

MARGULIES
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Mail Call

Think before you write

EDITOR:

"It is time for a tradition to either change or end." This is J. Frank Hernandez' opinion of the cadets eating together each night at Duncan Dining Hall. As far as I know, as long as Duncan has been there, the Corps has eaten there together.

While the Commons cafeteria is being renovated the non-regs must eat there. All that the Corps asks is that they eat before 6:10 p.m., and, if they are there later, to sit at tables designated for them.

This, as far as Mr. Hernandez is concerned, is discrimination and segregation. This is no more discrimination than not allowing non-regs to live in Corps dorms or go on Corps runs. It's their thing; let them do it. Where discipline is concerned, the Corps has the same rules for alcohol consumption as other dorms, and stricter visitation rules.

Furthermore, these rules seem to be more strictly enforced.

Mr. Hernandez says that the Corps is guilty of hazing since they "run every morning."

Well, unlike him, I did a little research. The law says that hazing is "any intentional, knowing, or reckless act . . . directed against a student, that endangers the mental or physical health of the student."

Twice a week, on Tuesday and Thursday, the members of the Corps participate in some type of outdoor exercise. The outfits decide what type of exercise it will be and the exercise ranges from playing frisbee football to running. I don't see how this fits the above definition of hazing.

Mr. Hernandez, you obviously did not know what you were talking about, nor did you talk to anyone who did.

Next time, think before you write.

Carol Klemm '90

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer.

Doughnuts, happiness and the meaning of life

I have a habit of saying, "Happiness is a cake doughnut." This is just a little quirk I have, due partially to my love for cake doughnuts.

Cake doughnuts are an appropriate symbol for happiness. Just as happiness has many roads which lead to it, cake doughnuts have a variety of flavors — plain, chocolate, glazed, blueberry, etc. The variety is limited only by the imagination.

Cake doughnuts are also round, a symbol for the completeness and unity that happiness is. But there is a hole in the middle of the doughnut. The doughnut is not really whole. While physically this is because the dough in the middle cannot be cooked without burning the outside of the doughnut, the hole represents the missing parts of happiness which are needed for life — fullness, love, meaning. Happiness does not imply those missing aspects of life.

This may sound inconsistent, the doughnut being whole and not whole. But life itself is full of paradoxes which are true, if you think about them.

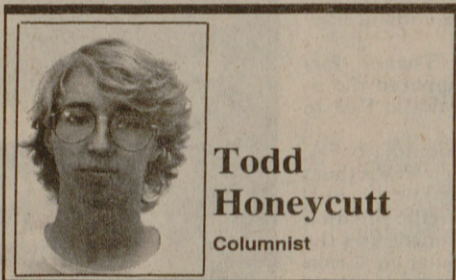
All of this is simply philosophical rambling, and the philosophical part is debatable. Happiness, though, is a problem which touches all of us. We all are, or should be, seeking it. It is a desirable quality, as the best components of life are.

As I look around, most people are not happy, or do not seem to be. Maybe I am just not looking hard enough. I feel a degree of happiness, but it is far from complete. I am not even sure if happiness ever can be complete in this world. Perhaps unhappiness is just a symptom of post-adolescents in college.

During the past four months, I have had four friends seriously contemplate suicide, and probably there are more I do not know of. That in itself makes me wonder about what I am doing, if I am part of the cause and/or the cure. In a less personal sense it also makes me wonder about the sanity of this world of ours, if happiness can exist.

Are we looking in the right places? Are we following futile dreams? Do we know what we are doing?

Ask yourself "Am I happy? Why, or why not?"



Todd Honeycutt
Columnist

If you answered both questions quickly, you are either a meditative genius, or you are not thinking deeply enough. Those are complicated questions. We have both happy and unhappy moments. And usually we are blind to what is going on inside of us.

I look into the mirror several times a day and most of the time I see only the physical. How does my hair look? Are my glasses crooked? If I look deeper, I may see a certain sadness around the eyes, or a joy in the way the mouth is curved.

Rarely do we look in the mirror to see anything deeper than the surface, and the same applies when we look at ourselves. I believe that this is a barrier to being happy. We are not contemplating our emotions, thoughts, and situations hard enough to determine whether or not what we are doing is right for us in the long term.

Longevity is definitely an aspect of happiness. There are many times where we exhibit a form of happiness, usually referred to as bliss or ecstasy, which does not last. Sex, drugs, music, people and beauty are common causes of bliss, but that does not rule out their potential for real happiness.

Many people think of happiness as satisfaction. It is not. Pure and total satisfaction within and without a person is stifling and boring. Growth, necessary for life, is weakened greatly. And from satisfaction comes complacency, the killer of free thought.

Happiness requires effort and work. Waiting for it to come to you is like waiting for a bird to land on your head when you are standing in a desert. The only bird that will perch on you out there is a buzzard, and that may occur only after you die. You have to consciously decide to find the bird, and lay

out your plan of strategy. If you use violent means, you are going to end up with a dead bird.

No one can tell you how to catch the bird. Everyone has their own methods, some which work and some which don't. And no one can use another's methods fully. We are all unique. In the end, you have to decide what happiness is for you. Is it a paycheck or a romantic interest? Perhaps it is a heavenly view or hitting somebody. Are these one in the same, or are different types of per-

ceived happiness derived from each? And is pleasure the same thing as happiness?

How often I have heard, "I love to be with children. They seem so happy, so full of life and vigor. I wish that I were a child again, in a simple world without problems or demands or the complexity of desires which come with later life."

