

## THE BATTALION Editorial Board

CHRIS WHITLEY, editor in chief

JULI PHILLIPS, managing editor  
 DAVE THOMAS, night news editor  
 BELINDA BLANCARTE, night news editor  
 MACK HARRISON, opinion editor  
 MARK EVANS, city editor  
 ANAS BEN-MUSA, AggieLife editor  
 MICHAEL PLUMER, sports editor  
 WILLIAM HARRISON, sports editor  
 KYLE BURNETT, photo editor



## EDITORIAL

### Helping hand

#### A&M aids disabled students

It can be difficult for incoming disabled students to learn what services are available to them. The student who uses a wheelchair signed up for a class her freshman year in the Military Sciences Building, which has no elevator. After she explained her situation to the Corps Commandant, she had two Corps men assist her to class every day.

Texas A&M University is making an effort to help students with learning and reading disabilities, not just those who demonstrate a physical disability. Support Services, located in the Koldus Building, offers services ranging from a handbook describing access to buildings on campus to textbooks on tape for students with visual or reading disabilities. There are tutors, advisers who teach study skills, note-taking services and extended-time testing for students with learning disabilities.

New campus buildings are designed to be very comfortable for the handicapped. Lecture halls have desks with spaces for wheelchairs in the back of the room. Some of the older buildings are not as convenient. In Harrington, students in wheelchairs are expected to sit in the aisles, which poses a problem when other students come in late and need to go around them. Regardless of the

kind of accessibility available however, University staff is generally very helpful in addressing problems students encounter and making an effort to solve them.

For students with visual impairments, there are brailers and cassette recorders with braille control buttons in the LRD on the sixth floor of Evans Library, as well as a laser reader which enlarges print and a reading machine that converts printed material into spoken English. For all disabled students, the Reference Division will retrieve books from the stacks and turn pages, photocopy materials or assist in other areas in which the students may need help.

The University should focus not just on access to classrooms, but on special events such as Bonfire and events held in G. Rollie White Coliseum. Some suggest temporary wheelchair ramps and platforms at Bonfire, and Networks, an organization of students with disabilities, hopes to work with the Muster Committee in order to create a more convenient way for students to attend Muster.

With all of the buildings and events on campus, it is difficult to make everything easily accessible. It's good to see that Texas A&M is making a strong effort.

## Sometimes women abuse their power

### Student falsely accused of exposure forced to plead guilty

This summer, exactly eight days after the regional baseball game against Yale, the College Station Police called Tony, an A&M student. An officer informed him that he had been accused of "exposing himself to a postal worker."

Tony asked if he was joking. The officer stated that he was quite serious and continued the conversation in an accusatory manner.

After the game, Tony, his roommate, Jeff, and his girlfriend, Tracy, had decided to go home for a few days. Tony drove alone. Jeff and Tracy followed. Stopped at a traffic signal, Tony glanced at the postal truck in the next lane. The woman driving the truck nodded at Tony and waved. Politely, he waved back.

He then realized that his friends were honking trying to capture his attention. They gestured at the gas station across the street. Tony confirmed the command by raising his arms and pointing to the station.

Within a few seconds they were at the gas station. They added water to the radiator of the second car and then drove home.

Tony never met the woman whom he allegedly victimized. Nor did he reveal himself to her. She thought she saw something that never happened. Maybe his gesture towards the gas station appeared to be directed

towards his lap. Maybe the woman was crazy. Maybe she was hallucinating. These options didn't seem likely to the police.

"The second that woman entered the police station, they decided I was guilty," Tony said. "They had convicted me before I even knew I had been accused of anything."

"My uncle, an attorney in Amarillo, told me that, in these cases, you must prove you are innocent, not the other way around," Tony said. "The jury will wonder why a woman around 50 years old would make this up. I wonder the same thing."

A few days after the phone call, Tony found a lawyer, paid a \$750 retainer and waited. The lawyer called the court house, and the judge reduced the charges from a Class B to a Class C misdemeanor.

