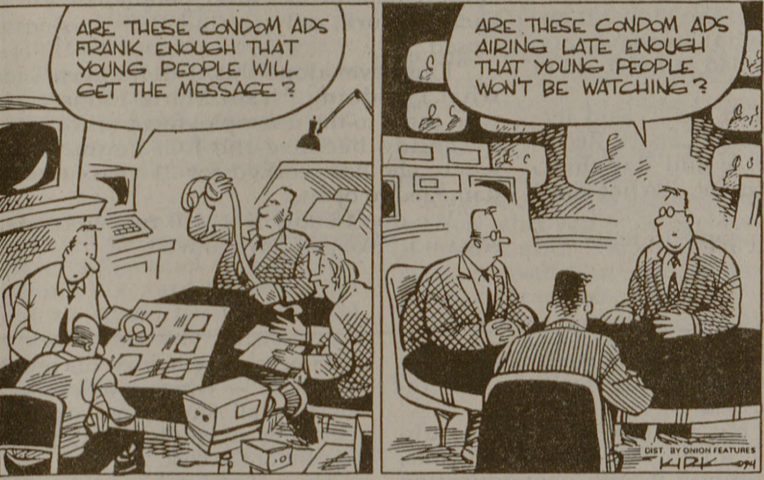


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EDITORIAL Cable Control

Self-regulation a hollow gesture

Everything is profits and expansion for the cable industry — until Congress is in session. With Congress returning next week, plans to redouble efforts to pass legislation requiring a violence-rating system on broadcast television have forced the cable industry to make the first move. This motivation makes the efforts put forth by the cable industry suspect.

In the wake of growing support for regulation of violence on broadcast television, the major U.S. cable companies have approved a plan to regulate themselves. Included in the new self-regulation policy are plans to develop an actual violence-rating system for movies shown on cable. The plan also endorses a method to allow viewers to block from their homes those programs rated as "violent."

Despite the effort, the cable industry's plan will not work, nor will any rating system passed by Congress. Similar attempts haven't worked for either the movie or music industries. Underage kids get into R-rated movies all the time. Hard-core rap exploded into the mainstream only after local bans on the sale of the records.

The fact that the cable industry has waited until faced with possible government regulation makes it rather obvious that the move has been made for defensive reasons rather than a genuine concern for the people that are affected by the violent, sex-glamorizing movies shown on cable.

Opponents of a rating system believe the cable industry should not be expected to do the job of the parent. If consenting adults want to watch a violent movie, they should be allowed.

True as this may be, the whole debate over violence on television centers around the people that are influenced the most — children. Children are not always able to distinguish reality from television, and while indeed the parent should explain the difference, that ideal is all too often not a reality.

One alternative to the rating system is to restrict the airing of excessively graphic shows to time slots when children will most likely not be viewing. Of course, the cable industry could simply resolve the issue by no longer showcasing gratuitous sex and violence in so many shows. But, then, we are dealing in reality.

Dealing with some of life's little fears

Phobias, like food, have their place, but can slow us down

Fear is as necessary to humans as food; it keeps us going in many ways. Although enough fear enables us to reach certain goals, we are all familiar with the discomfort and sluggishness that results when we ingest too much. Like Jell-o, however, many fears have no significant value or purpose whatsoever. Last night, for instance, I saw a news story on TV that got me thinking about just how much we love to wallow in these Jell-o fears.



FRANK STANFORD
Columnist

It seems that the children of a Midwest town voted to name their new elementary school Springfield Elementary. This seems quite understandable because the name of the town happens to be Springfield. The problem arises from the fact that the same name graces the town and elementary school in the popular animated sit-com, "The Simpsons." Apparently, the children's parents are afraid of the connection between the school name and the sit-com's main character, Bart, who is not a good student. They have banded together like good parents should, and petitioned the school board to revoke the new name.

