

OPINION

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Hillary conjures yet another scandal

Things at the White House are getting downright spooky. Apparently, the first lady has been speaking with Eleanor Roosevelt and Mahatma Gandhi. And there's really nothing wrong with that.



MICHAEL HEINROTH
COLUMNIST

Except for the fact that they're both dead.

Hillary denies she's conjuring spirits. Rather, she refers to the conversations as an "intellectual exercise."

Whatever.

For the past few years, Hillary has been meeting with Jean Houston, co-director of the Foundation for Mind Research.

Houston refuted claims she is nothing more than a "new age psychic." She likes to think of herself as a "social artist."

It was Houston who convinced the first lady to speak to the deceased.

Recently, on CNN's "Larry King Live," Houston defended the practice and demonstrated procedures for speaking to dead world leaders.

It appeared to be quite harmless.

The inquisitive mortal simply asks the deceased a direct question. The person then pretends to be the deceased and answers the question herself.

Houston proclaimed, "You become that person," and called the experience a "wonderful game."

She went on to say the "country needed a joke."

Nobody is laughing, though. Especially Democrats.

While this whole affair may seem rather stupid, "Gurugate" follows a long line of scandals that are slowly eating away at Bill Clinton's bid for re-election.

Ever since the Clintons and their cat Socks moved into the executive mansion, there has been nothing but trouble.

It's an impressive list. Whitewater. Travelgate. White House Aide Vincent Foster's suicide. Filegate.

And now, we have Gurugate. Personally, I wonder if Socks is responsible for any of this. We haven't heard much from



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him lately. Maybe the first feline is the one Congress should investigate.

At any rate, all these scandals make Richard Nixon look like a saint.

What I don't understand, though, is why we keep making excuses for the first family — and its devious cat. It seems no matter how bad the Clintons embarrass themselves, we just shrug our shoulders.

Then we reward them with steady approval ratings.

It defies logic.

One little slip and Richard Nixon was kicked out the back door. The Clintons are still inside eating cake.

The election isn't that far away, though. And one more blunder might crash Bill and Hillary's party.

But what is our alternative? The less-than-inspiring Bob Dole? I'm almost embarrassed he is going to be nominated by my beloved Republican Party.

Where is the charismatic dark

horse candidate that can save us from this electoral disaster?

Who knows, but one thing is clear. We don't need four more years of strange scandals.

Yes, Hillary's little "seance" was harmless. But it's typical of what we've come to expect from the Clintons.

It seems like something a first lady shouldn't do.

Just ask Eleanor Roosevelt.

Michael Heinroth is a Class of '96 political science major

Start spreadin' the news: NYC is weird

She brushed by me saying, "Oh, excuse me!" — and I couldn't believe my ears.



JEREMY VALDEZ
COLUMNIST

Because in New York, such niceties are interpreted as a sign of weakness. You'd do just as well to wear a sign that says "Mug me." Up north the word "mugging" is synonymous with "robbery."

I visited the Big Apple two weeks ago as one of the winners of the USA Network's Up All Night Campus Comedy Tour. Some of the things that I saw there made me yearn for a quieter, gentler, more conservative place like Austin.

Few people complain about a lack of metropolitan excitement in the B-CS microplex more than me. I've always considered myself a closet freako. But having set one foot into the freako jamboree, I have to question the sanity of the people who choose to live in New York.

New York is a city of dichotomy. It pained me to see the bright lights of all the Broadway theaters competing with the tawdry neon screams of porn shops.

Manic street preachers call people to take up crosses in front of the opulent shrines of capitalism and self-worship.

And then there are the roving bands of young comedians who get stuck in outrageous situations and try to make jokes about them.

Maybe we just had the wrong guide. On Thursday night, Karen, our network chaperone, told us that she knew of a really cool dance club to go to. Enticed, six of us piled into the back of a cab and told the driver to take us to Webster Hall.

"You want to go to that Webster Hall?" The cabbie seemed surprised. "Which way do youse guys go?"

Thinking that he was asking for our choice of route, Chris, a guy from Indiana Uni-

versity, said, "We don't care. Whichever way gets us there."

"No, I mean do youse guys like guys, girls, what? Because things aren't always what they seem over there."

That simple caveat earned our driver the title of Most Helpful Person in New York.

Unfortunately, a couple of us had forgotten to bring identification, so we had to turn back as soon as we arrived. I really wasn't crushed about not getting in, though, because when you've seen one transvestite dancing in a cage, you've really seen them all.

Karen really wasn't much of a chaperone. Earlier in the evening she decided to tell us about her marital problems. After we were rejected at Webster Hall, she tried to take us to a peep show on Broadway.

