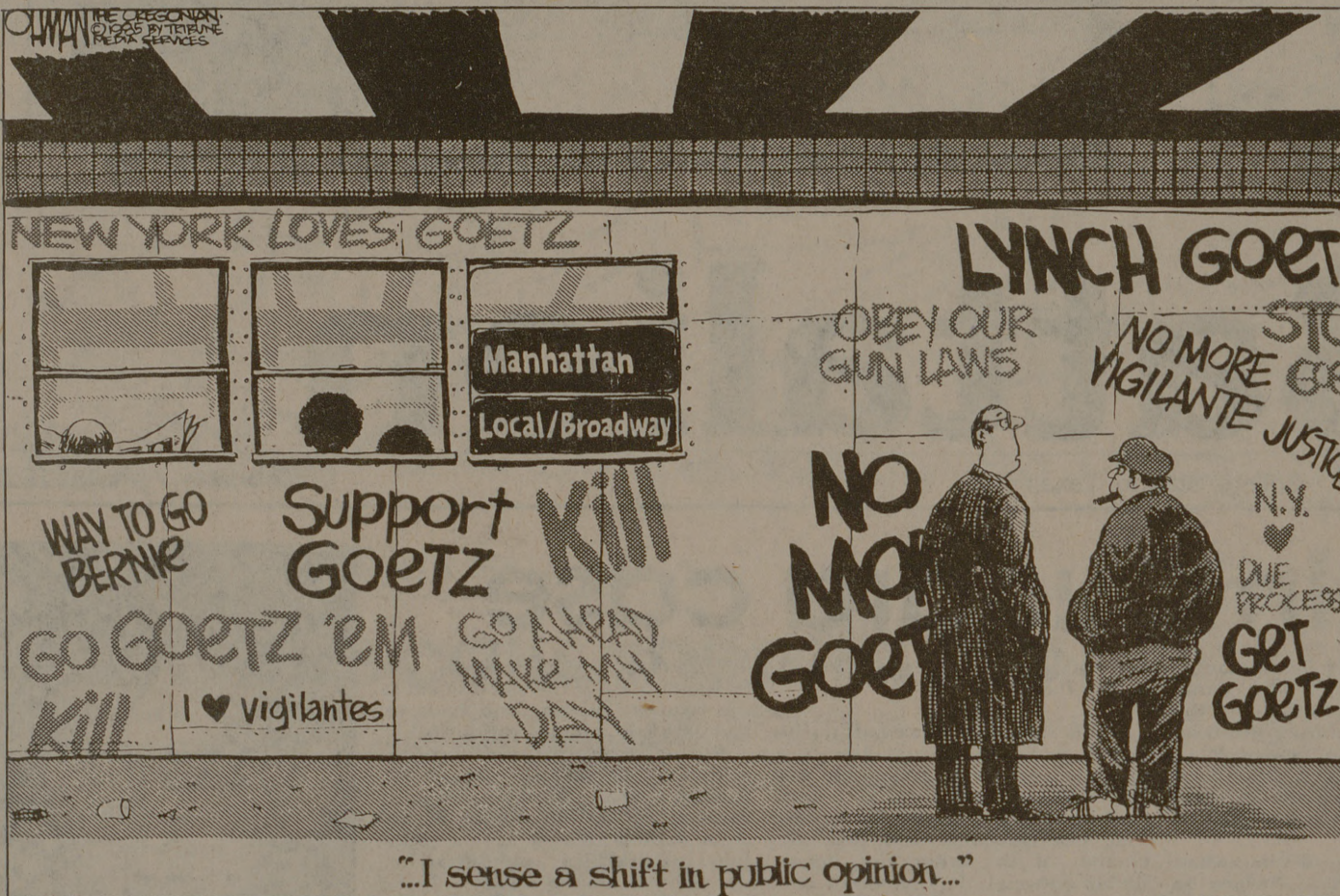


OPINION



Should students care about representation

The important question concerning Student Government is not "Does anybody care?" The answer to that question is obvious when you consider the low turnout for student senate meetings, issues and grievances committee meetings, the recent presidential candidates debate, recent Student Government elections, etc.

The important question concerning Student Government is "Should anybody care?" Student Government claims to represent and be the voice of the student body. If this were true, the answer to the previous question would be yes.

But unfortunately, Student Government does not represent the student body. By denying the student body two very important parts of the election process, Student Government has denied itself the right to say it truly represents the student body.

First of all, it has been the policy of the Student Government's election commission to withhold the names of candidates who have filed to run for a Student Government position. The election commission releases the names after the filing deadline.

