

OPINION

Game industry needs tougher rules



Tim Olmeda
Opinion Editor

I am getting real sick and tired of having to defend the video game industry. Every time a report comes on about games being detrimental to the emotional growth of our youth, I have to come up with a reason why they're not. Well, I'm through with all of that.

The gaming industry as a whole needs a complete and total overhaul in how it enforces what games are allowed to make their way into the hands of children. It's no secret that video gaming has grown into a huge business, grossing over \$25 billion a year.

However, it has failed miserably in how it enforces its rating system, which are given by the nearly defunct Entertainment Software Ratings Board, or ESRB. You've seen the ratings on the cover of any game you've played in the past few years: "M" for mature, "T" for teen, "E" for everyone and so on.

Believe it or not, those little letters actually mean something; unfortunately, parents are either unaware or retailers don't really care and think selling a game rated mature to a 14-year old is fine.

People are still operating under the assumption that games are still only for kids despite the fact that the average gamer today is about 25 years old.

I've been gaming since the days of the original Nintendo. I'm sure a lot of you remember that little gray box with those clunky gray cartridges that you'd have to blow in, smack, and jiggle around just to get your 30 minutes of digital pleasure.

Pixelated versions of fantasy worlds were there for your enjoyment. For at least an hour or so, maybe more, you were jumping from mushroom to mushroom while roasting a turtle with fireballs. It wasn't uncommon to hear people ask one another for tips on how to get a better time on Excite Bike or beat a boss in Legend of Zelda.

Fast-forward to today where you have kids asking each other where the sniper rifle is so that they can go on civilian rampages in Grand Theft Auto. That game, while really good in terms of its gameplay, is a prime example of how this industry has gotten out of control.

I don't care that a game, like GTA, is catered towards adults. What I do care about is how blatantly the industry washes its hands of any responsibility when faced with the fact that it is not doing enough to monitor enforcement of its rules.

My 13-year old cousin asked me the other day how many hookers I've killed in GTA because they're corpses usually leave a lot of money. I'll pick my jaw up off the floor sometime next week.

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Gerry Broome | Associated Press

The execution chamber at Central prison in Raleigh, N.C., where Kenneth Lee Boyd was executed Dec 2 at 2 a.m. for the murder of his estranged wife and her father. Boyd became the 1,000th execution since capital punishment resumed in 1977.

EDITORIAL

Death penalty a flawed tool of justice

The death penalty has been under close scrutiny since the United States Supreme Court reinstated it in 1976.

With the recent execution of Kenneth Lee Boyd in North Carolina for the double murder of his wife and father-in-law, the U.S. has now executed 1,000 prisoners since that grim year.

With reaching that milestone, it's time that the United States took a look at the capital punishment system to make it a more efficient and valid tool of justice.

The State of Texas currently leads the nation in executions since 1976 with nearly four times the number of executions of Virginia, who is second on the list.

Support for the death penalty remains popular among American citizens, but that has started to wane through the years. Stories of the innocent being put to death and the guilty going free have made people begin to doubt our judiciary branch and its ability to be fair in its rulings.

Our justice system as a whole is flawed in and of

itself. It relies more on which attorney puts on the better show in court rather than going off of evidence to prove their case. How else is O.J. Simpson walking around a free man rather than spending his last days on death row as any poor man who couldn't afford a million dollar attorney would?

It's true, our system does rely more heavily on forensic evidence today than it did in the past, with DNA and gunpowder residue common phrases many of us are now familiar with.

However, until our system can turn its eyes away from the flash of a smooth-talking attorney and provide trials that are based on factual evidence rather than hypothetical nonsense, innocent men and women will be the ones who pay for those mistakes with their lives.

Anytime someone's life is at stake, we as a nation have a responsibility to make sure we are 100 percent behind that decision. As it stands now, a lot of American citizens aren't so sure.

OPINION

Contradiction on legalization



Roland Ruiz
Advertising PR major

Denver supposedly legalized marijuana sometime during the month of November but further review of the law fails to make much sense.

The newly passed law states that, adults 21 years of age and older are legally allowed to possess up to one ounce of marijuana, but state law still states the drug is illegal.

This means that while a person with marijuana in their possession will not serve time in a state penitentiary, they will still endure fines. The outcome of the vote was 54 percent in favor of the proposed legalization while 46 percent opposed the measure.

Mayor John Hickenlooper stated, "Police will continue to arrest and charge people for marijuana because state law still makes possession illegal." But Mason Tvert, founder of Safer Alternative For Enjoyable Recreation, or SAFER, led the Denver campaign for legalizing pot.

