

# Addicted to reality

## Reality shows attract a student audience

By Ashleigh Holmes  
THE BATTALION

What makes reality television so hard NOT to watch? Is it a matter of normal, everyday people wanting to watch other normal, everyday people fall flat on their face?

"People are finding out what sociologists have always known - watching people is fascinating and often unpredictable," said Dr. Joan Manley, an assistant sociology professor at Texas A&M. Fame is another factor that plays a role in the public's addiction to reality television, said Frances Durham, a sophomore agricultural journalism major.

"America has an obsession about being on TV," Durham said.

She said ordinary people are obsessed with the possibility of making their television debuts, which plays perfectly into the plans of reality show producers. This provides producers with a never-ending supply of cast members and no agents are required, Durham said.

Mary Scheske, a freshman journalism major, said she thinks cast members portray life better if they have little acting experience.

"In real-life situations, people don't have any shame," she said.

Scheske said although the cast members' lives are exploited, they make a conscious decision to subject themselves to ridicule.

Michael Rice, a senior psychology major, said he is attracted to reality television, especially "The Real World," because the characters are not written.

"It's fun to see how low people will stoop to get on TV," he said. "They are real people who are unpredictable."

Fox's "Joe Millionaire" might have taken reality television a step too far, Rice said. He said it is wrong to deceive the female cast members by telling them the star is worth a million dollars when his actual income is \$20,000 a year.

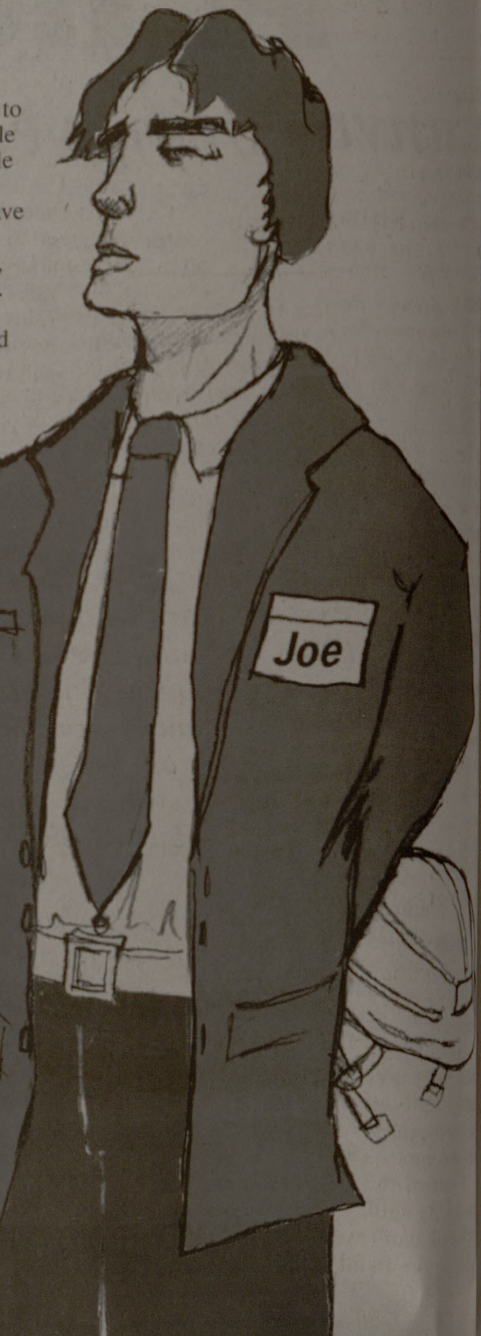
But Rice said he is interested in the girls' reactions when the truth is revealed.

Scheske said the appeal of "Joe Millionaire" is being able to watch the "sappy, pathetic" girls fall on their faces.

"(Joe Millionaire) is making victims out of people," Scheske said. "It's put out there for our entertainment, so why not watch it?"

Scheske and Durham attempted to enter the world of reality television by trying out for "The Real World" at Shadow Canyon last fall. But for Durham, the line was too long.

Rice said he would "go in a second" if he were given the opportunity to be on "The Real World." Aside from wanting to become rich



FRANK CHANCE • THE BATTALION

and famous, he said he wants to be on the show to broaden his horizons.

"I want to meet people from outside Texas with different cultures and different backgrounds," he said.

Rice said he would like to see a program with no intervention from casting directors. He said his concept is similar to that of "The Real World," except Rice said he thinks the next reality television show should take place in a college dorm.

"Go to a college campus, pick a dorm and just watch the drama unfold," he said.



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