

## Harassment at A&M

**Dr. Sue Lucas**  
and  
**Dr. Clinton Phillips**  
Guest Columnists

to the University's brochure on sexual harassment, he proceeded to outline options available to her.

First, as the brochure indicated, she might consider discussing the matter directly with the individual. Doe, however, felt this might be too confrontational for her: She simply didn't feel up to it.

A second option would be for Doe or Phillips to talk with the faculty member's department head and ask that he or she attempt to resolve the matter while maintaining Doe's anonymity. As Phillips pointed out, the difficulty with this approach is that the alleged transgressor could simply deny the charge, and there would be little that the department head could do about the matter except to put the professor on notice. A further difficulty with this approach is that confronting a faculty member with anonymous allegation goes against our fundamental concepts of justice. A person faced with such charges should be told who his or her accuser is.

The third and most effective option, according to Phillips, would be to file a formal sexual harassment charge. Following this approach, Ms. Doe would simply describe in a page or two exactly what had happened how it had affected her, and sign her name. Phillips would then take her statement to the professor's department head and dean. The head, perhaps accompanied by the dean, would then try to resolve the issue with the faculty member.

From this process, several outcomes are possible. The person charged may admit culpability and promise in writing to avoid any and all manifestations of such behavior in the future. Very likely, a letter of reprimand also would be placed in the professor's file. Another possibility is that the accused may deny the charge of "sexual harassment" in which case a small ad hoc committee would be formed to conduct an investigation of the charges and make recommendations to the department head and dean. The committee would be small so as to preserve confidentiality and, in a case such as the one described above, would include female representation.

Phillips stated that he hoped Ms. Doe would be willing to prepare and sign a statement detailing her allegations of sexual harassment. Such an action would guarantee that the allegations could be thoroughly investigated and appropriate action taken. A signed statement would also ensure that the accused professor would be made aware of the specifics of the charges against him and given the opportunity to explain and/or rebut them.

Finally, Phillips mentioned that the University's policy prohibiting sexual harassment contains two safeguards — one to protect the complainant and the other to protect the accused. The first prohibits "retaliatory action of any kind taken against any individual as a result of a person's attempt to seek redress" under this policy. The second states that if it is found that a charge of sexual harassment "is totally without foundation, and if there is evidence of malicious intent," the person making the charge may be disciplined. Again, both of these safeguards are designed to protect the individuals involved.

The meeting concluded with Ms. Doe indicating that she felt she probably would file a formal complaint against the professor as she felt strongly that such behavior should not be allowed to continue. Phillips concurred.

*Dr. Sue Lucas is a counseling psychologist for the Student Counseling Service. Dr. Clinton Phillips is the dean of faculties and associate provost of Texas A&M University.*

The following is a fictitious case involving sexual harassment; however, this case is based on real situations in which students have found themselves. The case is presented in the hope that students will become more aware of both the subtle and blatant forms of sexual harassment and will seek the assistance of appropriate professionals on the Texas A&M University campus should they find themselves dealing with a similar situation.

