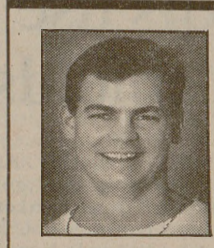


Activists use protests for personal reasons

There are few things that make me want to wretch more than worthless rallies. San Francisco, for instance, is characterized by these. With the Iraqi war raging, I expect to see many rallies, sit-ins, protests and the like.

Worthless rallies are easily identified. They usually consist of a large group of idealistic people, seemingly not having anything better to do than protest reality.

A local newspaper ran a story Monday describing a gathering of about 30 people who met Sunday at the Front Porch Cafe to form a coalition to promote peace in the Persian Gulf. Prospective future events include non-violent protests, teach-ins and communication with members of



Matt McBurnett
Columnist

Congress.

Isn't it a little late, folks? Idealism says maybe the actions of this yet unnamed group will have an affect on someone. Reality says it does not matter. Someone has to stop Iraq's madman. Gee, maybe Jordan can do it. How about those ever-dependable Syrians?

No one wants war. I am stressing we are in a war, we will be in a war, and a

group of 30 or 30,000 will not persuade George Bush to back down.

San Francisco had enough protesters last week to close down a major bridge. If I had been in the bay city and was late for work, or better yet, a tee time, I would have been infuriated by these self-righteous morons blocking my way. What do these people do — protest for a living?

These folks usually say they are content if they convince one person of their beliefs, or change one life. Oh boy, one down, 250 million to go.

I suppose most of us remember the controversy over the MSC expansion. If not, here is the lowdown. A few trees had to be cleared to make room for the MSC to be lengthened and numerous people protested. Or should I say, a few innocent trees had to be ruthlessly annihilated for our own selfish

motives.

As far as I'm concerned, they should have saved the damn things in the bonfire and planted some more. But for some reason, people protested to save those trees!

"These folks usually say they are content if they convince one person of their beliefs, or change one life.

I cannot help but question the motives of the people who rallied for the trees, as I question the motives of most protesters. The decision had been made. The trees had to go. The protesters just wanted to be seen — not

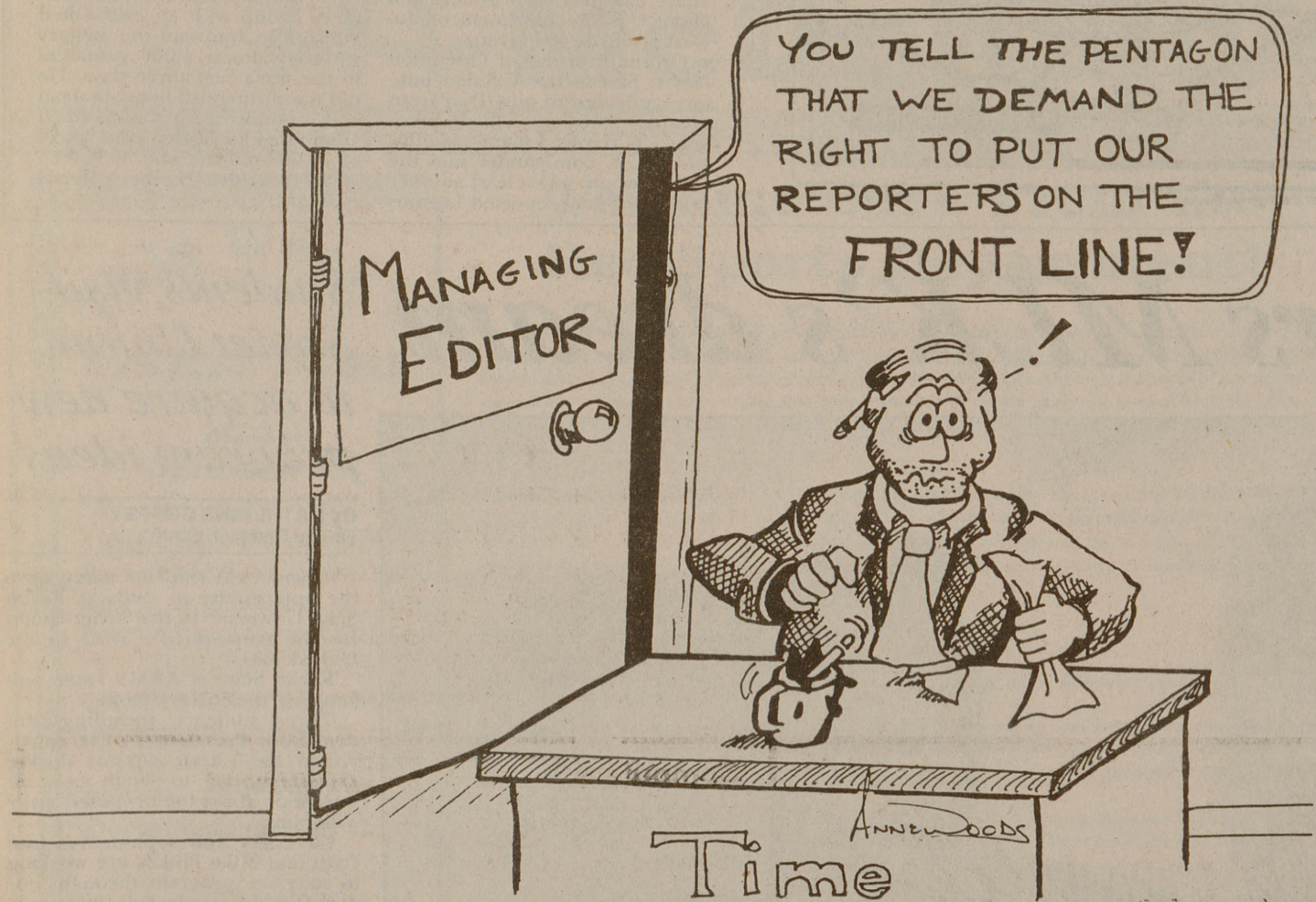
to promote their cause, but to promote themselves.

