



## Sexism: drawing a clearer line

### How can we distinguish sensitivity from paranoia?

Unlike some college males, I am not a barbarian. I have a general concept of widely accepted behavior toward, and in the presence of, women. But because of a recent verbal lashing by a female friend of mine, I realized just how confused I really am about what constitutes sexual harassment and what doesn't.

I am not referring to explicitly unacceptable behavior, like the boss who makes lewd suggestions and double entendres to his secretary, or the professor who propositions a student. Things that concern me are that fine line between playful, flirtatious remarks and unacceptable overtures, and a seemingly pervasive male attitude in our society that tends to view women as somewhat less important than men.



FRANK STANFORD  
Columnist

First, males must determine what behavior towards a woman is appropriate in a given situation. How old is she? The woman in the next seat in history class doesn't even blink when you mention how "pissed-off" your grade makes you. If she is more than ten years your elder, you find yourself speaking in a more "mature" manner and probably without expletives. If she is your mother's or even grandmother's age, you smile more, address them with a plethora of "Yes ma'ams" and "No ma'ams" and make a concerted effort to suppress all foul words -- even the mild ones.

Although these may be merely examples of good self-monitoring practice, it is here that the ambiguity begins.

If there is indeed a somewhat hierarchical approach to determining behavior, is there a "lower-archival" one? In other words, should the male change his attitude or behavior according to the way a woman dresses, behaves or speaks? Most of us would say, "Of course. That happens naturally." But this perception is often misinterpreted by males, resulting in an angry woman and the buffoon asking, "What'd I do?"

I have always assumed, perhaps wrongly, that when a woman's dress at a nightclub prompts stares and open mouths, it was intended to do so, and that any overconfident guy who's thinking, "She wants me!" can be expected

to approach her. At what point does his overture become harassing? The second time? The third? Perhaps only when he touches her arm? Has "no" been stated distinctly?

Any physical action is seen as a serious violation of social etiquette, but I have seen women converse with, and even dance with a guy to get him off her back, while others take offense at any approach.

What about the male who admires from a distance, reluctant to possibly offend? Has he missed the opportunity to meet Miss Right? Should he wait for her to approach, a practice not so accepted in our society?

Any woman should definitely have the freedom to speak, act, and wear whatever she likes without the threat of harassment or offensive comments, but unfair as it is, such freedom runs the risk of aggressive male behavior.

The issue now becomes one of achieving gender equality by changing or at least slowing the proliferation of these behavioral tendencies toward women. It appears on the surface that men are mainly to blame. After all, women don't really DO anything to deserve such treatment. But to many men, a woman who is just BEING is "doing" something to him.

An attractive woman walking in front of a construction site, for example, is seen as a tease for the workers, who vent their frustration by hollering bawdy remarks at her.

Does she deserve this? Absolutely not. But from an early age, most males are taught to view the female form as an object of beauty and adornment to be utilized for visual as well as physical pleasure, suppressing the notion of women as thinking, feeling beings.

The last few decades have seen great progress for women, but how can we possibly eliminate the gender roles that have perpetuated the idea of what it is to be feminine? Should we eliminate these roles or only alter them?

When half our bricklayers are women and half our nannies are men, will attitudes change? And what of those women who are sexist against themselves -- who firmly believe in traditional gender bias based on cultural norms or religious slant? Can we change their attitudes?

Obviously we have our work cut out for us. Only with clearly defined and widely agreed upon goals will the next step of progress be achieved.

Stanford is a graduate student in philosophy

### The Battalion Editorial Board

Jason Loughman, editor in chief

Mark Evans, managing editor

Stephanie Pattillo, city editor

Kyle Burnett, sports editor

Dave Thomas, night news editor

Anas Ben-Musa, Aggiefire editor

Mack Harrison, morning news editor

Billy Moran, photo editor

The Battalion



100 years at Texas A&M

## EDITORIAL

### Making the best of it

#### A&M system tries to soften cuts

While some people may find last week's layoffs by the Texas A&M University System a little hard to swallow, it appears the cuts have come only after administrators carved out as much as possible from other areas.

The decision to eliminate 53 jobs came after estimates of the System's income from the Available University Fund fell below previous years' levels. The fund provides more than one-third of the System's administrative and general offices budget.

"We've been reducing operating expenses and capital over time, but we're very people-intensive and there's not a lot of places we have left to go," Deputy Chancellor Ed Davis said.

Though it is unfortunate that administrators had to resort to eliminating jobs, the layoffs will allow the System to save \$2 million and pay for programs not funded solely by the Texas Legislature, such as retirement plans.

Administrators went the extra mile to protect as many jobs as they possibly could. They initiated a hiring freeze in January. They spent months planning for foreseen budget cuts. They cut office expenses.

All of this allowed them to reduce the number of employees actually let go by saving money in other areas.

Even those employees slated for termination may not find themselves actually out of a job. Some staff members will be transferred or see their positions consolidated.

Those staff members who are facing unemployment will not find themselves booted out onto the streets with nowhere to go.

Administrators have already given these employees priority for positions that open up elsewhere within the System. And the Human Resources Office is offering employees help in finding jobs outside of Texas A&M.

In a time of budget cuts and shrinking revenue from outside sources, A&M administrators could not expect to totally dodge laying off some of their employees and still adequately fund the System's programs.

