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Horrors found even here at A&M

Despite apparent safety, reality lies just around corner

ROY L. CLAY

Columnist

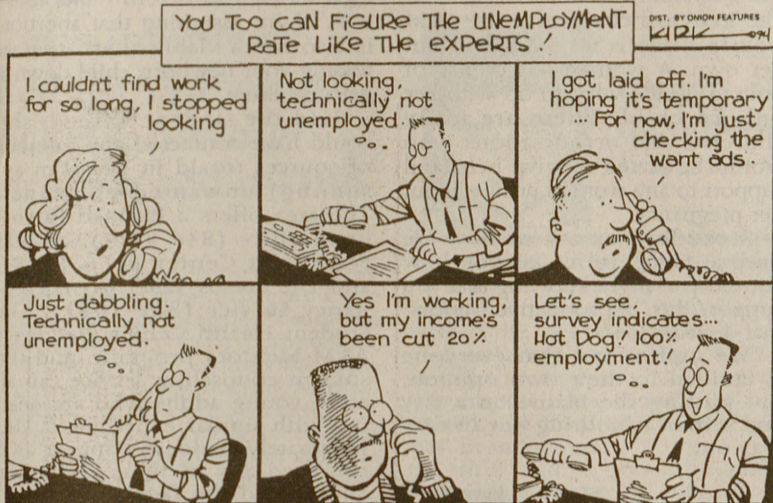


Last Friday, a dead infant in a garbage chute was discovered by UPD officers. Police were alerted when doctors discovered that a young woman brought in for emergency care had just given birth, although she denied it. An autopsy conducted Monday indicates that the baby was born alive. This sort of horror isn't so shocking in the deepest, darkest parts of New York or the projects of any major U.S. city, is it? But the infant was found in Mosher Hall, right here on the Texas A&M campus. It seems somehow out of place to hear of a tragedy like this happening on a college campus. University life is geared toward protecting the students from dealing with death, pain and crime, which usually only appear in intellectual discussions inspired by a philosophy class. So the average student on campus leads a fairly sheltered life. Certainly, a student who has to deal with unfiltered reality on a daily basis will have great difficulty coping with the amount of work necessary to succeed at the college level. Besides, no parents want to send their sons and daughters to a school that appears

to have difficulty creating a safe and healthy environment for its student population. But that raises a very important question: why should students be protected from the realities of life in today's world? The truth of the matter is tragedy and horror cannot be contained. Reality simply cannot be curbed at the doorstep of any home, community or institution. The unfortunate fate of this child only heightens this fact. We live in a world all our own here at A&M. For the most part, all we have to deal with is where to park on campus when we're late to class or when to actually go to class. But occasionally the real world does intrude into this small island of relative safety, and it is often heavy-handed. There are women at A&M who have had to deal with the terror of being raped. Some have even been attacked on school property. It's difficult to even conceive of the fact that students are being hurt and violated on these prestigious grounds that we hold so dear. This tragedy, combined with last week's terrible event, puts the high ideas and philosophies that we talk about in class and among our friends in perspective. The things we learn at this university should not be just so much rhetoric that one spills forth at the appropriate social function. Philosophy and the virtues of humanity are ideas we must live by daily, whether they are incorporated into one's spiritual beliefs or simply part of a more secular morality. These ideas should give those around us a light of reason in this all too chaotic world.

Our ideas and beliefs are just as vital to success in life as ambition and ability. The twists and turns of reality and its bitter aftertaste test the mettle of our philosophies. We try them out in order to find the answers to questions about our world. In their own ways, that's what such opposing viewpoints as Creationism and Darwinian Evolution are all about. Tragedies such as the one that happened on the third floor of Mosher also serve another purpose. Let anyone forget, reality can hit anywhere at any time. Life deals some really bad cards to everyone at one time or another, and it doesn't matter whether you're rich or poor, pretty or homely, smart or dumb. It is how you cope with extreme diversity that determines your fate. The mother of that child wasn't some drugged-out vagrant from a seedy part of town. She was a student just like you and me. Perhaps a less sheltered existence might have helped her overcome the trauma she obviously endured during her pregnancy. We all get caught up in the college life. It's great to have a chance to walk around this campus knowing that you are a part of a great tradition in education. It's also a lot of fun to drink, dance and party with the reckless abandon of immortal youth. But just be aware that reality is only around the corner and tragedy can strike at any time, regardless of the safety of your surroundings.

