

# Opinion

## Mail Call

### There's no research like invalid research

EDITOR:

The April issue of Car and Driver magazine reported that the federal government's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has provided funds to A&M researchers for a study to investigate the effects of radar detector use on automobile safety. What is objectionable about this is that the NHTSA is specifying in advance that the results of this study should conclude that the use of radar detectors by motorists causes unsafe driving.

One of the basic requirements of a valid scientific study is that the researcher cannot draw conclusions about the subject before all the data is gathered or else the data will be biased and the entire study will be worthless. Since A&M's researchers know the results before they begin, the study is scientifically worthless, yet the NHTSA will certainly try to ban radar detectors nationwide based on A&M's "evidence" which "proves" that they are unsafe. Why is A&M, which is always looking for worldwide scientific respect, providing the federal government with phony facts to help the NHTSA force Congress into making radar detectors illegal? The NHTSA's push to ban detectors, which will undoubtedly be justified by A&M's study, will certainly cause a national uproar, with A&M's irresponsible findings at the center of the unflattering attention.

David Adrian '90

## What is this mystery of men and their sports?

With the National Basketball Association's finals heating up TV sets around the nation, I would like to discuss a fascinating yet sometimes aggravating element of American society: the American male's infatuation with sports.



Barbara Jones

Women around the world have been mystified by the power these "games" have upon their spouses, brothers and boyfriends but has anyone actually stopped and asked why? Try asking a guy to take out the trash, answer the phone or do any domestic task during the course of a game, match, tournament or the like and see what it gets you. If you are lucky enough to get any kind of response at all to what seems to you as a harmless request, without moving their attentive eyes from the screen they will most likely reply, "at the commercial." Now trust me on this one. When they say this, your best course of action is to give up and do it yourself. Nothing short of dousing your body with gasoline, setting yourself ablaze, then running through the living room will drag him away from the Final Four. Even then you would probably just hear, "Honey, would you mind moving over just a bit, the flames are blocking my view. And while you're up will you grab me a brew?"

Now let's back up a tad. We can't really blame men for this curious obsession with sports. Maslow would say that boys are classically conditioned as children to enjoy sports and I agree. If a young boy picks up a Barbie doll instead of a football he is admonished and told that only sissies play with dolls. In American society a four-year old boy who asks for a Cabbage Patch doll for Christmas will most likely get a baseball bat, a glove and a trip to the "kiddy shrink." Of course a girl who prefers sports to playing with dolls is labeled a tomboy and is thought to be in "just a phase" that she will grow out of.

My roommate's boyfriend, Frank, is the stereotypical sport's fanatic. Frank knows everything one would want to know about sports and more. He is not only a sports fan but a sports academic. He studies all sports extensively in newspapers, magazines, and he is a religious viewer of hourly sports updates on CNN. At one point in the football season last fall, Frank had both our televisions on to two different games and

paced back and forth from room to room not wanting to miss that crucial play in either game. One Monday night I was startled to hear Frank and my roommate in a horrible fight, which for them comes rarely.

I jumped out of my bed following Frank's booming voice to save my roommate from obvious peril only to find Frank alone, red-faced and screaming obscenities at the TV which were directly aimed at Danny White of the Dallas Cowboys. It was not until then did I realize the seriousness of this infatuation.

To fully observe this phenomenon in action I got myself invited to watch one of the NBA finals in the presence of a group of guys — merely for research purposes of course. Men usually prefer women to occupy themselves with other activities during these sacred events because women only ask stupid questions and make irritating comments. Lest we forget that "women weaken the knees."

