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# COMMENTARY

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Tuesday, March 5, 2002

## Editorial

### Newspapers fight for their right to pair up with TV

(U-WIRE) MINNEAPOLIS —

The Federal Communications Commission, in a disturbing reversal of its previous stance, has been trying since Sept. 13 to overturn the 25-year-old ban of newspaper/broadcast media cross-ownership. Lawmakers enacted the ban, which bars one person or corporation from owning a television station and a newspaper in the same area, ostensibly to ensure a diversity of viewpoints within media markets. Though the actual motive behind the ban can be called into question — some speculate then-President Richard Nixon initiated it as part of a divide-and-conquer strategy against the press — it has served its purpose during the last quarter century and should not be repealed.

Spurred by the FCC's recommendation, Rep. Scott Klug, R-Wis., recently introduced the Newspaper Ownership Act to the U.S. House of Representatives as Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., sent an identical bill to the U.S. Senate. The Newspaper Association of America and the National Association of Broadcasters, along with several media watchdog groups, including Editor & Publisher magazine's editorial board, have since lent their support to repealing the ban.

But doing so would pose a serious and unnecessary risk to journalists across the nation and to the public they serve. We find the FCC's reasoning flawed in that it groundlessly put the burden of proof on those who see the need to keep the cross-ownership ban in place. Since the ban has served its function for more than two decades and has been upheld several times by the U.S. Supreme Court, those who wish to repeal it should have to give reason — beyond the superfluous benefit of increased profits — why a proven system is suddenly no longer viable.

Any argument of the act's supporters could deliver would be outweighed by the potential and probable pitfalls the act would allow. The current recession hit newspapers particularly hard. We recognize that allowing newspaper companies to merge or be bought out by gigantic corporations like AOL-Time Warner would shore up their finances. But journalism and the democracy it enables are about more than profit margins, and the people a free press serves are above the financial bottom line.

The newspaper industry is in trouble. Historically, papers have almost always been financially shaky because the nature of the business is not — and cannot become — increased capital. Yet they have always found a way to survive while remaining viable servants and watchdogs of the public interest. Lawmakers must not jeopardize this by passing the Newspaper Ownership Act.

This guest editorial is courtesy of the Minnesota Daily, the campus newspaper of the University of Minnesota.

### Letters to the Editor and Guest Commentaries Policy

Letters to the editor and guest commentaries are encouraged. Letters are limited to 250 words and guest commentaries to 550 words. Please include contact information. The Emerald reserves the right to edit for space, grammar and style.

## Farewell, Chuck — you wascally wabbit

"Animation isn't the illusion of life, it is life." — Chuck Jones

It's been a sad 11 days for fans of animation. Although people may not have noticed it, the animation community has lost one of its leading figures. Charles M. Jones, who for 25 years directed some of the most famous cartoon shorts for Warner Bros., died of congestive heart failure Feb. 22. Along with others who know of his work, I'm mourning his death. Although I never met him, through his work I and millions of others felt that we got to know him.

