

OPINION

THE BATTALION

Death & Texas

Press incorrectly blames residents for use of capital punishment

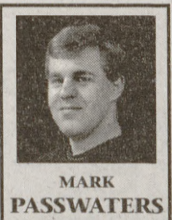
Texas is a bunch of redneck murderers and should be ashamed of themselves and their state. Sound like a bit of stretch? Even offensive, perhaps? Please forward all complaints to the national media, for this is exactly how Texans are being portrayed on television.

The primary reason for such allegations is Texas' use of the death penalty. Many members of the media, led by supposed journalist Geraldo Rivera, have attacked the "Death Penalty Bad" cause. Apparently, since these members of the media believe this, they feel that the rest of the nation should too, even if the truth gets butchered in the process.

Two weeks ago, when Gary Graham was executed in Huntsville, Rivera (who has done more preaching of hate than Pope John Paul II) started crying on air when it became apparent that the will of the people of the state of Texas had been carried out.

"The terrible thing that happened," Rivera sobbed, "Gary Graham has been murdered." He then went on to say that George W. Bush had the blood of an innocent man on his hands. Rivera got at least one thing right—a terrible thing had happened: NBC was dumb enough to put him on the air.

There are major points surrounding



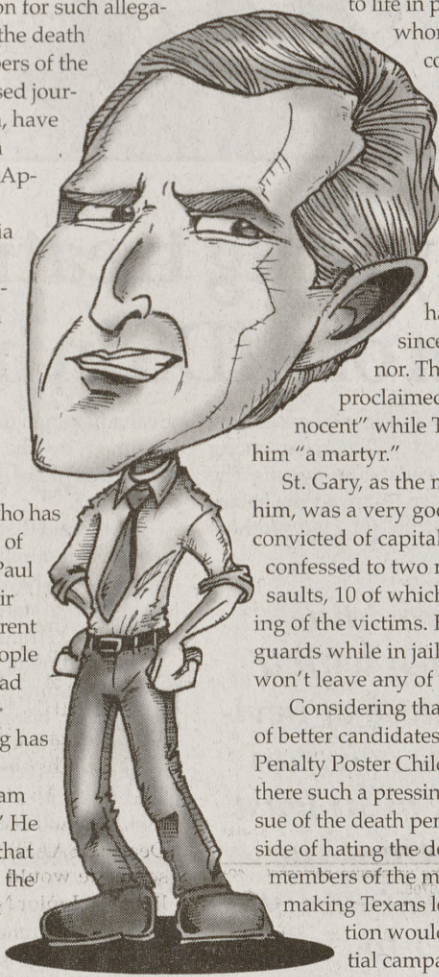
MARK PASSWATERS

two-thirds of Americans support the death penalty. The values of the media are certainly contrary to the ones that have authority in Texas.

It is extremely difficult to take the media seriously when their reporting sounds closer to a personal vendetta than to the stating of fact. In the regular world, the use of factually inaccurate information to support an argument is considered fraud; on television these days, it is considered "inspired." The real culprit for our dry summer may have been found at last considering how often reporters have spewed hot air on the issue of the death penalty in Texas.

Texas, regardless of their beliefs about the death penalty, should not let the opinions being spread as gospel stand unchallenged. The Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles is the ultimate judge of the condemned, not the governor. Texans strongly support the death penalty and the legal system is merely doing their will. The truth is out there, but it can not be found on television screens.

It is unfair and unethical for members of the media to portray the people of Texas as a bunch of blood-thirsty criminals because they support the death penalty. The reality is that the majority of people in Texas and in the nation see the death penalty as an effective deterrent to crime. The fact that some crimes deserve such punishment is not news. However, the members of the media are suddenly offended by reality and will not hesitate to condemn those who disagree with them. Their actions, however, beg a question: Are the beliefs of the public any more immoral than the media's lying to the people whom they are supposed to be informing?



Sex Webcast dilutes purpose of Internet

On July 22, a San Francisco Bay night club will prove that sex sells by hosting what it is calling an "AIDS awareness" event where five women will compete in having sex with as many strangers as possible. The participants in the sex-a-thon, which will Webcast live to paying viewers, will attempt to break the world record for consecutive sexual partners and accordingly win \$1 million. This Webcast is a sad and disturbing display of people succumbing to a form of self-degradation.

People are both outraged by and interested in this immoral spectacle, but the technological involvement in this virtual orgy needs to be addressed as well. While the Internet has proved to be a valuable resource in terms of education, research and entertainment, the Web has contributed its share of filth to the public consciousness. In the case of the sex-a-thon, pervers will gain sexual satisfaction while five women give away their dignity.

