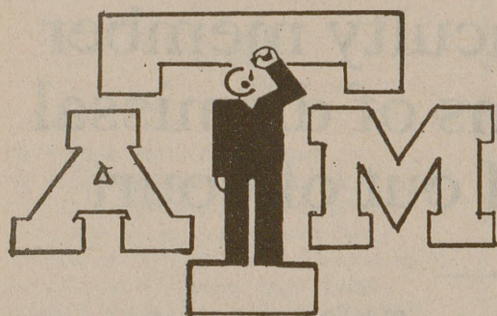


Save drug users' lives with keys of education

A day doesn't go by that we don't hear about drugs. So much has been said about them. The Drug War. Drugs and Society. Drugs on the Job. And even, Gubernatorial Candidates on Drugs.

We're all affected by this issue in one way or another. Those of us who live in a big city see the effects of the situation daily. But it doesn't happen only in Houston or Dallas. It's a fact of life here on our own campus.

It's all about communication, or the lack thereof. A really close friend of mine was caught up in this vicious world of neglect and misunderstanding. He didn't understand himself or the world around him. He felt like he was trapped. There was no way out.



I wanted to help, but I didn't know what to do. The solution was simple though. All I had to do was listen. I learned what was on his mind, and it was troubling for me to face the reality. He could not understand his family. He had no idea what he was doing in school. He was confused, sexually.

Then I began to analyze the situation. I came up with a few answers to some perplexing questions. The thing that kept coming back to me was that the ultimate problem lies in the hands of the drug dealer. They can't be cured. They want money and control and they'll do anything to get both.

The drug user on the other hand needs attention. They usually take drugs to fight their insecurities. They have a low self-esteem and feel that drugs are going to make them feel better. Well, maybe the drug does make them feel better, but what they don't know is that they are hurting themselves physically and emotionally.

Rudy Cordova Jr.
Columnist

Here at Texas A&M drugs can be found almost anywhere. The pressures are high and the suppliers know it. Just take a look around you on campus, in organizations, clubs, fraternities, sororities, dorms and even the Corps. It's just a matter of opening our eyes to a problem that exists right here in front of us.

The other day a friend of mine who happens to be from a small Texas town was struck by the harsh reality of "the drug scene." He went out with a group of people he had just become "friends" with. He drank that night while they took ecstasy and did mushrooms. He was taken advantage of that night. They stole his keys and a gold ring. He trusted them. They used him.

The sad part about the whole situation is that it's happening around us in an educational setting, which ironically is where we have to start. Legislation needs to pass where a health course becomes mandatory. As of right now, it's mandatory that we take four hours of useless credits in the field of kinetics.

