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EDITORIALS

Cable controversy

KBTX, TCA both acting foolish

Lately, television viewers have had ringside seats for the cable controversy that's been going over the airwaves and the lines.

KBTX-TV and TCA Cable of Bryan-College Station are trading accusations on television and radio over who's to blame if the cable company drops the television station from its cable lineup.

And we're tired of it.

KBTX, Bryan-College Station's CBS affiliate, peppered its programming with trailers beginning the day that TCA would drop the broadcast station from its lineup unless TCA came to an agreement.

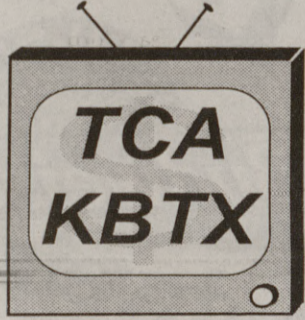
TCA has responded with radio and television ads of its own, telling the public that the problem is KBTX's fault.

KBTX and TCA are holding television viewers hostage, setting fingers and shouting, "Look what the other side is doing to you!"

The television station has stepped low in its conflict with the cable company. KBTX is

running messages across the bottom of the screen, crying out that it will be dropped from TCA unless the cable company repents.

But TCA is not entirely innocent, either. Although the cable franchise has told the public about the fee in radio and television commercials, TCA neglects to mention that the fee comes to 30 cents per subscriber each month — a penny a day.



If both sides truly represent community interests — as they claim to do — KBTX and TCA should stop squabbling like schoolchildren and come to an agreement of some sort.

Instead of criticizing each other, both sides should apply the same scrutiny to their own operations.

The cable company should attempt to remedy its limited offering of cable channels and to improve customer service. The television station should remember its responsibility and work to keep its journalistic integrity instead of lowering itself to the level of cheap pandering.

Opinion page: to agree or not to agree

Columnists work to stimulate debate, not anger readers

Howdy Aggs! For those of you who remember reading my columns from the spring semester ... I'm baaack.

For those of you who are new to the Opinion page, let me welcome you and introduce myself. I am the resident pinko-commie-fag (although "queer" is now the preferred term) tree hugging, whining, bleeding heart liberal who will be trying to convert you every Wednesday with a witty yet thought-provoking column.



JOHN SCROGGS
Columnist

that's just an added bonus.

We were hired because we have opinions and can write in complete sentences. ... most of the time.

To the untrained eye, it may seem that as columnists, all we ever do is moan and groan about things we don't have enough courage or power to change. It may also appear that we occasionally just begin spouting off with a one-track mind about something truly agitating to a few, but of no real concern to the average college student. In reality, however, we do have a purpose — a higher goal, if you will.

and attitudes. College is a time for experimenting with new ideas and trying on new points of view. College is a time for change.

The typical Texas A&M student may not be inclined to agree with my opinions, but with the Opinion page, we have an adequate forum to foster discussions. Once the discussions start, real learning and understanding can begin. With this new understanding comes the realization that people are people, not labels.

The columnists for the Opinion page are not being paid to convert, manipulate or mentally screw with the average student's preconceived notions of what life entails — that's just an added bonus.

The opinions expressed on this page are designed to inspire and challenge the reader to reach new heights of mental activity. If you find yourself discussing some topic presented on the Opinion page because you either concur or completely disagree, then our jobs as columnists have been fulfilled.

Most college students enter college with belief systems and opinions based mainly upon the influences of their parents and friends back home. For the first time in their lives, they may be coming in contact with differing views

Labels, similar to the ones I jokingly used before, are just oversimplifications that small-minded individuals use to categorize situations that they are unable to fully comprehend.

