

PRO CON

Should RU-486 be made available in the United States?

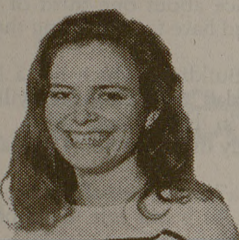
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Night News editor



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Columnist



Most people define RU-486 as the French drug that induces abortions. This is true, but studies have shown that it can help save lives. The problem is that Americans never will know how RU-486 can help them in these medicinal capacities. Radical pro-life activists have intimidated Roussel-Uclaf, the French manufacturer of the pill, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration into not marketing the pill in the United States. Pro-lifers are also lobbying members of Congress to prohibit RU-486 from being brought into the U.S. Though they never address the fact that RU-486 has a wide range of uses and could benefit many people. They refuse to think of it as anything other than a "human pesticide."

First, it is important to distinguish between RU-486, also known as the French abortion pill, and the "morning-after" pill. The "morning-after" pill is a concentration of hormones that can be taken within 72 hours of unprotected sex and creates such a hostile environment in the uterus that no life can form. The "morning-after" pill is available in the U.S.; RU-486 is not.

When used to induce abortions, RU-486 is 99 percent effective holding deaths related to its service to a minimum. Only one in 100,000 women have died as a result of RU-486 abortions. Almost all forms of abortion are surgical procedures, but this pill requires no operation at all, just a doctor's supervision.

Almost all forms of abortion are surgical procedures, but this pill requires no operation at all, just a doctor's supervision, and RU-486 has more uses than just abortion.

RU-486 has more uses than just abortion. Studies have shown RU-486 is successful in treatment of Cushing's disease, which is characterized by hormone overproduction by the adrenal gland which can cause obesity, diabetes and depression. The drug also keeps the immune system at full capacity.

RU-486 has shown great potential overseas for treating various cancers and tumors that can't be treated surgically. Women with advanced forms of breast cancer who haven't responded well to traditional forms of treatment have had success using RU-486 in their treatment regimen.

U.S. scientists want to use it in AIDS research, but since the drug isn't allowed into the country we may never know whether or not it is a potential cure for AIDS-related illnesses.

RU-486 also helps women in the delivery room. This pill enables a pregnant woman to begin contractions and leads to a shorter delivery, and in some cases helps women whose babies are late.

RU-486 has been approved for sale and distribution in France, Sweden, Great Britain and China, and it should be brought to the United States. Yes, it may be used to give non-surgical abortions, but it is also a drug that can save lives and treat severe medical problems.

RU-486 could be a new "wonder drug," but the only way we will ever find out is if the American government stops trying to regulate morality and starts working for what will benefit the greatest number of people.

Heather Winch is a junior journalism major

Erin Hill is a senior English major

Finals: time for cleaning and movies

A few helpful hints for surviving any test schedule

Finals are upon us, my friends, and I'm sure many of you are worried that you don't have the proper study habits. That's why I have dedicated this last column to tips on how to prepare for the dreaded tests. I have personally tried out most of these suggestions, so rest assured I know what I'm talking about.

First, clean up your room. You haven't seen the floor since Parent's Weekend when your roommate faked you out by saying his/her mom was coming to visit - when she really wasn't and your roommate just wanted you to clean. A tidy study environment makes for better learning.

Next, sharpen all of your pencils. Even the ones you found behind your bed and in the back of your desk drawer when you just cleaned. You never know how many pencil leads you might break while studying. It's kind of like when they made you bring eight pencils to take the SAT.

Now, arrange all of your books and notebooks in two nice piles on your clean desk, and line up the pencils next to them. Pause to admire the beauty of your room and the learning environment you have created.

Now, call all of your friends and tell them about it. Start with people you know locally - even those you haven't talked to all semester - and slowly progress to friends at other colleges and back home. Think about calling your family, but know they'll ask you why you're not studying and make you feel guilty.

Write them letters instead. Pick up one of your newly-sharpened pencils and find some stationery. Realize pencils aren't the best writing utensils for letters, because someone could erase the address at the post

LYNN BOOHER

Columnist



office and send your precious letter to Nebraska.

Search frantically for a pen. Call your friends again to see if anybody has one you could borrow. When they tell you to quit bugging them and start studying, go to Albertson's to buy a new pen. Justify to yourself that you'll probably need it for studying anyway.

Spend the next hour in the toy aisle playing with mini footballs and paint-with-water books. Then, spontaneously decide you need groceries to help you make it through the next three days.

Come home two hours later with one pen and \$45 in groceries. Realize you have no place to park on campus because PTTS has stolen your red lot and turned it into a staff lot after they started construction on Monday.

Park there anyway and pray you don't get a little yellow love note on your car before you move it. Now you're back in your clean room with plenty of food and a pen and 37 sharpened pencils and all of your books neatly stacked on your desk.

The room is too quiet. You can't concentrate. Turn the stereo on and play Prince at full volume as you leap around the room screaming, "Tonight we're gonna party like

it's 1999!"

