

The Last Word

By Warner McGowan

My friend Duncan and I were driving in his truck one day, maneuvering through trees and sharp curves, when it hit us, the problem with modern society is high-tech communication. Duncan and I have known each other for years, and we always find ourselves hashing out the greater problems facing the world, but this time was special. This time, I thought we had really stumbled across something outstanding.

Of course, I should have realized this problem of modern society much earlier, at least by the end of last summer. I was a mere busboy in a fancy restaurant in Birmingham called Bottega. The restaurant has excellent food, to be sure, but the most annoying thing about it is the Yupified, see-and-be-seen aura that pours from every crevice of the place. It's the kind of place where you can sip on cappuccino and make jokes about absent-minded accountants and be viewed as one of the wittiest chaps on the block.

Anyway, almost every night that I worked there, people came in, sat down, and placed their cellular phones in front of them as though they were idols of some sort. I once watched a man eat an entire meal while talking on his cellular phone, the whole time ignoring his wife sitting across from him. She just stared at the wall behind his balding head.

This kind of high-tech communication is becoming more common every day, and each day we become more dependent on these technical devices to express ourselves. In this month's edition of Harper's, I read that fifty-four percent of cellular phone users say their phones have improved their marriages. Offices everywhere are now equipped with fax machines, and many scratch their heads in amazement that they ever survived without one. Teleprompters, computer networks, notes from other people's lawyers, all of these things aim at increasing communication, but not one of them offers tangible, direct communication.

So what does all of this mean? Why is it important that we have direct communication? First, direct communication involving a handshake and sitting down at a table together reminds us that we are human. When I meet with a possible employer in her office and sit with her, look at a paper with her, and shake her hand before leaving, I have a visual and sensory image of who it is I am dealing with. Of course, it was a lot easier to leave a message on her answering machine, type out a note to her on my computer, even fax her something from home over the summer, but I would never know who she was. I would only have a collection of images, a recorded voice, perhaps a handwritten note.

These days, people seem to value their privacy so much that they will devise all sorts of ways to get a message through without ever facing a person directly. They either have other people do it for them (i.e., lawyers), or they let the wonderful world of machines take charge. Sure, America is a busy place filled with lots of people with lots of things to take care of, but how far will we let this technological communication go? How many phonemail systems and teleprompter meetings will it take before we realize the sterility of it all?

As we drove down the road, ruminating over the points of our discovery, a sleek new BMW started to pass us. Inside the car, a fat man with grey hair and a gold nugget the size of a golf ball on his ring finger yapped incessantly into the speaker of his car phone, speaking only to the piece of black metal on the dashboard. As the car moved past us and filed back into our lane, we saw the bumper sticker on the back. It said: "Honk if You're Single." We pressed down on the horn, both of us mashing our fists against the vinyl. The noise rang out like a siren warning of impending danger. The man looked into his rear view mirror, gave us the bird, and sped away in a cloud of dust.

Tears for the night

I love the night; a walk in moonlight, solitude under a starry sky, catching my breath as a shooting star carves an arc across the blackness, being touched by the mystical.

"Take Back the Night!" "Better lighting for a safer community!" I do not think that better lighting would necessarily make a safer community. At best, it is a Band-Aid cure for a deeper problem.

But the deeper problem was what "Take Back the Night" was all about. I cried as I listened to the stories of the women and men who spoke in Proctor Lounge last Thursday night. Tears of anger, of frustration, of bitterness and of a deep sadness traced salty tracks down my cheeks.

I cried for the ignorance of the men who look at me, or at any woman, and see an assembly of body parts and not the mind or spirit they contain. I cried for the women who be-

lieve, as they have been taught all their lives, that they are the inferior gender, that they cannot accomplish as much as men and should be content with less.

I cried for the women who, in their inferiority, believe that their only worth lies in making the men in their lives happy without ever finding their own happiness.

I cried for the double standards and gender segregation that make it possible for some people to never realize that their actions are unacceptable, derogatory, abusive, damaging, dangerous and illegal.

I cried for the women who do not yet know that there is more to life than striving to make their reflection in the mirror match the elusive contrived ideal of society.

I cried for the misconceptions that are reflected in our culture's values and in its expectations for men and for women. I cried for all those who have been

Abortion is tantamount to murder

"Abortion violates every decent human instinct so much so that its indecency must be clothed in euphemism." (Joseph Sobran) This quotation accurately states my view of the "pro-choice" movement. Calling the pro-abortion movement "pro-choice" is avoiding the real issue, which is violent end to human life. Rather than looking at the scientific facts, the pro-choice movement has set up a smoke screen that appeals to emotions. However, it is medically proven that a fetus is a separate life from the moment

that two living cells unite and produce a nonliving "mass of cells" that at some later point comes back to life. The zygote has to grow, but is no less human than you or I.

