

Bush should halt live war coverage

(U-WIRE) LUBBOCK, Texas — I am itching to tell you how I am feeling about all the news media. What in the world are these broadcast stations thinking?

I feel as though we are shouting out to Saddam Hussein, "Hey buddy, we are going to be at Baghdad approximately at 4 p.m. Sunday. Meet you there, OK?" Perhaps the media is not giving the Iraqi government any new significant information they were not aware of, but how do we know for certain?

What ever happened to national security laws? Have they totally been wiped out of existence? Is the media honestly giving us all this information, and there is absolutely no chance of us giving the Iraqi government information simultaneously?

I have quite an unusual view, I assume, for the average journalist. I believe even if we are not giving any important wartime information away, it still should not be all over the television.

What we are most definitely doing is antagonizing our enemy and his neighbors over and over again, 24 hours a day. We are just asking him to give us a harder fight.

What happens when you tell a bully he isn't tough enough? He just pushes harder. If Hussein is this crazy, why are we covering this war in this manner and showing him his dead soldiers? That makes him push harder, the same way we are pushing harder.

I have no understanding why President Bush has allowed this to happen, and to let it continue as long as it has. At first, I felt as if he wanted the media to cover this in such depth to show the American people two things: Our troops were helping the Iraqi people and there was little damage occurring to this suffering nation.

This obviously has not been the case. We are watching bombs nail the ground, producing unimaginable amounts of destruction and possibly civilian deaths. The way our media covers these destructive acts doesn't necessarily coincide with the theme "liberation."

I just think if the media didn't cover this war so closely and give the citizens an actual account of advancement and death, then we wouldn't be in the predicament we are in now with Arab countries lending suicide bombers and fighters to the Iraqi government. There might be other reasons, but our propaganda still tells them our entire nation loves to hear we have slaughtered many of their neighboring people.

Our media has painted these people

a picture that we are annihilating their neighbors with a glorious bloody defeat, which we are. But we can wait until this war is over before we brag. We are making ourselves look like a bloodthirsty country by showing these images in this cocky manner, talking of victory. Just tell us the bare necessities, if for no other reason than the safety of our troops.

I think the American media networks should bond together and put a cease-fire on the war coverage. This is a media war, which consists of each side showing its citizens horrible images and trying to continuously persuade other countries we are doing the right thing.

Common people, as ourselves, have not been trained to see the world in a combat view. We have not been through boot camp, and war training has not been a part of our lives. Although we have loved ones overseas and we would like to know what is happening, I think this could be dealt with without all the "exclusive" coverage. We are not trained like the soldier, and therefore, we should not see what they see.

Is this not what our troops are fighting to protect us from? We should not be able to see the "war zone" and watch bombs causing havoc. The pilots that drop these bombs have been trained to watch this disastrous act and understand it in a military sense. Not everyone has a military mind.

People are becoming depressed and obsessed over these visuals being flashed so carelessly on the television. These are scenes of horror, which forever are imbedded in my mind. We cannot continue doing this.

By showing these images on television over and over again, we are numbing our children and our own people to the harsh realities of the war. We are becoming accustomed to seeing mass amounts of destruction and death daily. Is this not what our troops are fighting to shelter us from?

I think coverage should be provided to us in a much classier and cautious manner. But until then, let's just pull 'em all out of there.

Kori Hahn is a columnist at Texas Tech University.

SAVE MONEY

MSC Aggie Nights wastes students' fees

Students turned out in droves, in February, to vote down frivolous fee increases, with four out of five voters rejecting a hike in the Student Services Fee.

"I don't think students even bothered to read the ballot before voting no," said Gabby Oroza, a senior psychology major and chair of the Student Fee Advisory Board. "It's a complicated issue, and students were just misinformed."

While Oroza might underestimate students' decision-making abilities, her criticism of the lack of information surrounding the fee is correct. The best example of this is Memorial Student Center's Aggie Nights, a program that is on its way to wasting \$208,000 in Student Services Fee money this year, and is shrouded in secrecy.

The Aggie Nights program reads like a MasterCard commercial. Door prizes to motivate students to attend Aggie Nights: \$5,000. Advertising to convince students to go to Aggie Nights: \$18,000. Junk food to keep students at Aggie Nights: \$30,000. Wasting Student Services Fee money when educational and agricultural programs are being cut: priceless. Other miscellaneous expenses include tens of thousands of dollars for hotel rooms and travel, dinners and breakfasts, entertainers and hypnosis sessions, copies, crafts and disc jockeys. While these figures sound outrageous, they are only the tip of the iceberg. These numbers come from financial reports showing only half of Aggie Nights' budgeted expenditures.

Perhaps the most interesting exploitation of the Student Services Fee money by Aggie Nights was its sponsorship of the Vagina Monologues. Only a year after former President Dr. Ray M. Bowen and other University officials attempted to distance Texas A&M from the controversial feminist play, Aggie Nights used its access to the Student Services Fee to purchase thousands of dollars in tickets and advertising for the program. There is no excuse for hijacking mandatory student fees to fund such tasteless special interests. This is tantamount to University sponsorship of the Vagina Monologues.

MSC leaders have been anything but open when it comes to explaining how they are spending Student Service Fee money, and it required a Public Information Request to prompt a response. MSC Director Jim Reynolds has not returned Battalion phone calls concerning Aggie Nights for the past month. MSC President Barry Hammond has refused to comment on the program. It is a sad day when those who have been entrusted to look after the welfare of students actively work to keep those same students in the dark on how their money is used.

