

Don't censor, just change dial

Upon reading a front page story in The Battalion today regarding TCA's proposed cancellation of the MTV network, I became very concerned. I am not concerned because MTV is the target. I am not personally an MTV viewer. I find the network to have little entertainment value, music or otherwise, and I am personally offended by some of the material shown due to its often sexually exploitative, violent and degenerate nature. Nevertheless, MTV should not be removed from TCA cable.

I stress the word personally in the preceding paragraph to indicate

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my feelings as dictated by my value system and morals. I do not wish someone else to impose his values upon others. By removing MTV, a vocal portion of the B/CS populace it matters not whether it is a majority or minority) will be indirectly imposing its value system upon another portion of the local cable subscribers. Conversely, some may argue that by carrying the network the viewers of MTV are imposing their values upon those who wish it to be canceled. This is not a valid argument, though its lack of validity may be subtle to some. Currently, cable subscribers have the freedom not to watch MTV simply by not turning to the appropriate channel. If the network is canceled then the freedom to watch MTV is denied to all.

The above argument may seem overly philosophical for such a seemingly petty topic. The primary reason some wish to cancel the MTV network is due to their children having access to the channel. Six to seven years ago, in my home town, such a situation occurred. A justifiably concerned group of parents wanted to ban MTV from the local cable service. Unfortunately, due to their social prominence, this group succeeded in having MTV removed from the local cable service. The just solution in both that case and the current dilemma is to have MTV

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Reader's Opinion

removed from a household upon request, not by default. While it may be easier to eliminate the network from TCA's feed entirely, or profit by charging those who wish to keep MTV, neither can be deemed as ethical. However, it would be ethical (though not necessarily "nice") to bill those who choose not to view MTV for an RF filter if they feel it necessary. It is indeed ethical since he may choose not to view MTV although its feed reaches the home by, again, simply not turning to MTV's channel.

Furthermore, parents should hopefully be able to direct their children not to watch MTV. Parents who ask society to censor itself for their children's sake are naive. Strong parents can instill values in their children in such a way that censorship is unnecessary in the long term. Censorship in a child's formative years can be accomplished by the parents. A steadfast value system is only achieved when weathered by the chaos that is the morality of society. I prefer the freedom to raise my children according to my doctrines and not those of society. Children who are prohibited from watching MTV because of censorship only, not by the guidance of a good parent, will inevitably suffer. They will suffer because their values will be dictated by society and not by their parents.

Another issue that is brought into the limelight is that of cable monopolies. In every city of which I am aware, there is a single cable company. This makes for a monopoly in every town. I am not versed in the legality of this situation, but it seems to the layman that competition might improve cable service. If cities would allow other cable companies to operate in a locale, then possibly our current problem would be as simple as changing cable services to one that opted not to censor. Competition might also have the side effect of lowering subscription rates. Presently, the responsible civil action for many will be to cancel TCA cable.

Mark Kirk is a senior electrical engineering major.



MAIL CALL

The Battalion is interested in hearing from its readers and welcomes all letters to the editor. Please include name, classification, address and phone number on all letters. The editor reserves the right to edit letters for style and length. Because of limited space, shorter letters have a better chance of appearing. There is, however, no guarantee letters will appear. Letters may be brought to 216 Reed McDonald or sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111.

Healthy diet can include meat

EDITOR:

As nutritionists, we are concerned that people receive sound nutritional information. The quality of their lives can depend on it. We worry more about people like Michael Worsham (The Battalion, June 25, 1991) who, without any real knowledge of human nutrition, propose significant dietary changes for the rest of us.

There is no excuse for allowing any contamination in our food supply. We would agree that inspection systems must be first rate, and the Congress and the people ought to look into possible failures. Tofu, too, may be contaminated in processing, and otherwise made less wholesome. That has nothing to do with nutritional importance of either tofu or animal products.

Admittedly, being fat holds a risk for coronary heart disease and we would like to see people eat much less fat — animal or plant. Strokes result mainly from excess salt in the diet. Osteoporosis is diminished, not caused by, milk products consumed mainly while young, but also through life. Diabetes is hereditary and requires dietary management, but occurs in vegetarians as well as non-vegetarians. Obesity is found among many who eat plant-centered diets. Animal products are the main source of vitamin B12, iron and zinc for people in North America. Interestingly, those populations that consume

animal products live longer than those who do not.

As for the John Robbins book, it reads well, but is so full of error and myth that it merits little real consideration.

Robert Hagevoort
Jon Moritz
nutrition graduate students

Students should support MTV

EDITOR:

In response to the issue over TCA Cable's cancellation of MTV, I call all Aggies to stand up, pay attention and take action. We're paying for a service, and we expect that service to include the availability of MTV.

Aggies, we don't have to sit back and let them take away our option to watch what we want! If you and every other Aggie reading this letter now call TCA and cancel your subscription, TCA will have to listen to our demands. TCA will have to find a way to provide MTV (not VH1 or any other measly substitute!) TCA will listen if we Aggies, all 10,000 or so of us, work together on this.

