

Staff Editorial

Extra! Extra!

People should treasure newspapers.

Starting this spring semester, *The New York Times* is available for free—yes, free—five days a week in Clark Student Center, as long as classes are in session.

So why aren't more students doing back flips for joy?

Unfortunately, today barely more than half of Americans read a newspaper during the week. The number of newspapers in this country has declined steadily for the past two decades, dropping almost 1 percent each year.

And it's not just young readers. Though only 40 percent of people aged 18 to 24 read a paper on weekdays, people of all ages (under 65) are reading less.

Part of this problem can be attributed to the changes of technology. People have the opportunity to check the news on TV or the Internet.

But these other forms of media aren't the same as opening a freshly printed paper in the morning at breakfast.

TV news, though it has moving pictures, does not cover stories as in-depth as a newspaper might. Stories on TV are only allotted a couple of minutes, sometimes seconds, basically to get headline and the major facts across. Newspapers offer more. They offer the deeper details of the story you want to know.

The Internet also falls short of newspapers in that readers are mostly limited to quick bits of information that haven't been well-developed by a paid journalist. Blogs are often one-sided and on-line advertisements are more than irritating. Also, staring at a computer screen can be hard on the eyes, and computers with big screens tend to be cumbersome to transport. Besides, it's so much easier, if you haven't finished reading a story, to tuck a paper under your arm and take it to your next destination rather than having to shut down, unplug and pack a laptop in a case.

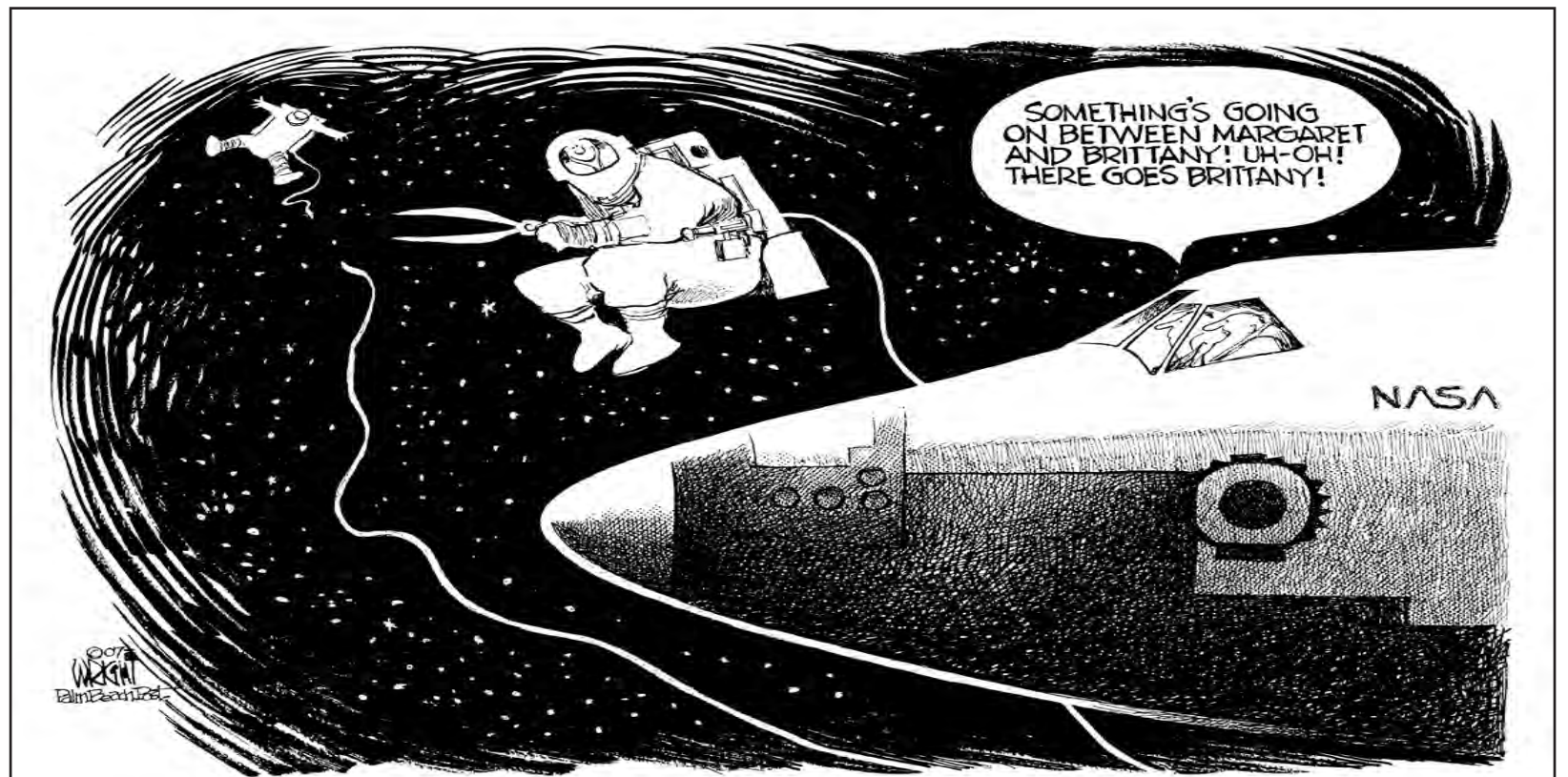
People also need to trust their news providers. When we are presented with news, we want it to come from a traditionally reliable source. *The New York Times* gives us top-notch writers we know and depend on. Aspiring journalists drool at the thought of working for such a prestigious paper.

