

Opinion

The Battalion

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A woman in the White House? Just keep 'em off the golf courses

Some of the guys were talking politics over a few beers the other night, and I brought up the fact that I believe we will, one day, have a woman president. They got in the Kiwanis Club, didn't they?



Lewis Grizzard

There was a lot of comment.

Earl said, "Long as they stay off the golf course, women can do whatever they please."

Harold asked, "What would we call her husband, First Man?"

Bubba belched and said, "Gimme another beer, Leon. This fool is crazy to be talkin' about something like that."

As I said to Bubba, "No, I ain't, either."

It's coming. As sure as Gloria Steinem is a Democrat, we're going to have a woman president, and I don't think it will be that far into the future.

We've already got women mayors, women governors and I got my gas pumped by a woman at a service station the other day.

Her name was Mildred, and it was written right there on her shirt, and she asked, "Check under the hood?" — the same as any man would.

Look at other countries who have or once did have women in the top spot. There was Indira Gandhi of India and Golda Meir of Israel, who gave the Arabs all the hell they could take, and then there's Margaret Thatcher of England.

Our own mother country has a woman as its leader, and if you don't think she can be a hard case, ask the Argentinians.

What we men have to ask ourselves is, whether there is anything about a woman that would make her unfit for the presidency?

• Toughness? See above.

• Intelligence? I asked a woman for her phone number recently, and I've been trying to call her for weeks. The number is 555-1212. Who's the dummy here?

• Cunning? Don't waste my time.

• Economically astute? I've had three wives, all of whom have forgotten more about money than Alan Greenspan will ever know.

• Character? How many women do

you know who will beer, belch in public, bet on football games and in the woods and shoot harmless, defenseless deer? How many men you know who do that?

• Diplomatic techniques? You know very well that when your wife kisses in the morning and says, "Don't forget to brush your teeth," she is really being diplomatic and means, "Your breath smells like the Chinese army bivouac in it last night."

• Ability to adapt to any situation? She's put up with you all these years, hasn't she?

• Loyalty to her country? Kate was a woman, wasn't she? So was Rose, Dolly Madison and Private Benjamin. Just because Jane Fonda's rotten doesn't make the whole barrel that way.

So, it's like I said to Bubba, "The going to be a woman in the Oval Office as sure as you're sitting on the barrel to which Bubba replied, "Oh, yeah. Then tell her to do the windows she leaves."

I guess Bubba has a right to be. His wife fired him last week down plant.

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Ideological idiocy

The Senate confirmation hearings on Supreme Court nominee Robert Bork bring to a head months of debate on whether the conservative judge should replace Lewis F. Powell Jr., the court's "swing vote."

Bork's opponents fear he could provide the vote needed to overturn the landmark abortion ruling Roe v. Wade. His views on civil rights, women's rights and law enforcement have prompted such groups as the National Organization for Women and the American Civil Liberties Union to oppose him. His supporters point to Bork's impeccable legal credentials and say he represents a much-needed return to judicial restraint.

All this debate is normal and necessary. What is unreasonable is the assertion — coming from many Bork supporters — that the Senate should consider only Bork's competence as a judge.

Such holier-than-thou posturing, which urges Bork's opponents to put aside the nominee's stand on the issues and consider only his judicial ability, is ridiculous. Competence as a judge is certainly a criterion for appointment to the court, but if issues are not, why do presidents appoint judges whose views mirror their own? As a former Reagan administration lawyer told Newsweek, "On the cutting issues — abortion, affirmative action, free speech, church-state — Bob Bork's presence and vote on the court will make a difference, and this is exactly the reason the Justice Department selected him."

The president has the power to select nominees to the Supreme Court — but so should the Senate, and the nation, have the opportunity for free and unobstructed argument over their qualifications and beliefs. Let the debate begin.

The law needs Bork

The debate over the nomination of Judge Robert Bork to the U.S. Supreme Court is of more than idle interest to the readers of this newspaper. Our Democratic senator, Lloyd Bentsen, is among those who are undecided; letters from home may influence his vote.

Karl Spence
Guest Columnist

I have followed this debate with great interest, but I have yet to see a piece that focuses on the main reason why I am anxious to see Bork confirmed.

Bork proposes to interpret the Constitution the way Madison, Washington, Hamilton, and Jefferson insisted it must be interpreted: according to its original meaning. That approach is controversial because much of today's constitutional law is not based on the original meaning at all.

Beneficiaries of those rulings, fearing the worst, have accused President Reagan of "seeking to impose by judicial fiat what he has failed to win in the legislative arena." But that is nonsense. A Bork court would not ban abortion or censor pornography or promote school prayer. It would simply stop interfering with legislatures and communities that choose to do those things. The American people would be in control again.

Similarly, no strict-construction ruling can impose racial segregation, because no American community today would enact Jim Crow laws even if it had constitutional permission to do so. And if any did, an amendment banning such things would easily be adopted and ratified by the American people.