They saw the cuts coming and tried to at least minimize the number of employees affected. All in all System officials did the best they could with such a difficult situation.



### Real facts support concealed gun bill

Regarding the bill to allow qualified citizens to carry concealed handguns, I'm sure it will be a repeat of last year's failed attempt. Sad. PC politics in action, folks. It's a political *gaucherie* to go against the prevailing (and totally inane) "wisdom" that this bill would lead directly to "old West" justice and "insult shootouts."

I don't hear anyone criticizing this "logic" in print. Why? Nobody can support it with hard facts; such evidence does not exist.

Consider what you've read opposing the concealed weapon concept. It's all replete with normative, not logical, constructs. Hardly admissible evidence to kill a concept that has proven effective in other states and municipalities have concealed gun laws. Florida was a fascinating case study. The doom and gloom experts predicted a bloodbath upon inception, and all hands watched with careful scrutiny for signs of Dodge City. And no, the world did not come crashing to a halt. Violent crime, however, decreased and there have been multiple documented saves under the new system. This is not a freak. In 1966, following a spree

of rapes in Orlando, police offered to train civilian women to use and carry handguns. Guess what? Rape in Orlando fell virtually to zero! Even more convincing is the "displacement" of crime observed. As rape fell so dramatically in Orlando, in surrounding environs the rate jumped 300 percent!

It puzzles me greatly why women's groups, and as well other minority groups at risk from the barbarically uneducated contingent of our society, are so in favor of conventional gun control. Read the Orlando story again! Conventional gun control does not work. Concealed weapon laws do.

Kevin Wilmeth  
Class of '93

Editorials appearing in The Battalion reflect the views of the editorial board. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions of other Battalion staff members, the Texas A&M student body, regents, administration, faculty or staff.

Columns, guest columns, and Mail Call items express the opinions of the authors.

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor and will print as many as space allows in the Mail Call section. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class, and phone number.

Contact the editor or managing editor for information on submitting guest columns.

We reserve the right to edit letters and guest columns for length, style, and accuracy.

Letters should be addressed to:  
The Battalion - Mail Call  
013 Reed McDonald / Mail stop 1111  
Texas A&M University  
College Station, TX 77843

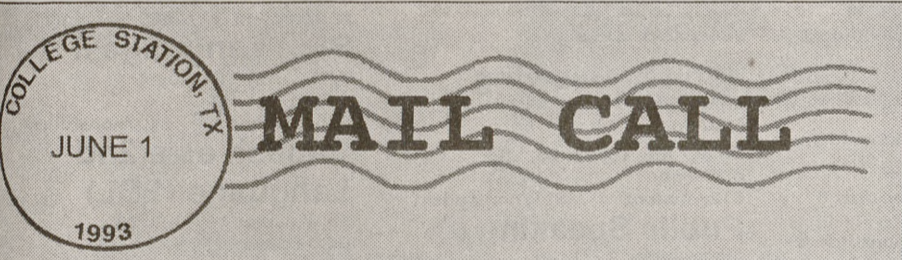
### Editor's note:

Applications are available in 013 Reed McDonald for The Battalion Reader's Panel.

The panel will meet regularly with editors to give us a better picture of what our readers want from their newspaper.

If you have ideas about the paper -- if you want to be involved -- stop by and fill out a short application.

It's your newspaper ...



### Smoking ban will cost us big money

President Mobley is trying to raise federal tax dollars! By prohibiting smoking on campus, people are going to be living longer because they won't be inhaling smoke. This means that after retirement they're going to be collecting social security for a long time. Social security comes from tax dollars which is paid by those people still working; the increased financial burden will be on them.

When you're 80 years old, sitting on your ass watching television and waiting for your check from the government to come in, your children and grandchildren will be working longer and harder for a lifestyle that won't be as good as yours. The horrible truth

can't be denied; it's already happening. We have to do something, now!

So if you read this, please, for the sake of your children and their children, please, start smoking. Start some other habits, too. Take drugs, drink booze, stop wearing seat-belts, use your hair dryer in the shower. We need to all be dead before we're 65.

And another thing, if anyone tries to stop you from dying, get rid of them. Impeach Bill Mobley! His four years are up! This is a public school, right? A public school in a democratic country? He's a president isn't he? I don't remember hearing anything about electing the school president, did you? Is it in the student handbook? Print this one up in bold print, 'cuz I got something to say!

Steven R. Bryson  
Class of '93

ny, June 1, 1993

Lawmakers de- to simply con- r the next two es.

as approved to Board of Insur- state's \$35 bil- industry. It also ations to prose- ict regulatory commissioner.

al that was de- insurance more or small busi- 50 people.

to provide for n against pre-

uston woman en's room at a lawmakers en-

facility where would have to of women's re- requirement ies either built

os, D-Austin, y" and good

er -- segment e good news, s, "slackers,"

Arthur, took m to stay in sed charging dergraduates 158 hours of ke.

as aimed at for recreation- subsidized by come a great

ey didn't mo- ergy, though, ound to con-

inale

UT THAT STEEL I AIN'T HURT WITHOUT PRESENT!!

troud

THE RESULT AVING AN BEAVER.

Rosas

BITTEN BY A KAPE THIS FATE!

EDWARD KING GIL PROTECTOR OF AGRIAN OF AGRIAN TRADITION!

WHAT A HORON