

From the Executive Editor:**The media are essential to society**

Last Thursday's "teleconference" between President Bush and the U.S. troops stationed in Iraq, along with a seemingly grateful Iraqi soldier, should be a wake-up call for those who do not believe the media are important in exposing the truth when it comes to current events, or for those who feel the media are, in any way, liberally biased, for two reasons.

First, a small group of reporters who were watching the event overheard Allison Barber, deputy assistant secretary of defense for internal communications, rehearsing the questions with the soldiers, as well as going over which soldiers would respond, before Bush began speaking. It was also reported by ABC News that the questions were "choreographed to match his goals for the war in Iraq and Saturday's vote on a new Iraqi constitution." The projected purpose of the interview was to give Bush an opportunity to inquire about "the overall security situation in Iraq, security preparations for the weekend vote and efforts to train Iraqi troops." It now seems unnecessary to have had the conference, since neither Bush nor the rest of the country gained any new or valuable information as a result of the event's staging.

However, Bush's failed attempt at tooting his own horn is the reason why the media's importance has been revealed.

If the media were not doing their jobs, the American people would have never even been aware that this little chat with the troops was fraudulent. It was nothing more than a molded public relations stunt gone awry for the Administration, which desperately wants to portray the war as a positive endeavor as well as a necessary path of action for our country. If the media had not been present, many would have been under the impression that the actual conference that took place was uncensored and spontaneous. The reporters who exposed this fallacy should be commended greatly. This example demonstrates why the media are so essential in ensuring that the democratic principles, on which our country was founded, are followed.

Throughout the history of this nation, the public has relied upon information gathered by the media to ensure that the government is doing its job. People also pick up the paper and tune into the news to receive accurate accounts of issues and matters of national concern. Regardless of the president's political party, the media have an obligation to expose all issues, truths and aspects associated with his decision. How can the media be the watchdogs of the government without exposing such inaccuracies? Do the American people deserve to know the truth? The answer is yes — they deserve to be accurately informed, and the only way that this is possible is through

the efforts of reporters like those who covered the teleconference.

Secondly, it seems that the media recently have been receiving hefty amounts of unwarranted, negative backlash regarding their role in revealing truth to the public. This is evidenced in the case with Judith Miller, the *New York Times* reporter who was jailed for 85 days because she failed to reveal her anonymous source. This source, I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, Vice President Dick Cheney's chief of staff, allegedly leaked the name of C.I.A. agent Valerie Plame after her husband wrote an Op-Ed piece in the *Times* that was critical of the Administration's justification for the war in Iraq. Libby relieved Miller of her obligation to keep his name secret, and she was released. But now, Miller, who did not even write a story including Plame's name but is reportedly in possession of evidence relevant to the leak investigation, has come under fire. The *Times* also has been scrutinized for publishing the name as a result of the leak.

What people don't really understand is that it is speculated that Libby leaked Plame's name to get back at her husband for criticizing the Administration. This jeopardizes both Plame's safety and the freedoms ensured by the First Amendment. If this is the case then the leak sends the signal that whenever a person criticizes the government, he or she will be punished, which is in direct opposition to the liberties that the Constitution guarantees. People should not be intimidated by the government in fear that they will be penalized if they say anything that is critical of its actions.

It is also incorrect to say that the media are liberally biased in their reports. Given the nature of a journalist's job, he or she looks to find as much information as possible to give to the public. This often includes the exposure of untruths, in order to clarify the reality of each situation upon which he or she is reporting. Balanced reporting of the truth has long been a standard practice that is highly regarded in the field. Many government officials — Republicans or Democrats, presidents or senators, governors or mayors — have all been the subjects of equally close monitoring by the media; it is their job.

Instead of blaming the media for the low public opinion of government officials, like President Bush, maybe it's time to start blaming the actual leaders we elected. We rely on the media to bring us the truth, and that need will be present for a long time to come.



Cara Latham

CLIPPINGS FROM RIDER HISTORY

SCHEDULE CHANGES

Oct. 18, 1968 — The Interim Study Program is introduced. Semesters are 12 weeks long, each course is three credits and classes are 60 minutes. Thirty-three credits are required to be completed per year.

FUEL AT SCHOOL

Oct. 21, 1977 — An on-campus gas pump is considered, which could lead to both job opportunities and cheaper gas for college-goers.

Letter to the Editor:**Community and unity**

On Oct. 15, I went to Washington, D.C., to celebrate the Million Man March's 10th anniversary. While there, I learned unity is possible, peace is possible and change is in the air.

With that in mind, I look back to a recent incident in which I was affected. An allegedly intoxicated resident stood outside of Gee residence hall, yelling derogatory comments and racial slurs, including every variation of the "N word" in the book. I can't help but think about how outdated the collective mentalities of the local and nationwide communities are, especially since this country truly is the "United" States of America and wishes to attain peace. This isn't the semester's first occurrence of intolerance.

Being among the estimated million black men and women who united in this demonstration at Washington, D.C.'s National Mall, I witnessed world leaders of color speaking from the White House steps. They mentioned the injustice of keeping political prisoners; new ties with Cuba, the Native Americans, Mexico and several African countries; the vision of "The United States of Africa"; and new hopes for unity within the Caribbean and West Indian territories. A question arose about acquiring funds for this large-scale movement. Means and methods were discussed in detail, which I found impressive. In this time of war, natural disaster, controversies within the church and "American Imperialism," visions of peace, unity and harmony are few and far between.

We should examine these efforts and evaluate ourselves as a global community with shared aspirations and values. Regardless of gender, class or race, we are all human. We all want to live our lives peacefully in a positive community.

Unity is a state of mind. If a million people from all over the world can peacefully gather in Washington, D.C., it should be simple for the few thousand people of Rider's community to unite under the common goal of education and the irreplaceable life experience that is college.

The future is now. As a senior at this University, I challenge Rider students, faculty and administration to exercise the Social Codes of Conduct and Harmony listed within *The Source*, not because you have to, but because you want to. Do it because you truly believe it is necessary to the continuity of a positive college experience and want to add to the increasing number of alumni who are proud of their alma mater and live their lives contributing to a more "United" States of America, one person at a time.

That *is* what we all want... isn't it?

—Jamaal Harris
Senior

'WSJ' from page 8

Whether covering mergers and acquisitions or stock prices and international business, *The Journal* has it all.

After all, we are paying that fee regardless of whether or not we read the paper, so we may as well put our money to good use. If paying the *Wall Street Journal* fee was optional for the business students, then I can see why some students would opt not to pay. But since the fee is already added onto our tuition bill, there is no excuse for not picking up the *Journal* every day and

taking a quick peek.

By glancing at the top stories each day, I have developed my knowledge. Since students use the newspaper for upper-level business classes, it is important to read for that reason; however, the bigger bonuses are found in increasing one's own awareness of and staying in touch with all the things that are happening in the business world.

As a senior, I am passing my experience on to those who are younger. Pick up that *Wall Street Journal* sitting on the stand next to Java City in Sweigert Hall for your own benefit. You will only be helping yourselves.

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QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"Life does not cease to be funny when people die any more than it ceases to be serious when people laugh."

— George Bernard Shaw