

Roommates, spouses must endure similar trials, unhappiness

Marriage: A boy and girl meet, fall in love, get married and live happily ever after.

Of course, this is not the standard case. Some couples separate and go their different ways. A similar institution remains forever intact at all universities: the roommate situation. Just as husbands forget to put the toilet seat

down, roommates use Right Guard for hair spray and corresponding parties must grudgingly adapt to such conditions as part of the daily routine. People are, by nature, too self-centered to comply fully to the established guidelines of living together.

End results of marriage attempts and roommate arrangements prove the perpetual dissidence of the human being. Only the dedicated endure the trials and find happiness in total revelation and understanding of someone besides themselves.

Although these two relationships at a glance seem more different than similar, a distinct likeness exists in the characteristics and outcomes of both correlations. Both live together, share facilities, fight over petty issues, take to scowling disapproval, gossip about one another, sacrifice privacy and personal time and at the same time try to remain calm.

There are the partners and roommates who meet, fall in love and live happily ever after. There are also the spouses and roommates who live in severe disillusionment, who thought it was love at first sight only to wake up the next morning with a disturbing reality. A roommate, who was a friend first, can make her significant other's life a feasible inferno with the unrelenting presence of her boyfriend, as a wife can do the same to her husband by having her best guy friend over all the time.

An arranged marriage is possible in which both parties meet with no previous acquaintance for the record and trudge on from there.

Rene Harris, the coordinator of student life negotiation and mediation services, said maturity is enhanced by dealing with roommates.

"I believe that the roommate relationship is part of the educational experience. It prepares them socially," Harris said.

Columnist



Kate Shropshire
Freshman
Meteorology major

Harris sees the similarity between married couples and roommates in the "ongoing relationship." "There will be conflict, as in any relationship, and conflicts need to be addressed," Harris said.

A self-absorbed society is clouded with the inability to conform. Everyone can be a central vertebrae in society's self-serving backbone.

A contributing factor to this mendacity is the spoiling of children with their with own room. In the real world, they are neglected mentally and physically by constraints on personal habits. It is almost necessary for roommates to silently sustain the preferences of each other while quietly plotting the death of their counterpart who most likely feels the same way.

A basic carnal instinct to take care of ourselves first is deep-rooted in the idea of natural selection and "survival of the fittest". Marriage and roommates disrupt the gravitational tide of this idea; even though we are aware of this, we act disturbingly surprised, convinced we can be the forever selfless beings only found in story tales.

So whether an overly conventional roommate reminds his or her partner to say hello when meeting Dante himself in a doomed afterlife or a spouse practices the same dogma, the concept of dealing with it prevails when faced with conflict.

The Student Conflict Resolution Services wants to share peaceful conflict resolution tactics

that could possibly save the utter downfall of any relationship: Value the opinions of others, openly communicate your feelings, share similar ideals and interests, be open minded to different notions, listen with an sincere mind and heart, grasp the concepts presented, consider possible consequences, create numerous alternatives, propose some rational solutions, and compromise impartial agreements.

This may seem like a lot to swallow, but spouses and roommates alike need something on which to base their relationship decisions. Until society makes an effort to expand, the job can only be seen by some as taxing and time-consuming, regardless of the increase in maturity to be gained.

Double vision in America Americans fail to live up to world image

Freedom. It is a Fourth of July kind of word, a red white and blue word, a fireworks word. A word Americans think defines the USA.

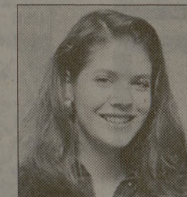
But what do people from other cultures think of life in America and what we call freedom? What do they think of Americans? Some people say that foreigners think Americans are big, stupid oafs. On the other hand, I hear some say they idolize our culture and all of its glittering decadence.

As America begins another four years under the leadership of a president whose, as Time magazine essayist Lance Morrow said "theology is politics", it is important to assess our nation honestly and determine our role in the 21st century. Are we a beacon on a hill for all the world to see as Jonathan Edwards and his contemporaries claimed? Do we need to return to the religion of the founding fathers? Are we about to drown in a cesspool of materialism? Should we put on the rose colored glasses of optimism?

International students are in a great position to enlighten the A&M community about what other cultures think. They know both the misconceptions and the truths of life in America and can give a clear picture of what other societies think of America.

Enis Robbana, a sophomore Petroleum Engineering major from Tunisia said "Most youths in Tunisia think it's McDonald's and Basketball. . . they have a lot of stuff here you

Columnist



Courtney Phillips
Junior
Psychology major

wouldn't see in Europe." He also said that "It is much more superficial, people don't want to get involved in other people's problems, although he did add that "In Texas people are much more polite and friendly."

