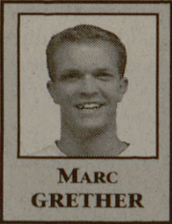


Don't look here Television continues to worsen this fall

lights, Camera, "Action" (Fox)! The new fall television lineups have been set, and the new shows look great. At first that is what the "reals and Geeks" who make the decisions about what to air would have viewers to think. Unfortunately, this year's fall programming schedule is the worst in recent memory and may be the worst in the history of television. Gone are the days of quality original programming like "I Love Lucy," "All in the Family," "Hill Street Blues" and "Cheers." As writer Goodman Ace said in his column in 1953, "We call it a bad year because nothing's well done." The statement should be revised. Good television is now rare and heading toward a typical viewing schedule for the fall will include ABC's "Once and Again," NBC's "Now and Again" or "Ally," a 30-minute compilation of material that did not make it into the hour-long "McBeal." Can you believe 30 minutes of outtakes are what passes for a television show these days? Work with Me" (ABC) here. Then there is the ABC comedy launched in March titled "It's like, you know..." which is, like, about, well, you know. Actually, nobody knows. Thus, the ratings for each show and therefore control their destinies. Certainly, if the actual content of a show was the basis for network executives' decisions, "Picket Fences" would still be on the air. It was a great show, or so they say. Nielsen viewers, help! It is needed now more than ever. Please take these shows off the air. Do not just watch. It's all Must Not See TV. Is there any escape from the "Harsh Realm" (Fox) of the current television abyss? "Get Real" (Fox) — the only way out is to turn the old boob tube off.



MARC GRETHER

And now the UPN is bringing wrestling to prime time with its Thursday night "WWF Smackdown." Hopefully, "Smackdown" will bomb and signal the end of wrestling's stranglehold on the ratings. UPN's "Grown Ups" is a sure mid-season cancellation. It teams up former child stars Soleil Moon Frye ("Punky Brewster") and Jaleel White ("Family Matters"). This show has no hope because it is on UPN, but did they have to cast Punky Brewster? Wasn't her last big hit *Pumpkinhead II: Blood Wings*? In these last days of television mediocrity, the prime-time game show "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?" (ABC) has been wildly popular. Television is so bad that people are voluntarily watching Regis Philbin during prime time. Maybe the year 2000 will mean the end of the world and bring relief from such madness. The family-oriented PAX TV's fall offerings include "Twice in a Lifetime" and "It's a Miracle," hosted by Richard Thomas (John Boy on "The Waltons"). "Twice in a Lifetime" involves a celestial being taking people back to pivotal moments in their lives and offering them the chance to change past mistakes. Sounds a little bit like the plot to "It's a Wonderful Life." But then PAX is not really trying to be original. What this country needs, and is desperately crying out for, is more restraint and discipline among the Nielsen viewers, those lucky few who choose which shows stay and which shows go. The 5,000 Nielsen households determine the ratings for each show and therefore control their destinies. Certainly, if the actual content of a show was the basis for network executives' decisions, "Picket Fences" would still be on the air. It was a great show, or so they say. Nielsen viewers, help! It is needed now more than ever. Please take these shows off the air. Do not just watch. It's all Must Not See TV. Is there any escape from the "Harsh Realm" (Fox) of the current television abyss? "Get Real" (Fox) — the only way out is to turn the old boob tube off.

Marc Grether is a mathematics graduate student.

Co-eds make the Hart grow fonder Letting women live in Hart Hall benefits both men and women

