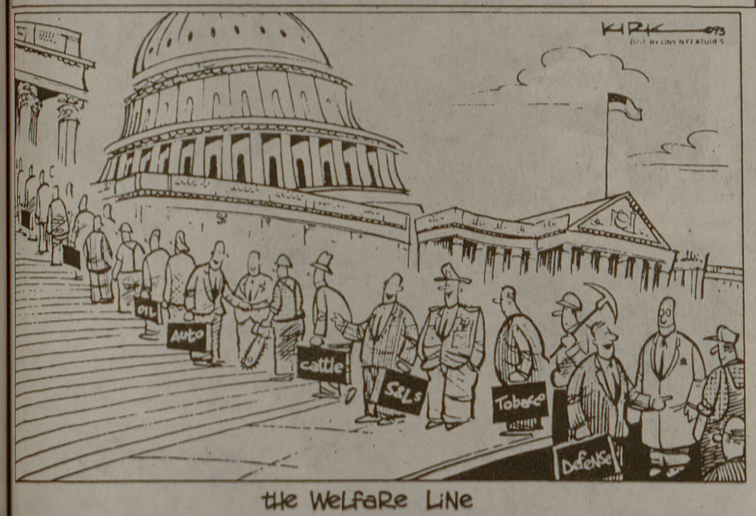


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the Welfare Line

EDITORIAL

Court decision

Ruling helps harassment victims

Tuesday's Supreme Court ruling that employees no longer need to show "serious psychological injury" to prove claims of sexual harassment takes a positive step in resolving problems surrounding the issue. The courts, however, must watch closely for abuses of the new precedent.

The old standard was obviously unacceptable. The legal system should work to stop sexual harassment before victims' lives are devastated, not after.

Supporters of the new standard hope it will act as a deterrent to further sexual harassment. They hope the ruling will encourage employers to develop and enforce rules to prevent these problems from arising.

The less restrictive legal procedures will probably lead to more employees to report cases of harassment. Opponents of the Supreme Court's decision fear that lessened restrictions will allow people to make false claims.

The need for proof of the inappropriate behavior still stands out as the bottom line of the issue. As in the case of

liability and malpractice suits, the changes in sexual harassment judgments could result in a massive tangle of convoluted legalities.

The impact of the ruling seems to justify the risk of a new series of legal complexities.

Before last week's decision, employees had to prove they suffered severe psychological breakdowns due to sexual harassment on the job in order to make a case against their employers.

Teresa Harris, who in the mid-1980s brought the original charges cited in the court's decision, quit her job after two and one-half years of misconduct by her boss.

Now that the courts have removed the element of psychological damage from such cases, victims will have a quicker way out of an oppressive environment.

The end of the psychological damage restrictions in sexual harassment trials ends a long-standing injustice. As long as the courts guard against false accusations, the recent decision will benefit employers and employees.

Two types of interracial relationships

Couples should date because of love, not out of envy

One of my girlfriends encountered the young man she'd had a crush on one night. (He happened to be a very attractive little business major.)

My girlfriend had let this young man know that she was interested in him quite subtly, and he seemed to respond. But a little after that, his interest dwindled, and he wasn't so attentive or sensitive. It deteriorated to the point that neither would really even speak to each other. It became a game.

The night she saw him at a dance was a little stressful for all of us. My tender little ears were bruised from the names she would grit out every once and a while. Sometimes, she would just stare like she was slicing him into nice, thin slices. At one point, I asked her if we needed to take her home.

The next day, another girlfriend was interviewed by a teaching assistant on her ideas about the relationships between black men and women. Her viewpoint was frank and not in the most positive light, but she was honest.

One of the questions that she brought up to him and later to me was "Why do black men date undesirable white women, and when black women date white men, why is it so wrong?"



TRACEY JONES
Columnist

I thought about that. And it seems to me that there are two kinds of interracial dating that are distinct and should be treated as such. Whether it is more popular in 1993 or just more "acceptable" for an interracial couple to be seen in public without hearing overt slurs, it is a characteristic of dating that will most likely be with our society for decades to come.