Roy L. Clay is a senior history major



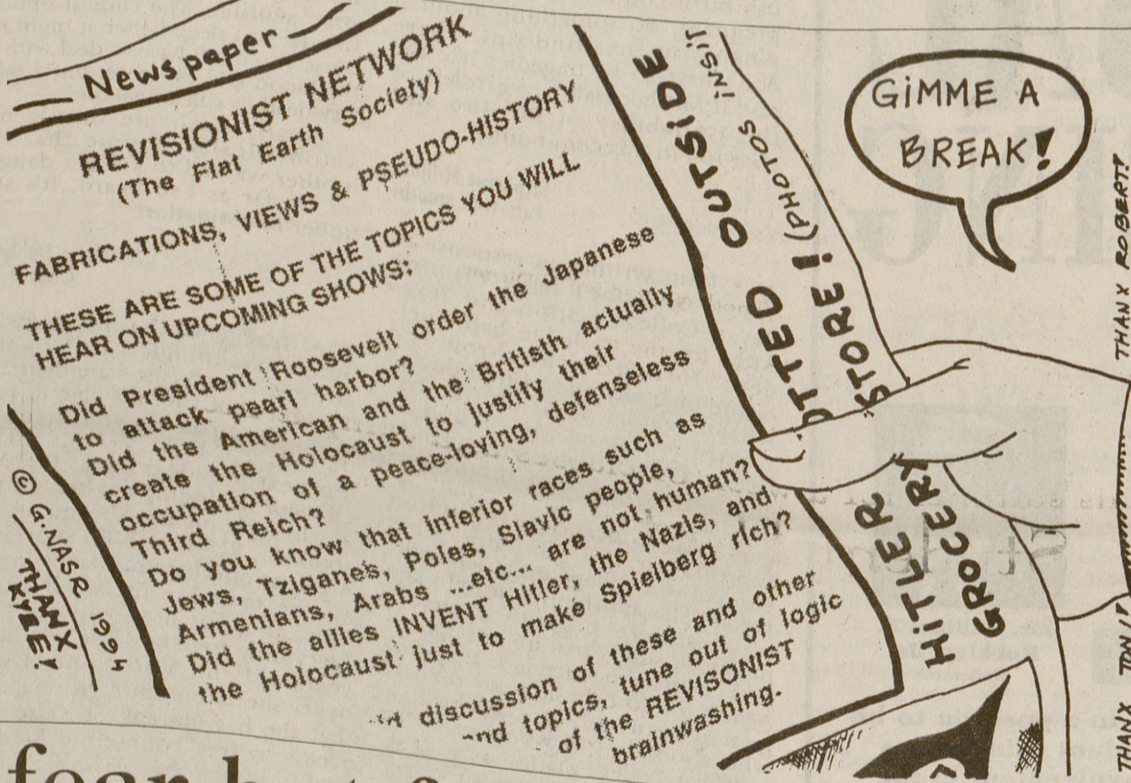
EDITORIAL

Class of '94 gift

Library donation aids learning

When choosing the Class of '94 gift, seniors should ask themselves which gift will benefit the greatest number of people. Using this criterion, the best choice for the seniors casting their votes today and tomorrow would be to donate class money to the Sterling C. Evans Library. The proposal on the ballot calls for enhanced reference services for undergraduates. The funds would provide a new reference desk, selected books and audiovisuals. Such modern reference materials could be expected to serve Aggies for the next 30 years. Although there are several proposed gifts that could serve as monuments to the spirit and history of A&M, no other gift would serve such a practical service to the future students of the University. Aside from being practical, the gift is badly needed. If the Class of '94 does not offer funds to the library, somebody else will have to come up with money to make the library more modern. And that somebody else could be a while. Look at how long the library has been in need of revamping. Last March, during a Student Senate debate on library funding,

several students spoke out about the poor research conditions at A&M. Off-Campus Senator Heather Cameron said, "We have done a lot of research on this, and let me tell you, compared to other universities, our library is sad." Cameron is not alone in her feelings about the library. We do not need any more monuments, statues or non-functioning fountains at A&M when students have more pressing needs. While it is important to commemorate the history and traditions that make us all Aggies, we should also remember that the first trainload of Aggies came here to learn. Today, we have also come here to learn at what is one of the best universities in the country. But our library has fallen behind the times and needs this gift as a boost to get it up to a level that will benefit Aggies in their educational pursuits. The greatest gift the seniors can leave behind is a future of excellence for the Sterling C. Evans Library. The best monument to show their love for this school would be no monument at all, just a helping hand for future undergraduate Aggies who need a good place to research and study.



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There's nothing to fear but fear's effects on our lives

JENNY MAGEE
Columnist



this idea. When I was a little girl, I used to be afraid that something was going to "get me." I was quite certain that a horrible blob of evil resided beneath my bed or in my closet, and his entire existence revolved around waiting for the perfect time to "get me." Even though my room was a 2.3 second run from my parents' bedroom (I know because I timed it), it did not stop that hard knot from forming in my stomach as soon as my parents left my room for the night. The shadows (from my rainbow-shaped night light) that danced on the wall would suddenly turn into monsters and goblins. The room that I turned into a fairyland or a magic castle during the day became a dungeon in the darkness. Hours would pass as the scenarios that my imagination was inventing became more horrible and graphic. I wanted to run to my parents' room, but I didn't want to admit that I was afraid. After all, the big evil blob story didn't translate from imagination to explanation very well. So I invented my own security system. The multitude of stuffed animals which were the accumulation of eight birthdays and Christmas became my army. Clyde, Snuggles, Honey Jo and all my other precious stuffed friends were lined up in a circular shape that fit my around body. I pulled one pillow up around my ears and hugged another one across my chest. I looked like a mummy. I was burning-up hot, but I felt superficially safe. There must have been a day when this nightly ritual ended because the army of stuffed animals now resides in two garbage bags collecting dust in my attic. They served their purpose well, because the big evil blob never got me. I remember that the fear seemed as stupid in the daytime then as it does all the time now. But, in the darkness of my room then, there was nothing more real. Everyone has childhood fears, but usually we grow out of them. And then we trade them in for adult fears. If we were reluctant to admit our fears in childhood, we can be almost certain that

