

He'd rather talk to me than himself. In the Hill, head of the department, would rather talk to Twain than do anything else. Hill, who has been in the Hill since 1986, was the only member promoted to full professor by the Regents March 28. Twain became effective September 1. Hill said he knew school that he wanted to go to. At graduate school, he was at the University of Chicago, writing his dissertation on Cummings, but then he became acquainted with Twain's work. Hill was hooked on Twain's humor. "Mark Twain is such a ticket that I would love to have him all over the place. I have a bunch of books on him. I'm playing the scam for just like the Duke and Huckberry Finn." Hill has indeed been talking about Twain in the United States. He has found surprising similarities in Pakistan, China, and other Western countries. Twain's dialect is difficult to relate to his story, Hill said. In a trade school in the first American to be sure the student

Anybody can fill Geraldo's shoes



Stephanie Stribling
Columnist

Years ago, I might have believed a talk show host had to be knowledgeable, bright, charming, and witty. But Geraldo Rivera has graphically demonstrated that anyone, even those with a seriously deficient IQ, can master the art of talk shows.

All they have to be able to do is make an ass of themselves in front of millions of people on nationwide television. I'm pretty sure I could do that.

I really have a hard time understanding Mr. Rivera's popularity. He has become our nation's village idiot, the man we love to hate. Yet people continue to tune in faithfully every day.

Apparently, the only person who doesn't know that Geraldo is the laughing stock of the nation is Geraldo himself. The Geraldo Rivera show is like Candid Camera on a grand scale, and Geraldo is the unsuspecting victim. I keep wondering when Alan Funt is going to show up.

The network executives are in a conference room somewhere saying:

"Just keep telling him he's a serious journalist — he'll never know the difference." They know if they can keep him baited for the next couple of years, they may set a record for the longest-running practical joke ever played.

Smile Geraldo — you're on Candid Camera.

What frightens me is that there may be more than just a few people who take this man seriously. Ma and Pa middle-America may not understand that this program is deceptively contrived humor. They think Geraldo is credible. They think he's believable. Some may even idolize him.

Pass the alka-seltzer please.

For such a little man, he sure belittles a lot of people. I suspect he might humiliate and degrade his own mother on national television if it improved his ratings. In fact, I really hate to compare what he does with reputable talk-show hosts like Phil Donahue and Oprah Winfrey. What Geraldo does is more like what Morton Downey Jr. does, under the guise of serious journalism.

Except that Morton isn't pretentious. He is an offensive idiot who thinks entertainment is a barroom brawl, and he knows it. He plays on these qualities and is subsequently paid handsomely for it.

Some of you out there may be saying:

"Stephanie, you seem to have intimate knowledge of the Geraldo Rivera show. If the guy makes you ill, why do you continue to watch him?"

That's a fair question. One that I have

asked myself on more than one occasion. Let's just put it this way:

Why do people rubberneck at the scene of an accident?

It's for the same reason that I continue to watch his show. Geraldo is simply an accident waiting to happen. I'm just there to see a little carnage. So far, the man himself has been the only carnage. I'm just sorry I didn't get to throw that chair.

Not only that, it's always nice to see someone more ignorant than yourself in action. For instance, Geraldo did a special on Charles Manson that was a real gem. He tried to match wits with a mass murderer, and found himself losing the set. It was painfully obvious to everyone watching that Manson had outsmarted him.

So what does Mr. Finesse himself do? He calls Manson a lying-scumball-devil-incarnate. Whoa Geraldo, that'll really get him talking.

Not too long ago, Geraldo did a special on satanism in America. He tried to convince us that there has been an explosion of satanic worship in the United States.

Well Geraldo, if there wasn't an explosion there sure is now. Geraldo is the only person I know that can make a subject as perverse as satan worship look attractive.

