

Editorial

Record rating could backfire on parent group

The showdown between the record industry and a group of parents begins today at a U.S. Senate Commerce Committee hearing.

The group, Washington-based Parents' Music Resource Center, wants standardized ratings, similar to movie ratings, for records, tapes and videos.

But recording representatives, who have banded together under the name Musical Majority, say ratings would censor creativity and interfere with the free marketplace.

Danny Goldberg, president of Gold Mountain Records, said the ratings would erode the First Amendment and endanger freedom of expression and music.

Nineteen major record companies have agreed to use a warning sticker on records and tapes with sexually explicit or violent lyrics, but the parents want more. They are demanding a single rating, such as X or R, for each album, rather than a simple "Parental Guidance: Explicit lyrics."

Parents have the right to know what is influencing their children. But the record rating system would infringe on the rights of artists and consumers.

Pop artists rely almost entirely on the lucrative teen-age market. And with a ratings system, artists would try to reach that market by censoring themselves. In the end, the music consumer is offered only a watered-down version of the artists' creativity.

The First Amendment prohibits government interference and censoring of published materials. Even if the ratings system was adopted, it would probably be found unconstitutional in the courts.

Albums, like books, are considered art forms, and they are protected by the First Amendment.

In addition, if a ratings system was instituted, it could backfire on parents. Instead of keeping mature-content albums away from children, the ratings could serve as a guide for young listeners who want explicit lyrics.

Instead of demanding ratings, parents should take a more direct role in checking the musical influences on their children.

For example, parents could ask sales clerks to play a few songs on albums before buying them or listen to the radio with their children to find out what topics an artist usually chooses for songs.

The general "parental guidance" warning offered by record companies would be sufficient. "Parental guidance" would put the decision back into the hands of parents, who know whether their children are mature enough to listen to explicit lyrics.



Finally, after four years, Allen has something nice to say

During the past four years I've written columns on budget problems, politics, values, religion, racism, sexism and book prices. I've written somewhat critical columns on sororities, fraternities, student government, the administration, President Reagan, the UNL police and even this paper.

I swear, I always thought the reason I wrote about these things was to spur some thought and give people a chance to reach their own conclusions. And sure, I wrote a few things just to entertain.

I really thought people would want to read about all these things, and would actually think about them.

But judging from the letters I've received during the years, I've finally realized that I was wrong.

So today, I'm writing the column that everyone seems to want me to write. I'm calling it "A Nice Column."

Gee, I woke up this morning and the sun was shining. I like the sun. It makes me glad to be alive and in Nebraska during the football season, when those glorious Cornhuskers take the field and represent the home state. It just gives me goose pimples all down the backs of my legs.

You know, the Greek system is so great. Really. Most of our most outstanding campus leaders are Greek. Many of them are in ASUN, our great student government. I like ASUN. I

always feel they have the student welfare as their top priority. Sometimes I wish I were in ASUN.

I think the best things about this campus and state is the fact that there is no racism here. Blacks are treated as equals by everyone, and not just football players either. For instance, in the bookstores here, blacks and whites alike pay the same prices for books. And the prices for textbooks are fairly reasonable, I think. After all, what price is too high for a good education?



Bill Allen

UNL offers a fine opportunity for a good education. Well paid, and adequately staffed faculty, combined with top-dollar facilities makes UNL one of the finest state institutions of higher education in Nebraska.

Wow, sometimes I'm just so bubbly about life that I just can't stand it. And there's so much culture in Nebraska. Pretty soon we will have a new Lied Center for Performing Arts. That's nice. And it was a real bargain, too. I think we should have built two, but that's just me. I'm sure the place will have a big parking lot and I can park there

when I go to the ballet. I love the ballet. I love parking, too. Sometimes the UNL policepeople give me tickets when I park in the wrong place. And sometimes I'm towed to Lincolnland. And I always say, silly me, how could I be so stupid as to forget to plug that meter. I'm sure glad those busy UNL policepeople took the time to give me a ticket as a reminder to plug that meter. I love meters. I wonder who invented them?

Gee, it feels so good to say so many nice things about everyone. Really. Now everyone is going to like me and I'll be all popular and everything, just like a high school cheerleader. I think I'll quit writing and go talk to some nice people now.

Oh, by the way, if I didn't have room to say anything nice about something that's important to you, I'm leaving a blank here so you can write it in. Please make sure it's nice. Thank you.

Maybe I'll go up to the Union Square and have a tasty cheeseburger and some hot fries. Then I can sit in a comfortable chair and read the Daily Nebraskan. Those kids do a great job down there, don't they? Have you seen the nice personals today?

Column gives international views

Editor's Note: UNL international students will write a semimonthly column expressing their viewpoints on international and local issues.

Education is often defined as what you retain long after all that is taught is forgotten.

College is a place where one learns to think independently, to challenge age-old ideologies and to coexist in a variegated world despite differences in philosophies.

In this idealized "university upbringing," an essential ingredient is the freedom of expression. Not only does every side reserve the right to speak out, but this blend of viewpoints forms the basis of the university environment.

Although this basic philosophy generally is adhered to, many minority groups are quick to point out that in the minds of the "powers-that-be," some groups are considered "more equal than others."

As an international student who has worked closely with many organiza-

tions, I realize that claim is well-founded. International students are the largest single minority group on campus, yet they lack a medium for expressing their sentiments.

Guest opinion

I am not trying to exaggerate the nature of our predicament. International students enjoy the distinctive ability to think laterally. Most international students are capable of viewing any situation from two distinct viewpoints: one, American, which is the result of assimilation of local culture, and the other, which is bestowed upon them by their native societies. Unequivocally this flair often enables them to evaluate most situations evenmindedly.

But many international students think the U.S. news media is biased by an editorial policy that results in one-sided opinions.

Such members would hail this column as a golden opportunity to express "the other side of the coin" on international

issues. Others more sensitive to campus events would want to occasionally state their grievances against university organizations. We welcome and encourage the involvement of all foreign students. This column will allow international students to state views that are not well represented.

We would like to make this column as broad-based as possible.

Without the enthusiasm of foreign students it would be an exercise in futility.

Let us use this opportunity to present something readable, something that we can all ruminate on, something that will help us enhance our understanding of the environment that we live in and of ourselves.

For more information and to submit articles, contact: Rod Merta, coordinator, International Education Services, Nebraska Union 345 or call 472-3264, or Vijay Tatkar, 477-9857.

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