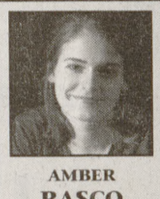


Of mothers and sisters

Expelling members with children contradicts meaning of Greek life

Hundreds of young women will soon flock to Texas A&M with high hopes of becoming Greek. Embarking upon a new chapter in their lives, these ladies plan to pledge their time, money and energy to a new family of sisters. After being initiated, many sorority women will begin to build their lives around their new identity, trusting their sisters like family.



AMBER RASCO

At this time last year, a single mother went through rush thinking it would be a good way to meet people. During rush, however, she did not mention she had a daughter. Upon pledgship, she, like other pledges, made a "personality page" introducing herself to her fellow pledge sisters. She included a picture of her daughter.

Disgusted that this pledge would defame the reputation of the sorority chapter by hiding her motherhood during rush, the new programming chair told this young mother not to return to sorority functions. To top things off, the pledge was told that, if she left quietly, the chapter would consider her an "honorary initiate" upon her graduation.

Although this case is individual, it is conceivable that similar situations have occurred at other times, but were handled more privately. Pledges who have children should not have to experience such discrimination, but should be given equal opportunity to join a sorority. While each chapter is expected to establish and uphold its own standards, the actions of this sorority's chapter defy what sororities are supposed to stand for — sister-

hood, loyalty and trust. The National Panhellenic Conference is not authorized to make specific policies on such issues as accepting mothers as pledges. Likewise, the Panhellenic Council at A&M does not set specific standards for individual member groups, but coordinates the best interests of the Greek community. Panhellenic adviser Meg Manning said that Panhellenic deals with the organizational aspects of Greek life, similar to the way a city's chamber of commerce overlooks its individual members.

Basically, the object of the association, according to the bylaws and constitution of the Panhellenic Council, is to "develop and maintain fraternity life and interfraternity relations at the high level of accomplishment" and to "cooperate with member-fraternities and the University administration in concern for the maintenance of high social and moral standards."

Each sorority defines its own set of high social and moral standards, and within each chapter, there is a standards board that privately deals with discipline issues. So when a member gets kicked out of a sorority, all of the facts are not publicly known.

Unique to each chapter, the criteria for social probation or expulsion are understood by those who pledge. Although a member must take an oath to uphold certain values, people who join sororities do not in-

tend to shame the sorority with something like motherhood. To reject a sister because of something like motherhood makes a mockery of Greek principles and ideals.

