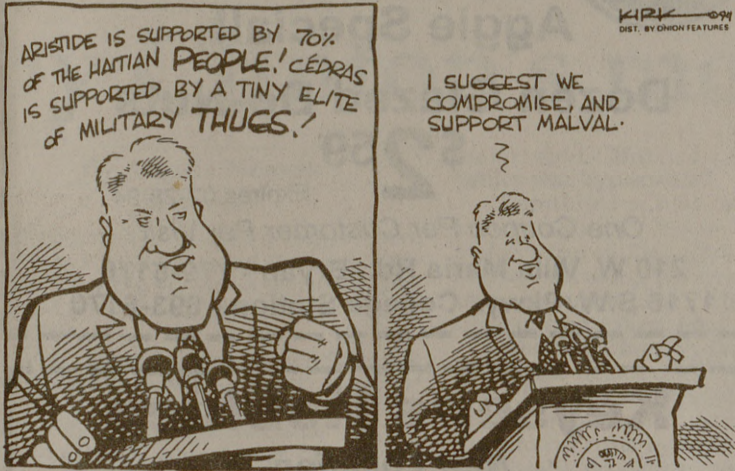


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EDITORIAL

Good for Gage

Reversal of policy the right move

Not all Aggies can say they never "lie, cheat or steal," but through a reversal of policy, Texas A&M Interim President E. Dean Gage has made it more likely that we will not tolerate those who do.

For six years the official policy for investigating theft by A&M employees allowed Vice President for Finance and Administration Robert Smith to determine whether or not it was necessary to notify law enforcement. University Police Director Bob Wiatt and Brazos County District Attorney Bill Turner, among others, have opposed the policy since it first was implemented.

"Mr. Turner was concerned that this policy could be misconstrued as selective prosecution, and this won't do," Wiatt said. Finally, the right man agrees.

To have allowed one person the power to decide if a matter would be turned over to the authorities was ridiculous. It does not take a high ranking official to determine if people should answer to allegations of wrong doing. It only requires common sense.

It is about time for the reversal of this policy. Gage has taken a step in protecting the

school's integrity that was much needed in light of the latest allegations of theft against an A&M official. Texas A&M is not a law enforcement agency, and trying to handle criminal investigations without going to the authorities only makes the school look like it has something to hide.

An in-house investigation into the recent allegations against Texas A&M's chief lobbyist, Timothy Shaunt, went on for at least a month, according to The Dallas Morning News. Turner's office received reports of the suspected theft only three days after The News requested the same information from the University.

This kind of silence only makes the school look dishonest. And it is just this kind of silence that the old policy has perpetuated. It is time for things to change, and this is a good starting point.

Gage cannot keep employees from lying, cheating and stealing, but he has made it clear that those who do will no longer have a ludicrous policy to hide behind. His reversal of the policy is the action of a true Aggie, and we should appreciate his efforts and hope his example is well noted.

The simple tale of a boy and his truck

Quest for vehicle drives family down fast lane of sanity



DAVE WINDER
Columnist

I slowly eased the seat as far back as I could get it, tuned the radio to my favorite station and shifted into drive. I was oblivious to everything around me; I was now an extension of the automobile. It was just like a dream.

Then reality hit me square in the face, in the shape of my father's hands.

"David (slap), I know you're real happy about your new truck and all (headlock), but if you hit one more cement trash can (Vulcan death grip) we're taking it back."

I got his point and immediately backed out of the ditch. I wasn't about to take this red beauty back to the dealer and go out shopping for cars with my parents again. It only took two years for them to decide that I needed a new one.

Me: Mom, Dad, can we go look for a new car tomorrow?
Mom: And what's wrong with the car you have, young man?

Me: Nothing — except it takes ten minutes for it to start. The defrost doesn't work. Most of the doors can't be opened from the inside, and it's beige.

Dad: Boy, you just don't know how good you got it. When I was your age, I didn't even have a car. Then, when I finally got a 1956 Chevrolet, it didn't have a windshield or brakes. I had to stop it like Fred Flintstone, but

it was the best car I ever had.

Me: Well then, can I take my car when I go back to college this fall?

Mom: Heavens no, David, your car is in such bad shape it would never make it.

Me: Then can we go shopping for another one?

