemed with wiggling children, but the parents who brought them also were excited — I could see it in their faces.

Every time a new band, float or group of twirlers came into view there was wonderment in young eyes and smiles on everyone. Real smiles: the kind you don't even know you're doing at first.

One woman was expressing to her husband that it was a shame for a parade route to be lined with vendors. They always stand around with balloons, pirate flags and blow-up Dallas Cowboys football helmets. They even had some

Christmas stuff. They're just souvenir salesmen. I've always thought vendors were actually a part of the parade because they seem to add something. Besides, no one can ever claim it's "a shame" there are so many video salesmen. Lawyers, maybe.

I didn't really watch much of the parade as I spent all my time watching everyone else. And I decided that the parade doesn't mean quite the same thing to adults as it does to children.

To most children everything in the parade is new and amazing; Santa is real. To most older onlookers, the parade is a needed time to reflect and enjoy, a reminder of when everything was new and amazing; when Santa WAS real.

It's impossible to see a parade and not feel one way or the other. But children seem to enjoy

about on The Avenue, making lots of noise. The Avenue is our life, and we use it every day.

We go, go, go, driving fast with eyes straight ahead, changing gears, straining at the yield signs that allow us onto The Main Avenue.

Sometimes we have accidents and get hurt. Sometimes we have a stop sign. A few of us screech to a halt, many more squeal to get going. But we still enter The Avenue only to exit and enter again.

Some people just stay on until they run out of gas. Some hate The Avenue; they take the back roads. Sometimes we have Parades. They make us smile. They are a chance to block off part of The Avenue and sit on the curb for a while.

These are the only times you can just sit on the curb of The Avenue in the middle of the day and not feel like a bum.

Often times our friends, lovers or spouses have to be our police. They block off The Avenue for us and make us watch.

Some of us watch every Parade like children and some of us watch every parade as "older onlookers, but "children" still seem to enjoy their way the most of all.

With finals around the corner, there's not much time to think about parades. Or avenues. We're all busy bustling about on The Avenue of life, making lots of noise.

their way the most. I guess with finals around the corner there's not much time to think about parades. Or avenues. We are all too busy hustling and bustling

Parades are what make The Avenue worth having.
Frank Stanford is a philosophy graduate student

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EDITORIAL

THE NEW FRONT LINE

From battle plans to lesson plans

Troops to Teachers, a new \$65 million dollar Pentagon program which places former armed forces members as teachers or aides in low-income school districts, is an excellent idea.

In this day and age, public schooling has become somewhat of a battleground. With the increase in guns and drugs on playgrounds, the school can no longer be considered a safe and secure place.

Placing former military personnel in public schools will not solve the problems entirely, but perhaps will enforce some discipline and order on school campuses.

Furthermore, it is evident that teachers have lost a tremendous amount of respect in recent years. They no longer are serve as a "scare" factor in children's lives.

By putting former military leaders in teacher positions, perhaps children will learn to respect educators once more.

In today's problem-plagued society, children, especially of disadvantaged backgrounds, need good role models. Many of the former military personnel are from minority ethnic and racial groups, and perhaps will

contribute positively to the lives of such children. By placing such role models in the schools, the image of inner-city schools is likely to be improved.

The need for talented, dedicated teachers has increased dramatically. In many ways teaching is no longer an enjoyable profession — in some cases it has become a dangerous one.

The military personnel who are participating in this program are not only helping children, but they are also alleviating the stress level of teachers and helping to cushion the low supply of educators. "It's a win-win situation," said Defense Secretary William J. Perry.

Perhaps the most important aspect of Troops to Teachers is the fact that veterans continue to serve their country. Instead of being on the battleground, these servicemen get the opportunity to work on their second careers by contributing positively to the nation's welfare.

This new program sponsored by the Pentagon is one of the best yet. It will benefit not only children and teachers, but it will also benefit education — an aspect of society that is in desperate need of help.

Every time out we did "Beat the Hell Outta t.u." non-stop.

I think we broke a record for the most consecutive "beat the hells."

You could tell it was getting to the t-sips, too. We defeated them three games to one.

The Lady Aggies finished their season against BYU the day after Thanksgiving and just won the first round of the NCAA playoffs on Nov. 30. Volleyball is pretty much over, but the basketball season is just getting started.