Although covert much of the time, the slurs do occur quite frequently.

Black men who date white women are denounced heavily by white men as well as by black women. It seems to be automatically assumed that a black man is not good enough for her. Or that white women are looking for something in a black man that is absent in a white man. But this is not always the case, even though the slurs portray this.

It is true that some black men look to Anglo women as status symbols and will date them as a way of elevating their own status. This attitude stems from the days of slavery. As whites were placed above blacks, it was embedded in many blacks that whites were superior.

Furthermore, the sexual myths that surrounded black men and women spurred white men to "protect" their pure wives and sisters from Negro men while they themselves indulged in sexual relations with the slave women either mutually or forcefully.

There was an underlying fear of the sexual virility of black men that was salient because in our society, this is what determines a "true man." Thousands of black men suffered horribly, some even losing their lives, because of this pervasive fear.

Now that it is no longer legally taboo to

date interracially, it is both a status symbol and source of power for some black men to date Anglo women — any Anglo woman. That is why you will see these black men with Anglo women who are very unattractive and unkempt.

But on the other side of the coin, there are black men who are very secure in themselves and will date a woman for her inherent qualities. And she may happen to be black, white or neither.

These men do not choose women who have nothing to offer them just for the sake of appearance. For instance, Quincy Jones is married to an Anglo woman who happens to be very attractive and is a fairly successful actress.

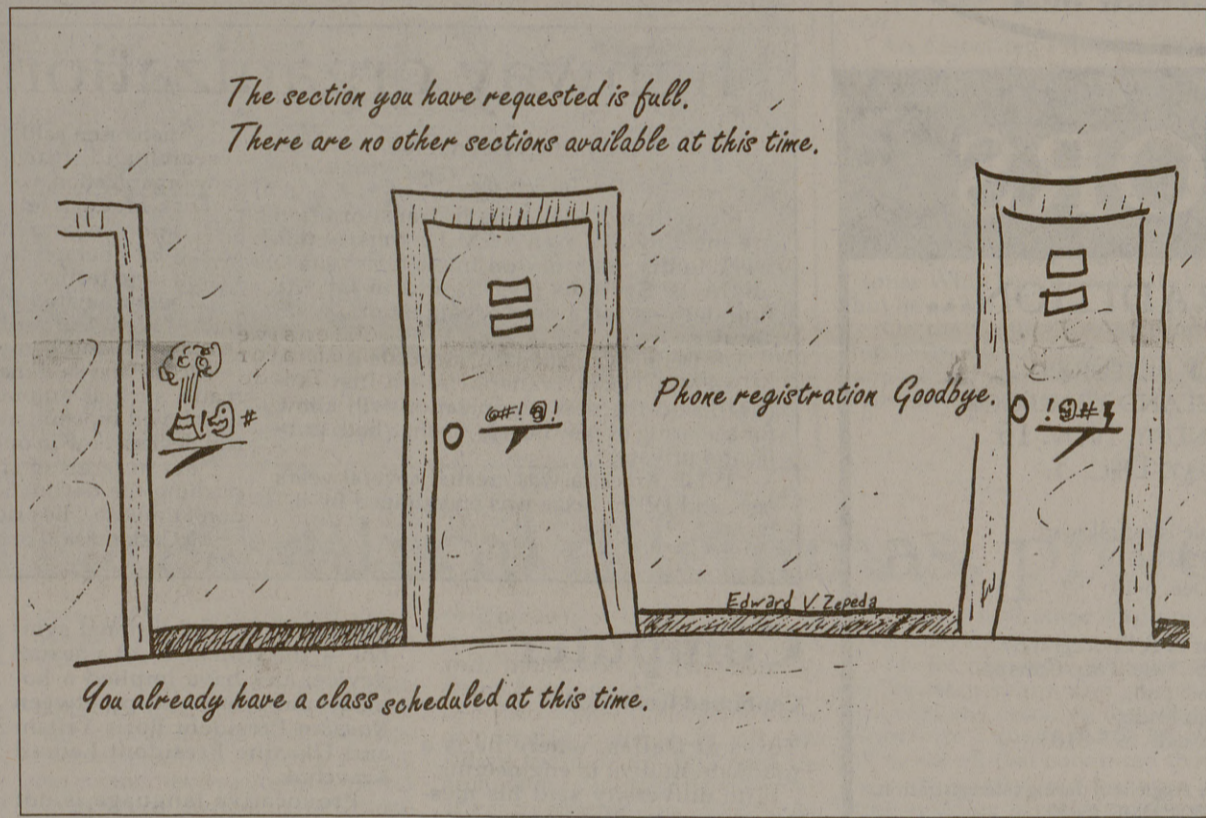
The same is true for black women. Dating outside the race does not mean that black men are inferior or less attractive as a whole, but rather that you appreciate the beauty in others also.

