

PERSPECTIVES

Sein off

America prepares to say 'good-bye' to 'Seinfeld' and the art of laughing at nothing

It's 10:30 p.m. After a long day of biology, I need a break. So, of course, I turn on the TV. Ah, nobody's on Letterman, Leno isn't any good anyway, and "Nightline" is out of the question. What's left? "Seinfeld." It doesn't matter what channel, or time, because it's basically in syndication on every station and in every imaginable time slot. Lucky me.



BEVERLY MIRELES
columnist

"The Bubble boy" episode is on. Sure, I've seen it before, at least twice, but I watch it anyway. Why suffer through Leno until Conan O'Brien comes on? Plus, it's still hilarious. It's this type of unflinching loyalty to a single television show that has made NBC into the huge network it is these days. And now that "Seinfeld" is rolling its credits for the last time on May 14, the executives at NBC must be crying their eyes out. Seeing their cash cow end its reign as the king of the Nielsen must be difficult. The show's end might give way to another network getting their foot in the door on Thursday nights. And though that's not an issue for many viewers, most of America will be mourning with them. "Seinfeld" went from a lowly rated

sitcom to a cultural icon in only a few years, securing millions of viewers every Thursday night. It made "Must See TV" into exactly that — something Americans would schedule around. And it distinctly added to the whole of American vernacular.

Before "Seinfeld," who knew about, or talked about, "shrinkage"? Or being "sponge-worthy"? Jerry Seinfeld and his crew of Jason Alexander (George Costanza), Julia Louis-Dreyfus (Elaine Benis), and Michael Richards (Kramer) have always comedically astounded, covering such controversial (and somewhat censored) subjects from homosexuality in "The Outing" — "Not that there's anything wrong with that" — to masturbation in "The Master of One's Domain," and made them hilariously funny.

It was publicized as the show about nothing. But it wasn't about nothing, exactly.

It really was a show about parading all the trivial bits of life that everyone is involved in, but don't notice, all on national television.

"Seinfeld" brought ridiculous things into the public spectrum, such as upside-down pens and sharing toilet paper between stalls.

It also brought a steady stream of neurotic characters and trifling relationships to television.

Lovable they aren't. In one episode, when Elaine's boyfriend showed signs of religiousness, she considered dumping him, saying she preferred dumb and lazy to any type of principle.

And every relationship that Jerry ever had ended because of some insignificant flaw in his numerous line of girlfriends.

But ... even with their total lack of scruples, they keep the laughs rolling in.

So, as my final dedication to the show, in tribute to all things neurotic and insincere, I thought I'd list my top five episodes. And let me just say, thank God for syndication.

Number Five: "The Implant" — George double dips his chip, Jerry dates a girl (Teri Hatcher) he thinks has implants.

Number Four: "The Barber" — Jerry gets a bad haircut and then has to go behind his barber's back to get it fixed.

Number Three: "The Switch" — Kramer's first name is revealed, George thinks his girlfriend is bulimic and Jerry and George try to pull the roommate switch.

Number Two: "The Chicken Roaster" — When Jerry and Kramer switch apartments, they also switch personalities.

Number One: "The Abstinence" — George stops having sex and becomes brilliant; smart. Jerry gets bumped from his junior high's career day.

Now, it's not exactly a complete list. I know, I left out the Soup Nazi, and a host of other really funny episodes, but hey, it's just a TV show, right? Not thing to completely obsess over — not that there's anything wrong with that.

Beverly Mireles is a freshman microbiology major.



STUDENT LIFE

Former Battalion editor in chief bids fond farewell to newsroom

They say a newspaper starts fresh every 24 hours. Breaking news turns stale, and editors anticipate the next day's issue before the ink has dried on the current one. This is the only reassurance journalists get when everything goes wrong. And boy does it.



HELEN CLANCY
columnist

People often question the value of newspapers, especially when libelous headlines and incorrect stories break into the most edited, scrutinized page. Readers demand explanations for these errors, wondering how it is possible for journalists to misspell four-letter words and overlook stories that jump to non-existent pages.

During my seven semesters at *The Battalion*, I've seen the s—t hit the fan, so to speak. From racist editorial cartoons to mixed up call-letters, I know the frustration of wanting to erase 23,000 *Battalions* from existence only moments after they hit the stands.

Unfortunately, this is never possible. And trust me, I've seriously considered making rounds to every stack on campus to destroy the evidence of

some glaring error. Even if the resources were available for such an undertaking, it would be unfair to advertisers, who generate about 97 percent of the paper's revenue.

Some readers may doubt the worth of a document that is obsolete after the course of 24 hours.

When stories are updated and some new controversy sparks another round of Mail Call, previous issues are cast away into an archive of has-beens. But it's this archive that grows more useful with time.

Newspapers are a living, breathing testament of our history. Not just of day-to-day occurrences, but of evolution and growth that cannot be noticed in 24 hours.

I have a dresser in my closet overflowing with *Battalions*. These stacks tell a story no yearbook or brochure can capture.

The passionate Mail Call letters and raw front page stories breathe life into a memory that gets foggy with age.

Recollections of my freshman year are jump started when I scan the headlines of the issues from 1995. The black and white masthead and dated design exaggerate the amount of time that has passed since my first semester here.

Four years isn't a long time for a University, but for the students who shape its direction, four years

is a lifetime.

Nothing can change, or everything can change. Four years ago, I was too shy to return an audible "howdy." Today, I'll argue with complete strangers about current events, journalism or the latest episode of "The Jerry Springer Show."

