

# Opinion

## Videotape ruling irrelevant

Those of you who already have a full library of television programs taped on video cassettes can breathe a sigh of relief and stop waiting for the FBI to knock at your door. The Supreme Court ruled Tuesday that videotaping programs for personal viewing is not illegal.

Walt Disney Productions and Universal Studios claimed they were being deprived of revenues by the manufacturers of video recorders. The recorders, they said, made it possible for the public to reap the benefits of the studios' work without paying the price.

Therefore, the studios claimed, they should be paid royalties in compensation for the unauthorized use of their product. But the movie industry's greed was thwarted by the Court's 5-4 decision.

However, the video cassette recorder industry is not completely out of the woods yet. Lobbyists for the studios will most likely demand legislators to change the copyright laws, thereby overriding the ruling.

In reality, neither the Supreme Court's decision nor any resulting legislation will have much of an effect on the average

owner of a video cassette recorder.

Over five million Americans already have been taping programs at home without detection. And with the increasing popularity of the video recorder, any law against private taping would be nonenforceable.

The importance of the Court's ruling has been greatly overestimated. American people will go right on videotaping, with or without the sanction of Congress or the Court.

— The Battalion Editorial Board

## Varsity Level II means 'second rate' athletics

Texas A&M prides itself in trying to be the best at everything. The word "second-rate" has been weeded out of the Aggie vocabulary.

But in creating Varsity Level II, Texas A&M has essentially labeled certain athletic teams second-rate — not good enough for full recognition by the Athletic Department and not good enough to receive any of its money.

Varsity Level II is a classification distinct from the other three levels of athletic competition at Texas A&M (intramural, club sports and varsity). The special status was approved last month after two years of study by the Athletic Council. Their goal was to provide varsity status to certain club sports, giving them the opportunity to compete in NCAA competition.

A close look proves the new status gives these teams exactly this. Period.

What they don't get is the benefits usually associated with varsity status at Texas A&M.

The Level II policy statement lays down the rules quite clearly:

— The teams with the new status will receive no money from the \$6 million Athletic Department budget, yet the department will be responsible for administering what budget the teams come up with.

— The teams will get use of university facilities only if they do not interfere with "other university programs" or they are given permission by "appropriate personnel" within the Athletic Department.

— Coaches for the teams will not be

provided by, but will be responsible to, the athletic director.

— Scholarships will not be offered to

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Varsity Level II participants, nor will room or board be provided for the players.

Above all, Varsity Level II status carries no guarantee of full varsity team status later. It must be renewed every two years.

Essentially, the teams get all the disadvantages of being part of the Athletic Department and only one real advantage: the chance to compete on a national level.

But giving the teams a way but not the means is like dangling candy in front of a baby.

If a team is good enough to compete on a national level and win — which is one of the requirements listed in the Level II policy statement — then it deserves that opportunity, no holds barred.

A&M is notorious for the money it spends on its football team and coaches. Meanwhile, its officials and former students attempt to explain it away by claim-

ing an ultimate quest for a winning team. If winning were really the issue, they wouldn't have to search far.

Both the riflery team and the women's soccer team are ranked nationally. The Texas A&M skeet and trap team has won the national championship two of the past three years.

The water polo team has done well consistently and the 1981 national collegiate handball champion competed here. A&M has sent two players to the National Handicapped Games.

Winners obviously are not the problem.

The problem is money. The teams that bring money into the University receive money from the University. Perhaps the administration feels non-spectator sports can offer nothing to the University and therefore deserve nothing in return.

It seems the administration can't see the forest for the goal posts.

The smaller non-spectator sports allow more students to become involved. More importantly, they offer diverse opportunities for a student to excel at what he does best, even if 76,000 people won't pay to see him do it.

A university should be a center of education, not a business venture.

If the administration truly desires a first-rate sports department, as it says it does, and not just a thriving business, it must put its money where its mouth is — with the winners.

Tracey Taylor is news editor for The Battalion and a senior journalism major.

