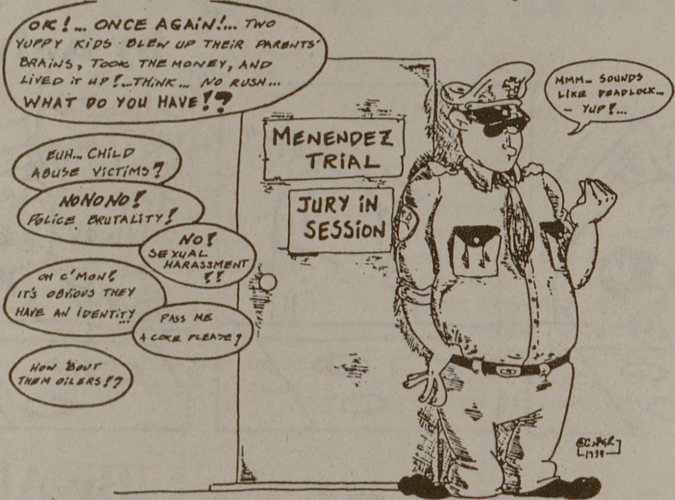


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EDITORIAL Thin ice

Harding shouldn't go to Olympics

Tonya Harding is skating on very thin ice.

She recently admitted that although she had no prior knowledge of the attack on rival skater Nancy Kerrigan, she did know shortly afterwards that people close to her had been involved in the incident.

Based on that information alone, Harding should not be allowed to be a member of the United States Figure Skating team.

In the aftermath of the attack, Harding breezed through press-conferences casually dropping "I would have kicked her butt anyway" one-liners at will.

However, as the investigation wore on, and as Harding's "Rambo-esque" attitude wore thin, rumors about the degree of her involvement began to emerge.

None of the rumors stuck until the skater's ex-husband, Jeff Gillooly, allegedly made a deal with the District Attorney's office to name Harding as a conspirator before the fact.

Only then did she come forward with her heart

wrenching, if not ill-timed, confession.

Allowing Tonya Harding to represent the United States now would tarnish the image that the United States Olympic Committee has tried so hard to maintain.

By not coming forward, Harding forced Nancy Kerrigan to fear for her life, not knowing if the attackers would be back to finish the job or if the attackers would go after her family. Harding's non-action in this respect is deplorable.

Removing Harding from the Olympic team is the best solution to a complex problem. Allowing her to compete would create a no-win situation. If Kerrigan doesn't win a medal, it could be blamed on Harding's upsetting presence. And should Harding win a medal, it will look all the worse for her.

Whether or not prosecutors build a criminal case against Harding, the damage may have already been done. Harding's dream of Olympic glory, along with the ice beneath her, is slowly beginning to crack.

Welfare reform is a cultural crossroads Clinton must move the welfare issue to the forefront

Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan wrote an essay on the dangers of illegitimacy 25 years ago. Since then, the illegitimacy rate has nearly tripled. Approximately 30 percent of American children are born out of wedlock today, yet we are still reluctant to bring the issue into the arena of national debate.



ERIN HILL
Columnist

The Nov. 22, 1993, issue of The New Republic stated, "The association of fatherlessness with poverty, welfare dependencies, crime and other pathologies points to a monstrous social problem. Yet, as the problem has grown, it has been systematically redefined by the culture... as simply another lifestyle choice."

President Clinton, however, has a differing opinion. "Would we be a better-off society if babies were born to married couples?" he asked. "You bet we would."

We must become more responsible with our power to create human life in order to put dents in the destructive cycles of poverty and crime. One way to foster this responsibility is to destroy incentives for sexually irresponsible behavior.

Conservative writer Charles Murray presents a radical idea: eliminate welfare. He says the system acts as an incentive and "pays" women to have illegitimate children, "the single most important social problem of our

time." Clinton said Murray's essay was "essentially right," although he doesn't believe welfare should be completely abolished. He does admit, however, that some problems stem from our welfare system, one of them being illegitimacy. We can't escape the glaring fact that something has gone wrong with welfare in America.

Since the late 60s, our government has given away over three trillion dollars in various entitlement programs — theoretically enough to bring everyone above the poverty line — yet people are still poor and the situation is worsening. Something does not compute.

P.J. O'Rourke writes, in "Parliament of Whores," that a frustrating paradox prevents the purposes of federal aid from being accomplished: "You can't get rid of poverty by giving people money."