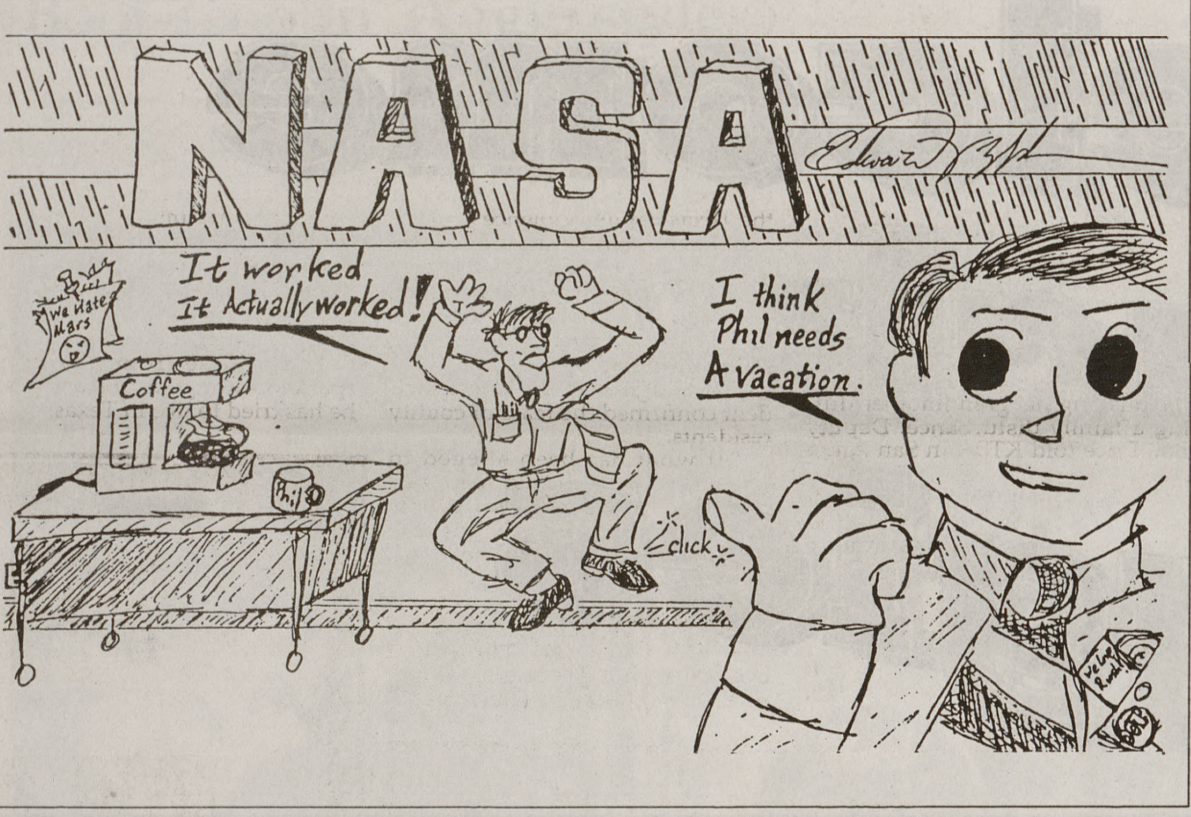
It is terribly sad when readers offhandedly lump certain columnists into inaccurate and shallow categories. Eventually, those same readers may begin to label other people as well.

Individuals are whole people that can never be simplified into single-dimensional caricatures. Although opinions may superficially seem one-sided, columnists never are.

So if you find yourself fuming over some idiotic dribble that your favorite columnist-to-hate had the audacity to put into print, take a moment to first try on their point of view. See how it feels to be in a different position for a while.

Then if you still can't understand how anyone in the world could ever believe such a ridiculous stance, write a letter to the editor, and let the world know how you feel. Maybe someone out there agrees with you.

John Scroggs is a senior English and philosophy major



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The Battalion encourages letters to the editor and will print as many as space allows. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class, and phone number.

We reserve the right to edit letters and guest columns for length, style, and accuracy.

Contact the opinion editor for information on submitting guest columns.

Address letters to:
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Why do people become brain damaged around celebrities?

While watching "The Sports Den" on the time Sports Channel, it hit me that there are some things in life I simply don't understand. The 30-minute program has high priced sports paraphernalia — baseball cards, autographed footballs and Dallas Cowboys jerseys signed by Aikman.

Anyone with a spare \$300, that is. After some quick calculations, much like going to figure out how much Mr. Bill makes a year, I totaled the worth of the available jerseys to be \$60,000. Assuming that each jersey costs \$10 to pro-



MELISSA MEGLIOLA
Columnist

duce and that Aikman can sign his name 200 times in an hour, I concluded that either HSC has found a profitable venture or that Aikman charges \$58,000 an hour to sign his name. What a business.

I just don't understand why anyone would pay that for a jersey. Sure, it is signed by the winning quarterback of the 1993 Super Bowl. But so are at least 199 others.

Owning a jersey doesn't mean that you met the quarterback, shook his hand or shared your awe of his skill on the field. The jersey simply means that you had a spare \$300 and caught the television at the right time. Yet, the on-screen tally of items sold proved that people are willing to pay a premium to feel just a little closer to their sports heroes.

