

Opinion

Hart's personal life is the nation's affair

Imagine being a goldfish and living in a large, transparent fish-bowl which the whole world can clearly see into. Sharp, beady eyes watch your every move, insignificant or not, as you swim back and forth,



Sondra Pickard

back and forth, back and forth — searching for just an inkling of privacy and hoping to find relief, if only for a minute, from the ever-present presence enfolded around you and your glass walls.

Not a comfortable thought, but anyone who chooses to run for president of the United States might as well throw up the shades, drag open the windows or move in with the pet goldfish.

Whether front-runner or dark

horse, privacy and comfort are not items included in the package deal of speeches, smiles and airplane rides a presidential candidate takes on, especially now — a time when hidden character traits and behind-the-curtain intentions need to be uncovered long before the high office is actually attained.

Democratic candidate Gary Hart and his Phi Beta Kappa pharmaceutical-sales representative friend Donna Rice, are the latest to suffer

from the well-deserved and often-asked-for "fishbowl syndrome." It seems the *Miami Herald* attempted to take its campaign-trail journalism seriously last weekend.

Acting on what it saw as a legitimate tip, the *Herald* sent reporters Jim McGee and Tom Fiedler, by land and air, to stake out Hart's Capitol Hill town house in Washington, D.C. What they saw there has set off the first and probably biggest sex-related ordeal of the 1988 campaign.

According to the *Herald*, Hart "spent Friday night and most of Saturday in his Capitol Hill town house with a young woman who flew from Miami to meet him." Hart may be about as atypical a politician as this nation has seen in quite a while, but he was, of course, politician enough to deny quickly that Rice actually stayed all night.

"No one was staying in my apartment," the *Herald* quoted him as saying. "I have no personal relationship with the individual you are following."

The stories from Hart and stories from the *Herald* don't at all jibe, nor will they ever. The real truth has yet to come out of the closet, and probably won't soon — if ever. The newspaper claims Hart and Rice entered Hart's town house arm in arm at 11:17 p.m. Friday and weren't seen again until 8:40 p.m. Saturday.

Hart, on the other hand, swears Rice left Friday evening with his friend and political adviser William Broadhurst. Evidently neither reporter watched the rear entrance from midnight to 5 a.m., or the front entrance from 3 a.m. to 5 a.m., leaving open the possibility that someone left during those times. So who do we believe? The charming, almost-young but very married politician hiding in his fishbowl, or the wily, beady-eyed reporters hiding outside behind the bushes?

Whatever the answer, the ethical question of a presidential candidate having an extramarital affair is much bigger than the story itself. Most agree that the *Herald* exhibited sloppy journalism in its inconsistent stake-out methods, including the newspaper's editors. Had it done its job completely, the *Herald* could have either dropped the story altogether, or opened the public's eye to a dishonest man wanting to be president.

Unfortunately, it did neither and instead ran a story that has left the public,

for the most part, confused and where near the truth. Now the story is a life of its own, and what's important is not the truth, but the public's perception.

The *Herald* should not be demned. The American voters have a major interest in the integrity and judgment of a man aspiring to be president. Besides, Hart did everything short of begging for such coverage, replying to earlier charges of wrongdoing in *The New York Times Magazine*. Hart said: "Follow me around, I care. I'm serious. If anybody wants to put a tail on me, go ahead. The very bored."

He asked for it, and he got it. And it's not as if he was anything but bored. His senior campaign adviser agreed on last night that Hart made a big mistake by putting himself in such circumstances to begin with. Mark Shields, syndicated columnist also appearing on CNN, said Hart's judgment was and that it is surely a "major political blow."

What counts in 1988 is character and leadership. Given today's problems, especially Ronald Reagan's Iran sanctions, Hart should never be seen without his wife. If he does cheat on his wife, why wouldn't he cheat on his country? If he has got to be alone, then not be with a 29-year-old, 5-foot-6-pound ex-actress and model.

As former Vice President Walter Mondale said, "Once they get together as well as you can get the cause you are going to depend on for life, prosperity and all the rest." Unmistakably Ellen Goodman also came out with a logical argument last week: "Sexual behavior can open a window on an emotional landscape," she said, "and even the ability to compartmentalize ethics."

Hart chose to run for president in doing so has chosen to live in a fishbowl. America is looking for honesty in the White House — not deception, wants continued success and high ratings. Hart had better keep in mind that millions of eyes are on him, waiting, staring, waiting. It's all part of the game of politics — any little slip could cost him his political career.

Sondra Pickard is a senior journalism major and editor of *The Battalion*.



An interview with Dr. Vandiver: Finals, faculty, world-class status

Every day I pick up a *Battalion* to find out about important issues such as "world-class status," senior finals and the problems of state budget cuts with respect to A&M.

Chris Rudesill
Guest Columnist

And every time I read about these problems I ask myself such questions as: What precisely is a "world-class university"? What is really and truly being done about senior finals? What incentives are there to keep an elite faculty? It sure isn't pay, and except for the annual College Station Jazz Festival which features North Texas State University's One O'clock Lab Band, this place is not a center for fine arts (you will note that not all the good professors are conservative Christians and native Texans who are content to watch rodeos and TV evangelists).

