

MARGULIES
BY ERIC HOUSTON POST



Mascot mistreatment must end

The faculty senate at the University of Houston showed their opposition to the replacement of the school's recently deceased mascot with a new cougar through an unanimous informal vote Wednesday.

The former mascot, Shasta V, was put to sleep on May 28 at the ripe old age of 9 years. She suffered complications associated with kidney failure.

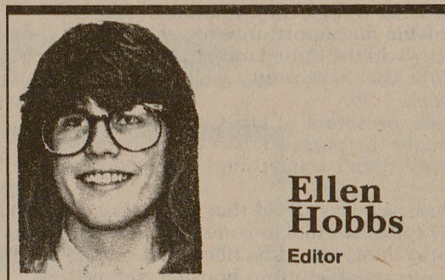
The faculty senate has the right idea. There is no humane reason to keep another undomesticated animal penned up only to amuse the crowds at sporting events.

Supporters of the plan to replace the animal have their reasons for wanting a new cat. Most often, they cite tradition. The university has kept a cougar mascot caged on campus since 1947.

"The University of Houston has so few traditions, this is one that should remain intact," Mikal Belicove, president of the UH student body, told a *Houston Post* reporter.

Tradition is a nice thing. We know all about tradition at Texas A&M. But, a cruel tradition is one that should be stopped.

The university will not be left without a mascot. They will still have a guy in a cougar suit to entertain the crowds and represent the Cougars at football games



Ellen Hobbs
Editor

and other events. Sure, it may be cruel to dress a guy up in a cat suit and make him dance around on a football field in the heat of August, but at least the guy in the suit has consented to be there. The animal had no choice.

Supporters also say that keeping animals at the school is no harder on the animal than keeping the animals in captivity anywhere else. Don't tell that to Shasta V. Not that you could, since she's dead at age 9. Cougars can (and do) live in captivity as long as 19 years.

The average time a cougar spends at the University of Houston is 8.4 years — about the same amount of time a student would spend in undergraduate and graduate school getting a Ph.D.

Animal rights activists are fighting to stop the cruelty. The faculty senate has voiced an informal opinion, and will further discuss the issue to replace the cougar in the fall.

But it will be students, both current and former, who will decide whether Shasta (may she rest in peace) will be succeeded.

That's because UH does not allow university funds to be spent to keep its mascot.

Donations from students, former students, and students' families keep the animal alive, keep food in its cage and keep its cage from falling apart. And the school's president, Richard Van Horn, has already said that a new cougar will not be purchased until a new, more "high-tech" habitat is built.

The campaign for the new habitat has been going on for two years now, and the school has yet to raise the \$125,000 needed for its construction. Donations are dwindling even more since there is no longer a live Shasta to put in it. That unbuilt, unfunded habitat may keep the university from getting a new cougar to represent them.

And that's certainly good news for cougars.

It may not be such good news for those supporting the purchase of a feline to replace Shasta, but college-educated people should have something better to do than gawk at a caged cat (safely, from the other side of the bars).

Ellen Hobbs is a junior journalism major and editor of *The Battalion*.

Decision to censor is individual right

First we had the moral majority telling us what to watch on TV, now we have Big Brother — also known as Big Business — telling us instead.

Surprisingly, some of the same ideas which inspired the Chinese student movement for freedom are being challenged in America by corporate censorship.

As if we aren't smart enough for ourselves to choose what to watch or read, someone else is peering over our shoulders and trying to decide for us.

A recent letter campaign by a concerned housewife to boycott sponsors of Fox Broadcasting Company's program "Married with Children" has resulted in a bombardment of copycat boycotts by concerned companies.

Companies are fearful of a consumer backlash because of advertising during inappropriate programming or running columns of news figures who advertise products which have nothing to do with their writings.

So instead of making carefully thought out and cautious decisions, companies are taking censorship into their own hands.

We certainly don't need another witch hunt to gun down freedom of the press and our right to choose for ourselves what we want to see. That's why we have channel changers and the ability to turn the page if we don't like what we see.

Domino's Pizza has stopped advertising during the program "Saturday Night Live" because of the show's risqué (but relatively tame) humor. This company has the right to advertise (or not advertise) where it pleases, but ironically this announcement came out about the same time as the controversy hit Fox's comedy.

This week, several companies announced hit lists of programs they intend to boycott. According to the Cable News Network, M&M Mars candy company has over 50 programs on its hit list. Pan American World Airways has boycotted "Star Trek: The Next Generation" for some unexplained reason. And Mitsubishi has boycotted all programs dealing with World War II. Just by coincidence, Mitsubishi was the company that manufactured the dreaded Japanese Zero warplane that fought aerial battles with American planes during the war.