He has stated that he "will encourage people who are charged under state law to fight their arrests in court." He also stated that, "the charges for marijuana possession will now be like the charges for a speeding ticket, and only a fraction of people end up going to court over it."

Tvert will also seek a state initiative to license and regulate the sale of marijuana. His campaign argued that mari-

juana is a safer alternative to alcohol due to the problems that follow alcohol abuse, such as violent crime and health risks.

The mayor of Denver has opposed the measure stating that "marijuana is a gateway drug which will eventually lead to harder substances and much more self-destructive behavior."

I feel the supposed legalization of marijuana is a joke. If Denver representatives were not going to really legalize marijuana possession, then it should not have been on the ballot in the first place.

It does not make sense and is contradictory to tell a community that it is ok to possess pot, and then turn around stating the law still prohibits it and actions will be taken against those found to be in violation of those laws.

The issue of legalized marijuana is one that requires focus and commitment on the part of our elected officials to listen to the will of its people.

It does little good to pass laws stating one thing and then offset them with another set of laws that should have no bearing on new legislation. It's confusing and it sends mixed messages to voters that their voice does not count.

In the future, when a city decides that it wants to legalize marijuana, it should work with the state to do so in a manner befitting an elected government body, not that of a volunteer PTA who can't agree to bring cookies to the next meeting.

ROLAND RUIZ IS A STUDENT CONTRIBUTOR FOR THE DMC FOGHORN. READERS MAY CONTACT HIM VIA EMAIL: EDOPS_FG@DELMAR.EDU

OPINION

Perry deserves credit for funding



Wendy Gobin
Community Editor

I was driving the other day and was pleasantly surprised by an announcement that I heard on the news-cast.

Recently, the Nueces County Community Supervision and Corrections Department was awarded \$382,000 in state grants, as part of a total \$3 million package given to nine programs in the state.

While I don't agree with all of his decisions, Gov. Rick Perry deserves kudos for recognizing the importance of rehabilitation and support for the alcoholic and chemically dependent citizens of Texas.

The money will go to the Nueces County Substance Abuse Treatment Facility (SATF), a place where drug and alcohol offenders are sent for rehabilitation in lieu of straight jail time. This is an ongoing grant that has been received in years past.

When the leadership of our state recognizes that substance abuse issues need to be dealt with, everyone

benefits. A huge percentage of people incarcerated in Texas are drug offenders. The cost to house them is staggering. Without treatment, many leave the corrections system and return again shortly because they haven't addressed their problem.

Realistically, not everyone who participates in programs like SATF will continue to stay clean. In fact, most won't. It is worth having the program for the people that do turn their lives around, as well as their families, and the community as a whole.

Of course, there is always room for improve-

ment. All of the money goes to an involuntary treatment facility, which means that a person must already be convicted in order to benefit.

In the future, I would like to see more attention paid to non-profit drug and alcohol treatment centers such as Charlie's Place, which offers care to individuals at no cost.

The bottom line is, the more money we spend on treating the problem, the less we will have to devote to the symptoms.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Team unfairly portrayed

My point was not made in my edited letter to the editor printed on Nov. 29.

The student service money does need to be increased and spread more evenly among the different clubs that Del Mar College graciously offers. As mentioned before, I think donations are more than appropriate to offset the costs of student luxuries.

However, the comment about the speech forensic team really needing \$14,000 plus dollars to travel was not needed. I feel that it "called us out," so to speak. While I have been told that was not the intention, it was still said nonetheless.

I am an active and proud member of the Del Mar College Vocal

Vikings. We are a very close knit group of polished public speakers who support one another, making us the epitome of what a team is supposed to be.

Everyone on our team has learned what it means to be a team player. We have all experienced humility, but in a way that only drives us to do better the next time out.

Patience, understanding, and being able to accept both positive and negative feedback are all valuable tools needed in all aspects of our lives. The value to be able to communicate your thoughts verbally is priceless.

Yes, the forensics team here at Del Mar competes, and yes, we have a budget that allows us to travel. In fact, we just returned from a tourna-

ment in New York City. While we didn't bring home trophies, we all came back winners. The trip provided many important details needed not only to survive the big, bad city, but also enjoy it as well.

There are many clubs at Del Mar that provide invaluable services to the students. While some are needed more than others, they all have a purpose in mind. Let's make an effort to take care of those clubs that take care of us.

Shane Ganschow

Editor's Note: The editorial in question was written to show that other clubs deserve to be presented with the same opportunities available to the Speech Forensics Team. It was the opinion of the editorial board that a special account should be set up and monitored so that other clubs may be able to enjoy "big city life" as well, not just a select few.

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