I myself am not an autograph person. I may have a huge ego, but I have always felt that I would belittle myself to ask for another person's signature — let alone pay for it.

All of this booming industry seemed silly to me until this summer when I found myself in the same hotel as David Robinson, Charles Barkley and Michael Jordan.

Waiting in the lobby for Barkley to head for the elevator, I learned about the \$500 fee to play golf with the Suns' star.

The man standing next to me explained the genius of each golfer's "charitable" contribution. Many of the participants in these tournaments bring stacks

I woke from a nap and was on my way to get some free wine and cheese when I just about walked into Michael Jordan and three security guards.

of pictures, several balls and everything else they can think of to have signed on the course.

After the tournament, they sell the autographed paraphernalia and make a profit on the tax-deductible event. The process seemed odd but innocent.

I was disgusted, however, to learn that

some dealers pay young children to run after athletes for autographs.

So, when I learned that all of the athletes were staying on my floor, I vowed not to bother them. Everyone deserves a vacation. One morning in line for breakfast in the concierge lounge, I did ask Robinson to pass me a spoon for my cereal. He picked one up off the table and handed it to me just like anyone else.

I was not impressed or awestruck. Very proud of myself, I never acknowledged that he was staying in the room across the hall from me. I even managed not to stare when Jordan was nearby pouring himself a cup of coffee.

But somehow things were a little weird all weekend. Whenever I heard footsteps in the hall, I wondered whose they were. My dad continually found reasons to escape his business meetings and just wander around the hotel. One night I dreamt about the Bulls.

Then Sunday it happened. I woke from a nap and was on my way to get some free wine and cheese when I just about walked into Jordan and three secu-

rity guards.

I remember the moment exactly. I had read that Jordan can never have a real conversation with people he meets for the first time. They are usually so nervous that they speak very fast, stutter or mumble so they can barely be heard.

Careful not to do the same, I confidently said, "This is great timing. Good morning." Dumb. First, commenting on timing makes sense when telling about the surprise meeting to someone else, but Jordan had no reason to feel lucky about running into me. Second, it hadn't been morning for over six hours.

Jordan just looked at me with the most perplexed expression I have ever seen. And then it was over. I, Melissa Megliola, held the full attention of the greatest basketball player of all time and, like everyone else, I was a complete idiot.

Maybe I should see about getting one of those Aikman jerseys.

Melissa Megliola is a senior industrial engineering major

COLLEGE STATION, TX
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MAIL CALL

Reader bit by dog worried about rabies

Saturday night, while walking in front of the biochemistry building on West Campus, I had a dog come up and nip at me.

The owner was apologetic, and I was in a hurry.

I didn't lecture the owner on the importance of keeping dogs on leashes, which he had in his hand but not on his two dogs. Later, I realized that the dog had broken my skin.

Now, I have the huge task of finding this dog, a German shepherd. After talk-

ing with a doctor, I found out I was at risk for rabies.

I was hardly aware humans could get the disease.

The "bite" does not have to bleed, only break the skin. Rabies is 100 percent fatal, incurable, and you die while going insane.

In the next few days, I must assure myself that the dog is vaccinated or received a Rabies vaccination. You might think this is funny; I did until I found out it would cost over \$300.

If you think your dog "bit" me or you know who the owner is, please contact the police (case # 08935007). I only want to find out if the dog is vaccinated now.

Please keep your dogs vaccinated and on a leash. Any creature that has teeth can and will bite, even if just accidentally

during play. Please help.

Amy O'Neal
Class of '96

Fall brings football, Spirit of Aggieland

Well, football season is almost here. The days are hot — so hot. Arriving on campus are approximately 30 young men — anxious to be part of what has become synonymous with success — The Fightin' Texas Aggie Football Team.

They come with excitement in their eyes, knowing, not only will they be part of a winning team, they are now part of

a winning family — Texas Aggies.

During orientation early one morning, we taught and led these young men in the "Beat the Hell Outa LSU" yell. Seeing them trying so hard to get it right and show their excitement in being a new Aggie was truly inspiring.

Yes, the season is almost upon us. Somewhere, far off, in a distant wind — yet to make it here — is the smell of burning wood — the burning desire.

Aggs, it won't be long now. That first cool breeze of Fall will blow upon us, and we'll know, we'll be back in Aggieland, and we'll know why it's so great — "The Spirit Can Ne'er Be Told." Gig 'em.

Darrel Pickard
Class of '85
Athletic department graduate assistant