Programs such as "The Morton Downey Jr. Show" and "Gerald Rivera," which have become synonymous with sleazy "tabloid TV," were on the list. This is somewhat understandable, but nevertheless, regrettable. What doesn't make sense is that award-winning news programs with good reputations and respect from journalists have also appeared on corporate hit lists. These news programs include "60 Min-



Jeff Osborne
Contributing Editor

utes," "Nightline," "20/20" and "48 Hours." These programs have redefined the meaning of investigative journalism, uncovering corruption and giving us valuable insight into our society. Perhaps it is this honesty and integrity some companies fear.

I sense that all these companies trying to jump on the bandwagon of censorship. For some people, freedom of the press applies only to views they endorse, not views they oppose. They have the valuable right to agree or disagree publicly with the views of the government, or powerful corporations. This is what the American ideal of freedom is all about, but there are also power hungry tyrants or misguided righteous zealots eager to take rights away from us.

The Moral Majority recently banded, announcing it had accomplished its mission of censorship and suppression of opposing views. Instead of letting its fanaticism rest in peace, corporations have revived the mission.

While it's true that we cannot allow vulgar language or perverted sex on TV, we also cannot decide exactly what is or isn't "proper" for other people.

As a subscriber to the *Bryan-College Station Eagle*, I disagree with the company's decision to discontinue the columns of Linda Ellerbee. She did not compromise her integrity any more than the *Eagle* compromises its own by accepting ads which appear as news on the business page.

Also, an issue which has caused debate on campus is *The Battalion's* decision to run the Khomeini memorial service ads for the Society of Iranian Students. Although I deplore the fanaticism and hatred of the Islamic priest, we must remember freedom of the press means the right to disagree. The ad is a prime example of our system of freedom. Even though we strongly oppose the views of others, they still have the right to speak freely in America. If this right is taken away by a totalitarian government, religious groups or corporations, even most close-minded individuals will finally realize the value of freedom of speech and freedom of choice.

As with all columns, opinions expressed by Guest Columnists are necessarily those of *The Battalion's* editors interested in submitting guest columns should contact the Opinion Editor at 845-3314.

Khomeini makes hell of fame

The devil called his management staff to order. "Men . . . and women, of course," he began. "Will you please take your seats." The devil did not like the idea of women in management, but after months of pressure from various she-devil rights groups, he had been forced to relent and name female executives.

"As you may have heard," the devil went on as the room fell silent, "the Ayatollah Khomeini arrives in hell this afternoon.

"It is not every day we receive someone with a background such as his.

"What I am looking for from you guys — and gals, too, of course — are some suggestions regarding the appropriate punishment for this mad despot.

"How about you, Ursor?"

"I say we put the Ayatollah into the dung pit, head first, next to Hitler," said Ursor.

"I think not," said the devil. "I want to keep Hitler alone. Being head down in a dung pit isn't nearly as wretched if you know somebody else is there with you.

"Not bad," said the devil, "but it's still



Lewis Grizzard
Syndicated Columnist

not exactly what I'm looking for. Yes, Ms. Durbalia?"

The devil did not particularly care for Ms. Durbalia, whom he considered a troublemaker. It was Ms. Durbalia who led the other female executives to demand that the devil end the rule that forced female employees to keep their tails covered while in the office or when out representing The Firm. But she did have an obvious mean streak.

"I say we put the sucker behind the Door of Gore," she said.

"And?" asked the devil.

"Put bamboo reeds under his toenails," said Ms. Durbalia.

"Go on."

