

# OPINION

## In the diversity corner

### Media bias: How much do we really know?

By Fariha Andaleeb  
editorial columnist

After reading various journals and newspapers and watching the news that the media decides to give us, we may think we are pretty well informed. After all, we have free press, right? But at the end of the day, what we see and what we think we know resembles nothing more than a blurry photograph. Our knowledge directly pertains to what we see, but is nonetheless a distorted image of reality.

Arguments for media bias can go either way. Conservatives will argue that the media is too left wing and liberals will paint a far different picture. Conducting a scientific test to gauge whether or not the media is leaning further to the left or to the right would be difficult, but certain basic facts still remain: a larger percentage of journalists and reporters are liberals, but the owners of most television and radio stations are conservatives. Which do you think weighs more heavily on the material presented?

The people behind the news reports and their delivery to the public are not

the only threat to our awareness of the true state of the world. The government, that claims to give us freedom of press and freedom of speech, has specific laws regarding what the media can and cannot show us. So much for the fair and balanced news that Fox News allegedly gives us or the most trusted name in news that CNN claims to be.

For example, the American media is not allowed to show caskets of the deceased soldiers returning home from Iraq.

Though it may not seem significant, it gives us a skewed perception of what is really going on and how victorious we really are. This is probably to ensure that we will still pump ourselves with our government's false sense of patriotism.

This patriotism is not the beneficial nationalism that keeps a country unified, but rather a xenophobic sense of patriotism that became so pathetically trendy after 9/11. Our lack of knowledge is what allows our government to hold so much power over us. Surely our cheers of nationalistic pride for our 'victory over the Middle East' may be somewhat hushed when we see what we lost in order to gain

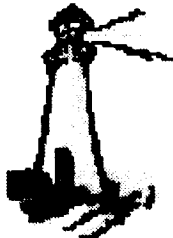
what we supposedly won. Surely our jingoistic applause for the triumph of civility and egalitarianism will be somewhat softened when we see what our soldiers did to the Iraqi prisoners in Abu Ghraib.

Our media is reluctant to show us what really happened in any of these situations. Perhaps their excuse is to keep disturbing and graphic images from upsetting the viewers. This, however, does not stop them from splashing newspapers with images of kidnapped Americans by fundamentalist groups, or showing blindfolded hostages begging for their lives in subhuman conditions. How can they justify keeping things from the public because the content is too disturbing?

The point is that it *should* disturb us, and we *should* be filled with the nausea that arises from graphic images. We shouldn't let the government or the media insult our intelligence by pacifying us with stories and images that make us feel safe in a time when we are not, or make us feel okay about the world in a time when the world is not okay.

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## Black, white, or Wayne Brady?

Recently I was sent an email to take part in the planning for the 2005 spring celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. As an African American woman, I am honored to be part of a race that has produced some of the world's greatest minds and idealists.

We, a people descended from kings and queens, have in our history numerous examples of how we have changed the world for the better. People such as George Washington Carver, Jessie Fauset, Mary McLeod Bethune, Charles Drew, Dr. Daniel Williams and W.E.B. DuBois are just the tip of the iceberg of talented great minds. All of these people show that the African American community can be a productive part of society.

Then there are the few that hinder our race in being taken seriously. One that comes to mind a lot of the times is the one Mr. Wayne Brady. What if anything, has he done to make the African American image better? He sings his songs and dances all across the United States and lessens the image of our real African American artists.

Known best for his impressions of white entertainment figures, he plays into the Uncle Tom image so many of us have tried to escape. At one time, the character of Uncle Tom was looked at as being a strong man of principles and morals. Now with the help of mainstream media and comics around the world his image has changed to one of the pushover, always happy, entertaining sidekick for the, mostly white, society.

We as a people have tried to turn the characteristics of Uncle Tom to good but people like Wayne Brady aren't helping. Stop trying to please them with your song and dance and take a stand for something. I know it must be hard to do with the many appearances with Celine Dion and all, but would it kill you to find an African American artist to perform with?

Then it does bring the question up, is he black enough to perform with the popular African American artists of today? A man who has made it his career to be as white as possible, it would be hard to cross over to the *dark side*. I



Danielle Faulkner

contributing writer

know there aren't many African Americans in show business making it but not one of them has had to sacrifice their culture to "make it." Brady tried his best at being something he wasn't and his show got cancelled; then he tried to use the Dave Chappelle Show as a stepping stone to get in with black America. I guess he thought Chappelle was Yoda and was going to show him the way or something.