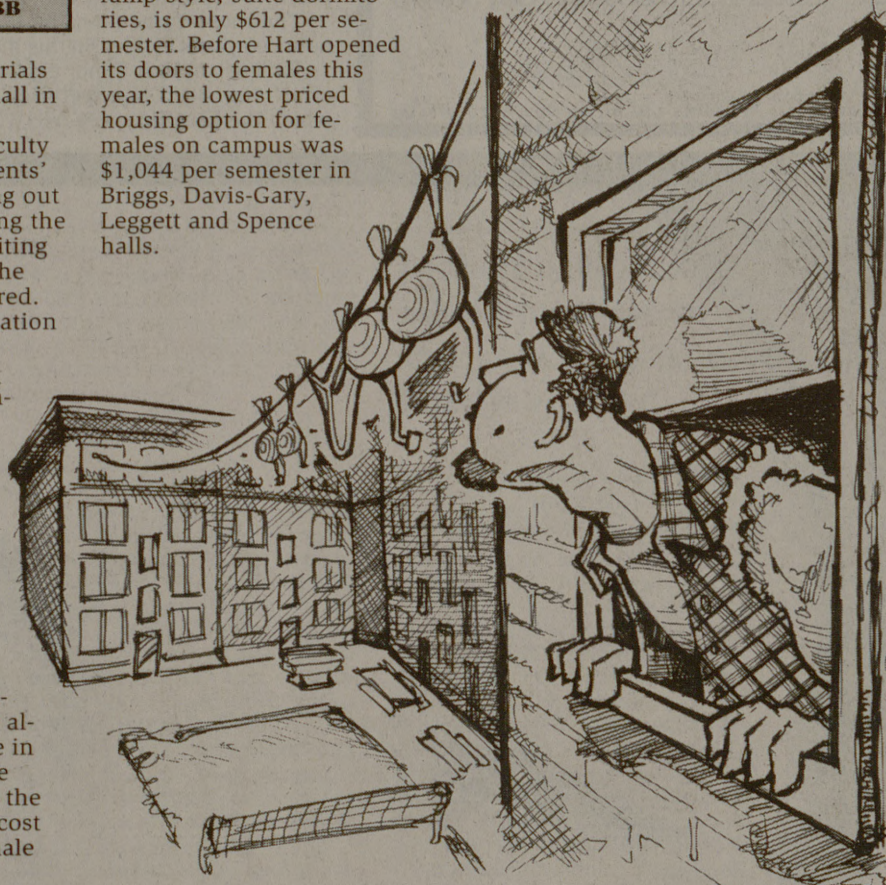
After over 60 years of Hart Hall history, the all-male, non-air-conditioned dorm has survived a number of trials as the lone residence hall in the center of campus. A few years ago, faculty complained that residents' Bonfire clothes hanging out of windows were soiling the campus' image for visiting dignitaries, and then the clothes soon disappeared. Cracks in the foundation of the hall have been found, but residents doggedly refused to vacate their beloved home and pushed for renovations like ethernet connections. Now, one more change faces residents, and the same class shown in these past situations is needed for the residents to adjust to it. This fall, the Department of Residence Life allowed women to reside in Hart Hall, and it is time Texas A&M recognized the need to provide a low-cost housing option for female students. Since females began attending A&M, they have been subject to residence hall cost discrimination. People complain about the oppressive heat in non-air-conditioned dorms, but the cheap cost is the exchange.



JEFF WEBB

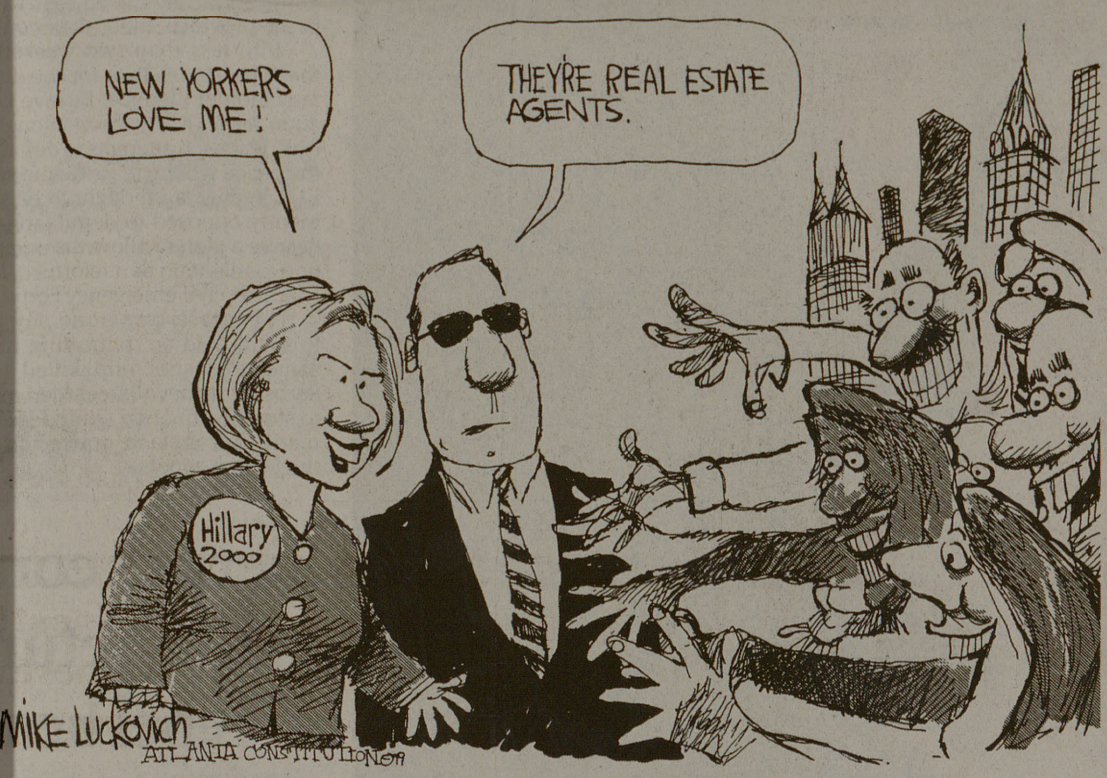
Between Hart and Walton halls, male students at A&M have had the benefit of housing that costs below \$1,000 a semester. The cost for a student to live in Hart or Walton, which feature ramp-style, suite dormitories, is only \$612 per semester. Before Hart opened its doors to females this year, the lowest priced housing option for females on campus was \$1,044 per semester in Briggs, Davis-Gary, Leggett and Spence halls. Separation between the sexes, which is done by floor in regular dorms, is provided more efficiently by ramps. With the ramp-style system, a set of doors with card-scanners provide a more reliable barrier than a flight of stairs. That means the Hart fellas can still float around room to room in their boxer shorts as they see fit without disturbing any females.

