

Big ratings from small packages

Modern professional wrestling too vulgar for younger audiences, teach wrong messages

According to the last batch of Nielsen ratings, 26 of the 30 highest rated Cable TV programs revolved around professional wrestling.



MARK PASSWATERS

The World Wrestling Federation (WWF) and its competitor, World Championship Wrestling (WCW), are extremely popular amongst young men in their late teens and early twenties. And that is exactly the group it should be popular with.

The problem is that professional wrestling is even more popular with the younger members of society. Do not be fooled: this is not your older brother's professional wrestling. The days of the good guy Hulk Hogan and the vile Rowdy Roddy Piper are long gone.

These characters may still be around, but the plots do not revolve around a PG-rated brawl of good versus evil. Wrestling is now a very R-rated event, selling sex and bad messages as well as T-shirts and action figures.

The WWF, under the "enlightened" leadership of Vince McMahon, is the foremost offender. McMahon is a shrewd businessman and he knows sex sells. As a result, most WWF cards now have matches between two stunning women, primed and trained to act like they are beating each other senseless.

Their outfits leave so little to the imagination that they would be expect-

ed on the stage of Sugar's Cabaret in Austin, not at an event well attended by five- or six-year-olds.

One of the lovely ladies, under her wrestling name "Sable," graced the April cover of *Playboy*. As soon as it came out, she paraded it around the ring, encouraging fans to buy it.

If people think this is something that is just a fringe movement, think again. The presence of "Stone Cold" Steve Austin on an episode of "Nash Bridges" earned the show its highest ratings of the season. A lot of people watch wrestling, and a lot of them are little kids. That is why it is important to make sure kids are not getting a bad message from the wrestlers they watch so often on TV.

However, screening the messages is hard to do. The lucrative demographics call for more sex and violence on TV, so the consumers get it.

At a recent WWF show in Austin, phrases like "I'll kick your retarded ass" were used over a dozen times. Not stunning, considering phrases like that are prevalent at Hurricane Harry's on Thursday night.

The idea that kids will be going to school the next day and telling the slow kid in the class the same thing, however, is a little unnerving.

Even the supposed "hero," "Stone Cold" Steve Austin, had his little say: "Anybody who wants me to kick this sonofabitches ass, give me a hell yeah!" Sounds like good banter around the jungle gym on Monday morning.

The most disturbing thing, by far, at these events, is the blatant use of sexual innuendo. One character, who takes the

head of a mannequin into the ring with him, asks the crowd, "What do you like?" the answer is, "HEAD!"

The idea of little Johnny walking into Mrs. Smith's second grade class the next morning and informing his teacher what he likes is almost funny, until it is considered that the kid has been making sexual comments and not even knowing it.

Another group of wrestlers, known as the "Gen-Xers", make an X over their crotches and inform the crowd to "SUCK IT!" Hopefully, Bobby will not tell the mean Bus Driver what to do.

Some wrestlers are even more blatant with their pelvic thrusts and telling the ladies in the crowd to come on down so they can "get a good bareback ride."

The ladies in the crowd scream wildly as if Elvis had just stripped to his boxers. And the little kids pick up some more knowledge they really are not ready for.

So who is to blame for all this? The easy target to accuse would be McMahon and the WWF. This move, however, would be insane. These people are entitled to make a living any way they can, and if this is the best way, so be it.

College kids are mature enough to understand exactly what is going on and have every right to watch.

The parents of the little kids should know what their kids are watching and consider limiting what they see. This would prevent Mr. and Mrs. Jones from having to drive down to the elementary school to get Tommy out of the principal's office after telling his art teacher to "suck it."

Mark Passwaters is a graduate electrical engineering student.



ROBERT HYNCEK/THE BATTALION

GUEST COLUMN

Students should seek help for themselves, friends, show support for those in need

Last week, each of us was touched by the death of "J.R." Berry who made the personal decision that suicide was the only option left to him as he thought about the problems he faced. We cannot bring J.R. back. So, it is to all Aggies that I say, "It doesn't have to be that way."

