



The Battalion Editorial Board

Jason Loughman, editor in chief

Mark Evans, managing editor

Stephanie Pattillo, city editor
 Dave Thomas, night news editor
 Mack Harrison, morning news editor

Kyle Burnett, sports editor
 Anas Ben-Musa, AggieLife editor
 Billy Moran, photo editor

The Battalion



100 years at Texas A&M

EDITORIAL

'1984' revisited

NSA should not crack codes

A recent decision by the Clinton administration threatens the freedom of every private citizen in America.

The electronics industry has developed a microchip that scrambles telephone signals used in conversations, modem and fax transmissions. This piece of equipment, called a Data Encryption Standard (DES) chip, renders phone calls immune to wiretapping.

In these days of computerized records and advanced electronics, the average American's right to privacy is constantly being eroded. Already, anyone with a radio scanner can listen in on cellular phone conversations.

Furthermore, if someone knows another person's Social Security number, he or she can find out practically everything there is to know about that person. Computer theft and fraud is a routine crime these days.

And recently, the FBI warned several U.S. companies that they were the espionage targets of French intelligence organizations.

The DES chip would give both private citizens and corporations a defense against such invasions of privacy.

The National Security Agency, however, does not want the DES chip to hit the market unless the NSA possesses the means to decipher it. The agency claims it needs a key in order to decipher communications from foreign powers and

criminal suspects. Instead, the NSA needs to get off its duff and figure out a way to crack the chip on its own; it should not put a leash on private industry.

At the current rate of technological progress, what's state-of-the-art today is outmoded junk tomorrow. Eventually the NSA will figure out a way to crack the chip; eventually industry will build a better one.

Why should business have to be held back because the NSA can't keep up with technology in the private sector?

Unfortunately, the Clinton administration has decided to back the National Security Agency's request to impose a universal encryption standard which would allow the NSA to unscramble these communications.

The Clinton administration should forbid the NSA to tell private business how to run its act.

This kind of power in the hands of a government agency is dangerous because it could be easily abused. Corrupt federal employees could use it to steal corporate secrets or eavesdrop on "subversives." In addition, the NSA will have to store copies of the key in computers, which are easily broken into by hackers and industrial spies.

The Clinton administration has taken a step back in time — to the "1984" of George Orwell. President Clinton should do the right thing and send Big Brother back to the pages of fiction.

Trials and tribulations of a TV-holic

3,000 channels provide endless hours of entertainment

Let's get one thing straight here and now. I am NOT a TV-holic. I can do fine without TV. It's just that it relaxes me, that's all. Sure, I could go a whole day without TV. What are you, nuts? I've done it lots of times. I am not addicted to TV.

OK, there. I've entered the first stage: Denial. As someone once said, "Denial ain't just a river in Egypt." So if it's true that denial is the first stage, then I figure I've already begun to solve my problem. I deny it all the time.

When I wake up in the morning, do I run to the bathroom to prepare for the new day? Nay, I say. I stumble to the television set groaning, "Katie, Joan... 'morning, ladies." I need my morning dose of happy talk.

"But, Robert, you have a lot to do today," the voices say to me. "Shhh!" I say. "Joan's talking."

The voices are right, of course. They're always right. There's homework. The never-ending tons of homework. There are errands to run, people to do, things to see. Yet, there I sit, helpless; bound by the endless hours of programming on the 3,000 channels which I flip through, on a continuous rotation, with the simple touch of a button.

I may be flabby around the middle, but you'd better watch out for the muscles in my remote control thumb. They're huge. Couch potatoes have big thumbs. Now you know.

I do have my standards, though. In my orgy of television viewing, I don't settle for just any mindless fare. I justify my — "habit," shall we say — by watching as much educational programming as possible. From CNN to the Discovery channel, if it's informative, I'll stare at it.

One thing I will not watch is "Barney," that obnoxious purple dinosaur who has a thing for kids. Any show that allows animals to sing "I love you. You love me..." to helpless, innocent children should be banned from the airwaves.

It's just sick. I mean those kids are at a very impressionable age in their lives. What will their therapists think

when a whole generation of kids reveal that their problems in building lasting relationships are rooted in their undying love for an overweight dinosaur? And all for the sake of marketing. Tsk, tsk.

No, I prefer shows with more substance. News shows like "20/20," "60 Minutes" and "House of Style with Cindy Crawford" will keep me from homework any day. I still learn a lot by watching these shows.

Just the other day, my roommate and I were watching "The CBS Evening News with Connie Chung and What's His Name" when we learned that people reportedly were finding special prizes in their Pepsi cans. Instead of baseball cards and bubble gum, these lucky players found syringes. Why would a company place syringes in their product, I wondered.

"Maybe Pepsi's just trying to encourage people to buy their 'Crystal' Pepsi," one friend suggested.

