

PRO CON

Should Beutel Health Center offer the morning-after pill?

The Beutel Health Center has decided not to treat students who get alcohol poisoning while rollerblading. Let them get their stomachs pumped and knees bandaged somewhere else — not here, no sir. Might promote drinkin' and the usin' of dangerous recreational devices.



FRANK STANFORD
Columnist



ERIN HILL
Columnist

So, you forgot to take the "morning of" pill, you're desperate for the "morning-after" option, but the Quack Shack doesn't offer it. Maybe this makes you mad, but it shouldn't. Beutel Health Center doesn't have an obligation to make this pill available for

several reasons. First, many people consider the pill to be a form of abortion. While it may be legal, this doesn't mean it's right. This pill's purpose is to destroy cells, possibly of a potential fetus, within 72 hours of intercourse.

Whether a life is destroyed when someone takes the morning-after pill may not be known, but the attitude that one can escape the natural consequences of sex through technology — in effect playing God — is disturbing. It degrades the value of life when we view it as a commodity that can be easily disposed of at our bidding.

Second, the University is not a democracy — it is a bureaucracy. Dr. Kenneth Dirks, director of the Health Center, has the right to make decisions for the Health Center just as a corporate CEO is allowed to make decisions for her company. Universities often make decisions that do not represent every student's viewpoint, but that's life.

The Health Center's purpose is to keep us healthy. In keeping with that mission, it promotes things like low-fat diets, exercise and sexually-responsible behavior. Sexually transmitted diseases, including the HIV virus, are problems nationwide, so much so that President Clinton recently launched a million-dollar campaign promoting condom use. In light of that, it seems foolish to offer something which may encourage unprotected sex.

People may resolve not to use the morning-after pill, but probably will. Arguing that it won't be abused is like

arguing that minors won't be served. Maybe in a dream world, but not College Station. After unprotected sex, the morning-after pill seems to be the perfect cure-all — except that it only eliminates pregnancy, not sexually transmitted diseases.

It's human nature to run with as much slack as is given, even if it's enough to hang us. If we do hang ourselves, then we ought to face the consequences. The morning-after pill deludes people into believing there need be no consequences for having sex, when it is actually something to be taken very seriously.

The morning-after pill indirectly promotes irresponsible behavior, which means trouble. For rape victims, the pill is available at Planned Parenthood. The rest of the student body simply needs either to be prepared or pay the consequences.

Frank Stanford is a graduate philosophy student

Erin Hill is a senior English major

When death is only part of the pain AIDS forces loved ones, others to face difficult issues

When I asked a friend about his Christmas, he told me about some of his presents, the most expensive of which were from his brother.



MICHAEL LANDAUER
Columnist

"Wow!" I said. "I'm too poor to even exchange gifts with my brother."

But he became serious and told me there was a reason for the gifts. It was probably his brother's last Christmas.

I asked my friend what the worst part is about knowing his brother is dying of AIDS. He told me it is KNOWING his brother is dying of AIDS.

"I wish I would just get a phone call saying that he died," he said.

But AIDS does not work that way. It is not like any other disease humanity has ever known. It gets more personal.

AIDS forces a certain curiosity that other diseases do not. When someone mentions cancer or heart disease, we do not ask how they got it. But with AIDS, we ask for the cause. We want to know if they are homosexual. Despite the fact that AIDS has proven itself not to be just a gay disease, we still wonder. AIDS is a disease that unjustly forces people to come up with an explanation.

My friend told me about how his brother went out and got them both drunk bar-

hopping in Houston. When they were drunk enough, the truth came out. His brother had acquired the HIV virus, and he was gay. How can you react to that?

My friend stays pretty silent on the subject. At night he likes to drink beer so he'll fall asleep thinking about nothing. He says it's better than staying awake waiting for a phone call. When he gets that call, everyone will ask how his brother died. And then, how his brother got AIDS.

The cruelest thing about this disease is that it asked to be ignored. It attacked a community that was not in the mainstream. Society did not accept gays, but eventually it was forced to accept their disease. My friend does not agree with the lifestyle he says his brother has chosen, but he respects him. And he loves him.

AIDS has forced its way into mainstream America by attacking every one from superstars to housewives and even children. But when it attacks gays, it still draws silence.

My friend's brother was silent about who he really was for years, and my friend still does not tell many people about it. Many families are not sure what to think and say when a disease attacks their loved one who lives a life they don't understand. That makes it a road traveled alone by many gay AIDS victims. Very few people can possibly be there for them without having a nagging thought deep inside them. What if my loved one hadn't been gay? Would he be dying?

But these questions can never be answered. We can only play with the hand we've been dealt. The fact is, many groups have been singled out by cruel fate

throughout history. Millions of Jews, for example, died at the hands of hatred in the Holocaust. When we think of those deaths, we have respect for a people who have been faced with extreme adversity.

When will we think of gays with respect for being faced with AIDS? Will the gay victims and their family's always suffer in silence? Maybe we don't understand their lifestyle, but we must understand that people are dying. And these people come from families just like ours. It is not just an epidemic; it is a million separate personal tragedies. It is a million friends, parents, children and siblings forced to wait for phone calls they never want to receive.

It would be easier for my friend and the others like him if they could just get the news and then mourn their loss. But to wait for a person you love to become too weak to fight off death is much more devastating than a phone call. It's more devastating than most of us can ever imagine — hopefully.

These people need our prayers, our sympathy and our support. They should know they don't need to be silent. And most importantly, gays suffering with AIDS deserve our respect, not our scrutiny — anyone suffering from AIDS does.

Does my friend wish his brother was not gay? Probably. But he respects him dying as who he is, rather than living forever in the pain of silence.

And we should all do the same.

