

VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

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Feminist's stands against draft not consistent with rhetoric

By CHERYL ARVIDSON
United Press International
Now let me say right off that I don't want to go to war. I don't want women going to war, and I don't want men going to war. I don't want war, period. Not for me, you or anybody else.
That out of the way, it is time to focus on the more general issue of women and the draft, a point Congress is going to have to address shortly.
President Carter wants to reinstitute draft registration for men and women, aged 19 and 20, as part of the military preparedness mentality sweeping the executive and legislative branches of government. But, says he, women won't be used for combat duty.
He could impose draft registration on men with an executive order, but to put women in the pool, Carter needs action by Congress. The Senate so far has been pret-

ty quiet on the issue, but some key House leaders say there's no way a proposal to register women can pass on their side of the Capitol.
Women's groups are opposing the registration proposal as well. Their line of reasoning goes like this: We don't want war so we don't want registration because that moves the country closer to war. It is only as an afterthought that they say women should be included if registration becomes a reality.
Strike up the band. Everyone is dancing the cop-out waltz.
Congress, in a not unusual stance, is ducking the issue and throwing the ball to Carter. If the president really wants registration, he can have it just by signing an executive order. Then if the public gets outraged, only the president is to blame.
Members of Congress can say it was all

his fault and they didn't have a thing to do about it. Add to this the extra benefit of avoiding entirely the question of what to do about women.
Carter is ducking, too. He's willing to go three-quarters of the way by saying women as well as men should register. But his commitment to equality stops in the crunch: combat duty. He fails to realize that equality for women isn't a part-time thing: An equal right to live means an equal right to die.
But the most distressing stand of all is that of the beleaguered women's movement that is slowly drifting farther and farther away from reality. Its main priority, the Equal Rights Amendment, is dying a slow death, revived briefly by a controversial extension of the ratification deadline until March 1982, but still no closer to acceptance than it was four years ago.

Women's groups should be on the front line, demanding that Congress take action is needed to end forever the fundamentally unequal assumption that America's men go off to war, its women stay at home.
And, for the record, draft registration isn't the same as going to war. In an argument could be made that the leaders might be doubly cautious, making warlike noises if their daughters, well as their sons, would be called the price.

OPINION

Walton Hall can take a joke

Last Wednesday, The Battalion ran an editorial lampooning Texas A&M University dorm residents who let their music loudly blast out of their windows while sitting in front of the dorm watching the passers-by.

The last two paragraphs to the editorial were:

It would appear as though these people are starving for attention.

If it is attention that these guys want, a better idea would be to sit around nonchalantly on the steps in front of the dorm wearing neon signs that say "Don't notice us."

Since that editorial was published, a large sign appeared across the front of the dorm (Walton Hall) that read "Don't notice us" and then below that "we can't afford neon."

The significance of this incident does not escape The Battalion. We have printed several cartoons, editorials and Reader's Forum articles in the past weeks in which we have poked fun at various campus organizations. We thought the persons involved and our readers would enjoy the material like we did.

Boy, were we wrong. After nearly every attempt at humor that appeared on the Viewpoint page, we would receive angry letters and even angrier phone calls. We never wanted to offend anyone. We were beginning to think no one on this campus had a sense of humor.

That is, until we took on Walton Hall. The residents of Walton Hall, with their ability to take a joke and give it back, have renewed our faith in the Aggie sense of humor. Gentlemen, we salute you.

the small society

by Brickman



By DICK WEST
United Press International
Presidential candidates such as Ronald Reagan soon learn two truths that are axiomatic in my line of work. They are:
1. Nothing is so preposterous that somebody won't believe it.
2. No joke is so innocuous that nobody will be offended by it.
For candidates, one is a blessing and the other a curse.
The first truism means that even when a candidate is uttering complete balderdash, a certain percentage of the audience will nod agreement as though they were hearing a ringing affirmation of the eternal verities.
The second one means that any candidate who attempts to inject a bit of levity

into the campaign is skating on thin quicksand. If he can't resist uncorking a few knee-slappers, he at least should avoid animal jokes. Especially duck jokes.

No group is more easily stirred to wrath by jocularity than pet owners. And the quickest of all to take umbrage are duck fanciers.