It's a difficult thing to have a conscience. It would have been easy to follow Karen into the seamy underbelly of the urban jungle. But I kept imagining my mother's reaction to a New York police officer calling to tell her that her only son had been run over by a street sweeper on his way to a place called Runway 69.

But I'm not trying to say that all of New York is like a bad bachelor's party that's been crashed by homeless people and foreigners selling bad knockoffs of Calvin Klein purses.

This was actually the greatest trip of my life. It wasn't great because of the things I saw, because sightseeing isn't what travel is about. The people you meet or travel with make the trip worthwhile because you learn something about them.

New Yorkers claim that when you kiss on the top of the Empire State Building, some weird atmospheric phenomenon creates a static discharge between puckered lips.

Even though there's a lot wrong with New York, I might like to return someday, hopefully with a group of friends like the people I met.

It seems like it would be a good place to go mugging.

Jeremy Valdez is Class of '96 chemical engineering major

Pointing fingers will not help raise children

Sitting in Ray Thomas' chair in Northgate Barber Shop the other day, the subject of high school came up. You see, Ray has three young children and was contemplating what type of environment to raise them in.



DAVID BOLDT
COLUMNIST

This is a tough subject for many parents. Should you send your kids to private school so they'll be protected, or should you expose them to the dark forces of the world in public school? Ray's choice was easy; he and his wife Crystal have decided to make their home in the Bryan-College Station area, where the forces of darkness aren't that bad — at least in College Station.

I told Ray that I went to an ethnically diverse school where I — a middle-class, drug-free, non-gang-member, white boy — was to doubt in the minority. "So how did you turn out OK?" Ray asked. "That's a good question," I said.

Many of us at A&M went to high schools where violence, gangs and drugs were commonplace. So how did we make it to a major university and not become menaces to society? I can't speak for everyone else, but I largely attribute my quality of life to the simple perseverance and patience of my parents in instilling a system of family values.

What are family values? The Clinton administration, as well as many top Republicans, claim the lack of family values is the cause of the moral downfall and increasing juvenile crime rate in this country. To me, family values are a simple sense of right and wrong that goes along with the

integrity to do what's right when no one's checking.

Many parents in America try to instill these values but give up too easily. Most teenagers in America are naturally rebellious — some more than others. There are obviously some who are going to turn out bad regardless of what their parents do. But that doesn't mean the parents should give up. Other parents try to shove these values down the teen's throat every time he steps into the house. If the parents tighten the grip too hard, the kid will slip right through their fingers. It takes the right combination of perseverance and patience to make it work.

So why do I claim to know so much about parenting? I don't have any kids, but I know what a stubborn, arrogant, rebellious, pain-in-the-butt I was as a teenager, and somehow my parents never gave up on me. It wasn't until I was about 19 that I realized how valuable concepts like honesty, integrity and respect were. This is something I will forever be grateful for and will carry with me for the rest of my life.

The point is, so many people blame their crappy lives on the neighborhood they grew up in or the school they went to. That's a copout. If there's anyone to blame besides themselves, it should be their parents.

The lack of family values is a cause of the rise in juvenile crime and the moral breakdown in this country, but it can be reversed. I am lucky; I come from a well-adjusted family with two happily married parents. But even if you come from a rough home life, someday you might have kids, and you will have the power to make the choice about how to raise them. Your past doesn't have to make that choice for you.

David Boldt is a Class of '97 marketing major



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Conservatives stand up for their beliefs

Upon reading David Recht's criticism of the gay and lesbian literature class, I assumed he was an accomplished writer: thoughtful, conservative and original.

MAIL CALL

However, his next column on the Republican Party proved me wrong.

Recht claims that the "Religious Right" is the cause of division within the GOP. I would submit that it's people such as Recht, who dabble in conservatism as if it were a hobby, who

will be the undoing of the party. What exactly is the "Religious Right" anyway? I am conservative, Christian, pro-life and a proponent of family values. Am I then a part of what Recht characterizes as "a bunch of far-right, intolerant Nazis?"

Recht mentions columnist Jane Ely, who wrote that the GOP convention delegates were more interested in "promoting a philosophy, an encompassing way of life," rather than issues concerning "raw politics." Ely doesn't realize that everything that goes into politics (i.e. lawmaking) affects our way of life. Politics, essentially, is life, not just fiscal and foreign policy.

Recht states that the "Religious Right" is only a "small faction," but later says that Sen. Phil Gramm was careful not to offend that group so as not to lose "a lot of votes." The fact is that family values are not the agenda of some minority group, but are actually at the very heart of the Republican Party.

Recht sees persistence and mistakes it for extremism. Standing up and being vocal about values you hold dear doesn't make you an extremist, it makes you an American.

Thomas C. Purdy
Class of 2000