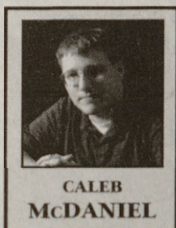


Too racy for the rack

Kroger sets good example by concealing sexual topics



CALEB MCDANIEL

Kroger has picked its side in the revolution against sexual revolution. They ought to be commended.

Thanks to the presence of Morality in Me, a non-profit, interfaith organization based in New York City, the grocery store chain has decided to allow local managers to conceal covers of magazines like Cosmopolitan and Glamour in check-out lines.

Other supermarkets are paying attention, and they would perform a valuable community service by following Kroger's lead.

After all, the line between pornography and special interest magazines is becoming blurred every day. Publishers are pushing the limits of the appropriate with each new issue, splashing half-naked models and raucous headlines on each new cover.

There is rarely a magazine these days that does not have the words "sex," "orgasm" or "position" featured prominently on the front. And there is apparently a growing impression that as long as certain anatomical parts are strategically covered in a photograph, the rest of the female body can be bared for all to see.

This careless, commercial approach to sex is lamentable for at least two reasons.

First, even though it is out of vogue to fight for family values, it is becoming more crucial than ever to speak up on behalf of children. Most college-age people can at least remember a time when sex was somewhat sacred — when a kid could ride in a grocery cart without seeing skin on every side. But the current generation is being raised in a society

saturated with sex. And the worst thing about graphically sexual magazines at the grocery store is that they literally cannot be avoided. Their location is carefully calculated to catch the eye. Consequently, parents' ability to control when their kids learn about sex is being constantly eroded.

These days, the conversation moms and dads dread most is no longer started with the question, "Where do babies come from?" Now, the birds and bees get introduced right in the grocery store as kids ask for explanations of sexually explicit words.

Surely it should not be hard to see why this reality is unfortunate. Children are the owners of curious and impressionable minds — a combination both wonderful and dangerous. Their eyes take in images that are retained for better or worse in their memory. And as they begin to discover the joy of reading, they are eager to digest every word in sight — even the ones Cosmopolitan intends to be "for advanced lovers only."

The inevitable result is children who are confused about sex and its significance. But on the other hand, this result should not be surprising. The ubiquity of raunch in the magazine racks of America ultimately shows that adults are confused about sex as well.

The second problem with graphically sexual headlines is that they dishonor the very act they exalt. Pulp magazines regularly degrade the sexual act from a special consummation of love to an acquired skill.

Headlines advertise articles on how to have good sex with the same detachment with which one might discuss how to make good chicken noodle soup.

The consequence of this approach is the connotation that sexual prowess is the main

thing — whom the sex is with becomes a secondary concern.

Rags like Cosmopolitan promise to teach a woman how to please men in general rather than her man in particular. Magazines like Maxim teach men how to drive women crazy — not how to satisfy their wives. And tell-all sex surveys of several thousand people can only mean one thing: The opinions of a large number of potential partners are important because modern men and women seldom intend to share their beds with one.

But if sex has become little more than a tool or a talent, it has lost all that made it special in the first place. It has traded permanently fulfilling love for temporarily satisfying lust.

And maybe the fact that men and women must turn to magazines for sexual instruction is evidence of a sadder fact. Couples have lost the desire to share the intimacy that comes exclusively when married people spend lifetimes teaching each other what is pleasurable.

Perhaps behind the sexy headlines lurks the sordid truth — copulation without communication and promiscuity without promises.

So hooray for Kroger.

They have realized that married, committed sex should be a beautiful thing, rather than something sold next to the National Enquirer and Snickers bars.

Because Americans are as attached to free speech as they are to cheap thrills, magazines that misrepresent sexual relationships will always be a reality in this country. But stores do not have to pitch them and customers do not have to purchase them.

Caleb McDaniel is a junior history major.



EMILY HARRELL/THE BATTALION

European Union decision to isolate Austria's Haider too hasty



JILL RILEY

People worldwide worry about the re-emergence of some of the horrors of the Holocaust, which is definitely a valid concern. However, concerning Austria, it is not necessary to freely electing an official whom other nations deem as holding questionable opinions about World War II solves anything. Other nations have no right to solve themselves in another country's democratic process.

The citizens of Corinthia, a province in Austria, recently elected Johann Haider of the nationalistic Freedom Party as their governor. Since that time, the European Union (EU), the United States, Argentina and several other countries have shunned the nation because of statements made by Haider about World War II and the Holocaust. The EU and others froze bilateral political contacts, denied Austrian ambassadors access to government ministers and withheld support from Austrians seeking jobs in international organizations, according to Reuters.

