

EDITORIAL PRICELY POLITICS

Everyone knows the importance of money in getting and keeping a political office. It buys campaign materials and name recognition. Politics and cash always have been together in America and are not likely to be separated anytime soon. But when voters head to the polls April 9 for runoff elections, they should look beyond familiar names achieved with a barrage of television commercials. There are many other factors that merit consideration.

A *Dallas Morning News* analysis of candidate expenditures found the spending of two successful Texas Democratic candidates varied widely. Tony Sanchez, a candidate for governor, spent nearly \$32 for every vote he received. But U.S. Senate hopeful Victor Morales spent just 3 cents. Sanchez already has surpassed the campaign spending record in the state of Texas.

Sanchez committed \$20 million to win the primary and has vowed to spend "whatever it takes" to defeat Gov. Rick Perry in the November general election. Money has been key to his success thus far. But voters get to determine the final results. Maybe Sanchez deserves to be governor, and perhaps he would be a good one. However, he should not receive support just because of the television commercials that are sure to blanket the state this fall.

Public service must not become the pastime of bored, wealthy men. Unfortunately, this appears to be the trend. Witness Sen. Jon Corzine, D-NJ and Mayor Michael Bloomberg of New York City, each of whom spent more than \$50 million of their fortune to win office. Dedicated, experienced public officials find it difficult to compete on such a costly level. People should be able to spend their money in any legal way they see fit. But voters must carefully consider politicians' background to determine their level of commitment to constituent interest.

Votes should be earned through a candidate's explanation of their views and goals, and their qualifications and experience. Thus a close scrutiny of the background and professional dealings of those who wish to exercise power over their fellow citizens is necessary. Informed voters who bestow their trust in a candidate who have earned it through hard work strengthen democracy. Ideally, political support is earned and never bought — a decision in the hands of voters.

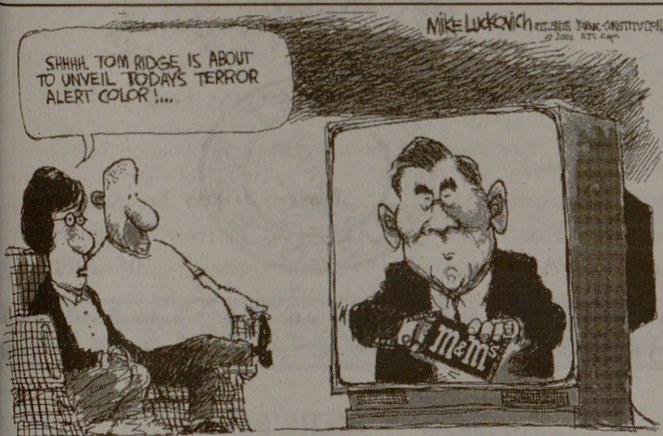
THE BATTALION

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MAIL CALL

Corps of Cadets is losing credibility

In response to Brandie Liffick's March 19 article:

Exposing those who perform objectionable deeds is perfectly acceptable. However, if someone's affiliation with an uninvolved organization has absolutely nothing to do with his or her offense, the name of that organization should not be hastily tacked onto the offender's title. Recent articles that have focused on sex/pornography offenders, and both times the writers have felt it necessary to include the offenders' affiliation with the Corps of Cadets in a very obvious fashion. The Corps of Cadets is an organization that prides itself on producing soldiers, statesmen and knightly gentlemen.

Granted, not every person within the Corps or who leaves the Corps has these characteristics, but a large majority of Corps members do. Many of the best leaders that this University has to offer come out of the Corps of Cadets. The actions of one do not necessarily reflect the actions of a whole.

Personally I think that it is tragic that we have people at our university who molest children or view child pornography. These people have no place on our campus.

However, I have to question *The Battalion's* motives behind printing such articles. I find it hard to believe that out of a student body of approximately 44,000, cadets are the only ones who break the law, while that is all that seems to appear in the pages of *The Battalion*.

You forgot to mention that of the 40 people in custody nationwide, 4 are members of the clergy, two of which were catholic priests. Maybe instead of constantly attacking the Corps, you should mention that we are the largest contributor to the March of Dimes, how about the Aggie Band Christmas toy drive, or the large Corps participation in the Big Event and how each outfit has a service project.