Children are beautiful, with their explorations and explanations of the world, however small and simple. We forget, however, that problems do exist

for little ones, perceived small in comparison with ours, but big when looked at from their perspective. That doesn't keep them from being happy.

We can see the happiness children hold, and often we are envious. The same happiness is available to the old and the adolescent and those with all the years in between. Take the doughnut if you want it and are willing to find the right one.

Todd Honeycutt is a sophomore psychology major and a columnist for The Battalion.

Helmet law intrudes on rights

A bill recently passed by the Texas Senate and awaiting signature by Gov. Clements demonstrates the "Big Brother" attitude lawmakers have taken in recent years.

Imagine a law requiring people to wear sunscreen when they're outside, or a law making it illegal to cross a street without looking both ways first.

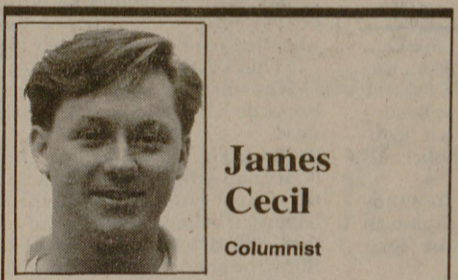
This bill didn't legislate against sunburns or hazardous street-crossing, but the idea is the same. A seemingly insignificant bill with little effect on most of the public, it requires all motorcycle riders to wear helmets. No big deal; the seat belt law that was passed in 1985 was similar to this, but it created a great deal of controversy.

The legislators have taken it upon themselves to tell "we the people" what is best for us. Clearly, they question our ability to make decisions for ourselves. So, instead of passing laws to protect people from criminals and civil disobedience, they pass laws that force us to behave in a way they think is best.

The principle is the important thing here. The state government is making it illegal not to take care of yourself. Lawmakers justify their actions because they are acting in the public's best interest. Indeed they are.

Everyone should wear seat belts, and motorcyclists should wear helmets because it could save their lives. But shouldn't people make a decision on their own to save their lives?

If the legislature can justify passing these laws, why not pass laws requiring



James Cecil
Columnist

people to eat balanced diets, which have been shown to reduce illness and prevent fatal diseases? Perhaps people who get sunburned should be arrested. They're increasing their chances of developing skin cancer, not to mention suffering a great deal of pain. Why don't lawmakers legislate against that? It would be for the safety of Texas citizens, right?

People riding motorcycles can decide for themselves whether or not wear helmets. What have they got to lose if they don't? Their life, maybe. Then again, what are the chances a person may be in an accident anyway?

These are questions that only the individuals can answer for themselves. When taking into consideration the chances of being crippled or killed in accident, most people will see the need for protection.

In the same way people decide to wear sunscreen and look both ways before crossing the street, they will decide whether or not to wear helmets.

Another aspect to consider is the fact that the legislators spent valuable time presenting and voting on this bill. Valu-

able because we are paying for it, and also because they could have used that time and effort to improve the shoddy state education system, the state tax codes, or the jumbled-up mess of laws they've patched together over the past decades.

Laws such as this are expected to be enforced, and what is the current state of affairs with our law enforcement agencies? Generally not good. Officials are pressed enough with tight budgets and current manpower levels.

Police don't need to be pulling people off the roads and slapping them with tickets because they aren't acting in what the state deems to be their own best interest. Aren't there more serious crimes that need attention?

Law enforcement capabilities aren't limitless, so their resources ought to be focused more on enforcing laws that protect us. I don't consider people not wearing helmets on a motorcycle or seat belts in a car to be criminals.

The purpose of the legislative branch of government is to pass laws that set rules for situations where people interact (civil law or family law) or to protect people from another person's malicious behavior (criminal law).

The Texas Legislature has taken upon itself the responsibility of restricting our lives, supposedly for our own benefit. But they don't realize that we know more about what is good for us than they do.

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The Battalion

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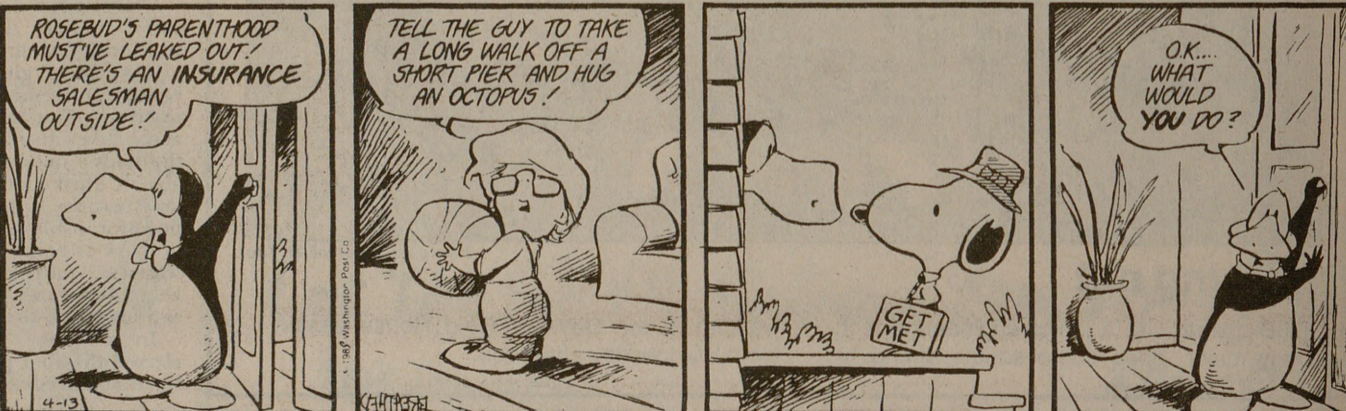
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