

Media should deliver objective information

Criticisms of political correctness could ruin efforts toward advancement of multiculturalism

How long for the days when "PC" just meant "personal computer." I've read so many articles about "political correctness" during the past year I can hardly believe it. Next to the Gulf War and the end of the Soviet Union, this seems to be one of the most talked about issues of 1991.

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have gone into any detail about their examples of PC behavior - they just list them in bunches for their readers to laugh at or be appalled by. The background of the situation is necessary, however, if we want to have a clear understanding of why the activists acted in the way they did.

One example of this is an Atlantic Monthly cover story on the issue. The cover art depicted a group of students chanting "Hey, hey, ho, ho, Western Culture's got to go." However, it was not until the reader had made it deep into the story that it was made clear the students of an eastern university who had used the chant were protesting not against "Western Culture" as a whole, but against western culture, a block of required classes in literature and philosophy that did not consider any ideas that were originated outside of western thought.

In two other articles that mentioned the same chant, no mention was made of "Western Culture" being a specific block of required classes.

Clearly, in this instance, a little information makes a lot of difference. But most of the time, such information isn't available unless the media offers it. How will we know, when we see the next list of PC sins, if there are extenuating circumstances that could help shape our opinions?

Many universities and colleges, like Texas A&M, haven't been the site of huge marches or sit-ins by students who want to increase multiculturalism in the classroom.

Instead, at those schools, there have been multicultural classes installed in programs by concerned educators who realize the importance of a multicultural education, and who don't believe in the silly idea that if we read Toni Morrison, we soon will refuse to read Chaucer. Where's the coverage of that?

The continuing PC and multiculturalism bashing could undermine those programs which are doing a good job. As long as "liberal journalists" keep taking potshots at their extremist PC brothers and sisters, classes like ours that are working may be caught in the crossfire.

If the mass media do not want to say multiculturalism is the greatest thing since sliced bread, that's fine. Just give us the whole story - objectively, for once.

Most of the articles have been about college and university campuses and the war between the PC, who say they merely want to give the schools an injection of "multiculturalism," and the defenders of Western tradition of literature and art, who say they are, or soon will be, battling censorship in the classroom.

Also, most articles have been analytical or persuasive. That means the personal opinion of the writer comes into play. And the opinion of most of the writers is that PC is bad. Even the progressive Utne Reader carried a less than glowing report of PC shenanigans.

Unfortunately, at a school like

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Texas A&M, the opinion of those writers are all we've got to go on. We haven't seen it for ourselves. There is no great outcry for or against multiculturalism in the classroom, though it does have its proponents, and it is in our curriculum. Some of the classes offered by the University include American ethnic literature, Blacks in the U.S. since 1877 and the sociology of Mexican Americans, to name a few. Still, we're moderates.

But the one-sided media coverage still could do us some damage. It could make students, faculty and administrators think less of classes which have a multicultural slant. That would be a shame - they're good classes. The media really doesn't need to become an advocate of political correctness, but it does need to make more of an effort to help us understand the issue through objective reporting.

One of the main problems with opinionated pieces on PC is very few



Televised state executions will benefit advertisers

In the plastics factory doing the manual labor-summer job thing in my earplugs and hairnet, I thought, "Wow, I'm so glad I'm not in prison doing this for free." Then I began to ponder a recent legislative possibility in the Sunshine State - you know, Florida, rest stop on the highway to heaven.

It came to pass that the friendly Floridians - the same folks who brought you Epcot and Disney - struck upon a brilliant, dare I say, enlightening, or even worse, electrifying idea of publicly televised executions.

Needless to say, it's a heck of a lot more controversial than the Class of 2000, and darn it, it's almost as much fun.

But before I climb upon the throne of evangelism, an explanation of publicly televised executions is required so the uninformed masses will be in the know. Publicly televised executions are exactly that: death penalty a la prime time, i.e., electric chair sandwiched between "The Flash" and "Quantum Leap."

The moral basis for this lovely piece of legislation is along the lines of the old "teach by example" method. In Saudi Arabia, your hand is cut off if you are caught stealing. Fellow countrymen see their shamed amputees and decide not to steal so they may retain all of their appendages. Therefore, Saudi Arabia has a remarkably low crime rate.

The logic follows, if we can tune into "bloodfest" on prime time with remote control in hand, in the comfort of our own Laz-E-Boys, we'll be shocked into submission, and we won't go cutting off people's heads and sticking them in our refrigerators. Not only is a lesson to be learned here, but also a profit to be made. It worked for "The Terminator." It can work for network TV.

First, consider the Super Bowl. Commercial space for Super Bowl '91 sold for millions of dollars. The Super Bowl is nowhere near as graphic and violent as a blockbuster Arnold Schwarzenegger movie, and the Bud Bowl doesn't even get that rowdy. Now imagine what would happen if, on some placid Sunday evening after watching "60 Minutes," we could all tune in to a real life execution!

Think about it! It's not every day (except on the news) you get to see people really die! And it's not every day you get to see real, hardened criminals fry! I'd watch it, and chances are, so would every other Nielsen household in America. And ad agencies would pay attention to the fact that the first televised execution was watched by more viewers than all the Super Bowls combined.

And the commercial time for the next execution would be outrageously expensive. And corporate America would be very happy indeed. And, the revenues generated from the commercial time alone would cover all expenses involved in the appeals process and all that legal stuff. So all you people who maintain it's too expensive to "give 'em the chair" can

just shut up.

Unfortunately, I don't think the three major networks would touch it. Too controversial. Too graphic. Too many opportunities for people like Tipper Gore to whine.

