

# Ready, aim ...

## Handgun law could have ominous effects



**ELAINE MEJIA**  
COLUMNIST

The Lone Star State is at it again, daring to go where few states have gone before. I am talking about the new concealed weapons law, under which those of us willing to battle through the paperwork and sit through the mini-course can grab our holsters and hit the streets.

If you have not given some serious thought to this new legislation and what it means to Texans, you may want to start soon. According to a recent editorial in the New York Times, a new handgun is produced every twenty seconds.

Supporters of the new law say it is a vital step toward turning the tide against crime. Theoretically, criminals will be less likely to commit a crime if they know their target might be carrying a concealed weapon.

But, as I understand it, we can already keep loaded firearms in our homes, and we can shoot most trespassers. If there is already the possibility of an armed homeowner behind every door, why haven't the criminals stopped attacking our homes?

Apparently, the thinking is that more guns, loaded and ready to fire, will enable the "good guys" to protect ourselves and deter crime. But what if the negative consequences of arming ourselves are being overlooked?

For example, how many of the "good guys" become unpredictable when they drink alcohol? How many "good guys," out of suspicion, fear or other emotions, would be more likely to shoot someone of another race? Just because someone generally abides by the law and can complete the gun-proficiency course does not mean that he or she will make wise decisions when scared or angry.

Under this new law, it is going to be very difficult to hold people accountable for their actions. Those of us who will become gun-toting Texans must be prepared to face the consequences of our actions. Maybe we should give some thought to



how we could cope with life after we shoot someone who draws a cellular phone on us.

Statistics on guns and violence are ominous. In 1992 over 1,000 people were shot to death while at work in the U.S. In that same year more Americans were killed by firearms than died in the entire Korean War. Compare that with just 33 people in Great Britain and 60 people in Japan, where firearms are severely restricted. One thing is clear — the number of guns in the U.S. is directly related to the amount of gun violence. More handguns in

more places can only make things worse.

No doubt, the fear of crime in our country is real and justified. And, perhaps it is true that a government that cannot protect its citizens should not presume to tell them how they may or may not protect themselves. But more guns is not the answer. Hopefully, Texas will be the state where people can carry concealed handguns but where they have the good sense not to

Elaine Mejia is a senior political science major

## Film shows that we should learn to exhale

**AJA HENDERSON**  
COLUMNIST



Whoosh. This was the constant sound that I heard as I and every other member of my family with estrogen watched *Waiting to Exhale*. Those who saw this blockbuster know what I mean about that whoosh — females were either "releasing" by breathing or by hurtling popcorn at the screen, on which no-good men did no-good things.

Millions of women trekked into the theaters to gaze at Whitney, etc. and cradle their popcorn tubs as they inhaled expectantly. The oxygen level dipped. Strange things happened.

The movie has made people react, and not just those who have actually seen it in the theater. Women are exhaling, and men want to boycott chick flicks.

Some people might think that a movie centered around four beautiful black beauties only applies to beautiful black beauties, but that's not the case. This movie fits Aggie land perfectly.

This campus is constantly "waiting to exhale." I'll provide a simple example to illustrate, but your participation is needed.

Inhale.

What do you feel? Tension. Faster heartbeats. And, if you stay that way too long (not recommended), you will black out. Hmm... could this be déjà vu? I can recall feeling this way countless times. When I overheard a typical conversation about that "\$%\*# multiculturalism." When I stepped too close to Reveille and she

— well, let's just say that she did not appreciate that. When someone asked me) why there is a Black History Month. I have felt this way

more often than I would like.

Exhale.

What do you feel? Release. Calmed heartbeats. And, if you inhaled too long earlier, your vision returns clearer and sharper than before. I can also recall feeling this way. When I attended my Ambassadors meeting and faced the most diverse group on campus. When I was groovin' at a Caribbean party and saw dreadlocks and a cowboy hat in the same glance. When I felt temporary shade relief after draping my twelfth man towel over my head. When someone asked me something about my culture that they always wanted to know but were afraid to ask.

I don't know about you, but I like the exhaling part better. Unfortunately, on this campus, we are usually inhaling far too much and exhaling far too little. How healthy and how fun can this be? Walking around all tight and bent out of shape. Perhaps that's why rednecks are red like that — air cutoff.