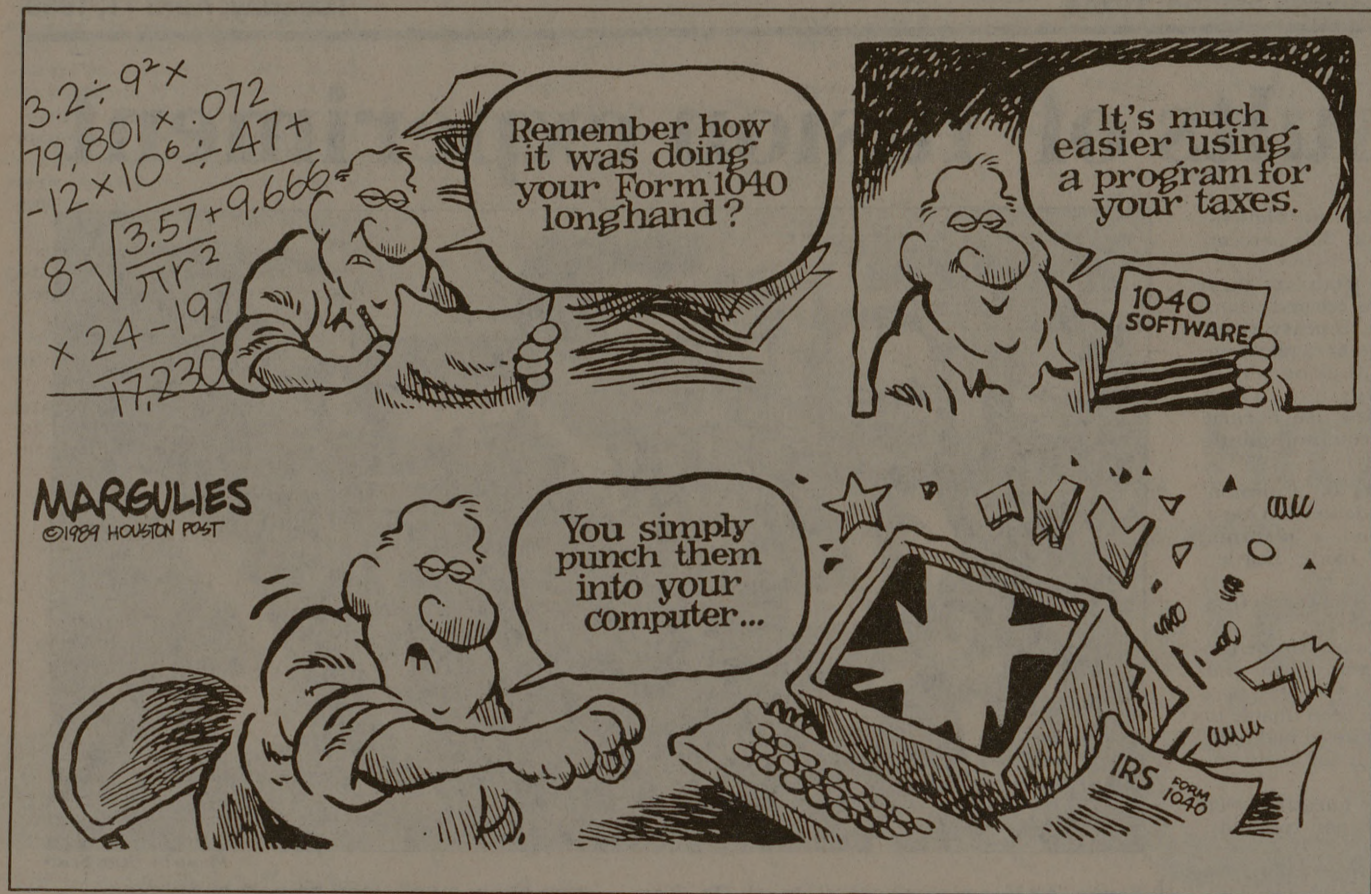
He begins the program by saying: "Parents, if you have small children watching . . . for God's sake get them out! It is critical that they be spared the horror, lurid sex, and perversions that we are about to present."

Hey, if I were a kid, that would sure scare me right out of the room — right out of the room in time to get some popcorn and make myself comfortable.

I think we should make it a moral imperative to get this man off the air. Before long, he'll have us hiding from the martians.

We should put him in a position that he's qualified for — selling encyclopedias.

Stephanie Stribling is a senior journalism major and a columnist for The Battalion.



MARGULIES
©1989 HOUSTON POST

Mail Call

Don't trust the University

EDITOR:

I am writing to warn all students and staff not to trust a verbal contract with the University. How often have I heard to always put agreements in writing and how foolish I was to think that I could trust the school to find all contracts binding.

In the middle of the semester I was lucky enough to get a space in the new parking garage. And even though the space is not convenient to my southside dorm, I needed the space for next year since I am moving off campus. I was specifically told that once I bought a space in the garage I was guaranteed a space every semester until I gave it up.

For this I paid my \$40 and began walking the long trek across campus daily.

Then tragedy struck. I was innocently calling the garage office to ask about parking sticker fee options if I wanted to reserve my space again and was told that since I am changing my status from on-campus student to off-campus student I am no longer guaranteed a space; back to a waiting list.

Both clerks I talked to insist that this is a new policy despite their supervisor's protests that the garage has always operated this way.

In fact, one clerk readily admits telling me that I was guaranteed my space.

Since this contract was made between me and the parking administration via their employee, and since money (my money) changed hands, I see no excuse for breaking the contract. I am appalled not only by the supervisor's unwillingness to admit and amend the problem, but by his lack of concern over the ethics of breaking this contract.

Ann Marie Cotman '91

Corps center needed

EDITOR:

I strongly disagree with the opinion of Mr. Monroe in his April 4 letter regarding the proposed Corps center.

He mentions that the center will take away precious green space on campus. If Mr. Monroe is so concerned with losing park area, why didn't he mention any of the other buildings that are being built on campus.

