Libel suits are often used for intimidation

Another multi-million dollar libel suit has come and gone. General Westmoreland has dropped his \$120 million suit

This time the press agency under attack survived. But what

An increasing number of libel suits are being brought against the media. More and more frequently courts are award-

ing punitive damages to libel plaintiffs. The first reaction of many people to this recent trend may be positive, thinking the threat of libel suits will keep the press in line and out of people's hair. After all, there is a growing wave of

dissension and distrust in the public toward the press these days. But the fact is libel suits and punitive damage awards are meant to serve as an intimidation factor against the press. And

Most newspapers, television networks and other forms of media cannot afford expensive libel suits. To them, the threat of a libel case means the threat of bankruptcy. Most smaller media organizations are forced to settle out of court — even when they know they would win — because court costs are just too steep.

The power of the pen is a mighty thing. The effects of the press are far-reaching, and when someone is unjustly treated by the press he deserves compensation. But most libel suits do not involve malicious, unjust behavior by members of the press. Most involve people, whether public or private citizens, who do not like the image portrayed of themselves in the press. The

The purpose of the press is to objectively, honestly report the news, to serve as a watchdog of the government and social agencies. If the government doesn't have to account to the public for its actions, if businesses don't have to account to the public, then how can people know their interests are being fairly represented? How can they be sure the government is looking out for their well-being?

They can't. And when the American public can no longer count on getting the facts, then a huge cornerstone of what this country is based on — freedom of speech, freedom of the press will have been destroyed.

And when those freedoms are taken away, which of our constitutional freedoms will be the next to crumble and fall?

The Battalion Editorial Board

Reagan's actions don't help generate peaceful feelings

A few years ago I was sitting around a table with some friends playing Dungeons and Dragons. Our bedraggled party of adventurers happened upon a creature resembling an over-

weight ape who had the ability to speak. The animal, called a quatsch, spoke in confusing little phrases which drove two of our party members completely insane before we could get away from the beast.

Loren Steffy

The other day I picked up the paper and began reading an article on Reagan's determination to continue with the "Star Wars" defense program no matter what. I instantly remembered the mind-bending primate from Dungeons and Dragons. Reagan's "quatschism" became apparent when he said develop armed space satellites.

he would continue the development of the space-based defense system, even if the United States and the Soviet Union agree to eliminate offensive nuclear

Basically, Reagan wants to eradicate offensive nuclear arms and build a defense system to stop the attack of offensive nuclear arms. This makes about as much sense as removing every electrically-dependent item from your house and then installing a circuit breaker.

Imagine how Boris the Russian diplomat will feel when he gets a call from Joe State Department saying America is ready to negotiate nuclear arms reductions. Boris grabs his briefcase and rushes over to Geneva, where Joe is

'We want to eliminate offensive nuclear weapons," Joe says.

Boris looks over Joe's shoulder and says, "Gee, Joe, looks to me like you're trying to increase your defense budget, build MX missiles and B-1 bombers and

The Soviets can't be expected lieve we want to limit weaponsp tion when we're trying harder to increase our arsenals. As I'ves fore, the "Star Wars" program w serve to transport our terrestrial sions into space and elimin chances of international coo The minute we arm satellite space craft will be developed to tary purposes as well. Soon w fighting wars outside our atmosp well as inside.

Deke Slayton has the wonderf of catapulting peoples' crema mains into orbit. The endeavo resents the first space effortbya industry, and other companies low Slayton's example.

But isn't one cemetary in

ders

Stude

Loren Steffy is a sophomore in lism major and a weekly column

Mothers are women, too

All women deserve equality

Mother. One word can engage all five senses and all thought.

The image of a dark-skinned woman with patches of gray in her coal-black hair. Light brown eyes contrast with the skin color and

Cathie Anderson make her gray eyebrows stand out.

Maybe she's combing and plaiting the thick, coarse hair of her daughter. Or she's cutting her son's hair with the aid of a bowl. Mama was good at being a mother. But she could have been just as wonderful at other things if marriage hadn't been the goal of most women of the '30s and '40s.

Mama was over 40 when I was born. I was born the ninth of ten children, the second of two girls.

I was a rare find for daddy and a bur-

ers wouldn't let me. And now I know that deep down inside my mother was glad that life's little secrets weren't aling men should never give women tions, a ways true anymore.

Perhaps her gray hair came so early because liquid steel ran through her veins. She was an incredibly strong person. She couldn't bench press 200 pounds or run the 100-yard dash in 7 seconds, but she withstood the day-today summer camp atmosphere at our house all year 'round.

It's because of mama that I believe equality of the sexes is necessary. Mothers are outstanding people, especially

My brothers, sister, and I often joke about her, but even my 42-year-old brother stands in awe of her. Mama would have a baby one day and be at home taking care of the kids the next,

of life's little secrets. Unfortunately I discovered that life's little secrets usually began with "Ladies don't..."

Fortunately for mother I wanted to Fortunately for me my broth
The world of the secrets and the secrets are the nation participal serves to think in terms of could have."

About the secrets. Because if she'd had to could have had more. No world participal serves to think in terms of could have."