Now, even though I'm not a parent, I can empathize with the concerns attached to raising a child in today's society. We are all scared of the drugs and handguns found in many schools across the nation, and even the effects of TV violence on youngsters — but alarm

over academic apathy on cartoons? This is a big time Jell-o fear. These parents are bent on passing the responsibility buck. To them I say, "Don't have a cow."

To a large extent, and unfortunately, too many students attend A&M not to be educated, but rather because we are afraid. Our parents and — for the most part — society have told us that if we don't receive a college degree we won't ever get "good" jobs and may even become bag-ladies. This is sort of a Jell-o pudding fear since many "good" jobs certainly require formal education. Even though the world has plenty of non-degree success stories, fear often drives us toward graduation.

Fear may also help us steer us towards appropriate disciplines as well. For instance, many people consider accounting to be a "good" profession. Although I respect the importance of the field, I would sooner pursue a degree in bag-lady transience for fear of counting someone else's bean piles for a living. Engineering is another "good" endeavor, but alas, fear of flunking Engineering 109 keeps most protractor wielding wannabes running to the Ag Department. I understand the College of Veterinary Medicine to be the scariest school of all. Not only is the department nationally ranked and almost impossible to enter, but also all those kitties and doggies hangin' around the giant refrigerators like furry beef jerky are enough to scare any pet owner.

Social situations are also ripe with fright for most students. Gathering the nerve to speak to that cutie in your class by forcibly repressing enormous bursts of anxiety is never something we really enjoy — not to mention the expense of such incredible self-control. This fear skips

straight from possible Jell-o to a Clydesdale pot roast and pea-gravel-stuffing fear.

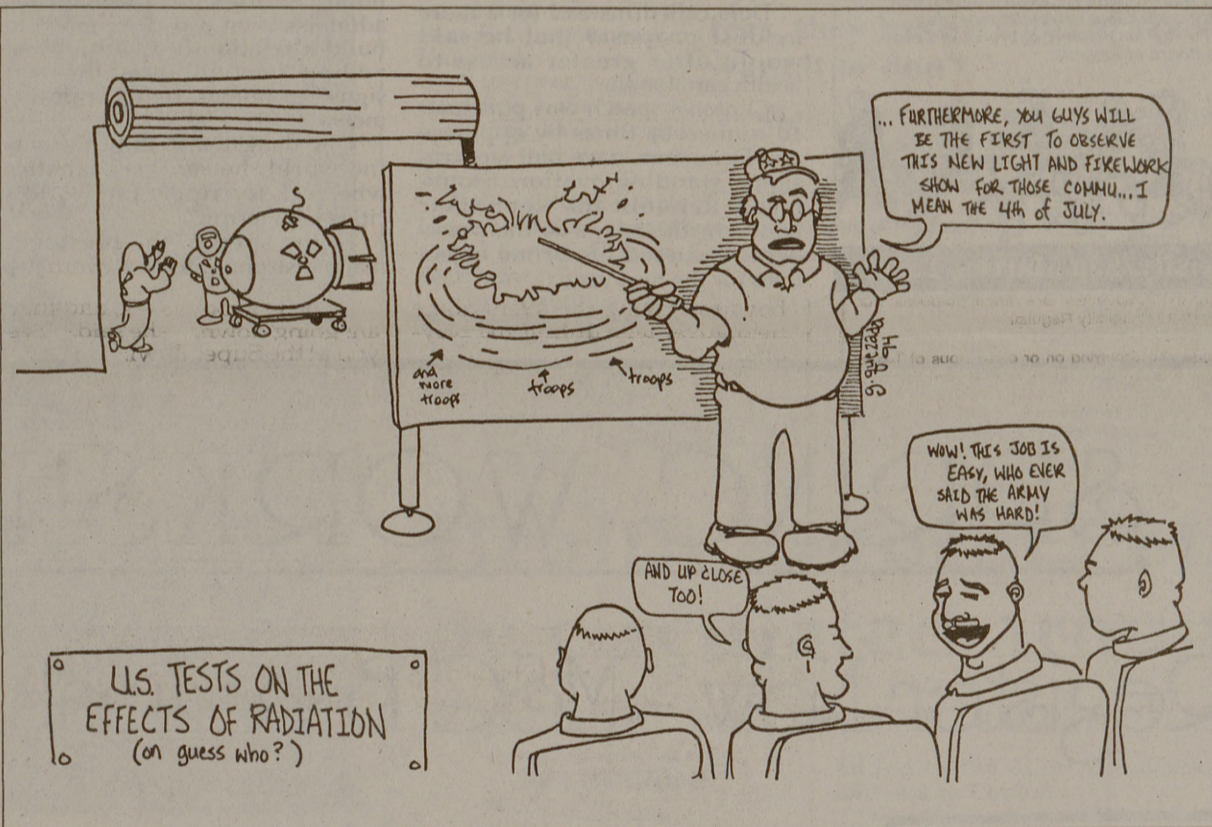
Along with the fears of a relationship getting off the ground — or being buried in it — come the all too familiar, "I'm afraid he's going to cheat on me," and, "I'm scared he will break-up with me." And let's not forget the ever terrifying, "Oh — — —, I'm late."

