

Food plays enemy for thousands

Overeating disorder starves lives of self-control, esteem

Eating disorders are serious diseases that can have severe physical and emotional consequences for young people — especially women during high school and college — if not recognized and treated immediately. Most people are aware of this fact, for it is hard to turn on the television or pick up a newspaper or magazine without seeing the latest story on anorexia or bulimia.

TERI VALENZANO
Guest Columnist

Unfortunately, what people do not know is that there is more than just two eating disorders. Another disease called Compulsive Eating (or Compulsive Overeating) Disorder affects as many or more individuals and is equally destructive.

I have been struggling with it for about 10 years. I am not here to say that people are making too big a deal out of anorexia and bulimia. Those who suffer from these diseases deserve all the help and sympathy we can give them. However, just because some people are not horribly thin or sticking fingers down their throats to make themselves vomit does not mean they don't have a serious problem with self-image or food.

In many cases quite the opposite is true — yet when most people see a fat woman on the street, they automatically assume she is slovenly, has no self-control or willpower or is even worthless.

Well, we all know what ASSUME does. Often, unthinking individuals will not stop with ugly thoughts but will go straight to speaking their minds.

Societal rules say women are supposed to be thin, buxom and pretty, even if they have to kill themselves to be that way. Well, that is exactly what is happening.

Some of us do it by self-starvation, some by bingeing and purging, and some (myself included) feel so overwhelmed by societal pressures and personal problems that the only solace they receive comes from food. Food becomes a place to hide

from the world; your own little space where there is no one to laugh at you, call you names or tell you that you would look so much nicer if you just dropped a few pounds.

Food also becomes your best friend because it is comforting, non-judgmental and oh so tasty! And the more "help" people think they are giving, usually in the form of criticism, the more a compulsive eater turns to food.

What I would like people to understand is that compulsive eaters do not want to be fat, and they don't just love to eat cookies. I certainly don't like being large. I haven't always been this way. I remember a time when I was a dancer and loved to play sports (I still do). As I grew larger, I became very uncomfortable with my body and hated myself for not being able to stop it. Each time I thought about clothes I came pretty close to breaking down with shame and humiliation, yet I turned to food again.

After each binge I had been on, I cried tears of guilt for hours, knowing that it would happen again and that I would be powerless to stop it. I was in so much pain, yet was too embarrassed to confess such a problem and get help.

In Fall 1993, I decided that I had to get control of my life again. I finally came out and admitted that I had a problem and needed help. I started therapy sessions and learned ways to cope that didn't involve food. I had been on the fat diets before, but I decided to steer clear of them because nine

