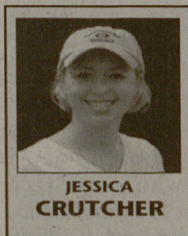


The law isn't always fair

Reed College acting legally by denying student paper link on Web



JESSICA CRUTCHER

During the last couple of weeks, a controversy has occurred in Portland, Ore., dealing with the so-called censorship of Reed College's student newspaper.

This private college will not provide an online link from its Website to *The Quest*, the controversial college weekly. In the past, the newspaper has featured profanity, as well as column on how to use the illegal drug acid, or LSD. Photographs of naked men also have appeared in *The Quest*.

Proponents of the student paper having a link with Reed College say the college is unfairly censoring the students. Michael Hiestand, a lawyer for the Student Press Law Center, said, "They don't want a wider audience to see what the students have written," and suggested that the college place a disclaimer beside the link rather than outright censoring its content or appearance on the site. This seems like a fair compromise to many. However, Hiestand and others involved with the case must remember that the ultimate decision is up to Reed College's administrators, because it is a private university.

According to past court decisions, although Reed College's decision may not seem like the fair thing to do, as a private school it has the right to censor its student newspaper in any way it sees fit. The freedom of the press exercised by student newspapers in public schools is not recognized to

the same extent when dealing with a private organization. In fact, when one looks at the past actions of other colleges, Reed seems very understanding. The officials are actually attempting to help *The Quest* stay in print, as spokesperson Harriet Watson explained: "If we put it online they would lose editorial control, and we would become publishers," she said in an interview with *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. "As publishers, we would, out of necessity, exercise oversight for what would bear the imprimatur of the college." In addition, officials said they have no problem with the paper being published in hard copy, and they encourage *The Quest's* editors to put the paper online on a site of its own.

Considering the controversial content of certain editions of *The Quest*, its editors should count their blessings and be glad they have not received more heat from the university. Certain other private colleges have not been so understanding. For example, a few years ago, Baylor University in Waco temporarily shut down its student newspaper and fired its editors after *Playboy Magazine* placed an advertisement informing area women that it was coming to town recruiting models. Baylor officials felt this was not an acceptable image for the school to portray and ordered the advertisement not be run. When it was printed anyway, officials reacted harshly.

Although their censorship might have been over the top, the courts ruled that Baylor, as a private institution, was fully within its rights. Likewise, Reed College is within its rights by refusing to link *The Quest*

to its Website. In the future, students with a propensity for writing controversial material should remember that if they want a completely free press, they should probably choose to attend a public university.

Jessica Crutcher is a junior journalism major.



RUBEN DELUNA/The Battalion

NAACP has forgotten the meaning of progress

There is no doubt that America has a race problem, not unlike every other country in the world.



JONATHAN JONES

Fortunately, much progress has been made in the last century. But that hard-won headway is jeopardized when organizations supposedly dedicated to bridging the divide between races cause unnecessary controversy and no longer advocate the policies of equality and progress that protect and foster racial tranquility.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) recently held their annual convention in New Orleans. The notion of being even slightly civil toward people with whom they disagree was nowhere to be found this year. Board Chairman Julian Bond blasted President George W. Bush, stating to the cheering delegates that "instead

of uniting us, the new Administration almost daily separates and divides us." He went on to say the President has "selected nominees from the Taliban wing of American politics, appeased the wretched appetites of the extreme right-wing and chose Cabinet officials whose devotion to the Confederacy is almost canine in its uncritical affection."

The Free Congress Foundation reports that just one month before Bond compared conservatives to the Islamic terrorist organization, Taliban troops rounded up an estimated 300 men and boys from their homes and jobs and shot them. Such overblown rhetoric is untrue and over the line, and indicative of the type of behavior that should disqualify the NAACP from claiming to represent the best interests of African-Americans.

John McWhorter, a critic of mainstream African-American leadership, professor of linguistics at The University of California-Berkeley, and author of *Losing the Race: Self-Sabotage in*

Black America, writes that if Bush was truly committed to the advancement of African-Americans in America, his first step should be to "dissociate himself from this irrelevant shell of an organization."

Last year, the NAACP ran ads linking Bush to the lynching death of James Byrd Jr., when in fact he vocally supported the death penalty for Byrd's killers. Bond also spoke of "racially-motivated voter purges" in Florida, when that charge is completely unproven. Mary Frances Berry, chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Commission that investigated the supposed violations against African-Americans in Florida, was unable to come up with any evidence in the recently-released report. She has attacked away at the Republicans regardless.