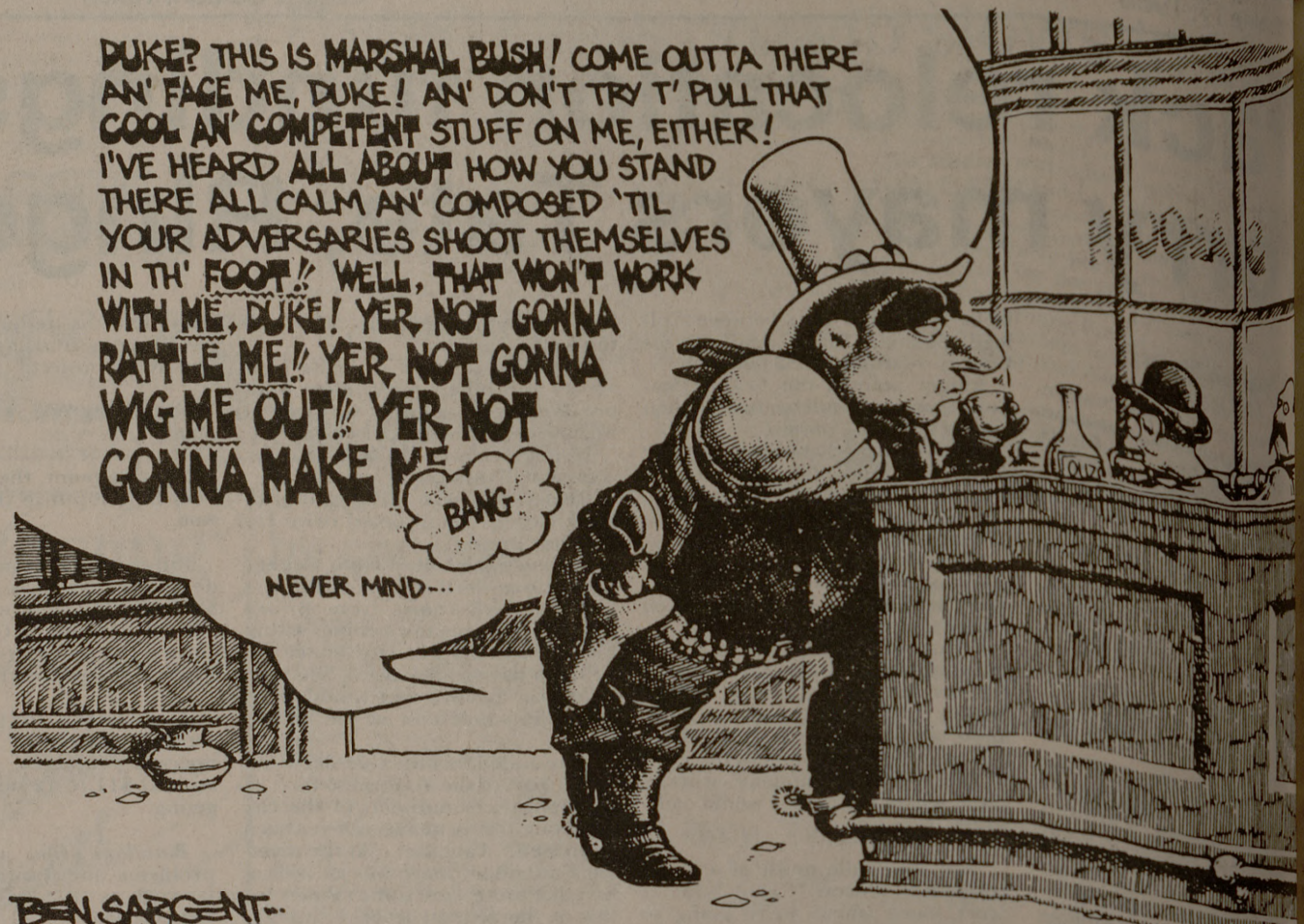
Wanting to fit in, I tried to constructively contribute to the sports talk that always accompanies any game. Some of my comments were: "Those cheerleading outfits are raunchy," and "That bald guy with the glasses looks like a fly." I received a few laughs. Already I felt like part of the team.

What I found during the course of my observations was very interesting. During the game I found that men revert back to a more primitive state. They drink beer, smoke, chew, spit, burp, fart, howl and do various other things that would be deemed socially unacceptable in any other situation. I was never sure if the game itself elicited this kind of response or whether it was the fact that there were no females (except myself) to disapprove of such behavior. There are a lot of "high fives" exchanged and usually at least one six-pack is riding on each game so beware — tempers may flare.