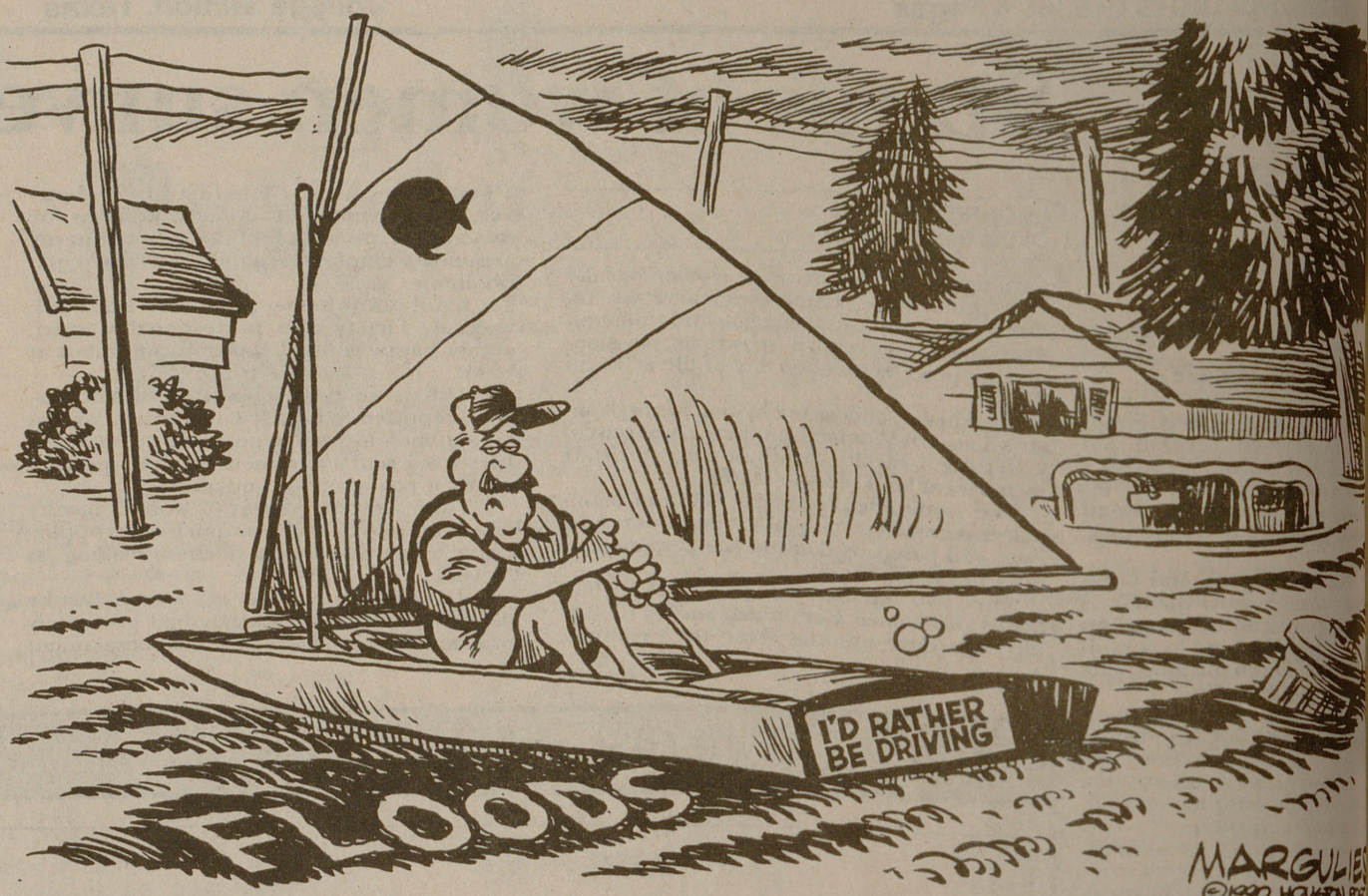
Why can't we take a class where we can learn and maybe even save someone's life. While we're at it, let's add a mandatory class on sexually transmitted diseases. Lord knows this campus has a lot to learn about "the real world."

One day some of us will become parents and we'll have to teach our children the difference between right and wrong. We'll send them off to college and hope that they can better themselves.

It's hard to envision a place where the atmosphere is clear from drugs. There is only one way to find out though, and that is to educate ourselves.

We keep hearing that education is the key. Well, if that's true then I guess if our keys are stolen, we're locked in and there's no way out.

Rudy Cordova Jr. is a senior theatre arts major.



Societal conflicts arise from divergence of personal values, human suffering

The solutions that we apply to just about any problem in our society embrace two basic goals: the maintenance of our values and morals, and the elimination of human suffering. With such widespread agreement on our ultimate objectives how can we, with issue after issue, have such intractable problems? What device allows there to be more than one respected viewpoint on an issue?

I offer the following premise: Most conflicts arise when our principles diverge from the minimization of human suffering. Two issues that fall under this idea are the inequality of resources to needs, and the protection of sacred life versus the quality of life. Does this sound ridiculous to you or is it just uncomfortable? Let's look at a few issues of our day and see if the model fits.

James Sinclair
Reader's Opinion

What about the health care crisis? Right now we have costs doubling every six years, yet at the same time 37 million Americans have no health insurance. However, we believe that all Americans deserve the greatest amount of care available under current technology. It seems that availability of care should not be tied merely to ability to pay. What are we going to do about overflowing emergency rooms and crack babies that cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to care for?

