

Voting is easy — get out and do it

The picture on the front page of Tuesday's Battalion said it all — five student body president candidates, speaking to a room full of empty chairs.

Indeed, the turnout at Monday's open forum meeting with the candidates was less than overwhelming. Considering the importance of this year's election, it is sad so few voters attended the session. There is something to be gained by having a strong student body president, and an informed voter is always better able to make the right choice.

It is easy for Americans, including university students, to vote — no guerrilla attacks on polling places, no sabotage, no violence. Citizens of other countries don't have such an easy time of it.

Granted, a student election at Texas A&M can't compare to the perilous presidential election in El Salvador, but the spirit is the same. We should appreciate our system of government and support it, even if the election is just a "simple student election."

There is growing apathy towards the election process in the United States. We sit back while others elect officials, then complain about those who are elected. The time to change all that is now. Get in the habit of voting.

If you're at all concerned about the classes you will have to take, the finals you may have to take, the amount of money it may cost you to attend this school and numerous other issues — don't just sit back and gripe. Vote today.

— The Battalion Editorial Board

Board's endorsement prevents free election

The Battalion Editorial Board has taken upon itself to endorse a candidate for student body president.

The Battalion receives \$35,000 from the University, taken from the student service fee that all students must pay at registration.

The basic problem that arises is that a University-linked organization is expressing a position of favoritism in a University election. If, however, we consider the editorial staff to be nothing more than a student organization, are we to conclude that any recognized student organization may make political endorsements in The Battalion, free of cost?

The right of an editorial staff of a student newspaper to make political endorsements has been argued in courts of law, and the issue will undoubtedly be brought up again.

The First Amendment guarantees the freedom of the press. One might consider it a "right". There are, however, other rights involved here, such as the right to hold a true and free election.

Obviously, everyone's rights cannot be completely protected. A compromise must be found.

In the past, the editorial staffs have provided a Voters' Guide for interested readers which has included basic information about the candidates' qualifications. This guide was extremely helpful to those students who wanted to cast an informed and intelligent ballot.

These editorial staffs obviously considered the students themselves intelligent enough to make their own decisions.

Apparently the current editorial staff no longer believes that the average Aggie is capable of making such choices

and must have someone else — i.e. The Battalion Editorial board — decide.

Ironically, this change in policy is being made in the year 1984. Orwell would not be surprised. "Big Brother" has decided to make our decisions for us — in our "best" interests, no doubt.

What is done is done. The Board has made its endorsement. What is important now is that all Aggies exercise their right to cast a vote for the candidate they believe is best suited for the position.

Use whatever means are necessary to make an intelligent decision (I suggest the Voter's Guide) and vote.

Some feel that student elections are not important enough to warrant voting. If you can convince yourself of that,

reader's forum

you can convince yourself that no election is truly important enough.

Remember, very few people in the world are ever given the opportunity to cast a ballot in a free election. Do not forget what price was paid to give you that privilege. Freedom does not come easily, but it is unfortunately easily forgotten.

Rodger A. Drew
Class of '84

Editor's note: The \$35,000 The Battalion receives from student service fees covers the costs of about one week's papers. That money is essentially a minimal subscription cost — something all commercial newspapers receive despite any candidate endorsements the paper makes.

Letters

Time for a change

Editor:

To many of us who aren't as gung-ho about the upcoming elections as many of the candidates, it seems a terrible waste of time, energy, resources, and, most of all, respect for Texas A&M to pollute our campus with expensive graffiti and mindless propaganda.

If any of these quasi-politicians are as concerned with and have as much respect for our University as their signs and posters claim, they would address some issues that improve our lot in life or at least have some bearing on us.

As it stands now, the issues are who has the most impressive, colorful, fancy, expensive or largest sign (or should I say exhibit) and whose last name sounds like McDonald's or can be recalled by an association with an object.

We don't care if they can build a windmill or not! The question is if they can make intelligent, responsible decisions to benefit the student body.

If Texas A&M were a country and I were a citizen, I would revolt! Thank goodness the Student Government doesn't have enough power and isn't effective enough to really have any lasting effect on my life!

Couldn't a few dynamic and intelligent individuals replace the group of self-glorifying, egotistic dopes that supposedly represent us? The way I figure it, anarchy is better than a shoddy government of idea-less "initiators". Let's

trade this popularity contest for a debate on some issues!

This letter might have seemed strong, but so is the stench of this election.

