

Conservatives are often seen as 'closed-minded'

I have a closed mind. Most of you probably don't realize it, but you may also. Don't argue, just accept it.

I'm a conservative — for those still unsure — which automatically means that, whatever my opinion, I am closed-minded in it.

I wondered what I needed to do to change my sad state. I was informed that if I only accepted and embraced liberal philosophy I could become open-minded.

I have pondered and watched over the past few weeks while trying to decide if such a change was worth it.

For those of you who don't start attending class until Spring Break is over, Sen. Phil Gramm came to our fine institution a few weeks ago and announced his candidacy for president.

Many people came to listen to his words. Fortunately, however, the "open-minded police" came, too. They decided to show their greater vision by heckling and yelling during the senator's speech. They claimed that they were just making sure people were aware that opposition exists to Phil Gramm's ideas.

Gee, not only am I closed-minded, I'm kinda 'slow, too. Yes, many College Republicans tried to block these purveyors of superior ideal, but that doesn't matter because Republicans are all closed-minded anyway.

My next stop on this journey of introspection was Virginia. A convention/party/excuse to have free alcohol for a national organization of county employees took place and all the big dudes — of both open- and closed-minded people — got the chance to speak, but not Newt Gingrich.

Once again, we all were the beneficiaries of the open-minded. These guys had a little party of their own and decided that they couldn't risk us being exposed to Gingrich's words at such a delicate time in our spiritual development. Fortunately, Newt Gingrich holds very closed-minded opinions on welfare — something about making recipients work or something crazy like that — so our great protectors could make sure to protest until Gingrich had to leave.

Which they did until he did. I could feel my mind expanding by the moment. And then last Monday came along ...

On that fateful day Pat Robertson announced that the big White House sure looked comfortable. Of course, Robertson is a conservative and, therefore, "worthy of the thought police."

Four plain-clothed members of the elitist "allow-us-to-prevent-you-from-speaking" brigade showed up to try to prevent Robertson from speaking.

It seems that, in their open-minded state, these gracious representatives of higher thought determined that Pat Robertson is a racist and that it was their duty to protect us from his words.

After all, we might actually believe Robertson, and that is simply an unacceptable risk.

By that time my mind was expanded to the point that a simple LSD trip would have been a relief. I couldn't take any more billowing of the mind. I wound up even more confused than when I started.

Now, just to avoid any confusion, I am not against protest, and I would never want to stifle my liberal friends. They are far too entertaining and, besides, what would I write about if they weren't around?

I would probably have to make up stories about a president who renames "VJ Day" to "End of the War in the Pacific Day" and who scales back ceremonies at Pearl Harbor so he won't offend the Japanese Prime Minister ... naw, no one would ever believe it.

A few questions here ... just to make sure I have it all straight.

So it's "open-minded" to protest racism and "closed-minded" to oppose affirmative action-induced quotas?

Okay, and it's "open-minded" to protest welfare reform and it's "closed-minded" to protest the taxes it takes to pay for welfare?

I am starting to get the hang of this — it's "open-minded" to soak-the-rich and "closed-minded" to expect a balanced budget.

This is a great game. I think all of us should buy the home version.

Sing along if you know the words ...

It's "open-minded" to think that citizens are too irresponsible to carry concealed handguns and "closed-minded" to think that citizens could conceivably be able to handle the responsibility.

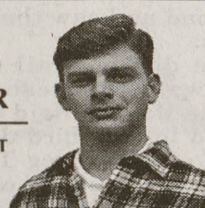
I think I understand it, now.

When I disagree with a policy I am being "closed-minded," but when someone who is liberal disagrees with me they are being "open-minded."

You ever get the idea that you can't win for losing?

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EDITORIAL

COMMUNICATION

The race relations forum held yesterday was a positive step to increase awareness.

The race relations forum held by the Texas A&M Race and Ethnic Studies Institute yesterday was a positive step toward increasing cultural awareness.

The Texas A&M System has made one of its goals the appreciation of differences among cultures and backgrounds.

This forum provided the needed opportunity to discuss specific problems and possible solutions.

CAMAC, UACT, EXCEL and the Southwestern Black Student Leadership Conference are programs in which all students can be involved and have their voices and suggestions heard.

However, organizations themselves are not enough. Education is also necessary to foster a University System that seeks to appreciate diversity.

When students are not fully aware of certain issues, closed-mindedness and ignorance advance and myths and stereotypes are formed.

Education about different cultures is needed to dissolve such myths.

In addition to the programs and education, there is a need for minority role models on campus.

The lack of multiculturalism and cultural appreciation is not prevalent only at Texas A&M, but is a nationwide problem.

If students are taught the importance of appreciating differences, understanding and harmony will prevail.

As the Texas A&M System continues to expand, the need for increased minority representation will be even more crucial.

If Texas A&M wants to change its reputation as a male-dominated, predominantly white university, all areas of the school will have to make an effort to actively recruit minority faculty members and student.

Minority populations will continue to increase and the System must be prepared to handle this.

Forums such as the one held by the Race and Ethnic Studies Institute are good ways in which this goal can be achieved.



Society's expectations cause much pain, tears

Satinelle. What an innocuous name. It brings to mind thoughts of slinky sheets, sexy lingerie and the feel of satin against your skin.

When you first look at it, it seems friendly enough. A creamy pale blue color. It fits smoothly into the palm of your hand and, when turned off, it seems like a harmless little device.

