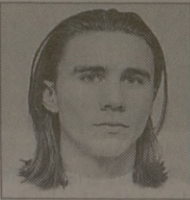


# Teaching the world to sing

Searching for a savior in the cola war leaves students without focus

Pepsi good, Coke bad. My soul is parched with a thirst that cannot be quenched here. At least not at my current station in life, College Station. My thirst is for Mountain Dew, a product of PepsiCo, not of Coca-Cola, the company with which the University has an exclusive contract.

**Columnist**



**Mason Jackson**  
Senior marketing major

But why Coke? I have seen the demographics, and I know I belong to the Pepsi generation.

Sure, Coca Cola taught the world to sing, but the music really sucks.

It can't be denied. This represents a major problem on this campus.

Is it possible the University would accommodate my request for a change of vendor, or a more desirable agreement in which the two companies could live in carbonated, caffeinated harmony that would serve as a model for peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where people are gunned down on the street every day?

No, but it would be happy to give me a parking ticket while I look for the appropriate person to stand in to make my futile request. I know my hopes lie instead in my own licensing agreement. It happens in the sports world all the time.

For example, the Houston Rockets just licensed Pepsi as their official carbonated drink, even though they can't buy any in their arena because the Summit has its own exclusive deal with Coke.

Speaking of sports, I wonder what they were at Augusta, where Tiger Woods just won the Masters, and where blacks weren't allowed to play golf until 1975.

But I have a plan to solve my problem. My marketing plan would be simple. PepsiCo would furnish me with a "Dew caddy," whose job it would be to follow me around

campus with a wheelbarrow full of addiction. In exchange, I would agree to wear free Pepsi T-shirts and appear in television commercials with Cindy Crawford and Shaq, class schedule permitting. Unfortunately, every time I call Pepsi and explain my plan, I somehow get disconnected, probably because of the stress fall class registration puts on the phone system. You know, I hear people in Third-World countries don't even have auto rudely. Suckers — it comes free with my caller ID package.

Since I won't be able to get my marketing deal until everyone has registered, I've started trying other options. Carrying cans in my backpack worked until I set off the metal detectors at Evans Library, which is surprising since they are known for their incredible accuracy.

Needless to say, what ensued wasn't pretty, especially when they brought in the snack-food Gestapo and I had to make a run for the door.

Besides, that method didn't keep the drinks cold and refreshing, though that would have been fine if I were living in crime- and inflation-plagued Eastern Europe, where they prefer warm Coke.

So I tried stashing a cooler in the bushes near the Wehner Building, but one of the Aggies

