# OPINION

Friday, Matt riday, March 31, 2000

## Freudian slip-up

Marketers' use of psychologists to assail children with products marks a new ethical low

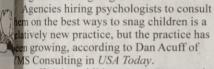
sychologists hired by marketers in order to target children debated in the Amer-Psychological Assoon last Friday, accordto USA Today.



uld curb this practice by setting new ethistandards, according to a letter signed by ut 60 psychiatrists and psychologists. The focus on children as customers is not w process — remember Garbage Pail s cards? But using psychology to entice ng children is going too far.

JILL

RILEY







Acuff claims children are "consumers-ining" and need practice for adult life. XII & johnny Children may need to learn the value of

ey and how to shop responsibly, but they his should do the trick lo not need to be lambs chased by wolves. dult, professional psychologists have an un-'air advantage over 8-year-olds.

Considering that children spend \$28 bilof their own money yearly and teens nd \$100 billion, it is not surprising that arketers are looking for new and better s of grabbing their business. Parents d \$249 billion under the influence of kids

Many parents, especially in dual-income ilies, say they do not have adequate time ach their children the dangers of falling the advertisement trap. Since parents nnot or will not take responsibility for eduing their children, someone should look for their interests

Children measure their self-worth by their essions more than their parents did at the e age, according to a survey of parents lucted by the Center for a New American

Dream in USA Today. But parents are not always the best consumers themselves.

Watching adults turn into crazed groupies over the little, stuffed animals called Beanie Babies should be proof that parents do not always act as good examples of consumerism. Children do not need the added disadvantage of being brainwashed to buy Happy Meals. Children see 50 to 100 advertisements per

day. "More is less" seems to be a dead mantra in the marketing business.

And with the addition of computers into more homes, kids are susceptible to even more advertisements. Commercials increasingly point children to Websites where they can register for prizes, and in turn receive a large influx of email hyping other products advertisers think the child might like.

The manner of advertising is questionable as well as the means of research. Some ads try to appeal by advocating unappealing behavior, like begging. Others glamorize products unreasonably, depict parents as nerdy or stupid, make children want to emulate older behavior and use peer pressure

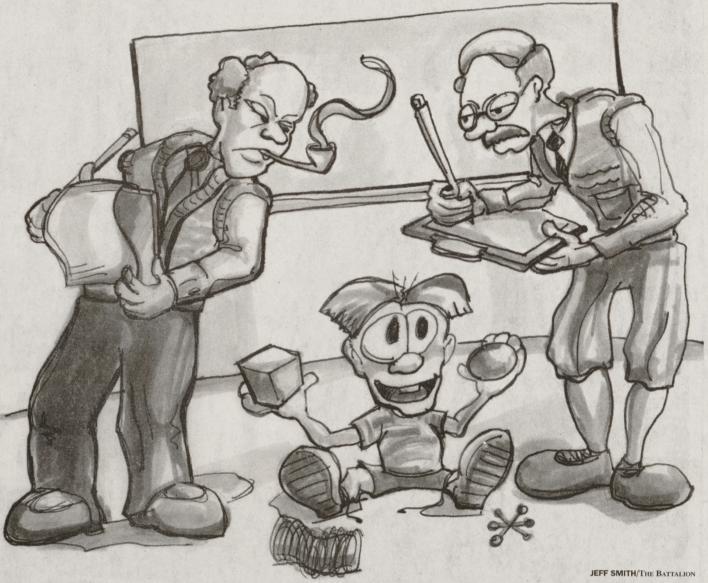
Naive as it may seem, psychologists originated to help people. Six to nine years of school and a professional degree should constitute some sort of ethical value system.

Manipulating children by using sleazy tactics does not fit into the world of ethics.

If professional psychologists and psychiatrists have come to the point where working for a company making kids want to buy Pokemon cards is more appealing than helping those who need them, there is obviously a problem with the field.

The APA should either denounce these psychologists' actions or add to the ethical standards all psychologists should follow. Maybe next Christmas there will not be the mad rush for a fad toy based on psychological tests.

> Jill Riley is a senior journalism major.



#### **E**mployer speaks on To BE COM early registration

response to students' March 30 mail call.

CB a gg for 10 years I ran one of the computer help desks for Computing & Information Services For 10 years I ran one of the computer help S). I was the only full-time staff at the help 2000 sk; all of the other employees were student kers. I can tell you with utmost certainty that registration is a critical factor in getting and keeping quality student workers. Let's face the pay for student worker jobs on campus es not pay as well as jobs in the community. ing perks such as early registration are critto the employers. ating early registration will not cripple student worker force on campus. But it cernly will make life a lot more difficult. And that one headache that we just don't need.

#### MAIL CALL **Economic status should** not play part in issue

In response to students' March 30 mail call.

I am a non-working student, and I support keeping the early registration privilege for those who do work while going to school. I think many of the letters from student workers made very important arguments for keeping the early registration policy.

