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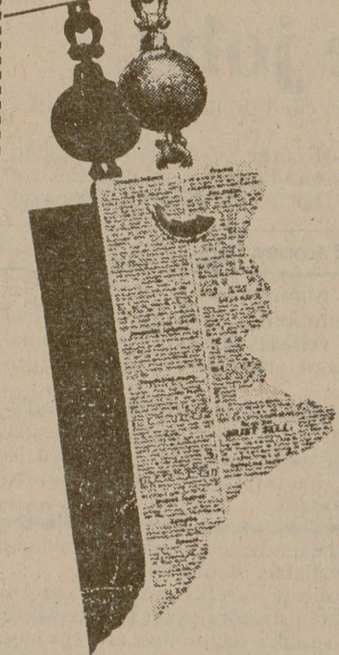
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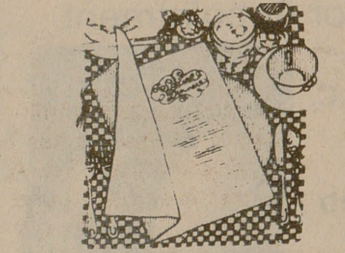


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Instructors: Tabloid TV threatens real journalism

Talk shows often lack responsibility, credibility

By Richard Tijerina
STAFF WRITER

You can watch their shows on any given day and see them explore subjects such as strippers, transvestites in today's job market and women with large breasts.

These hosts include Oprah Winfrey, Phil Donahue, Geraldo Rivera and Morton Downey Jr. Their shows are described as a new type of journalism, but some officials from the Texas A&M journalism department view them as nothing more than potential threats to responsible journalism.

The debate over the increasing popularity of these types of tabloid television shows has heated up over recent years, and journalism officials are wondering whether these shows are going to be a permanent fixture on American television.

Dr. Edward Smith, associate professor of journalism, said these shows have large audiences because the average viewer wants to see these types of topics.

"I think they're popular for the same reason print tabloid journalism is so popular," Smith said. "People enjoy the weird and the peculiar. Most of us lead fairly mundane lives and like to know about all those things. It's just a continuation of 'Ripley's Believe It Or Not.'"

Bob Rogers, journalism department head, likened the shows' success to that of soap operas, saying they are sensational, titillating and have a false sophistication about them. He said people naturally are attracted to shows like these.

Donald C. Johnson, associate professor of journalism and coordinator of student publications, said although he considers these programs a form of journalism, they are not necessarily credible.

"There's no question these shows are journalism, but there's a difference between journalism and responsible journalism," Johnson said. "I don't consider most of them to be responsible because their goals are not to convey truth to the American public."

Rogers said he particularly is offended by Rivera's show because Geraldo pretends to hold journalistic integrity, but actually has none.

Dallas jury clears officer of shooting

DALLAS (AP) — An Arlington police officer has been cleared by a Dallas County grand jury investigating his third fatal shooting in six months, a forgery suspect's death.

Grand jurors on Tuesday declined to indict Brian Farrell in the Feb. 1 shooting death of Michael Wayne Robinson, 21.

Farrell and his partner, Detective Ed Gordon, were confronted by Robinson, who lunged at them with a kitchen knife, officers said. Farrell shot Robinson once in the chest.

Gordon and Farrell were attempting to arrest Robinson on a forgery charge.

Despite the grand jury action, Farrell will no longer carry a badge or firearm while on the Arlington force, Police Chief David Kunkle said Tuesday.

"Brian Farrell will be returned to a job where he does not carry a firearm and does not exercise enforcement authority," Kunkle said.

Farrell's home telephone was unlisted and he did not immediately return telephone calls to his office Wednesday.

Gordon, Farrell and the Dallas officers who investigated the shooting testified at the grand jury hearing.

Tarrant County grand jurors ruled Farrell's use of deadly force was justified in two previous cases. But the shootings prompted his transfer to a low-risk assignment in the forgery unit where he was working at the time he shot Robinson.

Farrell fatally shot two men in August. On Aug. 2, he killed Ray Soto Jr., 32, of Arlington while Soto sat in his pickup on an Arlington street, after a bystander warned police that Soto had a gun.

Three weeks later, Farrell shot and killed Martin Williams, a 33-year-old Fort Worth man who had a history of mental illness, as Farrell and Williams wrestled along Interstate 30.

Kunkle said Farrell will remain on paid administrative leave until completion of an internal affairs investigation, which could take another two to four weeks.

The chief said the investigation will determine whether Farrell acted within the department's deadly force guidelines. If the investigation determines he violated procedure, he could be disciplined or fired, the chief said.

Farrell will be transferred permanently to non-enforcement duty if he remains with the police department, Kunkle said.

"He's an outrage to responsible journalism," Rogers said. "Even the good people in our business have a hard time achieving credibility, and then we have to gain that credibility in the face of people like Geraldo, who think they are journalists but really aren't."

Dr. Don Tomlinson, an assistant professor of journalism, said Rivera's show involves little journalism. He is troubled by Rivera's sensationalistic style.

"I think when you do (what Rivera does), you've lost the journalism and headed straight for entertainment," Tomlinson said. "His audience is the same that reads the *National Enquirer*. They're not interested in learning anything. They're not interested in the truth or even anything that approximates the truth. What they're interested in is a less than civil kind of debate."

Rogers said Rivera's biggest fault is trying to tag himself as a journalist, when all he is trying to accomplish is to obtain high ratings.