Cyberspace undoubtedly opens millions of doors for discovery and opportunity, but it also opens doors of manipulation, perversion, addiction and destruction. The upcoming sex-a-thon illustrates the worst form of Internet misuse. The virtual world that was created to expand the spectrum of knowledge has become a great social ill filled with obscene pictures and movies.

Awarding people for what amounts to prostituting themselves sends an incredibly twisted message to the world. With this sex-a-thon, promiscuity is applauded and encouraged. Web garbage like the sex-fest will pollute adolescent minds and further disgrace sex, which was once considered an act of love. It will cast aside the sanctity of intercourse and recreate it as a form of entertainment. Just like television, Internet garbage has desensitized society and increased people's tolerance for filth. This Webcast is an embarrassment to the United States; it crosses the line. The Internet should be used to better a person, to learn and to contribute good to society.

As far as promoting the brothel as AIDS awareness just because its participants will be using condoms, the night club is hypocritical and moronic. Sleeping with hundreds of people is far from safe.

People should save their money and learn to surf the Internet the mature way. If the concern is AIDS, there are several non-pornographic, informational Websites properly dispensing educational material without masking it under porn. Internet perverts and abusers have failed to uphold the ideals which give hope to future generations. The Internet is a powerful instrument that needs to be utilized appropriately—improving the world, not perverting it.

— Amber Rasco

Hacker insurance hides need for real security

In the wake of a series of aggressive attacks by hackers on several major Websites, including America Online and Yahoo, online companies have been scrambling to protect themselves from revenues lost when

Websites are disabled. This month, the insurance company Lloyd's of London is offering a package to cover CEOs' pockets in case of future hacker break-ins.

The purpose of this insurance is to provide the owner with peace of mind. However, like a homeowner who buys a policy but keeps his front door unlocked, Internet company heads are overlooking the obvious.

Bruce Schneier, co-founder of Counterpane, a network monitoring company associated with Lloyd's of London, explained that CEOs would buy the insurance even if their security worked. Schneier said, "The CEO doesn't care that his firewall works." But judging by the field day hackers had shutting down corporate Websites after Website, CEOs seem not to care whether their firewalls work at all. Now, more than ever, the stability of a company's Website needs to be a priority of top management.

Hacker insurance is a second line of defense that has gained popularity because the first line of defense has been sorely neglected. Online companies have continuously been outpaced in the arena of network security by hackers. The denial-of-service attacks that shut down many Websites this year demonstrate the naive mentality Web CEOs have concerning the strength of their firewalls.

Most hackers are not out to shut down Websites out of malice or financial greed. Usually they are idealists trying to wave a red flag by showing CEOs firsthand that their networks are not secure. Online company CEOs need to pay more attention to that red flag and make the safety of their Websites a personal concern. The need for tighter network security runs ahead of the need for hacker insurance. Increasing the first will lessen the need for the latter.

— Eric Dickens

Mail Call

cause there are not enough bike racks for bicyclists to use?

I have nothing against PTTS confiscating bicycles that are blocking doorways, but I personally have yet to see a single bicycle blocking a doorway. Even though the bike racks are overcrowded, most Aggies are still very courteous and park their bike in a reasonable fashion. Just look at the Zachry bike lot during the middle of the day. Are we going to have blue racks, red racks, green racks and yellow racks?

Rasco says "The new policy would not only clear the walkway for pedestrians but provide better facilities for bikers," but when does the University repave the streets, not the bike lanes? The only thing that will keep bikers off of the sidewalks (when there is a bike lane available) is to keep vehicles out of the bike lanes

— no cars, trucks or buses. That is not practical, so it is a problem we have to deal with.

Andy Lee
Class of '01

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 014 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:

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Concert riots show worst of human nature

When it comes to music, people often say they want something so badly they would die for it. "I'd die for the new Britney Spears CD!" "I'd die to see Metallica rockin' out!" "Eddie Vedder? I would die for him."

In recent weeks, it has become shockingly apparent that people are willing to die for these causes. On June 31, nine people died from injuries sustained at a Pearl Jam concert 25 miles west of Copenhagen, Denmark. Those killed were among a crowd of 25,000 fans.

Besides those trampled to death, 26 other fans were injured during the concert. While extremely saddening, the death toll is not surprising. Remember Pearl Jam's "Evenflow" video on MTV? Many viewers probably wanted to jump around in that sweaty mosh pit, even those who are big fans of personal space. Pearl Jam should have been named Jam Pile—the title is much more fitting for the feelings evoked by its music.

However, the deaths are not the fault of Pearl Jam. According to concert-goers, frontman Eddie Vedder repeatedly asked the crowd to move back. They simply did not listen.