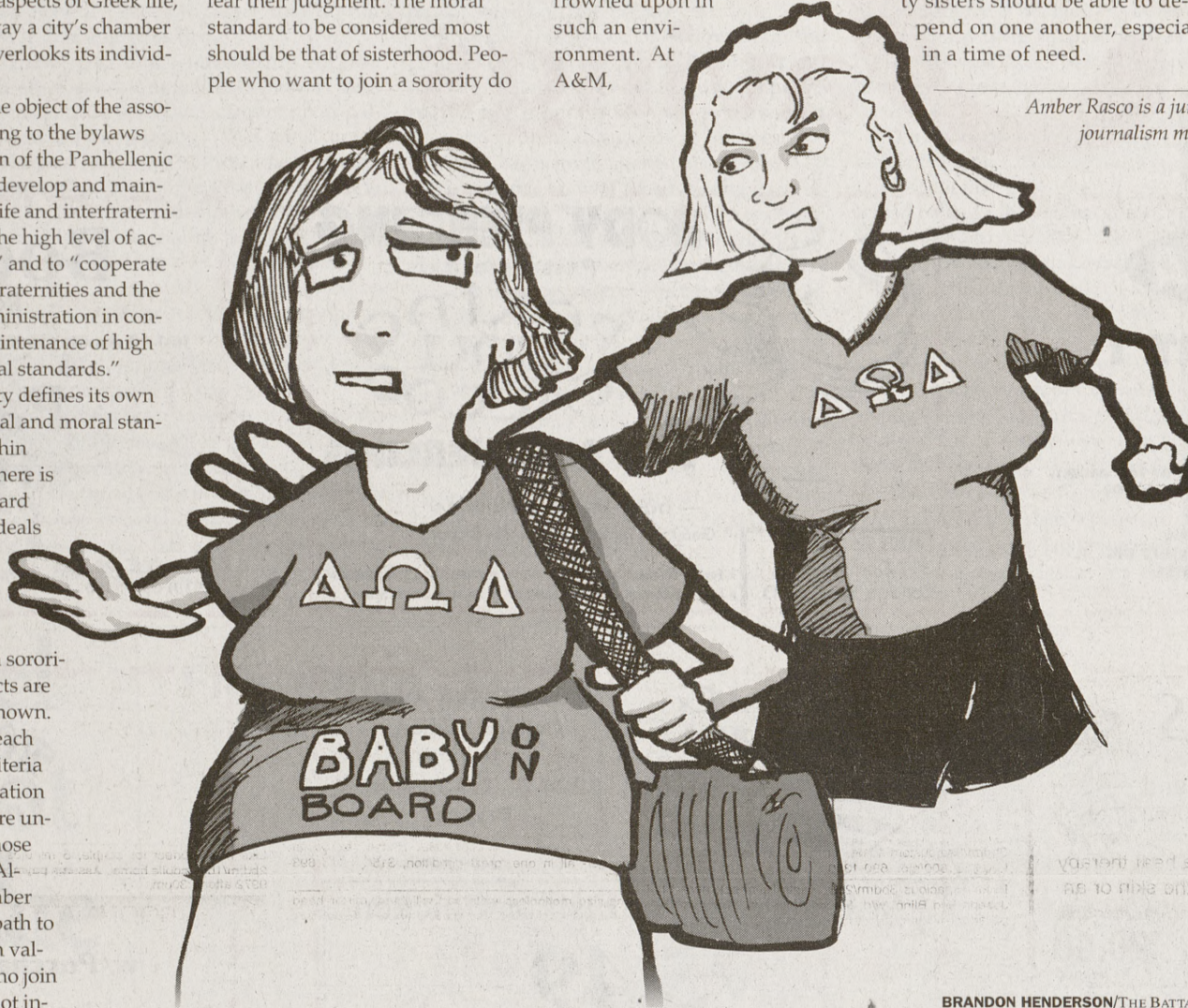
Being in a sorority should be about creating lasting friendships that endure through thick and thin. A woman enduring such a challenge as raising a child should be able to rely on her sisters for support and comfort rather than fear their judgment. The moral standard to be considered most should be that of sisterhood. People who want to join a sorority do

so because it provides a sense of belonging and safety. The actions of sororities that react to situations with such distaste demonstrate their ignorance toward the principles on which they were first founded.

A&M is commonly known as a conservative school, and College Station is home to many families, so an unwed mother in a sorority is more likely to be frowned upon in such an environment. At A&M,

sororities intended to promote unity and togetherness have neglected to meet the needs of young mothers. If one cannot turn to family for support, almost all hope is lost. Sororities are positive social groups. However, a sorority that would exclude a girl just because she is a mother should study their oaths and remember why they came together in the first place. Sorority sisters should be able to depend on one another, especially in a time of need.

Amber Rasco is a junior journalism major



BRANDON HENDERSON/THE BATTALION

ViewPoints

eBay loses credibility with auction removal

Founded in 1995, eBay describes itself as the world's premier online trading community. Everything from automobiles and Navajo rugs to clothing and baseball cards can be found and bid on. Recently, however, eBay has been under considerable scrutiny from federal regulatory agencies over the authenticity of some of the products its users auction. Instead of defending their sales method, eBay officials have given into federal pressure and are now enforcing strict policies.