But that's why we have the Fox network, isn't it? I'm thinkin' a little tag-team action with their highly successful "America's Most Wanted" show. We catch 'em. We kill 'em. And all in the comfort of our own homes.

Of course, if Fox really wanted to cash in, they could take a lead from the great state of Louisiana and turn it into a gambling bonanza. Think of the possibilities! Fox could do the "Rock 'em and Shock 'em Lottery."

Members of a studio audience could bet on how many amps would be required to kill the person on the "hot seat." (Hey, we're not gender specific here).

Individual bets would be logged into a computer, and the eyes of America would watch as the executioner slowly turned up the heat until the poor sucker was twitching like fresh roadkill on hot Texas blacktop. Then, members of our studio audience who picked the lucky number would be able to claim valuable cash prizes and merchandise.

But wait, there's more! It's a bookie's dream!

A whole industry could very well spring up overnight based on publicly televised executions. A new partnership between media and gambling interests would be forged.

Bookies could run the line on what the hardened criminal's last meal would be! The last cigarette? The last words? The last request? Do their eyeballs stick to the glass or do they slide off? (Do you actually think we, the viewing public, would settle for watching an electrocution with a bag over the hardened criminal's head?) Think of the possibilities, and I'm just an English/history

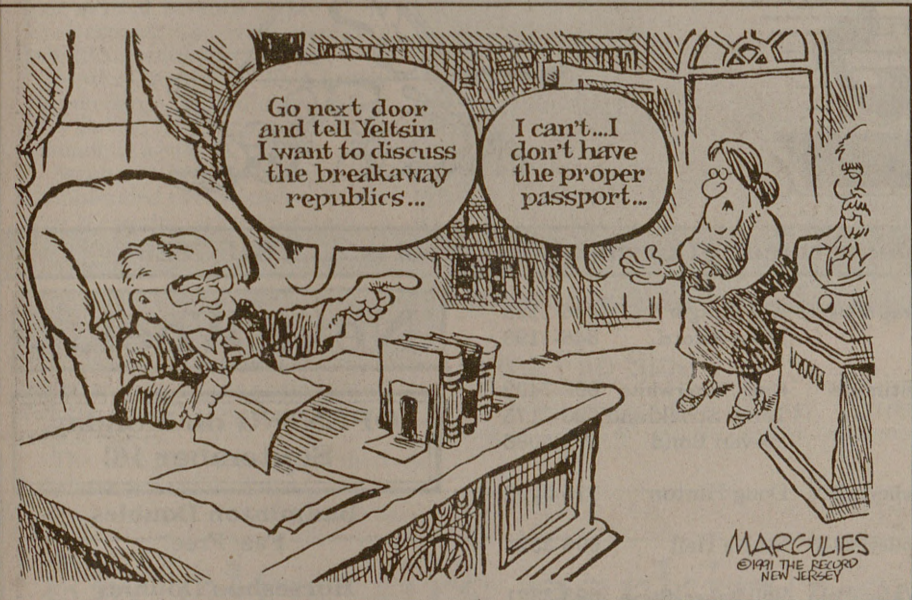
major. Sadly, though, the novelty would wear off after about 10 chair fries. After all, the average viewer of primetime television has an attention span of about seven minutes or so. Then what? You can only watch "The Terminator" so many times before it gets old.

Eventually, ratings would drop, and America would turn back to the thrills of Roseanne Barr. That's where MTV comes in. Those people will do anything. After all, they did Milli Vanilli.

So why not put it to music? Imagine, sequences of electrocutions to the cannon fire in Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture! Drawings and quarterings to Travis Tritt's "Here's a Quarter, Call Someone Who Cares!" Chemical castrations to Bon Jovi's "You Give Love a Bad Name!"

Sounds like a plan to me. Place a couple of bets. Call the gang. Grab a few brews and watch the heads fly. And just think of the possibilities!

Remember, you heard it here first. Publicly televised executions: the shock wave of the future.



Mail Call

Where does our money really go?

It's that time of year again - dealing with Texas A&M administration.

As a senior, I have finally wised up to the motive of several of their policies - more MONEY! This semester, I have encountered two problems that reinforces this.

First, I needed to buy a bus pass for only one semester, since I am co-opting in the spring. However, I was unable to do this because bus passes only can be purchased for a full school year.

This means they are getting more money up front and are able to invest that extra \$55 for a full semester for every departing co-op student and graduating senior because we cannot receive the pro-rated difference until January.

Second, I lost my ID card. The cost was \$12.

For an incoming freshman, the cost would have been \$5. I had already paid \$4 for "maintenance renewal." They said the \$4 would not count toward the \$12.

This makes no sense. It's obviously only \$5 to produce a new card with all your options. This would leave \$7 for maintenance. Yet, it's only \$4 for maintenance at the beginning of the semester.

I asked the ID representative. She said, "call

fiscal." I called fiscal. Fiscal said, "call fees." In other words, pass the buck.

I realize these two situations involved less than \$100, but if you multiply that against the thousands of Aggies who face these problems, we're talking big bucks!

I love Texas A&M, but it seems that administration makes me more resentful every year.

-Margaret Clark '92

Stay off of MSC grass when boarding buses

Poor planning! That's all I have to say to the bonehead who decided to make six buses stop in front of the MSC. This is a high-traffic area at all times of the day. The most upsetting part of it all is the MSC grass is being trampled. It already looks bad enough because of the construction, and by the end of the week, it will look like a bomb was dropped on it! Of course, I guess we could just pour some cement over it. You never can have too much concrete or construction. I thought the MSC lawn was supposed to be a living memorial to those Aggies who died in war. Let's get with the program people. This is a fine tradition which we need to continue to observe!

-Liska Lewis '92

Have an opinion? Express it!

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