

Stress, anxiety trigger students' eating disorders

Students experience many changes during college. They leave home, establish new relationships, evaluate family values and review career goals. On top of these changes, the pressures on college students to be attractive and successful are intense. The result is stress.

Stress may trigger feelings of anxiety, inadequacy and loneliness, and it is common to use food as a source of comfort to fight depression, frustration and boredom. However, when food becomes an obsession controlling the person's actions, thoughts and feelings up to the point of interfering with normal life, the presence of an eating disorder is contemplated.

Eating disorders are more prevalent among white middle- or upper-class women. About 90 percent of all patients with eating disorders are women. Women are especially susceptible to the trying to fit in the image of the "ideal woman:" one who is smart, well-like, beautiful and above all, thin.

Obsessive concern about weight is so prevalent among college women that 50 percent have engaged in binge eating and purging as a method of weight

Erika Gonzalez-Lima

Health Columnist

control, 10 percent have an eating disorder and three percent are anorexic.

Students in majors that emphasize looks and physical condition, such as fashion, entertainment and competitive sports are also vulnerable to eating disorders. The NCAA says 40 percent of student athletes suffer from eating disorders.

There are three types of eating disorders:

- **Anorexia nervosa** is a condition characterized by an intense preoccupation with food, combined with an irrational fear of becoming fat. Anorexia is accompanied by weight loss of 25 percent below original body weight, distortion of body image, extreme dieting and exercise, cessation of menstruation, mood disturbances, frequent weighing, inability to concentrate, hypothermia and constipation.

A study of 700 cases of anorexia

nervosa showed that after treatment, 50 percent of the anorexic cases improved, 25 percent continued having weight problems or became obese, 18 percent continued being anorexic and 7 percent died.

- **Bulimia**, also known as the "binge-purge syndrome," is a psychological craving for food that causes uncontrollable eating. The complications of bulimia are tooth decay, salivary gland enlargement, gastric ulcers and electrolyte imbalance.

- **Compulsive overeating** is the regular consumption of excessive amounts of food, usually in the absence of hunger. Compulsive overeaters are usually overweight or obese and may have trouble losing weight or maintaining weight loss. As their weight increases, they may suffer from shortness of breath, high blood pressure, joint problems, diabetes and heart disease.

Eating disorders are more prevalent among families who emphasize weight control or with a history of eating disorders, alcohol or drug abuse. Few people can stop eating disorders by themselves. The most useful treatments

usually combine several forms of therapy including behavior modification; individual, group and family therapy; and self-help groups. Hospitalization may be necessary for people whose symptoms are very severe. Here are some ways to avoid thoughts and food deprivations that may lead to eating disorders:

1. Learn about nutrition and avoid fad diets.
2. Avoid frequent weighing.
3. Emphasize health, not weight.
4. Avoid excessive hunger. Plan your meals and snacks.
5. Record food intake, exercise and mood states.
6. Know yourself: Find what triggers you to abuse food.
7. See setbacks as part of progress. Be kind to yourself.
8. Build a positive self-image.
9. Buy limited amounts of food and do not shop when hungry.
10. Seek counseling or professional help if necessary.

Vote yes for a better health center March 29.

The A.P. Beutal Health Center is one of the lowest in the nation. The passage of the Health Center Referendum will increase the Health Center fee from \$15 to \$25 per semester will allow the center:

- to hire more physicians, nurses and staff.
- to shorten the waiting time in the clinic.
- to schedule longer appointments with the physicians.

Considering that just one visit to a doctor in the community costs at least \$35, the referendum will enable the Health Center to improve the quality of health care while keeping costs down.

Have a question on a health issue? Write to the Health Columnist, Dr. Erika Gonzalez-Lima, The Health Center, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77845-1264. Letters will be answered through this column in *The Battalion*. If an immediate reply is expected, please include your name, address and telephone number.

Mail Call

Aggie's mind is closed

EDITOR:

After being perturbed by yet another letter to the editor, I felt I had to respond. What makes a person closed minded? Does it make me close minded to cherish this institution and its traditions? Or if I try to put my faith into action? Or is it because I love the Lord with my whole heart?

If this makes me closed minded, then call me that as often as you would like.

Douglas Tribolet '91

Stop killing innocent animals

EDITOR:

I am shocked by the narrow-mindedness of some of my fellow Americans regarding the killing of wild animals for their pelts. On several occasions I have heard someone say that "don't they (conservationists) know that animals had to be killed to make their leather jackets, shoes, belts, purses and other items?" There are several things wrong with this statement.