In late July, an online auction featuring purported pieces of Egypt's Great Pyramid of Cheops was canceled after questions were raised about both its authenticity and legality. In the text part of his advertisement, a seller called "brsteve" wrote, "This is an actual piece of the Great Pyramid of Egypt. On my first trip to Egypt, it was still possible to climb to the top of the pyramid. Now, because of the deterioration of the limestone, it is no longer legal to climb the outside of the pyramids." Officials shut down the sale of the pyramid pieces, which garnered bids as high as \$40. Kevin Pursglove of eBay Inc. explained: Either the item listed was accurately described, which would be potentially illegal, or it was inaccurately described, which would be fraudulent. Neither eBay nor potential buyers could verify the origin of the pieces, so the sale was closed.

The logic used by eBay officials is perplexing. If the origin of the pieces cannot be verified, then the claim made by "brsteve" cannot be disproved, either. As was stated in the auction's text, the piece was taken when it was still legal to climb the pyramid. If eBay, acting on behalf of federal regulatory agencies, shuts down the auction, then the burden of disproving the seller's claim rests with eBay.

eBay is the ultimate free market. Much of the success that eBay Inc. has had is due to its simple, yet strong, business model. Most children remember the intense baseball card trading sessions of their younger days. Everyone was a CEO as mergers and acquisitions occurred every day. No regulatory agencies sat in on these sessions. It was up to the traders to verify the legitimacy of their trades. That was a simpler time, but eBay started with the same idealistic principles. Baseball-card trading was a free market and it should continue to be with eBay.

Some monitoring of eBay is needed to prevent rampant fraud. But eBay has broken one of its own rules by shutting down a member's auction without being able to disprove his advertising.

—Luke McMahan

Chaney best choice for VP nomination

There have been several one-word descriptions of George W. Bush's selection of Dick Cheney as his vice-presidential nominee. Among them are "safe," "solid" and "dull."

How about "good"? Cheney accumulated a remarkable resume during his time in public service and is known as a capable man. Considering the lackluster competition for the slot, Cheney was Bush's best choice.

Cheney brings an increased sense of competence to the Bush ticket; no longer can Democrats say that Bush has no clue of how Washington works. With a former White House chief of staff, member of Congress and secretary of defense as his running mate, Bush has someone who can provide solid advice based on past experience.

The Democrats have attempted to label Cheney as an extremist who foretells bad things to come from a Bush administration. They might as well stop whining and concentrate on who Vice President Al Gore is going to select as his running mate, because the American people simply do not seem to be interested in any more negative campaigning. The tactic is especially unwise when dealing with someone like Cheney, whom the public remembers from Operation Desert Storm as a genuinely good and competent man.

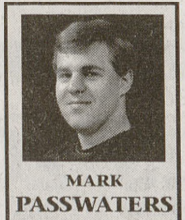
Accusations that Cheney is somewhat bland may be warranted. However, unlike whoever becomes the Democratic vice-presidential nominee, Cheney's boss is not the candidate whose personality stacks up unfavorably with that of a block of wood. Cheney is a man who is not only qualified to be vice president, but president as well. He is also a very loyal man who will fit nicely into Bush's call for "compassionate conservatism."

Electoral college candidates do not win elections. However, they can lose them (see Quayle, Dan). Bush's choice of Cheney adds consistent ability to the ticket and places the onus on Gore to find someone equally capable of fitting his platform.

—Mark Passwaters

Writer suspension shows paper's political agen-

The newspaper business, like any other job out there, has its fair share of inflexible politics. Writers and editors can act like spoiled brats when a writer puts something in print that they do not agree with. Most of the time, however, maturity prevails and the problems are ironed out.



MARK PASSWATERS

This, apparently, does not apply to *The Boston Globe*. Its tragic attempt at censorship has proven that it is still in need of a pacifier and a nice little nap.