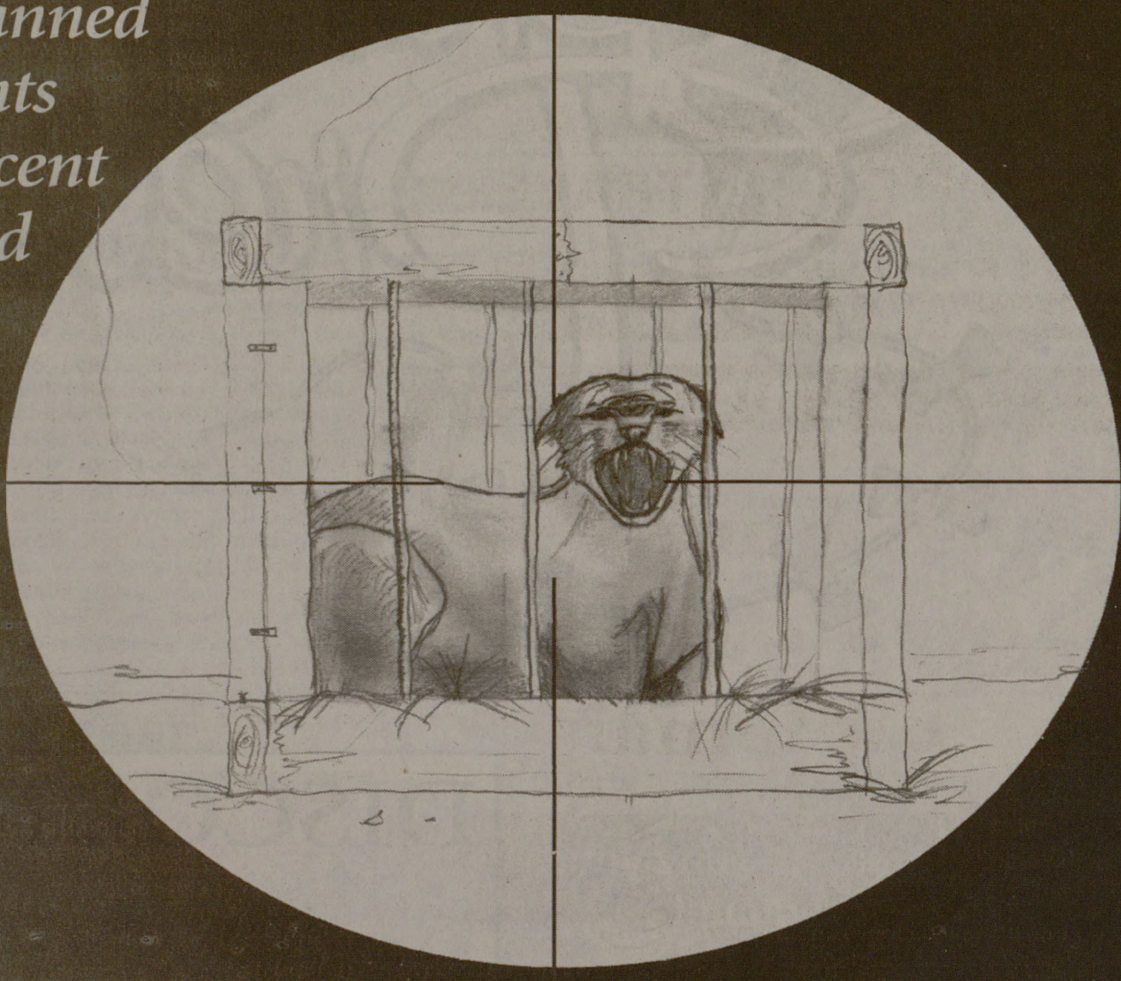
I just think it's a shame to have four years of hard work and devotion to this University mocked daily, while most of those who point fingers are the ones on the sidelines complaining instead of doing.

Travis Brown
Class of 2004

Ed Rhodes
Class of 2002

NOWHERE TO RUN

Artificial canned animal hunts target innocent animals and should be prohibited



FRANK CHANCE • THE BATTALION



COLLINS EZEANYIM

A domesticated tiger sits under a tree and watches as a hunter approaches. The animal is accustomed to humans and does not bother to get up. The poor animal is shot where it sits, never realizing the human meant it harm.

This horrendous example of animal cruelty occurred during a "canned hunt." This activity involves killing animals on an enclosed hunting preserve for sport. The goal is to bag a trophy, which is usually the creature's head. According to *Time* magazine and the U.S. Humane Society, there are about 2,000 hunting preserves in 25 different states, with 500 of them in Texas. There is no doubt that the Texas economy is impacted by hunting, which brings in \$1 billion a year, but serious measures should be taken to stop canned hunts. They are unkind, unnecessary and unsportsmanlike.

Some aspects of canned hunts make them especially abhorrent. First, humans raise many of the animals used in the activity. Thus, they trust people and, like the domesticated tiger, many of their natural instincts to fight or flee hunters have been numbed. They have been robbed of

fundamental skills for survival.