At the NAACP convention, she said of the party switch of Jim Jeffords that gave control of the Senate to the Democrats, "Before that, I was just wondering when Strom Thurmond was going to die." Such a divi-

sive attitude has become a major obstacle to our country's leaders working together on policies that could benefit African-Americans, and in the end all citizens.

President Bush rightfully declined an invitation to speak or send a videotape to the convention until a more constructive dialogue can be built. A good place to start such a conversation would be to address the very subjects that the NAACP, Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton are silent on: the dysfunctional public educational establishment of the inner city and the crisis of out-of-wedlock births. *The Washington Times* reports the illegitimacy rate to be nearly 70 percent in the African-American community. Unfortunately, it is much easier to continue to wallow in victimization and finger-pointing than to lift up those who need help.

Greater educational choices, which would allow for some of the poorest children trapped in failing schools to escape, is overwhelmingly supported in

polls of African-Americans.

Last year's National Assessment of Educational Progress test found that 63 percent of African-American fourth graders cannot read at a basic level. For the organizational leadership to staunchly support the failed status quo is inexcusable. Is Republican-bashing all the NAACP has to offer these days? The Washington, D.C., public schools spends a huge amount of money per pupil, among the highest in the nation, yet offers a terrible educational product.

It is long past time for new ideas that might very well prove effective. But the NAACP and Berry oppose school vouchers and remain silent on the responsibilities and necessity of fatherhood.

Now, they stand at the schoolhouse door. It was wrong for the government to institute policies that divided citizens based on race 50 or 200 years ago, and it is still wrong today.

What the NAACP advocates, including racial quotas and preferences and opposition

to school choice, does not help the progress of African-Americans in this country. Some of Bush's actions, like meetings with ministers who support his faith-based and school choice initiatives, and support of the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise and the Faithhood Initiative, do. These are some organizations fighting the problems of America's inner cities head-on, as opposed to inflammatory speeches.

The NAACP would do well to realize that overheated rhetoric cannot cure the travesties and injustice that plague far too many in the African-American community. Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision was one where individuals "were judged not by the color of their skin, but the content of their character."

U.S. leaders of every background should peruse color-blind policies that widen the doors of opportunity for all citizens.

Jonathan Jones is a senior political science major.

Mail Call

Uncartoonist responds to criticism of cartoon

With regard to *The Battalion's* July 24, 2001 "Cartoon of the Day," it was not intended to perpetuate offensive stereotypes or foster anti-Semitism. My cartoons are meant to inspire, bring laughter and explore the endless bounds of humor. It is not my mission to create anything offensive or belittle those belonging to certain groups. Please accept my whole-hearted apology for yesterday's cartoon, depicting the possibility of pornography being intermingled with the tradition of Kosher foods in the Jewish religion. My simple drawings are a vehicle of expression, emotion and love. I beg of you, do not

take these cartoons seriously as they are designed for deep thinking and as a catalyst for constructive conversation. Thank you for speaking your mind and helping me to better my work. I am sorry if there was any confusion.

— The Uncartoonist

New buses should be used off campus first

In response to Stuart Hutson's July 24 article.

I am glad to see that A&M has purchased new buses. Unfortunately, bus operations chose to use them on campus first. I wish they would have used them for off-campus purposes first. It is important for more students to ride the bus in order to cut down on park-

ing hassles on campus. No one wants to ride 30 to 45 minutes on a non-air conditioned bus.

I do not feel sorry for anyone who has to ride the on-campus bus for 5 minutes across campus. I do feel for those people who are on the long bus routes that still have to use the old buses. I hope it doesn't take bus-ops too long to give off-campus students what they need.

Jennifer Spurlock
Class of '01

Road rage can have serious consequences

In response to Stuart Hutson's July 23 article.

I found it difficult to finish Hutson's article without the over-

whelming feeling of anger. A tragedy such as this usually brings sadness and remorse, but I was just mad.

A year ago, on June 29, I lost my roommate Amanda Rodriguez to the same type of accident. We had just finished our freshman year at A&M and had gone back home for the summer. She was driving home from class and was forced off the road by another driver. The man fled the scene and would have gotten away, but a passing motorist wrote down his license plate number.

But what made me mad was that this "road rage" seems to be an everyday occurrence. Only when it gets serious do people pay attention to it. My heart goes out to the family and friends of Robert Castro Jr. The

next time that you feel angry while behind the wheel of a car, take a deep breath and consider the consequences.

Megan Stubbs
Class of '02

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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