If the fury generated by a woman scorned is your idea of severe emotion tempest, you should encounter a few duck fanciers in full cry. I can tell you from hard experience that they would see nothing humorous in a joke about taking a duck to a cockfight.

Should Reagan fare worse than expected at the Republican National Convention, it will not be because his controversial fling at

joke-telling cost him Polish and Italian votes. It will be because he lost the duck owners' vote.

Americans of Polish and Italian extraction are fairly tolerant of jests at their expense, compared to friends of the duck.

Why are they so sensitive? Perhaps because they are a sub-species of bird watchers, one of the most touchy groups on the face of the Earth, or wherever you may roam.

And bird watchers, in turn, derive their militancy from association with tree worshippers, probably the most thin-skinned of all.

I still feel the sting of a few years ago when I came across a report indicating that trees, by emitting noxious vapors not un-

like auto exhaust fumes, were a source of pollution.

I didn't write that report. I merely relayed its findings, along with a suggestion that it might be possible to develop under-bough spray that would make more socially acceptable.

Here's what I got for trying to help a small forest in woodpulp used to be letters denouncing me for arboreal rilege. Joyce Kilmer heresy and other crimes against nature.

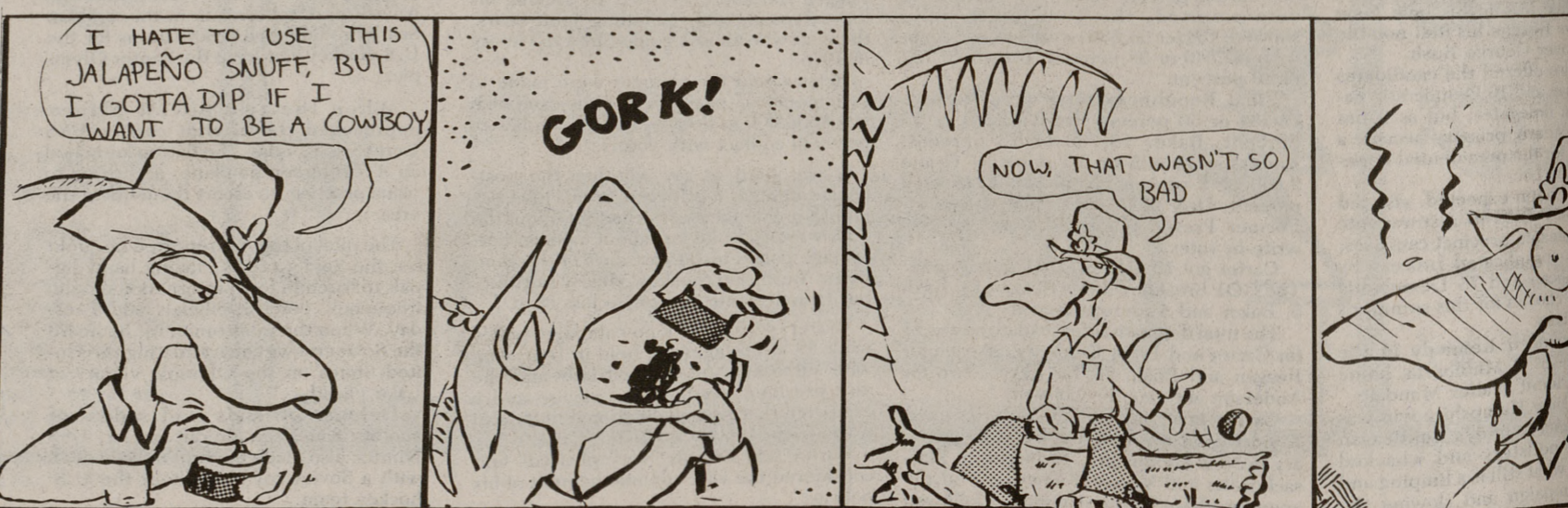
That taught me a bitter lesson about jests for joshing. Now I pretty much safe ground — the basic racial, ethnic, sexist and mother-in-law jokes I recommended that presidential candidates do the same.

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Reagan should 'duck' jokes between now and November

THOTZ



By Doug Graham

THE BATTALION

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