

Opinion

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THE BATTALION

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MOTHER NATURE vs A MOTHER'S NATURE

Maternal instincts supersede a woman's age



MELISSA BEDSOLE

From childhood, many women dream of being a mother. The dream may be very specific when girls are young, such as knowing that they would like to get married at 22 years old, have their first child at age 24 and so on. But as women grow older, there are many factors that come into play and change or alter their original plans. The desire to be a mother may never go away, just simply be delayed.

Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison has stated she had the desire to be a mother for many years. But she has had many other desires, and many other accomplishments that took up her time along the way. Now at age 58, Hutchison has adopted a baby girl and is receiving unfair negative feedback from the media for simply fulfilling a normal human desire. Adoption should have only one focus: finding a good home for a child who needs one. Hutchison's child is not just in a good home, she is in a wonderful home where her parents love her dearly and will do everything in their power to raise her the best they can.

The concern is that Hutchison is 58 years old, and her husband, Ray Hutchison, is 68. The ages of these parents are indeed a worthy concern. No one wants to see a child lose his or her parents at a young age, but realistically this child could be 20 years old before either parent dies of old age. Aside from age, the chances of her parents dying are just as great for Kathryn Bailey Hutchison (to be called Bailey) as they are for any other 4-month-old child.

It must be stressed that the Hutchisons are two well-educated people who have given a great deal of thought to the effect their age will have on their daughter. If Hutchison needed any credentials, she has worked specifically with adoption issues as a member of the Congressional Coalition of Adoption. According to an article from *The New York Times*, of the 162 members of this coalition, at least 15 have adopted children.

The Hutchisons are not alone in this adoption. They adopted Bailey through a licensed adoption agency, a legal and safe method of adoption for everyone involved and a process that is becoming more popular. In addition, the age problem is not that uncommon.

Julie Mason of the *Houston Chronicle* said, "Later-life adoptions are becoming more frequent [according to experts] as women put careers or struggle with fertility issues for years before deciding to raise children."

Finally, adoption is not an easy process. There are waiting periods and a great deal of paperwork involved, and sometimes a temporary placement of the child is required before the adoption is final. Adoption agencies are generally extremely careful and take great care for the well-being of the child. If it was detrimental

for an older couple to adopt a baby, it simply would not be allowed. Alice O'Neil, a Houston lawyer who specializes in adoption, said, "It's not harder for older couples to adopt."

The Hutchisons are not selfish; they are two parents wanting a child to love. Their situation is not different from many families, except the media is exploiting them. The new parents

Senator is too old to begin raising a small child



TOM CAMPBELL

There is nothing more noble than to lovingly raise a child in a family. Part of loving that baby is to place its needs above your own wants, desires and needs. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison is a senator and a

interest of that child. Their desire to have a baby should not take precedent over the best welfare for the child.

People in their retirement years do not have the energy that they did when they are young. It is difficult enough to see a 25-year-old woman struggle through midnight feedings required by a newborn, let alone a woman who is 58 years old. A 70-year-old should be watching the grandkids every now and then, not caring for a child full time. Because caring for a newborn child is difficult and requires a lot of energy, adopt.org states that the acceptable range of ages for parents wanting to adopt is 25 to 50. This is not to purposely exclude anyone, but only to maintain the best welfare of the child.

Ray Hutchison is a partner at the law firm Vinson and Elkins in Dallas, and Sen. Hutchison is a member of the Senate, sitting on four committees. Both of these jobs can be very difficult and taxing physically. Having two parents who spend much of their time in different cities with separate full-time jobs is not in the best interest of any baby.

All children need loving parents, and every child who does is lucky. No doubt that the Hutchisons could give that love to a new baby. The problem is that thousands of other couples are already waiting to adopt. The wait to adopt a newborn baby is about seven years, according to the Website adopt.org. For every baby given for adoption, there are often six or seven couples wanting to adopt that child. All couples on this seven-year waiting list go through an extensive home study and a series of meetings with social workers. The Hutchisons bypassed this and adopted directly from the baby's birth mother.

A better alternative for the Hutchisons would be to become foster parents or to adopt an older child. By adopting an older child, the Hutchisons would still have a young person to share their love and to nurture, but their age would not be as detrimental of a factor.

According to the Adoption Institute, there are over 117,000 children over the age of one that are waiting to be adopted. The average time they wait to be adopted is 46 months.

The Hutchisons do not even meet the age requirements, which are there to help provide the baby with the best possible situation. If the Hutchisons truly feel the need to share their love with a child, they should pick one of the 117,000 that are waiting for a home. The child's best interest involves many things, and one of them is having a parent that has the time and energy to keep up with them. As the Hutchisons reach their 60s and 70s while working long hours in stressful jobs, they may not be able to give that to the child.

Tom Campbell is a senior agricultural journalism major.



adopt a baby

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described Bailey as "beautiful beyond belief, except for a few occasions at 3:30 a.m."

Her parents will be with her in the middle of the night when she cries, and they will be there for many years loving and providing for her. Bailey Hutchison has not been mistreated or had her best interests overlooked. She is a very lucky little girl.

Melissa Bedsole is a senior psychology major.

lawyer, and has held many elected offices, including Texas State Treasurer. She has accomplished all of this, earning many awards on the way, but did so at the expense of her dream of having a child. Sen.

Hutchison and her husband, Ray, have recently adopted a baby girl to fulfill that desire. Unfortunately at their ages, 58 and 68 respectively, raising a baby is not in the best

MAIL CALL

Cartoon of the Day was indecent

In response to the Sept. 14 Cartoon of the Day "Commercial Aviation for Terrorists."

We are highly upset and disappointed that you chose to print the illustration. We

often wonder about the material in *The Battalion*, but this cartoon crossed the line.

We have lost faith in you and your staff's ability to cover the news. Because of that, we will no longer read *The Battalion*.

Steven Hatcher
Class of 2002

Just fly the flag

In response to the Sept. 18 mailcall "Show respect for the flag:"

I agree with you that the flag should be displayed properly, but I feel as if you are missing the point in this new-found patriotism.

In our country's time of mourning, it seems rather petty to be so concerned with how the flag is being displayed. To this date last year, a nationwide business recorded selling 10,000 American flags. Last week alone that same business sold more than 200,000 flags.

That alone speaks volumes for the patriotism and unity spreading over our great nation in the aftermath of its greatest tragedy. The flag is a symbol of unity, and to be concerned with the way it is displayed at a time like this only jeopardizes the overall importance of it being displayed.

A person's ignorance of how the flag should be flown does not make them any less of a patriot. Rather than attacking this ignorance it would be nobler of you to attempt to educate them on the subject. It is better to fly the flag improperly than to not fly the flag at all.

Todd Wolford
Class of 2003

Bikes need to stay off sidewalks, in bike lanes

Recently, I have seen more and more bikes on the sidewalks. Bike lanes are made for bicycles and sidewalks are made for pedestrians who are walking or in a wheelchair.

If sidewalks were made for bicycles, they would be called bike walks or something. If the University is going to issue citations to pedestrians who cross the intersections with no walk signal, than I think they should issue citations to the bicycle riders who ride their bicycles on

the sidewalks.

Some side walks on campus are exceptional, especially those in the middle of campus, but for those sidewalks that have a bike lane that runs right beside it there should be no exceptions.

It aggravates me when I have to move over on a sidewalk because a bicycle is either coming towards me or coming from behind me. So to PTTS, I hope that you will consider this and act upon the cyclists who ride on the sidewalks where there is a bike lane running parallel to the sidewalk.

Mark Woelfel
Class of 2001



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ADULTER CONSTITUTION

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

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