

CIS needs to wave its magic wand Playboy's porn poses serious quandries

Opinion Editor



Heather Pace
 Sophomore
 English major

For example, during my last sojourn in the ACC, I was trying to read my e-mail which is, of course, on VM.

VM is infamous for being the most unwieldy e-mail system ever put on the face of the earth.

For this reason, one would think CIS would take steps to alleviate the many questions of confused students who bombard the Help Desk by either simplifying VM or eliminating it all together.

However, I was still using VM, and my e-mail wouldn't open. Fortunately, I found a helpful CIS employee who admitted VM was a really screwed up system so he tried to stay away from it. But he offered to find someone who knew a little bit more than he did.

After about five minutes, someone approached. My excitement soon dimmed, though, after she admitted it was her first day to work at CIS, and she didn't know anything about VM either.

Finally, a third person came over to inform me that the "wizard of VM" resided in the Teague Research Center Building. Unfortunately, the wizard was performing his magic potions somewhere outside of College Station for the next few days.

Besides the employees who simply have no clue, there are the employees who are frustrated by students' inability to understand their explanations.

Listening to them pontificate may sound impressive, but I feel like I am being sucked into a giant abyss. If only I could be like Dorothy — click my heels a few times and suddenly know all the answers.



Instead, I decided maybe reading my e-mail wasn't that important after all.

It seems obvious employers would look for knowledge and enthusiasm in their prospective employees. If VM is one of the systems provided by the university, wouldn't they provide employees who know how to use it?

OK, so maybe it is a bad system . . . then why doesn't CIS replace it or improve it?

CIS needs to take a comprehensive look at the services it offers and the employees it hires because

VM is definitely not the only system in which employees lack knowledge.

Students who have suffered through computer classes have surely experienced the perplexed faces of employees when trying to find solutions to their questions.

Maybe CIS should make evaluations based on quality, not quantity.

If students are required to pay a \$60 computer access fee per semester, it would be nice for CIS to provide some computers — almost as good, though, would be some answers.

Columnist



Marcus Goodyear
 Senior English major

What's wrong with Playboy?

Many Aggies don't subscribe to it. They don't even like it.

However, they still can't seem to pinpoint the defect in Hugh Hefner's girlie mag.

Playboy is mildly pornographic. It may have good articles, but these are sandwiched between seductive photos of naked women.

This month's Big 12 issue includes two of Aggieland's women, Nikki Willis and Hillary Schatz, naked as jaybirds.

Of course Venus de Milo is also naked as a jaybird, but most people don't consider the statue pornographic. It is a nude — an aesthetic mold that is fundamental to great artists.

Playboy's nudes may be actual photographs of women, but they are not unartistic. The color and lighting of the magazine's pictures are sometimes quite nice.

Photography is an accepted mode of art. Nudes are as acceptable in photographs as they are in oil paintings and marble statues.

However, Playboy's photos are more than just nudes. Every naked Playmate has an explicit sexual undertone. They are not posing to show the beauty of the human form. They are posing so men may admire their breasts, gawk at them even.

So these photos are erotic. Big deal — the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood produced many sensual paintings in the 19th century. Each work of art captures an emotion or feeling. A photo expressing despair is hardly superior to a photo expressing desire.

Perhaps the Puritan heritage of America and the Protestant leanings of the Bible Belt have caused many of us to associate guilt and revulsion with sexuality. Those naked girls ought to put on fig leaves and hide their faces. Nudity is shame.

No photograph deserves such sweeping condemnation. Somewhere in photography there is a line dividing pornography and art.

No one has found the line yet — though even the Supreme Court has tried. The line may not even be the same for each person.

Everyone has a responsibility to himself or herself to determine what is acceptable.

The Big 12 Playboy issue is a perfect excuse for a student at A&M to examine the assumptions of his or her childhood and determine why soft-core porn is or is not objectionable.

A little research never hurt anyone either. A psychological study in 1980 found that even mildly erotic material (such as Playboy) increased men's aggressive behavior toward women.

A more recent study in 1994 found that soft-core pornography increased men's perception of women as sexual objects.

