

Editors say readers lack trust



From left to right, Ray Mariotti of the Austin American-Statesman, Edwin D. Hunter of the Houston Post, and Thomas J. Simmons of The Dallas Morning News. Battalion photo by Ken Herrera

By ANGELIQUE COPELAND
Battalion Reporter

Newspapers are suffering from a "credibility crisis" that has lowered the trust of their readers, the editor of the Houston Post said at Texas A&M University Wednesday night. That and other issues concerning the role of today's newspapers were discussed in a program presented by Political Forum, "Freedom of the Press — The Fourth Estate" Wednesday night. Edwin Hunter, the Post's editor, said that mass media, like other well-established institutions like the government, the church and the military, were subject to periodic attacks by the public.

But Hunter said that the newspapers' main concerns was to get the story right, not necessarily first.

Thomas Simmons, executive editor of the Dallas Morning News, agreed that newspapers are committed to getting the information right. He said most errors are a result of incorrect information from sources, not mistakes by reporters. "Even a good reporter is no more credible than his source," Simmons said.

Closely related to the lack of credibility is the charge that newspapers provide only shallow coverage of news events that mislead the public.

Ray Mariotti, editor of the Austin American-Statesman, said he be-

lieved it was possible for newspaper coverage to go too much detail. "It's a matter of balancing what the people should read with what they will read. We give them in-depth detail like a scientific journal and no one will read it."

Hunter agreed that the quality of newspaper writing was generally very good and said that vast improvements had been made in the last 30 years.

The question of how much control should be exercised by the government over the release of information brought a unanimous condemnation of prior restraints by the editors.

Simmons said that a newspaper must always have the right to decide

what material to print even though it is still subject to reprisals afterwards. "Anytime you have a censor from on high telling you what you can print you are seeing the end of free press."

Simmons pointed out that in times of national crisis such as World War II, the press demonstrated the responsibility of voluntary censorship that was almost 100 percent effective, without government control.

Mariotti agreed that if the government had the freedom to use prior restraint more often there would soon be "rubber stamp secrets."

Half of on-campus lot OK for green sticker

By MERIL EDWARDS
Battalion Staff

Half of parking area 40, east of Duncan Intramural Field, is now open to freshman and sophomore students. It's inconvenient — far away from almost everything. But it does have empty parking spaces.

Lot 40 was previously restricted to female and upperclass male dorm students, and day students.

University Police traffic director Thomas Parsons said the lot was not being fully utilized, so the back half of the lot was opened Friday to green permit holders. Green permits are issued to male students with less than 60 hours.

"We opened the lot to green permits since students haven't been filling it," he said. "We may open it up further if there are still empty

spaces." He said there were still about 100 empty spaces at noon Wednesday.

The front half of the lot is designated for red permit holders. Red permits are issued to female dorm students and on-campus males with 60 hours or more. Parsons said the lot has been designated for red permits since Sept. 1.

Parsons said the lot's minimal use is due to its distance from classrooms and the fact that many students don't know they can park there.

Parking area 40 does not have any small car sections. Parsons said the small car restrictions are working well in some of the other lots.

"We may try to open small car areas in some staff lots," Parsons said. "We'll see if we can get some cooperation there."

CS plans to draw up new flood-plain map

If you're wondering whether or not to build an ark for the next Brazos County spring deluge, the College Station City Council may be able to tell you.

The council may soon have a flood-plain survey map drawn of the local area to help residents prepare for potential floods.

In a Wednesday afternoon workshop session, the council decided the current flood-plain map for the area is outdated.

Members concluded, however, that a new map could be outdated after a year of construction and

natural erosion due to weather. Area residents can obtain flood insurance for their property, but few do so, City Engineer Elrey Ash said.

The insurance rate is subsidized based on the person's location on the flood plain, causing the need for an accurate flood-plain map.

The matter is considered to be a priority because the construction on the Texas Instruments (TI) tract on Highway 30 is nearly completed, and 3,000 in-coming TI employees will cause a housing demand in that area.

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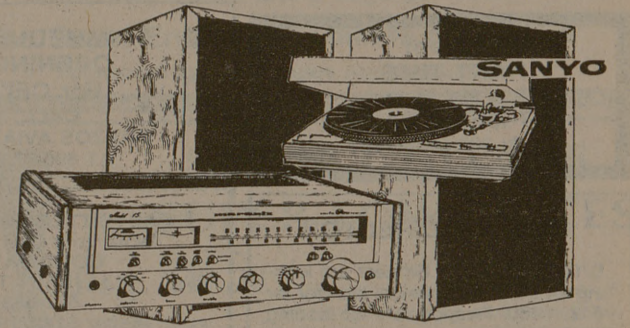
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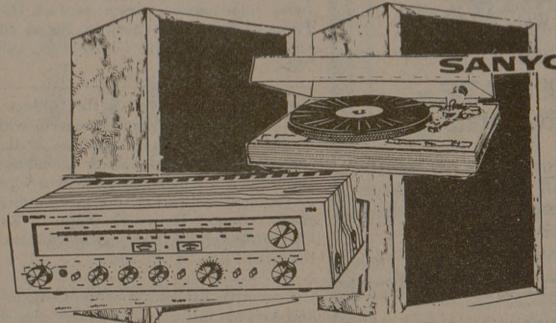
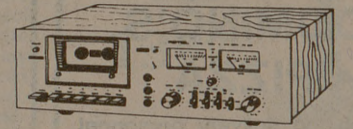


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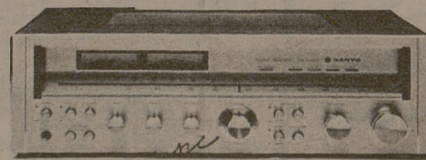
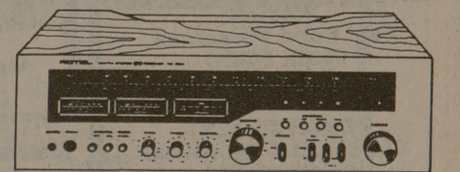
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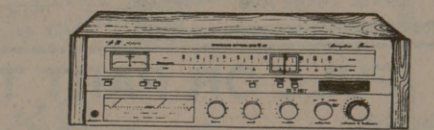
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