

opinion

Real violence

Deathwatchers: the fans.

The recent execution of Charles Brooks Jr. in Texas proves we haven't come much further in stopping the most gruesome of spectator sports — capital punishment.

Students — mind you, students — carrying bloodthirsty signs with such humane sayings as "Kill 'em in vein" and "Justice finally prevails" gathered outside the prison to experience the aura of the spectacle.

It is difficult to be unemotional about this issue. It is more difficult to read the play-by-play in the papers. The executioner's friends are given all the coverage they want. Why?

Because violence sells.

Capital punishment is real violence. It is more entertaining than the violence we watch on television. Brooks was an actual citizen gone wrong.

Capital punishment is clean, quick and appeals to a bizarre medieval sense of justice.

It also appeals to the baser interests.

If the sign carriers in front of the prison were any indication, some consider capital punishment great sport.

The Supreme Court made their decision to allow state's to reinstate the death penalty in 1974. Each state decides the method. The people decide to watch or read about it.

Each state's vote against capital punishment, something rumor has it Gov. Vic Atiyeh is considering reinstating, is the only end to capital punishment.

Until it is outlawed the media should refrain from the sports-like coverage of executions.

Making a difference

Ray Hawk as been a force for good at the University for the last 32 years. This month he retires. However, he will continue to aid the University as a volunteer in the University Relations office.

Hawk has always enjoyed working with and for students, something a bit unique among veteran administrators who can at times forget the students they serve.

Hawk has also been a friend to the University. He has been a public servant in the best sense of the word — more than considerate of the students, the University and higher education in the state, in that order.

What Hawk has done here has made a difference. The Emerald continues to appreciate his support of its move to become an independent publication in the early 1970s.

We'll miss him.

letters

Preachers

Do the preachers in the EMU courtyard bother you? They bother me. I made a conscious decision years ago to leave organized christian religion. To have these men (I've never seen a woman there) telling me how to conduct my religious life irritates me.

I do not begrudge them their beliefs. Let them live and believe the way they want, as I expect to

be able to live and believe the way I want.

If I want to hear a preacher I can go to church anytime. I avoid such places for a reason. These men who preach in the courtyard are infringing on my choice.

America believes in free speech. Does that mean I need to have this version of christianity shoved down my throat?

Margaret Laurine junior, elementary education



letters

Troublesome

As a member of the "troublesome" law school faculty, I feel that some response is required to the statements of Mr. L. L. Stewart before the American Association of University Professor's meeting last Saturday.

According to the reports of his remarks, given in the Emerald on Dec. 6, Stewart stated that professors "who publicly take controversial stands are doing higher education a disservice," and he "pointed to the University law school faculty as a 'good example' of faculty who cause problems."

In 12 years as a member of the University law school faculty, I have frequently observed my colleagues taking public stands upon any number of issues. In fact, I have watched them provide literally thousands of hours of voluntary service to the state in a variety of law reform and law improvement activities.

These activities include legal research, publication, speaking and service for a variety of public bodies and private public interest groups, providing legal drafting and assistance for the legislature and state administrative agencies, and involvement in public interest litigation. This, I believe, has been a substantial contribution which ultimately benefits all of the people of this state, including Stewart.

These activities, however, are only possible because law faculty members take public positions on matters relating to law and legal activities. These public positions, of course, could always be viewed as "controversial" by anyone who disagreed with that position. To

suggest that this activity is improper is ridiculous and reflects a serious lack of understanding of the public service obligations for higher education faculty in general and law faculty in particular.

Fredric Merrill professor, law

we must choose that life." No — we must be alive before we can choose. "This is a free country!" Freedom of life over freedom of choice. Please.

John Gibbons junior, English

Life dilemma

Once again we are torn between the two different viewpoints on abortion: pro-life/anti-choice, or pro-choice/anti-life.

Eichner's letter "Motherhood" (Emerald, Nov. 29) is an excellent defense of freedom of choice, with strong supporting data. However, instead of illuminating why woman's choice is superior to unborn life, he qualifies life, showing that wanted babies mature into more productive adults than do their unwanted counterparts. Yet, the abortion issue concerns the value of life itself, not comparisons of one life over another. "Be practical," you say, "this is the real world." So it is, but since when do we sell our humanity to the heedless cog of efficiency?

To approach our dilemma from another angle: It seems reasonable to assume that the developing embryo is indeed a human being, since despite what "it" does or does not look like, it is impossible to pinpoint a transition from a nondescript fetus into an unborn child. If the expectant mother believes that her womb cradles a human life, should she not place that life above her own choice?

"But my choice doesn't just reflect my unwanted child." You are qualifying life again. Life itself transcends choice. "But

Old-age funds

If you think the problems with Social Security are going to disappear then you had better think again. Current fiscal problems are just the beginning.

According to the Nov. 8 issue of US News and World Report, "lower birth rates are expected to shrink the number of workers under Social Security, forcing them to pay astronomically high taxes if the system is to remain self-financed."

Those currently receiving checks have little to worry about (except those healthy enough to last until the turn of the century) but people my age (I'm now 20) certainly do.

When those now in their early thirties start retiring there will be one recipient for every two workers! When the system was established there were sixteen workers for every one recipient.

Oh well, perhaps the national birth rate will increase but since it's now at a low level of 1.7 percent it will take a lot of doing to make up for the past decade of sub-replacement levels.

Of course, those who raise families at least will have someone to rely upon, if worse comes to worse. But who is going to care for those who want to retire yet have nobody to rely upon except the government? Think about it because that's a question my generation will be faced with in a matter of years.

Eric Stillwell political science

letters policy

The Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing fair comment on topics of interest to the University community.

Letters to the editor **must** be limited to 250 words, typed, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is turned in to the Emerald office. The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length, style or content.

"Your turn" is an Emerald opinion feature submitted by members of the University community. "Your turns" must be limited to 500 words and typed. This editorial column will not be edited by the staff, but selection will be based on appropriateness.

Letters to the editor and "Your turns" should be turned into the Emerald office, Suite 300 EMU.

Unsigned editorials appearing in the Emerald are based upon the majority opinion of the editorial board.

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