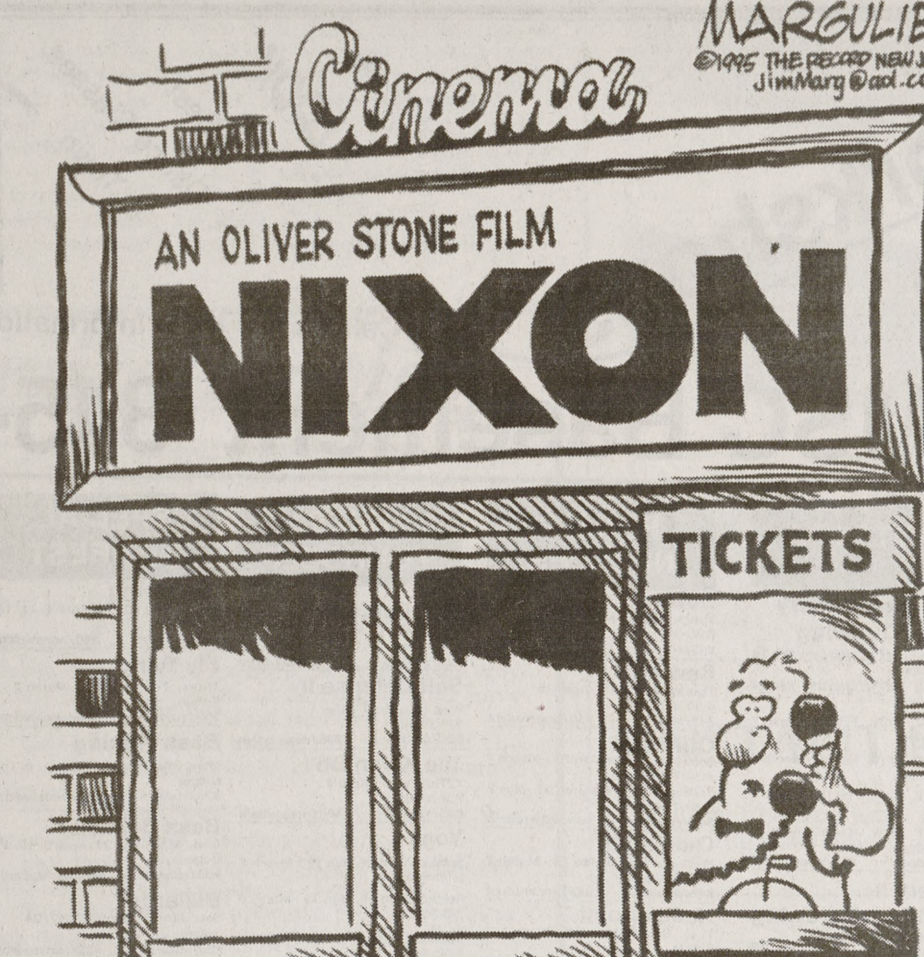
So, here's a suggestion. Puff your chest out and just let it go. Maybe you will start to see things as you never have before.

Maybe you will see something wonderful.

Aja Henderson is a junior political science major



Take down the name of everyone who buys a ticket...



## Stone's Nixon contains more art than history

**JEFF NOLEN**  
COLUMNIST

Oliver Stone has a gift. I'm not sure what that gift is, but it probably exists. It surfaces in his latest magnum opus, *Nixon*, or as I think it should have been titled, *JFK II: Back from the Grave*.

In this fine feature film, Stone captures the life and times of our nation's most controversial president. As in his previous movies, he plays loose with historical facts to get his message across.

The end result is a three hour flick so laden with his political interpretation that it is about as subtle as a jackhammer. Don't get me wrong, it was a well-made movie. It is just hard to get my popcorn down while having his ideology shoved down my throat.

Still, my opinion of the film was in the minority of those in the theater. There were three groups of people at the screening that I saw, the smallest of which were those who were under the impression that they were going to see *Grumpier Old Men*. They kept waiting to see Sophia Loren. The

closest this movie got was Paul Sorvino, who doesn't look nearly as good in red.

