

Opinion

Shorter elections the right choice

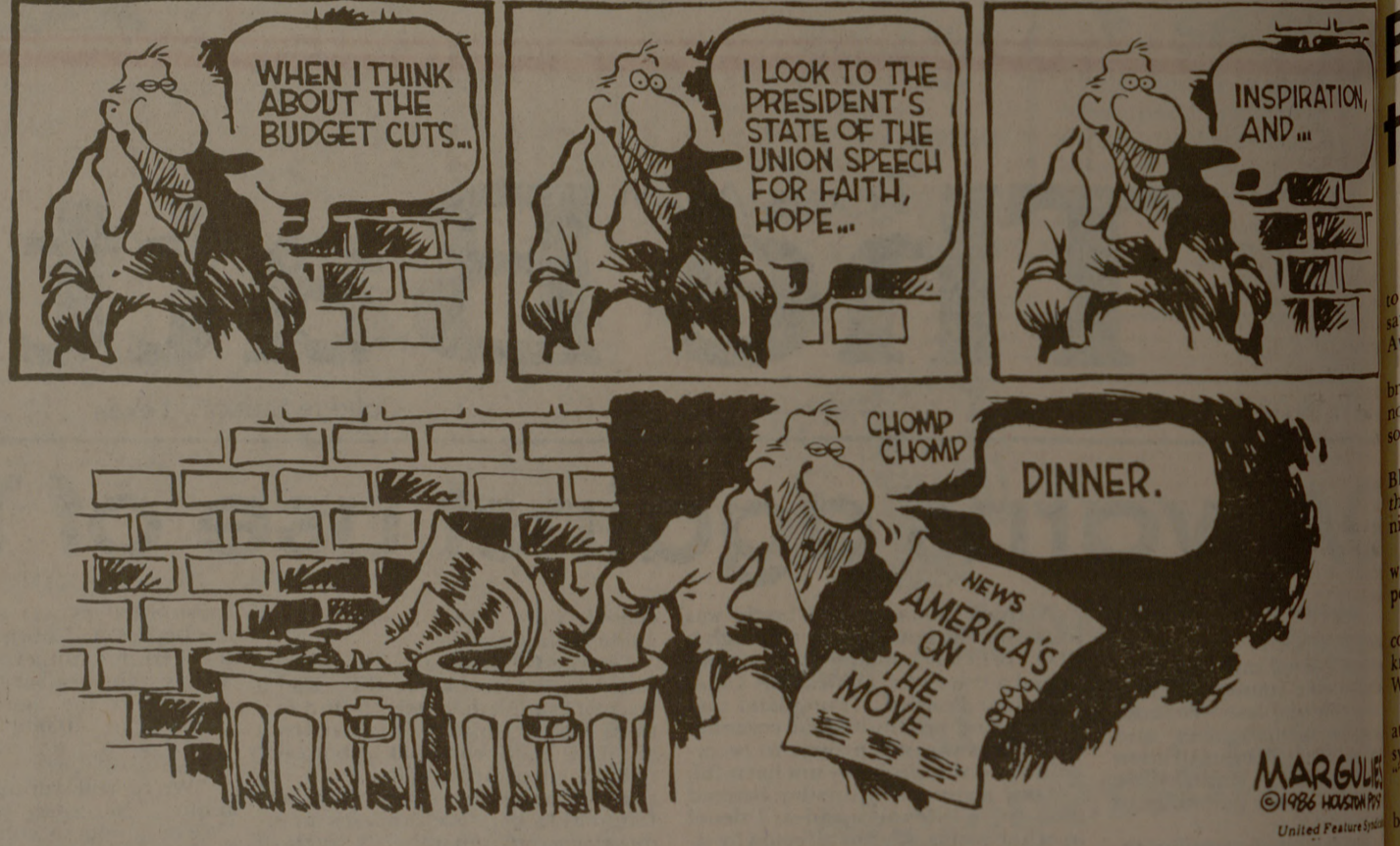
The Student Senate made a wise decision Wednesday night when it unanimously voted to end the tradition of two-day student elections.

The new one-day election plan will prevent members of the election commission from having to miss two days of classes. The student election may be important, but it should be carried out with as little academic suffering as possible to those involved.

The new scheduling for the polls will enable students to vote between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. at the Memorial Student Center, the Pavilion and either the Blocker Building or the Zachry Engineering Center. A central voting site will be open from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Sterling C. Evans Library for students who aren't able to vote during daytime poll hours.

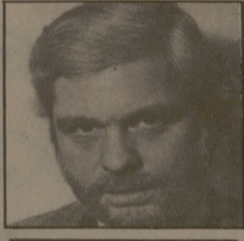
One day should be ample time for students to elect their leaders. After all, it only takes one day for the entire nation to elect a president.

The Battalion Editorial Board



Who were the psychologists really advising?

NBC hustled a child psychologist on to the air. He said talk to the kids. USA Today followed with a story headlined, "Explaining disaster to kids." It included a survey that showed that 69 percent of us had talked with our kids. The New York Times' poll reported that 75 percent of us had talked to our kids and three-fifths of the kids had been talked to by their schools. No wonder the Japanese are beating the pants off of us. Our kids can't get any work done.



Richard Cohen

plosion; it was funeral music for the eyes. In an era of media hype, this was the real thing — a national tragedy. The event itself was breathtaking in its finality, almost Biblical. There, in the heavens, seven persons — one of them a schoolteacher — existed one moment and were gone the next.