The decision already has been made about Iraq. They have to go. These feeble protests mean nothing. Not only would these activists have to convince Bush to pivot 180 degrees, the message would have to travel to England, France, Italy and the rest of the United Nations. It will not, but we know that.

And these protesters also know it. They just want to be seen.

I am well aware protesters have a right to do what they are doing. Though, in many instances, reality so overshadows the ideal that all I see is the self-righteousness of the people involved.

Matt McBurnett is a senior electrical engineering major.



Journalists spread biased news

This letter is in response to the column by Dean Sueltenfuss that appeared in the Jan. 15 edition of *The Battalion*.

In reading your column, I immediately noticed the style you used to state your points. I did not realize the responsibility of a "free" press was to form public opinion rather than report it. But I appreciated you pointing that out to me in your column.

In addition, I thought phrases such as "f--- off" were reserved for those individuals unable to convey their beliefs in a socially accepted manner.

I do believe in a free press. But I feel many members of the press are no longer responsible and impartial when they report the news.

At the beginning of the gulf crisis, the press presented reports of atrocities occurring in Kuwait against its citizens. But as the crisis progressed, no new news from Kuwait was reported.

Further, it appears the press has decided this is another Vietnam and their mission is to stop it.

I do not see this as the role of the press. I believe the press should present both sides of an issue and allow viewers or readers to form opinions. For weeks now, I have

Jason Phillips
Reader's Opinion

watched scenes of Iraqis shouting "Down with Bush!" and other slogans on news programs.

I hate to break it to you, but many individuals might not state their actual views for fear that Saddam Hussein's henchmen would execute both them and their families.

In addition, there are countless news stories on war protesters in cities all over the United States. It is interesting to note, however, that the "free" press doesn't state what percentage of each city's population is actually protesting.

I have some questions for you Mr. Sueltenfuss:

- ★ Why has the American public been kept in the dark about how Saddam Hussein gained power in Iraq and how he maintains it?
- ★ Why does the American public need to see "soldiers in extreme anguish?" If I were "blown to bits" in combat, I wouldn't want my family to

watch it, in color, on the evening news. Sorry, but I would want my right to privacy protected.

★ Don't you think United States offensives would be more effective — and less costly in terms of U.S. lives — if the enemy didn't hear it on CNN before it happened? I do. I think a "security review" is necessary in times of war to prevent irresponsible journalists from giving the enemy information that could result in the loss of U.S. lives.

I feel the right to free speech is of great importance. But free speech is both a right and a responsibility. Responsible journalists allow the public to form their own views.

Journalists who are irresponsible usually hide behind the First Amendment and pretend to be the protectors of the rights of the American citizen.

It appears you are well on your way to becoming a "real" journalist. Unfortunately, it appears that the stories you write will be more of the same, biased information that currently passes as "news."

Jason Phillips is a graduate student in business. The letter was accompanied by seven signatures.

Mail Call

Media emphasize anti-war protests

EDITOR:

I feel violence is an unnecessary means to solve any problem. This opinion comes into conflict, however, due to the fact that my father is a member of the elite group of men and women called the United States Marine Corps.

Although I do not believe in violence, I respect my father and all other American men and women who so bravely put their lives at risk when duty calls.

