

Mail Call

Don't like it? Don't see it

EDITOR:

Hey guys! Do you really feel it is necessary to pass around a petition to boycott the Aggie Cinema for showing an X-rated movie? Don't you think that's a bit too much? If you don't like what is being shown, then just don't go and see it! It's that simple! Why make a big deal of it, especially when you haven't even seen the movie?

I personally am glad that I am at an institution that supports the showing of any kind of movie, "pornographic" or not. I can understand you getting upset if the movie was triple-X rated — which actually shows penetration. But the one that was shown had only a X rating, which shows frontal nudity and excessive violence at most.

I don't necessarily agree with your belief that "pornography of any kind can potentially lead to sex crimes," although it is plausible that this can happen, especially when the person is mentally ill.

But I can assume that most of men at A&M are somewhat sane, and that we can go to a movie such as "The Last Woman" with an open mind without undoing our trousers and masturbating!

If you really feel that X-rated movies are so bad, then that's fine! That's your opinion and your belief. But as I've already stated, if you don't like it, then you don't have to see it. No one is forcing you to see it or tolerate it.

Mike Turner '90

Censorship not the answer

EDITOR:

I'd like to direct this letter to Jennifer Wolling and Matt DeWoody, the two students who are distributing the petition to boycott the Aggie Cinema because of its showing of "The

Last Woman."

I respect you for stating your views of the pornography issue. It is very rare to see students stand up for what they believe in. However, I do not agree with the measures you have taken.

I believe that if young adults are intelligent enough to gain admittance into this world-class university, they are capable of deciding which movies to watch. By boycotting the Aggie Cinema, you might limit their right to choose. I do not agree that censorship is the answer to the problem.

Texas A&M is a public institution embracing people from many religious, cultural and moral backgrounds. This kind of diversity enables us to not only learn about others, but also about ourselves.

Let's keep this university exactly what it is — universal. Restricting exposure to foreign films because of someone's dislike of the content is not intelligent.

Mari Palou '91

'Smut' pervades A&M campus

EDITOR:

With the recent outcry against pornography in the Aggie Cinema, I decided to take it upon myself to check the campus for other forms of pornography.

I went to the library and looked through the card catalog, (which is, by the way, how I spend all of my free time), for any kind of pornography. And do you know what I found? I found SMUT. Piles and piles of SMUT.

There were Playboy magazines, romance novels, medical books with explicit pictures of male and female genitalia and the book that has perhaps been the greatest threat against life, liberty and the American way: "The Catcher in the Rye." Can you believe our school has this kind of filth in our li-

brary?

Of course I didn't read or look at any of this stuff, I feel I can determine what is filth just by reading the synopsis that is in the card catalog.

To save the students and faculty from themselves, I am starting a petition to get rid of all objectionable material in our library. And who, you ask, should determine what is objectionable? Well, there are two outstanding students right here at A&M. Jennifer Wolling and Matt DeWoody would have our library "clean" in no time. They don't even have to read the books. They can tell if they are pornographic just by their covers.

Of course you can expect research to be a little more difficult with only edited versions of books by Dr. Seuss, but such is the price of freedom.

Felix Pierdolla '91

View it before you condemn it

EDITOR:

I was startled to learn of petitions being circulated by two students protesting the showing of an X-rated film on campus. I have been taught to judge people and objects on content, not appearances, so I was still even more shocked to read that Jennifer Wolling and Matt DeWoody had not even taken the time to see the movie. Their suggestions of a consumer boycott of the Aggie Cinema is an idea that encourages small-mindedness and the stagnation of growth. Film is an artistic means of communication, and, to the benefit of society, the least we can do is view it before we condemn another human being's beliefs or ideals.

Mark Platt '91

Petition creator defends Aggie Cinema boycott

On January 23, 1990 the Aggie Cinema featured a film entitled, "The Last Woman." On the following day a petition was created. The petition reads, "I am 100 percent against the advancement and promotion of pornography of any kind and resolve to boycott the Aggie Cinema the remainder of the semester for their decision to feature an X-rated movie on January 23, 1990." This petition has drawn much attention, both positive and negative. I am writing this letter to address the most common negative responses.

