

## Red light special

*Cabaret owners should value community virtues over profit, keep adult venues out of Bryan*



CALEB MCDANIELL

How ironic. The same week Bryan officials presented their community as one of the best in the country for the All-America City competition, plans to build a brand spank new "adult entertainment" bar in Bryan's backyard became public. Property owner Don Ball has leased a lot at the Industrial Park Center to John Skruck. The cabaret is supposed to open in October, bringing titillation — at a price — to a city desperately trying to clean itself up. The saddest part is many of the parties involved in bringing the cabaret to Bryan seem to see the irony of its arrival. Because adult entertainment has become so common in big cities like Austin, Houston and Dallas, towns like Bryan seem ready just to hang and bear it when they give in to red light districts of their own.

But nonchalant acceptance of the cabaret is irresponsible and detrimental to the community. Red light specials should be given the green light by either the owners of the bar or the citizens of Bryan. Some locals — and certainly the owners — will object to such a stance.

First, advocates of the bar will dress up business with transparent euphemisms. Instead of calling the product what it is — a little short of sex for sale — they will give an air of sophistication to call it a "cabaret," as if its promised choreography and musical routines betoken cultural enrichment instead of cheap thrills.

Of course, the trick of thinking of more palatable names for smut is not a new one to the industry.

It is the same marketing tool that calls strip joints "gentleman's clubs." There was a time when that word meant something, but the main patrons of these establishments are the same "gentlemen" who have per names for their private parts and read the newspaper just to ogle at the lingerie ads. How chic.

Secondly, after surrounding their wares with a disingenuous mystique, they will of course bring up the money.

Skruck actually offers profit as a justification for his enterprise — if hiring women parade themselves in front of horny men can be ennobled with such a name. To suggest that some members of the com-

munity may oppose this seedy use of his property, Ball was ready with an answer. "I don't believe there's a Bible-thumper out there who would have done differently with the same monetary offer," he said.

Translated, this excuse amounts to saying, "The money made me do it."

Such rationalization is all too common these days. Morality gets trampled in the marketplace because money is valued over virtue. Where profits are, entrepreneurs will be, too — clothed or not.

Both of these defenses obscure the truth about the adult entertainment industry. The truth is that peeping toms are not gentlemen, and bare bottoms cannot be reduced to a bottom line.

The truth is that pornographic shows are wrong.

The cabarets are wrong because they degrade women. They purposely twist feminine beauty into an object to be ogled at. The dignity of the women employed by the likes of Skruck is stripped away from them along with their clothes; they are treated as eye candy and nothing more.

