

The Editorial Board to make its choice

Yes, the rumor you heard is true. On Monday The Battalion Editorial Board, continuing its semester-long tradition of taking a stand on issues, will endorse a candidate for student body president.

The decision to support one of the candidates came after serious discussion and some dissension among Editorial Board members.

Endorsing a campus candidate is not a new idea. It has been done at Texas A&M in the past and is done at many other universities.

Our endorsement reflects our belief that we have a responsibility to research issues and present an opinion on them. Student body president is one such issue.

Many people believe that it makes no difference who is elected; Student Government and Texas A&M will go on as before. Although past experience seems to support that conclusion, we feel differently. The student body president can make a difference. It

happened at Texas A&M in the past and it is happening at other schools now.

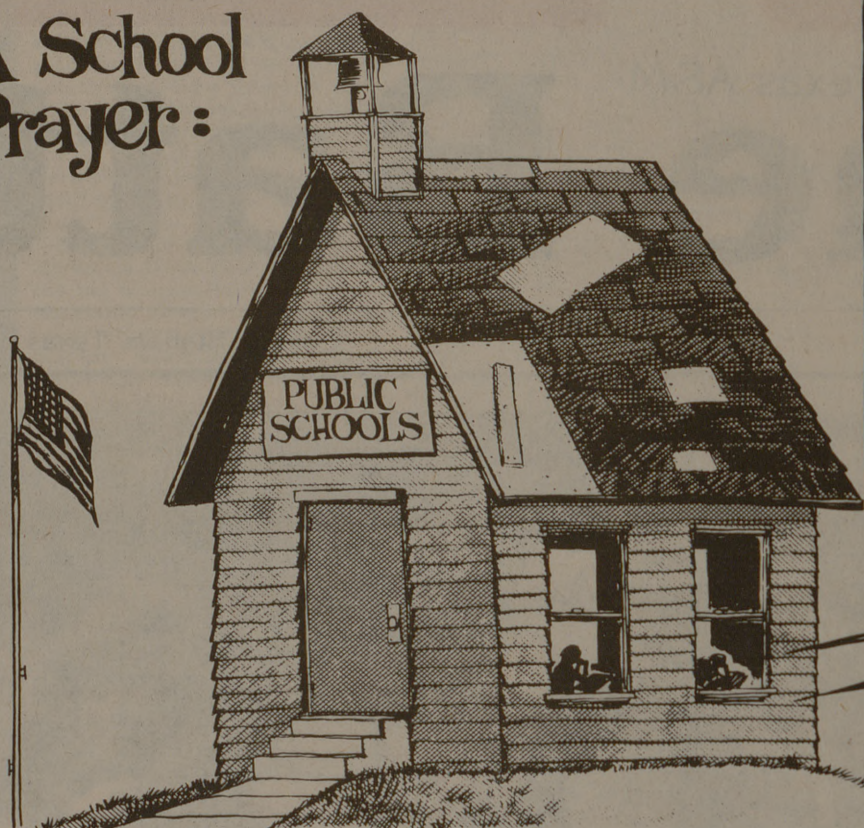
That's why we took the time this week to visit with the candidates. The time each candidate spent in the "hot seat" — as one potential president called it — included a presentation of his or her perceptions of the issues and questions from board members on subjects ranging from relations with the Faculty Senate to the state referendum on the Permanent University Fund.

Therefore, we will endorse a candidate for student body president. We are not attempting to control the opinion of the student body; we are merely expressing ours.

The choice won't be easy. After our conversations with the candidates, we feel that the slate this year offers five good choices. We hope you will put as much thought into your decision as we are putting into ours.

— The Battalion Editorial Board

A School Prayer:



...OUR CONGRESS, WHO ART IN WASHINGTON, HOLLOW BE THEIR AID; THY FEDERAL CUTS, THOU MUST BE NUTS; IN THE STATES AS IT IS IN D.C.; GIVE US THIS AID, OUR DAILY BREAD; AND LEAD US INTO APPROPRIATIONS, AND DELIVER US FROM BOLL WEEVILS FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM AND THE POWER OF THE PURSE STRINGS FOREVER AND EVER, AMEN.