Now I know all of you plan on going to men's basketball, but what about the women's team? They really are much better than the men's team, and I think they will go all the way this season.

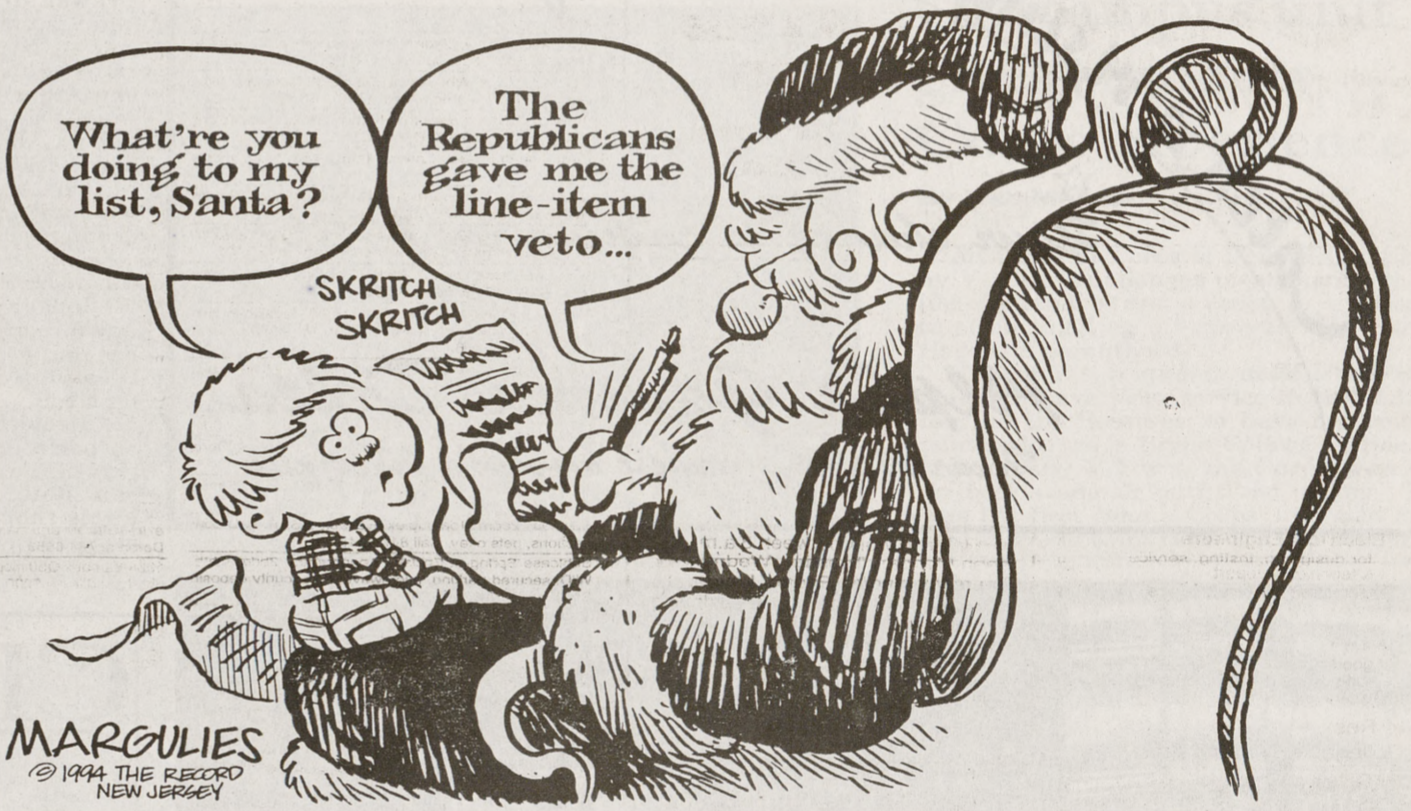
If you really want to see some hot stuff, come out and watch the Lady Aggies.

Hey, if you try it, I guarantee you'll like it.

Reed Watson
Class of '98
Member of A.R.M.Y.
(Aggies Ready to Motivate You)

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 for length, style, and accuracy.

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MARGULIES
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NEW JERSEY

I'll be home for Christmas ...