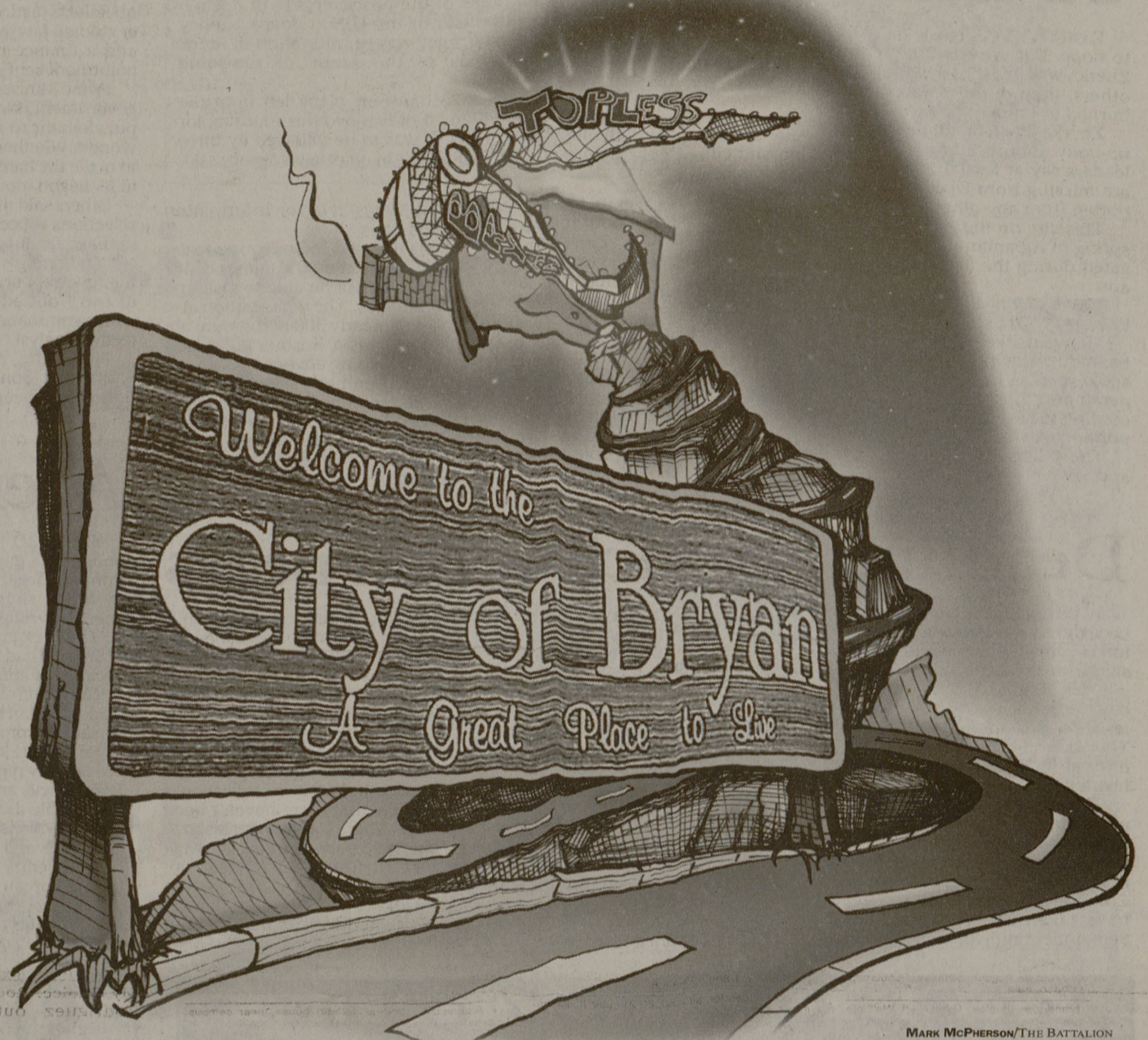
The cabarets are wrong because they destroy families and relationships. They offer men and women short thrill rides in lieu of committed relationships, and those who are in committed — even married — relationships are only encouraged to indulge in forbidden pleasures. Communities of relationships that must compete with the allure of supposedly no-consequence philandering will not survive.

The cabarets are wrong because they piller lust instead of love, and as a result, they gratify base desires instead of noble ones. Skruck promises the title of the cabaret will be "nice, short and tasteful," but the pleasures it sells will only be nice and short, as well.

You can call it "adult" entertainment if you like, but it is really the most childish form of leisure around. It delights in immaturity instead of commitment, and it makes excuses for itself because it stuffs the piggy bank with cash.

And although the city cannot technically stop Skruck, one can still hope for — and work toward — the day when men like him will grow up to be real gentlemen, temper their freedoms with some responsibility and think more of the welfare of women and the community.

Caleb McDaniell is a junior history major.



MARK MCPHERSON/THE BATTALION

### MAIL CALL

#### Leaving early good for grads

In response to Caleb McDaniell's July 6 column.

I graduated in the first ceremony in May. When I found out the College of Liberal Arts was walking with the College of Engineering, I knew it was going to be long.

I heard some people complain that so many left.

But my parents made a good point: because people were leaving in waves rather than at the same time, exiting Reed Arena and its parking lot went a lot smoother.

Besides, my family went to

#### see me graduate and no one else. I would venture to say that many of the families went to see their loved one walk and no one else (with the possible exception of former President Bush, but even he left early). Let them leave.

It also helps the flow to local restaurants.

Many of the college of engineering grads and their families were probably eating desert when we were singing "The Spirit of Aggieland."

Perfect timing for the next wave of reservations to invade our favorite eating establishments.

