

# Is the gender war heating up?

by Andrew Festa  
The Collegian

A man joins a women studies class. It's not long before he's given the impression that his presence isn't wanted. He has become -- here comes that word -- the enemy.

I took a women studies class at Behrend, along with a class on women poets. Often, I feel like I should be wearing a cast iron jock strap. I'm the enemy merely because I'm male?

I thought the main purpose of multi-cultural classes was to enlighten and bring about a union between people, not divide them into camps of good versus bad and "blame the sins of the past on the men of today?" Am I wrong here? Does this

picture have a blemish or two?

Sure, there's a lot of women out there hurting. First, though, let's talk about the women who have and do hurt men.

"Oh--sure," she says, "blame it on women."

"You're missing the point," I say.

She screams, "but men are jerks!"

"And I suppose women are all saints or beds of thornless



roses?" I ask.

She hesitates.

"Second," I go on, "let's talk about blame." I ask her, "if a bear hurts or kills someone, is it justified when all bears are hunted in retaliation."

"All bears are dangerous; it's

their nature," she says, "just like men."

"And women are just passive, submissive sheep, not at all responsible for life or their own actions, and they're not dangerous?"

"Women aren't at all dangerous; not like men."

Ok, so she's got part of a point: there is a distinction between the genders.

"Neither is a moving warhead passive," I reply, "until it slips on its imperfection."

"Women aren't warheads," she quips.

I say, "so why are so many women aiming so much of their anger at men instead of at the system from which both sexes derive?"

She hesitates. I want to say some nasty hate words. So does she. I remain quiet. She doesn't. This goes on, but you get the point.

As a writer, I want to know about people so I can create better, more effective, and more believable characters through whom I can talk in many voices.

I am particularly interested in women's voices, mostly because I don't want to be locked into any 'system' or style of writing, but also because they're so damn difficult to understand which is itself an intriguing challenge.

I want to be able to

understand them, to know them, not growl in ignorance at them. What I've seen, however, has been all the more puzzling.

When women talk about equality, those who shoulder the movement's ideals, they need to understand that direct abrasion with man-as-enemy creates undue tension which results in a loss of at least part of the communication process that could have taken place.

This movement seeks, I feel, to unite the sexes in a broader, more defined, more in-depth understanding of each, and to do so from an equal footing.

The problem is, women are not equal to men. Nor are men equal to women.

To call for equality is a worthy and attainable goal, but to call both men and women equal is wrong. Men and women do not have the same body parts, or cycles; men experience things women don't--and women experience things men don't, or at the very least both view, react to, and interact with life and others quite differently, whether by nature or nurture. (See, Biology did pay off.)

The next question is, "Why does there have to be a contest between the sexes, or between any people? Men are men and women are women. There's nothing wrong with being either.

Why be top, best, more; why worry so damn much about being number one?

A little voice called Cliche said, "but, that's basic human nature."

If the participants of the system would stop trying to one-up the others, they might unite and work toward a common good.

Cliche said, "It'll never work."

I wonder. Should it be 'women studies' or 'gender studies'? Maybe it should be gender studies. Maybe that'll bring the two [sides] together...

"Maybe it won't," said Cliche.

Well thank you Mr. Reality Check.

As a human being who believes that not gender, nor race, nor nationality, nor religion, nor any lone variable nor variables is enough to justify the shallow judgements dilled out on people like free tickets to a cheap street concert on a rainy afternoon, I do not feel we (all of whom are, by variables, different) should judge others so quickly and on so little.

Communication, Man; it's the damn key!

Andrew Festa is a Senior Majoring in the Creative Writing Option of English. This is his final semester with The Collegian. "Take Care!"

## Just in time for holidays: shelf-stable fermented meats with enhanced lipids

by Dave Barry  
Syndicated Columnist

Today at the Institute of Military Food Concepts we present the results of our taste test of a new sandwich developed by U.S. Army food engineers for internal use by troops.

This sandwich was brought to our attention by retired Army Sergeant Major Willard Clark, who sent in a newspaper article reporting that the Army is developing a new sandwich representing "a breakthrough in the state-of-the-art technology for intermediate moisture foods." The article quotes the Army as stating that this sandwich features "shelf-stable fermented meats" mixed into "a synergistic anti-oxidant system" offering "greatly enhanced lipid stability."