To begin with, the issue is not the killing of just any animals, but the killing of wildlife. Cattle, the source of leather, are not wild animals; they are bred and raised by ranchers with the intent to sell them for slaughter. Leather is only one of the by-products of the beef industry.

The carcasses of these innocent animals are discarded as one would discard an empty beer can.

If you want a fur then settle with an imitation. You have this choice, unlike the fox, mink, beaver, racoon and sable who must use their own.

Let's look to the future and put a stop to the destruction of wildlife and their habitat. Our grandchildren will thank us.

Steven Ferguson '90

Be quiet on the "quiet side"

EDITOR:

We have a simple and gracious request to make of our fellow Aggies. Please learn which side of the 3rd and 4th floors of the library are designated "group study." To us, the group study area is where a group of students meet to study a subject. This generally involves communicating through talking to one another. We and a group of friends frequently study together on the 4th floor, but on the other side, away from the group study area. We prefer the "quiet side" because it is usually pretty quiet and we study better with silence. At least we perceive that side to be the quiet side.

Lately, the group study "mumbling" disease has infected the quiet side.

We can tolerate and understand the need for some interaction with friends sitting with you as long as it is brief and in polite, soft, whispering voices.

We would like to extend our most sincere and humble gratitude to the group who decided to hold an impromptu "meeting" one evening right next to the table where we were studying for our promotion, management and Shakespeare tests the next day.

We don't want to be considered whiners. We just want others to respect and show consideration for other Aggies.

Kathy Jones '91
Carol Knight '91

Tatar, not Tartar

EDITOR:

Recently *The Battalion* published a news item by Pam Mooman on the B/CS-Kazan, USSR sister city initiative ("Soviet university, A&M share similarities"). There is a little geography (and history) lesson there. It is not Tartar, but Tatar. I know, because I am a Tatar-decent American. Cathy Long, who talked about Kazan and Tatars in the paper, was misquoted as having said "Tartars," a phone conversation revealed.

I also know that some Tatars do not like to be called Tartars. So, as we embark on this what may likely to become a true nurturing relationship with the city of Kazan on cultural, economic and friendship relations, let us not call them Tartars.

Thank you very much for making a note of this.

Sungat Altis
Graduate student

Have an opinion? Express it!

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. There is no guarantee that letters submitted will be printed. Each letter must be signed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer. All letters may be brought to 216 Reed McDonald, or sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111.

Unify Europe instead of just reunifying Germany

With President Gorbachev's hesitant go-ahead for German reunification, the last obstacle to the creation of a united Germany has been removed. The leaders of the world are now torn between the acceptance of its inevitability and the fear of its consequences. Will the specter of a strong, jingoistic and aggressive Germany become a reality?

There seems to be every reason for the world to fear this. After all, Germany is usually held responsible for the two most catastrophic wars in history. As it is, West Germany is the economic leader of Europe. The potential of a united German nation with a population of 80 million sends shivers down the spines of leaders in France, Poland, the USSR and indeed the whole world. Is there any way then, of achieving reunification, while at the same time guaranteeing a measure of security for the world?

First an obvious fact must be stated: Reunification is now a certainty. Besides, it is equally certain that it will happen not within decades, but within

Sarang Shidore

Reader's Opinion

the next few years. Indeed, the Germans have a right to unify their countries whenever they wish, at whatever pace they wish. Although we cannot, and should not, attempt to influence the domestic structure of a united Germany, we do indeed have a right to influence its future attitude towards its neighbors.

The Soviets have (so far) insisted that Germany dissociate itself from NATO and become a neutral state similar to Sweden or Switzerland. Western leaders however insist that Germany remain with NATO. This can be seen as an attempt to retain the cohesiveness and strength of NATO and secondly, to keep Germany firmly under a western "umbrella," thus decreasing the chance of it being isolated (and hence potentially dangerous). In fact,

President Bush insists that NATO remain in existence even after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact (which seems certain as most former Soviet satellites want Soviet troops to leave their countries). The justification being offered is that American troops are in Europe because the western European countries want them to be there. True, but we should not forget that NATO was created in 1949 (before the Warsaw pact) for collective security in the face of an ever-growing threat of a communist invasion. Its creation did indeed guarantee the security of the West. However, as George Kenran (considered the greatest living American Kremlinologist) recently stated, the specter of a Soviet led communist invasion has now been rendered "impossible." With internal strife hitting the Soviet Union like a

tornado, it is indeed difficult to imagine such an invasion. The "raison d'etre" or justification for existence of NATO has ceased to exist. Under the present conditions, far from being a stabilizing force, NATO would militarily dominate the world, as there would be no other military bloc to "balance" it. No, a Germany wedded to the West by a military alliance is no solution.