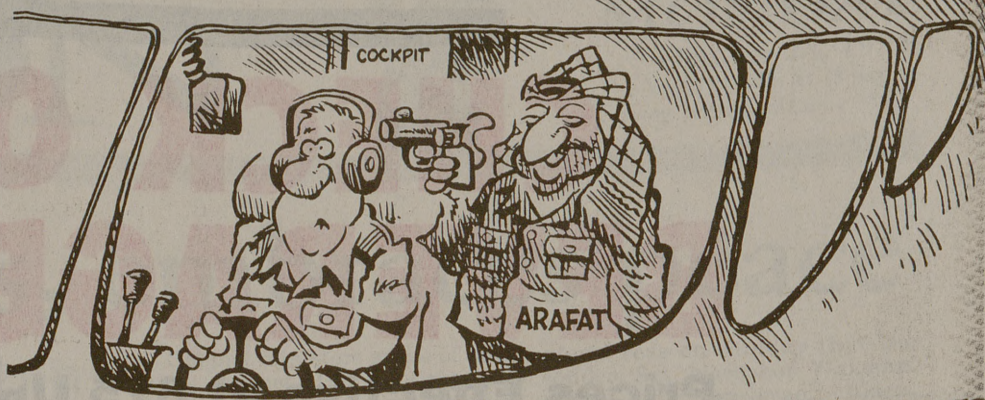
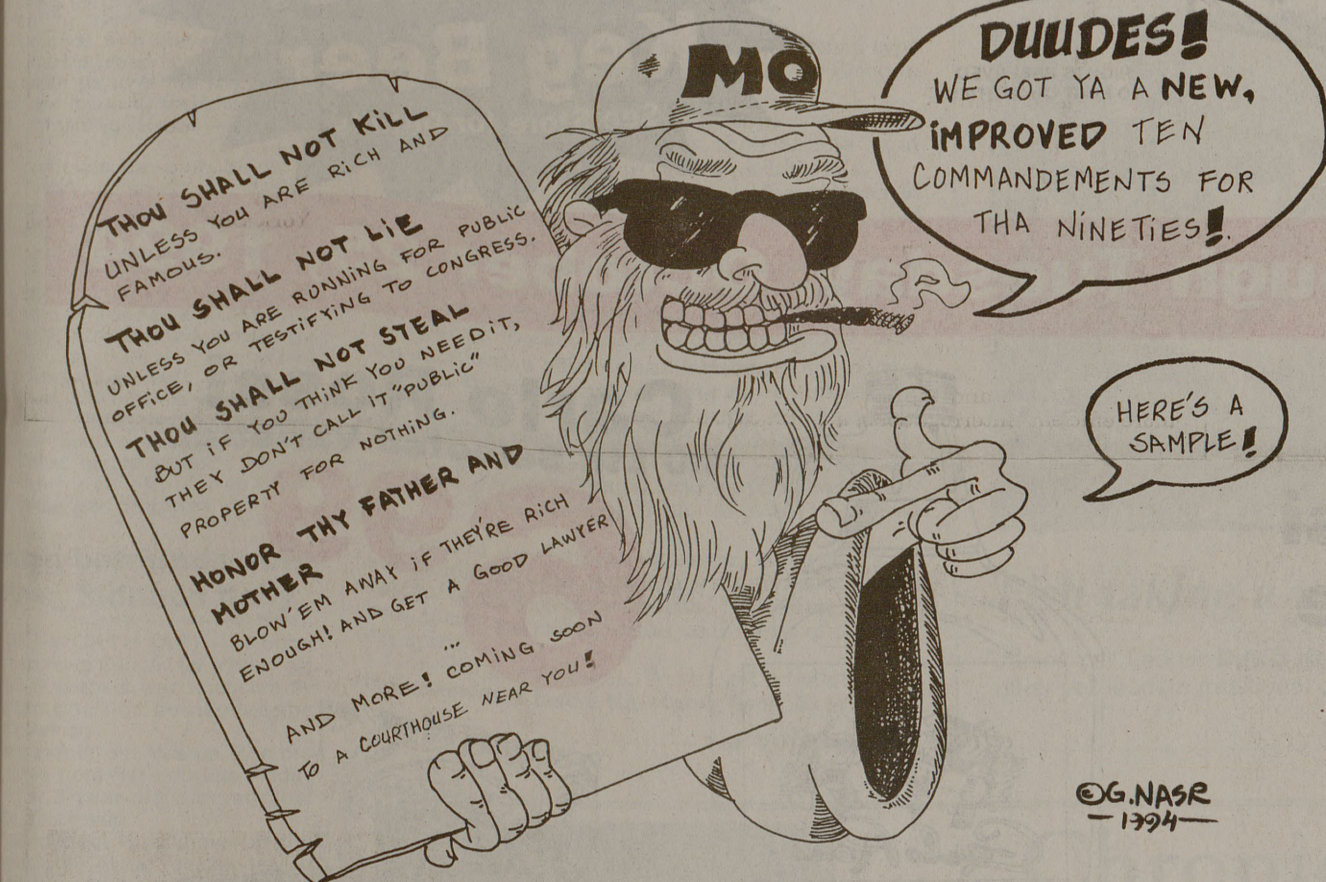
out of 10 times the weight comes back. I had to quit my job at the Common Market because I couldn't stand having cravings or seeing my hands shake as I stocked shelves.

Even though I still have a long way to go, I take it one day at a time. Talking about my problem is very cathartic, so my advice to anyone in a similar situation is to get the problem out in the open and, get help.

Things can only get better. The moral of this story, Ags, is this: Think twice before you judge people who are overweight. You don't know us, where we have been or the personal hells we have been through.

Teri Valenzano is a senior political science major

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EDITORIAL

FAILURE OF PEACE

Terrorist attacks endanger world security

Can 22 lives destroy the hope for peace in the Middle East?

War has raged among Israel and its Islamic neighbors since the late 1940s. Finally, it seemed peace was on the horizon as Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yassar Arafat shook hands after signing an autonomy accord in September 1993. Dreams of peace were on the verge of reality as Rabin, Arafat and Israeli President Shimon Peres were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize last week. In addition, Rabin traveled to Jordan Monday where he and Jordanian Prime Minister Abdulsalam Majali initialed a draft peace treaty with the signing scheduled for next week.

But, the stage of freedom turned to tragedy when Hamas, an Islamic terrorist group, bombed a Tel Aviv city bus, killing 22 people and injuring 45 passengers and bystanders.

In every move toward a greater

good, the protagonists must hurdle the obstacles. To combat terrorism effectively, the leaders of the Middle East must hold fast to the vision of peace and not submit to terrorist will, no matter how terrible their tactics.

Leaders are beginning to realize this. After Hamas murdered 19-year-old Israeli soldier, Sgt. Nachshon Waxman, Israel did not give in to their demands. An Israeli commando and three Islamic militants also died.

And according to the Houston Chronicle Thursday, after rescue workers carried away bodies and "scattered limbs, torsos and heads," from the once bustling Tel Aviv center, Israelis put their lives back together and went about their daily business.

As difficult as it must be for the Israeli citizens to endure terrorism, they must not let it stand in the way of the peace process.

If they do, then they validate the terrorists' tactics and destroy all hopes for a peaceful region.



