

Hiding women behind locked doors no solution to rape

Editor's note: This column is in response to a letter written by Brian Stokes entitled "Women should take safety precautions." It appeared in the Mail Call section on Thursday, Sept. 17.

My best friend, Marian, was raped in the dorm room of an expensive art school by the LSD-influenced son of a family wealthier than Marian's. He was consequently acquitted. About 18 years later she was raped in the changing room of a women's clothing store. She was not alone; there were five other patrons as well as the sales clerks there.

My friend Margaret was raped in the privacy of her own home during broad daylight by the neighbor's regular yard man and 10-time-rape-

fender. He threatened to wake her son if she didn't do everything he wished and so Margaret got to try some things she had never wanted to try.

My friend Dawn was raped, also in the privacy of her own home, by her cousin just the night before Dawn and her first longtime boyfriend had decided that it was appropriate for them to become sexually intimate for the first time. Dawn had bought champagne for the occasion.

My little sister was "felt up" by her Sunday school teacher while my mother went upstairs to get him a check for some work that he had done for us. And, oh yeah, his foster children were taken away from him because he was having sex with the older one.

My friend Martha's father did the honors in her home and my friend Janine was shared by father and brother.

I was molested by older boys in my neighborhood when I was a child.

Excuse me — am I repeating myself? The point is that of all my friends who have been raped

only one was out by themselves — a friend who was raped as a boy, lured into a woody area by a neighbor — and that wasn't even at night.

I am a night owl and have been called the "undead" or "gerbil" because I scurry around at night. It is 2:40 a.m. at this very moment. I can live on a day schedule but I prefer the night.

A major source of joy and tranquility in my life is the stillness of the night. And I walk alone on campus at night — with a wary eye, keys poised between each knuckle, and a "rape whistle."

But, damn it, why should I be caged? I lived in the time before women's lib was taken for granted and having experienced the blossoming of the freedom to move, I am loath to give it up.

And why should I cringe quivering in the corner of my room hoping for safety when their own rooms were not safe for so many of my friends?

Here is a story that is the favorite of my friend Marian. In Israel, a decade or so ago, a vote was proposed requiring a curfew of 10 p.m. for all women. This was to reduce the rising tide of rape. The men thought it was a brilliant solution

and were ready to vote yea.

Then Golda Meir suggested that since it was the men who were doing the raping, perhaps the curfew should be for them. The curfew was voted down and no one talked about it anymore.

I appreciate your good intentions, Mr. Stokes but I do not appreciate the willingness of so many to give up my freedom for my protection. Would they be willing to give up theirs? Besides, hiding us won't help.

This is the real world, and you carry a stick when you walk through grass where snakes are known to dwell.

This is the real world, and I appreciate the Corps escorts and a campus spirit that makes walking alone on campus at night merely a little bold and not an outright death wish.

This is the real world, but I will not live with any more fear than I have to and I will walk at night and watch the moon.

Oliver is a graduate student in geology.

GUEST COLUMNIST

JULIE OLIVER

MAIL CALL

Gun control ignores reality, fixes nothing

I am writing you in response to the article "Little gun control goes a long way" by Shawn Ralston. In this article she displays her ignorance of gun control and that of the people who feel it will save the world.

Like the more extreme gun control advocates she is way off base. She talks about all the people being shot in Houston, which I know a lot about being from just south of there, by robbers and punk kids — how if we had gun control laws this would not happen. For those who do not know, it is already against the law to carry a concealed weapon or any handgun; so what good would it be to create another law for them to break? When you look at the "stats" she is talking about you will find out that most of the crimes committed with handguns are done using guns that were already illegally obtained. She talks about how the Brady Bill will stop violence; well, if she would have read the bill she would find out that it is merely a waiting period (7 days) and requires no background check. This would accomplish nothing but increasing paperwork and causing a lot of confusion.

She talks of the National Rifle Association and how extreme they are; well, as a member and observer of all their publications I can tell you that she is way off base. The NRA pushes hard for harsh punishment of anyone who commits a crime, especially if they use a weapon, not the liberal "let 'em go early" theory. The NRA does want a background check performed on anyone who buys a gun.

To close, let me say that anyone who feels that the use of a weapon to defend themselves or their loved ones is stupid will likely end up dead. If you enforce the law and punish (capital punishment) criminals you will do a lot more to curb violence than just complaining about guns — you might get something accomplished.

*Steven Lynch
Class of '94*

Groups unimportant; being Aggie crucial

I may be just a freshman, so everyone tells me I don't know what Texas A&M is all about. But I do know what A&M was all about. I do know why I came here. I came here because of what I saw at Fish Camp. I saw people who no matter what type; fraternity, Corps of Cadets, sorority, non-reg, Northside, Southside, black, white and indifferent; coming together to support one ultimate goal — to uphold the spirit of Aggieland.

But when I came on campus I saw a totally different group of individuals. Individuals supporting and upholding only themselves. How can we all be so selfish? Maybe that's what's wrong with Aggieland, with America. We stop looking out for our fellow man because we want to benefit ourselves. We stop being one and start being several, and before we know it we're our own enemy — we've begun our own war.

Let's come together as Aggies; if not for ourselves, then for those Aggies before us and those still to come.