Committing suicide is an individual decision. Still I urge you, in the face of J.R.'s death, to be sensitive to your friends and fellow Aggies. It's not always easy to tell, but if you sense they are not OK, help them get to the people and offices on campus that can help. Remember, that to get help at A&M, all you need to do is call or walk through the door and ask.

Do not believe the myths that it's "crazy" for anyone to ever think about suicide, or that once

someone has made an attempt another attempt is unlikely, or that there's nothing you can do to help a suicidal person, or that mentioning the possibility of suicide will give them the idea to do it. Those ideas are simply not true! You can make a difference.

Academic problems, the break-up of a relationship and not getting an A&M degree are not worth suicide. No matter what the problems facing you, there are ways to help you lessen your stress, anxiety or despair. You have counselors, psychologists and physicians on our campus who are here to help you and your classmates. The evidence is clear. When someone participates in counseling, they are far, far less likely to ever attempt suicide or to try it a second time. A completed suicide is the one

problem we cannot help.

Watch out for each other. If you or someone you know is struggling with a problem, encourage them to come to the Student Counseling Service. If they're hesitant, come along with them. We're in Henderson Hall behind the Chapel. If you cannot convince them to come to the Student Counseling Service, call us at 845-4427 during the day and 845-2700 (HelpLine) in the evening and on weekends. Be willing to take the risk of having a friend be angry with you for trying to help them rather than the risk that they may not get the critical help they need. And remember ... "It doesn't have to be that way."

Dr. Wade Birch is the Director of the Student Counseling Service

Morality not always relative, vague concept

There is a philosophy that life consists of people climbing up a huge mountain. There are about a million different paths up the mountain and all have different admittance standards.



LISA FOOX

Some require certain foods to be carried with them up the path, some require the help of a guiding shepherd, and some merely believe in climbing to the best of one's ability. In the end, however, all the paths are leading to the same place.

The different paths represent different kinds of religions, and just as the paths are all heading in the same direction; so are all of the religions.

Since religion is dictated by a moral code, one can assume that all morals are relative and, since they are only individually absolute, must be guided by the individual for that one individual.

An example: protestants believe that drinking is immoral. Therefore to abstain from drinking, for many Christians, is not a matter of preference but rather one of moral choice.

However, a variety of religions incorporate the use of wine into their ceremonies. For these religions, drinking is not a matter of morality because it is not frowned upon by their moral code.

What needs to be realized is that whether one views drinking as immoral is a relative issue and one should not insist that their viewpoint is entirely correct and perfect.

This is what relativity means in today's society — that one can decide moral issues as they please without harassment by the majority.

Another example: Abortion. Now, is this really an issue that can be considered morally relative? Yes, with a qualification.

Those who believe that destroying the potential for life is immoral do not need to have an abortion.

However, there is the moral flipping coin in which one weighs a child being born to a girl/woman/teenager who does not want it, will not love it and will not have money to care for it,

against the destruction of the potential of this being.

Some might say that it is immoral to bring that child into life because it will not experience love and nurturing.

The issue must then fall prey to the individual's beliefs on life versus suffering.

The qualification? If, at some point, there is proof that abortion is murder, then the relative morality of the situation changes. Why?

Because murder, wife beating, child molesting and other crimes are illegal under the laws of the country. Most religions include a clause that subjugates its believers to the just laws of the country.

It is clear that murder and the

"In the end, all paths are heading in the same direction; so are all religions"

other crimes committed are an infringement on somebody else's expression of their moral code and therefore can be talked about in the black-and-white terms of right and wrong.

Of course, this does mean subjugation to unjust and obviously unfair laws, such as segregation, apartheid and totalitarian regimes. It is to be applied with common sense.

If a law is blatantly infringing on one's right to express their morality, the law need not be obeyed.

So, overall, morality is a matter of finding the right choices for the individual. Hopefully, these individuals can find the choices that will lead them up the mountain to the top.

The only real way to get to the top is through finding a moral code ... even if it does not quite agree with the majority's opinion of what is moral.

So choose wisely and choose privately. Once found, these moral codes can be shared but not forced. There seems something immoral about forcing morality onto somebody whose relative morals differ.

Lisa Foox is a senior journalism major.