If we were reluctant to admit our fears in childhood, we can be certain that growing up didn't change that. Society has conditioned us to hide our fear. "Only the strong survive" and "No fear" are our mottos. It seems that people think that denying fear is the best way to combat it. That leaves two options, either we run from what we fear or suffer in silence. When Franklin D. Roosevelt said the only thing to fear is fear itself, he didn't mean that we should be afraid to fear. Rather we should be afraid of how we let our fears affect our lives. A certain amount of fear is necessary. It motivates us, and sometimes protects us from doing stupid things.

But, fear becomes destructive when we allow it to dictate our lives. My first roommate my freshman year at A&M went home after two weeks because she was scared of life on her own. Maybe A&M wasn't the right college for her, but she'll never know because she was too afraid to take the time to find out. Her fear limited her opportunities. Often when people don't want to deal with their fears they build up walls. Just like my stuffed animal security system, people build up walls to separate themselves from their fears. They think internalizing their fear will hurt less than talking about and working through it. Maybe we find our fears embarrassing. Maybe we don't want to appear weak to the rest of the world. For whatever reason there is a world full of people missing out on opportunities, new experiences and relationships because they are allowing fear to dictate their lives.

Jenny Magee is a sophomore English and journalism major



April month to raise alcohol awareness

The month of April is becoming known across the country for something far more significant than April Fool's Day or even Daylight Savings Time. April is also officially designated as "Alcohol Awareness Month," and has become a time for recognizing the kinds of things we can do all year long to fight problems like illegal underage drinking and drunk driving. Now is a key time to talk with young people about the importance of respecting themselves and the law, especially when it comes to alcoholic beverages. That's why

we at Jack Hilliard Distributing, Bryan-College Station distributor of Anheuser-Busch beers, make available free-of-charge to parents the "Family Talk About Drinking" program. Developed with authorities in education and youth counseling, "Family Talk" helps parents talk with their kids about family rules, respect for the law, and peer pressure. We invite readers to call us at (409) 775-9047 for their free set of guidebooks. Readers outside the area can call Anheuser-Busch's toll-free number, 1-800-359-TALK. As a nation, we have made great progress in addressing illegal underage drinking. According to University of Michigan research, drinking by high school seniors is at its lowest level since 1975, when

the university began monitoring this trend. What's more, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation, the number of teenage drunk-driving fatalities decreased 60 percent between 1982 and 1992. Let's work together with our children to keep this progress improving this April and throughout the 1990's.

Ron Longoria, General Manager
Jack Hilliard Distributing
Bryan

Constitution protects Faculty Friends ad

With all the talk about tolerance, multiculturalism, and diversity, a person might be led to believe that constitutionally-guaranteed freedoms such as speech and religious expression were very secure. Such is simply not the case. Recently the Faculty Friends ad has come under sharp criticism. Faculty Friends is a group

of Christian faculty members who twice a semester publish an ad in The Battalion. The ad presents a brief Christian message and indicates that these faculty are available to those who want to discuss spiritual matters.

The Faculty Friends ad has been questioned by individuals who maintain that faculty cannot legally identify themselves as members of academic departments and as Christians. This viewpoint runs counter to the U.S. Constitution which guarantees freedom of speech and religious expression (in the First Amendment). The fact is that individuals who work in public institutions have the legal right to state where they work and that they are Christians. From George Washington to Bill Clinton, American presidents have publicly attended church, have sworn the oath of office with a hand on the Bible, and have appealed to Americans to pray for their nation. In each case, the man simultaneously presented himself as Christian and President. The U.S. Constitution permits these religious expressions by the highest ranking government official and the lowest public employee at

state-supported institutions, including faculty at Texas A&M University. The most disturbing criticism of Faculty Friends is the unsupported conjecture that Christian faculty mistreat non-Christian students. Effectively, the accusation is that Christian faculty cannot treat all their students fairly. If this were true, doing away with the Faculty Friends ad would not solve the problem. The final solution would require doing away with Christians on the campus. This is an unfounded and unjust attack on a group of people simply because of their religious beliefs. If any faculty member is accused of mistreating a student, that faculty member should be dealt with on an individual basis, without regard to his or her religious beliefs. I believe that Faculty Friends and their critics have some common ground. We all want to make this a better world. Let us work together, respecting our differences of opinion. Don't try to shut us up by denying us our constitutional freedoms.

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