Two months later, Tony was officially charged with disorderly conduct. Nobody ever contacted Jeff or Tracy for a statement. Practicing looking down into his car from the height and angle of a postal truck in the next lane, Tony and his parents determined it would have been physically impossible for the woman to see his lap. She remembered Tony driving a red car. His car is a metallic champagne. She also remembered him honking. His horn does not work.

Each discrepancy was considered insignificant, and his lawyer suggested he should surrender himself if the police came to arrest him.

"Then I had to make a choice," Tony explained. "I could pay the \$150 fine and \$20 court fee, thus cutting my losses at \$920 or I could agree to go to court."

To take the issue to court, Tony would have to pay the lawyer \$1,000 for each court

appearance, a fee that did not guarantee positive results. Of course Tony could choose to act as his own attorney, an action considered to be judicial suicide.

Instead, he paid the fine and in February must go before the court to end his six month probationary period.

And then it will finally be over. Or will it? "For weeks after it happened, I couldn't even look at anyone else at a stoplight. What can prevent this from happening to me again?" Tony asked in frustration.

Sexual harassment has been a hot topic recently. Women are no longer willing to accept any type of verbal or physical abuse in the workplace or in social settings. In an effort to protect female students, Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio has even established a set of regulations governing sexual intimacy. Many large corporations require all employees to attend seminars on sexual harassment and the repercussions of such behavior.

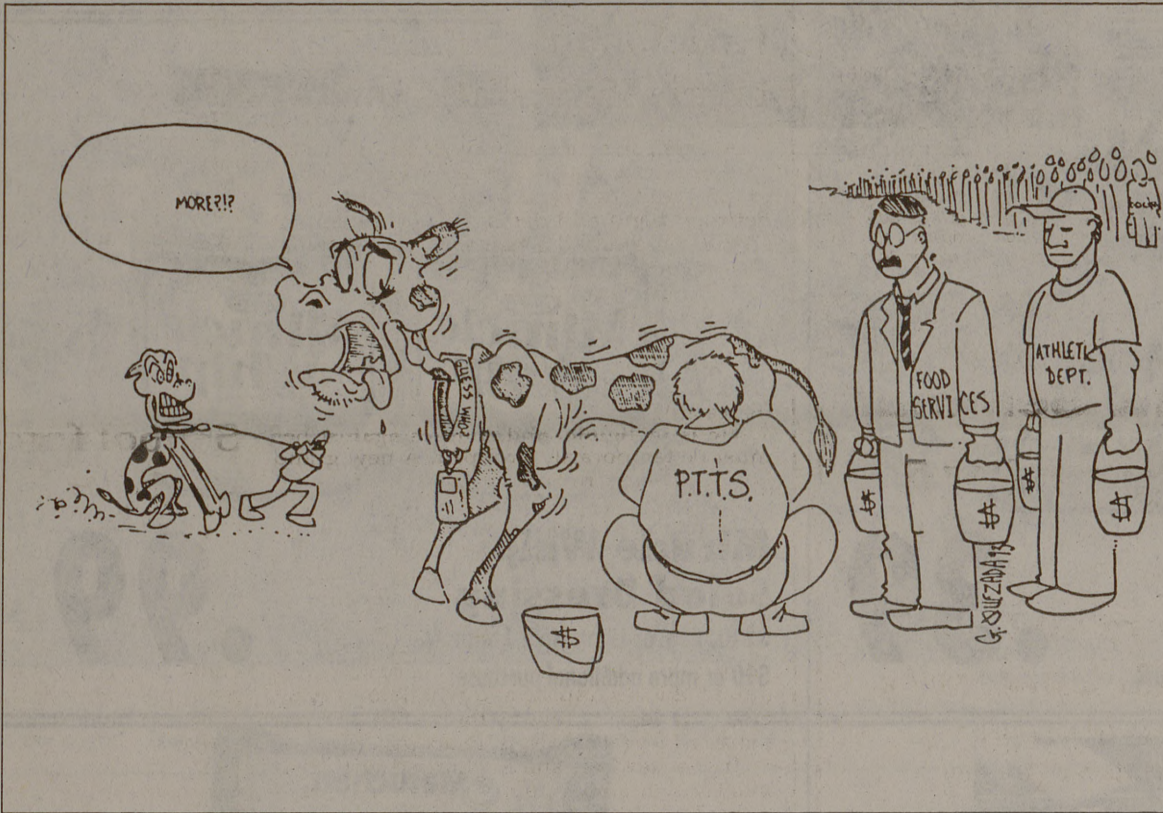
In today's age of lawsuits and exorbitant legal fees, women possess vast power from the simple potential to take legal action against harassment. It is important to use that power correctly.