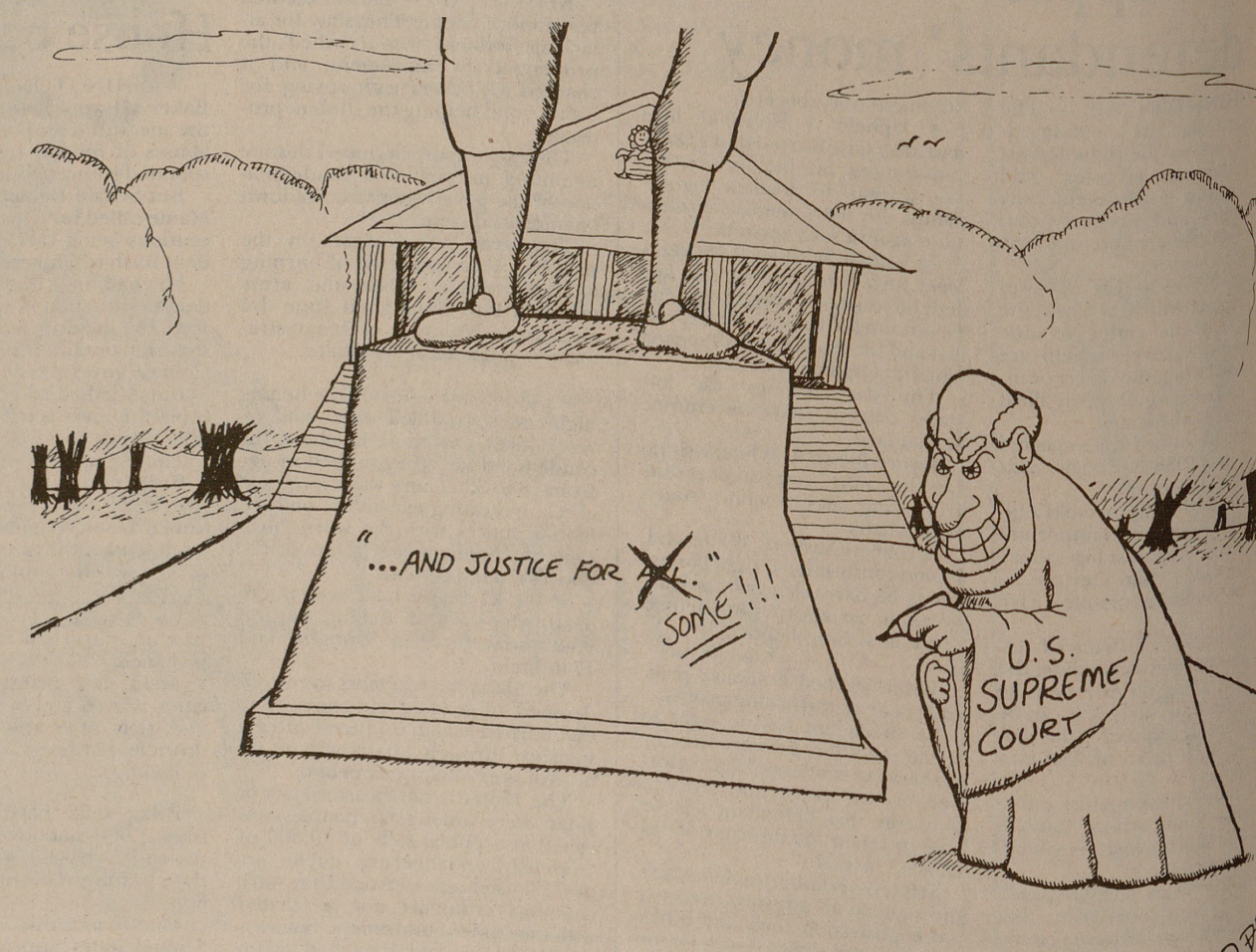
"And cut off his fingers one at a time with a dull butcher knife."

"I'm beginning to like it," smiled the devil.

Ms. Durbalia continued.

"While we're doing all that to him, we'll make him listen to 'The Satanic Verses' being read aloud."

The devil heartily approved and thought to himself, "Perhaps women know a little bit more about how to torture a man than I gave them credit for." Copyright 1989, Cowles Syndicate



The Battalion
(USPS 045 360)
Member of
Texas Press Association
Southwest Journalism Conference
The Battalion Editorial Board
Ellen Hobbs,
Editor
Juliette Rizzo,
Opinion Page Editor
Fiona Soltes,
City Editor
Drew Leder, Chuck Squatriglia,
News Editors
Steven Merritt,
Sports Editor
Kathy Haveman,
Art Director
Hal Hammons,
Makeup Editor

Editorial Policy
The *Battalion* is a non-profit, self-supporting newspaper operated as a community service to Texas A&M and Bryan-College Station.
Opinions expressed in *The Battalion* are those of the editorial board or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty or the Board of Regents.
The *Battalion* also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Journalism.
The *Battalion* is published Monday through Friday during Texas A&M regular semesters, except for holiday and examination periods.
Mail subscriptions are \$17.44 per semester, \$34.62 per school year and \$36.44 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.
Our address: *The Battalion*, 230 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-1111.
Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Battalion*, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77843-4111.