Even if the animals are wild, they are unable to fully defend themselves because they are trapped within a confined area. The creatures will attempt to run away, but will always encounter a fence or barrier. The animal will eventually wear out and the hunter will then have an even easier time of killing it.

While hunting animals on an enclosed preserve is a grossly unfair practice, there are techniques used during canned hunts that can only be described as savage. The most disturbing of these is "shooting over bait" in which animals — deer, for instance — are lured to feeding stations and shot by hunters hiding only a few yards away. Even worse, many of the species used in this disgraceful practice are rare and exotic. *Time* reported that such species include "the Arabian Oryx, the Nubian ibex, yaks (and) impalas..." Also included are rhinos, zebras and tigers.

How do hunting preserves acquire such animals? Sometimes zoos will sell what they call "overflow animals" to hunting preserves. The surplus of animals is a result of overusing captive-breeding programs. Currently, there are a couple of bills floating in the Senate and the House that would prohibit the interstate sale of exotic animals for hunts. Congress should pass these bills

and pass further legislation banning all exotic animals from being used in this shameful activity.

Presently, The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service cannot do anything about canned hunts. It is not allowed to intervene if the hunts do not violate state laws or involve interstate commerce. *Passing these bills in Congress will give the agency more power to regulate the way hunting preserves operate.*

Not surprisingly, many hunters defend canned hunts and hunting exotic animals. They say zoos breed more than enough exotic animals to be used at hunting grounds. They claim that without hunting preserves, the excess animals would die on their own in the wild. But they ignore that fact that zoos should not overbreed these animals in the first place and if zoos do have a surplus, natural habitats should be found. Exotic animals should not be handed over to hunting preserves where they will be slaughtered.

It is natural for humans to hunt, but hunting in such an artificial manner undermines those primal instincts.

Animals deserve more humane treatment than this. It is time to can canned hunts.

Collins Ezeanyim is a junior computer engineering major.

U2 singer Bono helps Africa



KATHERINE TUCKER

In a country where youth place their interests and respect in the popular faces of a changing culture, it was inevitable that the rock band U2 embrace a new role.

It seems stars make emotional claims on issues, hoping their name will be seen by helping a cause. The 22-year-old band U2 has international appeal and tied its name to an important world issue — except that their efforts are more than an emotional outcry, issues have become a part of U2's job.

With lyrics that embrace trials from all walks of life, U2 has embraced its role of comforting an ailing world and taken the next step — to change the world. This is a bold move — one that makes eyes role, but it is a realistic possibility when stars carry such an influence in so many people's minds.

Lead singer Bono has

educated himself on every detail of the situation. His knowledge has gained him access to influences such as Jesse Helms, Kofi Annan, Bill Clinton, Bill Gates and Pope John Paul II. With the ability to speak with the respect from millions of fans and a dozen world leaders, Bono has used his stardom to achieve an admirable influence.

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Bono has established DATA (Debt, Aide, Trade for Africa), riding on the argument that by eliminating the public debt of 52 of the world's poorest countries, the world can be a better place. Where does this confidence spring from? It could be the overwhelming hope that U2 has in this world, as conveyed through their lyrics, or it could be U2's strong world influence. U2 has captivated the attention and respect of a population of 15-

to 20-year-olds, a crucial time when developing minds determine their political alignments. Whether it is the political alignment factor or Bono's overwhelming charisma, politicians and world leaders are listening to this band's concerns.

Bono's efforts to provide relief to Africa spring from his involvement in Band Aid and Live Aid in 1984 to

relieve famine in Ethiopia. *Time* reported. Shaken and propelled by the death and sickness overcoming the nation, Bono's initial response was out of emotion. However, as emotional involvement of celebrities is frequently ineffective, Bono has taken a different approach: think through the problem, instead of feeling the way through.

His efforts in Africa centralize on eliminating debt. The countries are focused on paying off the principal sur-

rounding loans and neglecting health care and education. Bono has taken it on himself to convince America that saving Africa is in its best interest. By convincing America to involve itself, Africa can focus on health care, education and AIDS relief.

In a world where pop stars are over-glamorized, only adding to their egos, U2 has humbled itself before a greater cause. By breaking the barrier between stardom and politics, U2 has set a new standard for the musical faces of today. U2 has challenged stars to represent causes greater than themselves.

This challenge has the potential to change the world. Whether by raising the bar for today's popular influences or encouraging fans to support a greater cause than music, U2 has pushed the envelope and challenged the world to become a better place.

Katherine Tucker is a sophomore general studies major.