As soon as you get home today, call TCA Cable and cancel your subscription immediately. If we do this together, it will work.

Dana Frazer '93
Cynthia Fridley '93
Phyllis McAadoo '93

Two Views on The Supreme Court

Recent decisions reveal court's ultraconservative agenda

imposing limits on the freedoms of United States citizens.

To recap some of the more obviously conservative decisions the Supreme Court has made:

Police have the right to search passengers on a bus without warrant or even suspicion of a crime.

Prison inmates do not have an automatic right to counsel if they are being questioned about crimes of which they are not accused.

Federally funded family planning clinics cannot advise pregnant women about abortion options, even if the women initiate the questioning.

State prison inmates have limited rights when appealing to federal courts.

These are a few of the more clear-

Timm Doolen

Editor

cut cases in which the Supreme Court has limited our rights as citizens. If this trend continues, freedom in America will become more and more restricted.

Recently on "This Week with David Brinkley," former federal appeals court judge Robert Bork said he believed Roe v. Wade would be overturned within the next year. Is this still America we live in?

In all fairness the Court has made a few decisions that could be considered liberal or protecting the rights of citi-

zens, such as extending the Voting Rights Act to include judicial races. But those few decisions do not excuse the many restrictions the Supreme Court is imposing on us.

With it looking likely that Bush will be elected for another four years, by the end of Bush's reign we could have an entire court nominated by Reagan or Bush — two of the most conservative presidents in this century.

With more conservative nominees on the horizon, America is looking like a scary place to live. Conservative judges have normally exercised judicial restraint, but the Rehnquist court seems to be involved in judicial activism.

Judicial restraint is a strict, unbiased approach to interpreting the law rather than using the law to effect

social change, and obviously the Rehnquist court has been violating this doctrine.

Having a narrow interpretation of the Constitution and federal law is one thing, but promoting a conservative agenda is quite another. I would not mind so much except the decisions seem to be made along strict ideological lines, without regards to how it affects the citizens of this country.

So with our Constitutional freedoms being slowly taken away, I've decided once I graduate I will move to Holland, or Switzerland, or any place that has more freedom than the United States — maybe somewhere in Eastern Europe.

Timm Doolen is a senior computer science major.

Todd Stone

Managing Editor

diction of this ruling. But there are others as well.

First, news organizations and their reporters may be less willing to enter into a confidentiality agreement. Why take such a risk when any misunderstanding or obvious breach of promise could lead to a lawsuit?

Since unidentified news sources may be used less now, information to the public could be significantly lessened. This restriction of information limits expression which the First Amendment was written to protect.

Second, what if knowing the source is important to the public? The public's right-to-know is hindered by this ruling. For example, imagine University President William Mobley informed The Battalion or The New York Times that the Texas A&M Board of Regents was composed of communists. But Mobley would only provide the evidence if his identity was protected.

Certainly, the A&M public would want to know the source as much as the news. Often, the news source is as important as the news itself.

Although there are several reasons to criticize this ruling, some argue that unforeseen benefits are possible.

Again, since reporters may use confidential sources less, reporters may work harder for more reliable and

revealing news sources; thus, more credible information may be available.

Further, sources that in the past would never offer information, even as an anonymous source, may reconsider, knowing that he or she has legal rights if the confidentiality promise is broken.

Discussing the possible pros and cons of this ruling is a shot-in-the-dark at best. If the Supreme Court's goal is to clarify legal issues, then, it has failed with this ruling.

Confidentiality is already a difficult legal and ethical dilemma. The Supreme Court has only clouded an already complex issue with more questions than answers.

Todd Stone is a graduate student in business.

Source confidentiality ruling leaves unanswered questions

On Monday the Supreme Court ruled that a reporter's promise of anonymity to a news source is legally binding, and that the reporter and news organization may be sued for breaking such a promise.

The Court's ruling asserts that an agreement of confidentiality is a legal contract between the reporter and the unidentified person.

Indeed, it is easily argued that the basic aspects of a legal contract are present. There are two parties promising to give something for something else — reporter gets information, news source gets identity protection. So, when a reporter breaks this promise, a legal contract has been broken as well. This ruling may clarify that

promising anonymity is a contract, but many other issues now are raised.

What if a judge were to order a reporter to reveal the identity of a confidential source? In the past, if the reporter refused to comply with the court, he or she would face penalties for contempt. If the reporter revealed the source, that reporter breached journalistic ethics.

With Monday's ruling, the reporter faces a damned-if-you-do, damned-if-you-don't situation with the law. If the reporter protects the source, that reporter receives fines or jail for contempt. If the reporter reveals the source, he or she faces a lawsuit.

Don Tomlinson, associate professor of journalism at A&M who teaches media law, says this is the key contra-