

Forum

Student Opinion Matters

No Child Left Behind Act riddled with small print

■ NICOLE HUTCHINSON

Staff Reporter

It was the year 2000; a milestone in many ways. The Senior Class had just entered middle school, while the rest of the student population were third, fourth and fifth graders. It was also the year that the first President of the 21st Century, George W. Bush, was elected. Now I don't know if any of us, being between the ages of nine and 12, followed politics, but I bet a lot of parents would remember one of the first things George Bush did as President of the United States: help pass the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLBA), which was supposed to have helped kids struggling to stay in school based on intelligence and demographics.

It started as a continuation of a proposal Bush made when he was still governor of Texas. When he was inaugurated, his first project as President was to

institute NCLB. Bush signed the act as a law on Jan. 8, 2002 after both the House of Representatives and the Senate approved the act with flying colors.

Now I am not here to discuss the entire act. No... that would take too much time to figure out of all the small print and sub-sections. The part I would like to address is Section 9528. It is a section of the bill that was buried among important (but played off as not important) small print.

Instead of showing Section 9528 in its raw form, let me summarize: Section 9528 of the NCLBA says that schools are to provide the military with student names, addresses and phone numbers unless their parents have checked that little box in the very bottom right-hand corner of the student registration form. Schools receive federal funding based on whether or not they comply with Section 9528 or not.

Almost since it was passed as a law, the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) have opposed everything the act was meant to do. According to Wikipedia, 55% of parents don't know enough about the bill to say whether or not the law is actually improving local education or not. According to a Gallup survey, seven out of ten Americans don't know enough about the NCLBA to even have an opinion on it.

The school policy according to Julie Swanson, secretary in the Career Center, is: unless a parent has marked otherwise on their child's registration form, the schools sends out a list of graduating seniors (their name, address, and telephone number) to a representative of each branch of the military.

The act also says that the school must allow military personnel into the school. At West Linn,

once a month, on a specific date, representatives are allowed to set up a booth/display with brochures, free merchandise, etc. in the Commons. Military personnel are not allowed to approach any student; a student must approach the military representative.

Military personnel are not allowed to attend extra-curricular activities, such as football games, for recruiting. (Kim Noah, principal, said that one year they wanted to toss t-shirts into the crowd at the football game and she politely turned them down.) If any student approaches Swanson to inquire about joining a branch of the military, she directs them to a representative for that branch of the military.

What do I think about this? I don't like it. And neither should you. The NCLBA was instituted to help kids from falling through the cracks in education. Instead, it's jam

packed full of small print that is slowly manipulating American children.

Look at the target market for young recruits: people who can't afford college. They are targeting young, vulnerable kids in high school who feel like this is their way out. The way the military is manipulating the youth is disgraceful, putting our young people, who may not even want to be there, on the front lines in Iraq (a war that in itself is controversial enough to be a full, two-page spread editorial, but we shall refrain because even after screwing up as badly as he did, there are still supporters of President Bush).

But I'm not writing this article about Bush, or the war in Iraq. I am writing this about your privacy being invaded; about the government possibly taking advantage of you and your youth. Know your rights. Don't let the small print sneak up on you.

Does the movie industry need the MPAA?

■ JOHN CAMPBELL

Entertainment Editor

The Motion Picture Association of America: most people probably don't know what this organization is or what it does. This is the way the MPAA likes it, if no one knows what they do or how they do it, they can't get blamed for anything.

What is the MPAA? The MPAA is the organization that decides what rating a film deserves; they watch