The politically correct term is "objectification." Playboy reduces women to sex objects, toys for boys who have outgrown Star Wars figures.

In the explicit photos and cartoons, the women are completely one-dimensional. All of them want, need and think about only one thing: sex.

Willis and Schatz knew this when they posed. They could accept being objectified in return for their exposure to the modeling world. Posing in Playboy was a good career move.

These two Aggies and all the playmates like them have done nothing wrong, right? If a person wants to be objectified, conservative Bible-thumpers should leave them alone, right?

Unfortunately, Willis and Schatz's decision will affect all women in the United States. Men will think less of women in general after seeing these women presented as purely sexual. The erotic pictures support sexist gender stereotypes, too.

But let's not be too hard on the playmates and their porn peddler. Hugh Hefner didn't invent chauvinism and the hierarchy gender; he's just capitalizing on it.

Fraternities offer members more than meets the eye

Columnist



Sean McAllister
 Senior finance and accounting major

Without a doubt, fraternities are some of the most rewarding organizations at A&M. The sad part is that many people think fraternities are detrimental to the University and to individual fraternity members.

Tradition makes A&M unique and often incorrectly used as a reason to dismiss fraternities. Like A&M, tradition plays a big part in fraternities. So to be a little disheartened when state tradition is anti-frat. Sure, fraternities were not originally a part of A&M, but neither were non-fraternities.

Fraternities were not formed to have all drink-a-thons and all-out brawls. The spirit of fraternities were founded in the 1800s, when A&M was still pasture land.

Fraternities began to focus primarily on scholarship, athletics and brotherhood.

Fraternities continue to develop a person to the best person he can be. That's why fraternities take pride in everything they do and annually produce leaders. Since 1920, all one president of the United States has been a member of fraternities.

On campus, Greeks are not only participants in many organizations, but leaders. Aggies have to give 212 percent, 112 percent to A&M and 100 percent to the fraternity.

Being an Aggie may open some doors in the business world, but combining that with membership in a fraternity opens even more doors. My fraternity has 212 chapters across the United States and Canada with an average of 65 men per chapter. Combine this with approximately 100,000 thousand alumni members, and it creates two windows of opportunity for me in the business world, first as an Aggie and second as a Greek.

To those who think fraternities are groups of guys formed for two purposes, beer and women: Think again.

One of the primary focuses of every fraternity is philanthropy, for which there are many benefits hosted by fraternities. They donate hundreds of hours, and tens of thousands of dollars each semester to various organizations. The Greek system also has the largest turnout of any on-campus organization at The Big Event.

As for, "Rent a friend, join a frat," there is

no renting of friends. Friendships are never made by the mere collection of money. A fraternity is indeed run like a business, and all businesses need money. Dues can be compared to tuition for A&M, used to develop a member and support the foundation. Brotherhood, a significantly deeper bond of friendship, is fostered by mutual respect, concern for each other and belief in one common thing — the fraternity itself.

In order to become a brother there is pledgship, which is not a time for personal humiliation. The stereotypical image is antiquated and, in most cases, fostered by glamorized images portrayed on television.

Pledgship is not a time for humiliation and torture as many may think. Rather, it is a trial period for the pledges to prove they do indeed possess the qualities and desire to become a good member. Pledge education curriculum ensures members will be scholars, leaders and gentleman.

There are 26 fraternities at Texas A&M presenting an option for nearly everyone who is driven to excel. Fraternities are not for everyone, and I understand that. Fraternities are for men who are a cut above the rest.

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EDITORIAL

THE BATTALION

Established in 1893

Editorials appearing in The Battalion reflect the views of the editorials board members. 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. Contact the opinion editor for information on submitting guest columns.

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CRIME RING

Aggie Ring dunking tradition should continue despite legal challenges.

Campus is buzzing with talk of what one Battalion reader called a "nasty" rumor. But it is not a rumor: Ring dunking, as A&M students know it, is illegal in Texas.

Selling a pitcher of beer for individual consumption has been illegal since 1990. The law is intended to keep bars from encouraging excessive drinking.