Some Hart residents have resisted this change since it was proposed a few years ago, but the benefits for them outweigh the burden of losing one ramp to females. Co-educational dorms have the option of 24-hour visitation, a privilege Hart residents never enjoyed, but still abused over the years. During All University-Night, the usual complement of Hart freshmen escorting the hall flag to Kyle Field was joined by only one of the female residents. Participation by females might be slow to come because all change at A&M comes at the expense of long-held traditions. The most positive thing about the sex integration is the lack of attention the situation has received. In this case, no news is good news, and people can interpret the lack of problems as a sign that the residents are happy. And take it from a former four-year Hart resident — residents being happy is a good thing.



ROBERT HYNCEK/THE BATTALION

Jeff Webb is a senior journalism major.



MAIL CALL

ish Camp good, says freshman
In response to Eric Dickens' Sept. 6 column.
For the past few days, many freshman camp counselors have voiced their protest of Dickens' views of ish Camp. The counselors are not only ones who feel this way. I was not brainwashed or given puffed-up version of what life at camp was like. My counselors gave me an honest picture of what A&M was about. They had many sessions that informed us of the problems we would face as students: drinking and driving, hazing and parking. They also gave us many tips about classes, professors and their experiences with friends failing out. They did not lie to us and say, "A&M is a cross between Disneyland and Heaven, and everyone has a great time." And there is only one word I can say about "this University" — not much different from anywhere else in the world, but good banners and a watchful editor will let me say it. This campus is one of the friendliest places I've ever seen.

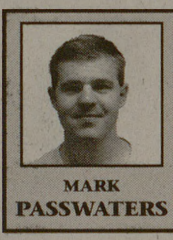
Nobody ignores you if you say "howdy." The upperclassmen I've met are generally very nice to me. From what I've seen in just the week and a half I've been here, A&M is a special place.
James Holland
Class of '03
Corps, non-regs must get along
In response to Tom Sullivan's Sept. 2 mail call.
Sullivan closes by saying that "Dickens" tugs at the main thread that binds us all and makes us Aggies." This is a great closing statement, but it does not mix with the implied feelings some few lines previous. He insists that we all succumb to some form of conformity, which includes Aggies who "stand at games and bow to the Corps."
This can, and should, be a hurtful statement toward anyone who calls this campus home. Sullivan says we are all Aggies but then unfairly marks the Corps as leagues above the rest.
I have already seen this year how words, like Sullivan's, can

change a person's outlook. I know how someone saying "howdy" to me can brighten my day with such little effort. Unfortunately, most often I am greeted with eyes of contempt or not so much as a glance in my direction. Don't be surprised that this is from Corps and non-reg alike. Non-regs do not bow to the Corps nor should they, but they should not treat cadets as so much refuse either. The same is true of the way non-regs should be treated. I cannot be sure when we began this dislike of each other, but I know it will sink us all if it continues. No one is below being treated with respect and kindness, and the change starts in your mirror.
David Clinkscales
Class of '00