These examples seem a bit sexist. Although it's safe to say there are as many male fears as female, I'm afraid to list them for fear they may happen to me.

Because there are so many things that are legitimately scary, the Batt Staff came up with a Top Ten List of things we really SHOULD be afraid of.

10. Banging your knee on a table when you come home at 3 a.m. — hammered.
9. Still being in college at age 30.
8. That your slutty roommate will get lucky and leave you alone at a party.
7. That someone else at the same function will wear the same outfit you are.
6. That you will have to live with your parents after graduation.
5. That the babe in the car next to yours saw you picking your nose.
4. That maybe the test really IS today.
3. That your chair will make a tooting sound when you're next to an attractive classmate.
2. That your credit card will be rejected in front of your date.
1. That when the band starts to play "Saw Varsity's Horns Off" the smelly, drunk beast next to you will lunge for your waist.

Frank Stanford is a graduate philosophy major



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O, what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice ...

I remember the first time that I ever cheated at a game. I was in Mrs. Webber's second-grade science class, and we were playing Heads-up 7-up. For those who lived through a deprived elementary existence, Heads-up 7-up is a game in which the teacher picks seven people, and they get to stand at the front of the classroom. The students who aren't chosen as one of the seven have to hide their eyes and stick up their thumb. The seven chosen people walk around, each tapping another person's thumb. Then they yell "Heads-up 7-up!" and the people whose thumbs were tapped have to stand up and guess who did it.



JENNY MAGEE
Columnist

Well, as anyone can imagine, there is all sorts of glory associated with being a chosen 7-upper. So one day, when a long dry spell was grating on my competitive nerve, I decided to take a quick peek to catch a glimpse of the culprit when I felt that light tap on my thumb.

I lifted my head slightly, but put it back down quickly. That corny cliché "a cheater never wins" danced through my thoughts. "What difference does it make? It's just a stupid game," I told myself as I raised my head and caught a glimpse of blonde curls. If it was just a stupid game, why did I have to cheat?

Heather O'Neil had the longest blonde, curly hair in the history of second-graders, so it is no surprise that my "guess" was right on target. Subsequently, I got to take my prized position among the chosen seven.

A couple of days ago, some friends and I were reminiscing about good ole 7-up, and they told me that the trade secret to cheating at the game is to look at the person's shoes. I didn't think of this idea

at the time.

This memory came to mind as I was reading an article about the recent allegations that figure skater Tonya Harding helped her ex-husband plan an attack on rival skater Nancy Kerrigan. Although Harding is denying any involvement and nothing has been proven against her, let's say for the sake of argument that she did play a part in planning the attack. What

There is something innately dissatisfying about winning through unfair tactics. It doesn't produce a wholehearted sense of accomplishment like a true win does.

would winning mean?

