

THE BATTALION Editorial Board

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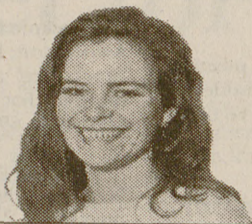
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Equal time for opinionated females Male journalists receive inordinate percentage of print

ERIN HILL

Columnist



In 1992, "Crossfire" presented a meager 55 female guests, as opposed to 440 male guests. During one month of that year, only 16 percent of the opinion articles at the New York Times and 13 percent of the opinion pieces at the Washington Post were written by women. At the The New Republic, 14 percent of the contributors were females.

Interestingly enough, the opinion staff of The Battalion is 50 percent female, and its editorial board has six women and five men. Texas A&M aside, a bias against female opinions exists in the media, which keeps women out of the hot seat far too often.

Many women view society and life through a personal lens in opinion writing and some journalistic power brokers claim this personal tone is justification for leaving them out, as though personal translates to worthless.

Anna Quindlen, of the New York Times, writes to much acclaim about her children and family, as does Ellen Goodman. Personal does not have to mean worthless. Too often, however, if one of these women is syndicated, the other isn't. There just isn't enough room on an opinion page for more than one mother it seems.

Women are also accused of only talking about their bodies and feelings. While some women writers do talk about these things, it can be said that men engage in the same type of dialogue. For example, the dispute over gays in the military focused on the "feelings" of military personnel about open homosexuality in their barracks and "feelings" about showering with gay soldiers. Yet women writing about issues that affect women's bodies, such as rape, are sometimes dismissed as non-mainstream.

Lest we blame this void of female voices completely on the established patriarchy of journalism, however, we must realize that not as many women apply, submit or write opinionated articles as men. An imbalance is there, but not to the tune of 440 to 55, the "Crossfire" figure mentioned earlier.

Why do fewer women feel the urge to slug it out in a ring of national debate? Perhaps, the imbalance is there because women are trained to use "feminine" speech which steers them clear of "nasty" arguments. We're taught to be considerate of other's feelings, a good thing on the personal level, but an obstacle if carried too far.

National media is a harsh place, especially for female writers. A woman's sexuality and femininity are often attacked when she offers opinions, as we can learn by observing the treatment of prominent female non-writers.

Kay Bailey Hutchison was portrayed as a shrew because she is a tough boss. Hillary Rodham Clinton has been accused of being a lesbian because she is an intelligent female who speaks her mind. Geraldine Ferraro was called a bitch for the same reasons, and other women are attacked in a similar fashion.

Even Naomi Wolf, a feminist writer who believes a bias in the media exists, indicts Jeanne Kirkpatrick's writing because it is "... uninflected by the experiences of the female body."

Such a direct attack on Kirkpatrick's style is at best hypocritical — at worst, downright mean. It seems then women too are guilty of attacking the person, not the opinion.

The trend of labeling all opinionated women as radical, hostile feminists or limiting them to maternal issues fosters an environment in which women are cautious for fear of not being taken seriously.

Then what do women want, you beg to know, if they don't want to be called radical feminists or labeled as "sweet"?

This may sound shocking, but some women are radical feminists and don't mind being labeled as such. Some hate men, some don't. Some write about personal experiences, others avoid those topics. And sometimes it isn't anyone's business — listen to what is said, then form an opinion.

Women want to be taken seriously.

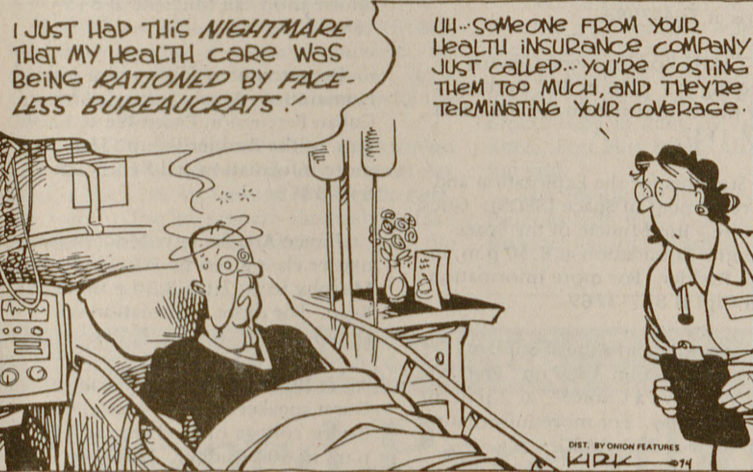
Women do not want to be packaged, labeled and disregarded.

Women want to be themselves, to prove themselves, to be considered.

To do so, more women must stand up, speak out and take the heat. At Texas A&M this should start in the classroom. Women must form and defend opinions, and not be afraid of speaking up.

If we keep talking, sooner or later the world will listen.

Erin Hill is a senior English major



EDITORIAL

Whitewater mess Investigation mired in confusion

The truth, the truth, my kingdom for the truth. Since the very beginning of the Whitewater inquiries, the airwaves and newspapers have been inundated with shocking revelations of deceit and political dishonesty — completely foreign ideas to any politician. Unfortunately, despite all of the information being presented to the American public, no one really understands what Whitewater is about.

