

Letters, visits help couples handle long separations

By MANDY MIKULENCAK
Reporter

For some, going away to college means having to leave a girlfriend or boyfriend behind, but it doesn't necessarily mean the relationship has to end.

Some students at Texas A&M say long-distance relationships are possible if the person is willing to find ways to cope with the situation.

For example, Sheila Roberts, 19, says she relies on long-distance phone calls to stay close to her boyfriend, Don Wiktorowski, 23, who lives and works in Massena, N.Y.

Roberts says their relationship is successful because she and Wiktorowski decided from the beginning that they were suited for each other, and that it was important to stay together and work things out.

"If the two people are compatible, things will pretty much work out if you're just willing to work with the other person," Roberts says.

Franklin Bohac, 19, is another student who has decided it's worth the extra effort it takes to maintain a long-distance relationship.

Bohac keeps close to his girlfriend, Kim Caesar, 18, by telephoning and writing but also plans to make frequent trips home this semester.

For Bohac, going home means driving 90 miles to Granger, but he says both he and Caesar will share the responsibility.

"I plan to drive down one weekend," Bohac says, "and then Kim will drive up the next."

For others, weekly visits aren't necessary to carry on a successful relationship with someone back home.

Tracie Green, 20, says she only sees her boyfriend, Tim Welch of Dallas, about once a month, but keeps in touch through letters and phone calls between visits.

The common theme these relationships seem to share is frequent communication through a combination of phone calls, writing letters and weekend visits, but Dr. Donna Davenport, a counseling psychologist at the Student Counseling Service, says there may be more to maintaining those successful relationships.

"I think the ones that last and that really work are the ones that have not only the frequent communication, but where both people are committed to continuing to grow together," Davenport says.

Davenport says that couples sometimes try to keep the relationship established exactly as it was before the separation and think of change as something that may threaten their relationship.

She says trouble may begin when the relationship remains stagnant like this, because growth and change allow the couple to continue to share the things they've shared all along.

Sharyn Romler, 22, agrees that for a relationship to work, it's essential for the couple to share things that go on in each other's lives.

Romler says the relationship she has with boyfriend Tim Sas-mann has been successful for over two years, even though Sas-mann lives and works in Houston, because they take the time to call each other to talk about what goes on in their daily lives.

"When you think about it, that's what going with someone is all about — sharing each other's lives," Romler says. "It just takes a little more effort when one person lives 130 miles away."

And is the extra effort it takes to maintain this type of relationship really worth it?

"It's definitely worth it!" Romler exclaims.

Southeast Asia

News of recent coup attempt doesn't alarm local Thai students

By FRANK SMITH
Reporter

Colorful, scenic posters portraying life in his native Thailand line the walls of Suchat Pivsa-art's room in Dorm 8.

"The north part of Thailand is very pretty," he said while pointing out several pictures of that region shown on one of the posters. Pivsa-art is from the province of Singburi, 60 miles north of Bangkok.

The 23-year-old junior chemical engineering major is one of about 40 Thai students enrolled at Texas A&M and is one of six in the Corps of Cadets.

He said news of last week's attempted military coup in Thailand really didn't alarm him.

"I know the names of the leaders of the coup and I know all of them are in or used to be in the military," Pivsa-art said. "Because all of them are in the military, (even) if they were successful and they changed something, the government would not change very

much. So, so be it. We are not afraid about it."

Sudjit Hemsorach agreed. Hemsorach, also a cadet, is a sophomore aerospace engineering major from Bangkok.

"In my opinion, even though we have a military coup, they are still Thai," he said. "Everybody's still Thai."

Nithi Kietchai, a sophomore aerospace engineering student from Bangkok, said he first heard news of the attempted coup while in his dorm room in Moore Hall.

"I was watching TV when a bunch of guys came running down the hall yelling, 'Nithi! Nithi! There's a coup in Thailand!' " Kietchai said.

He said he could sympathize with those leading the takeover attempt.

"I kind of agree with the coup because the economy in Thailand is bad right now," Kietchai said. "I mean bad bad."

Although the effort was unsuccessful, Kietchai said it may serve

a good cause by forcing the government to take heed of the country's economic problems.

An A&M political science professor who teaches a course on Asian governments and politics said the Thai military has ruled the country intermittently in recent years.

Kwang H. Ro, associate professor of political science at A&M, said the military leaders, after permitting free elections, will typically monitor the new civilian government's effectiveness at economic reform. If the civilian rule proves ineffective, the military will want another change, he said.

