

# opinion

## Drunk drivers kill real people

You hear about drunk drivers killing people in car accidents. Your reaction may be, "Yeah, drunks should get stiffer penalties." Or, "Accidents like that are tragic."

But you always think that it only happens to other people. I always thought that way until the phone rang at 3 a.m. one morning during finals.

My roommate's father had been killed in a hit-and-run accident. Her father and mother were walking across a street when a driver decided to run a red light. The driver was caught — and he was drunk.

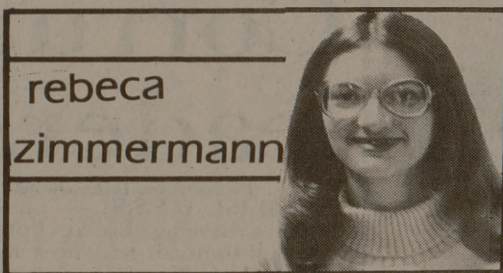
That drunk driver not only killed her father; two weeks later her mother died as the result of injuries from the same accident.

No family should have to go through that kind of pain, but one drunk driver is all it takes to shatter the lives of an entire family.

Unless something is done about drunk driving, more will die tragically, senselessly and needlessly.

Some things are being done. Many proposals aimed at reducing fatalities from drunk driving have been discussed. One law has been passed to tighten penalties for driving-while-intoxicated violations.

Raising the drinking age is always a prime target when drunken driving laws are discussed. When the drinking age was raised to 19 two years ago, the new law supposedly was to keep liquor out of the hands of high school seniors. But that isn't the answer. Ask any high school senior. Booze still is available — you just have to look a little harder.



rebeca zimmermann

Another proposal that was discussed in the state senate involved banning open containers of alcohol in moving vehicles. But state legislators killed this bill. Does that mean drinking and driving are OK?

As state Sen. Bill Sarpalius, D-Canyon, said: "It doesn't make sense to tell the people that everybody in the state wants to get serious about drunk driving and to pass a strong DWI bill, but then turn around and tell them it's still legal to drink and drive."

The legislators also worked on and passed a bill to stiffen DWI penalties. This comprehensive DWI bill is a great improvement over current laws. It closes many loopholes in the existing laws. Too many times guilty parties get suspended sentences or deferred adjudication — the conviction is wiped from an offender's record after successful completion of a probation term.

Tightening laws will help, but maybe awareness is the answer.

Already, efforts by Mothers Against Drunk Driving and other groups to increase public awareness of drunken driving and its hazards seem to have paid off.

College Station and Bryan police officials credit an increase in local drunken driving arrests to public awareness. Officials at the Texas Department of Public

Safety also attribute public awareness for a statewide rise in drunken driving arrests in 1982.

This awareness was responsible for the change in DWI laws. State legislators followed public awareness and sentiment and changed some laws.

But laws and police officers can't do it all. Even more awareness is needed.

New York police who set up roadblocks during Memorial Day weekend may have the right idea. While checking drivers to make sure no one was driving while drunk, they passed out leaflets warning of the dangers of drinking while driving.

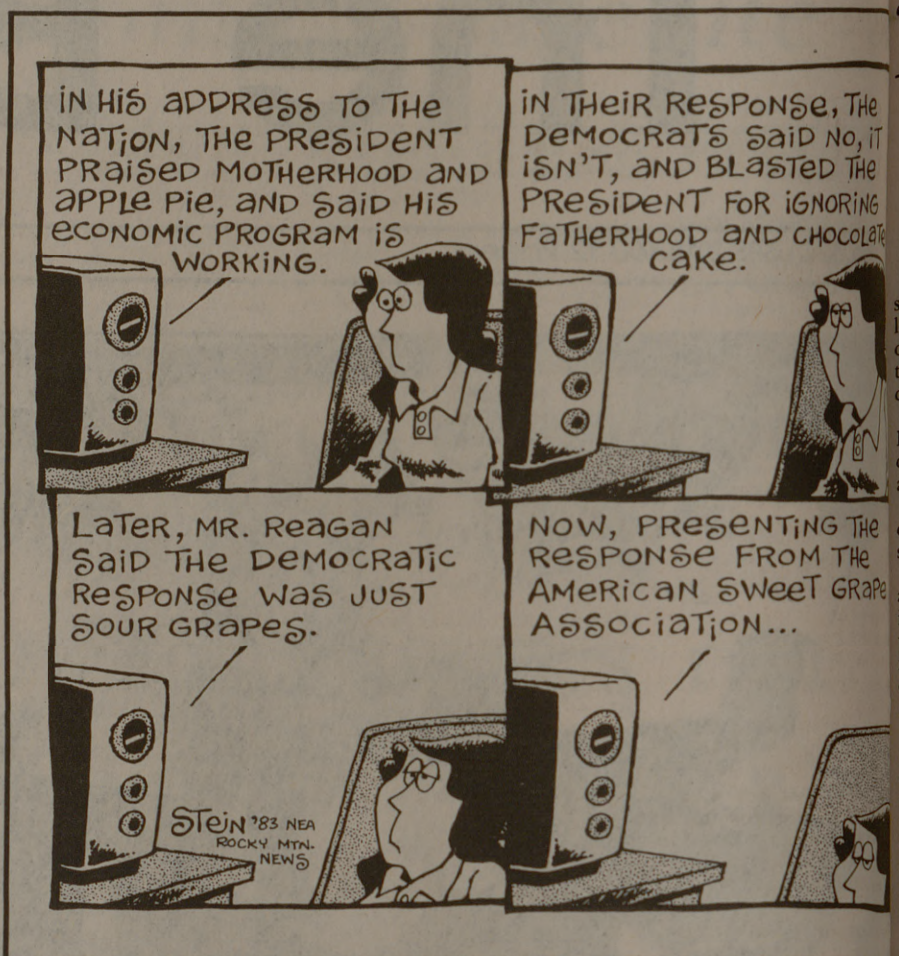
Maybe something more drastic is needed. One Houston family provided a possible solution Sunday. They erected a cross marking the highway site where their son was killed by a drunk driver. Seeing dozens and dozens of crosses marking sites where people were killed by drunk drivers might raise a few goosebumps and make people think before they drink and drive.