The second group of people was slightly larger in number. These were the folks who have such a high opinion of Nixon that they probably think his first words after walking

through the pearly gates were, "Hey, Jesus, get outta my chair." These were the most frightening people. Fortunately, they left the movie early so they wouldn't be late for their weekly meeting of the Flat Earth Society.

The largest group was comprised of the Nixon-haters, who think Stone was too easy on him.

These were the same people who took the time to point out every historical inaccuracy in the film.

It's a good thing they didn't see the film before the studio made Stone take out the tawdry bedroom scene between Kissinger and Nixon.

Stone has shown the ability to make a good film with a message and even stay

close to historical fact. Remember Platoon? But for Stone it appears that historical accuracy can take a backseat to the meaning of his art. And that is what people should accept before going to see any Oliver Stone movie, especially *Nixon*.

Those who went to *Nixon* for historical value were probably as disappointed as those who went to Jesus Christ Superstar for its religious value. Neither are 100 percent correct.

Nixon wasn't obsessed with the Kennedy family. Judas never wore fringe. We accept these fallacies because they are part of the artist's way of expressing the core of a subject. It is called suspension of disbelief. Without it, we wouldn't be able to get through any film.

At its core, Stone's movie paints a grim portrait of Richard Milhouse Nixon. It may not employ the most realistic tools to do so, but it does get its message across. Repeatedly.

In the end *Nixon* leaves us with an image of a man who, like Judas, betrayed that which should have been most sacred to him.

Jennifer Henderson  
Class of '97  
with 11 signatures

David R. Webb  
graduate student

## Athletes need to share Aggie Spirit

At Tuesday's Aggie Men's Basketball game against t.u., my vision of A&M Athletes was shattered.

A group of my friends and I arrived at the game an hour and a half early to get great seats. We sat court-side in a section we were told was open for Texas A&M students who did not consider themselves a part of the 12th man.

About 15 minutes before game-time, our section began filling up with student athletes. We recognized football, volleyball, and lady basketball players, as well as members of the track team. While many of the major sports teams at A&M were represented, I hope these athletes' behavior did not speak for all Aggie Athletes.

When the game began, my friends and I stood, just like we stand in 100 degree temperatures for the football team when they play at Kyle Field. In response to our show of support, the "Aggie" athletes yelled at us to "sit down and shut up." Later, the athletes asked an usher to tell us to sit.

To say the least we were both mad and hurt. These "Ags" did not stand for one yell and the only thing that brought them to their feet was when violence erupted on the court.

So ask me if I will ever camp out for another humid four-hour football game again, and my answer is definitely NO!

## The Battalion should not cast first stones

In reference to the column in the Battalion on 17 Jan 96 condemning the B-CS Eagle. The Battalion has no place condemning any newspaper for lack of journalistic excellence. You have had numerous typos such as the Eagle's 19 month pregnancy highlighted in [Dave Taylor's] column. I can quote several articles

## Mail Call

which show a lack of quality journalism on [his] part. Last semester The Battalion reported that the cost of living was less in B-CS than other Texas cities. To support this finding, The Battalion quoted a student as saying that B-CS was cheaper because she could buy 7 or 8 items for \$10 whereas she could only buy 5 or 6 items for the same price back home. What kind of proof or research is that? Obviously, whoever did the research on cost of living doesn't buy the same items I do or rent the same apartments I've looked at. For example: soft drinks cost about \$4.50 a 12 pack in B-CS, but go to Dallas, Houston, Temple, Uvalde, or almost any non-college town and they cost about \$3.00 and frequently go on sale for \$2.00. I can find an apartment cheaper elsewhere, too.

I also remember when The Battalion wrote an article about the Corps of Cadets one year after the sexual harassment incident of 1991. The cadet who brought forth the accusations later admitted she was lying, but the Battalion ignored this and blatantly tried to reignite the issue, obviously because it couldn't find anything else to write about.

Yes, the Eagle was unprofessional in the way they handled the situation with WTAW. Since [Taylor's] column insinuates that the Battalion is more professional and wouldn't stoop to such behavior, maybe WTAW should start quoting the Battalion for laughs instead.

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, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald. A valid student ID 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