Dad: David, we already told you there is nothing wrong with your car. I don't want to hear any more about it. Now, where's that remote control?

We had the same argument about 1,000 more times until the other day, when my father informed me we were going to go car shopping. I immediately found the morning paper to see if Hell had frozen over.

On the way, my father explained to me a dozen times that we were only looking, not buying.

Me (driving us past the dealership): Dad, do you want to stop here?

Dad: No. Just look and see if you like anything.

Me: Dad, I'm driving 65. I'm not going to be able to see anything I like at this speed.

Dad: All right then, turn around and drive past going 45. Look closely.

After attempting many passes, I finally convinced him to stop and actually get out of the car to look. I soon realized I had made a huge mistake.

Rudy (strong smell of Aqua Velva): Can I help you folks find something today?

Me: No, thanks. We're just looking.

Rudy: Well then, let me show you this beauty here. A 1976 Ford Pinto with mag wheels and a working dashboard clock.

Dad: I don't think so.

Rudy: Well how about this orange Dodge

Charger I got over here. It has a special feature that allows you to jump over 400 feet in the air by only punching the gas.

Me: That's okay. We're just looking, really.

Rudy: Then I know exactly what you need. Right over here we have a 1956 Chevrolet with no windshield or brakes. The guy who traded it in said you had to stop it just like Fred Flintstone.

Dad (really excited): We'll take it. How much? I'll write you a check right now.

Me (pulling my dad to the car): I think we'll be going now.

Three dealerships later, I was sitting in my new truck. No longer would I have to drive the beige bomber. No longer would my 6-foot, 5-inch frame have to sit in a space too small for most three-year-olds. I now had luxury, comfort and doors that could open.

Dad: I know you are real happy about having luxury, comfort and doors that can open, but we're going to have some new rules.

1. I want all A's next semester.
2. Nobody eats or drinks in the truck.
3. No more nude renditions of Jesus Christ Superstar at nursing homes.

Mom: Yeah, David, that could be dangerous during flu season.

Me (leaving for college): Thanks again, Mom and Dad, for the truck. I love you.

Both: We love you, too.

Dad: All right, Linda, let's go see if that guy will let us trade in the beige bomber for that 1956 Chevrolet. I'm telling you they just don't make cars like that anymore.

Dave Winder is a sophomore journalism major



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Cat-lover sheds light on admirers of the feline persuasion

For all the talk about divisions in our society, we overlook one that cuts across gender, ethnic and class lines: Those Who Love Cats vs. Everybody Else. It ought to be a concern the next time you go out. Make sure you and that person you're eyeing agree on cats. (I sense a possible pick-up line here.) And don't be fooled if he or she owns one. That hardly constitutes loving them. They wish it was that easy.

"I like my cat," someone might say. "But she's mean — she never wants to be around me."

Silly people! They don't know how to interpret feline behavior. Cats are reclu-



ERIN HILL
Columnist

sive by nature. They show their love in non-traditional ways that allow them to retain both their dignity and elitist attitudes. Those of us who love them understand and accept that. It's the first sign of a true believer.

My friend, Jason — who falls into the category of "cat-liker" but not "true believer" — loves to make fun of me, and admittedly the teasing is deserved. He says my family and I would do anything for our cats. He's right.

"Mom, hurry! Come here! Quick!" I yell.

"Erin, I'm on long distance ..." Mom replies.

"Mom! It's Max ... Hurry!"

Mom runs to living room, breathless, leaving caller in distant state to make sense of the abrupt termination of the call. By now my sisters have gathered, and we all sigh, delighted with the utter cuteness of our cat.

"Look," I say, "He moved his paw!" ("Look!" is heard frequently in our home.)

"What a cute little guy," we say in uni-

son, as if talking to a baby. "Isn't Max cute?" Funny enough, the reply is always in the affirmative.

My family actually has pondered whether cats understand English and, unsure of the answer, have tried to say more flattering things to them.

When Vanessa, our white Persian, died, the house seemed empty. We did what seemed right ... we paid \$100 for a

My family actually has pondered whether cats understand English and, unsure of the answer, have tried to say more flattering things to them.

new kitten. That wasn't even the first time we'd shelled out that kind of money — Balke was just as costly. The price we paid shocked Jason, my continually baffled friend.

