

## Do we trust rape victims?

The right to dictate who touches your body when, where and in what manner is one of the most important rights a person has.

One night, two girlfriends and I drove to a dance club in Houston. The club is on a major thoroughfare and has a parking lot with only 25 parking spaces, so we were forced to park in the neighborhood behind the club.

As my friend attempted to make a halfway acceptable semblance of a parallel parking job, I noticed a man on the sidewalk. He turned around, pulled down his jeans and started to masturbate.

Nothing happened, and we quickly abandoned the parking spot and sped away. The man didn't have an opportunity to violate our bodies that night, but he left us to contemplate the possibility.

He left us to wonder about how our lives would have changed. He left us to wonder if anyone would have believed our story.

A Houston Chronicle article on Feb. 20 discussed the recent debate surrounding the use of lie detector tests on rape victims.

According to this article, it has become a common procedure in law-enforcement agencies across the state to use the results of lie detector tests to determine if a rape case warrants further investigation. The lie detector test, or polygraph, measures a person's heart and breathing rates and skin responses to basic personal information questions.

The responses to those questions are then compared to serious questions about crimes, such as rape.

Recently, Rep. Debra Dandur, D-Houston filed a bill that would eliminate the use of polygraphs on rape victims.

Advocates of the bill, such as Cassan-

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dra Thomas, director of the Rape Crisis Program at the Houston Women's Center, argue that sexual violence is the only crime that uses the polygraph on the victim.

"We don't polygraph people who say their house was broken into," Thomas said. "We buy into the myth that women lie about rape."

Although a 1993 law prohibits police from abandoning investigation of a sexual violence case solely on the unwillingness of the rape victim to take a polygraph, advocates say the law has little effect.

On the other hand, opponents argue that eliminating polygraph testing altogether would hinder the work of officers who try to elicit important information from the victim.

But, think about the victim. Think about the woman or man who has been raped, and a week later scrounges up the courage to go to the police. Expecting sympathy and aid, they are met with the impersonal demand of taking a lie detector test.

Granted, America is a country based on the concept that everyone is innocent until proven guilty. But, how much should a victim be further victimized on the path to proving that the crime occurred? Polygraph results are, by law, not admissible evidence in Texas courts.

If a person goes to the police and claims to have been raped, that charge is serious enough to warrant a thorough inquiry.

Lt. Scott McCollum of the College Station police department agrees. He said that it is not a common procedure to use a lie detector test with rape victims in College Station.

"We investigate every case based on its own merit," McCollum said. "Whether there is physical evidence

does not dictate whether we investigate, especially in cases as serious as sexual violence."

The College Station Police Department sets a good example that could, if emulated, end the practice of using polygraphs on rape victims. Taxpayers are paying for police protection, and it is the police department's job to investigate almost every charge that citizens bring to them.

Sure there have been both men and women who have lied about being raped. But, given the magnitude of the crime, it seems a small sacrifice to investigate every claim — even the small percent of the cases where the victims are lying.

Some would argue that with other problems such as gang violence and drug abuse, police don't have time to waste digging up the facts of false claims. This argument seems substantial until you consider how much time police spend chasing down speeding vehicles.

Even if a person has lied about being raped, that person does not have to go completely unpunished.

McCollum said that the College Station Police Department has dealt with cases — although not sexual violence cases — where people have lied about their car being stolen. When it was discovered, the police prosecuted them for giving false reports.

The psychological effects of rape are too great. Too many cases go unreported each year because of the social stigma and lasting trauma associated with rape.

If anything, the law-enforcement system should encourage victims to come forward, not deter them by questioning their claims and further aggravating their shattered emotional state.

*Jenny Magee is a junior English and journalism major*

## THE BATTALION

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## EDITORIAL

### THE OTHER EDUCATION

Extracurricular activities are valuable parts of the Aggie experience and should be rewarded.

The Student Senate recently proposed a scholarship program that will reward students for extracurricular involvement, rather than on academic achievement.

College students at an extremely competitive university like Texas A&M, often cannot easily keep up with a full load of classes and be involved in a variety of campus organization at the same time.

They should create a balance between learning and "the other education."

Grades are important. Academics is a very serious part of a college education, but it is not the only part.

Students who excel through academic achievement should be commended, but so should students who dedicate their time and energy to campus organizations and activities.