Pray that you graduate before then. Notice that the door is open and that it's your RA, who has come in to tell you to shut up because 24-hour quiet hours started Wednesday night.

Turn off Prince and turn on the TV. Flip through the one channel you have and promise yourself to get cable next year.

Turn off the TV and stare at your ceiling. Decide to order Burger Boy because you really don't feel like actually preparing any of the groceries you just bought.

Sort through the change you found behind your bed. Realize it only adds up to \$1.25, which is not enough to have something delivered to your room. Tap on your desk.

Look at your books and wonder if you should start studying now. Open one of them so your roommate will think you're actually reading if he/she walks in.

Hum the theme songs to every TV show you can think of. Tap your fingers in rhythm. Consider starting a diary. Realize you have nothing at all that interesting to write about and continue humming.

Decide to see a dollar movie. Call all of your friends until you find one that wants to go with you. Argue with your friend for 15 minutes about which movie you want to see. Argue some more about who's going to drive. Tell yourself you needed a break from working so hard and that you'll study when you get back.

Good luck on finals!

Lynn Booher is a sophomore English and psychology major

We don't want a morning after pill that is quick, easy and gentle on your stomach. This would be abused by those who didn't practice "safer," protected sex.

As an abortion pill, RU-486 is used eight to ten weeks after conception, though researchers are testing to see if that time can't be extended. As a "morning-after" pill (used within 72 hours of intercourse) RU-486 also may have fewer side effects than the legal "morning-after" pill that is not offered at Beutel.

First of all, we don't want a morning after pill that is quick, easy and gentle on your stomach. This would be abused by those who didn't practice "safer," protected sex.

The slippery slope principle is at work here. Abortion is no longer a last resort, but has become just another form of birth control. As horrifying as it sounds, some people in other countries even use it as a method of gender selection, to prevent the "waste" of a girl.

The percentage of women who need abortions because their lives are in danger is small, though they play a huge role in the rhetoric of pro-choicers. Meanwhile, the number of people desperate to adopt is increasing. It is a sad commentary on our times that women march in the streets for the right to kill their children.

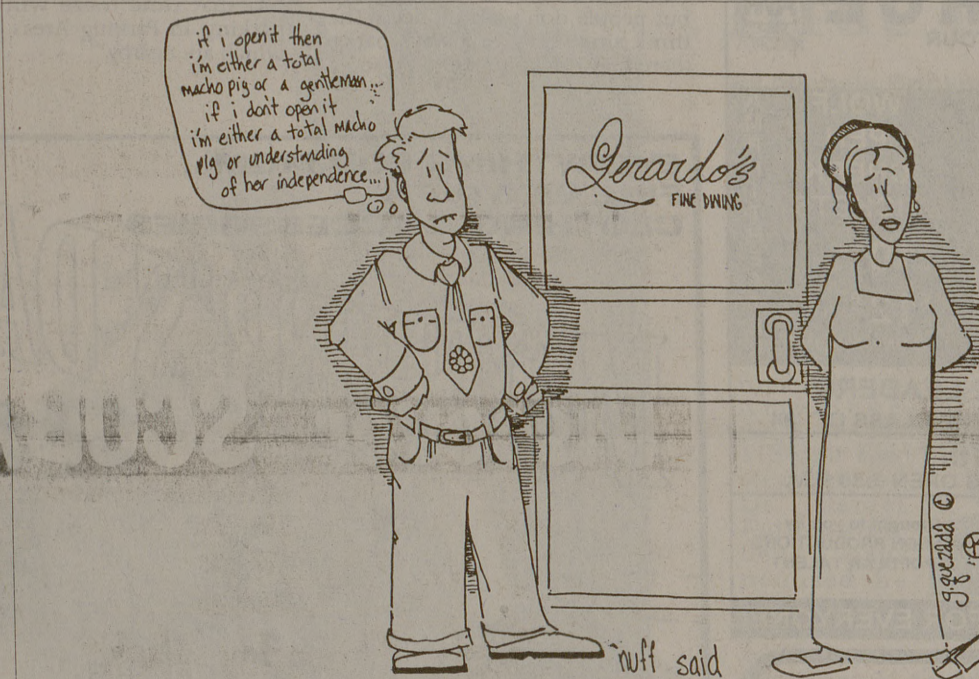
Recognizing that abortion is not something to be taken lightly, some clinics - like the Routh Street Women's Clinic in Dallas - insist on several counseling sessions before a decision is made. Since some women are simply frightened about an unplanned pregnancy, talking with a counselor might give them the courage to decide against the procedure. Certainly counseling would not make a difference in every case, but it does in some.

With the introduction of RU-486, abortion would be made even easier, a truly frightening thought. More and more women would take advantage of the non-invasive procedure. Just go to a doctor, swallow a couple of pills, and you're home free.

The trend of ending unborn lives when they aren't "convenient" is both alarming and obscene. We have degraded the value of life by treating it as a disposable commodity.

