

AGGIELIFE

THE BATTALION

Page 3 • Monday, September 20, 2004

Must-see Fall TV

By Robert Saucedo
THE BATTALION

Also along for the ride is "The Partner," a new reality show similar to Donald Trump's "The Apprentice." In "The Partner," a group of recent law school graduates will compete with each other to gain a position as partner in a major law firm.

"The Rebel Billionaire: Branson's Quest for the Best" will follow Sir Richard Branson, founder and chairman of the Virgin group of companies, as he travels with a group of young contestants around the world while searching for the most adventurous risk-taker amongst the group.

"The Next Great Champ" finds Oscar De La Hoya in a quest to find raw unsigned talent in the boxing ring. Although it premiered to dismal ratings, Fox's show will find itself in direct competition when NBC unveils its own boxing reality show, "The Contender," produced in part by Sylvester Stallone.

A new season of "The Apprentice" has premiered, with a third season set to follow shortly after the second's conclusion. Trump will test the wiles of 18 contestants again, each with their own business education ranging from the Ivy League to street smarts. Although this season's series did not receive the big ratings it expected, the contestants are already off to a great start: A toy designed by a one team during a challenge was picked up for mass production by manufacturer Mattel.

Spencer Selvidge, sophomore zoology major, watches approximately four hours of television every week. However, he chooses not to spend any time watching reality TV programming.

"It was real interesting at first, but today it's just boring," Selvidge said, referring to reality programming. "The first year it was cool and new, but it seems that all the new shows are just spin-offs of the same thing.

Natalie Minshew, freshman psychology major, said she has never seen an hour of reality television except for some episodes of MTV's "The Real World"

Once a year, colossal forces that shape and control human lives come together to prepare for combat in an attempt to rule the most powerful tool in America: Television airwaves.

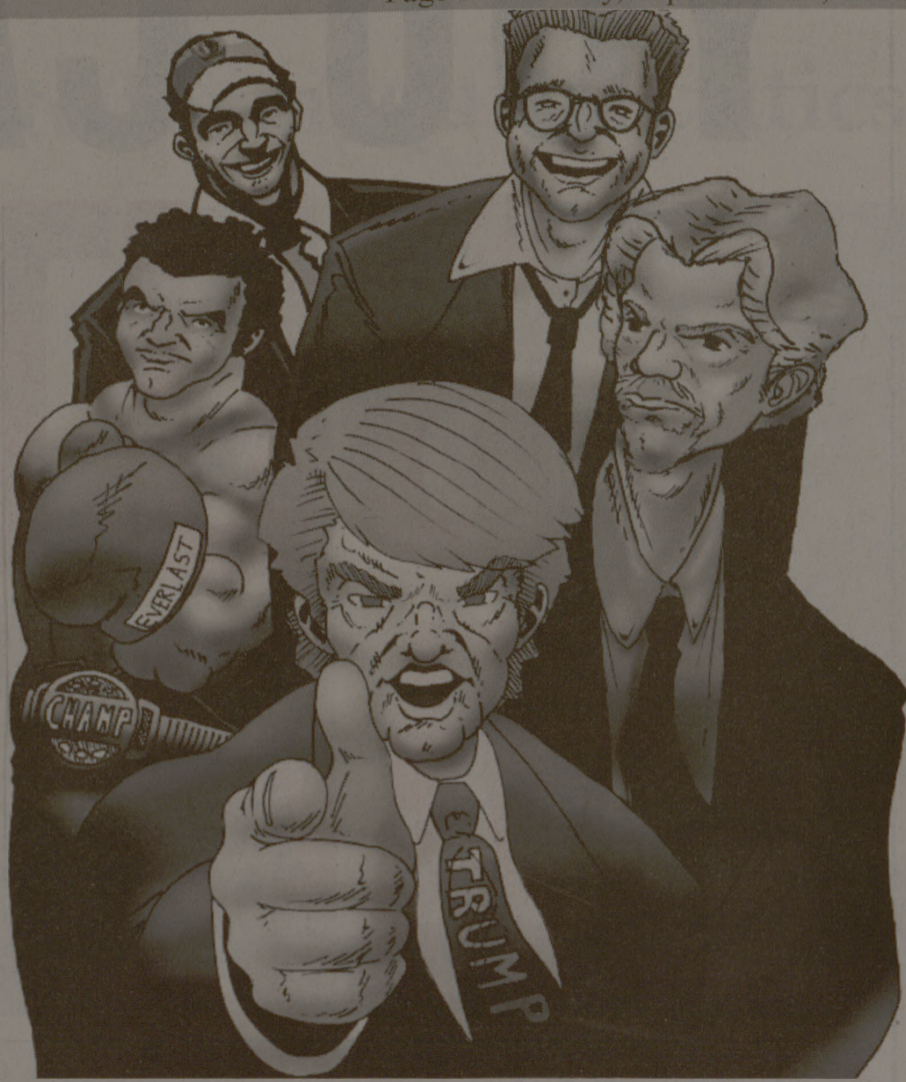
This fall, reality television will flood the airwaves as major networks prepare to roll out their new season of programs. From boxing to billionaires, the networks have looked far and wide in search of the next big gimmick in reality TV.