Keith Blockus
Class of '87

Ed Board too liberal

Editor:

We are disappointed with The Battalion Editorial Board. It is obviously extremely liberal and its viewpoints are contrary to those of the majority of Texas A&M students as well as Americans as a whole.

Your strong opposition to school prayer and capital punishment are just two examples. We wish we had an editorial board that was representative of our student body.

Michael and Sally Davis
Class of '86

Act uncalled for

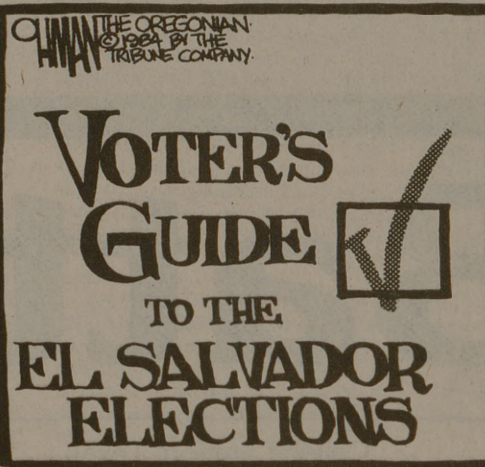
Editor:

We are appalled by the photo of a cattle crossing in front of the Kappa Alpha Theta house in Monday's Battalion.

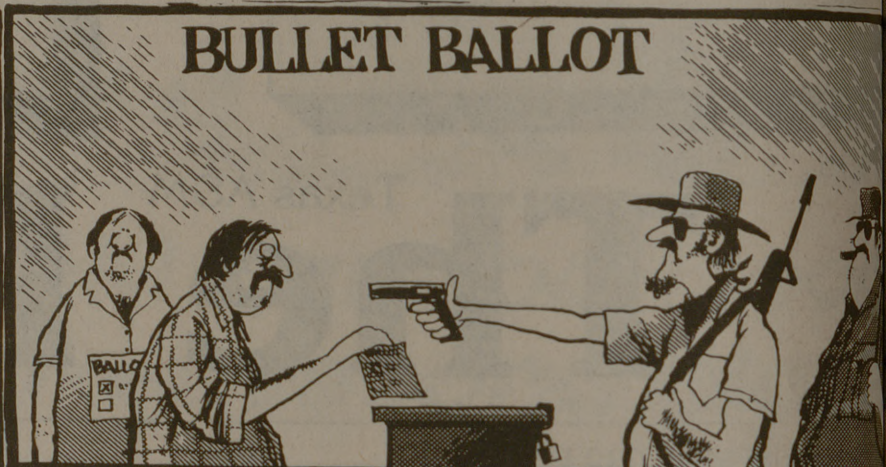
We fail to see the humor in an act which should be considered nothing short of criminal.

We will lend our full support to the apprehension of the offenders.

The Brothers of Sigma Alpha Epsilon



EXIT POLLING



PROJECTED LOSER



PROJECTED WINNER



Learning from foreign Aggies

College Station is a pretty nice place to go to school. In fact I'll go as far as saying I like going to school in Texas.

The problem is that I never really think about it or appreciate it until something shocks me into doing so.

Well, something shocked me recently. I learned that a member of foreign student's family was kidnapped several days ago by a Salvadoran death squad and then found dead. Probably murdered. Death squads? Kidnappings?

Those are never in places near to us, only in the newspapers. We can read the articles and think how awful the situation is, but it is always something that is happening in a place somewhere else.

When a friend of mine lost her brother through the unjust actions that are commonplace in countries such as El Salvador, it burst that safety bubble that surrounds me in College Station. The reality of what is happening can never be known by people like me — those of us who have never been to a war-torn country, let alone lived in one.

However, there are people near us who do know what that reality is. They are the foreign students who come to Texas A&M and other universities across the nation from countries like El Salvador, Nicaragua, and even from as

far away as Lebanon. They have left their families and the cultures familiar to them and come here to get an education.

Possibly these students' educations will help their countries in solving the problems that cause the conflicts. But

stephanie
ross



what about the time until then? How is it to live in one country trying to better yourself, while your family is at home in danger?

One comfort to the students is that they come to know others like them here. Most nationalities are represented in some student association or club. The student who lost her brother in El Salvador knew many other Latin American students through her church. They are a strong support to her, as are her

American friends.

The Lebanese students have a club that is very aware of what is on in their country thousands of miles away. Since the war has been there they have banded together to form an information network because it is hard to get phone calls through an area during the heavy fighting. Students call home, they are sure messages on to other students through their own.