"Isn't a cat just a cat?" he mused.

"Couldn't you just find one somewhere?"

"Find one somewhere?" I repeated. We fell in love with Maddie and couldn't let something minor like exorbitant cost deter us.

"You guys treat your cats like royalty!" he spit out.

"They are."

Are you beginning to sense that there are fundamental differences between the way Those Who Love Cats think and the rest of civilization? Perhaps our expectations are more realistic — translated, this means lower. Max, Balke and Madison don't do a lick of work; they don't kill mice or chase birds. They stay inside, not always getting along with each other, staring out windows and running away when we reach for them. Their long hair sheds everywhere. And they don't come when we call. But they make us happy.

One difference between cat-lovers and everybody else is that the former group understands that cats cannot BELONG to anyone; we, their "people," actually be-

long to them and live in their homes. The name on the mortgage, who makes the house payment ... all of those things are rather trivial to cat-lovers. We know who's really in charge.

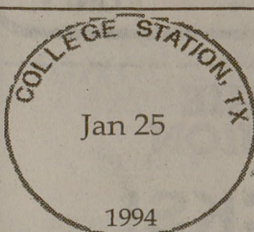
Christmas vacation was delightful. I spent most of my waking hours with Madison. He jumped around and bit me repeatedly — what's a little scar tissue between friends? My vacation revolved around our felines — just the way I like it.

Had you visited me you might have overheard: "Come here, Maddie. Climb on my silk blouse," or "Mom, can the cats play with the new crystal?"

Mom invariably replies by bending down and saying, "This cutesy-wootsy (insert all your favorite baby-talkisms here) little muffin? He can do whatever he likes! Because we love him, don't we?"

And there you have it, the testimony of a true believer.

Erin Hill is a senior English major



MAIL CALL

Hill, others did what anyone would have

I have one word for all those people who love judging Greg Hill and all the other football players for taking money that was given to them. Hypocrites!

Give me a break — these players go out and bust their butts all year long and have to watch everybody else get rich from their talents. If you were in their shoes,

you would have little problem taking money to feel compensated for all your efforts.

I believe Andrew Tomczeszyn has missed the entire picture in his Jan. 21 Mail Call. Greg Hill and the other players did not "disrespect the students, history and traditions of A&M," but instead led the Ags to three straight SWC championships and made the student body proud as can be.

Yes, Hill and the others made a mistake. (After all, they are human).

No, we do not have to outcast them or be ashamed. Let us forgive and forget.

As a fellow Aggie, I stand behind Greg Hill 103 percent. Remember, we are the Aggies, the Aggies are we.

Brent Watson
Class of '94

Aggie Moms are grateful for thanks

In the Jan. 19 issue of The Battalion, the editorial was titled, "Thanks Mom." This public acknowledgment from The Battalion is one that we, who make up the membership in the 97 Aggie Mom's Clubs, will treasure.

In September I was alerted to the very

real possibility that privatization of certain areas of Food Services was imminent. I contacted the chairman and members of the Board of Regents, asking them to delay voting on this matter until we had time to receive a response to our Sept. 11 letter to Mr. Robert Smith. Our main concern was that the privatization of two areas within Food Services was only a foot in the door, and this would eventually lead to the privatization of the all food operations at Texas A&M University.

During discussions with administrators and staff the point is reiterated time after time that these contracts mean money for the University. It is indicated that the reasons Barnes and Noble and ARA want to contract with A&M is to use it as a point of prestige when negotiating contracts with other universities. The question we, the Mothers' Club asked, and one that remains unanswered, is, "If something is not

broken, why would those in authority feel they need to fix it?"

The members of the Mothers' Clubs have never been opposed to a name-brand fast-food court. Our strong opposition is to this being negotiated by an outside contractor, whose primary motivation would be profit-oriented. We were confident we had a capable, experienced management team at food services.

Just as the students have a code of honor, perhaps this should be the code adopted by the staff, faculty, administration and Board of Regents.

On behalf of all the Aggie Moms — thank you to The Battalion for their very special "Thank You" and words of appreciation. WE NEEDED THAT.

Margaret W. Freeman
1993-94 Federation President
Texas A&M University Mothers' Clubs