The need for further development does not mean that life has not yet been attained. The average human being continues to grow and develop until age 23. "If a fertilized egg is not by itself a full human being, it could never become a [human], because something would have to be added to it, and we know that does not happen." (Dr. Jerome

reproductive lives." It is an insult to say that we must change our biology in order to fit into society (especially at the expense of another human's life). These attitudes contradict the rightful feminist affirmation of pregnancy as a natural bodily function that deserves societal respect and accommodation. Inequality is social, not biological. If there are barriers to pregnant women's and new mothers' full participation in all parts of society, it is the fault of the society, not women, and not children. Denying life is antithetical to a movement that seeks equality.

I urge our community to think deeply about what actually happens during an abortion and avoid being deceived by a smoke screen that diverts attention from the real issue. Do not be lured into violence by following a crowd that advocates choice without examining the choices it advocates. When life is ended violently, choice is not an applicable concept. At conception, when two living cells unite, what they produce must be living. If not, exactly when does that "mass of cells" become alive?

When its heart beats regularly (24 days after conception)? When brain waves are recorded (day 40)? When the stomach, liver, kidney, and brain are func-

tioning (8 weeks)? When it responds to touch (weeks 11 and 12)? If a fetus were a mere "mass of cells" without life, it would not feel pain.

But it does, as documented in the British Medical Journal (26 January 1980 p. 233.) When are we going to decide that this "mass of cells" has become a life? When it is totally independent? When it becomes a productive, contributing member of society? When we start making criteria for when human life has enough value to live, we are practicing selective genocide.

The pro-choice movement is setting the stage for a government regulated survival of the fittest which denies life to anyone who does not "measure up." If we distinguish fundamental human rights between a life that has been born and a life that has not been born, we set a precedent for distinguishing between people who are not mentally handicapped and those who are, rich and poor, landed and homeless (are not the homeless and those who receive welfare a burden on our economic system?) etc. Why not just let those who cannot function to full capacity alone be killed? This is exactly what abortion does to fetal lives. Once we begin to devalue human life, where does it end?

Sarah L. Richardson '95

Growth and differentiation transform the zygote, a single living cell, into a multicellular human being. Life is a continuum. It is illogical to assert that two living cells unite and produce a non-living "mass of cells" that at some later point comes back to life.

of conception.

Human development is a continuous process that begins when an ovum from a female is fertilized by sperm from a male. Growth and differentiation transform the zygote, a single living cell, into a multicellular human being. Life is a continuum. It is illogical to assert

Lejeune, testimony, U.S. Congress, The Human Life Bill) A mother and child are two distinct and separate bodies. If this were not true, how could a mother and child have two different blood types or sets of fingerprints?

Women's equality should not hinge on "controlling our



By Seymour R.

Do not forget the Holocaust

Last Monday night, Eli Wiesel, a Holocaust survivor who has written over fifty books, was a guest on *Late* with Bob Costas. The book he was discussing was *Night*, an account of his time in the Nazi concentration camps. Since April is National Holocaust Remembrance Month, and not much is done or said here about this terrible moment in our history, I wanted to make our campus aware of it.

Over six million Jews were taken from their communities all over Europe and separated from their families. Suddenly, they were alone; ageless, nameless, and faceless. Even if thou-

assaulted, abused, harassed or raped, and for the society that allows it to happen. I admire those who spoke on Thursday night and I thank them and applaud them.

Only through action and with support and compassion will changes be brought about. The group on Thursday showed that the support and compassion are there; now we need to put our feelings into action. Attitudes that have been formed unconsciously throughout a person's life, and that are continually reinforced through the bombardment of messages from society are hard to change. But once an awareness of them has been developed, they can be changed. So do not give up.

Kristina Daily '94

sands of stories were told, they would not suffice to make us understand what it was like in the camps. Wiesel's book goes into gruesome detail about the several hardships he had to endure, the first being his separation from his mother and sister by the simple command, "Men to the right, women to the left." He never saw them again.

For years, he was beaten, starved, and overworked. People were randomly chosen to be killed, some were beaten, while others were shot like game. Over one million children were killed, often in front of their parents. The horrors were endless, as Wiesel ex-

plained: "Death became a normative experience; you lived in a world of death."

Currently, reports of Nazi propaganda appearing in our country, as well as others around the world, makes me cringe. Children's computer games on the death camp are deplorable. Reports of radical groups, listening to Hitler's speeches (though most know no German), and claiming the holocaust did not occur, and that the photos of the camps were created by the Jews to gain sympathy, send a burst of rage through my veins.

The only way we can keep an event of this magnitude from (Continued on page 23)