The experts paraded on. Psychologists, psychiatrists, they offered their advice. They were solemn and serious and hinted that if things were not done just right, your child could — indeed would — be picked up some years hence for burning down his school. In a Freudian age, we post sentries to keep a keen eye out for the traumatic experience. The experts shouted the alarm. Trauma was spotted advancing over the hill.

A visitor from an earlier generation would wonder why all the anxiety. Death was once commonplace and the kids who survived, survived. You only have to go back a generation or two in

any family to come across ancestors who had a dozen children, of whom only maybe three reached adulthood. Women routinely died in childbirth. Famine struck. Storms hit. Men were killed in war or at dangerous jobs and influenza, when it came, emptied cities. Death was then very much a part of life. Still, there was poetry and music and young men brought flowers to young women.

Why then the anxiety now? Why the sudden concern that today's children will be scarred by the death of people they don't even know? Certainly, some of the anxiety was purely personal and had nothing to do with children. Adults are the ones who are closer to death — who live with it and who wondered what it felt like in that shuttle: Did it hurt? Did they know? Was the entire, doomed shuttle voyage just life in fast-forward — from something to nothing in a flash? We all thought of these things.

But to be a parent is to know more

than anxiety. It is to know guilt. The tragedies of yesteryear — the deaths of children by diseases and women in childbirth — were mostly attributed to God. In any event, aside from war, they were unavoidable. But a space shuttle is a creation of man; so, too, is television. Events that once could be shielded from a child now no longer can.

In some sense, the Challenger tragedy stood for all the ways in which television and the rest of the mass media have diminished the authority of the parents, circumscribed our role, forced us to deal with unwanted issues and, in the end, made us wonder about what was being done to our children.

In a way, the anxiety over Challenger was similar to the one about child abuse. There has always been child abuse. Every neighborhood had its creep and much of the time the kids knew him — or her — and so, in some vague way, did parents. But in recent years, the reality

of child abuse has exploded into a national anxiety. Once again, the anxious guilt. Children get abused when their parents are not watching. They are watching when they choose to work when they choose, in other words, not to parent. That happens to be the case many of us have made and have made. There are rewards — money, fulfillment. There is also guilt. A mother with a child at care knows the feeling

Some will argue that the national anxiety about children that followed the Challenger explosion is proof of what most of us will not admit — that we know the victims of contemporary American culture are our children. In fact, we worry plenty, agonize a lot, know no such thing. The kids are constantly testifying otherwise. After the tragedy, we did what the experts suggested and talked to our children. It was good advice. They calmed us down.

Richard Cohen is a columnist for the Washington Post Writers Group.

Striving for equality will never go out of style

I've been hearing and reading a lot of spouting off lately by "concerned Americans" who say the moral fiber of this country finally is becoming strong again now that militant feminism is dying out, now that women are beginning to think and act like ladies again.



Michelle Powe

But the ERA is not dead and it will not die. Equality is not a fad that eventually will go out of style. It is an issue which will continue to hover over us, until the problem is solved. The problem is a small, but radical bunch of well-organized, well-financed antigalitarianism.

These supporters of inequality use fear as their weapon. They tell their followers that feminists are lesbians and man-haters who are using the equality issue as a guise for what they really want — unisex bathrooms and power. Total control of the world.

Women will have to wear men's clothing, smoke cigars and swear a lot. We'll learn how to swagger and spit. We'll leer at men and make lewd gestures and remarks. We'll play poker and shop in hardware stores.

That's what being a man is all about, right?

What are these anti-feminists really afraid of? Are the women afraid they'll start to like wearing men's clothing? Are the men afraid the women will look better in men's clothing than they do?

People are just that — people first,



and either men or women second. Both are equally important — to reproduction, to each other, to survival.

As perhaps the best known feminist, Gloria Steinem, has said: "Women are human beings first, with minor differences from men that apply largely to the single act of reproduction. We share the dreams, capabilities and weaknesses of all human beings, but our occasional

pregnancies and other visible differences have been used to create an 'inferior' group and an elaborate division of labor."

Feminists — like so many other people — want equality, nothing more and nothing less.

When given equal rights as men, women will not have to stop being feminine. They won't have to be construc-

tion workers or brain surgeons if they don't want to be. No one's going to make homemakers trade in their aprons for briefcases.

But they will have the opportunity they want it. Which is all feminists want (it's all anybody wants) — the chance to be whatever they want to be, the chance to make the most of their lives.

Wouldn't our society be a much better, a much happier, place if everyone were encouraged to be the best she could possibly be?

And when we stop insisting that people abide by certain stereotypes, when we stop demanding different behavior from males and females, people will be free to reach for more, rather than settling for what is considered acceptable.

The moral backbone of this society will not break if all people are free to fulfill their dreams. It can't be strong until we overcome the hypocrisy we're living now and extend the freedoms guaranteed by our Constitution to all people.

Then, and only then, will we be truly democratic society.

Michelle Powe is a senior journalist and editor for The Battalion.

Mail Call

Make plans to find out

EDITOR:

Due to circumstances beyond our control, KAMU-FM personnel were unable to meet University faculty, staff, and students in the Memorial Student Center last week. We would like to encourage everyone to stop by our table on MONDAY, on the first floor of the MSC. KAMU-FM staff members will be on hand to give out program schedules and bumperstickers, and to answer your questions about Public Radio and the diverse programming offered

on non-commercial radio. Make plans to find out what it's all about — KAMU-FM 90.9.

Larry Jackson
Program Director
KAMU-FM

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