

The Battalion offers students chance to gain valuable skills

It isn't often that a student can shake hands with a music star. But it is an even greater opportunity to share past experiences and reminisce about the excitement of working for a college newspaper.



HELEN CLANCY
editor in chief

Before his rise to celebrity status, Lyle Lovett was a dedicated *Battalion* news editor. During those semesters, he said, he gained valuable skills that would impact his future career as a country musician. After all, everyone has to start somewhere.

He smiles when he thinks of the times spent toiling away in the newsroom and the satisfaction of covering topics he cared about.

"I remember all of the camaraderie — everyone pulling together to get the paper done," he said.

The interaction and teamwork, he said, are only some of the reasons why a student should apply to work for *The Battalion*.

Working at a college newspaper can be the most rewarding and challenging experience. From interviews to deadlines to the satisfaction of reading the final product, newspaper jobs provide tools for students who seek success in any field.

Mentioning deadlines, today is the last to day for students to apply for the best job on campus. *The Battalion* is in dire need of applicants from every ethnic, educational, religious and political background. It is difficult for the paper to provide the A&M community with diverse coverage if all groups are not represented in the staff, as well as on the front page.

In the tradition of army recruitment propaganda, the opportunities for those brave enough to apply are endless.

Meeting celebrities, working with student leaders and enjoying a "front-row seat" in campus politics are only a few of the perks afforded to *Battalion* staffers. But more importantly, staffers acquire marketable skills in communication and design which can propel their success in today's job market, whether it be public relations or the country music scene.

Employers constantly seek sharp individuals who can articulate their thoughts and develop creative solutions to

any problem. By working at *The Battalion*, one can leave this University confident in these attributes.

It takes more to be a productive student than attending classes and making the dean's list. Everyone is familiar with A&M's buzz words: the "other" education. Tunneling energy into the narrow confines of class work and studies is constructive, but constrictive.

There is a distinct difference between possessing knowledge and utilizing knowledge. Working in a newsroom environment allows individuals to explore their creative abilities in a variety of contexts, ranging from photography to writing to page design. Again, the opportunities are endless.

And even in the newsroom, there is an "other" journalism. The caffeine dependence, the friendships, the stress and the pure excitement of seeing one's work in print are only a few ingredients that form the icing on the cake.

Over 40,000 students recognize the work of each individual on *The Battalion*. This can be both redeeming and frightening to even the most seasoned staffer.

Aside from the magnitude of the paper's audience, its status among other newspapers is more than notable. For the third time in five years, *The Battalion* was named a top 10 publication as a Pacemaker finalist. To college journalists, this is a crowning achievement.

However, many students are too busy believing misconceptions about "The Battabloid" to acknowledge this. Contrary to popular belief, *The Battalion* is not a "rag," and anyone who believes so should stand first in line to pick up an application.

To borrow a familiar Aggie adage, "From outside looking in, you can't understand it; From the inside looking out, you can't explain it."

Battalion staffers are not all liberal, Bonfire-hating, tradition-loathing, muckraking two-percenters. For the most part, the newsroom is an open-minded forum for a variety of personalities. If you doubt this, find out for yourself.

Simply drop by 013 Reed McDonald and pick up an application or fill out the one provided in today's issue. Satisfy your curiosity and seize the opportunity — every position is paid.

But as every *Battalion* veteran (including Lyle Lovett) can testify, the knowledge you will gain and the pride you will feel is priceless.

Helen Clancy is a senior English major.

Neighborhood watch

Nighttime curfews replace parent-child relationships

Parents in the United States are getting a rude awakening these days in the form of laws determining when their children are free to venture outside the home environment.



JAMES FRANCIS
opinion editor

These laws deal with daytime and nighttime curfews for teenagers in an attempt to keep kids off the streets when they should be at home utilizing their free time for more productive situations, such as studying or helping to keep the family in order. But what people do not seem to realize is by implementing these laws, parental figures are losing ground as keepers of their own children.