It should be noted, however, that Chris Duke, the much maligned MSC Executive Vice President of Marketing, has been willing to discuss Aggie Nights. His justification of the program is that it offers students an alternative to drinking alcohol on their Friday nights. While seemingly noble, this reasoning is flawed. It suggests that there is no alternative to drinking in College Station, and that only with the MSC and the entire student body footing the bill would students



MATT MADDOX



participate in these activities.

The activities offered by Aggie Nights — movies, music, food, bowling, games, crafts, pool and dominoes — can all be found elsewhere in the A&M community. Also, even if a large number of Aggies drink, does this justify the MSC's flagrant squandering of funds? If Aggie Nights is to continue, it must do what every other venue in College Station does — fund itself by charging its customers, rather than taxing the entire community.

Congratulations to every student who voted down the fee increase. Not only were you wise to hold on to your money, but you helped keep those that operate the MSC honest. The wasted funds cannot be unspent, but money not yet flushed down the toilet of Aggie Nights should be frozen. Of all the investigations that have been proposed this year, an investigation of how unelected students dithered away fee money should have precedence. Most importantly, future MSC presidents need to be accountable for the millions of student fees they control. From now on students should be given the power to elect their MSC president.

Matthew Maddox is a junior business management major. Graphic by Leigh Richardson.

MAIL CALL

Saddam's atrocities are enough to justify the new war against Iraq

In response to Collins Ezeanyim's April 4 column:

Mr. Ezeanyim, do thousands of women being raped, countless numbers of innocent civilians being chewed up in industrial shredders, the murder of approximately 1.5 million Iraqi citizens by Gestapo-style death squads, and the massacre of 5,000 Kurds by use of nerve gas count as "Christian criteria?" If these reasons alone are not enough to justify the Christian criteria then I ask you what is. Here are the facts: experts agree that had the Israelis not attacked the Osiraq reactor in Iraq then Saddam Hussein would have a fully functional nuclear weapon.

Saddam is the only tyrant to ever use nerve agents: he used them in the Iran-Iraq War as well as the Kurdish uprising after Desert Storm. He has no regard for human life and has committed a myriad of human rights atrocities, and has offered \$25,000 to the families of Palestinian suicide bombers.

There was a fundamental shift in the policy of the United States after the terrorist attacks on 9/11. No longer can the U.S. sit back and hope for the best, we must take the fight to the terrorist and those that support them. We have taken all possible diplomatic measures to resolve this problem but they have proven unsuccessful because of a fanatic despot bent on the destruction of the "Great Satan." The United States must stand firm against Saddam Hussein not only for the countless millions of Iraqi citizens who will be freed from a tyrants grip but also for the thousands of Americans who will not be endangered by rogue terrorist armed with biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons from the Iraqi regime.

Todd Stewart
Class of 2005

Geneva Convention rules should be followed by all nations

In response to an April 3 Mail Call:

I will not go so far as to say that you should not be allowed to speak what is on your mind. After all, it is the hypocritical United States that

affords you that right. Many people take that right for granted and refuse to believe that Saddam Hussein poses a threat to the U.S. Granted, Saddam Hussein has not directly claimed credit for attacks against the U.S., but does that guarantee safety in the future for American citizens from attacks by terrorist organizations supported and sponsored by Saddam? In order for the Iraqis to be justified in ignoring the Geneva Convention, they must no longer expect to be honored as a sovereign nation. A nation that calls its soldiers to surrender then open fire on American soldiers, use civilians as body armor, incite citizens to become suicide bombers with cash, and parade U.S. POWs around as trophies does not deserve to be called sovereign. It is important to remember this is not a war about stopping suicide bombers, or getting better conditions for POWs, but it is a war to dethrone a dictator and known persecutor of his own people. I do not blindly put my faith in our Commander in Chief, yet I do agree with the campaign to bring the same freedom America enjoys to the Middle East.

Brian Wills
Class of 2006

Demonstration unnecessary and immature

In response to an April 3 demonstration:

Yesterday was a day of enlightenment. The "Straight A's" held an informative demonstration in the Academic Plaza in which participants held signs reading: "Without heterosexuals, you wouldn't be here," and "You can't put a square peg in a round hole."

For those of us who struggled through sixth grade biology, this was a great refresher course. I am certain innumerable square pegs were rescued from untimely demise.

However, another slogan suggested there might have been an ulterior motive. "Promote Heterosexuality on Campus." Apparently these men (and they were all male by the way) were so insecure about their own heterosexuality that they felt it necessary to brandish an eight-foot tall sign announcing their position on it — ostensibly at least.

To the best of my knowledge, no organization exists whose goal is homosexual world domination — nor encouragement of homosexuality, merely promotion of pride and tolerance.

As far as the depletion of the human race — homosexuality has

been around for millennia and we've still got 6 billion people, so I wouldn't start constructing heterosexual preservation shelters just yet.

To most people who got past that elementary school hurdle and already comprehend the reproductive process, this isn't anything new, but hopefully the "Straight A's" will be able to read this and acclimate to a little college-level thinking.

Cory Oliver
Class of 2006

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 200 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 also may be mailed to: 014 Reed McDonald, MS 1111, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-1111. Fax: (979) 845-2647 Email: mailcall@thebatt.com. Attachments are not accepted.