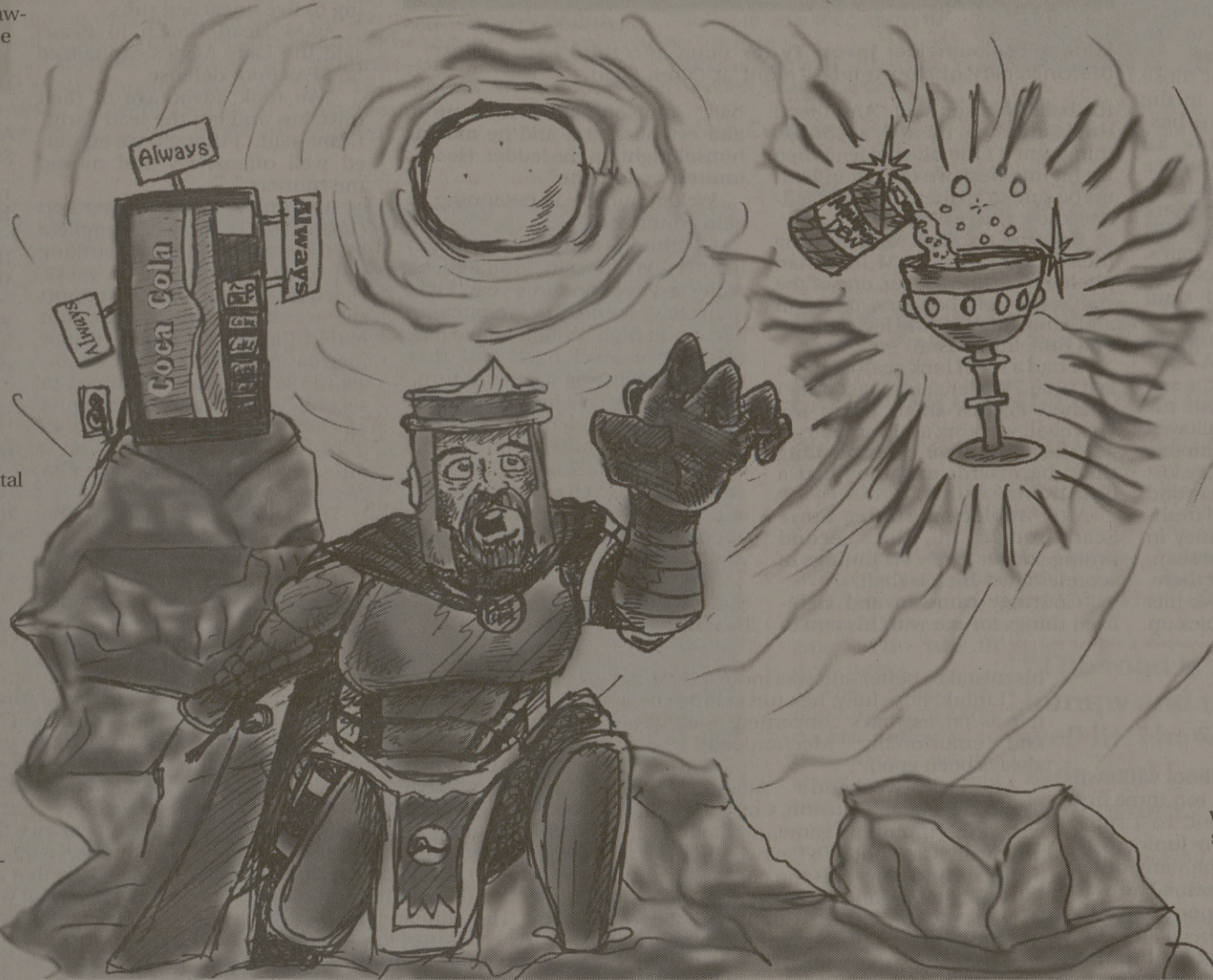
who doesn't lie, cheat or steal took it. Discouragement set in. I had been defeated, at least temporarily.

But maybe University officials knew what they were doing. If people got a broader selection of beverages on campus, they might start expecting a broader selection of course offerings, and that would be just plain goofy. Before you knew it, people would be taking classes that actually interested them.

That's almost as silly as Jews and Muslims fighting for 1,400 years. But, back to my situation.

I should just take what I can get and be happy I can afford the 60 cents for a 12-ounce Coke, though it is apparently cheaper in sub-Saharan Africa, where the commercials claim you can feed a family of 10 for three weeks for the price of a cup of coffee.

But I guess while on the A&M campus, it will be "Always Coca Cola," at least until I get my marketing deal, at which point I hope they don't want me to do any public service announcements or anything, because that would really cut into my sleep schedule. This is the end of this column, please don't tell me you think it was about soda-water.



## Graduation requirements exclude marriage

Spring fever is in full effect and the engagement ring epidemic is out of hand. Graduation is near, and diamonds are sold abundantly. All over campus, one can see women adorned with big rocks and men sporting huge debts.

**Columnist**



**David Boldt**  
Senior marketing/management major

Any junior or senior at Texas A&M will tell you that, at some point, they begin to feel old. They begin to take classes they might reach the legal drinking age and realize graduation is far away.

The thought of being a non-nerfed old geezer or an old maid begins to shake their nerves. Thoughts like "Holy Apollonia, I better find a relationship," or "Hmm, do I really want to marry this person?" begin to permeate their stressed-out brains.

However, contrary to popular

belief, engagement is not a requirement for graduation.

There's nothing in the University regulations, nor in any record of Aggie traditions, that says a student must marry soon after graduation. The Aggie cultural norm says possessing a diploma without a wedding ring is pitiful, a fallacy. It sends many single

seniors into a useless panic and pressures couples into making premature decisions.

Students buying into this silly idea can be heard making statements like, "I feel so sorry for him. He's graduating and he doesn't have anyone," and "They're graduating? When's the wedding?"

Some students, however, are breaking the mold and keeping open minds.

For example, Amy Whitley, a Class of '97 speech communications major from Richardson, has been dating her boyfriend

Dean for a year and a half. She plans to graduate in December and says there's no need to be married or engaged right out of college.

"I'd like to start a career first," she said, "Get my feet planted on the ground, have something to call my own."