Well got news for you Wayne, one appearance, on one show, with one black host doesn't put you back on my good side, not by a long shot. Moreover, why on the Dave Chappelle Show did he have to play a violent gangster pimp? Is that the only way he thinks will get him in with us? I get it now, try to be a gangster and then maybe then I can get them on my side and my show back.

Wayne, when white suburbia isn't even watching your show then you have bigger problems. For goodness sakes, Ellen has a show that is in the top Nielsen ratings for daytime. At one point, she was shunned because of her sexual preference but not once did she change or hide because of it.

So we are faced with a bigger problem, who takes the credit for the thing called Wayne Brady? On the one hand lets face it he is as black physically as they come, but he does sing a lot of Elvis songs. He is also married to a hot white chick. He has also done those coffee creamer commercials and we don't do creamers (not good for system). Yet, there is his dancing ability (no white guy could have that much rhythm), but then he goes and hangs out with Celine Dion. This is a case that will never be solved. So for now, Wayne Brady, don't mark black or white on important documents, just mark other.

## Comstock strikes back

by Kristen C. Comstock  
editorial columnist

On Oct. 1 I went to my first political rally. I put on my Kerry/Edwards shirt, my American blue jeans and my peace bracelet. I jumped into the car and rode off to the rally.

I was so excited to do my first real political thing ever. But then I started thinking, can this really be the first political thing I have done? Well, my last column was written in the hopes of being political, but all it really did was piss off a couple of right-wing fanatics. I don't think that ticking off people is the *only* reason for politics.

On my way home from the rally, I realized all I really did there was support my candidates. I want to do more in politics, for my candidates and for my country's future, but I do not want to seem like a zealous liberal either. But when did that become such a bad thing?

Right before the Democratic National Convention, Teresa Heinz Kerry was called "opinionated," to which she replied, in her speech at the DNC, that she was waiting for the day where opinionated women would be called smart and

informed instead of opinionated.

I have never thought that being called a liberal, an environmentalist or an opinionated Democrat was suppose to be an insult. Why should it be?

Today, more than ever, labels make the person. Democrats are Democrats and Republicans are Republicans. Society has never before been so polarized. Everything today is black and white; nothing is gray. No one seems to vote with the issues, most people vote with their party.

I was having a discussion the other day about this very topic. I was saying how people should look at all the issues and not decide on a candidate based on a single issue, because surprisingly most candidates agree on many of the main issues. As I was discussing, I looked at the person sitting across from me in a blank stare. I realized there is one more side to the black and white polarization phenomenon and that is the transparent side. It lacks color, opinion, motivation and incentive.

With the transparent person, nothing is black and white, because when politics are brought up that person glazes over. No one can change this indifferent person, just as much as a right-wing per-

son can never change me.

What upsets me most is that these glazed-over people, these uninterested students, don't care that they don't care. These students shut off, walk away or freak out at the mention of politics. They are actually proud that they do not support politics. They don't care about the issues. They don't care about the reasons. They just don't care.

These apathetic students are the ones who bother me the most, because how can they learn how important it is to care if they immediately close their minds to it? It doesn't matter how much right-wing backlash I get or how much liberal support I receive. What does matter to me are the people who didn't even read my column for fear of becoming educated, because I guess receiving education, becoming informed on issues and learning new things are not the reasons they are going to college.

This presidential election is going to be determined by the undecided voters, but it will never be decided by the unconcerned, unmoved, uninterested people, who cannot even take enough time to learn. No one has the energy to argue with indifference.

## DayQuil should be a fountain drink in Brunos

by Amy Progson  
editorial columnist

When I was at work the other day, the assistant manager came up to me and said hello. Normally this is not a big deal, but this particular day was different. Her voice was hoarse, she sounded congested she then proceeded to cough violently. As I watched her cough and sneeze, I began to feel wary and vowed to keep a polite distance from her for the rest of my shift.

The following day, as I sat in English class, the girl behind me answered a question. Her voice was low and hoarse. I began to feel nervous. Not again, I thought, I'm afraid of germs. I don't want to get sick. I don't have time to get sick. I sat in tense apprehension, expecting to sneeze at any moment, awaiting the onset of muscle aches, spasms, and violent chills. Luckily, none of these symptoms appeared.

It is impossible to escape from the colds and diseases that surround us. They live in the air, on unwashed surfaces, on our friends and on our significant others. When I got home, I found that my mom was sick. The following day I found out that my boyfriend was sick. Today I got the impression that my sister was bordering on becoming sick. It is pure love that keeps me from locking myself in my room where I will be safe from germs for a couple of weeks.

