

## Quit giving rock music a bad rap

**Chuck Squatriglia**  
Assistant News Editor

They're back. Just when we thought it was safe to go out and buy any album we want, the Parent's Music Resource Center comes along telling us rock 'n' roll condones, even promotes, everything from necrophilia to Satanism.

Now they want the recording companies to know music can be included in the Child Protection and Obscenity Enforcement Act.

The PMRC is led by Susan Baker, wife of Secretary of State James Baker, and Tipper Gore, wife of Tennessee senator Albert Gore. The group was formed in May, 1985 to inform parents of the inherent dangers of rock music.

How nice of them.

Two years ago they succeeded in requiring record companies to place a "Warning — Explicit Lyrics — Parental Advisory" label on any record deemed "obscene." Now they're back, saying the record companies aren't sticking to their agreement, and they say the obscenity laws could be used to enforce their demands.

The Child Protection and Obscenity Enforcement Act makes it a crime to sell any obscene material. Punishment for such crimes can include fines, imprisonment and confiscation of property. Judgment of obscene material is based upon three legal criteria: the dominant theme of the material, taken as a whole, must appeal to a morbid or unhealthy interest in sex; the material must be offensive and an affront to public standards; and the material must have no socially redeeming values. While the law is aimed primarily at pornography, it includes a provision for "auditory pornography" which could be twisted to include any music the PMRC feels is obscene.

The PMRC insists "obscene" records be labeled so parents can make informed decisions on what to allow their children to hear. They equate this plan to the rating system used for movies. I've got news for you ladies — those labels don't work. How many parents are even aware of the music their children listen to, let alone go with them when they buy it? A child could just as easily buy a Slayer album as a Debbie Gibson album, and their parents would be none the wiser.

The PMRC also seems selective of the music they want labeled. They always go after heavy-metal acts, because many of their songs deal with risqué topics. Metallica, Guns N' Roses, Judas Priest and Motley Crue seem to be PMRC favorites. They rarely go after rap musicians, and I've yet to see a warning label on a country album. Both these genres often use sex, drugs, alcohol and violence as themes.

PMRC member Sandy Sharpe says the group "has zeroed in on rock music because it is popular with the young-

sters. Country western music appeals to an older listenership." Apparently Sharpe has never lived in the South or Midwest, where country music can be heard at least as often as rock in any high school, or she would realize how popular country music is with teenagers.

I think the real reason the PMRC doesn't go after the country artists is because the country music industry is one of the greatest lobbying forces in Tennessee, and Gore realizes that forcing them to change could cause problems for her husband's political career.

Another problem with the PMRC's goals is the sticky question of who's to decide what's obscene. What may be "dirty" to one person could be perfectly normal to another.

A perfect example of this was brought up at a U.S. Senate committee hearing in 1985 on the topic of rating records. The PMRC quoted the lyrics "this time you cannot rise/ your hands are tied/ your legs are strapped/ a light shines in your eyes/ it's over now, the blade is gonna ride . . ." by the heavy metal band Twisted Sister. Vocalist Dee Snider says the song is about a friend's fear of hospitals and surgery, while the PMRC swears the song condones sadomasochistic sex.

Many of the lyrics the PMRC cites as obscene are taken out of context. They often twist them around to appear worse than they are. They recently charged Metallica with condoning drug abuse and murder because of the lyrics "Drink up/ shoot in/ let the beatings begin/ to see into my eyes, you'll find where the murder lies," taken from the song "Harvester of Sorrow." I wonder if people affiliated with the PMRC ever bothered to actually listen to the song. If they had, they would have realized the song is about a child who has been abused by his parents, and their drug addiction is what caused the abuse.

The PMRC seems to believe rock 'n' roll is the root of all the problems with America's teen-agers. They are using rock music as a scapegoat for problems that should be attributed to parents and society as a whole. Their message seems to be "Don't blame yourself for your kid's problems, it's that nasty rock music that's doing it all."

If they were truly concerned about the welfare of America's children, they would try to do something about the real problems facing teen-agers today and leave rock music alone.

Chuck Squatriglia is a junior journalism major and an assistant news editor for The Battalion.

by Berke Breathed

## Defensive driving prevents deaths and cures insomnia

Some people call it defensive driving; others just call it hell. Regardless of how you refer to it, one thing is certain — it's not much fun.

Believe me. I've taken defensive driving twice, and both sessions can accurately be described in two words: yawn city.

Of course I have no one to blame but myself for taking defensive driving. Nobody forced me to take the course.

But when you get a ticket for speeding or some other traffic violation, defensive driving is often the most logical way to get out of paying the ticket. If the court is agreeable (and most are), you can forgo paying your ticket by deciding to sit through an eight-hour defensive driving course that costs a mere \$25.