Members of Congress from both parties are calling for hearings to determine whether there is the need for an investigation into the level of Bill and Hillary Clinton's involvement in the real estate fiasco. Although the effort to find the truth is admirable, this case is better suited for an agency such as the IRS to handle.

Some critics argue that the hearing is necessary because the Clintons may have overstated the amount of money they lost in the deal and possibly lied on their taxes as well. If this theory is true, then it seems all the more inappropriate for anything other than a regular government agency to be the sole investiga-

tor. The most difficult aspect of this whole case is that no one has the complete story, as each group of critics seems to focus on one part of it. The result is a dozen different stories and a truckload of opinions, most of which are completely irrelevant to the issue.

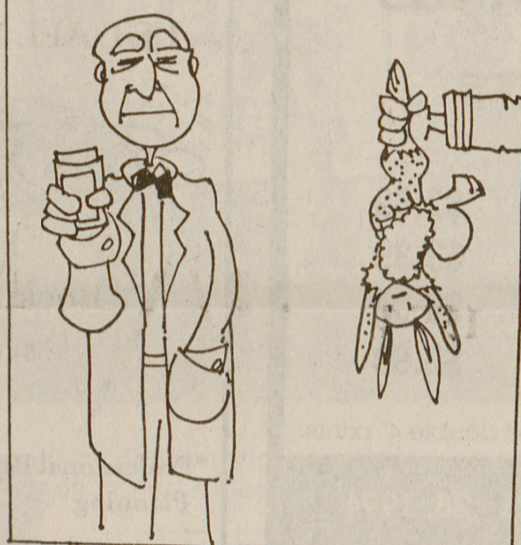
When Congress is placed in charge, with its vested interest in the findings of an investigation that could be potentially damaging to the careers of the opposition, the risk of sensationalism increases dramatically. No one is against the idea of an investigation, but why bother to have one if the facts are going to get lost in a sea of finger pointing?

As it stands now, the manner in which Whitewater is being handled does nothing except weaken public faith in the integrity of the governmental process. Politicians are once again proving that if a situation is being turned around, misdirected or misunderstood, then the government is probably involved.

MANY RABBITS WERE TESTED TO DEVELOP THIS DRUG THAT HAS SAVED 150,000 LIVES AND COUNTING.



MANY RABBITS WERE TESTED TO DEVELOP THIS DEODERANT THAT LEAVES NO FLAKEY MESS.



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.

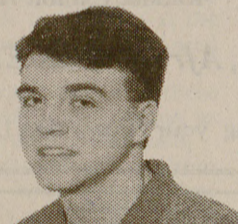
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Shopping styles differ vastly along great gender divide

DAVE WINDER

Columnist



Problem: Cris needs a new pair of blue jeans. Solution: Cris drives to the nearest mall and walks into the first clothing store. Cris quickly finds the correct color and size, pays cash for the purchase and is home in 30 minutes.

Question: What sex is Cris?
 The average reader has already deduced that Cris is male. It's easy. All the clues are in the above sentences.

Clue #1: Cris went shopping alone. Women never go shopping alone; they always travel in packs.

Clue #2: Cris went to the nearest mall.

Women always go to largest mall within a 200-mile radius.

Clue #3: Cris walked into the first clothing store he came to and bought what he needed. Yes, women go into the first store they come to. They also go into second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth stores they see. Then they return to the first store to buy the exact pair of jeans they first picked up.

Clue #4: Cris did not try on the jeans before making his purchase. No woman in the history of the earth has ever purchased an article of clothing without first trying it on and looking at it from all sides in a three-way mirror.

Clue #5: Cris paid cash. Women do not like cash. Paying for a pair of jeans with a \$50 bill means they are really spending \$50. They like those little plastic cards where no real money changes hands. That way they never translate purchase dollars into real dollars.

Clue #6: Cris is back home in 30 minutes. Women shop in terms of hours, not minutes. "Shop till you drop" is their national anthem.

Clue #7: Cris only bought what he went after, nothing else. Women go to the mall

for blue jeans, find super sales, and come home with things like red shoes, wedding gowns, grand pianos, refrigerators and major league baseball teams.

In case you think I'm exaggerating about the way women shop, let me tell you about a few true experiences.

When I was a salesclerk at Foot Locker, I would have guys walk in and buy a pair of \$125 Air Jordans without even trying them on. But I would also have women come in and try on a \$1.99 pair of ankle socks even though they were wearing a pair just like them.

Last November my aunt and her daughter drove from Nacogdoches to Houston, got on an airplane and flew to Minneapolis, Minnesota, to the biggest mall in the United States to do their Christmas shopping. For my uncle's birthday I think the plan is to fly to Samoa to get his presents.