But what happens when some fighting directly affects one of our friends here? We simply try to tell them with a feeling of inadequacy cause our own ignorance. It is a loss.

I feel very fortunate to have students as friends. They have many things about their country both good and bad — and have me think about life in my own country. Because of them, I take interest in going on "out there."

We can learn so much from the students, yet many American students choose not to get to know them.

Stephanie Ross is a senior junior major and assistant city editor of The Battalion.

Grads: Get off the conveyor belt

Wham! One Graduate, Texas A&M University, B.S., Engineering.

Wham! Another, B.A., Business Management.

Wham! B.S., Agricultural Economics.

Wham! B.A., History.

Sometimes I have this sick feeling that come May 5, I'll just be another graduate being rolled out of this place on a conveyor belt, still wet and steaming from the iron mold that I've been living in since my freshman year.

Of course, I know that can't be true. Why, I didn't even pick my mold, I mean, my major, until my junior year.

But I do feel justified in being a bit uneasy. I suspect that as a senior I'm nothing but a little closer to being "cooked" than I was as a junior.

I'm so proud of "What I've made of myself away from home" and "what I've done at college." The thought that all along it has actually been the University that has done all the doing to me is, naturally, just this side of mortifying.

There is comfort, however, in knowing that there are other students who have the same suspicions.

The other day in class, for instance, I banged on the iron wall between my mold and my neighbor's.

"Hey, Rosemary!" I yelled. "Do you ever get the feeling that . . . ?"

"Yeah, sometimes . . ." her muffled voice echoed back.

That brings me to why I'm writing, or rather, what I'm writing.

If I'm feeling more like a product than I am a student of Texas A&M University, Inc. and if a few other people I've randomly talked to feel that way, then there's an awfully good chance that a whole lot of other students on this campus are feeling that very same way.

No, you don't have to be paranoid, cynical, or defensive about the matter to be one of us — just a little curious whether Aggies make Texas A&M, or Texas A&M makes Aggies.

But let's just suppose we are dumb products of this institution and, other than a few miniscule decisions about

what electives we take and such, we are largely passive about this thing called Education. Suppose that, seen from 30,000 feet in the air, Texas A&M looks very much like a vast network of conveyor belts whose forks run through so many colleges and then converge on the stage at G. Rollie White. Bear with me and suppose that this is the case.

If we are passive objects, then would

reader's forum

we not be incapable of doing something as shamefully active as halting ourselves to consider the whole process? When was the last time you saw a Campbell's Soup can hop off its tracks in the factory to contemplate how on earth it ever became so full of cream of mushroom? I never have.

Yet that is exactly what we must do. What if we all, right now, in the course

of this very sentence, simply hop off the track and began to ruthlessly criticize what the hell we are doing in our ternoon classes, in our respective or even at Texas A&M University.

You see, if we do ponder on our situation at college, then we automatically prove that we are not dumb products of this industry. Higher education, simply because something passive cannot act on its own account.

However, this is not easy to do. It is very rarely done around here for a simple reason: It is easier not to.

It might also be horrifying to do that in the final analysis there is a discernible difference between a poor can of cream of mushroom soup and a graduate fresh from his iron mold.

If you think my comparison is outrageous, then I beg you to try to be better where along the conveyor belt were told so.

The Battalion

USPS 045 360

Member of
Texas Press Association
Southwest Journalism Conference

Editor.....Rebecca Zimmermann
Managing Editor.....John Wagner
City Editor.....Patrice Koranek
Assistant City Editors.....Kathleen Hart,
Stephanie Ross
News Editor.....Tracey Taylor
Assistant News Editors.....Susan Talbot,
Brigid Brockman, Michelle Powe, Kelley Smith
Editorial Page Editor.....Kathy Wiesepeape
Sports Editor.....Donn Friedman
Assistant Sports Editor.....Bill Robinson
Entertainment Editor.....Shelley Hoekstra
Assistant Entertainment Editor.....Angel Stokes

Editorial Policy

The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting newspaper operated as a community service to Texas A&M and Bryan-College Station. Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the Editorial Board or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty or the Board of Regents.

Letters Policy

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

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

Our address: The Battalion, 216 Reed Donald Building, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.

United Press International is entitled to the use for reproduction of all material published in this newspaper. Rights of reproduction in all other matter herein reserved.

Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.