

# Opinion

## We can't breathe Race to Oval Office starting to heat up and will get hotter

As freshmen we enter this university and are told, "You are adults now. We expect you to act like adults and we will be treating you as such." However, this is far from the truth and the new residence hall security measures are but another example of how far from adulthood and responsibility the administration at A&M thinks we are.

The locking of outside doors to the residence halls at 7 p.m. and mandatory escorting of opposite sex visitors is not only a nuisance, but the reasoning given for the new policy doesn't make sense. The administration said the policy was adopted to cut down on thefts and prevent attacks on female students.

But unless dorm residents lock their doors, the thefts will still occur — by other residents of that hall. As for the attack issue, a victim would seem to be much safer from attack inside the dorm, as opposed to outside, where other residents could hear the victim's shouts or cries. Such was the case in an attack this summer where other residents scared the attacker away.

We realize that these measures were adopted to ensure students' safety, but in the end they are another suffocating restriction on the freedom we "adults" are supposed to enjoy.

### Mail Call

#### Nuclear energy presents no danger

EDITOR:

This is in response to Dean Sueltenfuss' column in the Sept. 1 edition of *The Battalion*.

First of all, nuclear energy produces 17 percent or one-sixth of our nation's electrical power; a significant percentage that does not include the nuclear energy we import from Canada. I would challenge anyone to prove that nuclear energy is more dangerous than air or automobile travel. I don't have enough room here to mention all the airline flights that ended in tragedy much less all the automobile accidents that kill tens of thousands of people each year. There is much more reason to call for an abolishment of airline and automobile travel than for nuclear power plants.

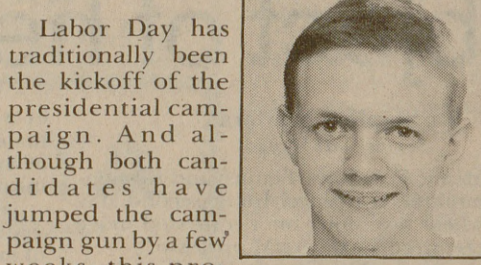
As far as nuclear waste, although it has a long half-life, after about 200 years it is no more radioactive than the natural material. In addition, there is more waste produced by hospitals than by all nuclear power plants in the U.S. combined. I guess we are going to have to do without health care if Mr. Sueltenfuss' argument is followed.

Finally, to give all sources of energy a fair shake should one not elaborate on the drawbacks of each? Acid rain has been connected with the use of coal at power plants. Some scientists also believe that the global warming we are now experiencing is irreversible and that if the burning of coal plants is not stopped that a shortage of food due to crop damage from the warming will cause more starvation — not to mention the loss of real estate along beaches as well as more severe storms that would increase property damage and loss of life. Given this, I would prefer to deal with the nuclear waste problem (which has already been solved in France), than with something as catastrophic as global climate change.

Isn't this reason enough to stop burning coal?

Mike Gaeta  
Graduate student

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 classification, address and telephone number of the writer.



Timm Doolen

Labor Day has traditionally been the kickoff of the presidential campaign. And although both candidates have jumped the campaign gun by a few weeks, this provides a convenient opportunity to assess both Bush's and Dukakis' campaigns. We'll be seeing a lot of them both for the next three months.

Let's look at what's happened in the past few weeks:

At the Republican national convention, Vice President George Bush picked Dan Quayle as his running mate. Many analysts, especially critics of Bush, claim that his choice was a mistake that will cost the Republicans the election. Well, the analysts are wrong for three good reasons.

First, because of the Quayle controversy, the press has focused an inordinate amount of attention on the Republicans, leaving the Democratic campaign stalled. Secondly, by sticking to his vice presidential choice and talking tough to Quayle's critics, Bush emerged with the image of a fighter rather than a wimp. Finally, the press' attack on Quayle has unified the Republicans and in the words of conservative columnist Pat Buchanan, it has been able to successfully "unite, energize and activate the Reagan coalition." So while Quayle did look like a liability, his controversy has turned out to be a welcome, albeit unanticipated, asset to the campaign.

By election day only political analysts will remember the National Guard story. In all, 16 of the 27 million people eligible for the draft found a way to become ineligible. Some taught school, some maintained good grades in college, some fled to Canada, and others served their country proudly by joining the National Guard. Even Pete DuPont, who ran against Bush in the primaries, admitted to joining the Navy during the Vietnam War so he wouldn't see open combat.

Should we really castigate Dan Quayle for doing something twenty years ago that any one of us would have done in the same position? Regardless of the question, the issue will soon fade away along with the bulk of early campaign rhetoric.