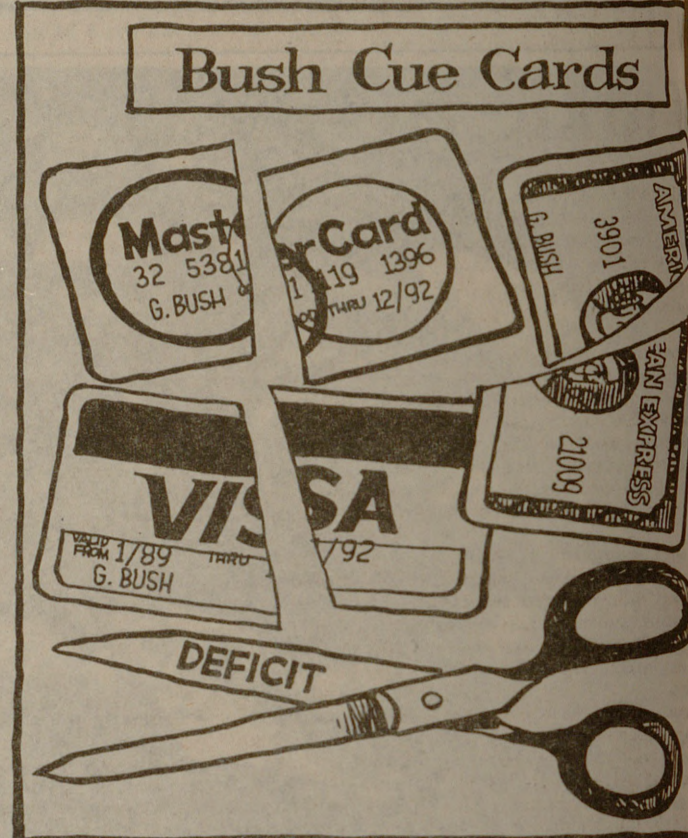
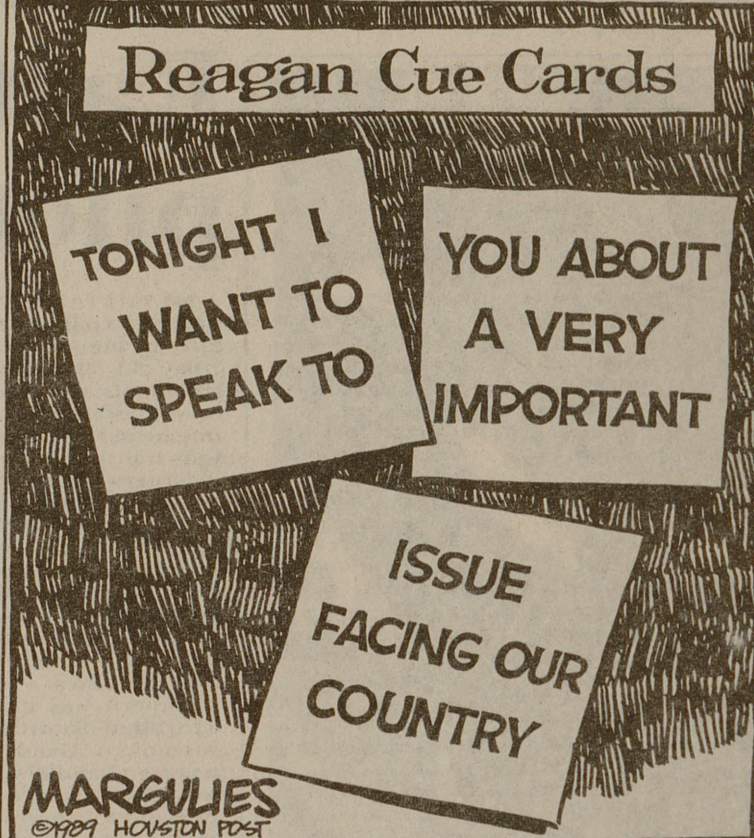
Pam Doe, a Texas A&M sophomore, was referred to the Student Counseling Service by her roommate, who had become increasingly concerned by recent changes in Doe's behavior. Prior to this semester Doe had appeared to be doing well at A&M, both academically and socially. However, Ms. Doe was no longer attending classes and was beginning to isolate herself from her friends. She seemed to take little pleasure or interest in her extracurricular activities.

During her initial session at the Student Counseling Service, Doe was tearful and appeared embarrassed and confused as she described her situation. She said that this semester she had begun having difficulty in one of her courses. After the first round of tests she had gone to her professor for outside help. Initially she was very appreciative and thanked him for his extra attention. But she soon began to "feel funny" about the manner in which this professor helped her. He always made a point of seeing Doe in his office late in the afternoon when there were few students or faculty members in the building, and he would frequently make comments about her appearance. These comments were often accompanied by seemingly accidental but suggestive touching. At first Doe thought she was just over-reacting and so said nothing to her professor or to anyone else.