But with regard to criminal law — my special concern — a Bork confirmation would definitely put existing doctrines at risk. Take away the spurious constitutional authority of the exclusionary rule, and no legislature in the land would resurrect it. Nor would lawmakers hesitate to make the death penalty mandatory for most kinds of murder, once the court admitted that under the original meaning of the Eighth Amendment, it has absolutely no authority to forbid their doing so.

This may give the American Civil Liberties Union a reason to oppose Bork, but it should prompt the rest of us to write Sen. Bentsen and urge Bork's confirmation.

Too many of us know from experience that our country is suffering a disastrous wave of violent crime. Crime has gotten far worse than any theory of poverty, racism, or "baby

boom" demographics can explain. In the two decades since Earl Warren rescued us from the Police State, murder in America has doubled and robbery has quadrupled.

America's crime problem is shocking, demoralizing, sickening — and yet it is rarely mentioned by progressive, enlightened people. But perhaps our progressive thinkers might listen to a truly enlightened voice from an earlier time: that of the English novelist and jurist, Henry Fielding.

Fielding wrote these words in the midst of an 18th-century London crime wave no worse than our own:

The great increase of robberies within these few years is an evil which to me appears to deserve some attention; and it seems not yet to have arrived to that height of which it is capable, and which it is likely to attain. For diseases in the political, as in the natural body, seldom fail going on to their crisis, especially when nourished and encouraged by faults in the constitution . . .

For my own part, I cannot help regarding these depredations in a most serious light; nor can I help wondering that a nation so jealous of her liberties, that from the slightest cause, and often without any cause at all, we are always murmuring at our superiors, should tamely and quietly support the invasion of her properties by a few of the lowest and vilest among us. Doth not this situation in reality level us with the most enslaved countries? If I am to be assaulted, and pillaged, and plundered; if I can neither sleep in my own house, nor walk the streets, nor travel in safety; is not my condition almost equally bad whether a licensed or unlicensed roque, a dragon or a robber, be the person who assaults and plunders me? The only difference which I can perceive is that the latter evil appears to be more easy to remove . . .

Here likewise is the life of a man concerned, but of what man? Why of one . . . by whom the innocent are put in terror, affronted and alarmed by threats and execrations, endangered with loaded pistols, beat with bludgeons, and hacked with cutlasses, of which the loss of health, of limbs, and often of life, is the consequence; and all this without any respect to age, or dignity, or sex. Let the good-natured man, who hath any understanding, place this picture before his eyes, and then see what figure in it will be the object of his compassion.

I urge everyone who has compassion for today's and tomorrow's crime victims to work for the confirmation of Robert Bork. Our Supreme Court must be put back into its place. Only then will we be free to use every means at our disposal in fighting crime.

Karl Spence is a 1985 Texas A&M graduate and a copy editor for the Bryan-College Station Eagle.

POLL:
IS THE POPE'S VISIT TOO COMMERCIAL?

Yes No

Enclose \$1 with each vote.
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for a copy of results, send another \$2

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Mail Call

The danger of health care

EDITOR:
On Sept. 6, a friend of ours complained of severe stomach pains and missed his classes. That afternoon he went to the A.P. Beutel Health Center. After three hours of tests, he was released and told that his blood sugar was a little high, but that was all. By the next evening, his condition had worsened and he was taken to St. Joseph Hospital. About an hour later, he entered emergency surgery with a ruptured appendix.

He is fine now, but how could the "trained professionals" at our health center miss such a serious ailment? Apparently Beutel is fine for dispensing cold tablets and birth control pills but not for anything serious like appendicitis. We pay fees to maintain a health center and are tired of hearing horror stories about the treatment received there. Free medical care on campus is a great thing to have, but if you can't trust them to be accurate, why risk it?

William Streidl '89
accompanied by 12 signatures

Curious logic

EDITOR:
Regarding Larry Hickman's comments on the

appointment of Robert Bork to the Supreme Court (The Battalion, Sept. 1), I offer a few observations:

Hickman's attempt to portray Bork as a "right-wing ideologue" rather than as a conservative is curious for several reasons:

• The most salient element of Bork's jurisprudence is his willingness to defer to the popular majority unless the Constitution forbids it. Since this is precisely what our founding fathers thought they were establishing, one can only wonder why Hickman regards this understanding as "right-wing" rather than as either conservative or, more appropriately, simply correct.

• Hickman's statement that "anyone who is not a Protestant or a Catholic male" (sic) ought to be afraid of Bork sounds almost as hyperbolic as Ted Kennedy's mindless tirade against the appointment. Is it a retrogression of our liberties for Supreme Court justices to stick to the actual text of the Constitution when they are the majority's representatives — what they may not decide? One would hope that partisans of republican democracy would think otherwise.

Donald J. Erler Jr. (Ph.D.)
Former constitutional law professor

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BLOOM COUNTY

by Berke Breathed

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