But there's one institution that I must recognize for this progress — the paper you hold in your hands. It's given me a depth of understanding I could never pick up in a classroom.

From time to time, I sift through the yellowing copies in my closet, trying to regain a clear perception of the trials this campus has endured over the years.

I try to remember the days before Reed Arena, hazing lawsuits and Bonfire controversies. The truth is, every day is consumed by news that is all-encompassing at the time. Before Reed Arena, there was Kyle Field renovation. Before the hazing allegations, there were the "Stickers."

And it's naive to try and gauge the effect any story will have on its readers. Some may recall the headline, "Secret organization causes concern." When this hit the stands, it turned out the only concerned party was in the basement of Reed McDonald.

Conversely, one of the most divisive issues ever to hit the Opinion page was the flap over carrying backpacks. One strap, or two — "Dateline," here we come.

But staffers wouldn't be slaving away in that basement if the only incentive was the hefty paycheck (all \$15 dollars of it). There must be some appeal to newspapering that can't be assigned a monetary value.

Just as Sterling Hayman, my first managing editor, warned, "The ink gets in your veins."

Sure, I've shuddered after seeing my name appear in a pull quote on the front page by accident. I've wanted to crawl under my desk and unplug the phone on many occasions, and I'm intimate with the insomnia that comes with controversial coverage.

But I also know the satisfaction of producing a high-impact, virtually flawless issue from time to time. These are moments when I wish our circulation was doubled. These are days when 60,000 readers still aren't enough. And these are times I will dearly miss.

Sometimes people ask me, "How did you endure an entire semester as editor in chief?" I smile, and say, "Caffeine and gummy bears."

Then they ask, "After kissing your Q-drops good-bye and developing a sleep disorder, was it really worth it?"

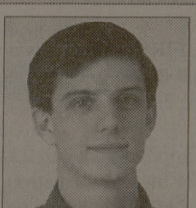
And I say, "Hell yes!" This is Helen Clancy, professional bully, signing off.

Helen Clancy is a senior English major.

PERSPECTIVES

Football star Reggie White offers interesting quips about A&M

Under fire for his controversial truths about homosexuality, Green Back Packers defensive end Reggie White is seeking refuge here at Texas A&M.



DONNY FERGUSON
columnist

Inspired by his leadership on and off the field, our esteemed Student Senate, in a rare display of action, invited the NFL's all-time sacks leader to speak to the group.

Talking frankly about the many cliques on campus making up the A&M community, he expressed his love of A&M. In the interests of celebrating our diversity, here is White's educational, if not contentious, statement to Student Senate:

"Thank you for this opportunity to speak the Senate. In the short time I have

been on the Texas A&M campus, I have come to enjoy the wide array of personalities and cultures which have come together. Whether it is a hillbilly from the poultry science department or one of those Cepheid Variable stoners, A&M is a fascinating place.

"I have come to appreciate the rabid Marxism and bitter hatred of the American way of life displayed by many of your architecture professors.

"Your Greek community has an incredible ability to simultaneously dress in khaki shorts, white shirts, baseball caps and too much makeup. Their love of materialism and shallow values makes A&M great.

"The construction of Bryan's new abortion clinic has brought your National Organization of Women chapter into the spotlight.

"They should be commended for their pride in the abortion industry. Hopefully their membership will increase once they stop killing off prospective members. "Hopefully, what few members they do

have will finally straighten out their philosophy. The same people who whine and complain about how evil men are go out of their way to dress, act and behave like men.

"Maybe if we all pitch in, they can get their act together. We should unite to help feminists come to their senses.

"By the way, congratulations on the new food court to be built in the MSC. Maybe you should call it 'Bowen Burger.'

"Customers could place an order, pay several thousand dollars, be assigned a number and forgotten about.

"Lucky customers may even get the chance to see their burger venture outside of Rudder Tower and talk about the importance of his opinion of 'diversity.'

"As an ordained minister, I was lucky to attend a meeting of your Pagan Student Association. The rhythmic chanting, tasty goat's blood and virgin sacrifice didn't sit well with me, but we need to be diverse of thought.

"While I'm on the subject of blasphemous heretics, the Atheist and Agnostic

Student Association certainly is entertaining. While the discussions on the evils of Pat Robertson, Ralph Reed and Chick-Fil-A were fun to watch, the look on their faces in the afterlife should be even funnier.

"No university would be complete without a group of losers who display their individuality by following a fad.

"Academie Vampirica is the best at being anti-establishment in such a conforming way. If you thought Afros and platform shoes looked dumb on your parents, just wait until their kids see body piercing and black lipstick.

"Curious children wanting to know more about the '90s could go down to the local Circle K and interview Marilyn Manson while he's on his smoke break.

"What would A&M be without those lovely bicyclists.

"When they're not busy running over innocent pedestrians, they're doing their best to become a hood ornament on your Pontiac.

"Frankly, this campus would be better

off if a few of them were embedded in a radiator grill.

"Speaking of people who need to be run over, what about those environmentalists? Not that there is anything wrong with not bathing, living off granola and licking toads, but what are the chances of these people getting real jobs?"

"I guess welfare checks replenish the ozone layer.

"Thank you for this opportunity to let me speak frankly about your wonderful campus community.

"From screwy environmentalists to indifferent administrators to future welfare recipients, Texas A&M is a diverse, harmonious community.

"You should be proud of A&M's growing array of losers, be they feminist or tree huggers. Sorry to cut my remarks short, but I have to bring refills of Valium to *The Touchstone*.

Donny Ferguson is a junior political science major.