

## The other education

### Giving rewards students in intangible ways

the young man would graduate at the age of 17. He has a job, a car, and a house. He is still looking for a job. He is still looking for a job. He is still looking for a job.



ANN HART

remuneration. But money is not the only reward that exists, nor is it the only reward worth having. The Big Brother/Big Sister, a program that assigns children with volunteer adult mentors, has provided thousands of kids with adult role models to look up to.

The adults involved gain the satisfaction of knowing they have encouraged a child in need. Even though it is not a peer friendship, both child and adult gain the benefit of human contact.

### Money is not the only reward that exists.

Literacy Volunteers of America helps adults learn to read through one-on-one tutoring. Volunteers may find their horizons widened by contact with the people they help or may gain a new appreciation for their advantages. Enrichment comes in many forms. My mother always used to tell me, "You get out of life what you put into it." There does not seem to be much evidence to the contrary. The more energy one puts into an endeavor, the higher the payoff. The harder one studies, the better one's grades. The more carefully one performs an experiment, the more dependable the results. The more generous one is with time and talent, the richer one's life. The attitude of "I put in my four

years, where's the cash?" is not justified. There have been very few who have gotten through those four years without help from someone. Mom and Dad paid tuition or slipped them the occasional \$20.

Those who received financial aid owe a debt of gratitude to the government or the organization which supplied that assistance.

Even those who will graduate with massive educational debts must concede their lives were made better by lenders' willingness to gamble on their future earning potentials.

Even students who have paid the whole bill alone will admit a professor took a minute to help them sometime during the four years.

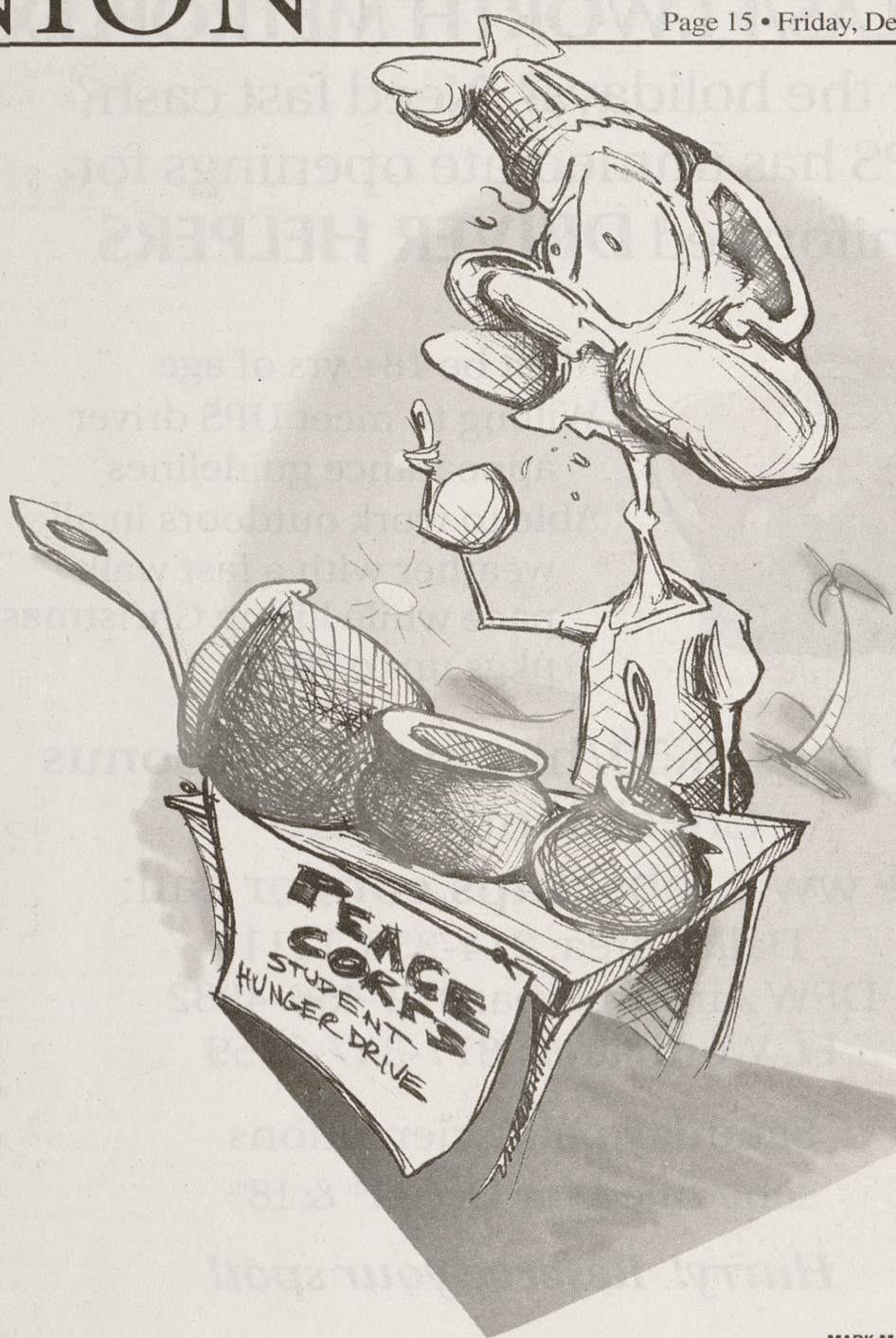
Anyone who thinks they earned a bachelor's degree without help is sorely deceived.