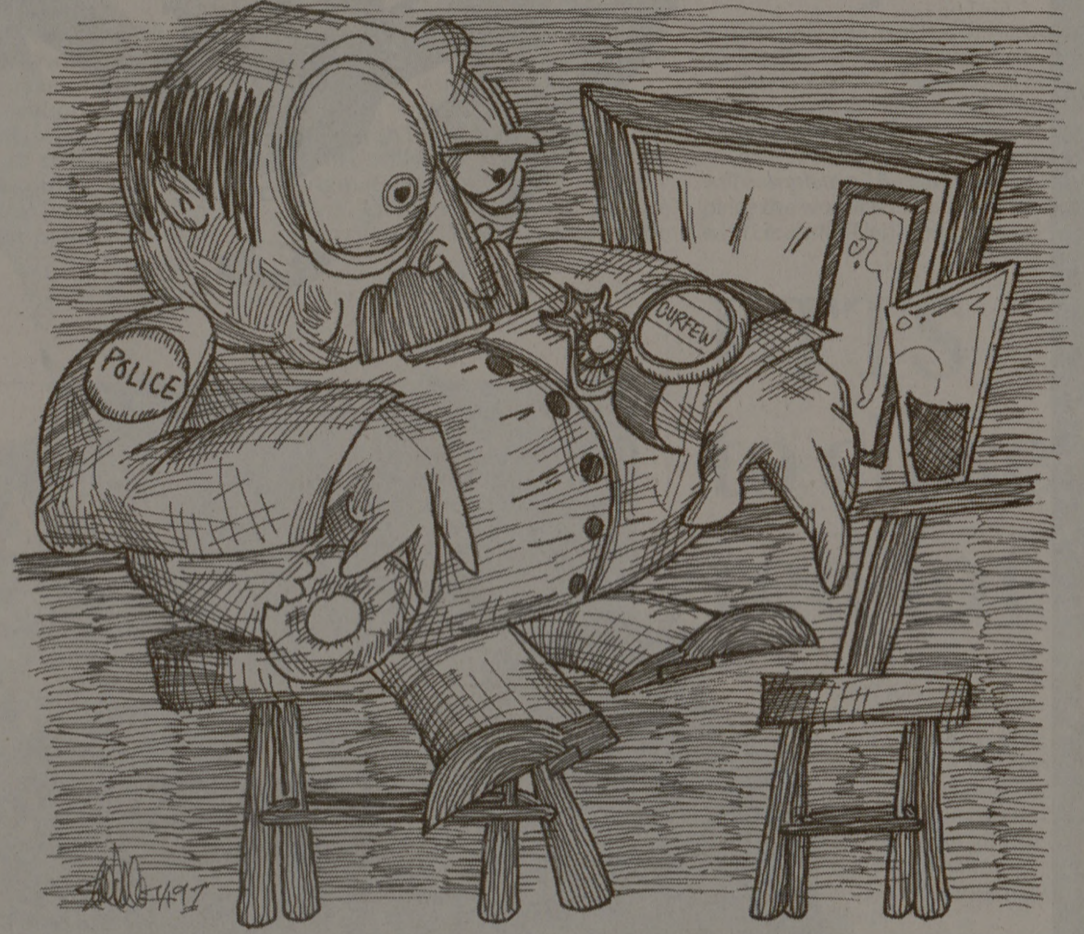
One of the prominent duties of parents is to ensure their child's safety, thereby laying down ground rules of common sense as to when he or she should be home and when he or she has the right to go out and enjoy individual freedom. This is not to say parents should be dictators to their children, but they always should be the strong and most dominant authority figures for their children, not police officials.

One way to ensure a child is not getting into any unnecessary mischief or criminal activity is to teach them from a young age about the rights and wrongs of life.

As all parents have different styles in raising their children, the one uniting tie between parents is the desire to have their children grow up to be upstanding citizens of their hometown and an overall, well-adjusted member of society. Curfew laws, on the other hand, take away and muddle the division lines between parent-law intervention in a child's life.

In an Associated Press report out of Washington, it was reported 347 cities in America were surveyed, and of the 347 responding to the survey, 276 declared having a nighttime curfew, with 76 of those having a daytime curfew. The following is an incomplete list of responses from police officials in some of the surveyed cities:

- Tulsa, Okla. — "There is generally no useful purpose for children to be out late at night."
- Charlotte, N.C. — "The curfew could stop teens from getting into trouble ... many parents didn't even know their children were outside the home."
- Claremont, Calif. — "The city's day and nighttime curfews free up police officers for other work."
- Billings, Mont. — "There was nowhere to take curfew offenders because parents often aren't home."



• Freeport, Ill. — "Curfew enforcement turns officers into baby-sitters."

• Richmond, Calif. — "Curfews treat all youths as if they were delinquents, giving law enforcement a bad image in the eyes of young people who are not troublemakers."

As a result of these curfew laws, it was reported 14 of the surveyed cities "said there had been constitutional challenges to the curfew." This number is surprising because it is so low. Surely more parents should realize curfew laws are attempting to do away with maternal and paternal authority figures.

Police overstep their jurisdiction when they make attempts to control the lives of children who are not their own. If the parents cannot control where their children go and what they do after a certain time of day, then maybe it should be the parents who should get some instruction on raising children, and maybe it should be the right of the children who determine when their parents can leave the house.

Another problem with curfew laws is that they cost money to be implemented into a city's budget. But then again, maybe once people have to start paying to keep their children off the streets, they will realize

maybe they should begin parenting better and making more efforts to give their children more important things to do around the house or encourage a hobby they have.

The bottom line is parents are and always should be responsible for their children. They should know where their teenagers like to spend time after school and during the evening, if they are accustomed to spending time alone or with friends outside of the home environment.