The fact is that the proposed area is used predominately by the Corps anyway. I have never seen civilian students utilizing this space before.

The remark about our former students finding something better on which to spend is uncalled for. Most "old Ags" are former cadets, and there currently is no place dedicated to their experience here.

The center will also be utilized by Corps staff members who now have no place to work and meet, aside from the guard room and their individual rooms (both of which are hardly suited to running the largest cadet unit in the country).

Regarding the subject of partial treatment of cadets, I regret to inform you that cadets pay the same fees, eat the same food, use the same parking and go the same classes as civilian students. The only difference is that I wear a uniform to class.

Lastly "if the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few," why do we have handicapped facilities on campus?

Matthew Kirk '91

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer.

Being a columnist can drive a person batty

It dawned on me one hectic day last week that I'm in either the wrong line of work or the wrong city. Maybe both.

On the one hand, I had been listening to a black radio talk show, during which dozens of angry callers were comparing me unfavorably with the former Klansman who had been elected as a state legislator in Louisiana.

That's because I had written a few columns about black radio talk shows that permit callers to go unchallenged when they make what to me sound like hate-filled, racial observations or bizarre and paranoid statements that they present as fact.

Because Chicago was in a bitter mayoral campaign, in which race was the overriding element, the tempers of the callers seemed to be bubbling over.

At the same time, my office phone hardly stopped ringing. The remarks of

Mike Royko
Columnist

one woman summed up what the many others said. Her voice almost choking with fury, she said: "You know what you are? You're a nigger-loving, bastard liberal." She elaborated, but it isn't printable.

She and others who shared her disapproval were angry because that day's column was sympathetic to a black postal worker who had been forced to flee from a white neighborhood on the South Side by a stick-wielding thug.

So many people called to express that opinion, I barely had time to field calls from others with a different point of view. They were the blacks who couldn't get through to the radio show, so they

called direct to let me know that I was a no-good white racist.

Having written a column for more than 25 years, I've become accustomed to abuse. It's almost impossible to write anything without making someone angry. If I ever simply wrote that it was a nice day, I'm sure someone would call to say: "Maybe it was nice for you, but it was a lousy day for me. Who are you to speak for others?" Or maybe: "Listen, we all know it's a nice day, so why bore us with the obvious?"

And I've developed a thick hide. Or so I thought. But last week, I would have needed skin that was bone-deep. It was a first for me: being simultaneously called a white racist and a nigger-loving liberal.

In a way, it was educational, showing that to many people there are no in-betweens, no gray areas. For them, life is in black and white.

But I really don't need any more education on that point. Since 1983, when Harold Washington broke the white grip on City Hall, the majority of whites have voted for white candidates, and virtually all blacks have voted for other blacks. Brotherly love in this town means the affection that exists between two guys who have the same parents.

Some candidates and a few dew-eyed preachers talk longingly of reaching out and bringing this city together. It's become a local cliché.

I'm more realistic. Like Harold Washington, I'd be satisfied if Chicagoans could just say "Hey, we're all here, whether we like it or not, so why don't we just make the best of it and show a little restraint and not do or say anything goofy."

That's basically what I was trying to say in the columns that inspired such contrasting reactions. Actually, the reac-

tions were the same. Both groups were telling me the same thing:

"You're either with us or you're against us." Even organizations that call themselves independent take the position: "If you don't agree with everything we say, you are not an independent."

More and more, I'm convinced that the best way to remain sane in this city, and maybe the entire country, is to find a quiet little nook, earn your living in a quiet way, tend your garden, keep an unlisted phone number, don't watch TV news or read newspapers, and look out the peephole before opening the door.

So I'm going to start looking. And when I find it, it's just a matter of persuading my wife that we can make some lovely decorative touches to a cave and there is much to be said for life as hermits. And bats should be no problem. I've become familiar with so much that is batty.

Copyright 1989, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

The Battalion

(USPS 045 360)

Member of
Texas Press Association
Southwest Journalism Conference

The Battalion Editorial Board

Becky Weisenfels, Editor
Leslie Guy, Managing Editor
Dean Sueltenfuss, Opinion Page Editor
Anthony Wilson, City Editor
Scot Walker, Wire Editor
Drew Leder, News Editor
Doug Walker, Sports Editor
Jay Janner, Art Director
Mary-Lynne Rice, Entertainment Editor

Editorial Policy

The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting newspaper operated as a community service to Texas A&M and Bryan-College Station.

Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the editorial board or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty or the Board of Regents.

The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Journalism.

The Battalion is published Monday through Friday during Texas A&M regular semesters, except for holiday and examination periods.

Mail subscriptions are \$17.44 per semester, \$34.62 per school year and \$36.44 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.

Our address: The Battalion, 230 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-1111. Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77843-4111.

BLOOM COUNTY



by Berke Breathed

*This offer is limited regarding these ch