Aggies in particular should recognize their educations are subsidized by the state. Everybody gets some help some time, and everyone can afford to give back.

Buildings at most universities have names instead of numbers because alumni who do well in life give money to the school that provided their training.

Few graduating seniors will have an extra million to give to a university, but all have time and talent. It seems ungrateful to say, "That doesn't pay enough," when asked to help.

Ann Hart is a senior English major.



MARK McPHERSON/THE BATTALION

## Editor in chief reflects on Fall '99 semester

On Aug. 25 I became the most hated person on this campus. Many of you have hated me this semester just because of my title — editor in chief of *The Battalion* — but I am not the bleeding-heart liberal most would assume. I am actually quite conservative and pride myself on being an Aggie. A glance at my resumé would quickly reveal my love for Texas A&M — how else could I have served as a class officer or been a Fish on counselor for two years? This semester I have laughed with you and cried with you, and Tuesday night I stood by at Silver Taps and wept with you. My editor in chief for this University did not disappear when I became editor in chief. This semester I have tried to provide you with the news of this campus. This news may not always have been what you wanted to hear, but in the "real world," outside this bubble, you will learn that the news printed is not always the news you want to hear. Journalists have the incredible responsibility of providing readers (or viewers or listeners) with the information they need to know. Information is not always positive, but it must be told. At Bonfire site, about 30 minutes after stack fallen, I was assaulted by a group of students praying for those hurt in the accident. I stood amidst the chaos, trying to understand the reality of what my eyes were seeing, and the story I wanted to tell was not the bodies

that lay on the ground but rather the reactions of students. But this was not understood by the students who beat me to the ground for simply taking a photograph. The A&M campus still has a lot of growing up to do when it comes to dealing with the news and journalists. The news of this year has been more than this campus could handle.



GUY ROGERS/THE BATTALION

Each of you still has the image in your head of the Northside Parking Garage after a freshman leaped to his death. That image haunts us all, but it opened our eyes to the problem of

suicide — something no one wants to talk about. Looking beyond Aggie land, I see a world that is quickly deteriorating.

School shootings, plane crashes and deadly earthquakes have become weekly occurrences. These stories are sensational before a reporter ever steps on the scene.

The journalists (with the possible exception of broadcast journalists) who step onto the scene are not out to exploit, destroy or hurt those they are reporting about.

They are simply trying to do their jobs to provide you, the reader, with the information you need to know.

My challenge to you is to look beyond the hatred and name-calling of journalists to focus on the fact they are providing you with the necessary truth.

This truth can be harsh and painful at times, but in the long run, knowing the truth only serves to make you stronger.

To those of you who still believe I am a heartless journalist with nothing better to do than destroy the lives of others, I beg you to remember that before I took the position of editor in chief I was the same as any other Aggie on this campus.

After today, I go back to being the life of a college student — sitting in classes and praying to God I actually will graduate someday. But I will never forget the lessons I learned while serving as the most hated person on this campus.

Sallie Turner is a senior journalism major.

## VIEW POINTS

### NASA exhibits carelessness

After half a week of silence, NASA scientists once again bowed their heads in shame as they acknowledged that the Mars Polar Lander was gone for good. President Clinton echoed the public's opinion Wednesday by supporting the program, saying the loss of NASA's two most ambitious Mars projects is just a minor setback which can be overcome.

How can the loss of a \$165 million Mars Polar Lander, with its \$29.5 million probes, and the \$125 Mars Climate Orbiter be considered a minor setback? These two failures are a clear and urgent indication NASA needs to rethink its strategy to explore the "Red Planet."