However, as the semester progressed, the professor's unwanted sexual flirtations increased. When Doe suggested to him that she did not need any further outside help, the professor implied that not only would it be difficult for her to pass his course without such help, but also it might be impossible for her to take upper level courses in her major or secure future employment in her chosen career field without his recommendation.

It was apparent to the counselor that Doe seemed to believe that there was nothing she could do — that she was powerless to change the situation. At this point the counselor began to educate Ms. Doe regarding sexual harassment and the different forms it can take on a college campus. The counselor also began to inform Doe of the University's policies and procedures regarding sexual harassment and the different options that were available to her. She was told that since the alleged offender was a faculty member, the appropriate person to contact would be the Dean of Faculties, Dr. Clinton Phillips.

Ms. Doe agreed to meet with Dr. Phillips, so the counselor arranged for an appointment for later that day. Doe recited the events that had led up to her visit with the counselor while Phillips listened. When Doe was finished, Phillips assured her that, contrary to her original belief, something could be done about the situation. He assured her that no student had to submit to sexual harassment at Texas A&M and, referring



## Congress must protect arctic refuge from oil development

For the past few years, Alaska has been a battleground between oil companies and environmentalists. This year the battle will escalate.



**Dean Sueltenfuss**  
Opinion Page Editor

Lobbyists for many major oil companies are trying to persuade Congress to allow exploration and development in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. Oil industry officials believe there is a chance of finding over 3 billion barrels of oil beneath the surface of the wildlife refuge, and they contend that exploration and drilling would not harm the environment.

Many environmental groups disagree with oil industry officials and are working to keep oil companies out of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge is the home of animals such as polar bears, wolves and caribou. Environmentalists believe that by opening up the refuge to development by the oil industry, many of the plants and animals living in the refuge would suffer significant harm.

A recent report drafted by the Environmental Protection Agency offers credence to the environmentalist's views.

The report deals with oil operations on Alaska's North Slope, which is located near the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. According to the document, oil companies have committed a number of acts that have damaged the environment.

In one case, EPA officials found hundreds of gallons of spilled chemicals at a facility owned by a major oil company. According to the report, there were 60 acres of contaminated tundra around the site.

In other instances, the report documented overflowing waste disposal pits,

fuel spills that were contaminating a community's water supply, and the improper handling of hazardous wastes.

Still, many oil industry officials say there would be no threat to the refuge if oil development is allowed to proceed there.

One industry spokesman said the practices of oil companies on the North Slope are in keeping with government regulations and will not harm the environment.

This seems to be the attitude of many oil industry people. They believe oil-drilling operations can exist in the refuge without affecting the plants or animals that live there. But based on the recent EPA report and past examples of oil development, it is clear that exploration and drilling for oil will definitely affect the environment.

Congress will decide sometime this year if oil operations will be allowed within the refuge. When the members of Congress vote, they will be making a difficult decision: Should we preserve the environment in one of the few places in our country that remains in a natural condition or should we open up a possible (no one's sure there is oil there) new source of petroleum for our country?

Even though the oil would be only a few months' supply for our country,

many members of Congress support development of the refuge.

For example, I wrote a letter to Joe Barton a number of months ago concerning the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. He responded by saying a potential new oil source was too important to merit the closing of the refuge to development.

It's unfortunate that so many people feel this way. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is one of the last remaining areas in our country where people are not interfering with nature. Because there are so many places where humans have infringed upon nature and destroyed it, the refuge was created to maintain a natural habitat for the animals and plants that live there.