Whitley is on her way down the path other Aggies should follow. Those close to graduation who do have someone special should be focusing on beginning a new era of their lives — on becoming financially stable and independent.

If that includes someone they love, great. Being in love is a wonderful experience that compares to no other. But just because a couple decides they want to spend the rest of their lives together doesn't mean they have to get engaged or rush out and tie the knot.

If they truly are meant to be together, waiting should be an easy decision. Besides, why spend two-month's salary before you have earned it.

As for those of you who haven't found the love of your life yet, panic is not necessary. Single life after graduation should be something to look forward to later down the road. Single degree holding Aggies will have more time and freedom to develop their careers and find their independence. One doesn't have to have a spouse to have happiness.

Besides, love cannot be forced. Rushing out on a relationship hunt is a waste of time.

Love comes when it is least expected, and if you look for it you usually won't find it. Whether you're 20, 30 or 40 years old when love comes it your way, it will be just as wonderful. Relax, enjoy life and be patient.

The bottom line is no one can control completely what happens in his or her life, especially when it comes to relationships. The key is to keep an open mind. Don't do anything just because society, or even your friends, think you should.

Take the hand you've been dealt, make your own life and have fun with it.

## Obsession with media flaws neglects its true goal

Americans love to hate the media. Amid the smut reported on popular tabloid shows and provocative headlines splattered across the front page of the National Inquirer, people are forgetting the point of media.

Media conglomerates capitalize on murder and mayhem. Ironically, the same consumers enticed by this coverage are those quickest to criticize it.

People need to remember the media are a key force in making the world go around.

Their purpose is to communicate events which impact society. Whether reporting on the New York Stock Exchange or providing on-site coverage of terrorist bombings, the media educate society about what goes on each day.

The importance of the media is immeasurable and its pervasiveness is phenomenal. Americans learn almost everything they need to know about the world from the media.

Society remains informed about its surroundings because of the media and therefore is able to make informed decisions about politics, health and safety — to name a few.

Dr. Charles Self, a professor of journalism and department head, said he is concerned a lack of education about the media will contribute to society's contempt for it.

What people don't realize, Self said, is the significance of the media.

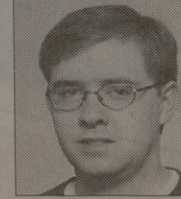
"Our whole picture of the world is profoundly shaped by the media," Self said. "The things we need to know to make decisions in life come from the media."

"It's impossible, in a country this size, to sustain a public consensus without it," he said.

The media work as a binding influence on society. Americans share the experience of a national disaster by being informed. When tragedy occurs, society unites and offers support to victims.

Herbert Gans, a sociologist who has studied American news media for 20 years, found journalists indeed flock to disaster. However, Gans noted journalists do not actually glamorize the disorder but rather report on how to

**Columnist**



**Brandon Hausenluff**  
Senior journalism major

restore peace. Media coverage of controversial events mobilizes society to react in a positive way.

When O.J. Simpson was acquitted of murdering his ex-wife and her friend, legal institutions around the country gained from the verdict. In court, prosecutors are fighting harder than ever before.

Defense attorneys argued the Los Angeles Police Department crime lab, where the murder evidence was evaluated, was a "cesspool of contamination."

Worldwide, people took the verdict as a blow. But crime labs around the country evaluated their facilities and cleaned up their acts.

Information is the key to knowledge. Richard Wurman reported in his book *Information Anxiety* that on Nov. 13, 1987, the New York Times published the largest newspaper ever. The 12-million word issue was 1,612 pages and weighed over 12 pounds. Today, a large daily newspaper such as the Times contains more information in one issue than an average person in the 17th century would have come across in a lifetime, Wurman said.

The media serve as a watchdog to politicians. When their government representatives slack off newspaper columnists and talk show hosts rouse citizens to act. Without the media, the government would be doing even less for the public. The media, in a sense, are tattletales.

Society is quick to blame the media when things go wrong in the world. Journalists often are placed in the same categories as criminals and politicians. Society wrongfully sneers at journalists.

The Battalion, for example, has repeatedly been named one of the best daily university newspapers in the United States. But The Battalion is the only student organization on campus to never receive any praise from the students it serves. Instead, staffers have to wade through mounds of hate mail to get into the newsroom.

Not all media institutions are respectable, but those which are deserve the respect of their consumers.

Indeed, the media produce some trash, but the benefits society gains greatly outweigh the setbacks.