"Gerald is so bad because he doesn't seem to have any respect for the truth," he said. "He's simply out to sensationalize. That's obviously bad journalism. . . . It demeans journalism."

Rogers said because of these types of programs, the modern American press faces a challenge to distance itself from other kinds of irresponsible journalism.

"I think it's important for us to be more responsible than we've ever been," he said. "I think the legitimate press has to be responsible al-

most to an exaggerated degree in order to make up for the phone and the frauds that live on the edge of that circle."

Johnson, who considers Rivera the worst of the television hosts, said these kinds of programs all have evolved from the investigative style of CBS's "60 Minutes," which was the idea of informing the American public of certain issues in society.

However, Johnson said newspapers and networks have become increasingly conservative over the last decade or so and tend not to build on that idea.

Smith said these programs resemble the early types of sensationalistic journalism. He doesn't believe the general public confuses these shows with responsible journalism.

"I don't think people view tabloid TV and get it confused with the *Houston Chronicle*, the *Austin American Statesman* or the *Washington Post*," he said. "I think the distance is so far in people's minds that it's not going to be a thing that damages one or the other."

These television shows should be considered more entertainment than any form of journalism, Rogers said.

"(Journalism) has too much of an impact on our lives for it to be treated in cavalier and stupid ways," he said. "It's too important for it to be debased by the mere shock value entertainment of it."

Smith doesn't think there is much

See Tabloid TV/Page 11

In Advance

Mosbacher to speak at annual Lincoln Dinner

By Kelly Brown
STAFF WRITER

U.S. Commerce Secretary Robert Mosbacher will be the guest speaker at the Brazos County's annual Lincoln Dinner. Tickets will be available through Friday for the March 28 event.

Brazos County Republican Party Chairman Rodger Lewis said tickets are \$25 for the fund-raising dinner, which will be at 12:30 p.m. in the College Station Hilton. Persons wanting to be on the host committee may donate \$250.

During the 1988 presidential campaign, Mosbacher, a Houstonian, was President Bush's chief campaign fundraiser as the National Finance Chairman.

As secretary of commerce, Mosbacher will be in a position to affect Texas A&M financially as many A&M projects, especially those in the College of Geoscience, are funded by the Commerce Department. Lewis said

the SeaGrant program estimates its funding from the Commerce Department as having at least a \$60 million local impact.

In a Feb. 13 issue of *Business America*, Mosbacher outlined his priorities for his new position:

- To ensure that trade is a two-way street for American businesses by expanding overseas markets for U.S. goods and services while vigorously enforcing antidumping and countervailing duty laws.

- To support the expansion of new research and development and an increase in America's capability to transfer technological advances into product manufacturing.

- To wholeheartedly support a vigorous national effort to clean up our ocean and coastal environment.

- To ensure that the National Weather Service has the ability to provide accurate forecasts and timely warnings for public safety.

- To ensure a fair and accurate census in 1990.

Housing Enterprise 1989 held in Rudder Hall

Students can learn more about off-campus living at Housing Enterprise 1989 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. today in Rudder Exhibit Hall.

Enterprise, which is sponsored by the Off Campus Center and S.H.A.R.E. — Students Helping Enterprise, will provide information regarding topics such as rent costs, utilities and safety precautions.

KANM holds fund raiser at Brazos Landing

By Juliette Rizzo
STAFF WRITER

KANM will sponsor a benefit Friday at Brazos Landing to raise money to support its operating costs for the semester.

Alex Luke, KANM's station manager, said the benefit may be the last radio station will host as a cable broadcast station. The station is anticipating switching to an FCC (Federal Communications Commission) licensed station in the fall.

Luke said KANM has been hosting benefits since 1984 to raise money to become an FCC station. Because Student Government awarded the station money for this purpose last year, the station is hosting the benefit to pay for the costs it has accrued this se-

Aggie Residents Everywhere — will feature booths with representatives from local apartment complexes and the Bryan and College Station Police Departments.

Representatives will provide information regarding topics such as rent costs, utilities and safety precautions.

The benefit is part of KANM's promotional week to draw attention to the station and expand its listening audience for the fall. Representatives of KANM will be promoting the benefit, passing out bumper stickers and selling KANM T-shirts in the MSC today. T-shirts cost \$8 each.

KANM's semi-annual publication, "The Alternative," also will be available next week.

The benefit will be Friday from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. Two progressive rock bands, Trio of One from Dallas and For Crying Out Loud from College Station, will be performing along with Guidance, a local reggae band.

Admission is \$3 for those 21 and older and \$4 for others. Admission is \$1 less with a KANM T-shirt.

MSC Hospitality sponsors Easter Egg Hunt

All children are invited out to Hensel Park, Area 1, from 2-4 p.m. Saturday, for the First Annual MSC Hospitality Easter Egg Hunt.

Children can meet the Easter Bunny while searching for eggs and prizes. There is no charge, but children are asked to bring their own baskets.

Sunrise meeting to be held Easter Sunday

The Great Commission Students and the Great Commission Church of College Station invites all Texas A&M students and staff to attend a special sunrise meeting beside the pond in Central Park on Easter Sunday.

The program will begin at 6 a.m. and shall consist of traditional hymns, Easter music, and a reading of the Biblical account of Jesus Christ's resurrection.

Following the program, there will be coffee, juice, and rolls in the picnic area.