

Opinion

Why beat a dead horse?

Once again, prominent boosters, scandalous pay-offs-for-play and rigid NCAA penalties are back in the news, with Southern Methodist University capturing the sports-world spotlight. Last week, four Methodist bishops released a 48-page report based on their investigation of SMU football improprieties involving stealthy slush funds, wealthy Dallas businessmen and even Bill Clements, who knew about illegal payments as chairman of the school's Board of Governors, but decided to wait until he became governor to tell the world about his dimwitted doings.

In February, SMU's football program was sentenced to what is known as the NCAA death penalty — and rightly so. The decision apparently was final.

But because of new findings in the bishop's report, an NCAA official has said the investigation could be reopened, although this same official said he's not sure if more sanctions would serve any purpose.

New findings or not, measures beyond the death penalty would serve no purpose other than to further diminish SMU's credibility — academic and athletic — by again placing the story back on the front page of every newspaper in this football-crazed state. SMU officials have predicted that the ordeal has caused donations to the school to drop by about \$3 million.

It's time the NCAA leave further probes to the Methodists, who seem to be doing an adequate job of identifying the remaining guilty parties. The NCAA should leave well enough alone and concentrate its energies elsewhere. In light of the NCAA's recent slap on the wrist to the University of Texas, reopening the SMU investigation is unnecessary and unfair. SMU's football program has been dealt the crowning blow — it's dead, defunct, dissolved and deceased. It doesn't get more final. SMU deserves to rest in peace.

Freshmen should experience college life before judging it

The incoming freshmen on summer conferences aren't too bad until they become experts on areas about which they know little.



D.A. Jensen

I don't feel superior to freshmen like a lot of upperclassmen feel. I realize they are learning the ways of an institution that is new to them. I help them on campus when I can and even try not to snicker when they pull out the map.

This week I'm learning why freshmen get a bad name among upperclassmen.

I was sitting at the bus stop waiting to go home when I heard a girl tell her mother that she wasn't impressed with any of the speakers at the morning orientation. I was upset that this girl was judging the department speakers on orientation speeches.

An orientation speech is meant to put

the nervous, uninformed freshmen at ease with their new surroundings. It is not meant to dazzle. It is simple information.

It amazed me that this girl was so cosmopolitan that she had a base on which to judge a college orientation.

My next encounter was at the Off-Campus housing center. I sat down at a table with a young girl with her mother in tow. The daughter said she wanted a furnished apartment with her own room in Treehouse Village. The mother said she had a \$125 per month housing budget.

The girl sifted through at least 50 roommate cards. She rejected almost all of them. One girl was rejected because she was "stupid" because she added the rent total wrong.

I'm not a real estate agent but I do know for a fact that it is impossible to live in the Village for \$125 a month even if you share a room or live in the toolshed. Maybe the girl just never read the price listing of apartments that the housing center provided her. Maybe she can't add either.

This same girl also had a negative comment about every girl in the file. She has a lot to learn about living with someone and the art of compromise. I'm glad I have a roommate.

My last big gripe is hearing about the intelligence level of every freshman while I supply them with books from bookstore.

I understand that people are proud of graduating at the top of their high school class. I was also. Now if only the status would carry over into college. Unfortunately, most people who have perfect grades in high school don't succeed at being perfect in college. Luckily, a sociology professor taught that everyone is good at something and no one is good at everything.

I know that the newcomers need to adjust. I don't deny them time. I want them to learn before they judge any way of life that is totally different from anything they have experienced in the past.

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Hart and Rice riding on the seesaw of life

Years ago, I spotted an ad in the classifieds for the sale of a never-used wedding gown. Thinking I would get a column about a wronged woman left weeping at the altar by some creep, I called the number. In no time, I developed a fine disdain for the wretch but, boy, was I wrong. It was she who had left him, she who was cavalier about the matter and she who thought the situation was nothing less than a stitch and a half. I saw no ad for a never-used tuxedo.



Richard Cohen

On my desk at the moment are two magazines, People and Life, both featuring stories about Donna Rice. I know quite a bit about her now. I know she's had breast-enhancement surgery and also that she spent at least two weekends in the company of Gary Hart. Unlike yours, my mind is always in the gutter.

