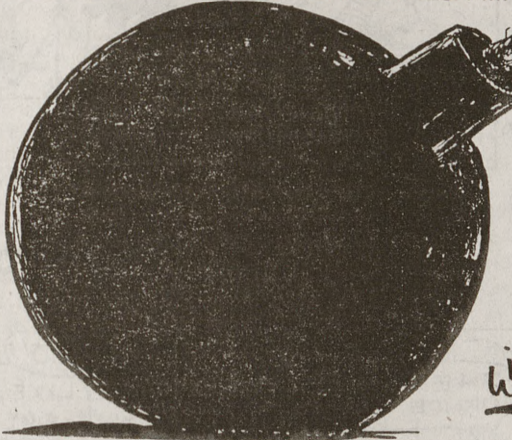


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EDITORIAL

The right to know

Bills threaten open records law

The on-going struggle between the right to privacy and freedom of information was the center of this year's state legislative debate.

Many proposals that would have closed records or meetings to protect people's privacy were killed or modified in the 1993 legislative session that ended May 31.

Among many measures introduced to seal off records from the public was a bill that would have made people's home addresses, home telephone numbers and Social Security numbers confidential under the Open Records Act.

The bill was killed after protests that the measure would restrict access to voter registration lists and tax rolls.

The future passage of bills like this could come dangerously close to setting off a trend of access-curling bills in the Legislature. When this kind of legislation is passed, records are sealed off from the public and placed in the hands of the government.

The question of how worthy our government is of this trust must be taken into account.

Many of the countries that control

voter registration lists don't have fair elections. If the United States is to continue to call itself a democracy, its people must not give sole control of information to the government.

For our governmental system of checks and balances to work properly, it is essential for citizens to have access to much of the information the government and its politicians would like to have sole custody of.

Proponents of legislation that would cut off the public's right to know cite the issue of privacy and safety.

Although in many cases, these arguments to keep records closed are legitimate, First Amendment freedoms are too fragile to allow the government to tamper with the degrees to which one can gain access to information.

The government must trust its citizens not to abuse their right to information just as citizens expect the government to be honest.

Any further limitations on the Open Records Act would hinder a right which every American holds dear, the right to free speech.

Depression: is society to blame?

Gender roles may contribute to problem in women

Feeling blue.

We all have days that we would rather have skipped over. Some are better than others. But when the blue episodes are too frequent or last too long, they may be indicative of a serious problem, namely depression. Taking care of ourselves is so much more than eating right; it is also thinking right and not attaching negative labels to ourselves (e.g. I'm fat, I'm too thin, I'm inept). Thinking right is especially important for women since studies show that women are twice as likely to suffer from depression as men.



TRACY JONES
Columnist

This is not to say that women are afflicted with mental disorders more often than men. When numerous types of mental disorders are scrutinized men and women show similar rates of mental illness. What differs between the two, then, is not disorder rates but rather the patterns of disorders — women displaying passive, internal symptoms and men afflicted by disorders characterized by outward, anti-social behavior.

Depression is perhaps so pervasive among women because of the roles allotted to women in society. As young girls, women are taught that it is "feminine" to be submissive and place the feelings and well-being of others above their own. It is inappropriate behavior for them to express any type of negative feelings outwardly, particularly anger. Young men, in turn, are taught that to act anything other emotionally detached and aggressive is "unmanly." As a result, they are much more assertive and tend to express emotions such as anger more readily.

A woman's sense of self-worth is usually defined strictly as part of a group and not as an individual. Self-worth is therefore dependent upon the group's evaluation of her performance. As a result, she may experience feelings of individual helplessness and incompetence, believing that she is incapable of completing a task without the help of the group. Furthermore, an unyielding adherence to social-

ly prescribed norms may condition women to define themselves in terms of group norms, prohibiting any type of outward expression by women. Instead, they are forced to turn their anger inward. This increases a woman's negative attitude and feelings toward herself, thereby making her more susceptible to depression.

Depressives view life as a chore, often feeling no reason to get out of bed or eat or even sleep well. They lose pleasure in most if not all activities that they enjoyed before. Women with children who suffer from depression may neglect these children, leaving them to fend for themselves. Depending on the extent of the neglect, the children may be removed from the home and placed with a relative or in foster care.

Furthermore, teachers who suffer from severe depression can obviously impede the learning process of their students to a great extent.