This means that a student who might be interested in running for a position cannot find out through official channels who his competition is.

The argument to this has been if a student really wants to run, then it shouldn't make any difference who his opponent is.

This would be a valid argument if it weren't for one very important fact.

Through talk, gossip and other informal means, people in Student Government already know who is running and have an advantage on the student who is not associated with Student Government.

The election commission has also defended the closed files by saying the elections would become a popularity contest if the files weren't closed.

Popular (though presumably worse) candidates would be able to pick out a less popular (though presumably better) candidate and beat him in the election.

The commission's desire for good government might be sincere, but its methods for attaining it should be questioned.

At the very worst, it looks as if the commission is trying to manipulate the elections.

At best, it looks as if they don't trust the student body to pick the right candidate.

At any rate, the commission is exhibiting an elitist attitude, one that denies the average student the information

people in Student Government know.

Secondly, Student Government denied the student body the right to choose the appointment process for student senators.

With the high turnover rate in student senate, a special appointment process is needed to fill the vacancies.

A student who wants to fill a vacancy must be interviewed and approved by a panel of senators on the internal affairs committee.

Student Government has chosen to close the interviews to the student body and is excluding them from taking part in this election process.

This might not sound too bad during a recent senate meeting, but a senator complained about people in Student Government tampering with the appointment process.

She said she overheard two different Student Government vice presidents they were going to have their internal affairs committee members vote on a student seeking a senate seat.

The vice presidents from the standing committees choose two senators from their committees to serve on the internal affairs committee.

The senator also complained about past speakers of the senate and special pro tem trying to use their position to influence the vote of the internal affairs committee panel.

In other words, according to this senator, people in Student Government were trying to manipulate the appointment process to get people in the senate who represented their views and not the views of the student body.

Student Government has made sincere efforts to reach out to the students to find out how they feel on the issues, but this is like trying to put a bullet in a gun shot wound.

If Student Government really wants to represent the students, then it should give them the opportunity to more fully share in the election process.

Should anybody care about Student Government? Without true representation, probably not.

Jerry Oslin is a senior journalism major and a staff writer for The Battalion.

Working for college newspaper invaluable real-world experience

The Battalion. Those two words can stir up more conflicting opinions and emotions on campus than most any other subject.



Ed Cassavoy

I've tried lately to imagine myself as the regular A&M student.

How would I imagine The Battalion?

So I went outside and looked at the Reed McDonald Building in an entirely new manner. It is an ugly red building that squats on the corner of Ross and Ireland Streets. It looked the same as ever.

So I decided to try something more. I just read the letters to the editor.

In my years at The Batt I have seen it compared to Pravda and the New York Times. Come to think of it, I think both were used in the same letter.

I think that one of the problems with the ordinary Ag is figuring out who to complain to. Looking through the staff box, I count 19 editors.

I can understand some of the irate and frustrated callers to the newsroom, "Can I speak to an editor, uh, because, uh it's about this story, and I want to know what....."

Some positions are pretty straightforward, sports editor and editor. But looking at the majority of job titles things get pretty hairy.

Who, unless you are a journalist, knows what a managing editor is? Or what pray tell, is a makeup editor.

I think life would be less complicated if you adapted job titles to daily reality.

So next time the phone rings and someone says, "I've got a complaint..." immediately the caller would be transferred to the complaint editor. Easy.

If someone began with "Why doesn't the Batt...?" the caller would immediately be transferred to the Why editor.

It is easier for me to joke, because journalists, at least good journalists learn that criticism, complaints and questions are a natural and necessary element of their trade. We learn to develop a thicker hide.

Rightly or wrongly, our mistakes are usually all that we hear about. After awhile you learn to temper the critics.

Sometimes the reader's complaints are valid and fair. That's when we take our lumps.

But other times I am proud of what the paper does.

In-depth articles, editorial board statements and stories that take a hard look at certain subjects affecting the University are a necessity.

In many ways, The Battalion is a very strange beast.

Frequently other university newspapers will send questionnaires asking about our newspaper operation. Most times I end up writing "not applicable"

or reel off a long written explanation of the circumstances here.

Unlike most college newspapers, The Battalion does not have an official faculty adviser.

Such an adviser would probably have some editorial control.

Except for the wise advice of our hard-nosed journalism profs, the editor makes all the decisions. And much of our criticism is received when we've made the decision and the paper has already come out.

Financially The Battalion is a regular newspaper business. Ads and advertising dollars pay our wages.

Unlike many college papers, the University administration has no control over the editorial or news gathering operations of The Batt.

