

**OPINION**

# Election commission not enforcing rules

Running a fair and honest election was why the Student Government Election Commission was formed. Again it appears the commission has chosen to be a pliable pawn in the electoral process it was formed to control.

The Battalion has learned there is evidence a number of the candidates for student body president have spent more than the \$300 campaign limit allowed in Student Government rules.

It appears this is a fairly widespread practice, one of which all candidates seem to be aware. There have been allegations that past student body president candidates have exceeded the spending limit. Unfortunately, the regulating body, in this case the election commission, seems happy to ignore this serious breach of ethics by the candidates.

But the regulation of candidate spending is so lax that compliance with the rule seems to be a moot question.

Incredibly, the election commission cannot force any candidate to be removed from the election race. The only time the commission — which was set up to monitor spending — can look at the candidates' receipts is after the election is over.

So realistically any candidate could do what he pleased and still be elected.

What a simple way to run an election. The election commission makes rules. The candidates ignore them. Nothing is done to stop them. Everything runs smoothly.

What a laughable way to run an election.

The Battalion Editorial Board

# Society also to blame for problems in prison

We clung together in the cool morning air outside the gates of the Ferguson Unit near Madisonville, Texas.

Brian Pearson

"Your escort will be here in just a second," chirped the crusty old guard at the front gate.

We were a sleepy batch of journalism students crazy enough to wake up early and follow our teacher on a tour of a men's maximum security prison.

Coming down the road through acres and acres of sprawling farmland, at a distance the unit almost looked like a university. But soon enough, the menacing guard towers with their multiple spotlight appendages could be seen among the rows of barbed wire and the high chain link fences.

The complex was a maze of red brick buildings with barred windows. Several inmates with stiff white uniforms were gardening the well-kept grounds inside

and outside the fence. One of the guards told us these people had earned a certain amount of trust and were allowed to work around outside the buildings. Others, he said, were usually confined to their cells, which was just fine with me.

After being identified and cleared, we were led through the gates and taken to a small room inside the main building where we were briefed before the tour began.

"We're going to have some fun this morning," said Bill Doyle, education director and our tour guide for the morning.

"Fun? Sure, it's going to be a real party," I thought to myself.

Doyle told us the prisoners of the unit had been in trouble many times before and had "tried very hard to get into prison."

"These people have some very serious problems," he said.

We were met with cold stares, the smell of ammonia and cigarette smoke as we were led through several corridors and into a main hall where inmates were scattered along the walls. A pot-bellied guard kept a close eye on an inmate mopping near our group.

We were a fresh breeze from the outside with our colors and our freedom. This place was a dead end of life where time was lost inside the maze of concrete walls.

I caught many of the inmates gawking at the women in our group as we were taken down the clean-slick hallway and into a cell area. Most of the tiny cells were decorated with kinky centerfold pictures.

Occasionally, I accidentally locked eyes with an inmate and engaged in a stare-down battle which I always lost.

Seeing the uniformed prisoners standing in lines it was hard to remember each one had a story. Doyle was asking us to be understanding, but it was hard to be sympathetic while imagining the violence and crime these young men had caused in our society.

The prisoners all around us were strangely quiet. There were no obscene remarks, no whistles and no attempts to harass the outsiders. I imagined Billy-bob Badass the Guard speaking to the inmates shortly before our arrival.

"Step out a line boys and I'll stick yer head in the toilet and flush ya to the Gulf," he said. Maybe they were told they would receive an extra helping of banana-slop pudding at dinner for good behavior.

In any case, something was said to subdue these wild men and our tour was completed without an incident.

Why the prisons are packed to the brim is puzzling and is an indication of some fault within our society. The inmates in Ferguson with their petrified lifestyles will probably never be changed or "cured," as Doyle put it. The only solution is to design a system that keeps these vicious criminals out of our hair and prevents them from killing each other.

Good luck.

Brian Pearson is a senior journalism major.



# MX argument similar to geometry

WASHINGTON — Something that is an interesting concept in geometry is a depressing commonplace in Washington. In geometry, a line can have length without breadth. In Washington, the argument about the MX missile is like that.



George Will

Most MX opponents are ardent for the arms-control "process," one sour fruit of which is... the MX. In 1972 the misbegotten ABM treaty banned defense of ICBMs, thereby making a necessity of what many analysts, then as now, considered a virtue: deterrence based on mutual vulnerability. SALT I, signed simultaneously, was permissive and porous. (For example, it limited but neglected to define "heavy" missiles.) So the Soviet buildup, unconstrained by SALT I but legitimized by it, soon made U.S. land-based ICBMs vulnerable to a disarming first strike.

The MX was supposed to cure the vulnerability of Minutemen ICBMs in fixed silos. But after a decade spent considering 34 basing modes, the Pentagon now proposes to put MX in "improved" silos. The Reagan administration could candidly admit that this might create a "use-em-or-lose-em" hair-trigger situation in crisis, and could plausibly argue that his might deter Soviets from provoking a crisis. Instead, the administration lamely argues that improved "hardening" makes silos invulnerable after all.