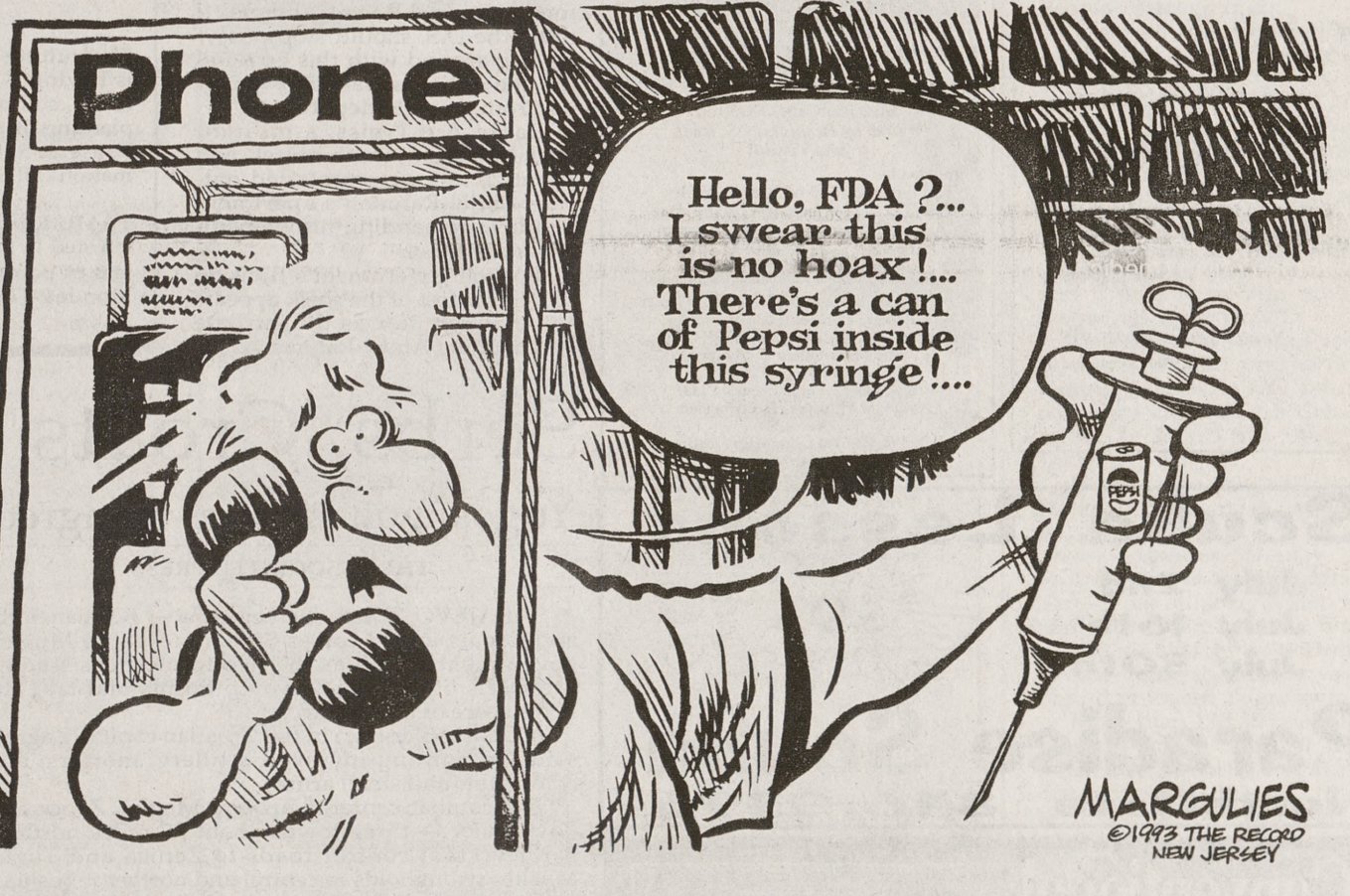
The double standards that children grow up with need to be modified if this trend in depression is to stop. Little girls need to be encouraged to express themselves as openly as little boys and be allowed to participate in social roles and activities that promote individuality. For instance, allowing them to speak openly about their feelings without fear of punishment or the loss of love or attention.

It is also important to recognize the symptoms of a depressive so as not to become a crutch for the woman. More harm than help results when excuses are made and the depressive is allowed to continue in her present state. It is most helpful to get her to a doctor.

