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# The boob tube

C-SPAN offers original, entertaining programming for imaginative students



**DONNY FERGUSON**  
columnist

When it comes to offering thrilling versions, the Ryan-College station area has a collective talent. Entertainment like "Jesse James' Def Comedy Jam." If being checked into a northside restaurant with drunken country science majors named Earl isn't your thing, the only other option is to fire up the VCR for an all-out "Mystery Science Theater 1000" marathon. That is, until the advent of C-SPAN.

Huh? C-SPAN? Isn't that the channel that makes Country Music Television look interesting? Not sooo. CMT will never be interesting and C-SPAN, when watched correctly, is the best entertainment on television.

True, C-SPAN may not appeal to students whose knowledge of things like classical music is limited to Monty Python's "Decomposing Composers."

Too often, they get lost in the parliamentary minutiae, dry statistics and monotonous roll call voting and forget C-SPAN's most valuable asset.

It is the only channel to offer 24 unlettered hours of ranting lunatics, paranoid schizophrenics and some of America's worst haircuts. (Check out the mop on Ohio Congressman James Traficant.

Great orator, but he looks like Kangaroo. Top honors go to your job over a Nutty Professor-like coif.) The heart and soul of the C-SPAN experience is, without a doubt, the opportunity to dish out endless taunting. After a long,

hard day of organic lab, math exams and dodging kamikaze bicyclists, nothing beats plopping down on a lumpy sofa, clicking on C-SPAN and horse-laughing House Minority Whip David Bonior. On those days when one feels especially creative, punch the "mute" button and add your own dialogue.

Adlibbing phrases like, "I am the only candidate in this race who looks like E.T." to Dick Gephardt's Labor Day speech to the AFL-CIO, or spicing up Ted Kennedy's floor speeches with a, "I, eh, just want President Clinton to know, eh, that I would be more than happy to give Paula Jones a ride home" is just one way to capitalize on the network's full comic potential.

But even the best of networks could use a little improvement. The current slate of programming is rather narrow and appeals only to Bill Gates-esque economics majors who find "The McLaughlin Group's" Eleanor Clift "babelicious."

C-SPAN should follow FOX and MTV's lead and appeal to a younger generation. Late at night, after "About Books," C-SPAN's new "Single Out - Live From The Kennedy Compound!" hosted by former Oregon Senator Bob Packwood would cool the romantic fires stoked by eleven consecutive hours of tax reform legislation debate.

No other dating game on television would offer categories like "That Giant Sucking Sound, NAFTA or the Spice Girls" and "Best Case Against Canadian Immigration, Alanis Morissette or Michael J. Fox."

Singles eliminated in the first round still win a date with the Kennedy of their choice (contestants must be under 16 and know how to swim.)

Sunday nights feature "The DNC Files," as Agents Mulder and Scully use extraterrestrial technol-

ogy to locate Colombian drug smugglers, Chinese arms dealers and Lebanese fugitives to invite to the White House in exchange for campaign contributions.

In the season premiere, Mulder and Scully travel to Roswell, New Mexico, and discover that the lone survivor of the alien spacecraft which crashed there 50 years ago escaped from an Area 51 Air Force hangar and became Surgeon General under the name "Joycelyn Elders."

C-SPAN's newest late-night fare, "The Real World, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue" is a probing look into the life of a tubby, philandering draft dodger; a sniping, feminist Little Rock lawyer and a droning former Tennessee Senator who won't stay off the phone.

In a touching episode, "Bill" escorts his only daughter to college and teaches her how to grow "special" plants in a dorm closet. Later, tempers flare when "Al's" phone records are subpoenaed and the shredder breaks down. "Hillary" saves the day when she shows him how to "misplace" them the Oval Office fireplace.

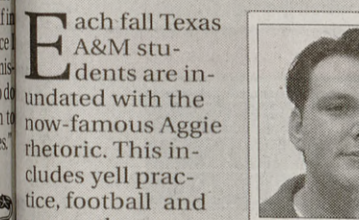
Too often, bored students looking for television viewing fun flip past C-SPAN without realizing its entertainment potential.

The House Government Reform and Oversight Committee may not be the Rolling Stones (some of whom actually served in the Continental Congress,) but when viewed in the right context, it can be every bit as entertaining. In a town where entertainment is a concert by someone named after a NASCAR driver, C-SPAN is an oasis of intellectually stimulating taunting, hissing and the occasional whoop when Speaker Gingrich takes the floor.)

Donny Ferguson is a junior political science major.



# Absence of A&M law school contrasts with new government focus



**LEN CALLAWAY**  
columnist

Each fall Texas A&M students are inundated with the now-famous Aggie rhetoric. This includes yell practice, football and many other practices and regimens that help to boost and prolong the idea that A&M is the finest institution in the land.

While this is and has always been true, A&M still consistently strives to become a more complete and versatile institution.

However, one aspect is missing in our collective quest. The Texas A&M School of Law.