Michael Landauer is a freshman journalism major

Students at A&M should have the opportunity to decide which morals, religions, philosophies and pills they will use.

for resale, but that doesn't mean the student body will rename the clinic the "Crack Shack" and start abusing sodium pentathol. Good grief, can't we make up our own minds?

This is another attempt — nay, success — by A&M to impose its moral value system upon its students who are supposed to be here to expand their minds, gather sufficient information to make their own decisions and ask their own questions, not to attend a religious convention. These decisions include not only major fields of study, but also whether to use a particular safe, legal pill.

The prevailing moral argument seems to be that this pill allows unprotected sex to be "safer" from pregnancy, and thereby promotes unsafe sex. Also, any pill that prevents a life from forming is essentially abortive in nature, and therefore morally wrong from some perspectives.

Most of us agree on the serious dangers of unprotected sex. However, humans have always done dumb things periodically and will continue to do so. This means a lingering spread of diseases and unwanted pregnancies with which we will have to deal.

The question of life beginning at the moment of conception is a moral, religious and philosophical one — not a legal one — regarding this pill. Students should have the opportunity to decide which morals, religions, philosophies and pills they will use. It's not surprising that church-affiliated, private institutions like Southern Methodist and Baylor have made these decisions for their students. Our "World Class" university should not.

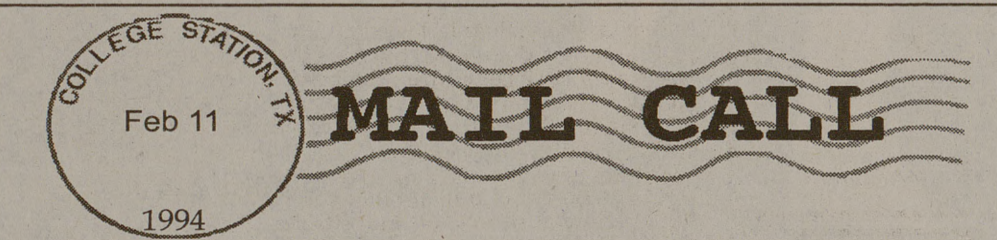


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Aggielife jazz review draws acid response

This letter concerns the Feb. 3 edition of The Battalion, specifically the section entitled Music Review.

In my opinion, a poor choice was made in approving Kyle Burnett's music review of "The Acid Jazz Test Part 1," an album by Modern Jazz. I found the article quite insulting and demeaning towards an art form which I and many other people around the world have studied, practiced and supported through good and bad times.

Although I am in complete support of the Aggielife editor expressing his opinion, I wish that you had proofread the article more meticulously. In the first paragraph of his review, Mr. Burnett claims that jazz music has thrived primarily in elevators. I have yet to hear of any jazz artist whose existence relies on revenues collected from consumers intending to use the music as background music in elevators.

The statement of his article that deserves the most of my criticism, however, is the paragraph explaining how Acid Jazz is unique from all jazz music performed up to the present by its use of electronic equipment.

Burnett writes, "But what separates this style of music from just any old jazz is the integral use of electronic components such as keyboards, mixers and drum machines."

Acid Jazz is truly unique, but certainly not in the way stated by Mr. Burnett. Does he consider the late Miles David "old jazz"? He was using electronic keyboards and electronically processed horns in the late 1960s.

Please be more critical of what your staff writes to prevent the exposure of such carelessly false statements.

Ben Bray
Class of '94

Student supports Mattox, achievements

Adair Holloway's opinion of former Attorney General Jim Mattox in Wednesday's Battalion (Feb. 2) did make me think about who Jim Mattox is, and what he has accomplished for the state of Texas in the past two decades. The U.S. Senate hopeful has fostered prosperity to many folks in our great state.

First, as a young woman at Texas A&M, I am aware that if it weren't for Attorney General Jim Mattox, the Aggie Band to this day would not allow women members to join its organization. Jim Mattox, in the early 1980s, brought this issue before a court of law and changed policy here at Aggieland — just as we have witnessed today at the Citadel. His support for the succession of young women today is as strong as it was ten years ago.

Second, as a future mother, I feel secure knowing I would have a Senator who will combat the onslaught of reckless violence. His positions on putting more police officers on the beat, expanding boot camp programs for more youthful offenders, and drug-testing those out on bond, on probation or parole are right on target with what our society calls for today.

Third, as a concerned member of society, I am in one accord with Jim Mattox's resolution that our current welfare system locks poor families in a state of destitution.

He is the only candidate that I have heard of even mentioning this dire issue. He plans to assist both Democrats and Republicans in reforming it.

Finally, as a product of over five generations of Texans, I want a Senator who is a true Texan and will stand up for Texas in the United States Senate.

Elizabeth Key
Class of '94

Chavez, Clinton both have winning records

When Jose de Jesus Ortiz (alias Pele) decided to write an article criticizing Julio Cesar Chavez, he also took jobs at President Clinton and Tex-Mex food.

I'll forgive his comments about Tex-Mex food, for how could someone from California know anything about good taste? My two main problems with his column were the suggestions that Chavez had a weak chin and was an unproven champion, and his weak Clinton comment.

Let me assure Ortiz that with a record of 89 wins, a lose and a draw, one knock-down does not make a weak chin. And as far as Chavez being an unproven boxer, his victory list includes John Mayweather, Hector Camacho, Meldrick Taylor, Lonnie Smith, Frankie Mitchell, John Dupleis and Edwin Rosarion — all of whom were in their prime and were never the same fighters after facing Chavez.

Maybe you've heard of them, but then again — by judging your comments — you have not.

As for President Clinton being a weak leader, just about every piece of legislation sent to Congress has passed, and our economy and consumer confidence continues to grow.

In closing I have a little advice for Ortiz: Why don't you stick to subjects you know a little about.

Freddie A. Medina
Class of '94