Likewise, the query of Quayle's competence will fall by the wayside. Quayle

is 6 months older than Nixon was and only slightly younger than Teddy Roosevelt was when they each became Vice-President. And Dan Quayle has as much Senate experience as John F. Kennedy had when he was elected President.

But back to current events: soon after the Convention, Bush started attacking Dukakis' gubernatorial veto of a bill that would make it mandatory for teachers to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. The details of the issue are not as important as the way Dukakis handled it. He argued his defense on legal terms, citing the unconstitutionality of the bill.

But Joe Applepie doesn't care about the legal issues. Joe just gets the idea that Dukakis is against the Pledge, and along with it, the American flag and other patriotic symbols. These are important symbols, especially to southern and midwestern white males, whom some analysts claim are the critical voting group in this election.

Early last week, we saw a poll that showed Bush and Dukakis running dead even in the Duke's own state of Massachusetts. But although Dukakis may implement a tax hike to pay for his Massachusetts deficit, which has temporarily made him unpopular in his own state, he will win that state handily as well as many of the northeastern industrial states.

Later in the week, we saw George Bush on the beaches of New Jersey rhetorically asking why Dukakis' home state asked for a permit to dump their sludge along Jersey's shores. During his speech, a helicopter flew by with a banner attached saying "Where was Teddy Kennedy?" Replying to the earlier Democratic question "Where was George Bush?", he replied that he was at home with Barbara — a biting inuendo about Chappaquiddick.

Jim Baker, Bush's campaign manager, not the televangelist, has planned their next big media event this week in East Texas, where he will watch missiles made illegal by the INF treaty be destroyed. Bush wants to make the visual statement that the Republican administration is committed to peace.

What has Dukakis been doing in the past few weeks? His gubernatorial duties, his aids say. Yet because the Massachusetts legislature is not in session, I am forced to believe otherwise. I think that he has gone into some serious campaign planning, evidenced by his recent "re-hiring" of the man he swore he'd never ask back after the Joe Biden incident, his former campaign manager John Sammo.

Some conservative analysts say this was an act of desperation, but likely it was an act of good sense. Dukakis' platform has been on the defensive for the past two weeks, and it had turned it around. Sammo and Dukakis' gubernatorial campaign will soon inject a needed shot into the presidential race.

What will we see in the next few weeks? We'll see plenty of pre-planned media events and opportunities. The only difference is that both sides of the ticket will be pouring millions into the presidential race. The press to their advantage. The Dukakis camp, now that Sammo is aboard, will begin launching an offensive that won't stop until Quayle, though Bush's slight early lead, will help him sustain his lead.

We will see Quayle actually campaigning for the first time, instead of constantly being on the defensive. We'll be seeing both Senators and Quayle more prominently during Congress recesses. Bentsen will be pouring millions into the presidential campaign and his Senate race.

Both tickets will be striking hard in the South, the Mid-West, and California — all places where many elections are up for grabs. California (47), Ohio (23), and Texas (29) are highly sought toss-up states, so a lot of campaigning in all those states may be the biggest struggle. Two of the four candidates are registered in the state and on opposite sides of the party line. Both parties will be registering their voters and getting them out on election day.

Surrogates? Look for Jesse Jackson to start some serious campaigning, especially in New Mexico and Texas. He won't be in Mississippi; Dukakis told him to stay away. Reagan will campaign in California and hopefully those precious votes home for him. We'll also see every good party member from Jack Kemp to Ted Kennedy, touting their party's presidential pick in their rhetoric.

What should we as good American citizens do? Register to vote and vote. Register to vote and vote. Register to vote and vote. This is the first time in Texas that we can vote absentee without providing a reason. So to all you long lines and crowds in November, vote early and make sure you get your say in the most important election of the decade.

Timm Doolen is a sophomore computer science major and columnist for *The Battalion*.

## Blind patriotism is stupid, just plain un-American

Every morning when I get up, the first thing I do is face the full-sized American flag that flies in my bedroom and recite the Pledge of Allegiance. I then take a shower and sing the National Anthem, four verses. After which I go downstairs, pour a bowl of corn flakes and bow my head in silent prayer until the flakes get good and soggy. I'm hoping to get a job in the Bush administration.



Donald Kaul

That's what it's going to take apparently. It seems that Mr. Bush finds it impossible to accept the Americanism of someone who does not spend a good portion of his or her day wrapped in the flag, saying the Lord's prayer.