Back home, Enis' friends think he is lucky to get to study in America, but most Tunisians don't like our politics and think the U.S. is always too quick to rush in and try to fix the world's problems and toot their own horn as a superpower. Lizbeth Lando, a BUSINESS ANALYSIS major from Mexico City, said "Some American people believe the U.S. is everything and don't see beyond their own country" and "families are not very tight" as they are in Mexico.

It seems that there is a dichotomy here. A half love and half hate, a reluctant lust for American things and a distrust of our political culture and morality. It is a dichotomy I saw personified when I traveled to Spain this past summer. Melanie Griffith and Antonio Banderas were in the country and in the news every night. The media was all over them wanting to know exactly what they were doing, wanting to peek inside their glamorous lives. Finally, when the cameras got a little too close for Melanie, she responded with a most endearing obscene gesture. What a picture of America. A million dollar smile (buy our stuff) and an attitude so beautifully exemplified by Griffith's third finger (but don't get in our way).

As Americans, we enjoy some of the highest standards of living in the world, yet we have low standards for living. Not to say the standards are so much higher in other countries, they often appear to be lower than ours, until you realize immorality here seethes beneath a distinctly American prudery.

Americans themselves seem to have a love/hate relationship with their country. Some would die for it. Some would do anything to escape it's stifling atmosphere. We have seen different groups struggle over the years. Some would march for freedom, support the troops, fly the flag, claiming the inherent virtue of America. Others would run away and write poetry in French cafes, living the unconsciously snobbish expatriate life. (Note: my poetry saw little improvement in Spain)

Perhaps life is a movable feast as

Ernest Hemingway wrote. The whole of it lies within the soul, and it can be carried with us anywhere.

We can feast on it or starve ourselves, regardless of where we are or where our citizenship lies. This gives a whole new meaning to the word freedom. Viewed in this light, freedom is no longer about laws, or rights, or America the beautiful. So-called freedom in America often wears chains of greed and selfishness.

We are clearly not a beacon on a hill anymore (if we ever were), and returning to anyone's religion for the sake of returning won't do us any good. We need to focus on individual people doing what's right as we collectively enter the 21st century, whether that's something the founding fathers did, or something we've never done before. We've all got a movable feast inside to carry with us wherever we go. What's in your picnic basket?



'Right to carry' law opens door to criminals

The problem with gun control in the United States is not the issue of who gets to own them, but where they should be able to carry them.

Although handguns may be an effective tool to protect an individual's home, home is where guns should stay unless they are being used at secluded firing ranges.

Ronald Reagan once said, "As long as there are guns, the individual that wants a gun for a crime is going to have one and going to get it."

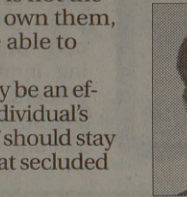
Opponents of gun-control laws claim although laws have become more strict over the past three decades, more criminals have guns. What they fail to mention is handguns have become the weapons of choice for more criminals.

United States Representative Cliff Stearns of Florida is sponsoring a bill, if passed, to give Americans the right to carry handguns with them regardless of their state laws.

The Second Amendment gives Americans the right to keep and bear arms and to form a militia as a safeguard against tyranny from the U.S. Government or Military. As Thomas Jefferson and other framers of the Constitution were concerned about this, today, more than 220 years later, it's inconceivable to be distressed about the possible takeover of the United States by its own government.

If the National Rifle Association had its way,

Columnist



Brandon Hausenfluck
Senior
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every American with a somewhat clear criminal record would carry a concealed handgun. The NRA claims America would be much safer if citizens were able to defend themselves from criminal attacks.

In a Beaumont Enterprise article, Daniel Polsby of The Northwestern University School of Law and Dennis Brennan of Harper College, cited the Warren vs. District of Columbia case which explains a situation where a handgun would be beneficial.

Three female rape victims sued the District, because they were not protected by police nor did they have the ability to protect themselves.

Two of the victims were upstairs at home when they heard their roommate being attacked downstairs. About an hour after calling the police the first time, the screaming stopped. The girls upstairs assumed the police had arrived. In reality, the police had not shown up and the other roommate had been beaten unconscious.

The two girls went downstairs and found the assailants had not left.

This was just the beginning. "For the next 14 hours the women were raped, robbed, beaten, forced to commit sexual acts upon each other, and made to submit to sexual demands," a court official said.

The police never arrived because of poor communication with the dispatcher.

This is an extreme example of what kind of crime Americans are subject to. In this case, a gun would have saved the girls a lifetime of horrible pain.

Closer to home, imagine what would have happened after the 1995 U.T. vs. A&M football game when the Corps brawled with Texas fans after they beat us then set foot on our precious Kyle Field. If an angry Aggie had brandished a gun and pulled the trigger, a chain reaction of gunfire would have erupted. Many innocent bystanders could have been hurt or killed.

