

opinion

So what if there's a woman in space?

FLASH: Sally Ride and her fellow astronauts today...

FLASH: Father's Day: The male shuttle astronauts today received Father's Day greetings from their families. Sally Ride, who has no children, did not comment during the transmission.

FLASH: Pre-shuttle cartoon: Sally Ride at the shuttle controls, wondering about her carpool duties before lift-off.

FLASH: Pre-shuttle news conference: Ride was asked if she would cry if anything went wrong during the flight, if she were taking lipstick and perfume with her, and what kind of underwear she would wear.

FLASH: Overheard conversation: "I wonder if Sally Ride's up there fooling around with the other astronauts?"

FLASH: Wednesday's Battalion, Page 1, six column headline, screaming "Ride operates space medicine machine in shuttle."

FLASH: The London Sunday Times refers to Sally Ride as "America's first, and the world's third spaceperson."

IF SALLY RIDE WERE NOT A COMPETENT ASTRONAUT, SHE WOULD NOT BE UP IN SPACE!!!



kathleen hart

As you read this, there are five people orbiting the earth in the space shuttle Challenger, all of whom have different capabilities. The fact that one of those people is female is important only to her husband.

I admit, we journalists are to blame for the hoopla over Ride, but we're taught in our first journalism classes that anything that's a first is news.

Well, Sally Ride's the first American female astronaut. OK. Everybody knows

that. Let's not go overboard with this, folks. The fact that a woman is doing a job she is perfectly able to do is NOT news.

So the childless Ride didn't say anything during the Father's Day greetings to the other astronauts (all of whom are fathers). So what? She is not and never could be a father.

Why does a syndicated cartoonist feel Ride must be depicted as worrying about carpoles?

Asking Ride about lipstick, perfume, underwear and tears on the shuttle flight is not only stupid, it's downright RUDE! The male astronauts weren't asked about their underwear. Fortunately, her response to the questions was, to say the least, admirable: "It's too bad our society isn't further along."

Also, I hear no speculation as to whether any male astronauts are "fooling around." It's just as likely between the male members of the crew as between the female and male.

Even the Battalion isn't blameless. WHO CARES IF RIDE OPERATED THE MACHINE? Did it work? That's what's important.

Finally, a newspaper as respected as the London Sunday Times referring to Ride as a spaceperson? Men aren't people? Only women?

Yes, Sally Ride is female, but let's not discriminate against her, or her fellow space voyagers.

Ride, at 32, has a B.S. degree in physics from Stanford, and studied X-ray astronomy and free-electron lasers in graduate school. That graduate work was one of the deciding factors for her being chosen as an astronaut. Apparently, free-electron lasers may prove to be an efficient way of transmitting energy in space.

She was chosen from among 8,370 other applicants, and easily passed the entrance examinations and psychological testing. While in astronaut training, she earned her pilot's license, and was referred to by her colleagues as being "very cool — a cool operator."

Such is not the description of a flighty, empty-headed female, but similar stereotypes probably will continue to exist until women have surpassed men in many traditional male-dominated areas.

Granted, some women are empty-headed, but I've seen some pretty flighty

men, too. Genes have nothing to do with it.

Society's continual suppression of the myth of total male superiority will do nothing but perpetuate the truth. People grow and are expected to be equal to men in areas, they probably would be.

I'm not saying we're total. There are some wonderful differences between the sexes, and some which males typically excel in. Physical strength (before I'm dis-

quartered, there are weaker strong women, also).

However, intellectually, there is evidence to support a belief that the ability for equality probably will be further developed through societal expectations.

However, if we persist in that happenings such as a woman in space are phenomenal occurrences, true equality — such as that which comes through thoughts and actions through mere words in a column will never become a reality.

Maybe someday we'll even get



Indian tribes need help to help themselves

by J. B. Blosser
United Press International
TAHLEQUAH, Okla. — Cherokee Chief Ross Swimmer says the federal government has grown weary of funneling bail-out funds to American Indians who cannot manage their money and care for themselves.

Until now Indians mismanaged and misplaced their funds but always feigned a "dumb Indian" attitude and got a sympathetic ear from Washington, the chief said.

"I think the federal government is about fed up with it," Swimmer said in an interview.

