

OPINION

Triplets have less market appeal

The Frustaci septuplets became stars overnight. Reporters congregated near the hospital, and book and movie offers began to pour in. Gerber Products, Inc., the famous baby food makers, offered the Frustacis free goods. A news conference was called to announce the names of the babies.

The health of the six surviving babies was monitored daily by the news services. Sadly, the media reported the deaths of four of the infants. We saw television pictures of undersized newborns struggling for their breaths. We read in newspapers of medical complications and fertility drugs. The Frustacis were probed by reporters after each death.

The parents allowed People Magazine to be on hand the first time Mrs. Frustaci saw her children, which probably brought in some money for them, but their medical bills are enormous and still growing.

Now that only three babies remain alive, the offers are disappearing as fast as they came in. A trust fund the Frustacis set up for their children has only \$2,000 in it.

The country's fascination with a seven-in-one birth has worn off. And so has the market value for the "septuplet commodity." The Frustacis were used by the media, then abandoned.

Gerber now claims its gift offer only applies to births of quintuplets or more. Now that the Frustaci children are merely triplets, Gerber says it will give only a small assortment of gifts. This down-scaled offer seems more like a door prize than a gift of sincerity.

Naturally, not every unusual birth should be financially supported by the media, private companies, or even personal donations. But the Frustacis were exploited by the media and other businesses to boost sales. Now that the sensationalism of the event has all but worn off, they no longer have a use for the Frustacis.

The Frustacis are real people and are facing real problems, both financial and emotional. They have suffered enough without being discarded by those who originally offered to help.

The Battalion Editorial Board

Moderation acceptable

Prohibition is hard to swallow

Hey, want to try a new drink at your favorite watering hole?

How about a strawberry crush, a banana boat or a watermelon cooler? Or if you are really daring, a Cit-Jet or an Evian.



Cheryl Clark

The newest names in non-alcoholic drinks. The newest laws in the courts. The newest trend in America. A trend towards sobriety.

Are we cutting off our noses in spite of our faces?

I've always had a rule at my apartment; if I say one of my guests can't drive home because they have had too much too drink, then the guest doesn't drive. Someone who hasn't had too much too drink does the driving, or the guest crashes on the sofa.

I would hate to think of one of my friends involved in a car accident because of too much booze, especially after I let them out on the road in that condition.

I had a roommate who had too much to drink one night. So did the friend she was driving with. They both wound up in a ditch with the car upside-down. No one was hurt, but she still laughs about it.

I know how a person looks and acts and thinks when they have had too much to drink. I've been that way myself more than once.

Sometimes I believe nothing is more frightening than a drunk, because you really can't control a person who has too much too drink, or reason with them or plead with them.

The national mood is shifting in that direction, too. The country is becoming the proverbial "brother's keeper."

Bars are being held responsible for the actions of their patrons. Party hosts no longer let their guests stagger from their party for fear of legal reprisal. Three-martini lunches have become a dinosaur.

Non-alcoholic drinks have become the trademark of the Yuppie genera-

tion. In Reagentown, we have become a country of health-crazed non-drinkers.

Yet, we still go to bars to socialize. The bars still encourage us to come. They just don't use the happy hour hook to get us in. Now it's music and salad bars and a general "good times" theme lure.

Drinking laws have been stiffened — considerably. All 50 states are raising the drinking age almost in unison. The government is applying some not-so-subtle pressure on the states.

Local lawmakers are taking their own initiative by raising and strengthening the drinking laws.

During the New Year's Eve holiday revelry in Dallas, the police were stopping cars at 9 a.m. checking for drunken drivers. The hotels offered not just all you could eat and drink for a New Year's Eve special, but also a hotel room thrown in for good measure.

The media, all forms, saturate readers with the non-drinking idea. Candy Lightner, original mother of MADD, should be commended.

The nose cutting comes in when the word Prohibition enters the scene.

Americans often perform a terrific 360-degree turn when slightly pushed. I think we would find out we like to drink better than we realize if suddenly we couldn't drink anymore.

Prohibition proved only one thing — you can't govern morality. People have to decide what is excess and what is not in some areas of their life.

Too many people died from drinking bootleg liquor. The president still served alcohol in the White House to guests. The law was repealed.

Moderation is fine. I think people do have a better time at a social gathering if they don't get smashed. I know they have a better time the next morning.

However, moderation is one thing and abstinence another. Let's not go overboard on eliminating alcohol completely from our lives. Many people are responsible, considerate drinkers who use alcohol in a sensible manner.

Don't bring the axe down on alcohol yet, just keep the drunks off the street.

Cheryl Clark is a senior journalism major and a columnist for The Battalion.

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Understanding a University

Tranquility often hides some potential conflicts

To the outsider, a university appears to be an "island of tranquility in a sea of chaos." Even to many of its inhabitants it may appear tranquil. But the analogy may be inaccurate, for within the university there exists high potential for conflict. Indeed, a strong case can be made that the potential is at least as powerful in universities as in other organizations where conflict is more visible — i.e. in business or politics. Beneath the surface are numerous sources of conflict that must be examined if we are to understand the university.