The world of the secrets usually the secrets usually began with "Ladies don't..."

Fortunately for mother I wanted to or "would have."

Showing women sexual equal ment and ers or never open car doors for a signed for These things are trivial.

I'm talking about gesture together one of Vice President George Bul said the Geraldine Ferraro. Bush gave longates to troses after insulting her, and that problems wrong time to give a woman for dent gove "This Women deserve respect in the w

A lullaby hummed softly and warmth of her body as she held men soled me. The smell of the outdoor

dress she'd just taken off the clothe When I think of the word, mot think of images like these and of

Cathie Anderson is a junior journ major and a staff writer for The bi

The Battalion Editorial Board

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Editorial Policy

The Battalion also serves as a laborator students in reporting, editing and phot within the Department of Communication

Second class postage paid at College Sta

If you received a questionnaire, please take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire and return it in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelop by March 8. These questions affecting students at A&M are important den to mama, who had to let me in on all he said.

Barney C. Natividad

versity. Any proof of one's belonging to School-spirited Ags a definate minority

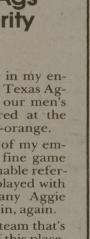
Aggie Spirit, ha!

Tonight, for the first time in my entire life, I am ashamed to be a Texas Aggie. Not twenty minutes ago our men's basketball team was outscored at the buzzer by those jerks in burnt-orange.

The team is not the cause of my embarrassment. They played a fine game marred only by some questionable refereeing and Lady Luck. They played with a pluck that would make any Aggie proud — they will play, and win, again.

dusted off, used, and put back again after the t.u. game isn't much of a spirit. supported all Aggies, win or lose. Ob-

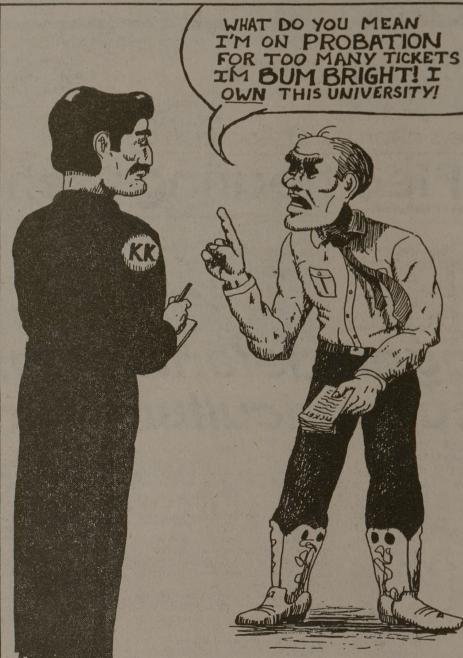
The way I figure it, 6,000 minus about 2,000 for old Ags, teasips, etc. is about 11% of the student body. Yes, 11% of the "most spirited student body anywhere" showed up for the game against arch-rival Texas. It looks like we have a new name for Aggies who don't support their school in the spring — 89 percenters. Thanks a lot, guys, it's almost time for spring training. As for me, I'm an 11 percenter and damn proud of it. The rest of you are nothing short of hypocritical.



No, it is not our basketball team that's embarrassing. It's the spirit of this place, or lack of it. We pride ourselves on our love of school, its tradition, and how well we support it. Ha! The majority of students only supports football, and to heck with everything else. Now, I don't know about you, but an Aggie Spirit that is brought out only in the fall, When we're in second place and only 6,000 show for a crucial game against the TEASIPS, for gosh sakes, something is very, very wrong. What do they have to do, win a national championship before they get some attention? I thought A&M was different, that we viously I was wrong.

Glenn Hawkins Class of '85





MSC cinema allows former students

ETTERS:

In regard to a letter that appeared in the Batt this week concerning "discrimito the Student and Faculty Senate. nation" in ticket sales for MSC movies at Thank you again for your time and co-

Texas A&M, I would like to correct operation. Admission to all MSC Aggie Cinema Census and Research films is limited to students, staff, faculty,

any of these classifications is sufficient to allow purchase of two tickets. One reason we have this policy is that the MSC is partially supported by Student Service fees. The services and entertainment programmed by MSC Committees are provided primarily for people paying those fees. But the main reason for this policy is part of our contract with all of the companies from which we rent our films. This stipulates

that we must limit attendance to the above named groups.

Finally, in this letter the writer implied (but never actually stated) that he is a former student. As such, he is welcome to purchase tickets (with proof). If he has been unable to do this in the past, we were clearly in error, and I will try to assure that it does not happen again.

Michael Gardner Chairman, MSC Aggie Cinema

Student qualified for C.S. city council

After all the criticism that the Editorial Board has taken, I would like to praise them for their open-minded opinion of Mike Hachtman. I think it is an excellent idea for Hachtman to run for this position. He is obviously well qualified, and Texas A&M University definitely needs quality representation on the College Station City Council.

Terey B. Counts

Student response to survey requested

EDITOR:

Student Government Census and Research Committee mailed out a questionnaire to a random 1,000 students. The questions are based on current ussues discussed by the Student and Faculty Senate.