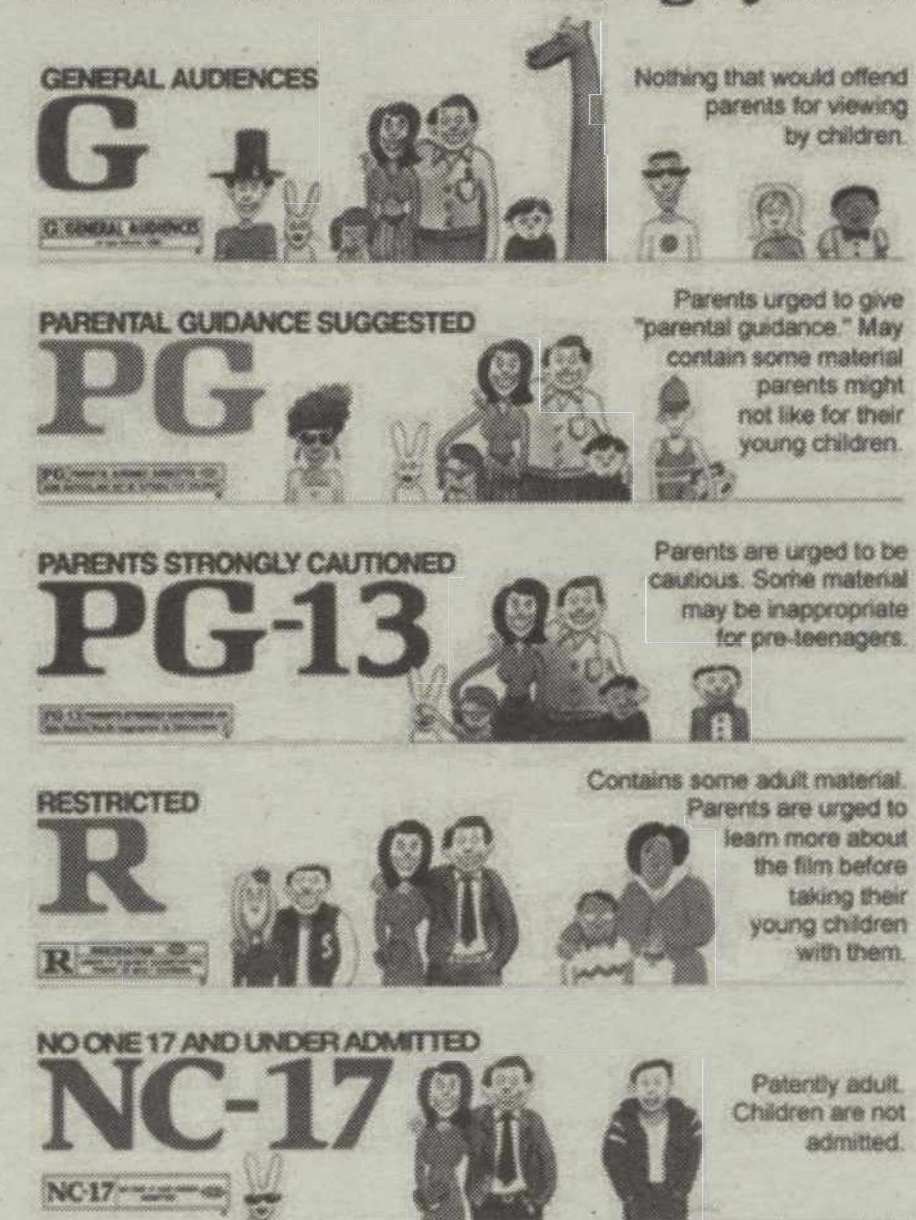
a movie and then stamp a rating on it. Therein lies the problem. How does the MPAA decide what content constitutes what rating? The ratings are based on arbitrary and ever-changing rules decided by the MPAA themselves.

What are these ratings and what do they mean? Most people are probably familiar with the MPAA ratings: G, PG, PG-13, R and NC-17. G stands for general

audiences, this means the MPAA has deemed the film appropriate for all ages. The next step up is the PG rating, which stands for Parental Guidance suggested, this means the MPAA thinks this film is appropriate for most ages but their may be some content that is inappropriate for younger children. Above PG, is PG-13, this is means the MPAA thinks this film appropriate for children 13 years or older.

The R rating is where things get interesting; the R stands for Restricted. In this case the MPAA finds the content to be inappropriate for anyone under 17; but the difference between this and the other ratings is that in this case no one under 17 can enter the film without a parent or legal guardian. Now the ratings are no longer guidelines for parents to protect their children but actual film-going rules. Then comes the all-powerful, unquestionable, supreme ruler of ratings, the NC-17, which means No Child under 17 will be admitted. In this case the MPAA has taken the decision of letting a child see this movie out of the hands of parents and has decided that no child under

What Everyone Should Know About The Movie Rating System.



17 will see this movie under any circumstances.

The problem with the MPAA is what gets a film an R rating and how an R film different from a PG-13 film? There are certain rules that designate what content deserves what rating. For instance, if someone is to use a certain four letter expletive that starts with "F," then the film is

automatically issued a PG-13, but if it is used again, then the film is rated R. If this word is used even once in a sexual context then the film is issued an R rating.

Another problem is there is a time limit on nudity in a PG-13. A great example of this is the movie "Something's Gotta Give."

MPAA: is it necessary?

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