If vivid reminders such as roadside crosses are needed to make people aware of the dangers, then put crosses along the highways.

So, the next time you get into your car after a party, stop. Think about adding crosses to the roadside. If you even think you may have had too much to drink, let someone else drive.

With the start of summer school — and the start of the requisite summer partying and drinking — it's time for Aggies to lead the way and avoid driving after drinking.

Otherwise, the next late night phone call may be for you.



## 'Computer State' life less than wonderful

by Maxwell Glen and Cody Shearer  
WASHINGTON — Nearly 20 years ago, a college professor developed a program to enable computers to chat with human beings. Joseph Weizenbaum of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology dubbed the program "Eliza," after the heroine in Bernard Shaw's play, "Pygmalion."

Computers that perform intricate chores do more than process data. In fact, draw conclusions. In an interview, the authors suggested that "artificial intelligence" programs help computers to replace the human handyman, the financial consultant, the teacher.

Like a latter-day Sigmund Freud, Eliza plied its partners with questions such as "How are you feeling?" and "What about your childhood?" That a machine could be made to converse with humans was startling enough, but Weizenbaum noticed that many of Eliza's "patients" preferred "her" to the real thing. Weizenbaum was chilled by such enthusiasm. But he would later write: "The real contest is between those who think (the computer) can do anything and those who think there should be limits on what it ought to do."

If anything, McCorduck and Burnham worry that U.S. computer makers like IBM trail their Japanese counterparts in research and development of the fifth generation of computers. "The world is entering a new phase," they wrote. "The wealth of nations depended upon land, labor and capital during its agricultural and industrial phases... will come in the future to depend on information, knowledge and intelligence."

Two decades later, the tug-of-war is well underway. Americans now live essentially computer-aided lives, with machines to assist in working, cooking, commuting and shopping. Within 10 years, according to Edward Feigenbaum and Pamela McCorduck, authors of "The Fifth Generation," computers will routinely aid Americans in thinking and reasoning as well.

Yet, in David Burnham's view, computer-generated wealth comes with drawbacks. In his new book, "The Computer State," Burnham asks how the computers of large companies as well as governments already are eroding personal liberty.

Yanking from the opposite direction is, among other people, David Burnham, a New York Times reporter who believes that Americans are losing both privacy and autonomy to enormous machines which collect data about nearly every aspect of their lives.

He explains how private data stockpile information on the firm, medical histories, friends, travel, political opinions of most private citizens. So extensive is the computerized information on Americans that politicians can target direct mail appeals down to the Volvo owner.

The attention American citizens and policy-makers pay to each of these views may determine the quality of life for years to come.

Meanwhile, telephone and insurance industries not only can exchange with alarming nonchalance, but depending their collection capacities, frightening, the proprietor of one of the world's largest computers, the National Security Agency, spies on everyone.

"Fifth Generation's" Feigenbaum and McCorduck, who monitored the development of "reasoning machines" for the last 25 years, aren't intimidated by the prospect of machines that think for themselves. The authors contend that "expert" computers already tackle many problems more efficiently than the human brain. These machines are diagnosing health problems in hospitals, determining drilling sites for oil exploration firms and designing buildings for architects.

Whether the supercomputer that will be leashed is unclear. The computerization of American life is not likely to slow down for 10 years, when some computer science will peak. In a decade the subtle evolution in technology will make life in 1975 seem primitive in comparison. The obsession with advancing systems could cloud the way for discretion. Unfortunately, by the time we have the answer, the fifth generation will be upon us.

### LORD... THE COURT HAS TAKEN AWAY OUR ALL-WHITE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL'S TAX EXEMPT STATUS.. WHAT SHOULD WE DO ?..



## Letters: Heath chastised

Editor: Enclosed is a copy of an article which appeared in last Saturday's edition of our local newspaper. Several things about the article stirred my interest, not the least of which was the caliber of individuals who are attracted to the University. The names of Mr. Ford, Mr. Heath and Mr. Schmidt confirm that Texas A&M has achieved not only national recognition, but international as well. It is my belief that this prominence has been attained not in spite of rules and traditions of the past, but because of them.

ties described in the subject article is Mr. Heath. It is his problem if he cannot observe the rules of an institution he visits and his problem if he cannot survive a few hours without a shot.

The article implies that University officials are somewhat embarrassed at the retention of rules from days gone by. I truly hope this is not the case. My children would like to have the opportunity to attend a university which is exceptional rather than normal. Having interviewed college graduates from a number of public and private colleges, I have found today's average university turns out illiterate, incompetent, self-centered, immature kids. The young man or lady attending Texas A&M is there for one main purpose, to achieve a level of education which can not be bettered. The abolition of rules which make Texas A&M different and have helped it to achieve prominence cannot serve to make it better even though "times have changed."

Please spare no effort to keep Texas A&M different from all the average universities. There are still thousands of young people in this country who will choose to be Aggies because of our rules and not in spite of them.

Michael L. Laird '71

## Raise own Nobels

Editor: Congratulations Dr. F. Albert Cotton for your receipt of the National Medal of Science. This is an excellent recognition for you, the Chemistry Department, and Texas A&M University. I hope that this proves to the administration that we have good scientists already here at Texas A&M who, with a little support, can achieve national and international recognition and need not bring in those who already have it.

Steven E. Newman graduate student

## Berrys World



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The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper

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