

Opinion

The Battalion

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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.

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

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Voter services

Today's *Battalion* provides students with several voting aids to help make their decision in the upcoming student elections.

First is the Voter's Guide supplement, which includes a collection of candidates' statements explaining why they are running for office and what they hope to accomplish. It is designed to provide readers with a convenient summary of candidates' views — a ready-reference resource of political platforms.

Second is the editorial board's endorsement of a student body presidential candidate, which appears below.

The endorsement is made not to sway voter opinion but merely to provide readers with who, in the editorial board's opinion, is the best candidate for the job. The endorsement is based on personal interviews with all the candidates, as well as other campaign events that *The Battalion* has covered.

Political endorsements in newspapers are still a gray area in journalism. Critics of the endorsement process say that papers should not engage in partisan support.

But we feel that student elections, the only elections in which we make endorsements, are not a partisan event, but a student event of concern to all.

However, we should explain that only the editorial board has input into the endorsement. The reporters covering the election have no part in the endorsement process and it doesn't influence their coverage of election events.

We hope these services will help students make their decisions in the student elections.

Hogan for president

Electing a student body president doesn't rank high on most students' priority lists. Reading *The Battalion's* endorsement, voter's guide and evaluating candidates based on their platforms — rather than posters — ranks even lower.

Most Aggies simply don't care about student government. After all, what tangible benefits do each of us reap from our student politicians?

The answer to that question explains the historically pitiful voter turnout on election day.

Perhaps you'd like us to tell you that this year's crop of candidates is determined to change all that.

Well, because they want to win the student body president's seat, almost all of the candidates did tell us what they thought you wanted to hear.

While interviewing the candidates, we kept their motives in mind and tried to sift through some of the rhetoric and determine how realistic the candidate's goals are, their attitude, how well they will be able to communicate and implement their plans and, most of all, whether they are interested in representing *students* at A&M.

After careful consideration of each of the above criteria, *The Battalion* has decided to endorse Mason Hogan for student body president.

Hogan isn't a politician. He is a student. And he is the best-qualified candidate to represent the rest of the students. He doesn't want the Student Senate to spend a lot of time passing resolutions against apartheid.

Expressing opinions are fine, and the Senate should do so, but campus issues should be Student Government's primary concern. Hogan doesn't believe a Senate resolution can single-handedly wipe out South Africa's troubles. He's more realistic than that, but at the same time, he's an optimist.

Hogan understands student apathy toward student government and his plans focus on issues that are of concern to students.

Hogan is hell-bent on *student* issues like getting the A.P. Beutel Health Center to stay open 24 hours and working to reschedule senior final exams.