1. You didn't see the movie. This is perfectly true. What if I had seen the movie? The word "hypocrisy" would be bouncing off the walls of Rudder. I did not see "The Last Woman." However, the following information was sufficient to conclude that the film contained at least some pornographic material:

The movie was indeed X-rated. The Aggie Cinema did display numerous

Matt DeWoody
Reader's Opinion

yellow signs warning of potentially offensive "sexually explicit material." Also, Andrew Gardner, of The Battalion Staff, previewed the movie. According to Gardner, the two main characters are Gerard and Valerie who "come to live together in Gerard's apartment, where almost all of the action of the movie takes place." Gerard is "woman-hating" and "makes it clear that to him, sexual prowess is the foundation of manhood." Gardner continues: "Be forewarned that this movie contains explicit nudity and sexual scenes. These scenes are especially disturbing because of their link with Gerard's brutal, animal-like nature. The film also contains an equally disturbing violent scene at the end of

the film. You will be warned about the film's explicit nature several times before entering the theater. Do not take these warnings lightly."

2. The movie was not pornographic. Just because it was X-rated does not mean it was pornographic. I agree that the scenes and language depicted in the film were probably not pornographic all of the time. However, there is no doubt that the movie did contain some pornographic material. An X rating almost always forewarns the viewer of sexually explicit scenes and/or language. Besides, if the film was so Disney-like, why all the warnings? What do you think explicit nudity and sexual scenes are? Webster defines pornography as, "Literature or art calculated solely to supply sexual excitement; obscene literature or art." Read the petition again. It states, "pornography of any kind." "The Last Woman" is a kind of pornography, even if its sole purpose was not for sexual excitement.

3. Don't shove your morals down my throat. I am not. If you wish to view an X-rated movie, go to a privately owned business. I have no desire to be associated with an institution that even remotely promotes any form of pornography and I definitely do not want to support such material through my taxes and tuition.

4. Censorship — we have our rights. Welcome to the United States. It is a fact that law censors numerous aspects of life. Certain behavior, including what we see, hear and say is indeed censored. Why the shock? Without some censorship, we would live in chaos.

5. If you don't like it, don't see it. That is exactly what I did. Thank you for your support. In turn, if you don't like the petition, then don't sign it.

6. The movie was educational and cultural. Even if it was, were there no alternatives? "The Last Woman" was not the only foreign film available that would educate us and make us culturally literate. There are thousands

of foreign films. Why not obtain one that is not so objectionable? The film to be drawn somewhere.

7. What is so wrong with pornography? There is some evidence that pornography can potentially lead to sexual crimes. A&M regularly promotes various safety programs. Date rape, assaults and the like are a significant social problem on our campus, and the Aggie Cinema's decision to show a movie featuring sexually explicit material in no way helps the situation. What if one mentally disturbed person viewed the movie, became sexually aroused and raped someone? Would Lance Parr and his associates be so confident and pleased with their choice? Would he still have not regrets?

We do not want another X-rated movie to be shown on the A&M campus. This is why the petition and the boycott was initiated. This is also why it will continue.

Matt DeWoody is a senior marketing major.

People shouldn't try to turn morality into legislation

A friend once said to me, "It's strange. You can watch murder all you want, but you're not allowed to do it. With sex, it's the opposite: You can do it, but you're not supposed to watch it."

We live in a funny world. Several semesters ago, Aggie Cinema showed the film "Blue Velvet." I had heard a little about it, so I went. The acting was good, the plot strange and the cinematography interesting. Parts of the film were outrageously hilarious. The main antagonist was a sick, brutal sadist. Much of the film was nauseating; the images that haunted my mind for days afterward were profoundly disturbing. I can handle a lot of sex in a movie, and a certain amount of violence as well, but I don't like them mixed up. I eventually regretted having seen the film at all, and would not repeat the experience. Anyone who asks me about it will be told in no uncertain terms why I didn't like it: graphic depictions of sexual violence and torture. This movie,

Jeff Farmer
Columnist

(for what it's worth), was R-rated. The flap about the X-rated film shown by Aggie Cinema a few weeks ago is almost amusing to me, given this previous experience. People seem to be far more interested in the rating than the content; the word "pornography" is being bandied about. From what I have heard about this film, it had a lot more in common with "Blue Velvet" than with "Deep Throat." The film contained some nudity and explicit sex; this is apparently what some people object to. The objections to having this film shown here arise from something very common in our society: confusing legal and political issues with morals. This confusion appears in the debate on many issues of our day, from drug

use and abortion to racial relations and AIDS education. The problem can be stated simply: People often think that just because something is bad, it should be illegal. This leads to attempts to legislate moral choices; these attempts today come almost as often from the political "left" as from the "right" (though on different issues).

