

## State and Local

# Students at Forum hear debate about censorship of high school newspapers

By Kristin Czarnik  
Reporter

At the Texas A&M Forum Wednesday night, students voted 53-27 against censorship of high school newspapers by high school administrators.

The Forum, sponsored by the Texas A&M University Debate Team, the Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts, and by Student Activities, is a debate that invites audience participation.

Audience members are divided into pro and con sections.

Bruce Hyvl, a junior finance major, delivered his speech against censorship.

Hyvl said the Supreme Court, in a 1983 case involving Hazelwood high school, decided that high school administrators have the right to censor any speech they feel is inconsistent with the school's basic education.

"Student journalism," he said, "is literally fighting for its life."

Hyvl said he recently met a student from the Netherlands who brought a couple of things to his attention.

Prior to 1975, he said, the Netherlands had a censorship law and they found out one important thing: in the urge to accept censorship, the opposite is accomplished.

"It is very much like little Johnny and the cookie jar," Hyvl said. "The more you say, 'little Johnny you cannot have those cookies,' the more little Johnny wants those cookies. You cannot stop people from taking."

"If people want to learn about an issue, but they cannot write about it, read about it or express their ideas on it, then they are going to try it."

"This is where you are going to wind up with 13- and 14-year-old pregnant girls and the 14-year-old fathers who had to drop out of school to support their families. Then you have the high school administrator who is wondering why didn't his son know about these things."

With the large number of small communities and small school districts in the state, Hyvl said he feels

censorship will lead to poorly trained and unqualified administrators who will be judging the work of high school students.

"Perhaps the saddest thing that resulted from the Hazelwood ruling is the damage done to the upper quarter of students," Hyvl said. "These are the ones who are the free-speaking young people who are most concerned about these issues. They want to research these controversial subjects. I feel denying these students the right to work on these subjects is inconsistent with our educational policy."

Hyvl said he was told by a teacher that her purpose, along with all the other teachers, was to teach students to think for themselves.

"Are we afraid to let our young people think for themselves?" Hyvl said.

"Let's hope there is enough wisdom out there to recognize a controversial subject such as AIDS, teen pregnancy and drug abuse. These will not be solved by ignoring the issues."

Sharon McCormack, a senior accounting major, delivered her opposing view on censorship.

"The Hazelwood case is not a question of whether high school publications should be censored," McCormack said. "The question is one of responsibility."

"Legally, minors are not held responsible for their actions. At home, the parents are held responsible. At school the administrators act in place of the parents."

"As a student enters the school yard, the administration becomes responsible for the student's words or actions."

"It seems logical, then, that if the administrator must take final responsibility, then they should also have final authority."

"In the Hazelwood decision, the court decided that the First Amendment does not require a school to promote certain student speech."

"This decision does not promote unlimited censorship or the elimination of student freedom of speech."

McCormack said censorship, like any other issue, has its limits.



Photo by Roy D. Parsons

Adriana Martinez speaks Wednesday night for censorship in high school newspapers by high school administrators at the Texas A&M Debate Forum.

"Few people advocate no restriction on student speech," McCormack said. "At the same time, few believe that students have no rights to free speech. In between there lies a common point, a boundary or a limit."

"While the Hazelwood decision did not establish the boundaries many hoped it would, it took us one step closer to establishing the necessary boundaries to high school censorship."

# Affidavit says informer gave Contras help

BROWNSVILLE, Texas (AP) — Lawyers for two men accused of being part of an alleged drug ring based in Colombia filed a federal affidavit Wednesday claiming an informant who arranged an undercover bust was involved in supplying weapons to the Nicaraguan rebels.

The affidavit was introduced in a pre-trial hearing for John J. Bevan, 27, of Wales, and Francis J. Otranto, 34, of Atlanta.

The two are among at least 29 people charged in the "Operation Intruder" case, in which federal agents infiltrated the alleged ring and seized 152,000 pounds of marijuana and 1,219 pounds of cocaine.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Jack Wolfe called it "the largest undercover marijuana bust ever."

In a trial set to begin Feb. 29 in U.S. District Court in Brownsville, Bevan and Otranto face charges of conspiracy to import and importation of more than 1,000 kilos of marijuana. They were charged in connection with the importation of 128,500 pounds of marijuana, which federal agents posing as smugglers brought in by ship through Port Isabel.

U.S. District Judge Filemon Vela granted a defense motion Wednesday allowing attorneys for Bevan and Otranto to meet with informant Michael Palmer, who helped set up the massive drug operation that included activity in Colombia, Panama, Aruba and Belize.

Attorney Norton A. Colvin Jr., who represents Bevan, said in an interview Wednesday he wants to talk to Palmer to learn more about allegations that some of the drug profits were to be sent to the Contra rebels in Nicaragua.

Colvin said he has no evidence

to support the rumors, but introduced into evidence Wednesday an affidavit from Alejandro Cerna Sanchez, a Nicaraguan also facing trial in Atlanta in the Operation Intruder case.

In the affidavit, Cerna said during a 1986 meeting in Panama that Palmer asked, "if we could use his (Palmer's) connections and expertise in taking a load of Colombian marijuana into the United States, with his airplane, a DC-6, which has been used by U.S. government agents, including Palmer and other CIA operatives, to fly supplies to the Contras in Nicaragua."

# Police cause controversy over pastries

HOUSTON (AP) — A request for donated pastries at a police seminar is causing an uproar over what gratuities police should accept.

The controversy began with a Jan. 27 letter from the office of Police Chief Lee Brown to Houston merchants. The letter asked for pastries to be provided for a seminar on crime prevention sponsored by the department.

In the past, Brown has admonished officers to refuse offers of free food, coffee or other on-the-job gifts routinely offered from merchants.

"Why is something that is good for Houston police officers not good for the chief's office, too?" asked Sgt. Larry Watts, a director of the Houston Police Officers Association. "It just smacks of an absolute double standard."

◆ MSC ALL NIGHT FAIR

AND

THE ORIGINAL NEW YORK SELTZER



PRESENT



BUNGLE IN THE JUNGLE

FEBRUARY 20, 1988

8 p.m. to 2 a.m.

MEMORIAL STUDENT CENTER

