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Column

The relationship rumor mill

A few years ago, my sister showed me the couple's page in her high school yearbook. This page was devoted to high school sweethearts that professed their puppy love for each other, most of which had only been dating for a few months. As we looked at this page, she pointed to each couple and told me how they had each broken up by the end of the school year, including the shining picture of her and her high school boyfriend.

I remember the relationship drama of my own high school career. Facebook statuses would change daily as one couple would break up because they were better off friends, or because one person had cheated on the other. In my yearbook, there was one couple on the couple's page that had only been together for a matter of weeks. But since they were both popular, their relationship status was a Big Deal.

During the opening of last Sunday's Academy of Country Music awards, hosts Reba McEntire and Blake Shelton joked about singer Taylor Swift's recent rumored date with football player Tim Tebow. Swift tried to shrug off the joke and feign innocence, but a clear "they caught me" look crossed her face during the joke.

It's interesting that the focus on Swift's constantly changing relationship status is similar to the gossip and rumors of high school dating drama. Every time Swift even sits down next to a man, it is automatically assumed that they are in a relationship.

And while Swift may try to downplay the gossip and act innocent, she comes off seeming guilty of wanting attention because of her long list of spurned songs about each of her departed honeys.

Swift is just one of many celebrities whose relationship statuses gain them attention and recognition. Magazine tabloid covers constantly tell of Jennifer Aniston's newest beau. Entertainment news broadcasters tell of the newest Hollywood divorce, infidelity or scandal, such as that of Ashton Kutcher and Demi Moore.

This focus on celebrity relationships has been happening for years. Since the start of Hollywood, the pairing and breaking up of couples has been big headline news. Think of Elizabeth Taylor's train of men or Marilyn Monroe's real and rumored relationships.

All of these magazine covers and news articles are the high school couple's yearbook pages of real life. These celebrities are the popular students using their names and statuses to increase their popularity.

But just like the doomed high school couple's, Hollywood starlets are constantly changing their companions. In an article from *O magazine*, the ratio of years together for a Hollywood couple to an average American couple is 1:5.

And just like their high school counterparts, these celebrities face the awkward moment of looking at their past relationships in public magazine covers and thinking, "I can't believe I dated him/her."

For Taylor Swift, the awkward moment comes when she writes one of her songs.