By claiming sexual harassment for incidents that don't really involve victimization, women can dilute the argument for the genuinely abused. The ability to claim sexual harassment is a defense mechanism against mistreatment, not a weapon to get even with the male population.



MELISSA MEGLIOLA  
Columnist

Melissa Megliola is a senior industrial engineering major



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, cartoons and letters express the opinions of the authors.

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

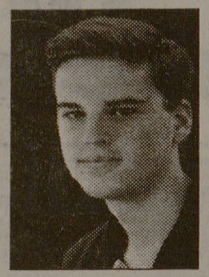
We reserve the right to edit letters and guest columns for length, style, and accuracy.

Contact the opinion editor for information on submitting guest columns.

Address letters to:  
 The Battalion - Mail Call  
 013 Reed McDonald  
 Mail stop 1111  
 Texas A&M University  
 College Station, TX 77843  
 Fax: (409) 845-2647

## Roadside diner offers glimpse of pre-McDonald's America

Somewhere between Houston and San Antonio sits a small unassuming building wrapped in those neon lights that are not by design, but from wear.



ELIOT WILLIAMS  
Columnist

A friend of mine had the opportunity to visit this particular diner over the summer and it was an experience I shall never forget — not because of the food they served, but rather the distinctive personality the diner took on. A personality that can not be duplicated by McDonald's or Burger King.

cated about 200 yards off the interstate. The four booths along the west wall offered the customers pay phones at their table. They were the old rotary kind that are probably worth more today as antiques than they were worth when they were new. Their baby blue appearance was in sharp contrast to the restaurant red vinyl booths. The floor was an odd matrix of old linoleum and broken tiles — it was a well worn surface.

Patrons could choose to have their meal served at the counter which, in pure diner fashion, filled most of the room. This was the option for which most of the patrons seemed to opt. Several dozen old greasy caps adorned the east wall of the diner. They were obviously donated by the Cattleman's more frequent visitors — the truck drivers who pass through on their way in and out of Houston.

The appearance of the Cattleman's, however, is not its charm. It is the conversation one overhears that make the visit worthwhile. During my repose, the locals somehow became engrossed in a conversation involving paranormal encounters. One of the waitresses remarked that she had

seen the ghost of her dead grandmother in her house numerous times. Others talked of their encounters with spooks and spirits. To the casual observer, it would appear that Cattleman's Cafe lied at the epicenter of paranormal activity in Texas.

Other visitors carried on their own conversations. One couple argued over

**People began to rely on the familiarity of the golden arches rather than on the friendly personableness of a family owned diner. Henry Ford's assembly line process was applied to food service.**

the best route to a nearby lake while several truckers shared rivaling road stories over their hamburgers. It was a surreal experience to say the least.

The Cattleman's, and diners of its genre, began sprouting up all over America when the Interstate and Highway Act

created a clientele of thousands of hungry truck drivers and young adults relishing the freedom that the new highways gave.

The diners were mostly family owned affairs. They were such a significant part of our culture that there was a very successful TV series based on them that ran in the early 80s. All of us remember how cordial and friendly Alice, Flo and the rest of the waitresses at Mel's Diner were to all their customers — more importantly how personable they were.

Small roadside cafes had the luxury of taking interest in their patrons' well-being. Diners became the source of travelers' home cooked meals on the road.