These, of course, are precisely the food qualities that knowledgeable connoisseurs look for when they dine in the finest French restaurants.

CONNOISSEUR: Garcon, is the lipid stability of your fermented meats enhanced by a synergistic anti-oxidant system?

WAITER: Vous etes darned touting? ("But of course!")

So we called the Army Food Engineering Directorate and asked if we could have one of the new sandwiches for testing

purposes. We were told this would require higher-level approval. The military cannot afford to have a state-of-the-art assault sandwich falling into the Wrong Hands.

We don't know how far up the chain of command our request went ("It could be a trick, Mr. President!"). But evidently we checked out OK, because several months later the Army sent us a dark-olive-green sealed foil package labeled: SHELF STABLE SANDWICH FLAVOR: PEPPERCORN

Accompanying the package was an Information Paper from the Army's Advanced Food Branch.

SECURITY ALERT  
(The following sentence reveals details from the Information Paper concerning the design of the Shelf Stable Sandwich. We are asking foreign espionage agents to skip over it. Thank you.)

The Information Paper states that, in the construction of the sandwich, meats are "formed into cylinders and are encapsulated in the bread to give the appearance of a 'Torpedo' roll-with a meat center."

(FOREIGN ESPIONAGE AGENTS MAY RESUME READING HERE.)

Our Official Taste Test Panel consisted of myself; my wife,

Beth; our son, Robert; and our primary and auxiliary dogs, Earnest and Zippy. We unwrapped the Shelf Stable Sandwich, which looks sort of like a flattened hot dog, with the meat totally enclosed in the bread. We each took a bite.

"Hey!" said Robert. "It's a Slim Jim!"



Of course this is not true. It is a high-tech, intermediate-moisture, eat-out-of-hand food component with enhanced lipid stability and an edible protein film barrier to prevent oil migration. It only TASTES like a Slim Jim. But this is a major improvement over the Army's current standard for combat food, which is the "Meal Ready to Eat," or MRE. For purposes of

comparison, our panel also taste-tested an MRE, which was mailed to us a year ago by alert readers Gregg and Chris Schauermann, who undoubtedly obtained it in a totally legitimate manner.

The MRE is a triumph of food technology, meeting or exceeding every significant nutritional, logistical, hygienic and longevity standard. Its only drawback is that nobody wants to eat it. Military analysts believe that a major reason why the allies won the Gulf War so quickly is that the U.S. troops wanted to stop being fed what appeared to be mislabeled construction materials.

Our MRE came in a mud-brown plastic bag. Inside were a number of equally attractive packets, including one labeled "BEEF STEW." We opened this packet, and out oozed our entree. If the federal government wants to eliminate the budget deficit, all it has to do is re-label these MREs and market them to pre-adolescent children under the name "Big Brown Bag o' Barf."

"How come it's so ORANGE?" asked Beth. She poked around in it a bit with a fork. "Look!" she said, at last, holding up what appeared to be a rodent organ. "I have something here that might be related to meat!"

The humans on our panel thought the stew tasted every bit as good as it looked. The dogs loved it, but they have been known to eat pizza-delivery boxes.

Another MRE packet was labeled "CRACKERS." It's difficult for us to imagine how, without the use of rare titanium alloys, the Army was able to manufacture a cracker this hard. Other MRE packets included a "CHERRY NUT CAKE" that was as dense as linoleum, but not as tasty; and a "FRUIT MIX" that you could "EAT DRY OR RECONSTITUTE IN WATER." We tried it both ways. Dry, it was like chewing an Odor Eater, so we recommend reconstituting it in water, which causes it to completely dissolve, thus enabling you to pour it down the drain.

For the record: The dogs loved all of these items, as well as the foil packets.

Anyway, our conclusion is that the new Army sandwich definitely tastes better than the MRE. Of course, so does ceiling tile. But still, it's a stride forward, and we wish the Army well with it, and many other military food concepts in the future. All we ask -- and we say this as patriots as well as human beings -- is that these concepts NOT include beer.