MAIL CALL

Paper, staff should stay mainstream

I must say that the quality of *The Battalion* has gone to yellow journalism recently. Publishing a front-page picture of someone's remains getting cleaned up after a suicide is a little extreme.

Additionally, the opinion articles have been terrible recently. None of them are backed up with any facts, and they are all slanderous and use things out of context and in some cases, flat out lie.

I was very disappointed with Manisha Parekh's coverage of Tom Short and her recent article on SUVs. Most of the facts she used were either wrong, misstated, taken out of context or confusing and are prime examples of yellow journalism. Additionally, and more importantly, she is not representative of the campus and does not consider the atmosphere of the campus in her writing.

At A&M, where there are more giant trucks and, in general, trucks than at any other campus she writes an article that she knows everyone is going to absolutely despise and thinks she is doing her job.

Why don't you hire a columnist that will write to the viewpoint of the majority and create more campus enthusiasm and agreement than finding some non-mainstream columnist that belongs at University of Texas.

Additionally, I feel it is time *The Battalion* grew up in its respect and treatment of stories. Sensationalism and drama are cool for a high-school newspaper, but for a

college newspaper I expected a lot more.

Benjamin Borgers
Class of '02

Professors respond to Res Week letter

In response to David Myers' Mar. 30 mail call.

We wish to respond to the letter by David Myers entitled "Resurrection Week equals intolerance." The purpose of Resurrection Week is to provide the opportunity for Christian students at TAMU to celebrate together this most important event, which is central to their religious belief and to share the significance of Easter to those unfamiliar with this religious holiday.

It is a sad commentary that Myers and others find such a celebration intolerable and then have the gall to accuse the Christian students of intolerance.

Tolerance is defined as the "disposition to be patient and fair toward those whose opinions or practices differ from one's own." Where is the evidence of Christian students treating the religious beliefs of other students with the disrespect and contempt Myers' expresses toward the Christian students?

John Stewart Mill, in his classical essay *On Liberty*, argued strongly that in a world of ideological pluralism, engaging in thoughtful discussions of our differences is the only way to move toward the truth of a matter.

Rather than castigating Christians for what they believe, Myers might spend his time more productively engaging students and col-

leagues in thoughtful discussion regarding why he does not believe in the resurrection, trying to persuade them by historical evidences.

Retreating into the safe, politically correct, post modern world of all truth as "subjective and personal" will not help us to get to the truth of the matter. Did Christ really rise from the dead and prove He is God or not? This is really the question. In a university environment where we should all be in pursuit of truth, let us skip the name-calling and get on with a discussion of the facts.

Walter L. Bradley
Professor, Mechanical Engineering
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Ramon Goforth,
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Student defends article, photograph

In response to Alan Wilson's Apr. 6 mail call.

Aaron Meier chose to publish a photo of custodians scraping the remains of a young man off of the street. The young man hurled himself from atop a campus parking garage, intent on dying. He was successful. Placement of the photograph on Page 1 caused controversy. Some say it was insensitive.

I support Meier's decision to put it there. Reality is occasionally gruesome. Why should *The Battalion* pretend it is not? Unfortunately as the event was, the story is accurate, and the photo supports it. *The Bat-*

tallon's coverage of the event was perfectly reasonable.

Like it or not, it happened on our campus. *The Battalion's* job: report the news. Meier did that. He did not create this news story nor did he create the image. He merely transmitted it. Let's not attack the messenger. Since when did we start criticizing newspapers for accurately reporting the news?

Sure, Meier could have covered up reality by having the piece written in "soft" euphemisms or by choosing a more "sensitive" photo. But newspapers are for reporting the news, and that is what *The Battalion* did.

One critic, Alan Wilson, berates Meier, inviting him to "join us in reality." It seems to me that what Wilson really wants is for Meier to not integrate so much reality in his reports on reality. I like it when newspapers relate the news in a straight-forward fashion. Pleasant or unpleasant, I want the story not an "edited for sensitivity" version. Why shroud reality? No amount of careful wording or prudent choice of photographs changes it anyway.

Douglas J. Claycomb
Graduate Student

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class and phone number.

The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:

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