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class and phone number. The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:
The Battalion - Mail Call
013 Reed McDonald
College Station, TX
77843-1111
Fax: (409) 845-2647
E-mail: battletters@hotmail.com

Clinton's clemency deal seems fishy

For the past several months, people who have been looking to glean some excitement from next year's elections have been looking north. Not toward Washington, D.C., but to New York. With Governor George W. Bush and Vice President Al Gore almost certain locks for their respective nominations, the presidential race may not seem as exciting. A showdown between New York City Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani and First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton in New York's Senate election may spice things up a bit — especially since a recent clemency offer made by President Bill Clinton looks like an attempt to assist the first lady.
On the surface, the race looks like an intriguing matchup: two strong-willed individuals going head to head in a campaign that promises to bring out supporters of both candidates in force. Neither Giuliani nor Hillary will ever be accused of being bland, because they are either adored or despised. With candidates who evoke such strong sentiments in a major state while fighting for a critical Senate seat, it is certain this campaign will be one with no holds barred.
Because Hillary has support from very high places, some in the media have wondered aloud if the White House may try to assist her.
This possibility is one of the reasons why President Clinton's decision to offer clemency to 15 members of the Puerto Rican terrorist group Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN) is all the more interesting. FALN is a group that claims the 1898 peace treaty between Spain and the United States which gave Puerto Rico to this nation is illegal. They are also a group responsible for over 100 bombings in the 1970, which killed six people. These 15 FALN members are in federal prison, convicted of seditious conspiracy and a litany of other charges. While it has never been proven these members were the people



MARK PASSWATERS

who actually planted or detonated these explosives, it was proven that these individuals provided them. Some in the public who do not see arming another person and assigning them a target to eliminate as a serious crime have taken up their case. Former President Jimmy Carter, New York Archbishop John O'Connor and South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu have all appealed for their release. These appeals have been going on for several years, but only in the past few weeks has President Clinton offered clemency if these 15 individuals renounce their calls for violent struggle. Only a truly jaded mind would think this is related to his wife's senatorial campaign in New York, right? Perhaps not. New York is a state with a strong Puerto Rican population, which Hillary will sorely need the support of if she is to be competitive against Giuliani. Recent polls have shown that while Hispanic voters are not supporters of Mayor Giuliani, their support for Hillary was tepid at best. Tepid is not going to win the Senate seat for Hillary Clinton, and this issue is a hot button for many in New York's Puerto Rican community. Such a move by her husband can only help her chances. Hillary sorely needs as many of these votes as possible to win this race, and responding to one of their favorite demands increases the possibility that members of this group will vote Democratic. It certainly will not hurt President Clinton's popularity within this community, but he is not running for re-election. The easiest way for the Puerto Rican commu-

nity to show their support is to vote for their candidate for the Senate — Hillary Clinton. This issue, however, is no longer just a hot button topic within the Puerto Rican community. The president of the Fraternal Order of Police (who is of Hispanic descent) openly questioned the motives of President Clinton by asking what these individuals have done to deserve such compassion. Whether or not one supports America's dominion over Puerto Rico, the fact remains that these people were involved in terrorist activities in the United States that resulted in the loss of innocent lives. They have also refused to renounce their methods or show any remorse, even after 19 years in jail. If this is the case, they are still a possible threat to society. There is no justifiable reason for them to be granted clemency. So why is the president doing this if there is no apparent benefit to the nation? Could it be because it could help his wife? If he is not, then what is his reasoning? White House commentary on the situation has been contradictory. The circumstances surrounding this situation make it hard to believe President Clinton's offer of clemency to the members of FALN came out of the goodness of his heart. This is an issue that, until recently, was largely forgotten by the public-savve for some of Puerto Rican descent. Unnoticed, this offer could have increased support for the Democratic Party among those who wish to see these people freed, with minimal outcry. Unfortunately for Hillary, someone did notice and has made this a bad situation for her. Receptive to the outcry of opposition to the clemency offer, Hillary changed her stance and now opposes their release. But 12 of the FALN members have already taken the deal, and several prominent Puerto Rican politicians have retracted their support from Mrs. Clinton's candidacy. Mrs. Clinton has fallen into one of the oldest political traps and has made promises to too many people.

"Because Hillary has support from very high places, some in the media have wondered aloud if the White House may try to assist her."

Mark Passwaters is an electrical engineering graduate student.