I hate it. Dr. Samuel Johnson, the great 18th century English critic, said, "Patriotism on their breasts, like a de-

signer logo. It reminds me of those couples who make a great public show of their affection for each other. They're always the first ones to get a divorce and you find out he beats her."

There is no litmus test for patriotism and neither party has a patent on it. Some choose to serve their country by honoring its ideals, others by blind obedience to its government. I prefer the first method but if you opt for the second it doesn't make you a bad person. A good German maybe, but not a bad person.

What I find particularly distasteful about Mr. Bush's constant invocation of the Pledge of Allegiance and his advocacy of school prayer is that they give aid and comfort to the self-righteous conformity that seems to be seizing the country. "We're in the majority, we Christians and sunshine patriots," it says, "and we have the right to shove our beliefs down your throat." Damn me for a freethinker, but I believe that's wrong. More than that; it's un-American.

H.L. Mencken, a member of the Cyndies' Hall of Fame, said this of patriotism:

"Patriotism is conceivable to a civilized man in times of stress and storm, when his country is wobbling and sore beset. His country then appeals to him as any victim of misfortune appeals to him — say, a street-walker pursued by the police. But when it is safe, happy and prosperous it can only excite his loathing. The peace, an active trade, political serenity at home — are all intrinsically corrupting and disgusting. It is as impossible for a civilized man to love his country in good times as it would be for him to respect a politician."

The point being, patriotism that costs nothing is worth nothing.

One thing I'll give the Republicans, though, they know how to run against the press. All politicians try that — politicians having the same affection for the press as does a burglar for guard dogs — but the Republicans have honed it to a fine art.

Do you think it's accidental that President Reagan hardly ever holds press conferences, that the recurring image of him is one of a busy man hurrying to a waiting helicopter, and cupped to one ear as members of the press scream questions at him?

No. Somewhere along the line Mr. Reagan's press people figured out that the scene made the President look good and the press like a pack of jackals.

The Bush people have learned that lesson well. Consider their handling of the Dan Quayle flap. He was not, after all, the first candidate to feel the bite of a frenzied press; both Gary Hart and Joe Biden, Democrats, found themselves in similar situations this year. And what did they do? They held press conferences, took questions and were shredded.

Four years ago Democratic vice-presidential nominee Geraldine Ferraro came under fire for her husband's financial dealings and she responded by

holding an exhaustive press conference at which she answered every question put to her, with documentation. She was widely admired among the press for her performance that day, but not by the Dumb Democrats.

Faced with virtually the same dilemma the Bush campaign offered Quayle for questioning in his home state with a raucous gang of neighbors intrusive and protective audience next time we saw him he was taking the garbage, besieged by those raucous and gentlemen of the press. It was a brilliant way of portraying as a beleaguered victim of paparazzi rather than a politician answering mate questions from legitimate questioners.

And it worked. Quayle, apparently has shot the rapids and survived the trial. Bush must be doing something smart; he keeps going up in the polls.

But that doesn't make it right.  
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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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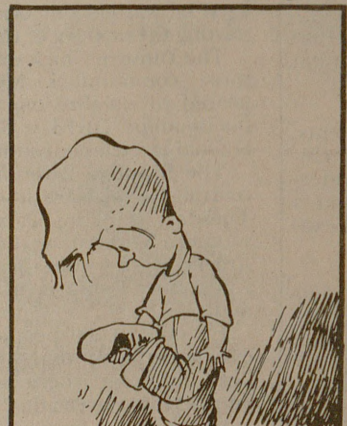
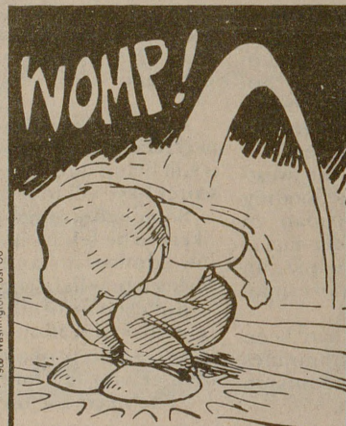
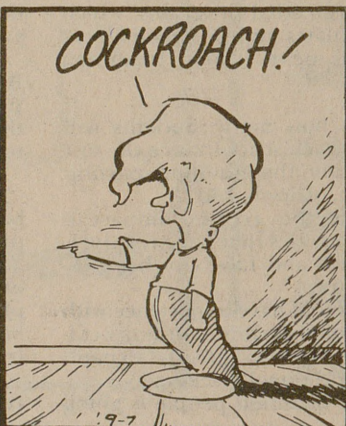
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