And trust me boys and girls — it's worth every penny.

Many of you haven't ever taken one of these courses, so let me just give you an idea of what they're like.

The room where the course is held is filled with chairs and there's a large movie screen in the front of the room. You walk up to the instructor, fill out a paper or two and give him your money.

After enough people show up the instructor starts talking. This particular instructor says he likes to know who his "fastest" students are. (He keeps an informal record of the highest speeds, he says.)

One student raises his hand and announces that he was pulled over for driving 89 mph in a 55 mph zone.

Not bad.

But he is quickly topped by a guy who says he was caught driving 121 mph in a 55 mph zone. A few other students announce their speeds, but no one can beat 121 mph.

Now the instructor announces the all-time record for the students he's taught in previous defensive driving courses: One person got caught going 147 mph back when the speed limit was 70 mph.

That's not too shabby.



**Dean Sueltenfuss**  
Opinion Page Editor

So far the course has been interesting, but after the announcement of the land speed records, the subject matter begins to get dull. Soon the instructor is saying things like "Green means go, yellow means caution and red means stop."

"Is there anyone who doesn't have that?" he asks.

Three people raise their hands.

Next it's time for the first of the eight films that will be shown during the course. These films concern subjects like avoiding head-on crashes and guarding against collisions at intersections.

This first film is titled "It's a jungle out there," and it features a guy in a red jeep who alternately drives along city streets and jungle trails.

And yes, it's as stupid as it sounds.

The other movies aren't much better. They were made in the '70s and they feature struggling actors who auditioned for Cheerios commercials but were turned down. Occasionally these films are so bad they make you laugh out loud, but usually they just make you sleepy.

I apologize if I'm making defensive driving seem terrible. I don't mean to make it sound like a living hell — but I just can't help it.

For those of you who have never taken defensive driving before, let me give you some advice: Don't put yourself in a situation where you will have to take a defensive driving course. Avoid tickets at all costs. Don't speed. Come to a complete stop at stop signs. Never run a red light. And for heaven's sake don't forget to yield!

The thought of having to pay for a traffic ticket should be enough to scare you into driving safely. But if it's not, let defensive driving be your deterrent. You don't want to spend eight hours listening to someone say "Green means go." And you sure as heck don't want to watch 15-year-old films that were made on a \$126 budget with actors who received their training at the Acme School of Drama.

Maybe none of this has convinced you to drive safely. Maybe you still are going to drive 75 mph and accelerate through yellow lights. Maybe you think of a ticket as just being the price you occasionally have to pay for driving dangerously. Maybe it's just a big gamble to you.

It shouldn't be.

I was involved in a two-car accident a few months ago that occurred for one reason: Neither I nor the driver of the other vehicle were paying much attention to what we were doing.

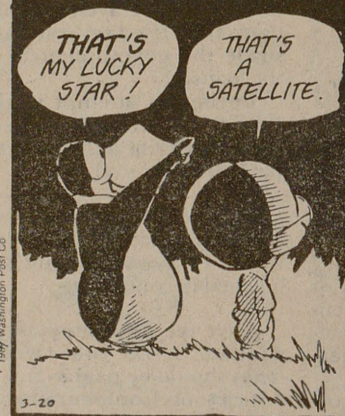
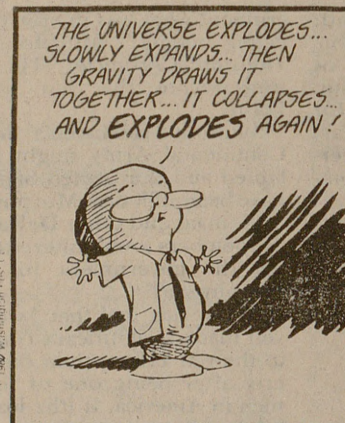
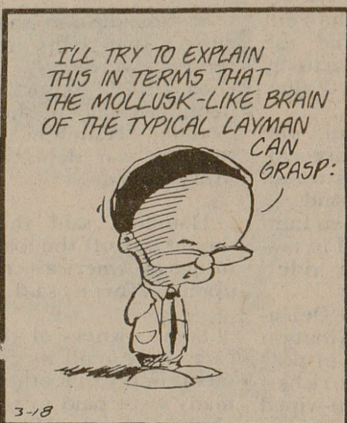
I consider myself lucky that no one was injured in the accident. If someone had died as a result of my bad driving, I'm not sure I could have accepted it.

Sure, defensive driving courses aren't much fun. But the main message taught in these courses is important: If you screw around while you're driving, you're going to kill someone.

I'm just glad I didn't have to learn that the hard way.

Dean Sueltenfuss is a junior journalism major and opinion page editor for The Battalion.

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