I finally decided to find out the answers to my questions — I asked President Frank Vandiver. In interviewing him, my goal was threefold: I wanted to say that I met him, I wanted to find out where Texas A&M is heading, and I wanted to spark an apathetic student body into taking some constructive interest in this University because if we don't, A&M will cease to be the "world-class university" our alumni forged.

What is "world-class?" Dr. Vandiver's response was quick — "We already are, have been for a long time!" He then proceeded to tell me about his "world university" concept. In short, it is a network of universities scattered around the world that would work together to solve basic world problems. These institutions would have to have top quality students and faculty — the same quality of excellence that is found here at A&M.

This led me to two more questions — the first dealt with finals and the second with faculty retention.

Let me start by setting everyone straight on the issue of senior finals: The issue is as old as the oldest tradition on campus. Seniors have had to take finals intermittently since the school first opened its doors. There will be finals for the Class of '88 on.

The big issue now is the schedule. Dr. Vandiver told me that he was pushing for two sets of finals so that Final Review and Commencement would remain unchanged, and also to honor the religious rights of non-Christian students and faculty.

The problem is that some of the faculty members don't want to write two tests. (I think these are probably the same who want a faculty club complete with bar to be provided at students' expenses through the food service). They need to be lectured to by the world-class student body they teach, but don't scare them away.

This leads to the question of faculty retention. How do we keep the high-quality teaching found here? Shoot Bill Clements? No — too radical for this place! The best we can do right now is support the alumni lobbying to keep the money we already have, and stock up apples for your favorite teachers when we are not arguing over a half a point on a lab quiz — keep the faith.

Having had my questions of world-class, finals and budget answered, I wish to close by defining "world-class university" — Texas A&M — a very unique University, a University with traditions, a University that is close knit (the purpose behind any and all traditions).

Where else have you been that you can introduce two strangers and they

can find at least one person in common? With 39,000 students expected this fall it will be more difficult. This is all the more reason to come out of our apathetic closets and take interest in what is going on around us. As a starting place repeat after me —

HOWDY DAMMIT!

Chris Rudesill is a senior engineering technology major.

Mail Call

Behind the times

EDITOR:

On the second page of *The Battalion* last Friday, Chuck Docekal complained in his letter of the attention being paid to homosexuals by *The Battalion* and wondered what impression people visiting A&M would get when reading these articles.

Well, Mr. Docekal, you may get sick of them, but I (a visitor from the Netherlands) get sick of people like you who get frustrated when they are confronted with different ideas or lifestyles. Did you really think that A&M visitors would be upset or even surprised to hear that there are homosexuals at A&M?

Poor guy, you must be terribly narrow-minded. May I give you some advice to relieve your sufferings? If you're not yet ready for the things mum and dad didn't tell, continue your gray and dull life and skip the next article about this subject.

Peter Sterk, visiting scientist

Thanks to the 'Hilton'

EDITOR:

To the students of Hotard and their RA's, I would like to congratulate you and wish you all the best summer and let you know how much I appreciate your cooperation. Thank you very much for the good school term we had.

May God bless each and every one of you.

Linda Martinez, custodial worker
Hotard "Hilton"

Athletics is no picnic

EDITOR:

In response to D.A. Jensen's column of May 5, our hearts just bleed for the poor lass having to pay her way through college. And we athletes are just sitting here wasting all that money. No, we have no incentive to develop our minds; we just take 14 hours of classes to fill the gaps in our day.

We challenge Jensen to spend one day like ours. Let her try something like this: 3 hours a day of early classes beginning at 8 a.m., followed by a two-hour workout in the gym or at the track, in addition to a 1½ hour session of lifting weights; one or two games per week that take up

at least 3 hours each; traveling across the country every weekend; missing classes because of travel; then trying to squeeze in meals, studying and sleep somewhere during this week.

This occurs every day, including Sundays. We get behind in classes and have to struggle to catch up. Most of us don't know what a social life is, because we have zero time for one.

It is not as if we sit back and are handed cash each week. Athletic events earn this school many thousands of dollars each year that is returned to athletic scholarship. Not all scholarship money is donated by old A&Ms.

Jensen needs to re-examine her facts and quit generalizing. As for her concluding remarks, they were rude and highly uncalled for. If she were to dwell on the athlete's side of the story instead of her own sorry opinion, she would discover that our education is not handed to us on a silver platter.

To help correct her article, a physical-education major requires 147 hours compared to a measly 128 for journalism. And what is the significance of her Ross Volunteer remark?

Margaret Spence '87
accompanied by three signatures

The Morrison mystery

EDITOR:

The time has come for the revelation of a most curious phenomena: the mystery of the disappearance and presumed death of Jim Morrison is unequivocally and interminably related to the inexplicable existence of a highly advanced civilization in the Peruvian Andes.

Recent intensive research into early cultural references uncovered in South America involving interstellar travelers, in concurrent association with a study of the philosophical treatises and art work of the errant poet Jim Morrison, has led to an earth-shattering conclusion.

Quite simply put, Jim Morrison was kidnapped by ancient astronauts because he was coming too close to the Answer. Take notice, ye unsuspecting world.

Paul Dinkum and Conrad Wong, '90

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editor reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include classification, address and telephone number of the writer.

The Battalion

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