Clinton A Phillips
Guest Columnist

Let us look at some conflict generators. One that frequently arises for the faculty is the contention between loyalty to discipline and loyalty to the institution. Over 2,000 faculty members teach at and are paid by Texas A&M University.

Accordingly, they owe allegiance to the University. But their allegiance is divided. Faculty members also "belong" to a discipline. Typically they belong to one or more associations in their discipline whose meetings they attend and whose journals they peruse.

Membership in such associations also serves to reinforce their allegiance to their discipline. At meetings of these associations and through the association's journals, faculty present their research findings thereby advancing knowledge in their disciplines. Such activities have the further effect of helping enhance the image of the University and the academic stature of the faculty members who have done the research.

In turn, the latter, by making "names" for themselves, become more attractive to other institutions which might wish to hire them away. The effect of this discipline-institution tension is that academicians serve two masters — they have divided loyalties.

The potential for conflict of interest is real. If a university experiences financial or morale difficulties, the travail is telegraphed nationally and even internationally as the "stars" are more easily lured to other academic firmaments.

This leads to the potential conflict of teaching and research. In theory, and usually in practice, teaching and research are symbiotic, not competitive. People who pursue an academic career typically do so because they love to learn and also love to impart their learning in both spoken and written words.

One enhances the other; at the graduate level, they are one and the same. There is no conflict there, but the potential for conflict does exist.

The professor who publishes prolifically does, as I indicated earlier, attain high professional visibility and therefore becomes more attractive to other institutions. Because a great university's reputation is based on the research of its outstanding scholars, the administrators of such institutions are loath to lose these "stars." Thus, every effort is made to keep the salaries of outstanding scholars competitive with those of faculty members of comparable reputation elsewhere. The effect may be that the person who publishes frequently may enjoy a higher salary than the person who is a less visible but equally good teacher.

There is a tendency, if administrators are not careful, to allow a two-class faculty to develop — especially in research-

oriented institutions like A&M.

A third potential cause of conflict may occur when there is a change in the mission of a university. A&M is an excellent example of an institution that has dramatically changed and enlarged its mission so as to focus more on research and on graduate education. Some of our older faculty members have been caught in this change.

They joined the faculty with perceived expectations that their primary role would be to teach undergraduates, only to find in subsequent years that what is expected of them as faculty members now is also to do research and teach graduate and undergraduate education. Again administrators must take care to avoid the possibility of creating a two-class faculty.

Inherent in this expanded mission at A&M has been a change in emphasis toward graduate education. As we seek to expand graduate enrollments to 25 percent of the total enrollment from the present 17 percent level, we must be ever-mindful that this objective must not be achieved at the expense of quality undergraduate education, and this emphasis must be continued.

A fourth cause of potential conflict arises in part because of concern over the quality of undergraduate education and in part because of disagreement over how much of the curriculum to devote to professional education.

Throughout the nation, universities are re-examining their undergraduate curricula in an effort to define some minimum requirements that will provide all students with a set of general education experiences. At A&M, the Faculty Senate is currently wrestling with this problem.

It is contended with considerable logic that for a person be a professional engineer, accountant or whatever, he or she must have training in various aspects of that discipline.

Accrediting agencies have been established to try to ensure that the person who graduates in one of these disciplines does so with full complement of discipline-oriented skills and concepts. But these professional programs tend to absorb much of the student's available time; opportunities to take experience-broadening courses in the liberal arts and sciences are limited. The danger is that the student will be too narrowly educated in a professional program. He or she will be trained for a job but not educated for citizenship.

Somewhere, a middle ground must be determined.

Inherent in the process of forging a curriculum that will provide breadth is the potential for setting the faculty in the professional schools against their colleagues in the arts and sciences. Conflict over academic turf can arouse professional passions to a fury.

Finally, there is a fifth set of tensions arising out of complex relationships among various constituencies of a university. The relationship between faculty and administration may not always be harmonious. At some institutions, contention over the sharing of university governance has led to faculty unionization. At most institutions, however, some kind of faculty senate has provided a mechanism for sharing governance, airing conflicts and alleviating tensions.

Student senates have played a similar role for students vis-a-vis administration

or faculty. Graduates of a university organized into alumni associations, may be another source of potential conflict, especially in athletic matters.

For state-assisted institutions, legislatures and state coordinating agencies sometimes create more opportunities for conflict. The accrediting agencies which often claim to know what is best for the university and are not hesitant to impose their views, are another potential source of conflict.

Finally, the governing board of an institution may generate conflict. Typically board members are well-intentioned persons who are successful in business or professional persons with actual experience as academicians. They tend to view the university more as a corporation, perhaps, and this attitude can create tension.

All in all, the modern research-oriented university is a wonderfully complex place. For those who seek to guide its destiny, it is not sufficient to provide, as one college president said, "sex for the students, football for the alumni and parking for the faculty."

The academic administrator must harness the myriad tensions inherent in a university to achieve a creative balance among them. To do it successfully requires great skill in communication, a willingness to trust affected parties — faculty, students and others — to seek advice and to share authority and responsibility for the academic operation of the university.

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