In addition, the dating environment is shifting radically for black women. As more and more African-American women are moving into the high-paying professions — law, medicine, engineering — there are fewer and fewer black men available.

In other words, black women are outnumbering black men, but not outnumbering professional men in general. So it seems only natural that these women would look to a different pool of eligible men.

Culture draws people together, not color. Making a life with another involves knowing that person on the inside. And everybody is the same color there.

Tracey Jones is a senior psychology major



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Forget multiculturalism; environmentalism is next hot topic

Remaining perfectly aligned with the prevailing politically correct doctrine of our time, the Faculty Senate approved a mandatory multicultural requirement for all future students last week.



ELIOT WILLIAMS
Columnist

While this policy will certainly make Texas A&M a leader in the field, our focus on diversity and multiculturalism seems to be distracting us from leading in the next hot topic of the nineties — the environment.

"But Eliot," you're thinking, "the environment is an old issue that was popular back when Gorbachev was in power."

However, the environment, like all important societal issues, has made its return to the forefront.

With the election of Bill Clinton and Al Gore, this nation is seeing a return to strict

environmental policies. Surprisingly, the media has spent very little time on this topic. It is a perfect example of how our government is misusing its authority, ignoring our rights and wasting our money all in an effort to supposedly save the environment. Not to mislead you here, these policies are not Clinton's. President Bush, in fact, adopted most of them; however, the handling of these issues is not getting any better under the current administration. Here are a few examples of our environmental policy as interpreted by the courts of the United States.

Wayne Hage, a Nevada rancher, hired a worker to clear some scrub brush from irrigation ditches that have been in use on his property since the turn of the century. He was convicted under the Clean Water Act for "redirecting streams" and faces a possible five-year sentence.

Harvey Van Fossan, of Springfield, Ill., was ordered by city officials to get rid of some pigeons that were causing a nuisance on a vacant lot near his home. To comply, Van Fossan used strychnine-laced corn, which consequently killed two common grackles and two mourning doves.

Under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act,

shooting birds is okay, poisoning them is not. Van Fossan was convicted under the treaty, fined \$450 and given three years probation. The prosecutor called this "one of the most important cases" in his office — although in North America, there are approximately 400 million birds like the ones Van Fossan poisoned.

Van Fossan was lucky — his horrific act was committed in 1989, before the

A Nevada rancher hired a worker to clear some scrub brush from irrigation ditches. He was convicted under the Clean Water Act for "redirecting streams."

U.S. Sentencing Commission imposed mandatory prison terms for environmental crimes. If Van Fossan had committed his crime against nature today, he would be subject to a \$5,000 fine and up to six months in jail.

Perhaps the most interesting of these cases involves Chicago commodities trad-

er Paul Tudor II. He hired environmental engineer Bill Ellen, the ex-wetlands regulator for the Virginia Marine Resources Commission, to build duck ponds on Tudor farms, a 3,200 acre development on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

Tudor obtained some 38 separate permits and hired two former Maryland regulators who, when they had worked for the state, had helped draw the maps that separate wetlands from uplands for the project.