So, if Pearl Jam is not to blame, who is? There has to be a culprit in all this madness. Blame continues to shift from source to source, but it still has not found a definitive resting place, unlike the nine victims.

Are not the pushing, screaming, animalistic fans at fault? According to Nina Crowley, an anti-censorship activist with MassMic who worked booths at the concert, the answer is no. She attributes the deaths to muddy conditions at the concert that day. As concert-goers sunk into several inches of mud, they were trampled by fellow fans. Is the mud really responsible? Not likely.

The real killer at this concert was human nature. People are willing to kick, punch and trample their way to get a closer view of the icon *du jour*. Record companies package insanity into CDs, T-shirts and bumper stickers and sell it to the masses. Many music consumers respond by destroying property and people at concerts.

The nine Pearl Jam deaths are not isolated incidents. Nearly 70 concert deaths were reported in 1999, according to Crowd Management Strategies. Unbelievable.

In 1979, 11 fans were killed at The Who's Cincinnati Riverfront Coliseum show. The event is widely regarded as one of the worst concert tragedies.

Most people have already forgotten the gruesome deaths of June 31. After all, there are new ones to grieve over, such as the death of Martin Muschette, a 21-year-old who fell 80 feet to his death at the Fourth of July Summer Sanitarium festival. Festival performer Metallica issued a statement saying the band was "absolutely devastated." Hmmm. I wonder if it has ever heard of a self-fulfilling prophecy? If so, maybe they should change the name of the tour. It is obviously attracting a crowd of crazies.

Deaths are inevitable at concerts filled with enthusiastic, drunk music lovers. Some people may, rather than risk their lives for a firsthand view the gyrating hips of Justin Timberlake, prefer to just stay home and watch "Behind the Music" episodes on Motley Crüe. That way they can rock on the "Wild Side" in the comfort of my home.

Blame continues to shift from source to source, but it still has not found a definitive resting place, unlike the nine victims.

Amy Lahaie is a columnist for The State News at Michigan State University.



Nick Luckoich
ATLANTA CONSTITUTION

Individual contributions. I spent time teaching music in Mexico and setting up studios between Mexico and the United States. I am currently teaching educational programs at several universities. We can increase the number of universities to do community service on their own," he said. I will retire soon from Adelphi University. I still has a lot of work to do. I hope to live long enough to see my son's malnutrition is eliminated. I hope to see the Caribbean.

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...a little bit and watch some of the other teams compete. I'm swimming coach and I said the chance for Nelan to compete at the international level is a great opportunity. It's exciting for us to see Nelan's name next year, and I hope it's neat because he is such a kid, and he's done such a good job listening to what we've said," Nash said. "This is a special opportunity for him. Nelan's parents are excited about their son's achievement. Nelan, his mother, said she's proud of what he's accomplished. He was the first swimmer at Keller (Texas) High School to win a scholarship to a Division I school. Debra Nelan said, "I believe he can do anything he wants to do." Christopher Nelan Sr., his father, said after last winter's Junior National meet, Chris Nelan Jr. found out the possibility of representing America in the Division I Aquatic Association for the USAAD. When he was asked for a strobe light at a Junior National competition, Christopher Nelan Sr. said she found out Chris was a called swim team at Texas trying to track Chris Nelan Jr.

We'll walk what we can and the rest of the way it's to," Debra Nelan said. Christopher Nelan Sr. said he must work to be able to trip himself. He said the trip will have to do a fund-raiser for the nearly \$4000 Chris Nelan needs to make the trip.

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...ensuring oxygen consumption and carbon dioxide production. Wade Womack, Fit Life coordinator for the Applied Exercise Science Laboratory, said center tests athletes but programs that allow students and members of the Bridge Station community to use their health.

The only 100-percent water sure percent body fat though underwater weightlifting is the only place to do 10-mile radius of Bryan and Bridge Station," Womack said. Through the summer, we test students, along with giving physicals. All the local police officers fight."

Womack said people may be for strength and conditioning, facilitated by senior and physiology majors. The access to the same equipment by A&M athletes.

Clark said some members of the coaching staff have used the extensive physical assessment tests and training offered at Applied Exercise Science Laboratory, and he said the self is a great opportunity for interested in personal health.

Bike permits pointless, PTTS motivated by greed

response to Amber Rasco's July 11 column.

The whole concept of bike permits sounds ridiculous to me. Rasco says in her column that "This will ensure that there is enough parking." If PTTS registers 30,000 bicycles and there are only 20,000 parking spaces, there is not enough parking. Or if 2,000 people want to park at Zachry and there are only 500 parking spaces, are the other 500 supposed to ride their bikes to West Campus to park? Does that not defeat the purpose of a bike?

Rasco states that "Bikers are parked everywhere," but why is that? Could it be be-