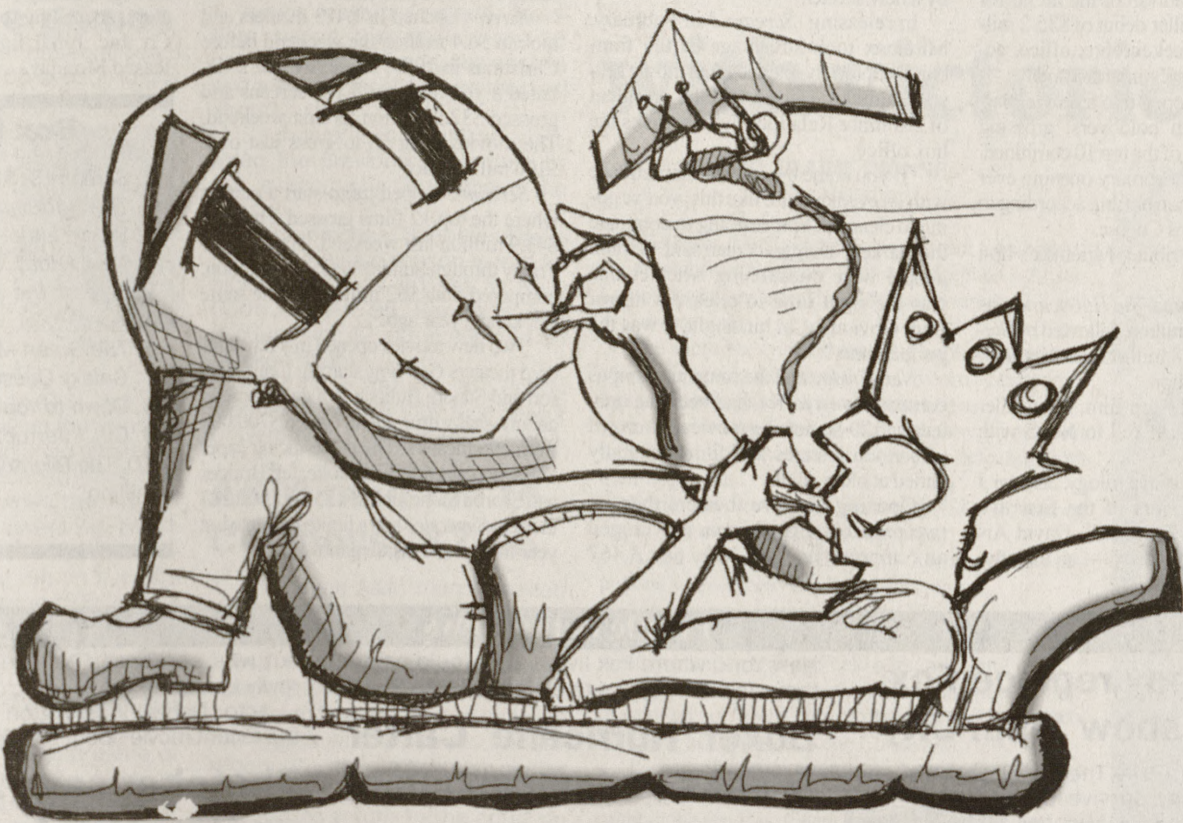


All work and no play makes Juan a dull boy



JEFF SMITH/The Battalion

I've been sleeping on my dirty laundry for about a week now. The idea was that I'd dump my dirty clothes onto the bed to force myself to do the laundry, but that didn't quite happen. Instead, I go to bed every night on top of cigarette smoke-smelling khakis and T-shirts I've had since the high-school Honor Society Car Wash, '95.



JUAN LOYOLA

I'm too busy to do the laundry. I have classes to run to, meetings to sleep through and assignments to complete two weeks after they're due. I have letters and e-mail — some over two months old — that I haven't had time to respond to. In particular is a letter from a friend of mine back home in Sulphur Springs. She wrote to me about a dream she had recently; in it, she and I watched a black-and-white movie together, except the dream was in black and white too, so really, it could have been a color movie that we were watching in a black-and-white world. Whatever. Dreams only mean something to therapists and people who find deep meaning in fortune-cookie predictions.

I wanted to reply about any dreams that I had recently, black-and-white or color or 3-D or otherwise, but I haven't had a dream in more than a month. I don't have time to dream. I'm busy thinking of when my next project is due or getting the cable reconnected because I forgot to pay the bill two months in a row.