Despite TV and the Internet, the bottom line is this: Our generation is one of complacency. People are disinterested in the world around them. They prefer to live in the universes of their minds, remain in their cliques and avoid the real issues of this country and this world.

You cannot disagree. America is in such lousy shape when it comes to caring about news and the world around us that only half of the population votes.

When you pick up your copy of *The Wichitan*, go to the Clark Student Center and also grab a copy of *The New York Times*. Get informed about the world and its many crucial issues.

The future of this age-old tradition depends on you.



Race, gender not factors in 2008 election



KONNIE SEWELL
COPY EDITOR

I'm 21 years old and I'm still afraid of the dark. I usually have to sleep with either the TV or my bedside lamp on. I'm also scared of anything having to do with tornados.

I've lived in Wichita Falls all my life, so I've grown up with all the stories and the sirens blaring on the first Monday of the month. It's gotten better now that I'm older, but even when I'm on campus and I hear the tests, or when I'm away from home and it's cloudy on a spring or summer day, I still get freaked out.

I think these are silly things to be afraid of, but I don't really care because they're rational fears. It's one thing to be afraid of tornados and the dark; it's another to be afraid of toilet paper or Valentines' candy.

Now, the really silly (and irrational) thing to be afraid of is change.

If you're going to be hardcore

I think it's okay to be scared sometimes. We're all human.

I have to admit, I'm scared of some stupid stuff.

about it, change happens every single second of every single day.

There's nothing we can really do about it, either. We're humans, not gods, remember?

The times they are a-changin' and, indeed, a change is gonna come

So accept it, even if you don't particularly like it. Don't criticize what you can't understand. Accept the fact that a woman or a black man may soon become president of the United States. There are people who like to go around chorusing, "Is America ready?"

After 231 years, I'd imagine so.

Time magazine featured Barack Obama on the cover of the Oct. 23, 2006 issue. The Nov. 13, 2006 issue ran a letter to the editor from Michael P. Delaney of Pasadena, Texas:

"Hell will freeze over and the devil will be on ice skates before the South will ever support a mixed-race liberal Democrat for President. There are still a lot of people down here who believe that miscegenation (which, like abortion, used to be a crime) remains immoral and sinful. Add to that Obama's al-Qa-eda-sounding name, and it's plain that he has no chance of being elected President."

Is this dude serious?

No, really, I want to know. Is he stating a personal opinion or is he just making an observation?

But then, right above that letter was one from Bill Longtine of Evansville, Ind.:

"Obama may not be our savior, but he has the charisma and capability to be our Moses and lead us out of the wilderness."

It is time to stop fearing someone's gender or ethnicity. The main question should be if he or she is qualified for the job. It is illegal to refuse someone a job in the United States based on gender or ethnicity. This applies to the position of president as well.

But when Clinton and Obama make a mistake - if they haven't already, they will soon - these are generally chalked up to her being a woman and his being black.

If you are going to fear a person, then fear his or her ideals and policies, but never the things about themselves they cannot change.