Then you plug it in. The coils on the end of the machine begin whirring at an incredible speed, and a loud, whiny sound emanates from the little torture device.

Advertised as a painless alternative to shaving — only \$49.95! — the truth is a harsh shove into reality. As the coils rip each leg hair out and the tears well up in the poor, gullible user's eyes, there is plenty of time to reflect on society's ridiculous notions of what is feminine.

A good friend of mine stopped shaving last summer. Her decision to stop was based on several reasons.

First of all, she was involved in a serious relationship, so she did not have to worry about reactions from closed-minded men.

Secondly, she lived in a dorm at Texas A&M, which was designed specifically to provide women with bloody legs and painful falls. With a diameter of approximately two feet by two feet and no ledges in sight, shaving in the dorms at A&M is an exercise limited to Olympic gymnasts with incredible agility.

Lastly, she was tired of the shaving ritual. For you guys out there who have not had the joy of experiencing this, picture spending half an hour — my friend is six-feet tall — shaving legs only to enjoy the luxurious smoothness for approximately three hours before the never ending stubble returns once again.

However, after a summer of either hiding her legs in jeans or enduring horrified stares and ever-witty comments from friends and strangers alike, she decided to shave again.

And though she was ashamed to admit it, it felt peaceful to once again to have the silky legs she was brought up to think were right.

Smooth legs are as much a part of American society as lying politicians and Kraft Macaroni & Cheese.

Learning to shave is as exciting a rite of passage in young women's lives to buying their first useless training bra or caking on their first bright blue eyeliner.

The poor saps don't know that this is only the exciting introduction to a boring and painful lifetime war against the hair that grows naturally on their bodies.

American men are horrified at the idea of an unshaven woman. The thought alone sends shivers of terror up the spine of the average Joe. Women have also bought into this notion, and they frantically shave, pluck or Nair, and then start the entire process over. Every damn day.

So, what did our weebegone heroine do? She was used to smooth legs and the peace that comes with them, but she abhorred the seemingly useless daily ritual of shaving.

It was at this crossroad that my friend discovered "Satinelle," the hair removal device that keeps legs smooth and satiny for weeks — with only a "twinge" of pain the first few times you use it.

For lack of a better alternative, my friend is still using it. She has recently tackled her upper legs with the "Painful Plucker" and has high hopes that eventually she will not scream in unison with the machine while using it.

Her roommate recently saw an ad for a device that plucks hair out individually instead of with coils. Mia is thinking about investing the money — the ad promises that it is virtually painless.

This problem is a common one. The reality of taking a stand on feminist issues often leaves the woman who took the stand feeling unattractive and ostracized.

It is easy to write about the ridiculousness of shaving, the uselessness of wearing make-up and the utter stupidity of the Wonderbra, but it is harder to thumb your nose at society and ignore these widely accepted norms.

In addition to the problems of looking different than everybody else, one often feels ugly when they don't follow society's expectations.

Until we raise our children to believe that natural women are the most beautiful women, the screams of women using Satinelle will continue to reverberate across our fair nation.

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MAIL CALL

Violent crime would not increase with handgun law

Although the idea of allowing the people of Texas to vote on the "right to carry" handgun bill is fine, I am a firm believer in the people's ability to self-govern.

The following biased reasons for opposing the bill were totally unjustified. The March 21 editorial states that violent crime would increase because of people taking the law into their own hands.

The author claimed to have researched the issue but stated no information that proved this bill would be helpful.

If the author would have checked with the federal crime statistics — a fairly logical choice for a "journalist" — they would have discovered that according to a FBI crime report, violent crime in states with right to carry laws is 22% below states without a concealed handgun law.

All other categories of violent crime have lower percentages as well, with the handgun homicide rate being 41% below the average in restrictive states: the one crime handgun opponents claim will skyrocket.

As for our streets being turned into the "Wild West," Florida has had a right to carry law since 1987, and since that time, only 19 out of 266,700 have been repealed because of a firearms related incident.

Joshua Anderson
Class of '97

accompanied by 2 signatures

Texans should decide fate of concealed handgun bill

In the March 21 Mail Call section, Trey Morton argues that guns should not be blamed for increase of violence.

True, you cannot blame guns alone. But they are probably the greatest of the factors.

Guns really make violence easy. With the squeezing of your finger you can change or even destroy the life of another person.

You really cannot compare a gun to a bat, or a rope, or even a knife. What makes the gun different is its capabilities.

None of the other "weapons" will do the amount of damage a gun will do 30 or 40 feet away.

These things cannot be outlawed because they were used for something they were not intended to be used for. We might as well outlaw driving. Vehicles injure and sometimes kill people everyday.

They are not killing machines, but they can

be considered dangerous.

About the Luby's massacre in Killeen, if someone had been carrying a gun, yes that might have saved lives.

You also have to look at George Hennard, the man responsible for the tragedy.

According to his lawyer, he "never exhibited a 'propensity for violence' or bizarre behavior."

He might have been able to pass a coarse and test to carry a concealed handgun.

He owned a Glock, and look what happened. The fact that he had easy access to a gun made it a whole lot easier to kill more people.

I'm not against owning handguns, but it seems we have enough problems allowing people to own guns, much less carry them in public.

The larger cities with the higher crime rates will feel the greater amount of damage as opposed to rural areas.

Let the citizens of Texas be the ones to decide on this issue. They are the ones that are going to be affected the most.

Arthur Saucedo
Class of '98

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