But life is a precious commodity. Sex needs to be taken seriously each and every time. Those who choose to sleep with someone are taking a chance - if you can't handle the consequences, don't take the risk.

Someday RU-486 may become a legal option, but it never will be a moral one.



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Students offer mixed response on Sul Ross

As an African-American female student, I read with shock some of the comments rendered in the article concerning Sul Ross. I am appalled that black students could even be expected to turn a deaf ear and a blind eye to Sully's prejudice and bigotry and praise the man. Furthermore, in response to the argument that Lawrence Sullivan Ross should be lauded solely for his military achievements, regardless of what he was fighting for - in that case, why don't we all praise Hitler, also? He certainly was brilliant militarily.

It deeply disturbs me that black students on this campus are seen as "bad Ags" if we refuse to salute a man who fought so hard to keep intact what we and our ancestors have fought so hard to eliminate.

voice our opinions, let alone go to school and study here.

As we all should know by now, we are not perfect. Sully lived in a time when his actions and beliefs were accepted and common among most citizens. We should honor Ross for his actions in making Texas A&M what it is today.

David Smith
Class of '97

I feel that the Sul Ross statue should be torn down. To me he is no better than Adolf Hitler. Why not build a statue of Hitler? He did a lot for Germany. He was a great military man. He was a leader, a great orator, and to some, maybe even a gentleman. Time for a new tradition. The Truth! If Sul Ross is what a good Ag strives to be, I do not feel as safe as I used to on this campus.

And yes, I am an African-American.

Duane J. Harris
Class of '96

Aja Henderson
Class of '97

This letter is in response to the May 4 article and editorial in which some Aggie students and professors criticized the tribute paid to Lawrence Sullivan Ross because of his role as a general for the confederacy. To Shawn Williams, Chris Jackson and to the editorial board, I would like to propose an alternative course of action that Sully could have taken. He could have deserted his fellow Texans and joined the Union forces. (Just as a note, not everyone fought on one side or the other depending on his belief for or against slavery, but rather he fought to defend his family, home, friends and state.) As was noted by Marc Bertamini, executive officer of the Ross Volunteers, Sully was a brilliant general, and he would have fought well for the Union.

However, on his return to Texas after the Civil War, he would have been called a traitor, and he would not have been elected Governor of Texas. But most importantly, Lawrence Sullivan Ross would not have been president of Texas A&M and then you and I (and the 40,000 plus students) would not be here to

This is in response to The Battalion's May 4 article, "Local groups question Ross glorification."

Sully is not a "monument to (slavery)." This university honors Sul Ross for his outstanding leadership, both military and gubernatorial, and for his indispensable contributions to Texas A&M. I realize that every hero has his faults. However, great men and women of history are remembered and honored not because they were saints, but because they took a particular action that had a positive impact on the future. If we decided to denounce every renowned person who condoned slavery during the Civil War, our country would have few heroes. A suggestion to the people who propose we just "take the damn thing down," and to Shawn Williams of the NAACP: focus your energy on providing education and promoting awareness today and in the future. What happened in the past cannot be changed, and dwelling on it only breeds bitterness, which won't end racism today. As for Sully, take him for what he means

to Texas A&M. As you pass his statue, you are asked to respect and honor him for what made him great: his love and support of Texas A&M, for that is what truly makes him a Texas Aggie worthy of remembrance.

Beth Brown
Class of '97

Accompanied by 41 signatures

Do not recreate history to further own agenda

In his guest column, James Harrington manages to attribute political disfranchisement, economic exploitation, the American party (the Know-nothings), the rise of the KKK, and all other social ills of the 19th century to the fall of the Alamo. His absurdly simplistic view of history is further weakened by Harrington's inability to get his few facts straight. If he had made more than a cursory examination of his subject matter, Harrington might have realized that it was W.B. Travis who drew the famous line and not Jim Bowie.

Harrington's article is part of a dangerous new trend of "pseudo-history" which endeavors to rewrite history in order to please certain groups or viewpoints. It annoys me that these people, while ignorant of the facts, find it necessary to spit on the graves of brave men only to further their own political agenda. I hope next time that Harrington writes an article he will stick to the facts and not contaminate it with his view of the way history ought to be.

Michael W. McStrawick
Class of '94

First female governor not Ann Richards

I just wanted to inform The Battalion that there could be some trouble trying to find the first woman governor at the Capitol! Miriam A. "Ma" Ferguson was the first woman governor, elected in 1925. Ann Richards is the second.

Scott Wieding
Class of '96

"We just wanted to say 'goodbye' and good luck in the future. Thanks for all the years of fun and hell."

"Hey, we look like the Brady Bunch! Say, 'goodbye,' Marsha!"

"(Censored)"

If you'll (sniff) miss us like we'll (choke) miss you (sob) ... **Buy our book!** (We have loans to pay.) **"Voices From A&M"** Coming May 10.