Now, I grant you that sleeping with a married man is not in the same league as child molestation, but it is not something to boast about either. In fact, it used to be considered immoral and therefore shameful. But shame is the one thing that Rice seems to lack totally. Renowned for just one thing, she appears determined to capitalize on it, while uttering a Nixonian disclaimer that she is not a party girl. Hamlet's rebuke to Ophelia — "Get thee to a nunnery" — has been rejected by this Phi Beta Kappa out of the University of South Carolina.

What's interesting about this state of affairs is how it stands conventional wisdom on its head. It echoes and amplifies all the wrong assumptions I made when I saw that classified ad for the wedding gown whose veil had never been lifted. All the wonderfully Victorian emotions that I had assigned to the woman — rage, heartbreak and, above all, shame — were totally missing and found instead in the man.

In the immediate aftermath of the Miami Herald story, Hart was denounced as a womanizer. The word was uttered — spat, may be closer to it — with all the contempt that some people can summon. Women especially used the term as if nothing more need be said. Like saying communist or arsonist, you don't have to explain why it is bad.

But I asked anyway. And I was told by women who are my colleagues that a womanizer is a bad, dishonest person. He lies to women, makes false promises, leads them on and uses them only for their bodies. I nodded halfheartedly to all of that, but then demurred a bit. There are women, I maintained, who do not have to be led on. There are those, such as groupies, who are colder, more calculating about sex than the men they sleep with. For this, I was roundly denounced and banished to my office to await a stinging editorial in Ms. magazine. But look at Rice. Where is the injured pride of the deceived woman? Where is the lady with the broken heart — the one who was promised one thing but got another? Where is the woman who went for love, but awoke to find reporters from the Miami Herald and instant scandal?

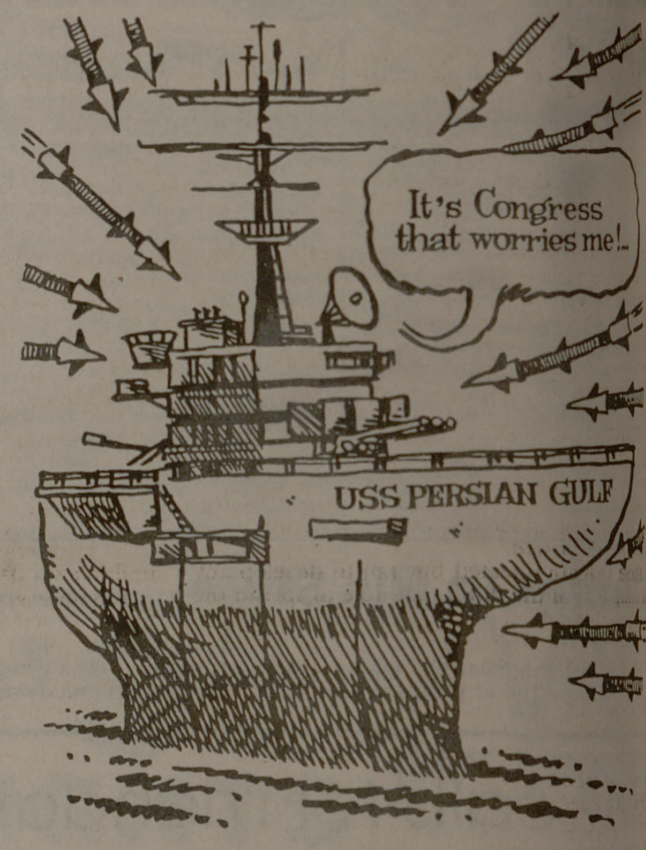
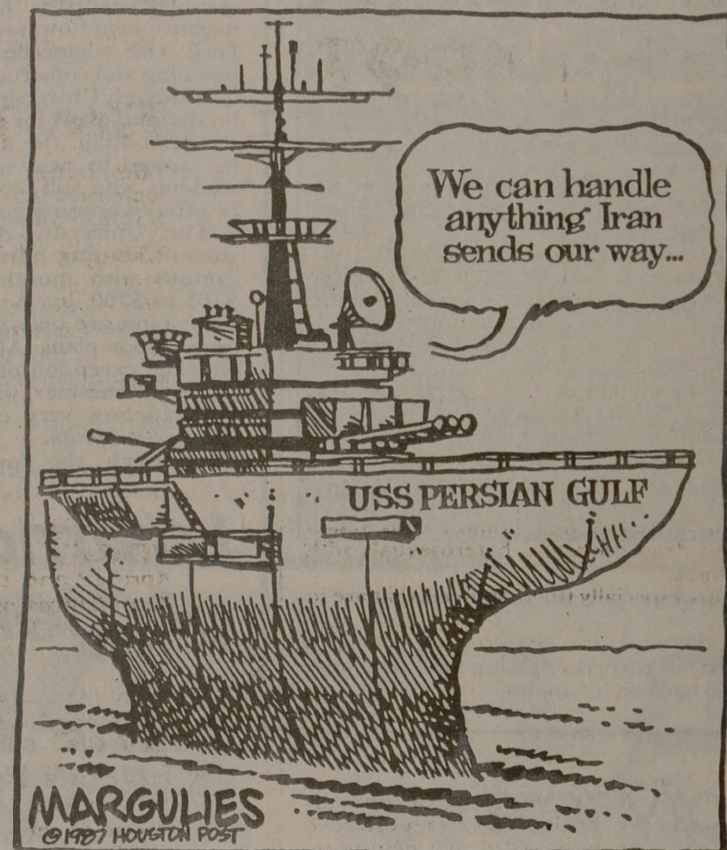
It is not there. Instead, it is Rice who has used Hart. His career is in shambles and hers, at least for the moment, is on the ascent. For more than the next 15 minutes, she will be famous. She has an agent for photos, yet another for a possible book, and her celebrity status was confirmed by an interview with Barbara Walters.