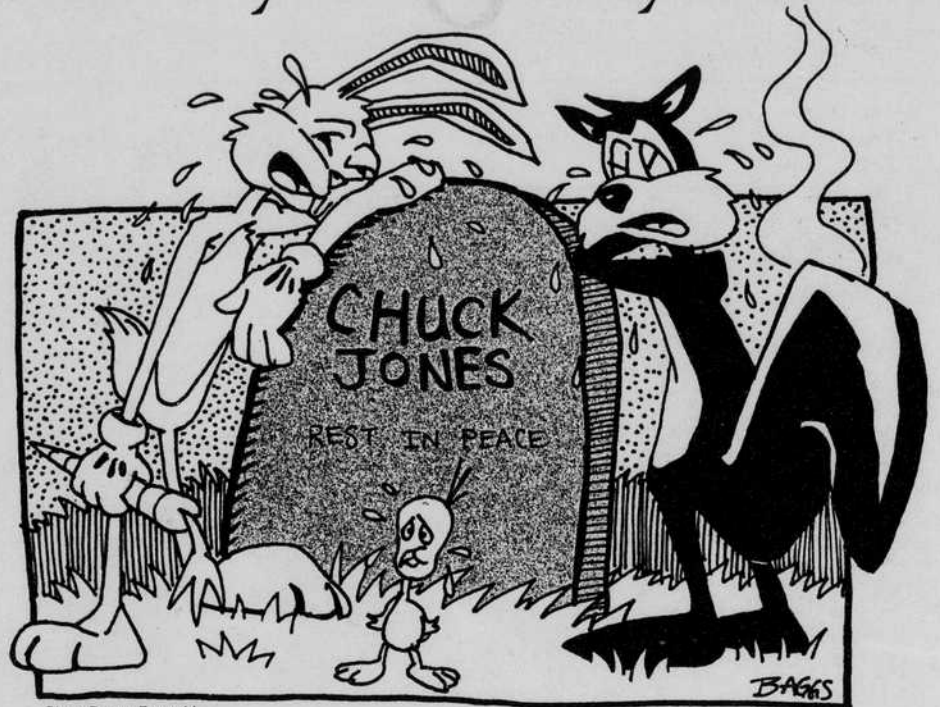


Pat  
Payne  
Columnist

Jones was one of the more likable types in the field. Unlike the

sometimes bitter and temperamental Hayao Miyazaki, who professes to despise the industry he works in, or Walt Disney, whose gentle, fatherly facade concealed a cold, ruthless and controlling side, Jones was instead a buoyant sort whose spirit and sense of fun was reflected in his films.

In private life, he was known to enjoy jokes and wordplay, and even cultivated a friendship with Ted Geisel (better known to the world as Dr. Seuss) while the two worked on the "Private SNAFU" education cartoons for the Army during World War II. In these little-seen works, Jones had free reign on humor: "Spies," for instance, had our "hero," SNAFU, inadvertently telling the entire Axis Powers about his troopship's sailing. Among the hilarious sight gags in the short is the ending. SNAFU ends up in a burning cauldron in hell. "Now who the hell do you suppose let my secret out?" asks SNAFU. Hitler, as the devil, gives him the answer: In a mirror, we see



Steve Baggs Emerald

SNAFU's face turn into a horse's ass.

It is said that a man can be measured by the body of his work. In that case, Jones belongs in whatever pantheon exists for animation. One can almost rattle off his most famous efforts: "Duck Amuck," "What's Opera, Doc?" (the only cartoon short inducted into the National Film Registry), "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," and "The Dot and the Line" are probably all somewhere in the top-20 list of any discriminating animation fan. And who can forget the brilliant characters he created? Yosemite Sam, the pint-sized gunslinger; Pepe le Pew, the Charles Boyer-esque lover (but who could love a skunk?); and the rebuild of Daffy Duck, turning a chaotic black duck into the greedy, scheming, egotistical mallard we all know and love. Disney may have had the upper hand in marketing his characters, but Jones always seemed to have a heart and soul that

transcended the acetone plastic, ink and paint of the cel.

Personally, of all the cartoons that I watched as a normal TV-addicted child of the '80s, some of the most memorable ones, and the ones that I still watch frequently today, were directed by Jones. My favorites were the trio of cartoons that pitted Bugs and Daffy against the eternal hunter, Elmer Fudd. I defy anyone reading this article to go home, watch "Duck! Rabbit! Duck!" and not laugh as poor Daffy is outsmarted at every turn by Bugs. "Shoot me, go on! It's elk season! I'm a fiddler crab! Why don't you shoot me? It's fiddler crab season!"

The rabbit hole lays silent now, the hunter's gun still. Farewell, Chuck. You have left us all with wonderful memories.

E-mail columnist Pat Payne at patpayne@dailyemerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald.

## We must improve health care quality

### GUEST COMMENTARY

Milton A.  
Braun

make any money off citizens' health miseries, except those who directly provide health care services, such as doctors and hospitals.

Enough money would be saved under a single-payer system to provide health insurance for the 43 million uninsured. In fact, Rep. Jim McDermott, D-Wash., has stated that under his single payer plan the nation would save \$100 billion per year in health care costs. The reason is that while the overhead for a single payer system like Medicare is only 2 to 4 percent, the profit and overhead for for-profit health insurance is at least 20 percent.

The trend in America has been to get rid of middlemen, except in the case of health insurance companies. Why should they be sacred cows?

So why doesn't America have a universal health insurance system? Well, as sad as it is, America's politicians have accepted so much money from the health and prescription drug industries that they are literally incapable of acting in the best health and financial interests of the American people. In short, they have been bought off.

Here is another little-known fact that

is bothersome: All representatives have 72 percent taxpayer-subsidized health insurance that includes a generous prescription drug benefit. And these folks are supposed to be employees, representatives and agents of the people?

The 108th Congress can fix our health insurance non-system that is becoming more complex, more costly and more unfair by simply placing everybody under Medicare, a time-tested program that everybody understands and likes. If we can afford to help rebuild Afghanistan, we should be able to "rebuild" the health of America's uninsured.

Students, if you believe every American should, as a fundamental right, be entitled to have permanent, quality and affordable health insurance, you should let your feelings be known now to President George W. Bush, your senators and your representatives.

Milton A. Braun is a retired CPA and a Southern Methodist University graduate.

### CORRECTION

Monday's story about the "Law and Politics of the Death Penalty" conference ("Nun's talk concludes conference," ODE, March 4) should have said the daughter of Crime Victims United president Steve Doell was killed by a hit-and-run driver.

The Emerald regrets the error.