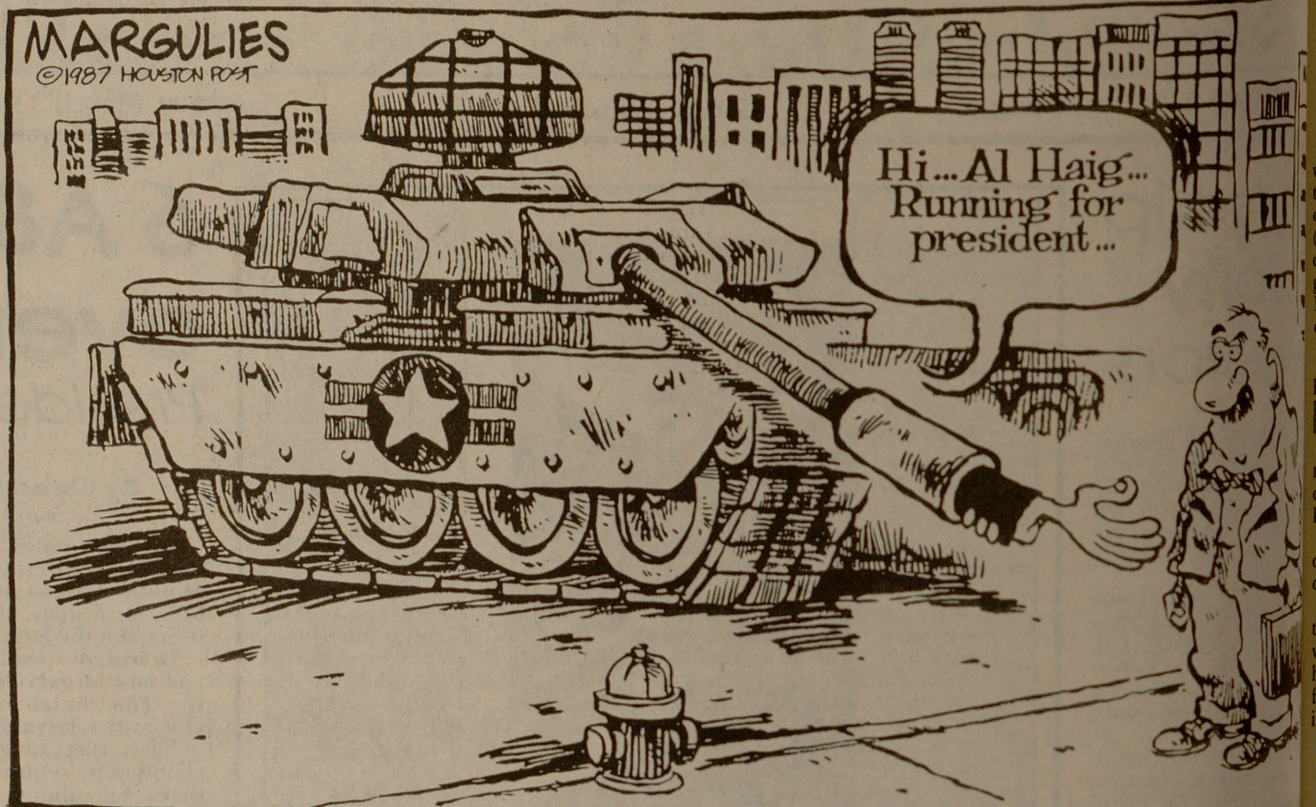
Hogan's not so blinded by Aggie faith that he won't organize a protest "on Frank Vandiver's lawn" if he has to. Had we such spirited leadership when the final exams policy was being drafted, the outcome might have been different.

Hogan's spirit and determination to make the student body's voice heard doesn't stop at the idea stage, however. As speaker pro tem of the Student Senate, Hogan said he saw a lot of good legislation die from lack of persistence.

One of Hogan's primary goals as president will be to follow up that legislation and make sure the resulting policies are implemented and not forgotten. With an attitude like that, the class of 1988 actually might make a difference.

Being able to relate to students as a student will make Hogan an effective student body president. Hogan will be able to work inside and outside Student Government to establish a solid, unified student voice on this campus.

While the other candidates had their share of good ideas and enthusiasm, none had Hogan's combination of candidness, determination and realistic goals. It is this combination that makes a good student body president. And Mason Hogan is the student for that presidency.



Finals decision is final



Loren Steffy

The newly adopted mandatory finals policy for seniors has ignited the biggest controversy on the Texas A&M campus since SWAMP threatened to set foot on the MSC lawn. Aggies managed to muster enough student concern to generate an anti-SWAMP rally and form a human fence around our beloved foliage. But the fear of footprints on the grass incited more reaction than the test-taking future of every A&M student.

For its part, the Traditions Council of Student Government has been trying to lobby opposition to the new finals policy, but their efforts have only agitated the administration, not helped create a solution. For the most part, outrage over the finals policy has come too late and is too unorganized.

Of the nine candidates for student body president, eight mentioned senior finals in recent interviews with *The Battalion*. But the candidates were divided on whether to oppose the finals completely or just denounce the idiotic scheduling set forth by the Faculty Senate.

Such indecision is not limited to student leaders of the future. In recent meetings of this semester's student leaders, the topic has been brought up on several occasions. The only consensus is that something must be done — exactly what must be done eludes them.

The entire protest procedure has a remarkable similarity to a Pink Panther movie — the players pretend to know what they're doing, but when it comes to protests at A&M, students fall over themselves.

A&M is not known for its social conscience. It takes a truly catastrophic

event to get the student body's attention — such as violation of the sacred grass. It took final administration approval on the finals policy to wrench students away from their daily tediums.

Usually Aggies, through the distorted lenses of tradition, focus their sights on a mythical past and try to live accordingly. But the final signature on the finals schedule altered a "tradition" of seniors being exempt from their last battery of exams. So, after the policy is approved, students decided maybe it's time to leap into action.