Sometimes in this debate you hear calls for a "reevaluation of the use of our health care resources." There is only one interpretation of this statement: Care is going to be denied to someone. Here is a case of the nonequivalence of resources to needs. In fact, the imbalance is so great that the recent congressional panel investigating the issue came up with \$60 billion as the first estimate of what it will take to offer all Americans a minimum standard of care. It says nothing about how to stop the exponential rise in costs.

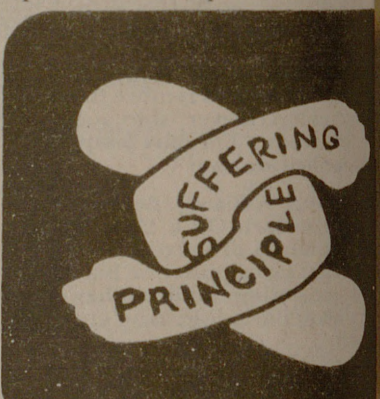
More issues:
• **Drugs: Morality**— Drugs kill. We should therefore be willing to pay whatever costs are necessary to bring total elimination of availability.
Practicality— The scale of the problem is so great that no level of attack will eliminate drugs. In fact, the likely effect of war will be to destroy the battlefield. Our goal, therefore, should not be elimination, but minimization of human suffering.

• **Abortion: Morality**— Abortion is murder. Since we can't tell when human life begins, the baby should get the benefit of the doubt. All life is sacred and should have equal protection under the law.
Practicality— Outlawing abortion will result in great suffering. We cannot support an additional 1.6 million births in this country, most to poor women. A testament to this is the growing underclass and the number of homeless people. Government social

programs cannot begin to meet the need. Adoption does not work since most babies are minorities. Women still have illegal abortions without proper medical supervision.

• **Teen pregnancy: Morality**— Availability of sex education and distribution of birth control devices have the effect of promoting teenage sexuality.
Practicality— Availability of education and birth control can reduce the number of pregnancies and spread of disease, perhaps at the cost of more teenage sexuality.

The problem with the level of care in this country is that issues seem so complicated that both sides use exaggeration and hyperbole to draw people to their side rather than see that the solutions of both sides have flaws. Each side portrays the opposition as maniacal zealots, or guilty of the spread of moral perversion.



The fact is that solutions have competing good and bad points. The judgement of their utility should be whether their net effect would improve the current situation.

My purpose is not to make judgement upon the issues stated (although I certainly have strong opinions on them). It is to establish the proper framework upon which debate should be structured. It is my belief that one of the conflicts that exist can be framed in these terms, although many issues are not as simple.

James Sinclair is a graduate student in physics.

Mail Call

Women still fighting in sexist society

EDITOR:

This is in response to Matt McBurnett's column on the survey where women are getting fed up with men and their attitudes. McBurnett started out feeling bad about women's opinions of men and how women all seem to depict men as sexist, self-centered and selfish, which is entirely a fair complaint. However, he goes on to state that since 1970, "women have been successful in acquiring most of the things they have tried to achieve."

If this were true, then women would still not be trying to fight so hard for their equality in a male dominated society today. He feels that "the farther women get, the more they expect," and that "this trend of higher expectations needs to stop soon."

Why shouldn't women have high expectations? Women are just as capable of succeeding as are men, if not more. They have every right to be just as selfish, self-centered (and hopefully they'll rise above this one) and sexist as men are today.

But then, I guess McBurnett doesn't see this considering he still degradingly states "how far women have come, baby." The fact that he thinks this survey is no big deal just reinforces the validity of its answers and proves how far women still do have to go.

Jennifer Malewski '93

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.

"Most conflicts arise when our principles diverge from the minimization of human suffering. Two issues that fall under this idea are the inequality of resources to needs, and the protection of sacred life versus the quality of life."

A major problem facing the United States today is the export of our jobs (usually manufacturing jobs) to third world countries where wages are low. Our principle is that workers have a right to a wage level that allows a decent living (by our American standards). Yet, we seem to be falling on our own sword. Because conditions allow lower wages elsewhere we are noncompetitive, forcing plant closings, unemployment and human suffering.

Thus, morality diverges from practicality. In fact, this situation has led to a decade of accommodation by unions through wage and hour concessions. Those that refused to accede were eliminated by the market.

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Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the editorial board or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty or the Board of Regents.

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