## Criticism of military uniforms casts doubt on press patriotism

by Art Buchwald

Columnist for The Los Angeles Times Syndicate

"I'm in a jam," I told Fetzler, who works in the Pentagon. "I want to do a story on the lousy camouflage fatigue uniforms the Army is issuing to its men."

"Why are you in a jam?" he asked. "Because if I write it I'll just be confirming what Secretary of State George Shultz and President Reagan said about American reporters not being on our side any more."

"What's wrong with the fatigues?" "You should know better than I do. They're too heavy for the tropics, they're

made of 50 percent nylon and don't breathe, and when they get wet it takes forever for them to dry. But if I write about it, Shultz and the president will think I'm on Castro's side."

"Why do you have to write it?" Fetzler wanted to know.

"Despite the complaints, the Army is going ahead and ordering 13.4 million more sets at the cost of \$432 million. They've already issued 6.4 million at the cost of \$205 million and the GI's hate them."

"The people in the Pentagon know what's best for the GI's. After all, they're generals."

"Then you think I better not say anything about it?"

"If you did you'd be giving aid and comfort to the Kremlin, which is what the press likes to do."

"What about the comfort of the American soldier?"

"That's none of your business. Why don't you write about what's good in the Army and not always what's bad?"

"Don't get me wrong. I'm on 'our' side," I said. "I just don't want our boys fighting in the tropics in heavy fatigues."

"The Pentagon is aware of the bad reviews on the battle dress and has appointed a commission to study it?"

"But why are they going ahead with the \$432-million order when there's a question whether they're any good or not?"

"Because it's going to take 12 to 15 months to design and test a new fatigue uniform."

"Didn't the Army test the one they have now in the tropics before they ordered it?"

"That's just the kind of question that makes the president wonder if you people are on our side," Fetzler said.

"I'm not trying to make waves," I protested. "My problem is that where the American GI is concerned he should at least be dressed for the war he's asked to fight in. And if he isn't, the American public should know about it."

"When the Pentagon makes a mistake it is perfectly equipped to admit it. It doesn't need a bunch of Sandinista-loving reporters to tell the country what we're doing wrong," Fetzler said.

"But wouldn't a story on the uniforms stop the Army from wasting the taxpayers' money?"

"The money's a drop in the bucket compared to the damage you could do to our troops if they find out their battle clothes will make them sweat," Fetzler told me.

"I guess you're right. If you were me and wanted to prove your loyalty to America what would you write?"

"If you really want to prove you're on 'our' side, why don't you write a story on how tacky the Cuban fatigue uniforms are compared to ours?"

## Portfolio: Hunger



### THIS IS ED.

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## Darkbulb seen for the future

by DICK WEST

Columnist for United Press International

Parody is parody, and "The Journal of Irreproducible Results" is a lampoon of scientific papers.

Nevertheless, there are times when send-ups seem to make sense. And with Congress returning next week, the Journal's article on the "darkbulb" becomes all the more relevant.

Maybe a globe that screws into ordinary electric sockets and "floods the room with darkness" is only a figment of imagination at this point. But the "darkbulb" would have commercial possibilities far beyond instant darkrooms for photo development. Clearly, it is a travesty whose time has come.

Perhaps the "black holes" discovered by astronomers can help bring darkbulbs to fruition.

"Black holes" are invisible objects cre-

ated in the universe by stars that collapse of their own weight. So dense is the matter that not even light rays can escape the force of gravity.

If a way could be found to harness energy, the darkbulb would be possible. The first step would be the production of material compact enough to fit inside a glass bulb and dense enough to draw all light in the immediate vicinity.

In order to reach mass markets and successfully compete with the Japanese, the material would need to be both plentiful and inexpensive.

Toward that end, I was thinking in terms of developing some process for recycling congressional speeches, many of which already have a high level of density and are aligned with the forces of darkness. The Congressional Record would be an abundance source of raw material.

## Slouch

by Jim Earle



"Although we will encourage the full exercise of creativity in this class, I must demand that there is a degree of conformity, and that suggestion without calling names."

### The Battalion

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Columns and guest editorials also are welcome, and are not subject to the same length constraints as letters. Address all inquiries and correspondence to: Editor, The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843, or phone (409) 845-2611.

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