Sadly, the era didn't last long. Soon, the concept of fast food franchises became popular, and diners slowly lost their popularity. People began to rely on the familiarity of the golden arches rather than on the friendly personableness of a family owned diner. Henry Ford's successful assembly line process for producing goods was applied to food service.

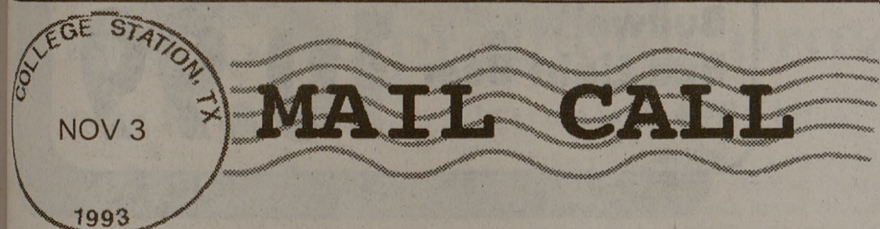
Lost in the process, however, was the personality of a roadside diner. It is hard to imagine a McDonald's employee taking a

serious interest in how your day has been. The person-to-person interaction was replaced by the ever poignant metaphysical question, "Would you like fries with that?"

Our imaginations are hardly challenged by the invariability of the Burger King interior. Rather than being stimulated by the differing appearance of the local diner, our society has instead chosen the banal design of a Jack in the Box restaurant whose plans are faxed to every startup franchise.

In our strive for efficient design, we have driven the originality out of our collective unconsciousness. Diners like Cattleman's are a fading breed. It is sad that we find soybean burgers served in 30 seconds more important than communication with others in our society. Everyone who fears losing their individuality would be well served to visit a place like the Cattleman's. Oases of the highway, diners are shrines to an essential time in our cultural history that everyone should enjoy visiting.

Eliot Williams is a senior electrical engineering major



### A&M shouldn't put up with corruption

After reading the quotes from our University officials over the past couple of weeks regarding the book store and Food Service scandals, I am shocked beyond words about how these officials have the gall to make such bald faced lies and expect us to swallow them.

Board of Regents Chairman Ross Margraves, a political appointee, and his cronies, Robert Smith, go with their wives on several expensive junkets paid for by a company they are supposed to be bargaining against and tell us this is "standard procedure."

Bull! This is nothing other than betraying the trust and interests of people they are supposed to be here to serve.

Next, Margraves is put under investigation after serious charges of impropriety are made against him to state offi-

cial. He expects us to believe that if he hadn't given a copy of the charges to the state officials that there would not be an investigation in the first place.

Bull! Any idiot could perceive that he had only been furnished a copy of the charges after they had already been forwarded to the investigating officials. Then he has the gall to trivialize the charges by calling them "hateful" while he wraps himself in the A&M flag.

Finally, Smith has the audacity to tell us he was not intending to sell off Food Services to a contractor, while he sacks management known to oppose this idea. He expects us to believe the administrators have been reassigned because they were needed elsewhere. I guess a new load of paper clips needed sorting.

Only after the investigation into his dealings does he accept a proposal from his own lackey to keep Food Services in

charge of the Underground. Why didn't he accept Food Services' proposal before?

These two are behaving in a grossly unethical manner. We should be concerned that these liars and crooks have such power at our school and insist they be immediately removed. At least we should ask ourselves some serious questions about how our school is really being run and resolve not to tolerate corruption.

Paul Deignan  
Class of '94

### Zachry always late in changing clocks back

For the last four years, something has bothered me about this world-class insti-

tution. I have seen a certain event occur seven times since I've come here, and each time it brings the same result.

This has led me to put forth this question to those who run our great university: "Why does it always take two weeks to adjust the clocks in Zachry (Engineering HQ) after daylight savings time?"

Also, I've always wondered why the clocks on different floors in Zachry are set to different times. You could be on time for a test while in the basement, yet late as soon as you walk upstairs.

How can things like this go on at one of the nation's top engineering schools? My elementary school never had problems like these. Someone is sleeping on the job.

Jeff Krontz  
Class of '94