If you are not sure about your feelings on Obama, don't blame these fears on his being half Kenyan. If anything, blame your fears on his inexperience.

If you are not sure about your feelings on Hillary Clinton, don't blame your fears on her being a soft, weak-willed female. That is

an easy, ignorant route. If anything, blame your fears on her being wishy-washy over the war in Iraq.

Come, mothers and fathers throughout the land. Your sons and daughters are beyond your command and we're ashamed of what we're seeing. We are ashamed to see the odds are against Obama and Clinton simply because they are who they are - no woman or black has been president before, so it's highly unlikely they'll actually get a shot this time around.

Yes, they are different. And they are just what we need. We need to be reminded daily of the diversity of life. The world is much, much larger than little Wichita Falls, than pequena Texas, than la petite United States.

The world is not comprised of just white people, or just black people, or just Hispanic people, or just Japanese people, or just males or just females. The world is filled with a little of each.

Maybe I'm nothing but a writer and a critic trying but failing to prophesize with my pen. But I'm keeping my eyes wide because it's possible this chance won't come again.

It's been a long, long time coming, but I know a change is gonna come.

Valentine's Day not always flowers, candy



ADRIAN MCCANDLESS
PHOTO EDITOR

happen to ensure I had a less than lucky day Feb. 14th.

When I was younger and in the puppy-love stage, I liked this boy named Dru.

He was so cute for a 7th grader. The only problem was he and my best friend Katy liked each other. Katy and Dru didn't work out and he and I officially started "dating" a little after the big day for love.

Even though we dated through out our teenage years, we never seemed to have that magical Valentine's Day I dreamed of as a child.

After Dru and I parted ways, I spent the next Valentine's Day pretty much hating life.

I've never had much luck on Valentine's Day.

I don't actually know why but something would always

I sat in my room and wallowed in sorrow, listening to boy bands like N'Sync and 98 Degrees.

Things weren't looking up for me in 2002. The summer before my senior year, I met my future boyfriend and my first love.

Our mutual friend brought him to my end-of-the-summer bash and needless to say, I wasn't impressed. It took me a few days to realize I was head over heels for him.

I kept my feelings for Bobby hidden from anyone for six long months.

Valentine's Day started creeping up on me fast, and I was going to use the big day to tell Bobby how I felt.

For two weeks, I plotted and schemed of the perfect way to let Bobby know how I felt. As lame as it was, my plan was to go up to him between class periods and give him a bag of Hershey's kisses.

I even practiced what I was going to say: "Here's a kiss for you on Valentine's Day." As awesome as that was, I chickened out and ended up giving the bag of candy to a mutual friend of ours.

Yet another Valentine's Day

passed where I had no one.

This time, instead of listening to sappy love songs, I kicked myself for not telling Bobby how I felt about him.

I spent the next two Valentine's days single.

The first Valentine's Day, my roommate and I spent the evening listening to George Straits' "I'd Like to Have That One Back" and drinking Jim Beam.

We reverted to being helplessly sad girls hopelessly longing for what we couldn't have.

The next big day for love we spent watching sappy chick flicks and polishing off three trays of Jell-O shots.

I gave up on finding that perfect Valentine and went to bed that night. I simply did not care anymore.

The weekend after S.A.D. (Singles Awareness Day) Bethany and I decided to go play pool. She decided to invite her friends Chuck and Casey.

We met up at the pool hall and Chuck immediately caught my eye. I became even more intrigued when I witnessed him down a whole pitcher of beer, and I knew he was

the one for me. We went on our first date March 4.

The next Valentine's Day I was pumped because finally I was with the perfect guy. Both Chuck and I were broke, so he decided to cook me dinner by candlelight with one single rose in a vase on the table.

There was only one problem.

Chuck's roommate Casey decided to stay in the living room throughout our entire "romantic" dinner.

To make things worse, while Chuck and I were whispering sweet nothings to each other, Casey let one rip. I am talking about the kind of fart that makes you have to leave the room.

I was crushed that I still did not get my perfect Valentine's date.

I have come to the conclusion that I will never have the perfect Valentine's Day.

And you know what?

I am fine with that because Chuck and I have been happily married for the last eight months.

So if you have a hot date on Valentine's, then more power to you.

But if you are single, don't fret because the person who could change your life might just appear on St. Patrick's Day.