The law itself is a reasonable one. If discussed in the context of drinking and driving, few people would argue against the law or the thinking behind it. However, ring dunking has become a tradition at A&M, and traditions do not die easily. And students should protect the spirit of this tradition even though, in past practice, it has conflicted with the letter of the law.

It is not the first such conflict between Aggie tradition and law. E. King Gill was not eligible to play in the Dixie Classic, but he has served as the inspirational image of the Twelfth Man ever since he was asked to suit up.

The first midnight yell practice was the result of freshmen breaking curfew.

To a lesser extent, Muster emerged from a broken rule. Cadets played the role of the Mexi-

can army for years on April 21 to recreate the Battle of San Jacinto. One year they rewrote history — broke the rules — and won the battle. The next year, since they were not invited back, they held a celebration on campus that evolved into Muster, the most revered Aggie tradition.

Although it is not as noble as many other Aggie traditions, ring dunking has served as a rite of passage for over a decade. Students who do not drink have started taking part in the tradition, altering it to fit their lives.

And with the crackdown on the sale of pitchers for individual consumption, Aggies who drink will also have to make an adjustment.

This does not and should not signify the end of a tradition. It should prove that Aggies never lose respect for their past and always adjust to the future. And if nothing else, this crackdown should remind everyone to drink responsibly. Simple precautions can keep ring dunking safe.

Whether students drink less, drink from two cups, drink in spurts, or don't drink at all, finally receiving an Aggie ring will remain one of the most unique rites of passage offered by any university.

Aggies never lose respect for their past and always adjust to the future.



MAIL CALL

sonable to expect the full extent of the services that we pay for.

Chandler W. Coy
 Class of '99

Family thanks friends for support

In the hour of our greatest need, it was the understanding, sympathy and the many kindnesses of our relatives, friends and neighbors that gave us added strength to carry on.

We wish to express our most sincere gratitude and appreciation to all of those who attended the services and for the beautiful floral tributes and cards which we received during our recent bereavement in the death of our beloved son & brother Jose Maria Ibanez, Jr.

A special thanks to Lt. Colonel Ray E. Toler, Director of Bands, Dorothy Hopkins, Aggie Band Mom, Kristen Sayer, Associate Director, Department of Student Life, Texas A&M Cadets, A-Company, Band Members, Bus Operations Shop Staff, Students and Faculty Members of Texas A&M University.

Your kindness and support

showed us what our son and brother had so lovingly boasted to us about these past four years.

He always spoke so highly of his friends and fellow students at his beloved A&M and their camaraderie for each other.

Chema was so proud to be an Aggie and a part of such a special group of people.

While our hearts are broken, we know Chema is in Heaven, proudly smiling down at all of us right now. Thanks again and may God Bless each and every one of you.

Ibanez Family

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or fewer and include the author's name, class, and phone number.

The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:

The Battalion - Mail Call
 013 Reed McDonald
 Texas A&M University
 College Station, TX
 77843-1111

Campus Mail: 1111
 Fax: (409) 845-2647
 E-mail: Batt@tamvm1.tamu.edu

For more details on letter policy, please call 845-3313 and direct your question to the opinion editor.

Students deserve prompt services

made it to my class 30 minutes late. The problem wasn't I woke up late or that I didn't get to class wasn't important enough to attend.

I was late to class because I had to go to school and depend on the University's shuttle system. I had to wait 40 minutes before my class began.

After five minutes passed and the first bus approached and stopped.

As someone pulls out of their well-earned "space," the attack begins.

Two vehicles, from both sides of the lane, race to the vacant and valuable parking facility. It is a daily battle for all off-campus students to get to class on time. We depend on the shuttle buses to transport us.

Because it costs \$110 for a bus pass and \$75 for a commuter parking permit, it is not unreasonable to expect the full extent of the services that we pay for.

cause it was too full. By the time the third bus did the same thing, there were nine of us just standing around, and I was already late for class.

I decided to take my car to school and within four minutes was in the commuter parking lot. It took 20 minutes to find a parking spot in the parking lanes furthest from any building as other commuters patiently waited behind the wheels of their steeds, stalking their prey.

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When other people joined me and I waited for the next bus, it also did not stop be-