This doesn't conform at all to conventional wisdom. After all, it's men who are supposed to do the using and women who are used. It's men who — boys supposedly being boys — are forgiven this type of behavior and women who are denounced and scorned. Increasingly, though, this is not the case.

Fannie Fox hardly hid after her affair with Wilbur Mills was revealed; Elizabeth Ray did not slink away after she admitted that typing was not among the things she did for Wayne Hayes. No, it is the men who are ridiculed and their careers destroyed. The scarlet letter is now written in neon and worn by the men. The women go on their merry way.

Long ago, I concluded that sexual morality, like airline food, was an oxymoron. But I cling to outdated notions of who wrongs whom, and of what should be intimate and not public. I don't expect double suicides, but shame is a different matter — the shame of immorality plus the shame of looking like a fool after being caught. At the very least, shame adds seriousness to an affair and marks the always thin line between romance and farce. But Donna Rice seems to have no shame. Maybe that's why Gary Hart has it all.

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We still have a way to go toward racial harmony

Mississippi State was playing Louisiana State in the Southeastern Conference baseball tournament in Athens, Ga. It doesn't matter who won the game.



Lewis Grizzard

What does matter is that a young white Mississippi State fan, according to news reports, began heckling the LSU right fielder, who is black. When the fan began spitting out racial slurs, the LSU right fielder jumped over the fence and went after the fan, who grabbed a large board with which he planned to defend himself.

But you would think you wouldn't have to read about such a thing occurring in 1987.

Ask blacks why racism obviously still exists and they will say it will never go away because a large portion of the white population still cannot accept the idea of black equality. I wondered what white people thought so I asked a few of them.

Here were some answers: "What bugs me is every time some black politician or bigshot gets caught with his hands in the cookie jar, he starts hollering about racism and blaming his troubles on whites. It's such a convenient copout."

"It's like because they're black, they, you know, deserve everything handed to them on a silver platter."

"I don't say 'nigger' in public

anymore, but I say it sometimes among white friends."

"We have a black Miss America pageant. Why can't we have a white America pageant?"

"I work in downtown Atlanta. It's a rare day when I walk to lunch with a friend and we don't get some sexual remarks from black men on the street. I resent it and it frightens me."

"A few blacks come in to my favorite bar. They don't get hassled, but if I went into an all-black joint, I don't think I would be treated the same."

"Can you imagine what would happen to this country if Jesse Jackson were elected president?"

The only conclusion that can be drawn from any of this is, yeah, we've come a long way towards racial harmony. But sadly, we've still got a ways to go.

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