

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?

Students mouth off on cursing in public

By Gabe Patterson
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M has long held the distinction of one of the friendliest college campuses in the nation. A big part of this often is referred to on campus as "Aggie pride."

With this reputation, A&M attracts thousands of hopeful applicants each year. However, it seems some students have forgotten about the wholesome image of A&M. In an era when it is no longer surprising to hear profanity in public, Aggies are no exception.

Shea Stout, a freshman computer science major, still takes offense to bad language. "I try to make it a habit not to use swear words in any situation," Stout said. "I really don't like it when other people do it either, especially in public places and around children."

As young adults, some Aggies believe it is their responsibility to set a good example for others. "You never know what kind of effect your words might have on someone else," Stout said.

Some students consider restraining foul language a sign of respect.

"I've had friends use curse words around my parents, and I'm like, 'Hello?'" said Shawn Ursell, a senior environmental design major.

Jesse Haines, a freshman general studies major, said movies, television and music have all contributed to the use of public profanity.

"Profanity is more or less unavoidable nowadays," Haines said. "You can't always predict what kind of language is going to be used when you first sit down to watch something or listen to a CD."

Scott Blackwell, a senior electrical engineering major, said his parents have grown accustomed to entertainment with vulgar language and situations.

"My mom and dad eventually realized that there was no way to stop it," Blackwell said.

However, Stout said this is not a valid excuse and most parents do not monitor what their children see and hear on television.

"Parents and children can monitor what they watch and try to choose more wholesome programs," Stout said. "The problem most

people have with that is it takes a lot more effort on their part."

Some may even forget that profanity is illegal. According to Title 9 of the Texas State Penal Code, in some situations, swear words constitute a form of disorderly conduct. Section 42.01 reads, "A person commits an offense if he intentionally or knowingly uses abusive, indecent, profane or vulgar language in a public place, and the language by its very utterance tends to incite an immediate breach of the peace."

Lt. Rodney Sigler of the College Station Police Department said this rule is enforced in College Station.

"If a person's foul language upsets someone, technically they are breaking the law," Sigler said. Such a breach of peace requires that police take action, which can include removing the person from the situation or possible arrest. Someone who curses with no intention of causing a disturbance may still be arrested based on another's reaction.

Eddie Sorrell, a senior sports management major, said the main reason he curses is habit.

"On the rare occasion that I do use swear words, I don't mean for people to take them literally," Sorrell said. "They're just expressions that slip out when I'm overly angry."

In fact, few people who curse think about what the words mean when they use them. This is consistent with the ideas expressed by Illinois-based Cuss Control Academy. Its position is illustrated in author Jim O'Connor's book, *Cuss Control: The Complete Book On How To Curb Your Cursing*.

The Academy insists that cursing has little practical use. Its Website, www.CussControl.com, states: "Sometimes it's funny and sometimes it helps you vent anger, but swearing never earns you respect or admiration, enhances your reputation, makes you more pleasant to be with, exhibits your intelligence or vocabulary or reflects strong character. It doesn't demonstrate respect for others, help you win arguments, set a positive example, get you romantically connected or help you get hired or promoted."



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