

## The Battalion Editorial Board

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The following opinions are a consensus of The Battalion opinion staff and senior editors.

## Killer ignorance

### Lack of sex education risks students' lives

"You'll do it if you love me" — or if you want to die. The words, carved into the bedrooms, parking lots and back seats of time, assume an entirely different meaning today in a world faced with the reality of AIDS. Teens today not only must deal with the moral dilemma of premarital sex and the social consequence of unplanned pregnancy, but also must cope with the deadly reality of HIV and AIDS — and apparently, our youth, ever invincible and eternally young, are unable to handle the magnitude of the situation at hand, as the rate of HIV-infected babies to mothers under the age 19 increases at a shocking, even frightening, rate.

Last week the Texas Department of Health released a report showing a dramatic increase in the number of HIV-infected babies born to teenage mothers. According to Health Commissioner David Smith, the results of this report demonstrate that teenagers are unaware of the real threat posed to them by HIV and AIDS. Smith encouraged educators and administrators to seek new, "non-traditional" methods of educating teens about HIV.

As enlightened educators battle concerned parent groups in school board meetings across the country, students lose as their needs for

concrete sex education information are ignored. They watch as the statistics concerning teen pregnancy and AIDS are abandoned.

Rather than sponsor diluted curricula which tends toward an abstinence-only sex education course for students, school districts, administrators, teachers, parents and officials in Austin must develop a realistic, hard-hitting approach to combating AIDS in our schools by giving students the cold, essential facts about birth control and sexually transmitted diseases, especially AIDS. No more can the moral delicacy of sexuality serve as an excuse to shelter kids from the reality of death. While many argue that the teaching of birth control in public schools acts as an encouragement to promiscuity and experimentation, the reality of HIV-infected children born to unwed, teenage mothers mandates a stronger, more comprehensive statewide curriculum of sex education, one which teachers will be trained to effectively implement and which will be taught the same way to every child in Texas.

When a teen asks his sex education teacher if "it's OK to use plastic wrap" as a condom substitute, Texas teens cannot afford to go without a more forceful sex education curriculum.

## Dues due

### Incarcerated criminals must also pay fines

Criminals are getting away without paying their due. Literally.

Last week it was released that in Harris County alone more than \$14 million in fines were imposed with some sort of prison sentence last year. Of that, less than \$2 million were paid.

State district judge Ted Poe stated, "When a fine is assessed, it's a statement by the court or the jury to keep the person in jail."

But more is needed than a "statement."

Criminals are being released onto our streets at an alarming rate, many have not even served their full prison sentence, let alone paid their fine. The "statement" is not being heard and the phrase "paying their debt to society" has been made into a joke.

State district judge Joe Kegans and others believe it is like trying to "get blood out of a turnip," meaning that many convicts just cannot pay the fine they are given.

But court systems must no longer allow criminals to walk away without paying their fines. If a jury hands down a sentence of 20 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine, then that criminal

must not only serve his or her sentence, but also pay the fine. If that means suspending parole and putting the criminal to work to pay the debt, so be it. The least they can do is work off the monetary debt they owe society. If at the end of their term they have not paid off the debt, keep them in and working until they do.

Right now, the system is such that it really does not care if a fine is paid. It took one honest felon two days to track down to whom his fine must be paid. The judge, the prosecutor, the district attorney, the state prison system and the sheriff's department did not know who would take the man's check.

Who was responsible? The sheriff's department. And they did not even know when he asked them.

This case only proves once more the sorry shape the Texas prison system is in.

The courts must enforce the sentences they give.

Criminals who are given a fine with their prison term must be expected to pay it.

We must expect them to pay their full debt to society.

MARGULIES  
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NEW JERSEY

Mr. President,  
voters are unhappy  
with the choices...  
They want new  
faces in the race...

NO

PROBLEM!

## Men versus women

### Gender differences cause lots of problems, thank goodness

One of my classes spent all of last week on the topic of gender differences. It had to have been the liveliest group discussion I have been part of in a long time. For the most part, we men and women struggled to understand one another's behavior. Well... that's not entirely true.

First, we griped at one another. Then, we threw stereotypes around. Finally, we tried a little bit of understanding, and some of us were successful. Most weren't.

I see it this way. There are some things that are fundamentally different between men and women. Maybe the difference is the result of a cerebral brain wash occurring between the two hemispheres of the brain in males at birth. Or maybe little girls have a doll gene and little boys have a truck gene. Call it a phenomena.

Whatever the case, there are just certain things that men do for reasons that women are incapable of appreciating or understanding. Belching and passing gas for instance. It just seems that men do a lot more of both than women. Perhaps, it is closer to the truth to say that men are louder and find more joy in gastrointestinal bodily functions than most women can appreciate.

And sports. A man is not a man unless he knows the entire lineup of any given football team over the last three decades along with the entire existing body of obscure baseball trivia ranging from the 1919 White Sox to last night's game. I am truly amazed by a man's capacity to recall such copious amounts of data and

learned long, long ago that when a man in my company starts talking stats, I either pretend I know exactly what he's saying or face at least 10 minutes of strained silence. Woe to any woman who doesn't know that Nolan Ryan is the all-time knockout king of baseball.

But what about women, right? Admittedly, I just can't help but be biased. It's difficult for me to relate to a man's view of a woman. However, I have noticed that there are a few very common complaints that men share.

PMS. "My girlfriend will go from being perfectly sweet and loving to a drooling, snarling, noxious thing of estrogen-induced evil." First of all, if your girlfriend actually does this, you need to a) change your cologne or b) get a new girlfriend.