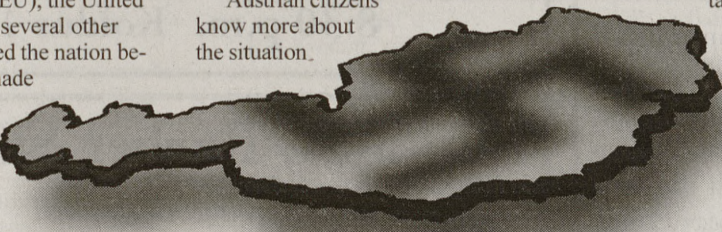
Haider made several comments referring to the role Austria's military had in World War II and the Holocaust — drawing fire from people around the world — which is the reason these countries do not support the new government, according to the Associated Press (AP). Haider has since retracted some of his misunderstood comments, but labels such as "neo-Nazi" and "fascist" continue to flood the newsways.

By freezing contacts with Austria based on the personality of an elected official, the nations have forgotten several issues — Austrians operate a democracy, and Haider has no national policy-making power. Millions of Austrians voted for

members of the Freedom Party and the People's Party in the last election. Now the two parties combined outnumber the Social Democrats, 110-63. The Social Democrats do not like the new arrangements because they no longer hold the majority, but from the election results, it is clear that the Austrian citizens wanted a change.

Austrians chose a nationalistic government against foreign encroachment instead of a socialist democratic government. In other words, the citizens are not in favor of the EU taking control of their country. In a democracy, they have the right to vote for whomever fits their beliefs. The hoopla generated by the election is just another example of other nations sticking their noses where they do not belong.

Austrian citizens know more about the situation.



ROBERT HYNCEK/THE BATTALION

in their own country than outsiders, but the London Guardian insinuated that since the province Corinthia already has low crime, low immigration and a high degree of wealth, Haider's platform for such things was unnecessary.

Austrian citizens agreed with Haider's anti-immigration, anti-state supported welfare, anti-tax and anti-crime platform and exercised their right to vote. A foreign paper should respect Austrians enough to allow them to think and vote in any manner they want.

Austria's ambassador Peter Moser made another valid point: Haider does not formulate national policy. Haider is only one province's governor. The national parliament holds the reins to Austria's policies.

"Haider is not Austria, and Austria is not Haider," Moser said, in an AP arti-

cle. Moser feels that Haider receives more attention than he should and that a lot of the attention he receives is due to his outspokenness.

According to Pat Buchanan in an AP article, Haider opposes the "global new world order," which refers to the EU.

"Europe is overreacting. We're not a bunch of Nazis here and neither is Haider," said Monika Bauer, an Austrian citizen, in an AP article. "Look around. Does this look like a place where bad things are happening?"

Without Haider, the Austrian parliament recently demanded companies that used slave laborers in World War II compensate their victims, according to Chancellor Wolfgang Schuessel in his first speech to parliament. Most feel this act is something that should have been taken care of long ago, but now unnamed skeptics question the timing of the decision. Because of Haider's statements, Austria is being criticized for its decision to rapidly compensate Nazi slaves used by Austrian companies. The criticism is totally ridiculous.

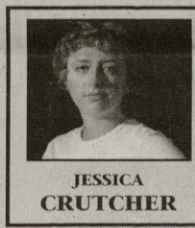
"This is an obligation of Austria, whether it's a socialist government or a neo-Nazi government," said Elan Steinberg, a spokesperson for the World Jewish Congress in an AP article. No matter the timing, those who were wronged in World War II should be compensated as soon as possible. They should have been compensated years ago.

The EU should take a deep breath and give Haider and the rest of the Austrian government a chance. Clinton and his administration will follow their lead. The world saw the horrifying reign of Hitler. If Haider starts dictating national policy and killing innocent people in Austria, then will be the time to criticize and subdue the new Austrian government.

Jill Riley is a senior journalism major.

Punishments fit the crime

University policy for student criminals meets expectations



JESSICA CRUTCHER

The way Texas A&M University deals with student criminals has recently been criticized as not being strict enough. When students are caught breaking the law on campus (driving under the influence, being in possession of drugs or a variety of other crimes) they are turned over to the University Police Department for punishment. Some people argue this is letting the students off too easy, failing to realize the UPD is a fully staffed law enforcement agency that is just as capable of dealing with criminals as the College Station Police Department.