Sometimes, just listening to a person can ease an episode of depression. Talking about the problem may give the person insight to a solution that they never considered before.

Getting help for a depressed woman can make monumental changes in her life. She can again find pleasure in activities and become an active member of community organizations and local programs as well as productive parent and role model.

Jones is a senior psychology major



The problem with multiculturalism

On June 9, the Liberal Arts Council passed a six-hour multicultural requirement. This requirement mandates that a student must take at least three hours of American culture and may take the other three hours in international culture. It is the intention of this requirement to make students more tolerant and less racist. This requirement assumes, of course, that the student body is intolerant and racist and is in need of proper socialization.

Of the 19 courses in American culture presented to the council six are related to women's studies and four are related to African-American studies, one is related to Latino studies and two are related to Native American studies.

None of the courses are related to Judaic studies, men's studies, or Asian-American studies. In short, this requirement is not truly multicultural in the sense that not all cultures are represented.

The main problem with multiculturalism is that, while its intentions are noble and admirable, historically these classes drift from their original intent and become pulpits of liberal indoctrination. It becomes an opportunity for liberal professors to trash all things conservative and try to "enlighten" the masses. While I agree that professors have the right to interject some of their own personal philosophy into a class,

these classes should not be required.

In my opinion, the Liberal Arts Council has developed a solution to a problem that does not exist. Despite the rhetoric of some council members Texas A&M is not a haven for racists. To my knowledge A&M does not have a problem with hate crimes, cross burnings or race riots. In fact, when College Station was visited by the Ku Klux Klan, students responded with Whoopstock Unityfest '93. Students of all races, creeds, colors, sexes and political ideologies came together in a united voice — "Just say no to racism."

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said that he had a dream. A dream "that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of the former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down at the table of brotherhood." Martin Luther King's dream is alive and well on the campus of Texas A&M.

As an Aggie the only color I see is the color maroon.

Jody L. Withers
Class of '95

God, not man must judge homosexuals

Amen, Mr. Brobst !!! (Baptist Convention Blurs Homosexuality, 6/22/93). I understood the Bible to be a guide. In my mind, the Bible gives you guidelines to live by and the judg-

ment of your life comes from God. The Bible says homosexuality is wrong but does not give human beings leave to be judge, jury and executioner of people who are homosexual.

The "Religious Wrong," as Mr. Brobst so well defines them, seems to lose sight of what Jesus' teachings were all about. The amount of personal energy that these people expend to persecute others who do not "think" the way they do amazes me! It seems they spend their whole lives condemning others and focusing on others lives in the name of God when it is God who says "Judge not, lest ye be judged!"

What would we ever do if the color of the skin, the way a person's family was composed and the way a person showed love didn't matter!?

Wow, what a concept!

Cathy Ruedlinger
Class of '78

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MC requirement better than nothing

Historically, universities required a knowledge of Greek and Latin because those were the languages of scholarship, and they were useful. The fact that we no longer require mastery of these languages reflects the societal changes which made such mastery less useful.

We are behind the times. If A&M kept up with societal changes, business majors would take classes in the legal aspects of sexual harassment and EEO programs. All graduates would be fluent in a language other than English. For example, business majors would be both proficient in Spanish and knowledgeable of the culture of Mexico. Petroleum engineers would be fluent in Arabic and knowledgeable about the Islamic culture. Electrical engineers and computer scientists would be proficient in Japanese culture and language.

Now, Liberal Arts is the college of broad-based generalist education. That

it requires a paltry six hours of multicultural studies is exceptionally weak given the multicultural nature of the United States.

Face reality; cultures which we regard as similar are currently engaged in war over cultural supremacy. Consider Bosnia, Kurdistan, Kashmir, Cambodia, and Ireland. People in these regions die over relatively minor cultural differences. The strength of the United States is our polyglot multicultural nature. We are so diverse that we must get along or our nation will not survive.

I consider it ridiculous to propose that our students remain insulated from societal realities. Hopefully the multicultural classes will not be "pish posh," to quote Professor Reynolds. The cultures studied should be given a realistic look, covering non-PC subjects like black prejudice against Asians. I believe that the six hours of multicultural studies by the college of Liberal Arts is less than the least we can do, but that it is an important first step.

Ed Everidge
Graduate student in Mathematics