All this stuff about PMS is for the most part exaggerated. Sure, we can get a little moody. I admit it. But it's rarely that extreme, and I've observed that men are as moody as women. Men just don't have the right organs for women to blame it on.

"Girls take forever to get ready!" Yep, you got us there. It often does take a woman much longer to get dressed and ready to leave than it does a man. It's true, and I feel bad. I try to hurry. I do. But nothing makes the situation worse than, "Are you ready yet?"

Come on, guys! Give us a break. Have you ever really stopped to compare what you have to do and what we have to do? Besides donning three layers of clothing, we usually have to dry and style our hair along with applying makeup in just such a way that we look "natural." Don't ask. Nobody knows what natural is anymore. We only know that it takes a long time.

There is one thing for which I do feel men take a bad rap. It is unfair to say, "Men only have sex on their mind." (They have sex and sports on

their mind. No, just kidding.) It is just as true a statement as saying, "Women only have sex on their mind."

Sexuality is such an individual thing, that it shouldn't be gender stereotyped towards men or women. There are as many women as men who seem compelled to constantly dwell on sex. And there are as many men as women who treat the subject with a reasonable amount of diplomacy.

Not all differences are bad, mind you. It's nice to watch the same men who would not normally be caught dead sharing anything more than a vice-gripped handshake turn into shouting, jumping, laughing, hugging fools when their team comes through at the last minute. I like the way men can fix anything mechanical and try to fake it if they don't know how. I like a man's ability to open the jelly jar in one effortless twist after I've been working for two hours to loosen it.

Our differences really contribute to a great deal of the attraction between men and women. We never really will understand each other, and thank goodness for that. How boring it would be if men figured out why Hallmark commercials are emotional experiences for women. And what would be left to ponder should women comprehend the untold depths of beauty and mysticism a man finds beneath the hood of a car?

The best thing to do is to just accept the fact that men and women don't see things identically and appreciate the other's view as much as humanly possible. If nothing else, it keeps us all on our toes. As the French say, "Vive la difference!"

Garrard is a sophomore speech communications major



Toni Garrard

## Mail Call

### Policy on athletes helps them, A&M

This letter is in response to an article that appeared in The Battalion on April 14 that I feel perpetrates a dangerous stereotype and seems to be biased towards athletes.

It was the article concerning whether athletes should be exempt from the admissions standards other students meet. A Rice University official stated that this practice was a "shameful travesty." I feel that the real travesty would occur in discounting these young men and women sorely in need of an atmosphere conducive to learning and sorely in need of an experience they might otherwise not receive. What about non-athletes that do not meet university criteria? Is that also a shameful travesty or are athletes the only ones that get admitted in this manner? A&M has thousands of regular students who don't meet the initial admission standards, but because they are given a chance, they are attending and achieving in this great university. Should athletes, simply because they are athletes, not be given this same opportunity? That would be a "shameful travesty."

The Battalion implied that admission to this university should be based on SAT scores. To me,

this is akin to implying that if an individual does poorly on standardized tests, he/she does not have the capabilities to meet the standards in an A&M classroom. Time and again, student athletes have demonstrated the SAT to be an extremely poor indicator of classroom achievement.

The Battalion also stated that to allow athletes in under these conditions "cheapens the educational experience for other students." This statement was on page 9 and was preceded by two pages of articles detailing the accomplishments of A&M's athletic teams. Does it not seem hypocritical, if the athletes are truly cheapening the educational experience for other students, to dedicate two or three pages to Aggie sports everyday? Should we put athletes by the wayside merely because they possess special skills or should we give them a chance to showcase their talents while also working towards a degree? The answer is obvious.

Another point I'd like to make is that once admitted, athletes must maintain the same standards as non-athletes. They must maintain the same standards while under the pressure of parents, coaches, athletic advisors, media, etc., while other students do not have to deal with the majority of these problems. Texas A&M is first and foremost a tool for education, but does that entail merely academia or does it include Midnight Yell, Bonfire, Saturday nights at the Dixie Chicken, Silver Taps, and the Cotton Bowl? Fortunately for the student body, we have been

able to attract top-notch athletes who are also good people, who obviously have had the capabilities to achieve in the classroom. To cheat the athletes or the students out of these experiences would be the most obvious travesty to me.

The Battalion stated that the average SAT score for incoming freshmen last year was 1058 while Aggie athletes only averaged 918. The editors fail to look at the final outcome. There are numerous examples of successes they failed to mention. For example, of the 58 players Villanova basketball coach Rollie Massimino had play for him, all 58 graduated. While this may not be the rule, it is certainly not the exception (18 of the 20 players who played for Coach Barone at Creighton graduated and the other two are working toward their degree). I could go on and on with these examples of success.

In conclusion, I would like to pose one question to the editors of The Battalion: does it cheapen the educational experience to give athletes an opportunity to get a degree and participate in sports or would it be better to merely dismiss these athletes and disregard their opportunity for the experience of a lifetime?

Higher education should be available to these individuals and I say Give them a chance!!

Brian Beckom  
Class of '95

### Have an opinion? Express it!

The Battalion is interested in hearing from its readers.

All letters are welcome. Letters must be signed and must include classification, address and a daytime phone number for verification purposes. They should be 250 words or less. Anonymous letters will not be published.

The Battalion reserves the right to edit all letters for length, style and accuracy. There is no guarantee the letters will appear. Letters may be brought to 013 Reed McDonald, sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111 or can be faxed to 845-2647.