For the satisfaction of self-sufficiency and to prepare for what could soon be an end to free-flowing government funds, Indian tribes must take over responsibility for their people, the principal chief of the Cherokees said.

But Swimmer argues with Interior Secretary James Watt's suggestion the government has created "a false economy" and dependency among Indians. Instead, the chief contends, government aid has provided educational opportunities and decent housing.

"I don't see anything wrong with that," Swimmer said. "The dependency comes in when, once the person gets a new house, he doesn't know what to do with it."

"We've got to go the next step and help them help themselves."

Swimmer also contends tribes must become more involved in business interests to survive: "Indian tribes have become big business. Tribes are developing their own resources that will someday supplement, if not take the place of federal resources."

"It's not just a way of getting money to buy our way out of our problems," Swimmer said. "We develop more jobs, we solve a whole bunch of problems."

"When you put people to work they feel better about themselves, they don't get sick as much, their kids are better educated. It seems it just creates a feeling of self-worth. Kids have a better role model in working parents."

The Cherokee Nation is a major employer with an industry in Stillwell, it owns a restaurant and motel in Tahlequah, and holds 40,000 acres of land slowly being recycled from wasteland to production acreage. About 500 people work at tribal headquarters in Tahlequah, overseeing programs and developing new tribal projects.

"That kind of long-range planning has got to be done by tribes all over the country," the Cherokee chief said.

Just as important, Swimmer said, his tribe is learning to efficiently use federal funds.

About 3,000 Indians are involved in the Cherokees' nutritional support, or foodstamp, program for women and children. Summer programs employ 200 to 300 youths.

The tribe also financed and utilized volunteer labor to lay a water line serving more than two dozen families.

"It's a whole cycle," Swimmer said. "You cut back (the number of people unemployed) and you need less federal aid."

People and problems begin to take care of themselves, he said.

"That entails building a real economy in Indian Country. That doesn't happen overnight."

"I see tribal leadership around the country as being in the dark ages. They are not moving fast enough to get qualified people into (leadership) positions

Letters: Improving liberal arts would benefit university status

Editor: I am much pleased to know that Dr. Eaton stated five approaches to making A&M one of the world universities and also that the Committee for 2000 addressed the perspectives for improving our University.

The former advocated the consolidation of fine arts programs and the latter recommended creating a center for performing arts on the campus. I agree on both accounts.

I also complement the two recommendations by stressing that our liberal arts

(humanity and social and behavioral sciences) programs should be strengthened. Three decades ago dichotomy between science and humanity began to spread among the campuses of the world as C. P. Snow warned in late '50s.

Yet, while I was associated with Columbia University for five years in mid-'60s, there were many chances of communication between two cultures. When I came to A&M in 1968, I was quite surprised at the almost non-existence of such communication. In recent years I feel some improvement has occurred in this direction particularly after we got our current humanist president.

There may be many approaches to this direction. One is to convene many seminars and lectures on humanity by outside speakers under either the University or Liberal Arts College sponsorship. Another is to adopt the resident humanist system such as resident philosophers, poets, journalists or novelists.

The resident humanists may not be currently popular persons. I would rather prefer non-conformists to opportunists who may be popular among the public or to Washington.

In relation to the humanity program we cannot neglect the international aspect. Currently there are some international cooperative programs on campus in agriculture, geosciences and engineering.

However, in order to promote international cooperation in these technical fields, we need more understanding of the political, cultural and historical backgrounds of foreign countries.

In this aspect our university has serious defects. There is no exchange program in cultural fields even with Central and South American countries. Lack of effort to promote our understanding of the Eastern cultures and history becomes apparent just by glancing at courses and curricula of departments of Liberal Arts College and library holdings.

Of course, it may not be feasible to match Harvard, Yale or Stanford in the fields of international studies, but the current situation should be remedied if A&M wants to get out the present parochial nature.

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The Battalion

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The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Communications.

Questions or comments concerning any editorial matter should be directed to the editor.

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Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length, and are subject to being cut if they are longer. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must also be signed and show the address and telephone number of the writer.

Columns and guest editorials also are welcome, and are not subject to the same length constraints as letters. Address all inquiries and correspondence to: Editor, The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843, or phone (409) 845-2611.

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Berry's

"I hope those people in the moon are there from another planet and not for DIOXIN!"