If he's right that money given without training or job opportunities isn't terribly effective, then we must rethink federal aid. Welfare is necessary for many Americans, no doubt about it, but a lifetime on the dole is inexcusable. The government isn't a basket of prizes at a restaurant, waiting for us to reach in and grab what we want. Such a paradigm traps its participants.

Clinton's promise to change welfare "as we know it" — rushing in where other politicians feared to tread — was one of his campaign's most popular aspects.

"We are at a cultural crossroads," stated John Leo referring to Clinton's willingness to grab a ten-foot pole and touch the welfare system.

But Clinton put his reforms on the back burner at the beginning of January, and it

seemed we hadn't arrived at that crossroads yet. Health care received most-favored status on the administration's agenda when advisors decided that pushing two bills on Capitol Hill concurrently could be detrimental to their respective success in Congress.

But America is suspicious. The budget bill included tax hikes, and the health care plan will cost us. We need an indication of Clinton's fiscal responsibility before allowing him to attempt the most ambitious piece of social engineering since Johnson's Great Society.

So our president brought welfare reform back to the forefront in his State of the Union address. He promised to introduce legislation by spring and initiated a new trial welfare program with increased emphasis on employment training in Florida.

Hmm... Clinton has taken many dizzying detours on the road to welfare reform, but perhaps he has finally reached that crossroads. If he's really serious, then he needs to make welfare reform his first priority. Someone needs to sit him down and say: "No, Bill. Absolutely no playing with health care until you do something with the entanglement we call entitlements."

If Clinton were able to cut waste from the welfare program, we might be more supportive of adding another cook to the health care soup. Politically, it's risky, but with the increased risk comes increased reward.

We elected Clinton because he said he would fix things that were broken, like the welfare system. Now is the time to do that, not after the health care bill is passed.

Erin Hill is a senior English major



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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

You have just entered the TV zone — prepare to be shocked

Click!
 "Today, on the Oprah Winfrey show we will be bashing men for the 1,378th consecutive show" (standing ovation). Click!
 "Please welcome to the Geraldo show, Sam and Tracy. Sam is a 34-year-old virgin while Tracy is a 31-year-old virgin. They are joined on stage by Dr. Brian Hyatt, who is an expert on human sexuality." Click!
 "Today on the Ricki Lake show — violence against distant relatives." Click!
 "Women who like to bash men but couldn't get on Oprah — on today's Sally Jesse Raphael." Click!
 "Children embarrass their entire family



DAVE WINDER
Columnist

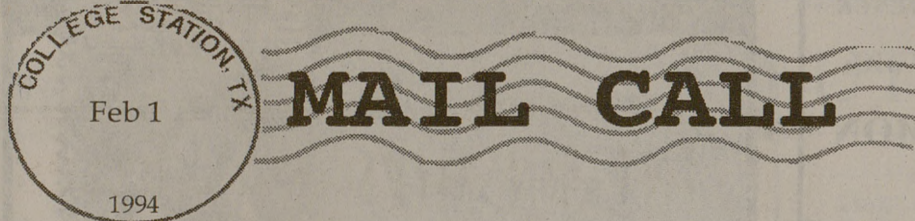
with dark secrets, next on the Montel Williams show." Click! Click!
 "Men bash other men, right after this break on Donahue." Click!
 "Next, on the Jerry Springer show — schizophrenic Nazi cheerleaders who like to play Crisco Twister while watching French versions of 'Saved By the Bell.'" Click! Click!
 "Well, Oprah, I have a very good reason for sleeping with my husband's best friend (standing ovation). For our sixth wedding anniversary, he gave me a pair of diamond earrings and a dozen red roses while we were vacationing in the Caribbean. I just had to get back at him for treating me like that" (standing ovation). Click!
 "Yes, Montel, there is something I want to tell my parents that I couldn't tell them in the privacy of our own home. I'm pregnant, and the father is either my swimming coach or Woody Allen. I just thought you and the rest of the world should know together." Click!
 "I just haven't ever found the right woman, Geraldo. I want that first time to

be special. I want it to be with somebody like Tracy." Click!
 "Yes, Phil, I'm calling from Long Island and I would just like to say — I'M BUCK NAKED." Click! Click!
 "That's when my mother walked up and told me that my fourth cousin's younger stepbrother had been seriously killed. It hurt so bad, Ricki, I had to stop playing Sega for a couple of minutes."
Montel, I want to tell my parents something I couldn't tell them in privacy. I'm pregnant, and the father is either my swimming coach or Woody Allen.
 Click!
 "I was going to tell this to Oprah, but since she wouldn't let me on her show, I guess I'll have to tell you, Sally. Two years ago I had an affair with my boss, Jim, and I