My friend has the worst buying problem I have ever seen, though. She likes to go into the dollar stores and buy stuff that she has absolutely no use for. One time she bought two pair of baby booties because the price was so

low. At the time she was not pregnant, nobody she knew was pregnant, in fact she didn't even have a boyfriend but she bought them anyway. Her reasoning was, "Someday I'm going to have children and they're going to need booties. So I decided to buy them now because I doubt booties are ever going to be this cheap again."

My mom talks about looking for sales bargains the way her brother talks about stalking prey with a rifle. My worst childhood memories center around being dragged from store to store in crowded malls.

Me (age 3): "Mom, how much longer are we going to be here? I want to go home."

Mom: "David, I just want to look at one more store to see if they have what I want."

Me: "You enter one more store I'm going to throw the worst temper tantrum this world has ever seen."

Mom: "If you're nice, I'll buy you an ice cream cone."

Me: "You got 20 minutes, 25 if it's chocolate-chocolate chip."

Today I consider myself the average male shopper. Last week I bought two pairs of shorts (one black, one brown) and two shirts (one plaid, one maroon). I drove 12 miles to the nearest mall. I went to one store where I got exactly what I wanted. I paid cold, hard cash. I was back home watching the NCAA basketball tournament in less than 30 minutes.

Of course you can guess which sex the store owners like to see coming through the doors. If males made all the family purchases, malls would have to close by 2 p.m. and lock the doors on weekends.

Dave Winder is a sophomore journalism major



Three reasons for reading The Battalion

I read The Battalion for three reasons. One: to catch up on major news. Two: to check up on the activity schedules for organizations. Three: to hopefully learn to take a new perspective on an issue (or be entertained) by columns on the Opinion page.

If the Batt keeps columns like Frank Stanford's on the meaning of life and Lynn Booher's on gender equality, I'll keep on reading. If the Batt continues to put out un-researched, poorly written, unoriginal columns like those by Dave Winder — his column about writing a column was particularly "stupid" — I won't waste my time. I encourage anyone who has any re-

motely interesting or insightful ideas for a column to write in as a guest. If I have to come across another column that's so obviously a desperate attempt to fill space with nonsense; it won't happen a third time. So please, someone, give A&M quality columns.

Mary Matella
 Class of '96

Flag more important than leaking sewage

Texas A&M administrators need to get their priorities straight. Early on the morning of Feb. 21, a group of Class of '97 McInnis Madmen raised a flag on an unused flag pole

on the north side of campus. The flag was made of 4-by-6-foot purple material with white lettering sewn on it. One side read, "McINNIS MADMEN," and the other read "CLASS OF '97." The flag flew harmlessly and undisturbed for several hours as a symbol of dorm spirit.

Around 9 a.m., several A&M employees began trying to remove it; however, the McInnis Madmen greased the pole to foil any attempts at removing the flag. Finally, sometime after 10 a.m., the Physical Plant brought in a cherry picker along with about 15 employees who stood around doing nothing and ripped the flag down. So the Texas A&M administration dropped all other projects and in about five hours had the McInnis flag down.

I am a McInnis resident, and on March 1, I put in a work order to have my toilet fixed because it was leaking raw sewage all over the bathroom floor. Over a week later, no one had been out to check the problem nor had I heard from maintenance.

It seems the Texas A&M administration has their priorities out of order. It took half a day for them to take the McInnis Flag down that was hurting no one, but my toilet that is leaking raw sewage and mildew that is carpet gets no attention.

Mike Stewart
 Class of '97

Physical Plant fails to seek others' advice

The behind-closed-doors decisions for our campus never cease to amaze me. The new windows for the Academic Building are a prime example of how students and former students have no influence on what is done to our campus.

Yes, I strongly agree that it is time to change the deteriorating 80-year-old frames. I fully understand how the Physical Plant wants windows that require less maintenance. David Godbey said, (Jan. 6 article) "We selected them (windows) on the basis of aesthetics."

Aesthetics is defined as "dealing with aesthetics or the beautiful." Godbey obviously doesn't know the definition because the new windows don't fall into the category of aesthetically pleasing. I never ever want to hear the quote, "the new windows will fit in with the other buildings on campus" again.

How can this quote ever make any sense? Practically every old building we have left on this campus has had its original windows changed to the hideous dark anodized aluminum with tinted glass windows. These windows go together with

newer architecture but in no way with architecture of the past.

Physical Plant needs to take off its blinders and see that changing windows on a building doesn't match architecture; it changes it! Windows like the originals with all the detail could have been ordered in anodized white aluminum and would definitely not be turning back the clock to 1912.

I wish everyone would remember that the Academic Building was erected upon the ashes of Old Main (the first building on campus) which burned to the ground on the night of May 27, 1911. This is one of the three oldest buildings on our campus and remains a focal point of the campus. Whenever I walk past the Academic Building and see Sully's statue I feel the pride in being an Aggie. For some reason, I feel someone trying to tarnish my pride when decisions like this are made.

The windows were decided by a small group of people that would not listen to students, former students or even the Historic Preservation Department of the College of Architecture. This is an age of preservation and not destruction, and some people need to see the light.

Mark E. Barnes
 Class of '94