NASA administrator Dan Goldin's space-exploration theory of "faster, better, cheaper" falls flat on its face, because it does not use common sense. The novelty of space travel has long worn off, which has led to less attention to detail.

It seems scientists who work on multi-million dollar space projects have come to see their work as rudimentary. There can be no other explanation for the careless oversights, such as the measurement systems that led to the Climate Orbiter's demise. Clinton raised some sentiment for the program by comparing these most recent failures to the 1976 launchpad fire that killed three astronauts. The flaw in his comparison is that the fire was an accident, while the loss of the Climate Orbiter and possibly the Polar Lander was carelessness.

NASA needs to have more focused goals instead of juggling Mars exploration, shuttle missions, space-station work and other projects. The solution is not to scale back funding but to define projects better and put more effort into checking details. If anything comes out of the loss of the nation's investments, NASA should use it as a reminder that as they shoot for the stars they have to shoot for perfection.

— Mariano Castillo

### Erroneous evaluations

With the semester coming to a close, students are getting a chance to voice their thoughts about classes through course-evaluation forms. While University faculty rules note the importance of student feedback in evaluating the effectiveness of teachers, these forms play virtually no role in deciding professors' fates.

The emphasis for faculty members at Texas A&M is their research and publication. Professors pride themselves on, and the University rewards them for their success at, getting their work published and earning new research grants. With this bias toward research, A&M has built a faculty widely recognized and respected as well as one that brings funding to the University.

However, A&M also has stacked the deck against students. Some professors' skills at conducting a class and giving a lecture leave much to be desired.

Many students have had professors who stumble through their class lectures, mixing up facts and confusing students.

Fortunately, there are some alternative avenues for course evaluation. Several student organizations post blank sheets of butcher paper in residence halls and elsewhere on campus as places where students can write their thoughts on professors for other students to see. While the comments tend to be short and decidedly one-sided, they serve as effective means for students to warn other students of professors they will have classes with next semester.

Unlike the current Scantron evaluations, which are sealed before other students can see their classmates' opinions, these informal message boards allow students to clearly see how their peers feel about teachers. This student-to-student feedback is even more valuable considering the University's favoring of research over teaching skills.

— Eric Dickens

## MAIL CALL

### Parents appreciate student response

We find it difficult to find the words to express our appreciation for the incredible amount of love and compassion that has been shown to us as we grieve the loss of our son Jeremy, and his Aggie brothers and sisters. Texas A&M has been a special place for us since our oldest attended and graduated here 10 years ago. He and our daughter-in-law were Bonfire buddies. Jeremy died when he was 10 that Texas A&M was where he wanted to go to school. He loved it, and we are so grateful for the four and one-half years he spent here. Each one of you has used your God-given talents and gifts to support us in such wonderful creative ways. We have loved every word spoken and every prayer offered. The many expressions of love always come just when we need them the most.

Although we are not "Aggies" by true definition, we feel that we have been adopted into this most incredible family. We love all of you, and will be lifting you up in our prayers and we will be sustained by the prayers you offer up for us.

Family of Jeremy Frampton

### Spring sports need total Aggie support

Although some of us would like to think otherwise, our University is coming up short in some respects when compared to schools such as the University of Kansas and Indiana University. Is it the fact they have premiere men's college basketball teams? That is part of it, but more importantly, they also have a healthy atmosphere of rabid basketball fans. Anyone who has visited a Texas A&M Men's Basketball game in the past decade would probably

agree that this same enthusiasm is lacking in College Station.

Yes, there are loyal fans who come to the games and support the team on a regular basis. But for a University with over 40,000 students, there is no reason there should be empty seats at Aggie basketball games.

A&M has a coach in Melvin Watkins who had legitimate success at a school that had far fewer resources than A&M.

According to numerous publications, A&M signed a top-20 recruiting class last year and already has signed who one publication called the 18th-best prospect in the nation for next year.

So why can't we take a bit of the enthusiasm that manifests itself at Kyle Field each fall and move it across the street into Reed Arena?

To add a little motivation, I should mention that we have a deadline to meet — Jan. 17, to be specific. On this date, A&M will play in front of a national television audience thanks to ESPN's "Big Monday" telecast. ESPN has made it well known

that it has no intention of coming back if Reed Arena does not sell out, so the pressure is on us. Either we can get behind our team in a big way and have some fun, or we can have years of a half-full arena with no national exposure. My challenge to you is to find it inside yourself to catch some basketball fever.

Stephen Metcalf  
Director of ARMY  
(Aggies Ready to Motivate You)  
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:  
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