

Defining our freedom

Student speaks about freedom of the press

Recent celebrations of the Fourth of July symbolize more than ingesting hot dogs and other delicious barbecued food, floating the Truckee River, and watching fireworks.



VICKI ISACOWITZ
On the Chalkboard

Historically, Independence Day honors freedom. Due to current events in politics, some of our freedoms find themselves altered or eliminated.

After a recent fireworks show, I bumped into a former and well-respected student of mine, Chris Colpitts of Squaw

Valley. Chris holds strong opinions about journalism, government, and the freedom of speech. The writing that follows is solely the expression of Chris Colpitts.

Vicki Isacowitz is a secondary English teacher who has been educating students since 1996. She is co-founder of Clever Minds Educational Services, providing tutoring for students in grades kindergarten-12. For information call 582-1707 or e-mail vicki@cleverminds.org.

“As a young American, I feel that it is important to look closely upon the recent and potential prosecutions of journalists for the supposed divulging of classified information. We as Americans have the inalienable right to many freedoms, one being the freedom of speech. I, like many, am realistic in the fact that the general public can and probably should not know the most delicate information that keeps us safe. However, I do feel that whatever the government does to maintain our freedom should be done through legal means based on our constitution or else we become no better than that which we fight against.

When a person becomes a journalist, they sign no document stating they will keep the secrets of the country safe. They are in the business of news (reporting the facts) whether the facts are good or bad. It is the people inside the government who take the responsibility to keep these secrets safe and it is they who should take responsibility if the secrets are leaked. When a reporter does his/her job and finds wrong doings by the government, such as illegal wire tapping, starting a war on false pretenses or plans to destroy a broadcasting company because of difference in views, should the journalists be punished? Or do they have a responsibility to present the unbiased facts to the people, not necessarily with the govern-

ments blessing.

If we as citizens no longer have the right to criticize what our government is doing, we should be afraid of losing the very freedoms that this country was built on.

I feel the freedom of press is no less important than the delicate system of checks and balances, which our forefathers designed. If we as citizens no longer have the right to criticize what our government is doing, we should be afraid of losing the very freedoms that this country was built on. It should not be considered unpatriotic to stand up for your beliefs and voice your concerns about the direction of our nation, because that is simply one of the most patriotic things you can do. It is also how we as the people can maintain control of our future.

This backwards trend and the reverse of our liberty is what concerns me and is what should concern us all. It must be known that government attempts at perpetuating our fear will not stop us asking the questions that we should, and that they like no other citizens are above the law of the land.”

— Chris Colpitts,
Special to the Sun



For those who wish to speak out, here is how to get in contact with you local state representatives:

- **Senator Dianne Feinstein**
Web Address- feinstien.senate.gov
Phone- (415) 393-0707
- **Senator Barbara Boxer**
Web Address- boxer.senate.gov
Phone- (916) 448-2787
- **U.S. House Representative John T. Doolittle**
www.house.gov/doolittle
Phone- (916) 786-5560
- **California State Senator Dave Cox**
senator.cox@sen.ca.gov
Phone- (530) 283-3437
- **California Assemblyman Richard Keene**
assemblymember.keene@assembly.ca.gov
Phone- (530) 895-4217