Elections, Soviet-style

By ART BUCHWALD

Columnist for The Los Angeles Times Syndicate

Have you ever wondered how the Soviet elections would go if American political methods were applied?

"This is Dan Ratevich reporting to you from the Soviet Broadcasting System with a special edition on the elections. With only .01 precincts counted SBS has declared Konstantin Chernenko the winner in a surprising landslide election.

"For one thing it was a very large turnout, which is always a good sign for the Communist party. Chernenko's popularity crossed all age groups, from the young hooligans to the old-time Stalinists. Labor strongly supported him and so did the army. But I believe the deciding factor was the unexpected big turnout of the KGB at the polls."

"No, they just turned up there. They stood next to the ballot boxes to watch the people vote. As soon as the undecideds saw them they weren't so undecided anymore."

"So you believe that Chernenko owes his victory to the KGB?"

"Dan, no Soviet leader has ever been elected without the support of the KGB."

"Thank you, Vladimir. Now let's go to an exit polling station and talk to Alexander Novisty who is standing by in Kiev with a voter who has just cast his ballot for Chernenko."

"Dan, I'm here with Comrade Mikial Dobrinsky, a steelworker from the Lenin Foundry. Comrade, what was it about Chernenko that made you decide to vote for him?"

"He's young, and he has some new ideas. I was sick and tired of hearing the same promises from the same old Soviet politicians every election year. I decided to vote for someone who could get the country moving again."

"Thank you, comrade. Dan, I will now talk to someone who didn't vote for Chernenko. He's in a police van over here and although our cameras can't see

him, I'll put the microphone up to the grill. Comrade, can you tell us why you didn't vote for Chernenko?"

"I left my ballot blank. I put it in the box stepped outside to light a cigarette and the next thing I knew I was inside a police van."

"How many people are in the van with you?"

"Three dissidents, four enemies of the state and two counterrevolutionaries who keep yelling, 'What's the beef?'"

"Alexander, this is Dan. I have to interrupt. We're going to switch live to Chernenko's headquarters in the ballroom of Hotel Moskva where Roger Muddnikov is standing by. Roger, there seems to be a lot of celebrating going on."

"It's a madhouse, Dan. The Chernenko supporters have been screaming and shouting ever since you declared the candidate a winner. I hope to speak to the new secretary of the party when he comes down, which should be any minute. He must be arriving now because the orchestra is playing the theme song 'Rocky.' Here he is. Comrade Chernenko, would you say this was the biggest night of your life?"

"It's been a long hard battle from the first primaries in the cold steppes of Siberia in February to our squeak-through by the Caspian Sea in November. The turning point for me was the debates."

"We didn't see any debates."

"They all took place in the Kremlin. You don't think we'd show them on television, do you?"

"Comrade Chernenko, forgive me for asking the tough questions, but that's the Soviet media's job. Why do the people believe so many Soviet politicians are phonies?"

"What is your name?"

"All right, if you won't answer that one, how about doing your imitation of Yuri Andropov?"

"Comrades, this is Dan Ratevich. Because of technical difficulties we seem to have lost Roger Muddnikov. We'll return to him as soon as possible — but then again, who knows?"

Running the race shows farce of A&M campaigns

There are plenty of worthwhile subjects to write a column about. Texas A&M's Student Government isn't one of them. But since the people involved with Student Government here waste their time with it, I might as well waste mine writing an column about it.

There is a basic difference, however. At least I realize I'm wasting my time.

I came to this realization last year about this time. I wasted time running for the office of Student Vice-President of Academic Affairs — a position for which I was totally unqualified. I still received more than 1000 votes. And if I had won, those 1000 votes would have been unearned.

The story of my decision to run and how I just possibly could have won presents scathing proof of how ridiculous our system is.

A friend of mine decided to run for student body president for the very same reasons I am writing. When I accompanied him to the Memorial Student Center to register for the election, I found that, with just one more day left to register, no one had signed up to run

for the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

I nobly took it upon myself to run, hoping to win uncontested.