As construction proceeded, the Bush administration redefined wetlands to include basically the entirety of Tudor Farms. Bill Ellen was stuck in a game of legal limbo. In May 1990, he was indicted on six counts of violating section 404 of the Clean Water Act of 1972 for altering 86 acres of wetlands. Ellen countered that he had in fact created wetlands, rather than destroy them.

To indict Ellen, the government relied on a technical violation that Ellen had moved two truckloads of dirt illegally — you see, the federal wetlands manual describes even moving dirt as potentially filling a wetland. Assistant U.S. Attorney Jane Barrett wrote in the fall of 1992 that Ellen's actions "resulted in the illegal filling of

many acres of very valuable and rapidly disappearing wetlands."

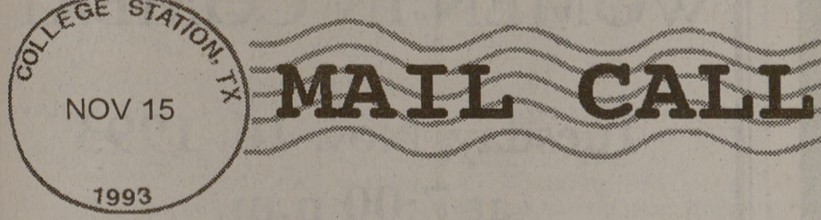
You've got to be some kind of engineer to be able to do that with only two truckloads of dirt. Ellen was sentenced to six months in prison.

Tudor was also indicted but agreed to pay a \$1 million fine and pay another \$1 million to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. He also received 18 months probation during which he was not allowed to hunt birds.

It's hard not to make the analogy to A&M's decision to put the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity on probation last year for holding a racially insensitive party. SAE members were subjected to classes on race relations in the same way the Tudor was told not to hunt birds.

Both penalties accomplished nothing, yet both punishments let bureaucrats show how powerful they are. Now that A&M has conquered multiculturalism, how long before the UPD starts checking our garbage for un-recycled materials?

Eliot Williams is a sophomore electrical engineering major



Don't forget to thank your Bonfire Buddy

Howdy Ags! Bonfire is in the making, and with Bonfire comes Bonfire Buddies. I am writing to voice my concern about the current Bonfire Buddy situation.

One of the reasons Bonfire Buddies is organized is so that men and women can help motivate each other in the building of Bonfire (not to mention meeting people of the opposite sex).

I am a sophomore, and for the past two years, I have been part of the Bonfire Buddy program. When a person signs up to be a Bonfire Buddy, you agree to

exchange gifts and talk with your buddy. I, along with others, have experienced a lack of participation with our supposed "Buddy."

It seems that many people spend a lot of time and money on gifts to their exchanges and never receive a gift, phone call or thank you in return. (A simple thank you is not asking much.)

I guess what I am trying to say is if you sign-up to be a Bonfire Buddy, follow through. The program doesn't work one way. Be courteous enough to acknowledge a gift that is given to you, even a simple phone call is appreciated.

Jennifer Ditrach
Class of '96

Headline helps bring humor back to Batt

Hooray! Step aside, "Fritch"! Get lost, "Tubularman"! Give it up "Just the Beginning." Humor has been rediscovered at The Battalion.

James Bernsen is the comedy future of this fine paper. If he can only continue his witty story headlines, just as he did Nov. 10 with "Sperm donors give HELPING HAND to infertile couples."

Brilliant. I laughed and laughed. Thank you, James. It may have been unintentional, but you brightened up a really gray day.

Oh, yeah. James, give Jason Brown (the guy who draws "Just the Beginning") a few pointers; he needs your help.

Gary Peterson
Class of '95

Editor's note: James Bernsen had nothing to do with the headline in question. News story headlines fall under the domain of the Night News desk.

Reporters do not have control over story placement, photographs or headline wording. In this particular case, the credit — or blame — goes to Heather Winch, one of our copy editors.