The facts of the matter at hand, however, are that peaceful means of solving the current situation never were ignored by the United States. Instead, every peace proposal that came about was listened to and rejected by Saddam Hussein.

I am totally against the idea of America fighting for oil or for whatever "reasons" that have been given by politicians concerning our presence in the Persian Gulf.

I am not, however, going to ruin my father's morale by protesting this conflict at hand — nor would I ever do that to any other military man or woman in the Persian Gulf.

I feel that the media, especially, are blowing these anti-war demonstrations out of proportion. Our servicemen and women do not need to see or hear of any of this "yellow journalism." I know for a fact that I, as well as other family members of military personnel, would not want our loved ones thinking that we were not supportive of them and their mission because of an over-publicized protest.

I do not know or understand the intentions of the media, but this must be stopped.

If the media want something to report on, let them drive down the street and see all the yellow ribbons in support of our American troops, let them interview the majority of the American people who support and love our servicemen and women, let them interview the families of servicemen and women who, with tears in their eyes and an instilled fear of unknowing proportion in their hearts, will not denounce their support for their loved ones. American men and women in the Persian Gulf do not deserve this.

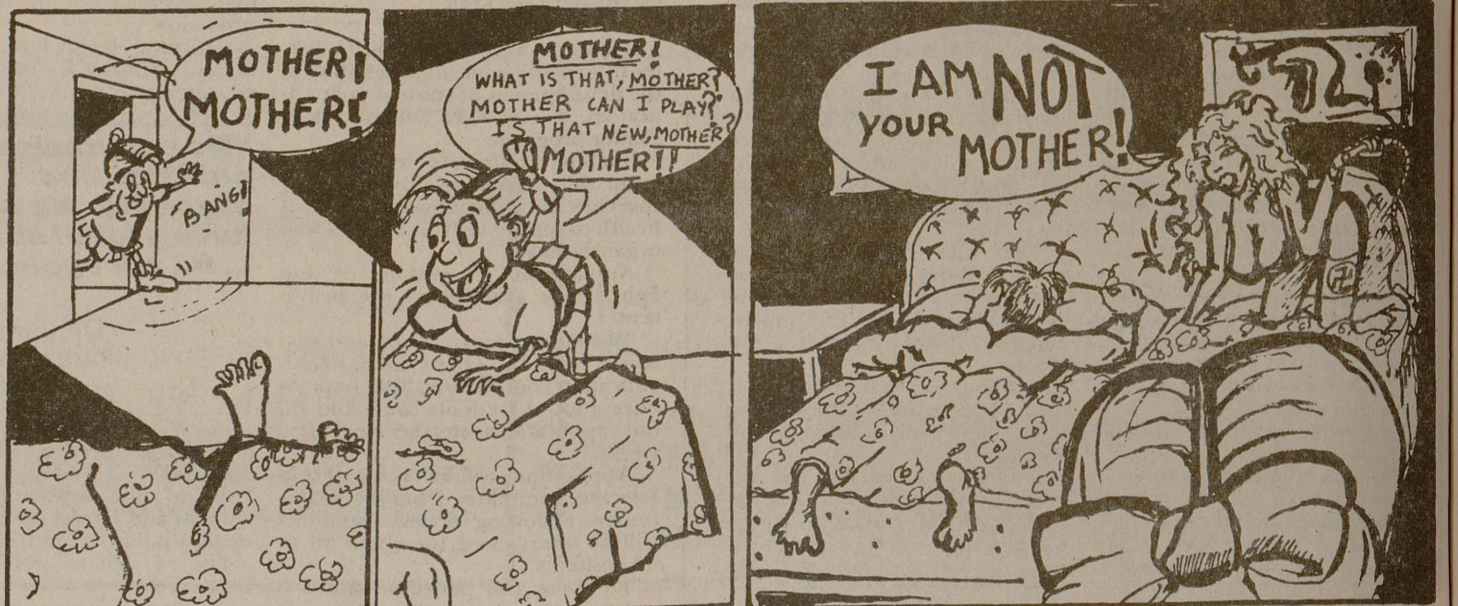
They are risking their lives to preserve the beliefs that every American, anti-war or not, believe in their hearts — freedom for all peoples of the world, no matter how obsolete a group. Our American troops need to hear words of hope and optimism that this conflict will come to an end very soon.

Our armed forces have enough on their minds at the moment without having to worry about whether or not their countrymen and women are behind them.

My father did not spend 20 years of his life to receive this kind of treatment from those unfeeling people who make it a point to publicize this type of rhetoric.

Terri Hooper '94

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by Nito

The Battalion

(USPS 045 360)

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