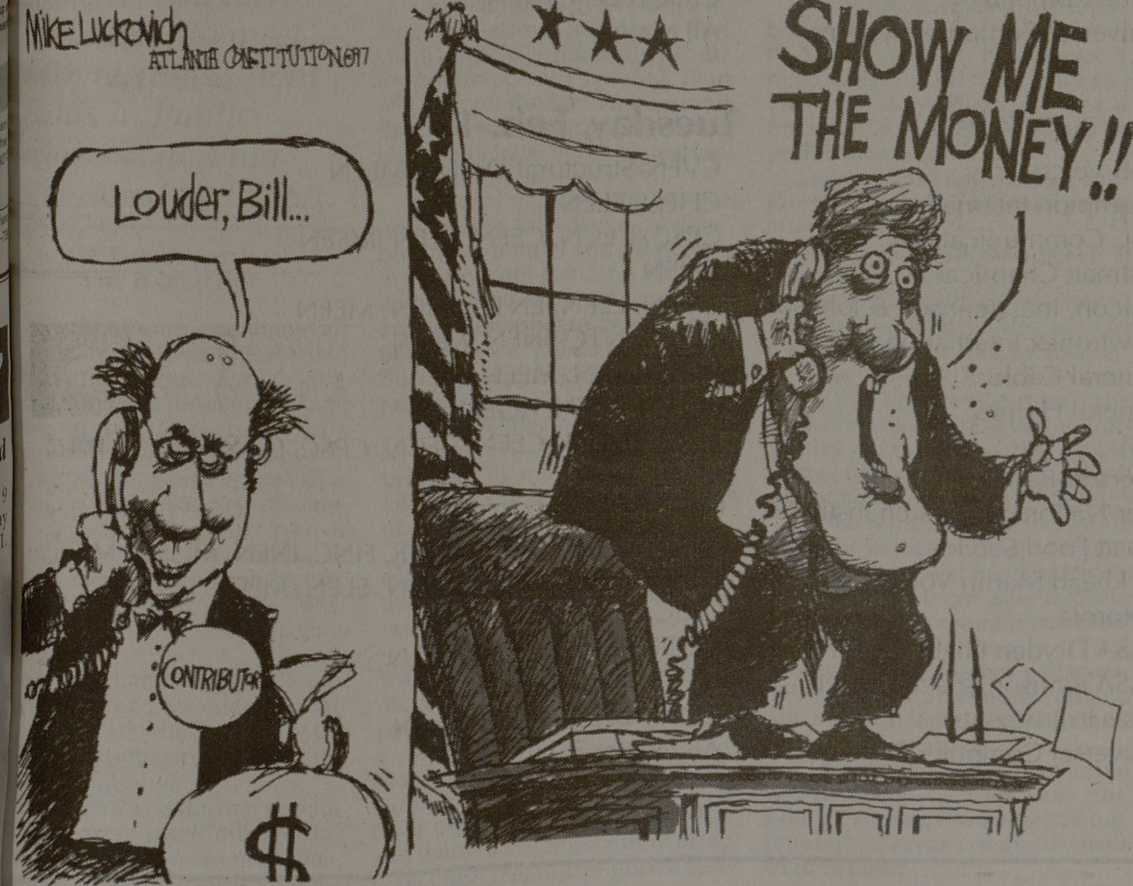
Authorities have a hard enough time keeping the streets safe. Arming every John Doe out there would be detrimental to America's safety.

Law abiding citizens do have the right to have handguns, but they should not have the right to tote them wherever they go. Most public establishments do not allow concealed weapons on their premises. They, like most people, do not feel comfortable knowing everyone is carrying a handgun.

Guns are a part of many Americans' lives. Personally, I enjoy shooting skeet, dove hunting, quail hunting, and have even killed a few deer. I have a shotgun, a rifle, and a 4 wheel-drive. However, I don't consider myself a country boy, and I can survive without carrying a handgun to class.

It is ludicrous to say less crimes will be committed if more people are given the right to carry a handgun.

Americans should have every right to be safe. But putting more handguns on the streets will kill more people than it will save.



Racist students fail to qualify as Aggies

In response to Kevin Barrios' Feb. 4th letter.

I agree with that the circumstances were uncalled for and can be quite upsetting, but for anyone to declare themselves no longer an Aggie because of what happened is selling themselves short.

There are a lot of people around College Station that don't attend the University. If they were A&M students, that doesn't necessarily declare them as Aggies.

Part of being an Aggie is participating with enthusiasm at yell practice, sporting events, Bonfire, and promoting your school pride and image. These people obviously were not doing so.

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MAIL CALL

Unfortunately, these type of immature bigots are everywhere, not just in College Station.

I, too, am a minority and enjoyed four great years at A&M. So don't throw away your school spirit, "aggie ring", and all the benefits of being an Aggie because of a few people who aren't even worth it.

Jason Morawski
Class of '95

Smokers forfeit all special treatment

In response to John Lemons' Feb. 5 column titled, "Smokers unfairly punished by taxation."

What would these poor college students do with a tax increase on

Lisa Peterson
Class of '00