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Manic depression

(Continued from page 1)

ble illness to have. Not that it is desirable, but because it is a disease of the upper class. The socio-economic class that it affects is the one most people would like to belong to.

"Also, some of the world's most creative people suffer from manic depression."

Historical figures who were diagnosed as manic-depressives or who had histories of such behavior include Abraham Lincoln, Ernest Hemingway, Virginia Wolf, Winston Churchill, Vivian Leigh and 19th century artist Vincent Van Gogh.

According to an article in Psychology Today, psychiatrist Nancy Andreasen of the University of Iowa College of Medicine was the first investigator to have used modern psychiatric diagnostic criteria to explore the relationship between manic depression and creativity.

In the 1970s, Andreasen completed a study of 15 prestigious American writers and compared them with another group matched for age, education and sex. Ten of the writers had histories of mood disorders, compared with only two from the comparison group. Two of the 10 were diagnosed as manic-depressive and almost all of them reported mood swings, including manic or hypomanic (mildly manic) states.

This data supports findings of an investigation conducted in Great Britain by psychologist Kay Jamison

of the University of California, Los Angeles. Jamison surveyed 47 of the top British artists and writers, questioning them about their mood states and their treatment history.

Thirty-eight percent of the total had sought treatment for mood disorders — a rate about 30 times that of the general population. Writers experienced the most problems and of these, poets topped the list — half of them reported psychiatric intervention for depression or mania. And a large percentage of the playwrights had been treated for mood disorders.

Although most investigators believe that creative achievement occurs despite — not because of — emotional illness, Jamison says intense creative episodes often are indistinguishable from hypomania.

Ostwald says the relationship between creativity and mental health isn't always clear cut, although several other studies have indicated that there is a connection between creativity and manic depression.

Some manic-depressives are reluctant to seek medical treatment because they don't want to lose their creativity, he says.

But Dale Simpson, counseling psychologist at Family Life Counseling Services in Bryan, says the manic-depressive person often doesn't know, or isn't willing to admit, that something is wrong.

Many times friends and the family of the manic-depressive notice something is wrong and try to get the person to seek counseling, but it often is

difficult to recognize the illness in the early stages, Simpson says.

"Highly distractible in the early phases of mania, the individual is witty, humorous, and delightful to listen to," he says. "As the disturbance progresses, genuine grandiosity appears and the manic's friends and associates begin to become uncomfortable and attempt to avoid his or her company."

Although tests show mental performance declines in mania, Simpson says, manic individuals believe their ability to think and reason has never been better.

"People in a manic stage may think that they are doing all this wonderful creative work," he says, "but they really are not."

People in the manic stage are prone to buying sprees, foolish business investments and reckless driving, he says, as well as a lack of concern for the consequences of sexual promiscuity.

"I once had a patient who, during a manic episode, purchased 11 automobiles in one month," he says.

When manic-depressive people come off a high, Simpson says, they usually become depressed because they have to deal with the financial and psychological consequences of their wild sprees.

"In the depressed stage, the person's judgement is impaired in the opposite direction," he says. "They have low self-esteem. They don't think they are capable of anything."

In both states, he says, there is a clear change of thinking. Both manic and depressed individuals ex-

perience poor concentration, although the people in the former category rarely admit to having problems.

The drive and activity of people in the manic state are the most striking features of this mental illness. They are excessive in every way and, as the illness progresses, their disorganization, lack of sleep, excessive expenditure of money and intrusion into other's lives become very apparent.

Inversely, deficient motivation, diminished initiative, decreased efficiency and increased errors in performance are all signs of a depressed person.

Frances Kimbrough, a counseling psychologist in Bryan, says it's important to try to help students with manic depression because they usually won't seek aid themselves unless something drastic has happened.

"The greatest resource available to students is the student counseling service at A&M," Kimbrough says.

Patients must be thoroughly assessed before being diagnosed as having manic depression, she says.

"The person is given both biological and mental tests," she says. "We also look at the person's history — heredity plays a large part in bipolar disorders."

"An important feature of bipolar disorders is their episodic nature. When episodes recur, they frequently do so at regular intervals."

Schumann-Ouseley says, "Students have a tendency to be ashamed of being manic-depressive. I wish I could make them see that it's not their fault."

Ex-legislator hopes to do prison in ship

AUSTIN (AP) — A state legislator hopes to solve prison overcrowding by putting prisoners afloat.

He suggests buying an ocean liner to house inmates. For \$10 million, Texas buy a 1940 luxury liner, refurbish and delivered by a new prison could be said Paul Ragsdale, a former representative from Dallas.

"This rascal could be up on the coast within seven months," Ragsdale just want to make sure the seriously look at this as an alternative to the overcrowding.

Texas is under court order to alleviate crowding in its prisons. The liner has 761 cabins, 2,246 berths. That's almost the size of the new Unit of the Texas Department of Corrections, which cost \$70 million and took two years to build.

There is ample room in constitutional guidelines, Ragsdale said.

"I certainly don't think surface the notion ought to be cast out the window," he said.

"When these guys appear me, at first I thought it was funny. It is not funny, it is a waste. This is the time for innovation."

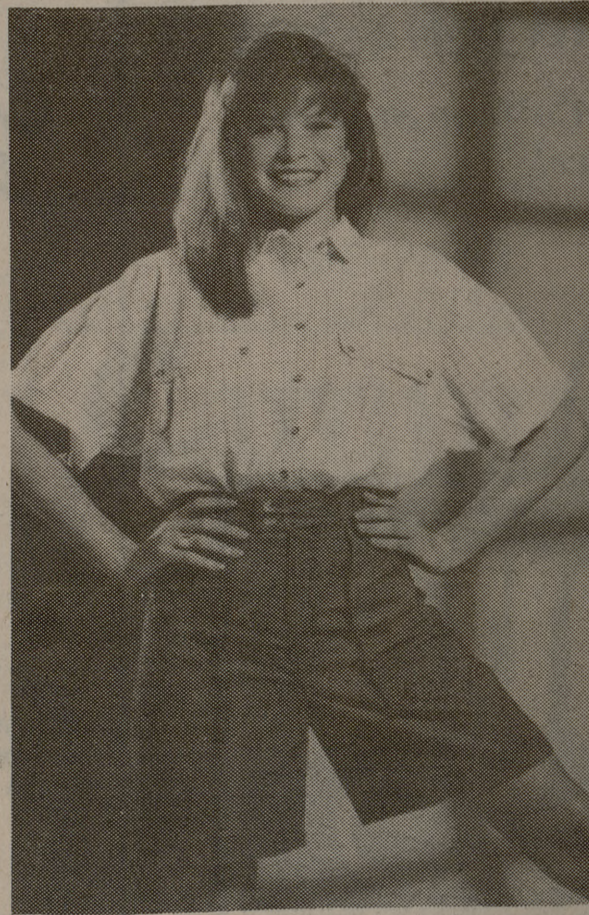
Ragsdale would not say the ship or say who owns it.

He said he began making about the deal three weeks ago and has gotten favorable responses from legislators.

"They're not laughing when Ragsdale said, "Most of them trying to help."

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