*Summer Belleperche
Class of '96*

Multiculturalism no boon to race relations

In reply to the obviously uninformed Greg Buford, I would like to defend the Republican Party on the issue of multiculturalism. Buford postulates that if the Republican Party is against multiculturalism, then it must be for monoculturalism. The Republican Party is for "United States-culturalism," and deems it necessary that our children be taught the culture and history of the land in which they live. Multiculturalism is promoted under the false premise that it will make everyone more sensitive to the heritage of others. Under this guise the multiculturalists have been engaging in a form of historical revisionism.

The way in which to welcome people into our "melting pot" is not to promulgate differences but instead to strive for racial and ethnic "color blindness." Why is it that we must become (fill in the blank)-Americans, rather than simply Americans? Though most proponents of multiculturalism have good intentions, I feel that the means they are using are not the proper ones. Children should learn of their heritage, lineage and culture from their parents, in the

home, free from government mandate. The Republican Party has been unfairly labeled as a divisive party. The Republican Party believes bigotry and prejudice cannot and will not be eradicated through government mandate, but rather through a platform that doesn't recognize individuals on any personal characteristics, and through the honest efforts of individuals to strive for a better understanding of all cultures.

Oh, and Buford, if you had bothered to do your homework, you would have discovered that the phrase "Judeo-Christian heritage" does not discount "African-American heritage" or "Asian-American heritage," but instead is a phrase which attempts merely to state the foundation on which the Republican Party bases its moral and ethical beliefs.

I would like to conclude that it is Buford who is promoting and encouraging divisiveness, envy and separation, and it is people like him who stymie the American ideal. We are all Americans, with different backgrounds, cultures and ancestors, yet we are all nonetheless Americans.

*Brian Beckrom
Class of '95*

South Africa doesn't deserve bad press

As a South African I think I have had enough of the negative and misleading media coverage given to the situations taking place in South Africa. Everybody seems to think that whites hate blacks, and the articles I read here certainly do everything to emphasize that fallacy.

If it was that simple, it would have been resolved years ago. What people don't realize is that South Africa is made up of many races. Within the black race lie many different cultured tribes.

What much of the fighting recently has been about is the confrontation of the Zulus and the Xhosas in the townships. Each trying to fight for their leader, they necklace and casually burn each other to death.

But you see, then the South African police force is sent to try to create order, to prevent these barbaric deaths, and suddenly the headline all over the world is "South African police kill 40 blacks."

Get it right! I'm sick of hearing negative stories about my country. Just for

the record, do you ever recall reading a newspaper that South African blacks do not pay taxes; that over 90 percent white taxes go directly toward black schooling and housing, or that if you are black, you don't need to pass the standard senior high school exam to be admitted into one of our extremely competitive universities.

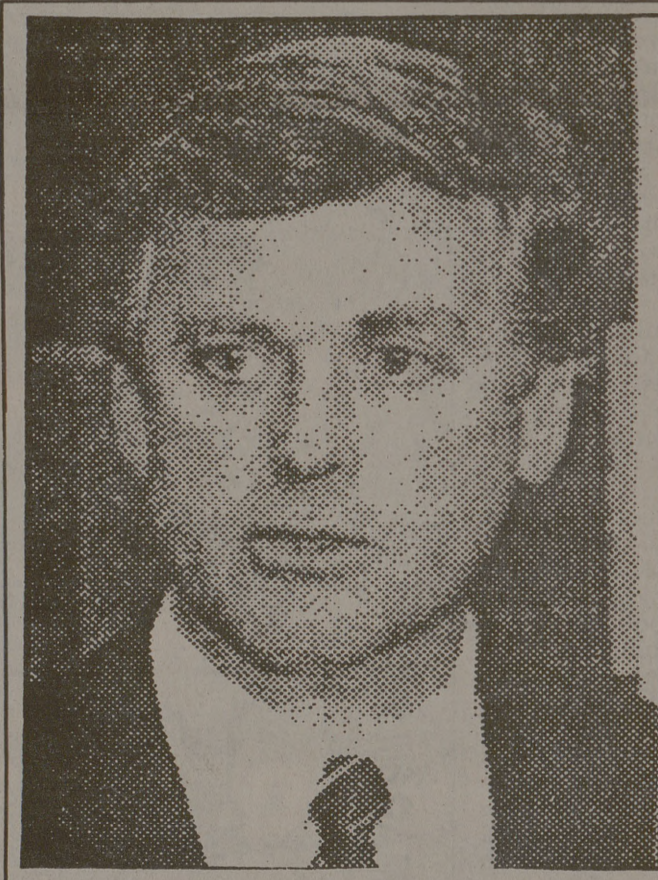
And if you are white, and ask for a type of grant in aid or scholarships for study purposes, you'll be laughed at and told that unless you are black you may not apply, no matter what your financial situation may be.

I am not a racist, but I love South Africa. For anyone who has had the opportunity to visit there, I know they will agree when it is said that it is one of the most, if not the most beautiful country in the world.

So keep having your say. I prefer focus on the positive side, seeing all the wonderful and significant changes that have taken place in South Africa over the past few years under President de Klerk.

You have enough problems of your own to worry about.

*Joanne Lefebvre
Class of '95*



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