Curfew laws only add to the problem of criminal activity in the streets, as teenagers always have been known to rebel against authority. With the laws enacted, surely they will roam the streets only to get back at a system designed to take away parental privileges.

The AP report stated, "half these cities say juvenile crime has dropped since the curfew was imposed; 11 percent say the number of juvenile crimes has remained steady; and 10 percent have had an increase in juvenile-related crime." This only proves the ineffectiveness of curfew laws. Overall, they do not work and may never produced the desired results of the law.

James Francis is a junior English major.



MAIL CALL

Christmas trees show decoration

In response to I.M. Latheef's Dec. 2 "New tradition promotes religion" Mail Call letter:

What planet are you from? The

Christmas tree is a decorative ornament for the Christmas season, not for the Christian faith.

Christians believe Christmas is a celebration of the birth of Christ, not Christmas trees and ornaments. The Christmas we see today with the trees and the exchanging of presents is something in which many religions participate.

I attended Catholic school in Houston for most of my life, and not once when studying the birth of Christ did I read about Mary and Joseph saying to the livestock in attendance at the birth, "Oh no, we forgot to turn on the lights around the tree and the manger."

The Three Wise Men, according to The Bible, followed a star to Jesus, not a bunch of blinking lights around a house with a sign in the yard saying, "Hey Santa, do not miss us." Santa Claus, lights and especially trees are not essential to Christians celebrating Christmas.

Maybe if the Winter Spirit of AggieLand group herded a few sheep, goats and cows through the Memorial Student Center, one might have case for promoting Christian views.

Until then, you can go around to every department store, grocery store and every city government office and tell the workers their Christmas tree in the lobby of the establishment is offensive to you.

Christopher Fisher
Class of '98

Holiday greenery represents season

Well, once again something positive is looked upon negatively. First Bonfire, and now the Winter Spirit of AggieLand. The placing of Christmas trees was not to give the campus a "Christian" face, it was done to give the campus a Christmas face.

Unfortunately, I.M. Latheef has nothing better to do, so he writes in an complains about something done to make these cold days before finals a little more bearable. If Mr. Latheef feels uncomfortable,

then he should put up some decorations from his religion. I would not be offended if he did so. I would not write to *The Battalion* opinion page, whining.

Perhaps the most ridiculous argument put forth in the article was the alleged violation of church and state. Give me a break. If that statement held any truth, we would take down all Christmas trees on public display. So much for the national Christmas tree at the White House, and say goodbye to the Christmas tree at the mall.

Perhaps Latheef would rather us forget about Christmas all together as a national holiday. I'm sure it violates someone's religious beliefs somewhere in America. Mr. Latheef, take some time and look at a Christmas tree, not from hostile eyes, but from the eyes of those who put them up. They are trying to make life around here a little more cheerful. Maybe then you can appreciate the Christmas trees around campus.

Chris Cox
Class of '98

Only mothers can judge role of parent

In response to Kendall Kelly's Nov. 25 column, "The Crying Game:"

I have never felt more compelled to respond then when I read Kendall Kelly's article. Exactly how many children have you had? Exactly how many have you lost? Exactly how many have moved away to attend college? If you can't answer at least one to all of these questions then get back to me when you can. You should be ashamed of yourself. No, I guess you wouldn't want your mother to participate in Aggie Mom's Fish Camp there, she might feel ashamed as well — she raised a daughter not God, judge and jury.

You say, "Aggie Mom's Camp is a poor replica of the real thing and encourages a graduated version of high school moms who are always more involved in their children's lives than was really necessary." Again, you have how many chil-

dren? I ask you exactly what amount of "involvement" in a child's, teenager's, young adult's or adult's life is "more than necessary." And how did you arrive at this amount?

You say, "I thought that the parents who got satisfaction through their kids' accomplishments were a thing left back in high school, but apparently not." I guess with the number of children you have, it must have been easy to decide: "OK, at 18 you are on your own, and I take no joy in watching you succeed in life or grow into a successful adult."

Finally, you say, "It is a ridiculous waste of time that there is an entire weekend spent counseling mother that they will 'be OK' now that little Johnny is away in the big, scary world of college. This concept moves right through the strange category and smoothly into the pathetic range." Kendall, has anyone ever told you that they were proud of you?

I wish they had because then you might not find it so easy to be judgmental of parents who are proud of their children and find an undying desire to be involved in their lives.

Being a parent is eternal, it is a way of life, not just a role. It lasts longer than anything and not even death takes it away, much less high school graduation. I think the number is large of those students at this University alone who have lost a parent and would give everything not just anything to have them back participating actively in their lives.

My advice to you is to walk a mile in someone else's shoes before you yourself "move into the pathetic range" of condemning the very parents this world needs more of — those involved in their children's lives.

Shana Lee Nugent
Class of '93

Rebekah Lynn Wiggs
Class of '94

Ashley Dawn Ohm
Class of '93



MIKE LUCKOVICH ATLANTA CONSTITUTION/ENR