The first thing I had to do was pay a \$3 registration fee and get 100 signatures so I could get my name on the bal-



dave scott

lot. I don't know what purpose the \$3 serves, but I suppose the signatures are designed to keep just anybody from getting on the ballot.

In my case, it didn't work. This "anybody" just walked outside and got his signatures from a crowd that had gathered to harass one of our Rudder Fountain preachers. It took only 20 minutes to guarantee that my name would be on the official ballot.

The next day I was devastated to find that I had a challenger for my position. Now I would have to campaign.

Here is what my campaign for the office of Vice-President for Academic Affairs consisted of:

- some handwritten flyers of white paper. I think about 10 of them actually made it to a bulletin board.
 - about 30 more flyers that were actually typeset and had letters that were the same size and everything. About 25 of these made it to displays — for how long is anybody's guess.
 - one 3-foot sign made from an old wooden pallet. Since we didn't put the sign up until less than a week before the election, all we could do was stick it behind all the other signs already out.
 - an extremely sarcastic description of my background and goals printed in the voters' guide of The Battalion.
- That was it. Seriously, that was all I did.

When election day rolled around, or three of my friends and I went to vote. We were given our ballots to a nearby table to cast our votes in the utmost privacy and secrecy.

We promptly told the few other people there to vote for me. They said they would if we would vote for their candidate in another office. We willingly consented to the fair agreement.

Being dutiful Aggies, we wanted to vote for every office, but we were too bergasted to find that for the off-campus senator positions there were enough candidates from each ward.

I quickly volunteered to be a candidate for Ward II and my fellow voters the table supported me by writing my name in. Now I figured I was a shot to become a part of student government; I had doubled my chances running for two offices.

I anxiously awaited the results. The returns were repeatedly delayed because of a computer malfunction delaying the votes.

After a new program was written by one of the candidates for student body president — the results came in. I lost both races.

I was soundly defeated for Vice President of Academic Affairs; my opponent received twice as many votes as I did. I must say that I wasn't really surprised.

The scary part is that if I had spent one or two more hours campaigning in the right places, such as on the Quad around the MSC, I could have won. Total campaign expenses amounted to \$10. There's no telling what would have happened if I had used my full limit.

Although my defeat in the Vice Presidential race was not unexpected, I truly crushed to find that I had not winning the off-campus senator spot one vote.

There were nine positions open in ward. The ninth candidate had more votes while I had seven.

If just one more person had written my name in, it would have forced an off election between a couple of candidates that were looking for an easy into student government.

Oh, well — easy come, easy go. Dave Scott is a senior journalism major and staff writer for The Battalion.

Letters

A look at the issues

Editor:

Another election year is upon us and it is time to re-evaluate our government and our nation's objectives.

Our government is currently protecting American jobs and industry. What are the results?

The nation's steel industry has to compete with government-subsidized steel from other countries, so tariffs were levied on imported steel. The result: Americans pay more for steel.

We could be buying that subsidized steel, forcing foreign governments to subsidize our industries that use steel. American products would then be more competitive in the world market.

A by-product of tariffs is inefficiency. Since our steel industry is protected, it can afford to run old inefficient plants in an inefficient manner, raising prices even more.

Our government also seeks to keep products safe — another noble idea.

What happens? An example is current regulations on lawnmowers. Every lawnmower made is now required to have an automatic shut-off system. As soon as the operator takes his hands from the handle, the lawnmower stops.

I'm a senior at Texas A&M — tell me that I don't have enough brains not to stick my hand underneath a lawnmower! I have to pay more for my lawnmower because some dolt wants to wrestle with a lawnmower blade.

The point is this: government has its hands in our personal lives and our economy. Does anybody think that electing a Democrat to a federal office is going to remedy the situation?

Currently one out of every four dollars that my wife and I earn goes to support this mess, and I cannot tolerate this waste of my money anymore.

Malcolm L. Franklin

Slouch

by Jim Earle



"Anybody who's opposed to prayer in the classroom hasn't taken a test like this one!"

The Battalion

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Letters Policy

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 100 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the address and telephone number of the writer.

Reader's Forum columns and guest editorial also are welcome. Address all inquiries to the Editorial Page Editor.

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