Wednesday, October 20, 1993

THE BATTALION

What's Up

Wednesday

TAMU Bridge Club: general meeting at 8:00 p.m. HRBB 321. For any information call Mary at 696-2857.

Pre-Law Society: general meetingattorney panel at 8:00 p.m. in 601 Rudder.

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American Laboratory Theater: one-act play: "Orchids in the Moonlight", by Carlos Fuentes at 8:00 p.m. in the Fallout Theater, Blocker 144. For any information call the Theater Arts Box Office at 862-2052.

Corps Chaplains: Christian Night-no alcohol from 9:00 p.m.-1:00 a.m. at the Hall of Fame.

Women's Bonfire Committee: general meeting at 7:00 p.m. in 401 Rudder. For any information call Angela at 847-2800.

Center for Academic Enhancement: free course in managing college reading at 7:00 p.m. in Blocker 242. For any information call 845-2568.

ExCEL: team leader meeting at 6:30 p.m. in 114 RICH. For any information call Rico at 847-6191.

National Organization for Women: guest lecture on personal safety from a member of the College Station Police Department at 7:00 p.m. in 145 MSC. For any information call Kathy at 847-2253.

Agricultural Communications of Tomorrow (ACT): general meting at 7:30 p.m. in 123 Kleberg. For more information call Royce at 764-3012.

Agnostic and Atheist Student Group: guest lecture on Catholicism by Father Michael J. Sis from 7:00-9:00 p.m. in Blocker 158. For any information call Brett at 268-AASG.

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TAMU Economics Society: general meeting in 413 Harrington at 6:30 p.m. For any information call Michael at 846-2932.

TAMU Zoological Society: guest speaker on the Nudi branch of the world at 7:00 p.m. in 502 Rudder. For any information call Derek at 693-4058.

What's Up is a Battalion service that lists non-profit student and faculty events and activities. Items should be submitted no later than three days in advance of the desired run date. Application deadlines and notices are not events and will not be run in What's Up. If you have any questions, please call the newsroom at 845-3313.

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Attend a seminar on

Professional Etiquette

October 21st, 7:00 p.m. Student Services Building, Room 111 Career Center 845-5139

Masturbation healthy, homosexuality OK, according to Lutheran task force report

The Associated Press

Masturbation is healthy, the Bible supports homosexual unions and teaching teens how to use condoms to prevent disease is a moral imperative, says a task force leading the nation's largest Lutheran body into the sex wars.

Four years in the making, a draft statement going before the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America declares that the core of human sexuality should be loving, committed relationships.

"It is the binding commitment, not the license or ceremony, that lies at the heart of biblical understandings of marriage," says the statement. "In those circumstances where a legal marriage is not feasible, communities of faith may need to consider other ways of publicly affirming and communally supporting a loving, binding commitment between two people."

The 21-page report — "The Church and Human Sexuality: A Lutheran Perspective," a copy of which was released to The Associated Press — is to be sent later this week to 19,000 pastors and other church leaders in the 5.2 million-member denomination.

Local churches have until next June to respond. A second draft will be prepared for a churchwide assembly of lay and clergy delegates in 1995. The report is the ELCA's first attempt to grapple

The report is the ELCA's first attempt to grapple with sexuality since it was formed in 1988 by the merger of the Lutheran Church in America, the American Lutheran Church and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches.

Foreshadowing current U.S. ferment over gay rights, mainline Protestant denominations have been convulsed in recent years over demands by gay and lesbian members that churches accord them formal acceptance and the right of ordination. The United Church of Christ is the only major Protestant denomination to permit the ordination of homosexuals.

In the last two years, the Episcopal Church, the United Methodist Church and the Presbyterian

Church (U.S.A.) have rejected proposals to loosen church strictures on homosexuality.

The issue has no more vanished from the sanctuaries than from the streets, as attested by the raucous protests by gay church members and their supporters after the votes. The Mcthodists, Episcopalians and Presbyterians all are engaged in new studies of homosexuality.

Within the ELCA, the 67-member Conference of Bishops has already expressed reservations about the report. The ELCA falls on the moderate end of mainline Protestantism but is more liberal than the 2.6 million-member Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

A motion earlier this month to postpone work on the sexuality statement indefinitely was withdrawn, but bishops expressed concern the proposal could threaten the new denomination's unity.

The wide-ranging report begins with a confession that the church has too often overlooked "the created goodness of sexuality."

The task force urges children, adolescents and adults to learn the pleasures their bodies can give them. "Masturbation, a means of self-pleasuring, is generally appropriate and healthy," the task force said.

In many places, the report upholds traditional church teachings. Marriage is affirmed as a divine and blessed estate, and teen-agers are encouraged to be chaste until they enter "a permanent commitment."

The report attacks adultery, promiscuity, sexual abuse, prostitution, anti-gay violence, pornography and the exploitation of sexuality in advertising and entertainment.

"This is not anything goes. There are some things we stand against," the Rev. Karen Bloomquist, director of the sexuality study, said in an interview Tuesday.

Bloomquist said the statement balances tradition with the contemporary realities of sexual relationships among unmarried people, heterosexual and homosexual.



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