Although it is probably not written in any rulebook anywhere, I think hiring a hit man to bash a blunt object into a competitor's knee is pretty much cheating.

Say Tonya Harding does go to the Olympics and win a medal. What could she say about such a medal?

"Here's my medal — at least I think it's mine, even though one of my major competitors wasn't able to compete."

As a society, do we place so much emphasis on winning that honesty and fairness no longer have a place? Have we made the glory of winning so great that it can overpower one's conscience?

There is something innately dissatisfying about winning through unfair tactics — it doesn't produce that wholehearted sense of accomplishment like a true win does.

Many times people try to rationalize or justify cheating. Maybe those nine A&M football players who accepted money for work they never performed didn't plan an attack on another team's player, but they did accept money for work that they didn't do. That's cheating, plain and simple.

Rules are made to protect integrity. In the case of college football, student ath-

letes are not allowed to accept money for their performance on the field, or from overzealous alumni, as an enticement to go to a certain school. The reason for this rule is to protect the idea that college football, like high school football, is played in an educational atmosphere.

If cheaters didn't hurt the innocent along with themselves, perhaps the knowledge that they gained because of an unfair advantage would be enough punishment. However, many times cheaters drag down others because of their actions. Why was Nancy Kerrigan almost denied the opportunity to fulfill her Olympic dreams? Why should the other A&M football players, the coaches and fans be forced to endure a punishment that has little effect on the offenders?

Cheaters cheat to win; but if you have to cheat, then you didn't really win in the first place.

Jenny Magee is a senior journalism and English major

COLLEGE STATION, TX
 Jan 26
 1994
MAIL CALL

Have they ever got a deal for you

Beware of some of the automotive repair shops in the Bryan-College Station area. In November my daughter, a junior at A&M, said she was having trouble with her car not shifting up to the higher gears.

First, she took the car to Tune Up Plus. They gave us a \$600 written esti-

mate indicating the problem was a need to replace the fuel pump, fuel filter, and some aspect of the intake manifold.

Next, she took it to Gary Stevenson's Quality Pontiac, Buick and GMC, where the problem, they said, was that the transmission needed to be replaced and there was really no need to look any further. He gave a written repair estimate of \$1,858.20.

Not knowing these firms or trusting their diagnoses, the car was towed to Glossermans' Chevrolet, Buick dealer-

ship in Lockhart, where a sticking transmission linkage was loosened. This corrected the problem at a cost of about \$100.

The moral of this story is, you can't be too careful when it comes to dealing with a mechanic you don't know. Students beware.

John S. Carter
Austin, Texas

Beutel gets a bad rap

It seems as though the Beutel Health Center hasn't received anything but negative publicity here in the Mail Call section in semesters past. Contrary to the popular trend, I'd like to shed some positive light on the Health Center through

an experience of mine.

I went into the Health Center right after finals with a sore throat and fatigue. Tests revealing I had mono. I ended up not being able to leave the Health Center due to an enlarged spleen and was forced to stay overnight.

I must admit that I felt right at home. I was served food from Hullabaloo and watched cable TV. Overall, I was given exemplary care by the physicians and nurses, and the doctor who cared for me at the Health Center went beyond the call of duty by faxing my records to my hometown doctor and arranging for my parents to come pick me up the following morning. She even called me over the holidays at my home to see how I was doing.

I don't think many students realize how lucky we are to receive the kind of care that is available from our medical

center, not to mention the low prices of prescription medicine. I had to pay \$25 for a refill of a prescription at home that I paid \$3 for here.

I bet a lot of students who went to Fish Camp have forgotten about the presentation that is made by the Health Center about how to stay healthy and prevention of becoming sick. Representatives from the Health Center are also available to speak to student organizations at any time during the year about preventive medicine for anyone who is interested.

If you are not pleased with the care you received the first time, ask for another doctor the next time. There's a large number of qualified physicians to choose from.

Tim Deithloff
Class of '95