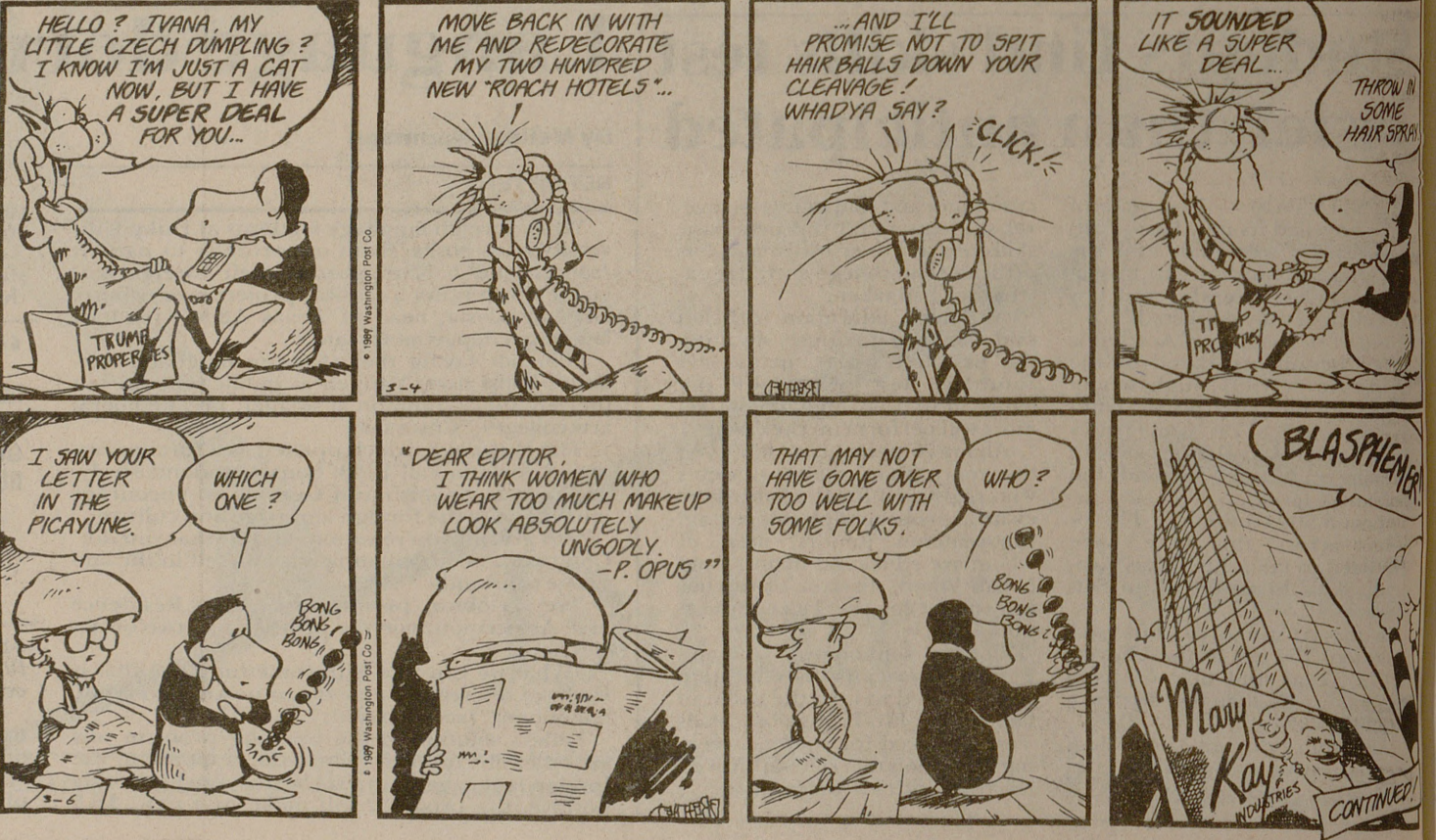
Oil, gas, timber and mining companies have destroyed many of our natural resources in the past 100 years or so. It is bad enough that we have damaged much of our environment as we already have. It will be even more unfortunate if we decide not to honor the few places we have decided to protect. National parks and wildlife refuges must be completely undeveloped if they are to achieve the purpose for which they were created.

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is one of the few places where all of our garbage and chemicals and pollutants are not allowed. It is a place where foxes, bears and wolverines can roam free, just as they have for hundreds of years. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is one of the last vestiges of wilderness left in America.

The oil companies are trying to change that.

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