GMAT's writing exam tests business of communicating

Since classes were held in one-room schoolhouses, teachers have been telling students that good grammar, sentence structure and verb usage are the key to success in both academics and business. Elementary school teachers stress the importance of learning to write in cursive and memorizing each week's spelling words. Junior high and high school teachers focus on topics like paragraphing, parallel structure and effective detail. "Show. Don't tell," Mr. Heup, my senior English teacher, would practically shout each time he gave out an assignment. But, for many of us, the coaching ends there. According to University requirements, all students at A&M must take or place out of the freshman composition course, English 104, and at least three additional hours of speech or writing classes in order to graduate. Thus, a total of six English-related hours are mandated by this institution. Most degree plans include about 130 credit hours. So the state requires that 4.5 percent of our academic career focus on the English language, a percentage that hardly seems adequate. Business recruiters agree. Because of complaints that many business school graduates are incapable of effectively communicating on the job, the Graduate Management Admissions Test has changed for the first time in its 30-year history. Saturday, for the

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Columnist



first time, the GMAT included an hour-long analytical writing exam, in addition to the three hours of multiple choice questions covering verbal and mathematical skills.

Stacy Night, a recruiter for Deloitte & Touche Management Consulting, sees the need for a change. "One of the things we do in consulting is analyze situations," he said. "But, you must be able to communicate to the client both orally and in written form. If you can't communicate to the client, the project goes undone. Nothing is changed or made better."

The need for strong communicators is as great in industry as in consulting. "Many things in concurrent engineering are happening simultaneously rather than individually as they were in the past," concludes Stephen Beck, a recruiter for General Electric. "That requires great communication skills. Companies are looking for people who thrive in that environment."

Because many business schools already require written essays as a part of their applications, the new section of the GMAT may actually have little effect on the selection of MBA candidates. Susan Robertson, Director of Masters Programs for the College of Business Administration, says that the addition to the GMAT will serve as just one more measure of the applicants' writing abilities.

At Northwestern's Kellogg School of Business, the

staff will look at the new writing portion of the GMAT "just like any other portion of the test." The usefulness of the new test is that it standardizes the process of writing assessment.

More important than changing admissions for business schools is that the new GMAT points out the need for candidates with better writing skills. In colleges like business and engineering, students' inability to write has almost become a joke. Statements like "I'm an engineer, I'm not supposed to be able to write," can be heard over and over again in Zachry, Bright and Richardson. After freshman Eng-

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lish, writing is virtually limited to the occasional formal lab writeup.

While many students working on technical degrees admit that they do not enjoy writing, they are still concerned about their preparation for writing in the workplace.

"All through college my writing has been wordy and figurative," admits Mary Dubberly, an accounting and business analysis major. "This

summer when I interned, I needed to write functionally, and I had had no preparation. It was really hard to just state the facts."

"I think we need continuous exposure to writing. Not just one class as a freshman," said Philip Wilkerson, a graduating Industrial Engineering major.

One class common to most technical degree plans is technical writing. The course is supposed to introduce students to business writing. Classes cover letter and memo writing, resumes and technical papers.

The technical writing class emphasizes format rather than content. Unfortunately, the assumption that students have already learned the grammar and structure needed for effective communication is false. Often students are just as intimidated by business writing after the class as they were before taking it.

Degree plans at Texas A&M are already lengthy. Many students are unable to complete them in four years as they are. To suggest that additional classes should be added to the curriculum is not realistic.

The current course schedules must be modified and consolidated in order to make room for the needs of students and recruiters.

Just as we've been told since the days of fat pencils and extra wide lined paper, writing really is a key to success.

Melissa Megliola is a senior industrial engineering major



Bonfire traditions build spirit for all Aggies

Since the first one in 1909, Bonfire has been a tradition built on Aggie Spirit and

pride. There are no tryouts, applications, or discrimination to be involved — everyone is welcome and accepted. There is a part of Bonfire for everyone, and everyone can be a part of this tradition.

This is my 4th year to be a part of the building of Bonfire. I have been active in all aspects of Bonfire, from cutting to giving out water and lunches. No matter what I was doing, from the very first time I was out there, I felt accepted. For as long as I've been involved in Bonfire, I have never known anyone to do anything malicious or harmful to anyone else.

It is unfortunate that by an oversight, distasteful music was played, because

Bonfire is not a display of racism. If anything, it displays blind acceptance.

Bonfire is still a symbol of tradition, spirit, and pride, and the actual Bonfire is not the only thing built. Lifelong friendships are also built between people who might not have had the open-mindedness to meet otherwise.

If you want to get right down to it, the purpose of Bonfire is to show our undying love for Texas A&M University, and the mark of beauty is the impact that it leaves on your life long after it burns.

Angela Winkler
Class of '95

Graffiti for Coming Out Week defaces campus

I would like to thank the gays and lesbians of A&M. Thank you for opening my eyes with your graffiti scrawled all over campus. Why do you inflict your messages on the campus and other students like that? Personally, I don't like what you people represent, but I don't care as long as you keep your preferences to yourself. However, that is my opinion and my right. What you do in your house is your business, I don't care. That's your right. But, when you start defacing the

school, you invade my privacy. If you want to display your feelings, do it in your home, room, and windows, like other Aggies.

William C. Riley
Class of '96

Accompanied by 22 signatures

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