

Law strives for equality in rape cases

By Tracy Smith
THE BATTALION

Women raped by their husbands may finally see justice as a state law, which went into effect Sept. 1, strives for equality in rape cases.

Marital rape cases have been taken to court since 1987, but a conviction in those cases required more evidence than if the assailant had been a stranger or acquaintance.

Furthermore, the assaults that were prosecuted as marital assaults were restricted to only those involving physical harm.

The 1994 law did away with all distinctions between sexual assaults caused by the marriage partner and those caused by a stranger or acquaintance.

Sherry Hostetter, public education director for the Brazos County Rape Crisis Center, said she hopes the new legislation will get more women to report marital assaults.

"Many women don't report these assaults because they feel they don't have a case," Hostetter said. "Now we need to educate women about the change in the law to let them know the law is on their side."

The Tragic Facts

Sexual assault programs in Texas reported 2,131 marital rapes between October 1991 and September 1992.

—Texas Department of Health

About 61,000 women a year are raped by either their husbands or ex-husbands.

—National Women's Study

"It will take awhile to get the word out because the change is so new," she said. "The more the public knows, the better off they are. Women have to know that it has been passed and in their favor."

Debbly Tucker, executive director of the Texas Council on Family Violence, said it

will take 10 years for the change in the law to become well-known.

"Sometimes it takes a very long time for attitudes to catch up with these things," Tucker said. "It will take a brave woman and a feminist prosecutor willing to articulate that a marriage license is not a hitting and raping license."

Thad Stachowiak, associate director of the A&M Student Counseling Services, said one of the problems with any legislation changing a law is that many people don't really understand the change and how it will impact them.

"Knowing about a change doesn't necessarily mean understanding the issues involved in the change or how it could affect a person's life," Stachowiak said. "Right now this issue needs a lot of education and repeated exposure to let women know that intimacy doesn't have to be coercion."

"This is a good piece of legislation for an issue that is growing in concern," he said. "It will take time before it becomes completely visible to society, but recognition needs to be made that one person doesn't own another person in a relationship."



Stacy Cameron/The Battalion

Woodworking, anyone?

John Oliver, a senior kinesiology major, works on a cabinet in the University Plus woodshop. University Plus offers classes in pottery, woodworking, jewelry making and more.

Yellowpots vow to 'clean up' Sbisa yell

By Amanda Fowle
THE BATTALION

Friday afternoons before football games have been a big mess in Sbisa in the past, but Bonfire yellowpots agreed Thursday to try to keep Sbisa Yell cleaner.

Sbisa Yell, a Northside tradition, is a yell practice led by the Northside yellowpots that begins when Sbisa opens for dinner on Fridays before home football games.

Another tradition at Sbisa Yell are food fights between residents of different halls and the yellowpots being "groded," in which freshmen throw yellowpots in the mud after yell practice.

Janette Garner, Sbisa Dining Center manager, Owen Ross, RHA President, and Rusty Thompson, assistant director of Residence Life, met yesterday to discuss ways to eliminate the problems encountered at past Sbisa Yells.

Ross said he wanted to preserve the tradition of Sbisa Yell, but reduce the destruction it causes.

"We asked ourselves how can we best preserve this tradition without having the problems," he said.

The yellowpots will attempt to reduce the destruction of Sbisa's front lawn and will limit profanity in their yells. Also, food will not be thrown.

Mike Tippit, Schuhmacher Hall president, said he and several friends helped clean up after Sbisa yells last year.

"When we stayed and cleaned up," he said, "it only took about ten or 15 minutes because we were all working together."

The yellowpots also agreed to tell the freshmen to take them back to the area around their halls to grode them, instead of destroying the lawn in front of Sbisa.

Garner said students will still be allowed to throw napkins, but not food, during Sbisa yell.

During the yell practice, students beat cups and dishes on the tables to make noise, occasionally breaking dishes. Garner said that if any property is destroyed, the students will have to pay for it.

"They can make all the noise they want," she said. "It's the destruction of property caused by the noise that we don't want."

Students who do throw food, or break other rules, will be subject to punishment, Ross said.

"It's like speeding," he said. "Everyone may be speeding, but maybe only one person gets caught. Some people are going to be punished as examples."

Students who do break the rules will have their ID cards taken and will be referred to the Conflict Resolution Center.

The first Sbisa yell will set the tone for the rest of the year, McInnis yellowpot Ryan Busse, said.

"The first yell practice sets the precedent for the rest of them," he said, "so how we act Friday will determine how the rest of the yells will be."

Ross said that Sbisa Yell could be ended if the students do not cooperate with the newly established rules.

"Sbisa yell is a privilege," he said. "It could be cut out because many parts of it are in violation of dining policy procedure."

A&M's first Midnight Yell of the season to be held tonight

Texas A&M University will continue an age-old tradition Friday as the University holds its first Midnight Yell Practice of the season.

The tradition, which occurs the night before a football game, will take place in Kyle Field.

Alcohol is not allowed at the event, and access to the area surrounding the field is restricted. University police officers will be on hand to ensure that order is maintained.

For people driving to yell practice, a representative of the Department of Parking, Transit and Traffic Services said that they should park their cars in Parking Area 61, across the railroad tracks.

A&M's first home football game will start Saturday at 4 p.m. as the Aggies take on Oklahoma University.

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The Battalion (USPS 045-360) is published daily, Monday through Friday during the fall and spring semesters and Monday through Thursday during the summer sessions (except University holidays and exam periods), at Texas A&M University. Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Battalion, 230 Reed McDonald Building, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.

News: The Battalion news department is managed by students at Texas A&M University in the Division of Student Publication, a unit of the Department of Journalism. Editorial offices are in 115 Reed McDonald Building. E-mail: BATT@TAMVM1.TAMU.EDU. Newsroom phone number is 845-3313. Fax: 845-2647.

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