For example, a student caught on campus with marijuana will face not only criminal charges but also University discipline that could be as severe as being expelled from the University.

The only exception to strict police discipline is the possession of alcohol in dorms by underage students. If an underage A&M student is caught in their dorm with alcohol, there is a good chance the police will never be notified. Instead, the incident will be recorded by the RA, the student will receive some form of mild disciplinary action, and a letter will be sent to the student's parents to notify them of the occurrence.

Some people would argue that the current system does not force students to take responsibility for their actions. An RA filling out paperwork undeniably commands less fear and respect than a police officer handing out MIPs on Northgate. But demanding tougher penalties for student alcohol possession on campus overlooks the serious consequences students still face.

When a college freshman leaves home for the first time, they find themselves seemingly without any sort of authority to tell them what to do. The reality of dorm life is that there are people in charge: they are called residential advisors

(RAs). The RAs are a sort of parent figure for the other residents, providing help and enforcing dormitory rules.

When an RA catches a student with alcohol, the illegal substance is confiscated and a report is filed on the student. Repeat offenders face eviction from their dorm. But there is more: A&M has a policy of notifying the parents of any student caught on campus with alcohol. Critics that think A&M is letting the students off too easy should think back a few years, to that critical time when their parents controlled virtually every aspect of their life. Although there are exceptions, many students would rather be sent to jail than have their parents notified when they have done something illegal.

Parent notification is in many cases a better way to keep students from misbehaving than any other form of law enforcement. Most students rely primarily on their parents money for tuition and living expenses. Without the support of their parents, most students would be out of luck.

Certainly, underage students should not be in possession of alcohol in their dorms. But with all the talk about what these students are doing wrong, apparently no one has noticed what they are doing right. Students that are drinking in their dorms have at least had the intelligence to not wander drunkenly down Northgate, causing a danger to themselves and passing motorists, or to decide to drive themselves. It hardly seems rational to use as strict of disciplinary procedures on students not causing nearly as much of a disturbance as those who really are endangering themselves. Campus authorities have thankfully realized this.

Campus RAs and the University Police Department are quite capable of doing their jobs. The UPD is a professional police department, and their decisions should be regarded as such.

Jessica Crutcher is a sophomore journalism major.

Demanding tougher penalties for student alcohol possession on campus overlooks the serious consequences students still face.

COLLEGIATE ROUNDUP

From The Daily Iowan at the University of Iowa

(U-WIRE) IOWA CITY, Iowa — "Kensucky" is the word of the day for late night talk-show host Craig Kilborn. That's how he referred to Kentucky during an "In the News" segment last month, earning him yet another notorious backlash to his self-described "frat boy comedy."

On Jan. 3, a tornado blew through parts of Kentucky, including the city of Owensboro, where the brunt of the anti-Kilborn sentiment began. The Kentucky House of Representatives has since passed a measure asking for an official apology from the talk-show host.

Kilborn has made derogatory remarks before in the face of tragedy. When World Wrestling Federation wrestler Owen Hart, known as Blue Blazer, died in May of last year, Kilborn's response was an "In the News" anecdote. "Blue Blazer's partner, White Turtleneck, was unharmed," reported Kilborn.

Kilborn received more letters about that one than Kris Kringle. Admittedly, the "White Turtleneck" and "Kensucky" jokes may have been insensitive and in bad taste, but they were not intended merely to offend people — just to receive a chuckle. Laughter is the best medicine, right? Apparently not. The question is, why can a single joke on a late night talk show offend so many people?

There seems to be two levels of comedy, one conservative, the other uncensored. Innocent jokes such as Kilborn's anger people, while comedy written for the sole purpose of offending people is lauded as genius. "South Park," Tom Green and Howard Stern are All-American icons making millions by consistently conquering the shock value of comedy. That's what they're expected to do.

When Green threw his precious piggy off the hill, I didn't see any animal-rights activists clamoring to the foot of the hill to catch the

poor piggy before it got smashed to a pulp. Green's comedy is expected to be offensive or outlandish. As a consequence, he is allowed to cross a line beyond other comedians such as Kilborn and David Letterman.

People who don't find Green's type of humor amusing are learning to ignore him, giving him more of an uncensored freedom.

But when innocent-looking Kilborn insinuates that Kentuckians didn't lose much in the January tornado because all they had were trailer homes to begin with, he's lambasted with criticism from fans who may not have expected such "irreverence" from him.

When did this double standard in comedy come about? If you find it funny, laugh.

If you don't, there's a simple solution: Throw the television off the hill and see if you can't hit the piggy.



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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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