

Rock 'n' roll effects same everywhere

Oh, those rock 'n' roll blues. For years parents in the United States have screamed at their children about rock 'n' roll and contemporary music. Charges of obscenity, tastelessness, immorality and decadence have abounded, all to no avail. Parents are still screaming. "The epitome of tastelessness" is one description used for a pop group. But the criticism didn't come from a U.S. parent. It came from someone in the Soviet Union. Apparently, the United States is not the only country with people who think pop music is trash. People in the Soviet Union have different reasons for objecting to the music — it's not about communist ideals. And Western pop groups are blamed for the influence they've exerted on Soviet pop groups.

A letter to the editor in a Soviet paper calls Western pop music "the forceful propaganda of an ideology which is alien to us, to a way of life which is alien to us." It's interesting to see how much impact someone from another country places on pop music. No one in the United States would consider "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" and other Top 40 songs that blare from car radios as any type of ideological statement. But no matter who you are or what country you're from, contemporary music — probably a factor in keeping teens out of trouble and certainly a highlight of college students' social lives — catches flack. People are people, wherever you are.

— The Battalion Editorial Board



Dead computers: an American nightmare

By ART BUCHWALD
Columnist for
The Los Angeles Times Syndicate

The most frightening words in the English language are, "Our computer is down." You hear it more and more as you go about trying to conduct your business. The other day I was at the airport attempting to buy a ticket to Washington and the attendant said, "I'm sorry, I can't sell you a ticket. Our computer is down." "What do you mean your computer is down? Is it depressed?" "No it can't be depressed. That's why it's down." "So if your computer is down just write me out a ticket." "I can't write you out a ticket. The computer is the only one allowed to is-

sue tickets on the plane." I looked down the counter and every passenger agent was just standing there drinking coffee and staring into a blank screen. "What do all you people do?" "We give the computer the information about your trip, and then it tells us whether you can fly with us or not." "So when it goes down, you go down with it." "That's very good, sir. I haven't heard it put that way before." "How long will the computer be down?" "I wanted to know." "I have no idea. Sometimes it's down for 10 minutes, sometimes for two hours. There is no way we can find out without asking the computer, and since it's down it won't answer us." "Don't you have a backup com-

puter, when the main computer goes down?" "I doubt it. Do you know what one of these things costs?" "Let's forget the computer. What about your planes? They're still flying, aren't they?" "I couldn't tell without asking the computer, and as I told you..." "I know, it's down. Maybe I could just go to the gate and ask the pilot if he's flying to Washington," I suggested. "I wouldn't know what gate to send you to." "I'll try them all," I said. "Even if the pilot was going to Washington, he couldn't take you if you didn't have a ticket." "Why don't I give you the money and you could give me a receipt and I

could show that to the pilot as proof that I paid?" "We wouldn't know what to charge you. The computer is the only one who keeps track of air fares because they change every hour." "How about my credit card?" "That's even worse. When our computer is down it can't notify the credit card computer to charge the fare to your account." "Is there any other airline flying to Washington within the next few hours?" "I wouldn't know," he said, pointing at the dark screen. "only IT knows." "And at the moment 'IT' don't know nothing." "IT knows it," he said defensively. "IT just can't tell me."

By this time there were quite a few people standing in lines. The word soon spread to other travelers that "the computer was down." Nobody knew exactly what this meant, but some people went white, some people started to cry, and still others kicked their luggage. A man in a red blazer came up. "Please don't get excited. Wichita has been notified." "What's Wichita got to do with it?" asked. "That's where our main computer went down. But as soon as it gets over its glitch, it's going to buy everyone who misses his plane a free drink."



Letter:

Reader says abortions destroy innocent, unborn children

Editor:
I am writing in response to Kristin Parson's pro-abortion letter. (The Battalion, July 3)
I'm a mother, too. However, I do not share your casual attitude towards abortion. I believe no one has the right to take the life of an innocent, unborn child.
Too often women have abortions because it is not "convenient" for them to have a baby. This is the ultimate in selfishness and cold-heartedness.
I don't buy the old argument that "a woman has the right to do what she wants with her body." A developing baby is NOT a part of your body like a finger or an ugly wart, that you can get

rid of on a whim. A baby is an entirely separate human being within, but not a part of, the mother.
Since Ms. Parsons is so familiar with fetal development, she should know that as early as five weeks after conception, a baby's heart is already beating and other organs are forming. After three months the baby has developed arms and legs with perfectly formed fingers and toes. It can kick its legs, close its fingers, turn its head and open and close its mouth. Despite this, pro-abortionists will still claim this is not a living human being. They call it "tissue" or "the product of conception."
They will perform an abortion up to

the 20th week of pregnancy. By that time the baby is completely formed. The methods of abortion are cruel and painful to the baby. An abortion by suction literally tears it apart, piece by piece. Yes, that sounds ugly, but it's the reality of abortion.
I encourage any woman who faces an unwanted pregnancy to consider other alternatives, such as adoption. Abortion is not the answer — it is only the easy way out.
Tammy Ne...
Editor's note: Kristin Parson's letter was pro-choice, which doesn't necessarily mean she's pro-abortion. There is a difference.