Cariño Casas Class of '99

#### NOW's policies hypocritical

In response to Mark Passwaters' July 5 column.

As a conservative woman, I could not agree more with Passwaters' column about the hypocrisy of NOW. Patricia Ireland was quick to denounce Bob Packwood, but she and the rest of NOW have been deafeningly silent with regard to Clinton, Moran, and any other politician who is pro-choice.

Ireland may as well just spare the group any charges of hypocrisy in the future and change NOW's name to the

National Organization to Support Pro-Choice Democrats.

Ellen Daniel Class of '01

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or less 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

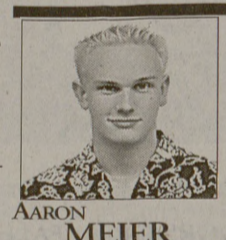
Campus Mail: 1111  
Fax: (409) 845-2647  
E-mail: battletters@hotmail.com

## Popular women's sports re-invent feminine ideals

There used to be a time when the only two women sports figures were Martina Navratilova and Mary Lou Retton — two polar opposites of the feminine spectrum.

One could scare the lines off the tennis court. The other was so pixishly petite, her voice made dolphins wince in pain.

But lately women in sports have become more than a nice pair of legs in a tennis skirt.



AARON MEIER

There is the WNBA, which started out as a potential League of Their Own in the making, but has been growing in popularity in its third season. There has been record-setting attendance at this year's Women's World Cup games with the U.S. team taking center stage.

While at one point mothers encouraged sexual stereotypes by sending their little girls to ballet lessons and their little boys to soccer tournaments, now Mom puts both kids on opposing co-ed teams and watches as Beth sends Todd home crying.

Finally, the world has learned that chicks dig sports. But more importantly, the social stigma of women in sports is slowly disappearing.

While at one time the vast majority of female athletes would find that there was no life after the NCAA, today professional and amateur leagues exist for women interested in practically every sport.

While it used to be considered unladylike to sweat or run up and down a court, two years ago a Miss U.S.A. finalist was a player on the University of Missouri basketball team.

Also, according to a recent AP article, a high school in Maine had a nation-wide first. Its prom queen was also the football team captain.

Even collegiate women's sports are gaining public attention. The Texas A&M Volleyball team had its own mini-superstar this year in Stacey Sykora. She dominated her position as an outside hitter with an on-court personality that made her the Janeane Garofalo of the team.

Prissy Sharpe, forward of the women's

basketball team; Melanie Wilson, goalie of the soccer team; and Clara Ho, a freshman NCAA swimming qualifier, have all left their mark on their sport and A&M athletics as a whole.

Not only are women breaking into a field that was once strictly reserved for the "stronger" sex, nowadays they are surpassing men in many ways.

Today's women athletes realize the impact they have on the youth of America. While male athletes like Charles Barkley and Latrell Sprewell flaunt their irresponsible behavior, women such as Lisa Lobo of the WNBA and Mia Hamm of the U.S. Women's Soccer Team take their roles as role models seriously.

In the sport of tennis, it is evident that the women's matches feature more stars than their male counterparts.

Ask the lay person to name a male tennis player and two names come to mind: Pete Sampras and Andre Agassi. Ask them to name women in the sport and names such as Graf, Williams, Davenport, Seles, Hingis and Kornikova come pouring out.

At this year's Wimbledon, the quarter final match between Venus Williams and Anna Kornikova had so many onlookers they were practically hanging over the balconies to catch a glimpse of the two prima donnas of tennis.

Even the sacred cow of professional sports — endorsements — have come knocking on the doors of women athletes.

With the Women's World Cup under way in the United States, Nike has produced a series of commercials touting the strength of the American team. Never before has a trip to the dentist been such a team-bonding experience.

Individually, Hamm, who has been called the Michael Jordan of the soccer world, has been in several Gatorade spots going head to mid-chest with M.J.

While ticket sales to women's events may not be up to the male leagues and the money involved may not approach the mind-numbing figures awarded to men, if the ladies keep up the excitement and integrity of their sports, then "I shall have two fillings."

Aaron Meier is a senior political science major.



MIKE LUCKOVICH ATLANTA CONSTITUTION