Jeff Jacoby, a columnist for *The Globe*, was suspended for four months without pay for an article that ran on July 4. In his article, Jacoby mentioned the fates that met some of those who signed the Declaration of Independence. Jacoby failed to mention in his article that he found some of the information — and corrected some inaccurate information — from a piece widely distributed on the Internet and printed in an Ann Landers column.

The Globe's editors suspended him, screaming all the while with righteous indignation that Jacoby had soiled the "good name" of the paper by plagiarizing.

An appropriate price for a minor faux pas, or a purge of a dissenting view? Considering other past lapses in journalistic integrity by *The Globe*, one smells a rat.

The Globe is a liberal paper in a liberal town in a state that is sometimes called The People's Democratic Republic of Massachusetts. Jacoby is a conservative writer; in fact,

he is the sole conservative on *The Globe's* opinion/editorial staff. Jacoby had the audacity to say in a column that he was opposed to gay marriages and he wrote some pieces that criticized President Clinton. According to *The Boston Phoenix*, this outraged many of his coworkers, including two homosexual copy editors who encouraged other members of the staff to "get (Jacoby) back for his homophobia." When Jacoby was suspended, The Media Research Center noted that he was informed there would be a "serious rethink" of how and what he could write in his columns if he returned.

In other words, Jacoby would be censored. This hypocritical act is far beyond a reasonable punishment for Jacoby's crime and becomes even more questionable when looking at the way *The Globe* handled problems with other writers. In essence, Jacoby is being run out of town for getting his facts straight. This may be why *The Globe* is so angry with him; it has coddled writers such as other opinion writers Mike Barnicle and Patricia Smith, who wrote as "fact" information that was about as real as the boogeyman.

The Globe refrained from taking action against Barnicle and Smith after they repeatedly invented sources and quotes and plagiarized other people's work. For these repeated lapses in integrity, Barnicle and Smith were never suspended. It took a mas-

sive outcry from other publications and *The Globe's* parent company, the New York Times Corporation, to get Smith and Barnicle fired. Likewise, according to the Media Research Center, *The Globe's* former city hall bureau chief was given the light punishment of being transferred to another post after it became known that he had gotten a recommendation to a Harvard fellowship from then Mayor Tom Menino — the very man that he was supposed to be covering.

Now, in an election year, *The Globe* is going to crucify Jacoby for running something factually accurate? No, not really: It is merely a pretext for a group of liberals to silence an opposing viewpoint. The four-month suspension for Jacoby will end, conveniently enough, just after the Nov. 7 election. Until then, *The Globe* will be able to print liberal columns without any opposition from the other side of the aisle.

There is every reason to condemn *The Globe* not only for being unfair, but for lacking professionalism. *The Globe* has played fast and loose with the truth before and has actually protected writers like Barnicle and Smith for doing so. It seems convenient that the first — and perhaps only — time *The Boston Globe* decides to stick up for the paper's journalistic values and ethics, the target happens to be the lone conservative on the staff.

Until the elections in November, *The Globe* might as well write love sonnets to Al

There is every reason to condemn The Globe not only for being unfair, but for lacking of professionalism.

Mark Passwaters is a senior electrical engineering major.

Mail Call

Inefficient use of water explains shortage

In response to Stuart Hutson's July 27 article, I read the article about on-campus conservation and had to laugh. I would like to venture my own idea about why water supply officials cannot fill the on-campus water tower. I be-

lieve the lack of water stems from A&M's aggressive policy of watering the streets and sidewalks on campus. Every day for years, the irrigation system on campus has effectively watered much of Bizzell and Spence streets, as well as several parts of West Campus paving. I think that if A&M water officials realized how much water they were putting into the University's storm sewer system instead of on the fo-

liage, they would understand why they cannot meet all water demands. In times of short water supply, perhaps the answer is not always to cut back, but to become more efficient in using what water we have.

Matthew Zeve
Class of '99

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 014 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:

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