Walk into any classroom and it is easy to see just how significantly attendance has dropped. Sure, some people are sleeping in or have found better places to go than to class, but many of these people, our classmates, our friends, are

at home in their beds with horrible aches, chills and dangerously high fevers.

The best thing a person can do for a sick friend is to send drugs, preferably DayQuil. In my experience, DayQuil is the best cold fighting drug known to man. I took it once. The only way I can describe it is "whoosh." It was a strange sensation. It started somewhere around my nose and spread across my face, clearing my nose, my sinuses and my sickness-crazed thoughts (You know, those strange meaningless thoughts that go on in your head when you are sick and only half know what is going on.)

Whatever you do, do not let your sick friend sneeze on anything or anyone. I worked as a waitress and I remember one day, as I was taking an order, a customer turned and sneezed all over me without making the slightest attempt to cover his mouth. Stunned, I took a step away from the table, frantically wondering what diseases I might have just acquired. After I was done taking the order I ran to the sink and scrubbed and scrubbed, yet somehow I never felt fully clean.

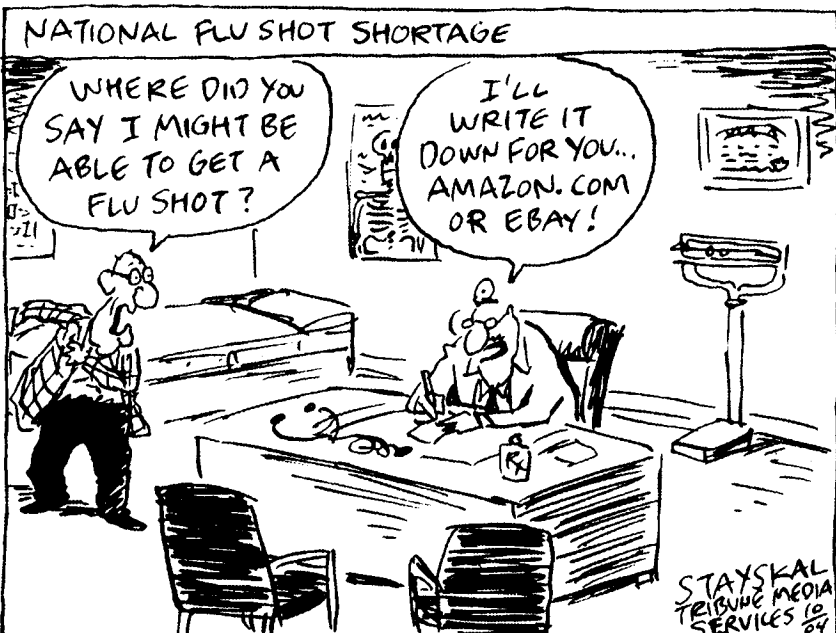
Do let your sick friend run around outside in the cold, maybe even in shorts and a t-shirt if it makes him or her happy. According to a website I found by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, cold weather has nothing to do with people catching colds during the fall, winter and spring. People are more likely to catch colds during these seasons because they are usually inside, surrounded by more people, which means that they are more likely to pass colds back and forth to each other. So if being outside in the cold makes your sick friend seem happier and healthier, then by all means let your friend go out-

side.

Do not let your sick friend go to class. Being in an enclosed classroom with so-so ventilation will only give the germ a chance to roam free and infect many other innocent students. Besides, it is always better for people to stay at home and rest when they are sick. It will help them to recover much faster and they will be much more relaxed after having spent a couple days doing nothing except watching TV and sleeping. Your friend will seem more innocent, more in touch with nature, more willing to find a new religion. It's amazing how a few days away from the daily stresses of school can improve a person's well being.

On second thought, do not let your sick friend go to class ever again. According to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases' website, psychological stress is the main cause of a weak immune system, and ultimately of colds and the flu. Writing a paper on Chaucer will not improve your friend's health. Doing calculus will not improve your friend's health. Studying physics will certainly not improve your friend's health. Only a life of leisure can ensure a full recovery.

And time can also ensure a full recovery. There is no cure for a cold; there is simply rest and hot soup, long naps under soft afghans and steamy baths with lots of bubbles. A short phone call from a friend can make a person feel better, but don't bug. Simply look forward to seeing them when they are well. With this in mind, may your cold season be short, mild and full of DayQuil.



Difference in opinion?

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Do it! Do it! Do it!