However, those who employ class warfare as an argument only cloud the debate with irrelevant arguments. Students who do not work are not "rich little boys and girls" who are pampered for life. Many have scholarships, loans, and/or earn enough i

cover their expenses. If there is someone out

there who "goes to class, and spends the rest

of the day studying, watching soaps, sunbathing

length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters

The Battalion - Mail Call

013 Reed McDonald Texas A&M University

College Station, TX 77843-1111

Fax: (409) 845-2647

E-mail: battletters@hotmail.com

MIKE LUCKONCH

### Society's priorities mixed up when pets are valued more than children

n Gainesville, Florida, a tearful Jennifer Graham pleads on television for information about the abduction of her daughter. Jessica Rodriguez. There is a \$15,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the kidnapper. Meanwhile, across the nation in San Jose, Calif., Sara McBurnett, the heartbroken owner of Leo, a bichon frise dog, urges anyone who knows anything about the person who hurled her dog into



portant than a pet. Yet, when a bizarre case like Leo's occurs, suddenly missing children are insignificant. The hype about poor Leo points to a greater problem with society. It takes something as unusual as a serious case of road rage to gain public notice. The Humane Society of Santa Clara Valley has received sympathy cards and donations from around the world. The mother of the missing Florida girl received donations from her community, but not from people across the nation. This is not acceptable.

An animal rights group in Virginia, Our Animal WARDS (Working for Animals used in Research, Drugs and Surgery)

derson Park e door ehner March 28th.

INVITE

ngfest at Rudder f Event V ars at MSC

at Rudder rm<sup>70.</sup> I find it appalling and a bit scary that our Unibors at Wolf Pen (reversity administrators are changing policy based ly on what the top ten universities are doing. Did their parents never give them the lec-



Texas A&M's mindless stampede tords homogeneity among other schools can end in student apathy and a total sacriresents... of our identity. For an administration that so vehemently

ouse



new friend ch 31st at 7:00

Computer Systems Manager

#### A0C motives for pushing proposal criticized

response to The Battalion's March 30

e about not following the other kids off the

gs diversity it is ironic that their goals for the

versity all seem to be bent on conformity.

or doing other fun things, making a 4.0, and complaining about registering late," I have yet Chris Barnes to meet them in my five years at A&M. Dept. of Geography There are many hard working students at

Corry Clinton

Class of '00

A&M. Some work at school, some work at jobs, some work at extracurricular activities. Some manage to do it all. But those with jobs do not have a corner on the "hard work" market. The driving issue in this debate is how to make class schedules that are conducive to student workers. Let's keep it at that and leave class

warfare out of it.

may also be mailed to

Tase Bailev Class of '99 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

three lanes of oncoming traffic to come forward with the information. The dog met his untimely demise after a slight fender accident. After the accident, the suspect approached McBurnett's car, reached in McBurnett's car window, which she had rolled down to apologize, and grabbed her pet Leo.

Animal rights groups and people world wide have donated and pledged a total of \$109,000 in reward money for the person who turns in Leo's killer. Looking at these two tragedies, it seems that there is more concern over a dead dog than a missing child and this is simply not right.

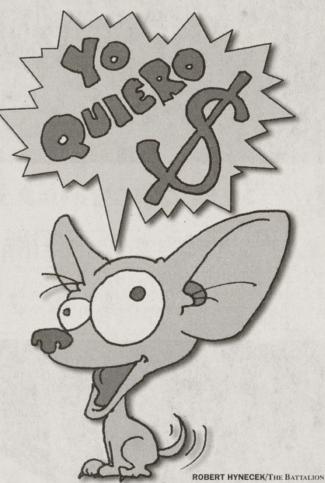
Donators to Leo's cause argue that the person who tossed the dog into traffic needs to be caught and the overwhelming amount of the reward will prompt people to come forward with information. Most people agree with the idea that the suspect needs to be caught. The person has a serious case of road rage and is a danger. But finding missing children should have top priority.

Last'year, there was an estimated 2,100 children reported missing per day to the police and the FBI's National Crime Information Center according to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. This statistic is alarming to most Americans. But what is more startling is the idea that the reward for a dog killer is roughly ten times as much as for the average

missing child. The idea that society has found missing children to be so common is disturbing

Others argue that because the road rage case is so unusual it warrants the money and surrounding media frenzy. Unusual as it is, a young girl being abducted from her driveway at 4 p.m. in front of her younger sisters should be even more noticeable. There is usually no media frenzy for those 2,100 children that are missing daily. Many people would agree that a child is more im-

contributed \$50,000 to the reward fund. Ken Byrer, spokesperson for Our Animal WARDS, said, "We decided [that] you have to draw a line for civilization somewhere." The line according to animal rights groups is the unnecessary death of animals, however the line does not apply to the fact that in society to



It seems that only the extraordinary gains the attention of the public. It is a sad time in American history when missing children go unnoticed by the public. American society has become so saturated with sensationalism that the plight of missing children is not exciting. If the media could help the problem, instead of augmenting it, maybe the statistics on missing children would be lower. If society takes the time and donates the money to the search for missing children, maybe the problem

there are children ab-

times never found.

ducted daily and many

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could be solved. Society should hold itself accountable for the serious problem that has come from these two events, and agree that a dog killer's arrest is not more important than a kidnapper's. When society falls into that trap, it will grow complacent with terrible events. If a child's abduction is so common-

place that it only warrants a \$15,000 reward, there is a serious problem with the priorities of civilization. As the problem progresses, if the abduction of children is considered normal, then the chances of ever becoming a civilized nation becomes even more remote.

> Brieanne Porter is a freshman chemical engineering major.

