

OPINION

THE BATTALION

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A show for few ages

The FCC investigation into Super Bowl XXXVIII halftime show is justified



COLLINS EZEANYIM

Anyone with a pulse knows what happened on Feb. 1 during the halftime show of Super Bowl XXXVIII. Which, in light of current events, might be better labeled Super Bowl XXX. Toward the end of the half-time show, which featured catch-grabbing galore and the desecration of Old Glory, viewers were shocked to see Justin Timberlake expose Janet Jackson's right breast.

Michael Powell, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, has ordered an inquiry into what happened during the halftime show. Some, like Democratic presidential candidate Howard Dean, have said the investigation is not necessary, according to the Chicago Sun-Times. But this inquiry is justified.

The first reason is the outrage it inspired in many viewers. There seems to be genuine anger and concern over how this event transpired. Some in the media have said people became outraged for the sake of being outraged — which is probably true. Still, www.fox.com reports "Nipplegate" has set a record for most-searched for a single-day news event, even outnumbering the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

The most important reason to investigate this

incident is to assign blame to the proper parties and find out who exactly knew what, and when they knew it. Frankly, accountability for this fiasco is as hard to find as Iraq's illegal weapons cache.

In case anyone is keeping score, the NFL and CBS blame MTV, the producer of the halftime show. However, the NFL's claim of naivete is highly suspicious. As Jim Rome pointed out on his radio program the day after the Super Bowl, the NFL will fine its players if they don't wear their socks correctly. It is hard to believe a league that micromanages so much and is fanatic about its public image knew next to nothing about what would occur during the halftime of its most important game of the year.

MTV blames Jackson, claiming the network was victim of "a renegade mistake by a performer," according to The New York Times. MTV



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Networks CEO Tom Freston went so far as to say his network was "punk'd" by Jackson, according to Forbes magazine. The allusion to Ashton

Kutcher's low-brow reality show indicates the MTV brass isn't taking this as seriously as it should.

Before complaints by MTV are given any merit, consider the fact that the network promised "shocking moments" in the publicity for its halftime show. Realistically, exposing a breast is not below MTV's morality threshold, considering it orchestrated the Britney Spears and Madonna kiss at last year's MTV Video Music Awards.

To her credit, Jackson has claimed full responsibility for the incident. Timberlake initially — and infamously — blamed the

incident on a "wardrobe malfunction." But the FCC should find out if this is truly the case.

Meanwhile, even before the FCC completes its investigation, there are several parties that are deserving of scorn.

The NFL deserves censure for overreacting. It dropped performer J.C. Chasez from the Feb. 8 Pro Bowl because of his association with Timberlake. The disapproval of the NFL was also a factor in ESPN's boneheaded decision to cancel its popular "Playmakers" series, according to ESPN.com.

CBS deserves condemnation for its continued hypocrisy. CBS rejected a political ad where children pretended to do adult chores, but ads featuring horse flatulence, references to bestiality and a halftime show featuring an exposed breast are acceptable.

So investigate away, Mr. Powell. Punish those who deserve it and prevent any further uses of weapons of mass wardrobe malfunction.

Collins Ezeanyim is a senior computer engineering major.

Keeping aggressions in check

EU arms embargo against China must be retained despite France's wishes

More than 50 years ago, the United States helped establish a country for fleeing Chinese nationalists on an island known as Formosa. It holds free elections and has a free market economy, in spite of the fact that few countries, including the United States, formally recognize the country now known as Taiwan.

Now the Taiwanese are going to vote on a referendum that would defend themselves from Chinese missiles, and countries that wish to curry the favor of China have been condemning the vote. This includes the opportunistic French, who would like to lift the European Union ban on arms sales to China. The European Union should refuse this request by France and keep the embargo in place.

The European Union first put the arms embargo against China into effect after the atrocities that occurred at Tiananmen Square in 1989, where thousands of counterrevolutionary protesters were killed after more than one million people filled the area. But now, according to the BBC, French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin has asked the European Union to lift the arms embargo.

De Villepin said the "embargo stems from a (view) of European Union-China relations which is outdated," and the ban should be lifted when European Union leaders meet next month. It seems that France thinks the human rights problems that occasioned the embargo no longer exist. Recent remarks

made by German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder indicate that the Germans have come to the same opinion.

However, it is more likely that France and Germany wish to appease China to build trade ties and avoid being cut out of the growing Chinese market. According to an article by the International Herald Tribune, Chinese Premier Hu Jintao announced that China Southern Airlines had already agreed to buy 21 Airbus airliners while he was in France this past week.