"I think this is probably the most brilliant marketing scheme Coke has come up with," another said.

"These cola wars have everyone on pins and needles," still another one suggested. We made him leave.

Still, it seems the information relayed through TV has become endless. Unfortunately, so has the amount of time I spend watching it.

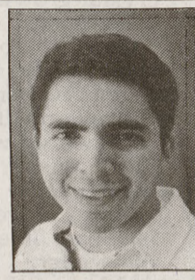
I need help. There, I said it. I feel better already. I figured if I got my problem out in the open, I might have a better chance at recovery.

I don't know what happened. I mean, it started out with one or two shows a day. Then I was watching two and three hours in one sitting. Soon, it was an all day TV marathon. I had become a chain viewer.

There's hope, though. I've never been addicted to anything before. And I'm getting better. Today, I watched only five consecutive hours. I'm cutting down, really. Soon, my roommate will be moving out and taking his television set with him. Then, I won't have a problem at all. My TV will be gone.

I need a drink.

Vasquez is a senior journalism major



ROBERT VASQUEZ
 Columnist



... THEY HAVE MADE THEM A MOLTEN CALF, AND HAVE WORSHIPPED IT (EXODUS 32:2) ...

COLLEGE STATION, TX

JUNE 22

MAIL CALL

1993

Students to support multicultural classes

In response to Dr. Reynolds' guest column, I must make a few observations about what I see between the lines. Reynolds calls for "good Ags" to do something, presumably an "organized opposition" and "insurmountable resistance" in the form of civil unrest. Where is this opposition going to come from? I would postulate that it is not going to come from the students directly, but from those on high that will manipulate the student organizations to present "insurmountable resistance." Reynolds urges us to remember that tensions on campus are in our future. I am inclined to agree with him. However, this tension will not be a sponta-

neous combustion of student outrage; it will be a carefully planned and executed exercise to bring pressure upon the Board of Regents and the administration to override the multicultural course requirements.

I believe that students on this campus are intelligent and forward-looking enough to realize that it is necessary to have at least a little understanding of those unlike ourselves.

Reynolds is correct that the university depends on the goodwill of the Texas taxpayers. He is also correct in asking the question of "Are we entitled to this goodwill?" Of course we are! Part of the responsibility of the University is to ensure that it is living up to the expectations and wishes of the taxpayers.

The taxpayers of Texas are not all white, nor all they all male. The issues that are important to taxpayers are the

issues that are important to the University. There is no average taxpayer; every person's input (be they male, female, or of any color or culture) is important. Some would do well to remember that.

Wade W. Burton
 Class of '93

Baptist Convention blurs homosexuality

The Southern Baptist Convention recently decreed that their churches have to condemn "homosexuality."

Since I have been reared a Baptist, I will share the "reasoning" religious bigots employ, and then show how absurd it is.

Because obviously all homosexuals go to hell, but everyone has the opportunity to go to heaven, the religious bigots have to be able to separate the nebulous "homosexuality" from the person. Thus, they reduce something as complex as personal identity to a sexual act.

Therefore, a homosexual who is celibate is not really a homosexual (otherwise he would be damned, in more

ways than one).

He may desire, fantasize, dream about, and long for someone of the same sex while being repelled by heterosexual intercourse, but that person is not a homosexual, at least as defined religiously.

Thus, celibate homosexual = heterosexual.

I wonder, does celibate heterosexual = homosexual? If it doesn't, why not?

Whether a person is a homosexual or a heterosexual has nothing to do with physical actions, but it does have everything to do with natural desires (expressing those desires is irrelevant to the equation). This differs from the clever analogies used by religious bigots.

If we could separate the acts of murder or adultery from a murderer or adulterer, he would no longer be either.

However, if you separate intercourse from a homosexual, you still have a homosexual.

This conclusion corners the religious. They can declare that 10 percent of the population is destined for hell, and not even faith can save them. Or, they can admit that the church has, as it did during its support of segregation, blindly followed a hateful majority and

conformed the Bible to popular notions.

Instead of doing the right thing, they did the acceptable thing.

The Falwells of the world need to get a grip.

A celibate homosexual is not a heterosexual but a suicidal homosexual — which, it could be argued, was the goal of the religious wrong the whole time.

Kenneth Brobst
 Class of '94

Editorials appearing in The Battalion reflect the views of the editorial board. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions of other Battalion staff members, the Texas A&M student body, regents, administration, faculty or staff. Columns, guest columns, and Mail Call items express the opinions of the authors. The Battalion encourages letters to the editor and will print as many as space allows in the Mail Call section. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class, and phone number. Contact the editor or managing editor for information on submitting guest columns. We reserve the right to edit letters and guest columns for length, style, and accuracy.

Letters should be addressed to:
 The Battalion - Mail Call
 013 Reed McDonald / Mail stop 1111
 Texas A&M University
 College Station, TX 77843