The game itself often entices men to go out and participate in the sport after the game is over. My theory on this behavior is that this renews their reasons for going to college in the first place.

To conclude, I address all women who do not share the same love for sports as their male counterparts: try not to get your panties in a bunch over men's preoccupation with something that to you is "just a stupid game." Spend this time doing all those truly enjoyable activities that for some reason or another men cannot fully appreciate, like shopping.

Barbara Jones is a senior journalism major and a columnist for The Battalion.



BEN SARGENT  
OF THE Austin American Statesman  
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## Finding some rock songs in today's commercials isn't the end of the world

Although I have two sons who have actually earned money playing rock music, I don't know much about this art form. I've admitted as much in past columns.



Mike Royko

Oh, I'm not totally ignorant. I know that under the strict rules of rock composition, the listener is not supposed to understand what the singer is shouting. Or if you happen to decipher the lyrics, they aren't supposed to make sense anyway.

And I know that the most admired rock performers are those who can play an electric instrument while twirling, lying on their backs, crawling or diving into the audience.

I'm also aware that the two most popular singers today are Bruce Springboard and a fellow named Deboss.

But if you ask me to name a song or musical group, I have to admit that I don't know the Terminally Ill from the Grateful Sick, or the Jefferson Airport from the Rolling Bones.

So I was surprised when a fan of rock music asked for my support and sympathy in defending rock music against those who would cheapen and exploit it.

The rock fan, Larry DeAngelo of Franklin Park, Ill., who is in the shoe business, is terribly upset because some of his favorite classic rock songs are being used in commercials.

As he says: "I grew up in the '60s,

with some of the finest rock and roll music the world has ever heard.

"I want to know who is responsible for the defamation and degradation of the life blood sounds I treasure.

"When Carly Simon's song 'Anticipation' was turned into a ketchup jingle, I sensed a trend that has suddenly turned into a nightmare.

"Now they're playing 'A Little Bit of Soul' with a twist to sell cars. I feel like my blood is turning to plastic.

"And they've done it to an old Rascals hit called 'Good Lovin.' Some high-paid executive has transformed this piece of rock history into a trite ploy to sell Dr. Pepper soda.

"Enough is enough. Where do we draw the line and say 'this is not to be exploited?'"

"If you would research this subject, I'm sure you'll find it at the core of what's ailing our society. The loss of values, traditions and otherwise."

Well, I'm always on the alert for anything that is at the core of our society's ailments, and other threats to our values and traditions.

But I wonder if Mr. DeAngelo might not be overreacting to what he sees as an attack on the integrity of his "life blood songs."

I'm not familiar with this fellow Carl Simon's song "Anticipation." Nor did I know it had become a ketchup jingle.

I would assume, though, that it was done with Carl's consent. Isn't it possible that Carl loves ketchup and wanted to share the gift of his music with his fellow ketchup lovers?

I'm also unfamiliar with "Good Lo-

vin" and the old rascals who were involved in rock music is surprising thought that most of them were rascals. On the other hand, while ping channels recently, I did glimpse of a group called the Balls and they seemed to be getting in years.

Whatever the case, I find myself wrong with those who drink Dr. Pepper being exposed to "Good Lovin," especially if they are consenting adults.

Although Dr. Pepper drinks are not considered hip, they're just as tied to "Good Lovin" as someone drinks chablis or puts powder in their noses. Maybe the old rascals who that song were simply trying to out to the Dr. Pepper crowd, especially those who might have had the mature experience of bad lovin'.

Actually, there is nothing new great music being used in TV and commercials.

I've heard Beethoven, Mozart Strauss used to sell everything from wax to cough medicine. While composers haven't attained the stature of somebody like the Beatles and the Pastas, they, too, have loyal fans.

I'm sure if Beethoven, Mozart the others were around today, wouldn't object to their music being used in commercials, so long as they were paid.

And they'd would probably be fans, too. Remember, Mozart was dirty and Beethoven was deaf.

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