And the students who work on this paper probably have more freedom to say and try new things than they will ever have an opportunity to do on a real world newspaper.

And that is why I feel that students should realize what a gem they have here. There are few subjects that The Battalion cannot report or comment on. We have the ability to inform and express many ideas and views every day.

Best of all, I get paid to do something I love to do.

Ed Cassavoy is a senior journalism major and a weekly columnist for The Battalion.

LETTERS:

Poem about Islam offensive to some

EDITOR:

I was flabbergasted and completely astonished at the shallowness presented in Cathy Riely's article entitled "Creative drive gives varying results." A Texas A&M Battalion staff writer should have enough responsibility and developed sense to ensure logic and validity in her journalism. Her capacity to recognize, appreciate and understand the subject matter was not up to par and this was very evident in her piece.

The references made to Islam and Muslims in the article were rude and disrespectful. Islam, the faith that teaches respect and justice for all, was treated unjustly. Millions of people in many countries, with diverse cultures and customs, believe in Islam. Some of these customs, however, are not in full accordance with Islam and it would be unreasonable to characterize the religion based on customs and practices of a people in one corner of the world.

In the article, Miss Riely lacked the depth and professionalism expected of responsible journalists. I hope that in the future The Battalion staff writers will research to obtain pure facts so as not to be swayed or controlled by other people's prejudices.

Amr Ali

EDITOR'S NOTE: Cathy Riely's story about Therese Norris was not a news story about Afghanistan or Islam; if it had been all sides of the issue would have been presented. It was a profile on the au

thor and her opinions about her experiences in Afghanistan. The story was written about Norris because she was the author of first place poem in the 1985 Texas A&M Writing Contest.

Poet's views not intended as insults

EDITOR:

I would like to state that my intentions when I wrote "Kabul, 1974" was not to insult the Islamic people or their religion. Since I was raised in an environment that encourages one to pursue any chosen goal it is hard for me to accept the limited freedom of the Afghan women. I did not and do not imply that these women lead a life of misery. Afghan women are well-respected by the men and community for being good wives and mothers. I only know I would not be content in their place considering my background. Nor do I want to suggest that Christianity is a better religion.

I wrote of the sights, sounds and flavors of a foreign land. My poem was intended to present those memories in such a way as to give the reader a glimpse of another place. It was not meant to be a historical documentary on Moslem women. Just as a painting is only an artist's interpretation of an image not an exact duplicate.

Therese Norris

Wrong group got credit for work

EDITOR:

I would like to call attention to an article that ran in At Ease (Friday, April 5). This article, titled "OPAS Brings Good Music, Comedy" said in error that MSC OPAS instead of Townhall Broadway is sponsoring "Gigi" and "Brighton Beach Memoirs." Because there are so many different campus organizations and activities, it is essential that we receive accurate coverage. We appreciate your cooperations.

**Jody Boarnet
MSC OPAS Chairman 1985-86**

Are only couples allowed at functions?

EDITOR:

As two single seniors who have attended Texas A&M University for four years, we would like to address Senior Weekend.

We have no statistics concerning the ratio of couples to singles attending TAMU; however, it appears as though somewhere, at some time in the history of this great institution, someone decided that Senior Weekend, in regards to the Bash, Banquet, and Ring Dance can be synonymously referred to as "Couple's Weekend."

In other words, single seniors seeking a ticket to these events discover that

there is no such thing as a single ticket. We have nothing against couples, we would just like all seniors to feel free to take a part in Senior Weekend. We are not blaming the MSC Ticket Office for this problem, yet this was where we were informed that two girls or two guys may purchase a couple's ticket; thus entering the Bash as a couple.

Would it be too much to ask that two kinds of tickets be available for the Bash: couples — \$5 and singles — \$2.50? Technically, two people buying a ticket as a couple is all fine and dandy because it still gives us the opportunity to attend the Bash; however, from reflecting on past experiences, we feel that purchasing tickets under the status of a couple will discourage many single seniors who would like to attend the various weekend functions.

This argument may sound picky and petty, but being seniors, we are hoping to motivate those single seniors who were going to miss out on the weekend (at least the Bash) due to the emphasis on couples. We also hope that those responsible for handling the tickets now, and for future events will consider our view of this matter. Who decided that Texas A&M University consists of more couples than singles? Hope to see you at the Bash.

**Lisa G. Dornbusch, '85
Suzanne M. Frybert, '85**

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Editorial Policy
The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting newspaper operated as a community service to Texas A&M University students at the 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.

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

Letters Policy
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 include the address and telephone number of the writer.

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