The Reagan administration is stuck

with an MX that others wanted for reasons related to arms control. Arms controllers are not actually hostile to strategic rationality, if rationality is compatible with arms agreements. But first things — agreements — first. Arms controllers know that the way to get agreements is to agree to limit things that are easy to count. So SALT I limited the number of launchers. Result? Bigger launchers packed with more warheads—more eggs in more vulnerable baskets, like MX.

MX will survive in Congress this year and by next year will have become a jobs program and probably will be invulnerable (to Congress, not Soviet missiles). It will survive this year thanks to only one thing — the arms control "process," in which MX is, the administration says, a "bargaining chip." Actually, it is a bargaining chip between the administration and Congress, which supports it lest U.S. negotiators be weakened.

The President says the MX vote is "a vote on Geneva." By "Geneva" he means the arms-control "process," during which, since SALT I, the number of nuclear warheads has quadrupled and the Soviets have deployed 21 new nuclear weapons systems. So, although it is fitting that Congress supports a new missile in order to sustain the arms-control "process," it is dismal that, to sell this misbegotten missile, Reagan has become a zealous worshipper at the barren altar of arms control.

He says Moscow considers the MX vote a test of U.S. "resolve." But a nation driven from Lebanon by a truck bomb cannot restore its reputation by buying a missile for which three administrations have failed to find an adequate basing mode. A nation that lacks the resolve to use its ships to quarantine a regime like

Nicaragua's, or its rifles to overthrow that regime, or even its dollars adequately to support Nicaraguan freedom fighters, cannot show relevant "resolve" by buying high-tech hardware. The West is losing the Third World War in small wars, not big missile competitions.

Perhaps the President means the Moscow considers the MX vote a test of U.S. "resolve" to spend for defense. Moscow would be distraught were Congress to spend the MX dollars on rifles and ships we might actually use, and aid for freedom fighters in Nicaragua, Cambodia, Vietnam and Afghanistan. Congress could use the small change to buy better radio transmitters to overcome Soviet jamming that violates the Helsinki accords which, speaking of resolve, the administration lacks the resolve to repudiate as dead letters.

But there is the rub, and the reason why it is sensible to hold your nose, get your teeth and support MX. If Congress kills MX, it will use the dollars to solve different vulnerability crisis — the vulnerability of Congress to constituents angered by domestic spending cuts.

The current round of arms control, perhaps now that the kids have taken control of the Kremlin, the pace will quicken, in which case the two sides reach a deadlock quickly. The only certainty is that the "process" will have produced MX, a missile conceived as a result of SALT I, gestated during SALT II and born in the hope of SALT III. Actually, the MX argument resembles not geometry, which is reasonable, but modern art — say, abstract expressionism, which is the work of the confused, sold to the earnest.

George Will is a columnist for the Washington Post.

# LETTERS:

## SG not only group that deserves credit

EDITOR: In the Tuesday, March 5 edition of The Battalion, headlines read, "S.G. to review A&M blood collection policy." Throughout Trent Leopold's article on the upcoming evaluation of which blood collection agency should be allowed on campus, there was implication that Student Government and only Student Government had anything to do with the Aggie Blood Drive.

In reality, the Aggie Blood Drive is organized and ran by a Blood Drive committee consisting of members from two other organizations as well. These organizations are: Alpha Phi Omega (APO) and Omega Phi Alpha (OPA), a National Service Fraternity and National Service Sorority respectively. These same committee members make up the Blood Drive Review Board. These Review Board members decide which blood collecting agency will be allowed on campus. Not Student Government, as Leopold's article would imply.

This is not the first time The Battalion has listed Student Government as the sole sponsor of the Aggie Blood Drive. Over the years The Battalion has

consistently neglected to recognize APO and OPA for their work on the Aggie Blood Drive while giving an overabundant amount of attention to Student Government for work which was done by others. I do not know if this lack of recognition is intentional or merely ignorance on the part of The Battalion staff, but it is high time that it stop. Each semester APO has in excess of 100 of its members working alongside the Wadley staff. This is compared to the 3 to 5 Student Government workers.

This letter is not written to discredit any group for work they have done. Everyone has done the part in which they were assigned. This letter is only written so that due credit may be given to those who have worked so hard to make the Aggie Blood Drive what it is today. APO and OPA, you definitely are due that credit.

James Fairfield, '85  
Blood Drive Review Board

## Defacing signs childish vandalism

EDITOR: We would really like to congratulate the person or group of people who thought it necessary to deface the cam-

aign signs for junior and senior leaders. We realize that there are some people who feel that certain people should not be yell leader, but to revert to pranks such as vandalism is not childish, but also immature. One of the most important things to remember when we vote for yell leader is that whether he wears a uniform or blue jeans is not the issue. The issue should be the person in the clothes and how he represents the University. Yes, congratulations for your maturity and for being such a "good Ag."

Mary Rucker, '86  
Scott Palmer, '86

## Fraternity's help, time appreciated

EDITOR: The Boys Club of Brazos County staff, Board of Directors and members would like to thank Sigma Nu fraternity for their help during our 1985 Basketball season.

Sigma Nu fraternity members came to the Boys Club four evenings each week and volunteered their time to help referee and supervise our basketball program. Thanks for helping make our program a success!  
Boys Club of Brazos County

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The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Communications.

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Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 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.  
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