

Opinion

THE BATTALION

Fish vs. Farmers

Environmentalists place animals before humans

Amazingly, some people in our society value inferior forms of species over human life. In Klamath Falls, Ore., one such species, the sucker fish, is putting farmers out of business and forcing struggling families to look for a whole new way of life.

The sucker fish, which is protected by the Endangered Species Act, has caused an irrigation system that helps parched fields receive water from a lake to be abandoned. Irrigation was severely scaled back to ensure enough water remained for the sucker fish. The much-needed irrigation system helps pump life into the economy, put food in children's mouths and enhance the farmers' production. The Claremont Institute reports that there are 1,400 small farms on the verge of becoming worthless plots of land because of these fish.



BRIAN CHEADLE

From the beginning, the Endangered Species Act was flawed. It was enacted by Congress in 1973 to help save the bald eagle, the national bird. Instead, it created a bureaucracy run by unelected people who could care less for the common American. These people decide what they feel are endangered or threatened species. Once someone from the U.S. Department of Interior decides what species to protect, the species is guarded from any kind of harm or pursuit: hunting, shooting, wounding, killing, trapping, capturing or collection. The Department of

Interior also has expanded the protection to any kind of action that modifies or breaks down the environment or weakens essential behavioral patterns of the endangered species. The problem that befalls this bureaucratic system is that it does not consider the repercussions on human life. Regardless of the families who rely on the land to make a living, like the farmers of Klamath Falls, there is nothing anyone can do once a species is added to the list. Farm families will, no doubt, have a rough winter ahead all because the sucker fish must be preserved at all costs.

Proponents of preserving certain species must reevaluate their priorities. Sure, it is nice to be able to save an animal, but not at the cost of human life. Unfortunately, this is not the only instance where a species took priority over human life. Four firefighters died in an out-of-control forest fire because helicopters could not snorkel water from the Chewache River. Bureaucrats prevented this life-saving procedure because the river was a habitat for endangered species.

The sucker fish really must be a huge contributor to our society to put small children and families on the backburner. Americans need to take back their way of life and their country. This nation was built with blood, sweat and tears of the common citizen, and now the government is turning its back on them. Our representatives should step up for the common citizen and repeal laws that tear away at the fabric of our society. Representatives should not fear being voted out of office for

standing up for the working family, but standing up for a sucker fish just might get them voted out. People of Klamath Falls, and elsewhere need a Congress with a backbone. When the Endangered Species Act was first created, Congress did not take the steps to create the initial list of endangered species. In effect, this allowed Congress to run away from controversial dispute, but reap the benefits after they saved the bald eagle. Enough is enough, and as Congress sits idly by, two armed officials are sitting in the shade of a small building that houses the valves to the irrigation system in Klamath Falls. Meanwhile, crops have already died, and farmers' land values have plummeted by 50 percent. And the sucker fish swim on.

To some people, the farmers' state of existence is menial when it comes to an animal's right to swim

where it wants to. America needs to reevaluate the Endangered Species Act and put people first, where they should be.

The sucker fish has been given the same status that our forefathers bestowed on every American — life, liberty and the

pursuit of happiness. In this case, the sucker fish has a greater priority to be happier than the farmers and the families in Klamath Falls.

Brian Cheadle is a junior political science major.



RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION

FBI methods in busting crimes raises privacy issues

In an obscure case of loan sharking and gambling in New Jersey, the issues of privacy and government intrusion have been raised. The government's case against Nicodemo S. Scarfo includes information gathered by a device that records every keystroke made on his computer. Scarfo owns Merchant Services in Belleville, N.J. The use of this type of technology verges on the edge of the invasion of privacy. Government intrusion into the private lives of citizens has been aided by new technological advances. Although Internet communication is not as protected as other forms, perhaps steps should be taken in that direction. There need to be clear and strict guidelines regulating the use of this technology to protect the public from Big Brother's prying eyes.



BRIENNE PORTER

Court documents said the government had a 30-day search warrant that allowed the FBI to "install and leave behind software, firmware and/or hardware equipment which [would] monitor the inputted data" in Scarfo's computer. But the question is whether the key-logger system is equivalent to a wire tap. If it is the same as a wire tap, then the FBI should have requested a "Title III," which is an electronic communications wiretap order. The government argues that since the information did not gather information via email that they were not required to get a wiretap order. Yet, the FBI used the information from the program to learn Scarfo's password to decrypt his personal documents. Ronald D. Wigler, assistant U.S. attorney on the case, said (in *The New York Times*), "Letters do not become 'electronic communications' subject to Title III merely because they happen to have been typed on a computer."

Did the FBI have such broad reigns with the key-logger system that it violated Scarfo's

Constitutional rights? According to briefs filed with the court, Scarfo and his lawyers state "the keyboard logger collected everything Mr. Scarfo typed, the court order permitting its use violated longstanding constitutional rules that search warrants and evidence collection should be as narrow as possible." The system, the specifics of which the government will not make known in public, is very similar to the wiretaps in that the FBI sat around waiting for Scarfo to type something that will help the case.