Where did all this responsibility come from? I was walking across campus last week, chatting with God or Fate or whoever it is who controls our destinies. I said, "Hey man, I thought we'd agreed that I was put here to be a slacker — a goof-off. How is it that I'm not even home long enough to watch all of 'TRL' on MTV?" All I get to see is two-fifths of the Backstreet Boys and about a minute of Mandy Moore's adolescent rump-shaking, and then I remember that given the time, I probably wouldn't be caught dead watching that show anyway. I'd probably be watching "Crocodile Hunter" on the Discovery Channel. Now that's a guy with things to do and little time to do it.

Unfortunately, it isn't wrestling warthogs in tar pits or chasing rare venomous zebras that steals most of my time. It's this campus, this busy university with a million activities to get lost in. I'm a writer for *The*

Battalion, the human resources director for Aggie Pottery Unionists, the Web designer for HowdyMongers Online. I have a radio show at KANM, I play the drums in a promising local band, and I mow a rabbi's lawn every Thursday from 12 to 2 p.m. (I also rake his leaves.) My point is, there are over six billion people on this planet. Someone else should be picking up the slack.

This is how I know there are too many people on this planet. My brother recently got "the Internet" on his computer. You know. With the e-mail and the Web sites and stuff. He's officially a commuter on the information superhighway.

"I predict that in the near future, we as a society will be forced to split the population into shifts, day and night."

Like many of you, I've had "the Internet" since I enrolled at Texas A&M, free of charge. I've sent e-mail to celebrities and gotten template responses. I've learned to Telnet and WinZip and whoosit. My first exposure to Internet porn was in the Blocker Building's computer lab — the guy on the computer next to me had logged onto netboobies.com and I took a peek.

Mmm. Digital. So, anyway, my brother, excited in his new virtual world, sent me his e-mail address, his Web site address, and his AOL screen name so we could instant message each other. Except that I didn't have AOL Instant Messenger. So I got it.

Do you know how hard it is to come up with a screen name that hasn't been used yet? They're all taken. "Juan," "JuanLoya," "JLoya," "JuanL," "Juuuuuuuu Looooooya." I was out of luck. I had to come up with a screen name that somehow reflected my personality, my hopes and dreams and my aspirations, my political ideologies and my choice of carbonated beverage, all in 16 characters or less, the first being a letter.

They're all taken.

"WuTangFan," "TwinkieFiend," "MiracloAdict." They've all been used.

I started inputting nonsense words, "brillig," "baumish," "slithy," "obulence." No such luck.

"Jimity," "Kurnip," "Hembot," "Paul." At every turn, someone had beaten me to my own fake lexicon.

I tried "Fair Play." That's the motto of Mr. Terrific, the Golden Age superhero with a "natural aptitude for natural aptitudes." If I wanted "FairPlay" as my login name, I'd have to be "FairPlay116."

See? There's too many people on this planet when I can't even reference obscure comic book characters without being the last in a line of one-hundred and fifteen similar minded geeks.

So what is to happen? The population is huge and it's not getting any smaller. Statistics say that before the year 2010, there will be more people on the planet than there are hamsters dancing on the Internet (and in case you didn't know, there are a lot of hamsters dancing on the Internet. And they're all naked.)

I predict that in the near future, we as a society will be forced to split the population into shifts, day and night. And why not? What a wondrous world this would produce. Every business would be open 24 hours, people could sublease their beds to night-shifters while they're at work during the day. The romantic comedy of the future would be about a couple, the man a day-shifter and the woman a night-shifter, torn between two worlds, their love separated by chroral fluke. And they've have a grumpy old landlord. Sandra Bullock would probably star in it.

Most importantly, more things would get done. Our planet would be at work at all hours of the day. Somebody else could mow the rabbi's lawn, and I could spend the day dreaming about whatever I want, Twinkies or otherwise. And I could finally get to doing my laundry, which is slowly turning my bed into a mountain of filth bigger and filthier than most professional wrestlers. But that's just a dream. Most likely I'll be spending the night on the floor again, wide awake and sorting through my plans and appointments for the rest of the week in my head. But I won't be sleeping or dreaming in the dull hours of the night. Busy people don't have time to dream.

Juan Loyola is a senior journalism major.

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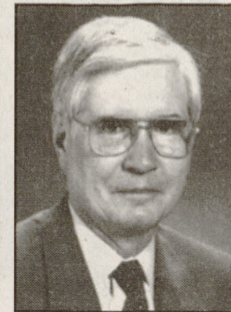
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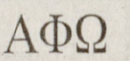
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