Student organizations help build character, offer experience and develop leadership skills. Students often

find difficulty in concentrating entirely on academics. After all, students' grade point ratios will be only a part of how they are evaluated by future employers.

For the most part, the work force will be looking for well-rounded individuals who have had experience working in several activities.

While there are some students who are able to maintain "A" averages, hold officer positions in organizations and work their way through school, there are only a handful of them. Students who put their time, creativity and motivation into campus activities deserve recognition and support for what they have achieved.

Texas A&M has always stressed the importance of the education that comes through campus involvement. The University should reward those students who excel in this "other education" and perhaps it will become more meaningful.



### Letterman has been crossing line forever

I am writing in response to Michael Landauer's David Letterman column on Feb. 27. Having watched David Letterman for the past 14 years, I guess you could say I'm not a Letterman expert, but I could point out a few things to the obvious novice on Lettermanism.

I saw the show he referred to in his column when Dave gave extra money to an overweight guy to buy some snacks. What Landauer failed to mention was that the gentleman added to the humor by saying he would need more than the few extra bills Letterman gave him. He did not in the least bit seem offended by this, so why should Landauer? It was, more than likely, a moment the gentleman will never forget.

As for Letterman crossing the line in his humor, maybe Landauer should lay off the Nyquil before viewing the show.

Dave has been crossing the line his entire career. Dave doesn't care if Landauer watches or not. His show now accounts for about one-third of CBS's entire gross income. So maybe it is a "kinder gentler" Dave, but it is by far the best talk show.

It's not because of expensive suits, graphics or the Ed Sullivan Theatre. Sorry to offend you Michael, but it's simply because of Dave. Just ask Conan.

*Chris Davison  
Class of '93*

### Corps handled Rev-napping incident well

In responding to Brian Powell's letter of Feb. 27, concerning the abduction of Reveille VI, a few facts need to be set straight. First, as the former commanding officer of Company E-2, the theft of Reveille is no one's fault but my own. Reveille's abduction is no the outfit's fault, and not Jim Lively's fault — it is my fault. Responsibility for everything that did or did not occur within that outfit lies with me.

Second, I can now reluctantly laugh at the fact that Rev was stolen. Let's face it, as much as it pains me to say, it was probably going to happen sooner or later. The President of the United States is guarded 24 hours a day and is not totally safe. What I will not accept is the insinuation that Aggies are one-sided "spoilsports." Spoilsports would have gone out and stolen Bevo — or something worse — upon hearing the news. Yet they didn't.

The Lively house was stalked and even broken into. Yet, the family filed no charges. As yell practice prior to the Cotton Bowl we could have incited a riot that would have made the t-sips think twice before stealing a puppy again. However, Aggies didn't seek retribution.

After Rev was stolen, no one felt worse than we did — we knew we had let

down many people.

Instead of placing blame elsewhere, E-2 and Jim Lively accepted responsibility. When asked about the perpetrator running for office, Lively simply said he hoped that Sheffield would not be elected due to his actions — by the way, he was thrown out of the race.

So when someone breaks into Powell's home, steals something that means a great deal to him and thousands of others and then runs for public office on that premise, we'll talk about his sense of humor. I would hope that he could find the same courage and integrity that Company E-2 has.

*Greg Riel  
Class of '94*

### Use of Corps at partisan events shocks student

On Feb. 24, units of the Corps — most prominently the Band — took part in a partisan and political event. This was not an event honoring a President or former President; it was not even an event honoring a Senator. It was, without attempt at disguise, a partisan rally for the advertised purpose of an individual announcing his candidacy for the nomination of his party for president.

All such candidates run as individuals, not as Senators, or any other such title. It is irrelevant to the issue, but the person announcing is not and, without deciding to come to school here someday, can never be an Aggie. An Aggie, now and forever, is a student or former student. But that isn't the issue.

The issue is this — present in uniform and as the Band, those Aggies and other Corps units present, thereby officially represented the Corps and the school at a partisan event. Anyone attempting to say that the presence of our Band does not represent this Corps and the school is being, at best, disingenuous.

The most fundamental tradition of the American military is that our military considers it an internal, sacred tradition to never be involved, as representatives of the military, in partisan politics. The spirit of that tradition was symbolically violated by the presence of the Corps at a partisan event, as it would be at any partisan event, regardless of the party of candidate.