Those of us who aspire to become attorneys are faced with having to leave our alma mater and contribute to some other school's livelihood. The University of Texas currently holds the title as the best law school in the state, and the idea of asking one's Aggie parents to ante up a big chunk for the 'sips is quite unsettling.

No one is naive enough to believe that A&M is the only place that one can receive a quality education, but for some it is the only institution worthy of

the effort needed to graduate from a graduate program. I know this is a novel idea, as it has become so sheik and trendy to bash A&M.

However, the fact still remains that due to our collective nature and our reputation for academic excellence, the Aggie degree carries more weight than those from some other state institutions.

Aggies past and present have the right to continue their education here if they choose to do so, and it is up to the powers that be to make certain that the option is open.

A&M has taken steps to ensure continued academic superiority in other fields, but has neglected the legal community.

The George Bush School of Government and Public Service and the addition of a music major to the College of Liberal Arts are prime examples.

Many have argued that there are too many attorneys in the world and too many law schools in Texas.

These statements are matters of opinion and are constantly under debate. There is a need to be satisfied by having a law school at A&M. This university has the reputation of graduating the highest-caliber graduates in each field.

The same would naturally be true for an Aggie law school. Many are

quick to claim equality, but few have the gumption to claim academic superiority over A&M. Not to mention, in our attorney-loathing nation, the sheer novelty of law school graduates with a pre-determined reputation for having a sense of integrity and honor.

Many students that attend the George Bush School of Government and Public Service are interested in politics or some other form of public service.

If one takes the time to analyze the educational criteria and accomplishments of most of our political leaders, they will find that most at least went to law school.

Many took the bar exams in their respective states and went on to private practices before running for office and becoming elected. Some went to law school and began working for other politicians sans bar exam, however, most are attorneys of some breed or another.

Texas A&M and its graduates have been leading the United States Armed Forces for many generations, and the time has come for Aggies to begin to lead the nation in government. The Bush School will naturally supply Washington with many good A&M graduates who will have to attend law school, so why force them to attend

law school somewhere else? Here in Aggieland we are fortunate to be in an environment that is conducive to students. College Station is one of the last true college towns in our nation.

Here, again due to our collective nature, students have the opportunity to build long-lasting and beneficial relationships with professors, employers, local businesses and friends.

Why should we voluntarily give up the right to expand our education at this university?

There is fierce opposition to our gaining the ability to build a law program. However, all of the arguments are political and monetary.

None of the arguments against our acquiring a law school revolve around the quality of education students would receive. No one dares to doubt the administration's ability to educate.

If A&M were to get the political affirmation needed to build a law program, other schools like UT, Baylor and Tech would naturally raise their crybaby flags. The crux lies in the fact that if A&M were to gain a law program, we would instantly become the most versatile institution in the state. One could come to Aggieland and study almost anything. This would render the academically inferior and

smaller institutions unable to compete to a certain degree.

That is the real problem — not our desire for a law school. Texas A&M has been put in the position of having to curtail our growth in order to help ensure the success of other schools.

Nothing else here works this way. Professors do not water down their tests so that weaker students can survive. Athletes do not tame their performance so that weaker opponents can survive. Elected officials do not bow down to their opponent so that the opponent may also enjoy some success.

It's curious that at the institution charged with our preparation for the real world, we are taught that the strongest will survive, but if we take the example taught to us by our legislature and administration it seems that one is not rewarded for performance. One is rewarded and protected for being weak and secondary.

A&M has accomplished more and retained a higher level of prestige and honor than any other institution in the state, yet, all of the other institutions coupled with the legislature control our destiny.

Len Callaway is a junior journalism major.

MIKE LUCKAICH ATLANTA CONTRIBUTOR



## MAIL CALL

### Unfair statements deride football

In response to Michelle Voss' *Passing the Pigskin* Sept. 26 column:  
I can only say that Voss' words represent an uninformed individual. She states that "football is one of the top 10, most utterly pointless distractions of mankind in the past 2,000 years." Although this is clearly hyperbole, the root of the statement cannot be justified. Football is a complex sport, full of complex strategy and intricate planning. The rapid decisions that must be made set this sport away from

other sports around the world. The planning that must be required for each play likens football more to chess and other games of strategy, more so than any other sport.

Voss also states, "This sport of primitive brutes, who romp about artificial turf while slamming into each other, bears a striking resemblance to Neanderthals."

However, is American football any less barbaric than other world sports, such as boxing, rugby or Australian football? American football players get hurt many games at a time, but a boxer's appearance and intellect can be damaged for life, and Australian football players have died on the field. So by comparison, football is quite tame.

Most erroneous of Voss' statements, however, was that football funds could be better used to fund more worthwhile projects. Apparently she does not realize that A&M's athletic department is self-sustaining.

With respect to the NFL and the players' huge salaries, the reason these players get paid so well is be-

cause they turnover a massive profit for the owners who pay them.

In order to refute every erroneous statement made by the columnist, I would have to write a column of my own. I believe my point is clear, however.

Voss' opinions are her own, and she has every right to express them as it was her opinion column. But in the future, I suggest she not base her opinions on falsehoods.

Howard Hamilton  
Class of '99

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