A unified Europe, not just a unified Germany, may be the ideal solution. Economic integration is the first step. For example, we can imagine the existence of truly European corporations with (say) raw materials from Germany, factories in Belgium and powered by French power stations. Gradually, a political federation could evolve, with a common trade and foreign policy. This would leave Germany securely tied to the rest of

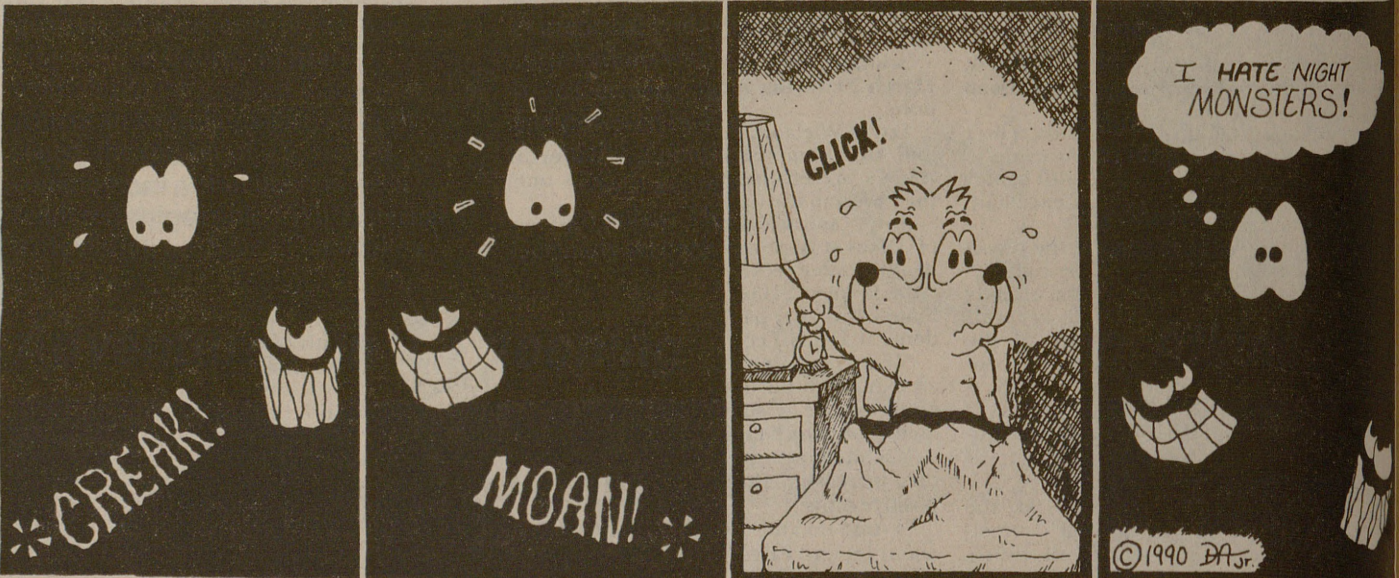
Europe. The other European countries would also be as much dependent on Germany. It would be very difficult to ignite nationalistic or ideological passions in such a federation, simply because its citizens would be from very diverse ethnic and ideological backgrounds. It would probably be ruled by parties which would be similar to the present social democratic parties. Shorn of the fanaticism of the extreme left and right, this federation could be a model on which other, similar federations could develop across the world, bringing down economic barriers and accelerating progress.

Impossible? Possibly. Either way, we know within our lifetimes. Now, isn't that an exciting thought?

Sarang Shidore is a graduate student in aerospace engineering.

Adventures In Cartooning

by Don Atkinson Jr.



The Battalion

(USPS 045 360)

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The Battalion is published Monday through Friday during Texas A&M regular semesters, except for holiday and examination periods.

Mail subscriptions are \$17.44 per semester, \$34.62 per school year and \$36.44 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.

Our address: *The Battalion*, 230 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-1111.

Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Battalion*, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77843-4111.