My primary concern is with the Corps. When you put on the uniform, you put all of us in there with you. You are responsible, yourself, for learning, and building, the ideals you represent.

I hope you will use this event as a spark to quit being on the defensive, and start concentrating on being what has made this Corps something that all of us who have gone before hold so sacredly.

*Van Veselka  
Class of '66  
Graduate Student*

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 for length, style, clarity and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald. A valid student I.D. is required. Letters may also be mailed to: The Battalion - Mail Call, 013 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-1111. Fax: (409) 845-2647. E-mail: Batt@tamvm1.tamu.edu



### Competing agendas cause confusion

#### A&M Board of Regents should adopt Elchanan's four-point plan

I am a bit confused as of late. I think it started with the Republicans and their "Contract With America." Or maybe it was just a symptom of our times.

Now every supposed "leader" on campus is proposing some plan, theory or activity that will improve Texas A&M and make it a "World Class University."

For instance, our valiant student body president Brooke Leslie has come forth with a goal-based platform and her accomplishments while in office — she may be a professional politician yet.

While the Book Swap, the starting of a Crime Stoppers program on campus and the increased lighting are certainly great achievements, I kind of found myself confused by her other deeds.

Leslie said she had improved the media perception of A&M. Well, maybe someone should've told Pi Kappa Phi about that.

As for the much-flaunted Honor Code, I think that maybe Robert Smith and his gang should study that tradition further and get back to students about how that is going to work exactly.

This idea for giving scholarships based on criteria other than grades is cool. We could give scholarships to people with lots of tattoos and nose rings — for their creativity, at the expense of decency.

As for cultural sensitivity, well, maybe the College Republicans should put in a word or two on that subject. On the other hand, maybe not.

While we are on the subject of cultural sensitivity, I want to relate a little story to you. I was reading the trusty old Batt when I came across the NAACP Twelve Point Plan.

I was really impressed. You see, I have a nice tan skin-tone, and my father was born in Tunisia — making me both a person of color and an African-American. The idea that I could get minority scholarships simply made me giddy. On top of that, the proposed state funding for the Race and Ethnic Studies Institute and the degree requirement for learning about cultural groups would mean that I could study topics on Asian and Middle Eastern history here at A&M, as well as African history.

Some real liberal arts at last!

I did have a few problems with the plan before I signed on, like the proposed surveying of the local community — otherwise known as the not-paying-for-my-education crowd — for feelings about A&M and suggestions about how we could pos-

sibly represent every minority by having a class about them.

Unfortunately, I ran into a real snag. First, the NAACP said that I could not receive their scholarship money because I was not a black African-American and second, the classes they were proposing would only be about recognized American minorities.

I felt like I had been discriminated against, but nobody listens to Tan Americans, except maybe for the Conservative Coalition.

I found out about these guys from one of my survivalist friends at work. He was cleaning his gun while discussing how only the Conservative Coalition understood my pain and would back me up.

Their Great White Leader — as the members call him — said we cannot accept every minorities and every view because it is a, "degradation of national patriotism and pride."

Afterward, it was pointed-out to me how the black people had to be sacrificed for our national needs and how Native Americans were trying to take over "our" country.

I am still not sure, but I think these guys might not be "all there," if you get my meaning. When they started bowing-down to a picture of Rush Limbaugh, I got out of there.

My experiences around our lovely campus inspired me to make up a plan for Aggieland. It is only a Four Point Plan, making it much easier to implement than the others.

Here it goes:

- Give all students good parking spaces, and make the faculty park at Olsen Field. This seems logical since most of us have three or four classes while most professors only teach one or two

- Disband the PITTS and execute all its present and former members — do you think this constitutes 'inciting to riot'?

- Disband the Board of Regents and the Student Senate and start the United Students' Union, where we would all refuse to pay our tuitions if the President did not give in to our demands.

- Get rid of the "F" and replace it with a "P" for "Pending," since most people have to take a failed class in over to graduate anyway.

I turned this plan into the Regent's office. They immediately started laughing and asked me to go buy them some beer while they looked my proposal over.

I dunno, but I don't think they took me very seriously.

*Josef Elchanan is a senior management major*