became pregnant. He refused to marry me, so I was forced to tell my husband. My husband agreed to take care of the baby, but then got selfish when I tried to name the baby Jim, Jr." Click! Click!
 "Thank you, Montel, for letting me destroy my family's reputation on national television. Mom, Dad, I just signed a two-year contract to play point guard for the Dallas Mavericks." (Dead silence falls over the audience.) Click!
 "I've had boyfriends and stuff, Geraldo, but nothing really serious. I never dated anybody who was as nice as Sam." Click!
 "My marriage started breaking up for the same reasons, Oprah. But the main reason Ed and I split is because he kept playing those damn Ray Stevens videos at all hours of the night. You can only hear 'The Streak' so many times before you go totally nuts" (standing ovation). Click! Click!
 "Don't you find it interesting, Jerry, that there are seven talk shows going on simultaneously and not one of them involves pit bulls on crack and the women who love of

them." Click!
 "Geraldo, there is a very simple explanation why Sam and Tracy chose to go to the Holiday Inn during the last commercial break. It's what we in the human sexuality business call 'extremely horny.'" Click!
 "Oprah, I'm starting an organization whose sole purpose is to kill men (standing ovation). We feel that the sooner we got all the men off the face of the earth the sooner we can all live in happiness" (standing ovation). Click!
 "Yeah, Phil, I'm calling from Manhattan and I have a comment for your guest panel — I'M NOT WEARING PANTS." Click!
 "Montel, I also have something to tell my parents that will have them contemplating suicide. Mom, Dad, I don't get my extra money in college by working the night shift at Burger King like I told you. I get my money by writing an opinion column for my school newspaper" (both parents shriek in terror).

Dave Winder is a sophomore journalism major



Students should not tolerate harassment

This is to the pitiful excuse for an Aggie that yelled from the top floor of Hart Hall: "Blond b—, blond b—, come up here, and suck my d—!"
I do not appreciate your comments. I'm sorry if you are sexually frustrated. Sounds like a personal problem to me. I also know that the female student and her

mother who were visiting our grand campus didn't appreciate your vulgar screaming, because they told me so!
I think other male Aggs would agree that you are dumber than Bevo's butt (and that's being nice), and if you want lovin', I suggest you think of a better pick up line.
It's time male and female students stop tolerating all forms of sexual harassment on our campus!
Melissa Green
Class of '95

Aggies send thanks to the Rustlers. Not!

Having read the letter from Calvin and the Texas Rustlers, I am very much ashamed. This group of nice young men had only the noblest intentions at heart when they took Reveille into their care. This just proves how in touch with their feelings student at the university are, in sharp contrast to the back-stabbing and selfish Aggies. As Calvin says, "...only an Aggie would turn against one of his own."
He is right; Longhorns are above the petty and childish concept of tradition and pride. I feel it is my duty as a sensitive and caring man of the 90s to renounce my tainted Aggie heritage and don the burnt orange of freedom and democracy. No longer will I take part in Bonfire, stand up

at football games, say howdy, or clap to the sounds of the Aggie Band; I will now be more concerned with the environment, buy lots of flannel and wear beads. Winning football games will no longer be important to me — just "a friendly rivalry based on good sportsmanship, and of course good humor."
Many thanks to Calvin and the Texas Rustlers for upholding the standards of morality and decency, while at the same time showing Texas A&M University to be the inferior institution that it is. I go now to fill out my transfer application. Hook 'em horns!
Keith Stubbs
Class of '96
I'd like to thank Calvin and the rest of the Rustlers for the recent letter in The Battalion. The fact that they need to

spark spirit of t.u. is really no concern to me, but by stealing a mascot? In the history of A&M, we have also taken Bevo on an "inter-university exchange program," but we pride ourselves on tradition. Aggies show their pride by Aggie Bonfire (which I'm sure many t-sips attended and various other activities. Spirit is one thing, but try developing pride that will continue throughout the years.
The Rustlers' winter escapade shows the insufficient spirit at Texas University and a lack of continuity. They did what had never been done before, too bad it only took them 63 years to do it.
I tip my hat to Cadet Lively and hope that he still holds his head high, because he has no reason to do otherwise.
Robert Stewart
Class of '97