

Area Media Covering 'Cobra Beat' Case

By ILEANA DOMINGUEZ

Associate Editor

Most Miami area newspapers, radio and television stations that stress news coverage, have dealt at least one time with *The Cobra Beat* affair at South Miami Senior High.

The *Herald's* local news assignment editor, Mike Baxter, explained what made the story newsworthy: "It was a very unusual situation and a conflict that you rarely hear about."

The *Miami News* devoted front page space to the proceedings because, according to assignment editor Tom Kimbell, "there are many individuals today trying to 'buck the establishment'. We didn't see where the school could've dictated such policies so we decided to let people know what these policies were."

Tomas Regalado, news director for WFAB Radio and latin news correspondent for WINZ-AM, stated that the stations he represents felt "it was a direct case of discrimination against the Spanish people and that it was a proud thing for a young Cuban to fight for his heritage."

Steve Hammel, morning newsman for WMJX Radio (96 X), stated that the *Cobra Beat* affair had also been discussed for 90 minutes in the station's weekly Sunday talk-show, "Reality Ranch".

Channel 7 evening news assignment editor, Don Adams, commented that "people attending school are being instructed towards open mindedness and here we see a conflict of the choice not being allowed. Our TV audience certainly wants to know why and we're giving them this service by covering it in any way we can."

Reaction to this extensive publicity is varied among SSMH community members.

Rick Rodriguez, Junior Class President and *Serpent's Tale* News Editor, stated: "I'm afraid that our school — as covered in the press — has come out very negatively. The impression that the press is giving to the SSMH community is that we're more concerned with controversy than learning."

Assistant Principal Elizabeth Henry feels most of this news coverage was "fair and pretty accurate except for Sam Beneckson's articles in the *Community Newspapers*."

Ms. Anne Kinney, Media Specialist, feels very strongly about preferring the matter "being solved in school, not in court, so that the negative publicity given to the school would have been avoided."

"A lot of problems begin when people assume others are not willing to listen," commented Rick.

Local & State News

Students Sue Principal Over

Administration bans publication

Student editor petitions ACLU for right to publish school paper

By JOEL GREENBERG
News Service Staff

Being the principal may not be one of the options listed in the student's rights booklet at South Miami High School, but a dispute over the establishment of a school newspaper at the school has led a group of students to sue a lawsuit against Mr. Warren.

Led by editor Marie Rodriguez, the students are fighting for the right to publish the "Cobra Beat" school newspaper.

School officials terminated the publication after one issue because, they said, it failed to meet conditions designed to prevent direct competition with the established school newspaper, the "Serpent's Tale."

CLAIMING CENSORSHIP, Rodriguez took her case to American Civil Liberties Union lawyer Steve Raskin, who filed the suit before Judge Norman Benetzer in Fort Lauderdale. Benetzer has not yet decided whether to grant the requested injunction against

BY DENNIS POWELL
News Service Staff

Students at South Miami High School will get a free lesson in constitutional law when "Cobra Beat," the publication of

the October issue and related withdrawal of support by the organization. So Editor Marie Rodriguez took the matter to the American Civil Liberties Union.

Rodriguez believes that by certain guidelines which could not be met by the school based publication of "Cobra Beat," she thinks this is in violation of the First Amendment.

He said he had been working on the publication since August. The first issue came out in September.

Elizabeth Henry, assistant principal for curricular

in Federal Court," Raskin said.

A suit was filed last Wednesday in Federal Court, Southern District of Florida.

Judge Norman Benetzer presiding, by Attorney Stephen Raskin, a representative of the Civil Liberties Union in behalf of the "Cobra Beat," a student newspaper headed by Marie Rodriguez.

Announcement, the bench of the planned suit is a Federal

Mrs. Elizabeth Henry, assistant principal, who said she encouraged the intention

Editor of 'Cobra Beat' Sees Ethnic I

Suit fight: school magazine ban

A lawsuit to stop the ban on Cobra Beat, the new South Miami Senior High School publication, has been filed in U.S. District Court here.

The suit is on behalf of 128 grade students and Marie Rodriguez — works a temporary injunction to prevent the school principal, Warren Benetzer, from terminating the publication.

Assistant Principal Elizabeth Henry, for approval before publication, that the newspaper take a magazine format and not deal with immediate news and that the Cobra Beat not solicit advertising. She says she has already contacted by the school's official paper, Serpent's Tale.

Raskin, who said he hopes the suit will be

Cobra Editor Ready to Strike in Federal Court

A Federal court action in Federal Court here in Miami, Florida, was filed on Wednesday by Stephen Raskin in behalf of Marie Rodriguez, editor of the Cobra Beat, a new student newspaper at South Miami Senior High School.

He said he is a member of the American Civil Liberties Union of Florida.

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Warren Benetzer, principal of the high school, contended that he had a right to publish and distribute the newspaper despite its challenge to the

staffers of the paper, had prohibited the school, last Wednesday in process in the court case by the school principal.

The Cobra Beat is one newspaper in an area

encouraged the intention

South Miami-Kendall News

Extensive local newspaper coverage was given to the *Cobra Beat* case. Shows that appeared in *The Miami Herald*, *El Miami Herald*, *The Miami News Guide*, *Community Newspapers*, and *The Serpent's Tale*.