"Consider this: In the United States we change governments through peaceful means — elections," Ro said. "Some other countries simply cannot wait four more years or five years or six years. And they like to change right now. There is a coup."

However, Ro said that Thai power struggles never involve

plots against the nation's

urehead monarch. "The one characteristic of Thai coup is they never challenge the royal family," he said. "The monarchy in Thailand is a popular institution. A Thai is simply designed just to change the ruling factions."

Pivsa-art also emphasized

popularity of the king. "The king doesn't have power but he has a lot of influence Thai people," Pivsa-art said. "I guess every Thai loves him, respects him, will protect him."

Occasional political power struggles aside, Pivsa-art said the unity of the Thai people is strong, especially within the family unit.

"Here, the technology is a better than in my country," he said. "But I think of our future — how can I say it? — the warm-ness — the relationship between people in your family, think that in my country we have it better. We're closer together, lot more than here."

Vitamins not answer to all health problems

By PAGE PATTON
Reporter

Magic youth pills sold by a quack out of the back of a wagon or a special tonic that brought vitality back to the elderly are some of the potions once used to fool the public into thinking that the aging process could be reversed.

Although these mystical cures sold to reverse the aging process have been around for centuries, the process is actually irreversible.

"No vitamin or mineral can prolong life or stop the aging process," says Dr. Alice Hunt, a nutritionist at the Texas A&M University Agricultural Extension Service.

"Vitamin companies have played up the need for vitamins," Hunt says, "but with a good basic diet, with a variety of foods, a person doesn't need vitamin pills."

If children eat properly, she says, they don't need vitamin supplements either.

Although professionals know that the aging process is irreversible, modern-day nostrums can still be found.

Hunt says one company markets a product, which is supposedly similar to what bees feed their queen, and the company claims the mixture gives people extra strength and power.

"The product is nothing but protein and carbohydrates," Hunt says. "There are no special compounds in it. And it could be dangerous to take it."

Bees bring in different contaminants from the field, such as pollen or ragweed, and serious allergic reactions may occur, Hunt says.

Another modern theory believed to be true is that the intake of vitamin C will prevent colds.

"Vitamin C does not prevent the common cold," Hunt says, "but it can reduce the symptoms by about one-third."

If a person has a cold, it is better to drink fluids with vitamin C than to rely on a vitamin C pill, she says.

"Vitamin C is the most common vitamin taken today," Hunt says,

"and signs of vitamin abuse are being seen."

"People are taking 100 to 1,000 times more than the recommended daily allowance," she says.

While some vitamins and nutrients are being abused, others, such as calcium, are not being taken enough.

Women suffer the most from the lack of calcium, resulting in an increase of osteoporosis.

Osteoporosis is a reduction in bone density accompanied by increasing breakage, Hunt says. This is due to a loss of calcium from the bone.

"It is estimated that one out of four women over 65 will see some complication from osteoporosis," Hunt says.

Osteoporosis is a long-term chronic disease, she adds, and people set the stage for the disease their entire life.

"The teen years up to 35 are the most important," Hunt says, "because that is the time to lay down extra calcium."

"After the age of 40, or at menopause, the body begins to lose on the stored calcium," she says.

But just taking calcium pills is not the remedy for osteoporosis.

"Two-thirds of American women do not get the RDA of calcium," Hunt says, "which is estimated to be 800 milligrams a day."

Exercise prevents calcium loss, she says, so if people exercise, get the RDA of calcium through their diet, there is no need for pills.

"Just two glasses of milk a day would meet RDA standards," she says.

"People still believe the myth that only kids need milk," she says, "they need to realize that adults need it too."

The aging process cannot be stopped and osteoporosis is a part of it.

Yet even with the technology offered today, no known cure can help.

"Good nutrition and exercise keep what we have in good condition," Hunt says, "but that's all it is."

GRAND OPENING

IMPACT pulse

AT FOLEY'S

Five area banks are providing a new service to shoppers at Post Oak Mall and want you to share in the celebration of the Grand Opening of the new automatic teller machine.

First City National Bank of Bryan, First National Bank of Bryan, RepublicBank A&M of College Station, Unitedbank of College Station and University National Bank of College Station invite you to attend Grand Opening festivities in the northeast foyer of Foley's on Saturday, September 21 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Refreshments, balloons and prizes will be given away.

Come join in the fun!