But if students want to do something about the mandatory finals policy, they're going to have to come to terms with present-day reality.

It doesn't matter how long seniors have been exempt from finals, the mandatory policy was written into A&M's destiny years ago. It has been President Frank Vandiver's pet project for as long as he's been living across from Duncan Field. It has the support of most faculty, not to mention the obvious approval of the Faculty Senate. Most other colleges, especially those of the "world" status that we so desperately seek, already have senior finals, and therefore most incoming faculty is going to support the measure. In short, opposition to the policy from anyone other than students can only dwindle.

If students were going to oppose the implementation of mandatory senior finals, the time to do it was three years ago. The Faculty Senate made its official recommendation for senior finals in May of 1984. Now, it's a dead issue.

But students do have a legitimate gripe — the way the finals policy is being put into effect. The schedule shows not only a complete disregard for graduation-time functions, but also for the normal academic processes.

Students have about four hours to clear all blocks, Final Review for the Corps of Cadets is out of sync, profes-

sors have less time for figuring out, and, most unrealistically, no time allowed for computer malfunctioning. It's the same computer that has crashed through a registration of 100,000 without crashing.)

Student concerns were ignored completely — and the strength of the Government's power revealed — Faculty Senate's grandstand play that established the current schedule.

A committee of student and faculty representatives worked for months to develop a workable solution for the groups. But the Faculty Senate subsequently Vandiver, paid for the committee's hard work. Does the senate's action reflect student opinion counts on that issue? It also shows a lack of concern for fellow faculty members. The Faculty's stupidity will haunt them as well.

And it is this ridiculous situation that we still have a chance of changing. But we need to approach the situation not as whining kids who complain out of some tests — that will get us sympathy or support — but as people genuinely concerned with the future of the new schedule on the functioning of the University. We must take our own initiative and try to do the best of it by working for a better schedule.

The recent T-shirt sales and calls to Vandiver's house sponsored by the Traditions Council were at least tactless, methods of student outrage. But the focus of our efforts should be the schedule, not the individuals. Student leaders and tomorrow's, need to consider this goal.

If SWAMP's actions can cause such strong student opposition, the student body ought to be incensed about the scheduling of senior finals. Get off their grass and do something.

Loren Steffy is a journalism student and editor for *The Battalion*.

Mail Call

Lost my discs

EDITOR:

I wrote a research manuscript on the sunflower-like plants of Louisiana. The manuscript was scheduled to be sent to the reviewers in another two weeks. On March 24, a box of computer discs containing this research manuscript was lost in the 6th floor of the Sterling C. Evans Library. The value of those discs is very little, but the matter they contain is of immense value to me. The manuscript runs for about 400 pages. I have put notices in the library and advertisements in *The Battalion*. I hereby request the finder of those discs to kindly contact me at 845-4328 or 846-7931. A reward will be given with gratitude to the finder.

K. N. Gandhi

Like, what's your sign?

EDITOR:

Well Aggies, in case you haven't noticed, it's that time of year again. No, not just springtime but the time of the Annual Campus Wide Sign-Building Contest, otherwise known as the student government and yell leader elections.

For you freshmen unacquainted with this, yet another great Aggie tradition, let me tell you what it's all about. Each year, many of our fellow students feel it their bounden civic duty to serve their community through a

public office. So they throw their hats in the ring and out the carpentry tools and paint brushes. From these campaign becomes the Battle of the Signs. Whoever has the biggest, nicest sign with the most "Gig-em" thumb ATM logos, "Howdy's" or most inane slogan wins. Here in Aggeland, to actually take a stand on and issue equivalent to political suicide — and who wants to chance to beef up the old resume?

We have some entries this year:

1st Place, "Gig-em" Thumb Category: Craig Meeks

1st Place, ATM Logo Category: Matt Sellers

1st Place, Inane Slogan Category: Jaime Galvan

I think a special award should go to the person who built the Eichor. The Eichor sign near Sbis is really cool. It looks like a giant toilet paper spool standing on end. I propose we move it to the area near Harrington and the Academic Building after the election. However, the signs ever were the windmills somebody named Hogan built a few years ago.

Remember, this contest is open to anyone with a set of tools, paint brushes, and creativity. (Maybe more E.D. majors should run?) May the best artist win.

Ted Hudacko

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editor 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 a classification, address and telephone number of the writer.