Differences give America greatness

By STEVE JAMES
Columnist for
United Press International

WASHINGTON — The idyll — driving on an open road with the radio blasting, twiddling the dial for any one of a thousand images of America. It's like flipping through a pile of old 45's. A golden oldies station in Philadelphia — Elvis Presley — my sister dressed in black beatnik, jiving with the bedroom door as partner. Big band jazz — Mum and Dad. My grandfather's tales of the London blitz and how the Yankee soldiers rescued the neighbors after the street was hit by one of Hitler's doodlebugs. Glenn Miller and Harry James — my uncle's bands. He can still sit down at a piano and play those sounds, even though he never had a good thing to say about the country they came from. A soul station in Newark, and my own adolescent memories of America. Otis Redding and Sam Cooke. America — that strange land so far away that we knew so well through movies and "I Love Lucy," but really didn't know at all. America — hastily arranged student meetings to condemn this or that American atrocity in Vietnam, talk of marching on the embassy, burn Nixon, yeah. Then there were those wide-thighed girls you saw all over Europe — always with knapsacks.

The so-called American Dream may be just that — a rarely achieved ideal. But it gives sense of purpose to people who are taught to believe they are the best — even when they are not. That is what makes America.

You can wallow in a lot of nostalgia driving the roads of America with the radio on. Especially if you're driving from Washington to Connecticut to be sworn in as a citizen. As I neared New York, the enormity of it all hit me. That's when I heard him on the radio. Howard Stern, a very opinionated talk show host. And I got to wondering if I really wanted to be an American. All the way across the George Washington Bridge, the Cross Bronx Expressway and along the Connecticut Turnpike, Stern was talking at me. "Yes, I would say that 75 percent of female gym teachers are lesbians..." A call from a man who says he is a teacher in a New Jersey prison. "No, don't want to talk to him," Stern tells his giggling female assistant, then hangs up and takes off on a flight of fancy about a TV sitcom in which he is gang-raped by black prisoners. Is this the America that I am embracing? Where my children are going to grow? The same America that Vietnamese boat people braved hurricanes and pirates in the South China Sea for?

To have some boorish know-it-all mouth his prejudices and ignorance on the radio? Did Jefferson and Washington really have this in mind 200 years ago? Was I going to raise my hand in a Connecticut courthouse and mouth the pledge of allegiance for this? Well... yes. God knows it's no paradise. There are injustices and discrimination and greed and selfishness. I doubt the average American has any more actual freedom than, say, a Swede or an Australian. There's a lot of self-righteous talk about personal freedom that sneers at state indoctrination in communist countries. But aren't American children also brainwashed about their country being the greatest? The so-called American Dream may be just that — a rarely achieved ideal. But it gives sense of purpose to people who are taught to believe they are the best — even when they are not. That is what makes America. Now that I have joined the ranks, it has become clearer to me.

Americans themselves do not really know who they are. Just like my childhood images of what Americans should be, they are unable to pin down what makes an American. In Boston, for example, an Irishman from Southie or a black man from Roxbury or a Brahmin in Beacon Hill. They are worlds apart, but share a common American-ness. In a country that is meant to be a melting pot, there are so many vociferous factions intent on proving their differences. Bumper stickers that declare "Polish Pride" or "Irish Power" strike one as anachronistic in a society in which all are meant to be equal. But that's it. It's that something that makes Americans what they are, or should I say what WE are. It's that difference we all have while simultaneously being the same. Thank you to the judge, whose name I couldn't hear. In that room full of strangers with foreign names, you made us all equals in one stroke. Like Simon and Garfunkel, it was on the New Jersey Turnpike that I began to find the America I was looking for. And I think I like it. (Editors note: Steve James, a former British subject and an editor on the UPI foreign desk, recently pledged to renounce all "princes, potentates and sovereigns" in favor of the Stars and Stripes and American citizenship.)

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