Laws and rules exist to protect the rights of individuals to live in peace and freedom as they choose; in doing this they allow us all to live together. Morality is something much different and much larger — it involves choosing honesty over deceit, kindness over meanness, generosity over stinginess, forgiveness over revenge and love over hate. Moral principles operate in every sphere of life and cannot be legislated. Attempts to make people "good" by

passing laws are ridiculous; people are good or bad by their own choice. If you force me at gunpoint to speak kindly to my neighbor, my words have no meaning and no moral content.

Laws are necessary, but enforcement is always problematic — we should resort to making rules only when they are both clearly needed and can be rationally justified. We must resist the temptation to prohibit behavior which is merely stupid or immoral; if the actions do not infringe on the rights of others, respect for freedom demands that we allow them.

In the case at hand, I support those who speak out against sexual violence. I accept the decision of some not to view a film because of its explicit depictions of sex (or violence), and I appreciate the way they have spoken out and tried to convince others that they are right. But

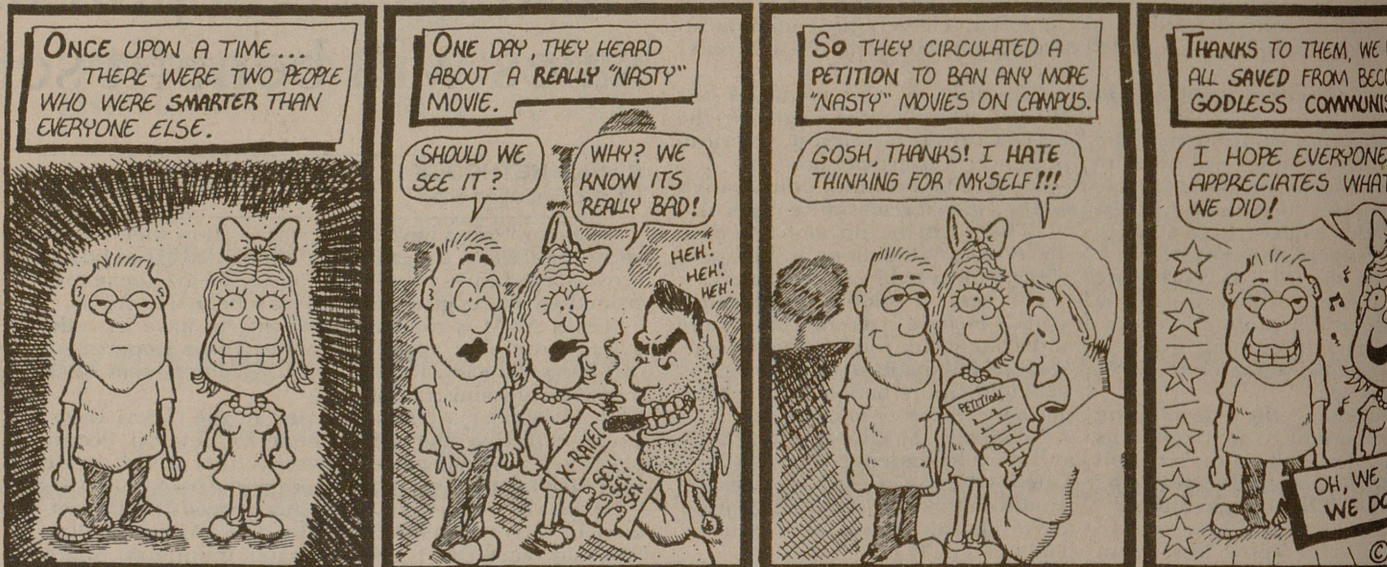
if their goal is to force the creation of policy that will prohibit the showing of film because of its subject matter or content, then I believe they misunderstand both freedom and morality.

To be significantly moral, choices must be free. Morality is also specific to person, place and time; it is bound to the individual choices we make in each part of our lives. Attempts to outlaw prejudice or hatred, abuse of one's body (be it by eating, drinking, using drugs, smoking or surgery), or alternative forms of sexual, artistic, political or social expression invariably fail. Hopefully, they always will — for the day that such attempts succeed is the day that human freedom and morality disappear from the face of the earth.

Jeff Farmer is a graduate student in mathematics.

Adventures In Cartooning

by Don Atkinson



The Battalion

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