Changes in holiday traditions don't mean loss of their real meaning

The semester is over, and less than one week from today, life will be much less stressful for all of us. By now I've already finished the horrendous amount of homework, the paper and the test I had to take before I could even begin to focus on finals. I also found my I.D. holder and a new roommate, so most of my semester's stress has dissipated.

LYNN BOOHER
Columnist



The holidays are just around the corner, and with them comes good food, wonderful family and nice presents. Soon my parents will be dragging the 10-year-old fake Christmas tree out of the storage shed in the back yard, dusting it off and stringing the lights around it. The old tradition of decorating the tree will be a little different this year since both my sister, Karen, and I are away at college.

As children, we used to fight over which one of us would get to put the 15 boxes of decorations on the tree. By the time we were teenagers, we were arguing over who would be forced to decorate it. Eventually we settled on pitching the ornaments at the tree and seeing where they landed. My parents put a quick stop to that tradition.

Then came the time for the outside decorations. Dad would string lights on the house while Karen and I would cover the trees and the fence with more strings. At one point we had a large wooden mailbox shaped like a doghouse that was built to hold packages. It made a perfect manger for the mini-nativity I would carefully set up each year.

The tradition ended the year baby Jesus was stolen from the mailbox. Not too long after, we got a normal stone mailbox that prevented future manger scenes. This year we won't be home early enough to set up the yard display, so my dad was industrious and put the outside Christmas lights up the day after Thanksgiving.

The Christmas cookie bake-a-thon was another exciting ritual in the Booher household. Over the years we collected dozens of creatively shaped cookie cutters, ranging from three or four versions of Santa Claus to snowmen, bells, wreaths and of course, gingerbread people.

Mom would mix up infinite batches of sugar and gingerbread cookie dough, leaving us kids to cut the cookies out and decorate them with colored sugar and sprinkles. Karen

liked to pour hundreds of teeth-cracking silver bb's all over her cookies.

For a few years, all our friends and the neighborhood gang would gather 'round in the kitchen to help on a day filled with laughter, warmth, the smells of baking — and best of all, no school.

One year we got so caught up in the fun that mom let every kid make gingerbread houses out of graham crackers, icing and dozens of different candies, only half of which made it into the houses. Unfortunately, these traditions are also dwindling. The excitement has worn off with age, and the passel of neighborhood kids are now teenagers or older.

On Christmas morning in days of yore, I would jump out of bed at six in the morning and run into the living room to see what Santa had brought us. Some years I would exercise constraint and go into the kitchen first for a bowl of cereal, all the while bouncing in my chair with the anticipation of seeing all the presents in the next room.

After a while I would walk in there to see two chairs side by side, one with my stocking draped over it, the other with Karen's. Piled all over the chair and on the floor around it would be an abundance of really cool presents. After digging through the dolls and toys, I would run to Karen's room to wake her from the dead so that we could enjoy everything together.

Christmas morning was probably the only time we could play alone together without ever fighting.

In the afternoon came relatives and glorious food. My family really knows how to throw feasts for the holidays. Between late November and Jan. 1, we have

at least three major banquets, and sometimes more. No one could not love the turkey and stuffing, green beans, Jello molds, sweet potatoes and best of all, the melt-in-your-mouth rolls, fresh from the oven.

Thoughts of the wonderful food ahead are sometimes the only thing that sustains me while I'm at school, cooking for myself.

The traditions will continue this year, though not exactly the same as when I was a kid. It doesn't matter, though, because they still include the most important aspect: being with the family I love.

Happy holidays to all of you, and beat the hell out of finals!
Lynn Booher is a junior English and psychology major



MAIL CALL

Aggies should take time to see women's sports

I just wanted to tell all you Ags out there in Aggieland that ya'll have really been missing some great athletic events. No, I'm not talking about our Fightin' Texas Aggie Football Team, I'm talking about women's basketball.

The Lady Ags have had a pretty good season, and a lot of ya'll missed it. I bet you they could have been much better if we had more people in attendance to support them.

Crowd involvement really works, I know from previous experience. The Lady Aggies Volleyball team went to the SWC tournament at Rice. They easily defeated Rice in the first round and were ready to face t.u. in the second round.

Both times we played t.u. this season, they defeated us in five games. But this time, those of us Ags who were there at the t.u. game made the difference. We stood behind the team and really pumped them up, and when the team switched sides after completing a game, we stayed in the same place and razzed the t-sips.

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