Networks have cooked up a handful of new shows, each hoping to entangle viewers in their web of addiction.

ABC's "The Benefactor" will follow Dallas Mavericks owner and all-around billionaire Mark Cuban as he chooses, among 16 hopefuls, one lucky contestant to bestow \$1 million dollars upon. Cuban's show premiered to decent ratings, likely because of its system of eliminating contestants at any time during the season, with three contestants already failing Cuban's test by the end of the first episode. "Wife Swap" will feature two families that trade their woman of the house to experience a mile in a different shoe.

Fox is sure to be crowned the king of reality television as it unveils its fall lineup, containing a total of five unscripted shows in comparison to its single new drama. Among Fox's new shows are "Spouse Swap," taking the same formula as "Wife Swap," wherein families trade not only wives, but fathers as well in their similarly themed program.

Already halfway through its season, "The Complex: Malibu," which deals with eight couples that compete for the chance to remodel a home, is suffering dismal ratings. Fox hopes to improve its luck with "Renovate My Family," where a panel of "professionals," including Dr. Phil's son, Jay McGraw, will consider and redesign every aspect of a family — from cars to pets to personalities.



CHRIS GRIFFIN • THE BATTALION

Part One: Meet the freshmen of reality TV

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| ABC | Channel 9 |
| | "The Benefactor" Premiered Sept. 13 |
| | "Wife Swap" Premieres Sept. 29 |
| FOX | Channel 7 |
| | "The Complex: Malibu" Premiered Aug. 30 |
| | "Renovate My Family" Premiered Sept. 1 |
| | "The Rebel Billionaire" Premieres Nov. 9 |
| | "The Next Great Champ" Premieres Nov. 7 |
| NBC | Channel 6 |
| | "The Contender" Premiered Sept. 9 |
| | "The Apprentice 2" Premiered Sept. 9 |

WILL LLOYD • THE BATTALION

when she was in middle school.

"I've never watched reality television," Minshew said. "I'm kind of proud of that now that I've survived the heyday of reality television, but I used to feel really confused when my friends would talk about who got eliminated in what."

Minshew prefers scripted drama to reality any day of the week.

"I don't feel my life has been neglected in some way. If I want reality television drama, I'll go hang out with my friends."

Rick Rigsby, professor in the department of communication, teaches a

course on the rhetoric of popular culture. In Rigsby's opinion, nothing good can come from reality programming.

"Reality shows have hit home runs," Dr. Rigsby said. "They allow the public to watch vicariously. I think these reality shows say more about American culture than people involved in broadcasting."

Selvidge doesn't think all reality shows are worth watching.

"Big Brother" is the dumbest thing on television," Selvidge said. "I have friends who pay for a live feed just to sit there at their computers and watch

See TV on page 7

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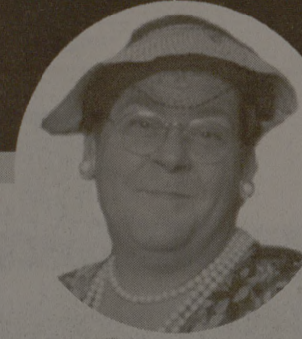
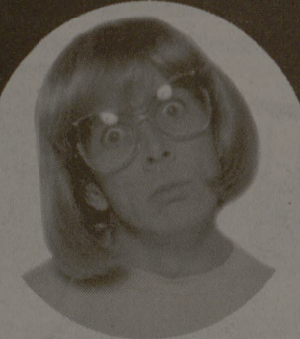
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Starring Jaston Williams & Joe Sears
(stars of the Tuna Trilogy) joined by five
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