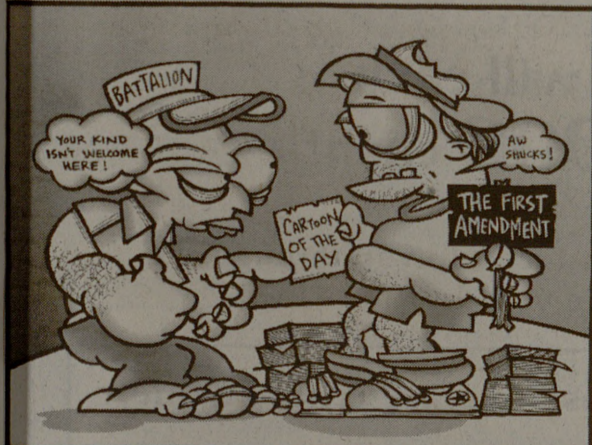
The right to privacy is not a right that is thrown out the window with new technology. It is an inalienable right that even the worst criminal is entitled, unless a specific court order says that the government can intrude to stop illegal actions. Yet, to disregard this right, the government has to have the proper court orders. This time it did not. The key-logger system is the same as a wiretap because it records personal information communicated between people like on a telephone. David Sobel of the Electronic

Privacy Information Center, an advisor to the Scarfo team, said, "the idea of secret government surveillance technology being installed with very little oversight or accountability is about as close to the common perception of Big Brother as anything I could really imagine."

The government maintains that it did not record anything from electronic communications, but they will not release the specifics of the system so that all parties can decide if the system did record information not covered by the search warrant. Without detailing the specifics of the system, the court should throw out the information gathered by it. The court also should classify the key-logger system as a Title III. Once that is done, the public can rest a little easier knowing that the government can not come into their homes without a Title III and monitor computer usage.

Brienne Porter is a junior political science major.

CARTOON OF THE DAY



THE UN-CARTOONIST ©

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Reality programs bring out the worst in people

For the past few years, America has been bombarded with new television programs whose purpose is to portray reality.



LAINE CLOUD

These shows have one major gimmick — playing to win money, and lots of it. The cast willingly begins their journey into the ruthless world of televised competition willingly, but money should not be that important. These individuals give up their privacy for a cheap 15 minutes of fame, and that simply is not worth it.

Being watched 24 hours a day and playing ruthless games to win money is not the most positive way to achieve success. It is a slap in the face to the hard-working Americans, who take years to work their way up and make the same amount of money that these cast members can make in three months of degrading competition. Indeed, the repercussions the cast members face after the show has finished taping are not often positive.

In the second season of "Survivor," held in the wilderness of the Australian Outback, fierce competitions and violent behavior was normal for their daily activities. *T.V. Guide's* Michael Moses said that "Survivor" winner Tina Wesson endured "42 days of starvation, dehydration, and public humiliation." She had to make some harsh decisions just to play the game, and thinking of herself was her number one priority.

Television time cannot replace human dignity.

This won her a nice sum of money, but that is all she walked away with.

The cast members are selling themselves to a ratings-starved network television industry without full thought of the repercussions for themselves. Beside endangering her health, Wesson demonstrated to her children and millions of Americans just how manipulative and backstabbing people can be. In real life, there is no monetary reward for such

bad behavior.

Another popular reality show is "Big Brother." Each episode seems to reflect how selfish people actually are. No one is able to trust another in the household, and they put on an act to save themselves from being evicted. Each person is competing in a popularity contest in order to win, but for those who have a conscience it can be difficult to cope. Bunky, for example, regularly burst into tears as he strategically voted his friends off the show.

A poll taken by CBS asked individuals if they were a member of the house would they be ready to leave or would they stay. Out of 74,483 voters, around 68 percent would leave, and 31 percent of the voters said they would stay. At least some of the viewers can see through these network charades. To willingly parade oneself around for the entertainment of others, participating in the type of manipulative behavior citizens should shun, demonstrates the level to which some will sink for their 15 minutes of fame.

The media certainly pays

attention to the cast members lives after the show is over, but this fades as quickly as the novelty of reality television. Jerri Manthey from "Survivor 2" had a dead end acting career until she was voted out of the Australian Outback. She has now posed for Playboy. Expect to never hear from her again.

Auditioning to be a cast member in hopes that a career is furthered is extremely selfish and undoubtedly wrong. Acting is a grueling job, but people who are devoted will go after their dreams without taking a cheap side route to get there.

Becoming famous is a dream come true for most people, but for the average American, all the money in the world should not persuade them to give up their privacy and expose themselves to the world. Reality shows allow people to place themselves in situations that reward the worst of human behavior. People should have more respect for themselves while getting a grip on what is truly important in life.

Laine Cloud is a sophomore biology major.