France has also expressed dismay at the referendum on the Taiwanese ballot to beef up Taiwan's defenses if China refuses to redeploy the missiles currently aimed across the Taiwan Straits. French President Jacques Chirac referred to the referendum as a mistake on the part of the Taiwanese, and the Chinese have painted the referendum as an attempt by the Taiwanese to move toward independence.

In his effort to pander to the Chinese, Chirac has backed China's effort to scare the Taiwanese out of deciding to defend themselves against Chinese aggression. Sadly, the United States and Japan have also shown their opposition to the referendum.

But the Chinese and the other countries backing their opposition to the ballot have failed to mention that the same ballot will also have a proposition to open negotiations with the

Chinese, according to the BBC.

Since the Chinese have repeatedly stated that Taiwan is a renegade province, they should welcome talks to reintegrate Taiwan peacefully into China.

It seems odd that if Taiwan is part of China, China would point 496 missiles at what is ostensibly its own territory. Obviously, China believes Taiwan is a threat. What is new is the conscious decision by western-style democracies to abandon a fellow democracy for a few dollars.

The United States, European Union and Japan should seriously reconsider their positions on the issue. Although the desire to preserve peace in Asia by powers such as the United States and Japan is important, they should not forget their friends in Taiwan when China waves its emerging market in their faces. But the French have just proven once again their mercenary nature.

In Taiwan, like Iraq, France has shown that it values economic gain over the freedom of peoples and countries other than its own.

David Shoemaker is a junior management major.



DAVID SHOEMAKER

MAIL CALL

Women must keep fighting for equality

In response to a Feb. 6 mail call:

Instead of being so exasperated by local feminists, you should be studying women's history. To believe that men and women are equals in society and judged only on personal accomplishments is naive. In the past 100 years we have gained the right to vote, have a family, have a career and attend public universities.

How many women could have said they were electrical engineering majors at Texas A&M 40 years ago? Our generation of women is expected to do well in school and accomplish more in life than get married, have children and stay at home. This is quite different from our grandmothers and even mothers' generations.

Texas A&M's administrators, faculty and staff provide students with an excellent learning environment that makes it easy to forget there is a real world out there. Just because you have never experienced an act of discrimination based on gender doesn't mean anybody else hasn't.

Feminism isn't about being a man-hating bra burner any more. It is about stopping the exploitation and discrimination of women in all

aspects of life. So whether Ms. McReynolds realizes it or not, her statement claiming to be able to get a job over a man equally qualified is a highly feminist statement. Realize that you will be judged because you are a woman, it is what you do about it that counts.

Mindy Terrell
Class of 2004

States should not decide on gay unions

In response to a Feb. 5 mail call:

Mr. Donahue's suggestion would not present a viable solution because of the "Full Faith and Credit" clause in the U.S. Constitution. Regardless of the applicability of such a solution, it is surprising that this view, which has been aired by both Republicans and Democrats, has not been denounced as outrageously bigoted.

The concept of letting individual states decide what rights certain people get reeks of pre-Civil War divisions between North and South. Even without going so far back in time, there are disturbing parallels; in the more recent past, the argument was made that the mixing of the races was immoral and would be a

corrupting influence on society. Then, as well as now, many conservatives enthusiastically quoted, and often misquoted, scripture to help support their arguments.

The claim that gay marriage threatens the fundamental foundation of American society by somehow weakening heterosexual marriage is as unjustified and insulting as the claim that the "mongrelization of the races" would threaten Whites.

Ahmed M. Gamal
graduate student

Mass. Supreme Court ruled correctly

Congratulations to Massachusetts' high court for standing up for what they believe is right and finally legalizing gay marriage. It's about time that gay people be treated for what they are, human beings. It is about time that people start seeing that it is not right to deny these people happiness just because some may find it sick or deviant.

Some may argue that allowing this sin to run rampant will open the door for allowing other unacceptable behaviors into our society. However I must say that I find a great deal of difference between getting married, and

raping or murdering someone. I can only hope that other states will soon follow Massachusetts example and do what is just and right.

Carlos Perez
Class of 2007

Bring back a tradition or move a bus route

Most of us have taken advantage of the on- and-off campus buses. Each bus has a unique name of something

extremely important to all Aggies: traditions.

Bonfire is no exception. This bus route is one of the most popular. It takes students to key points throughout the campus.

It seems to me that if the A&M administration is so determined to keep the tradition, Bonfire, off our campus, they should move the bus route off. Since Bonfire has been moved off campus, Bonfire should be moved off campus.

Charles Holland
Class of 2005

