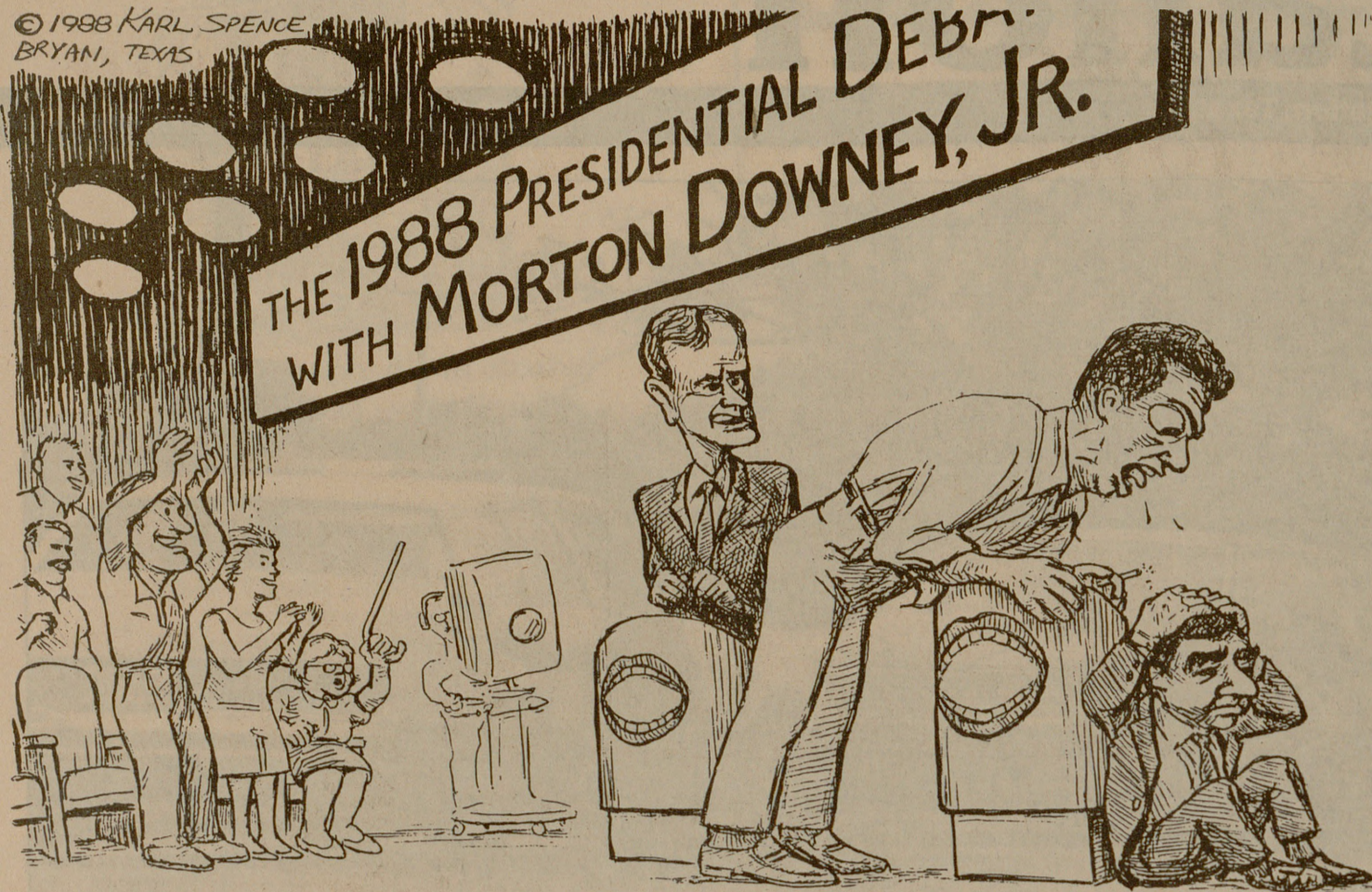


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THE REPUBLICANS' IDEAL DEBATE FORMAT

Pretentious Batt columnist reviews '88's great debates

What do I, an average voter, think about the presidential debates? Well, I didn't follow them too closely but I do remember Peter Jennings won one of them, but I don't remember what questions he asked. I found a few flaws with some of the things the candidates said. Well, not actually with what they said, but how they said it and why.

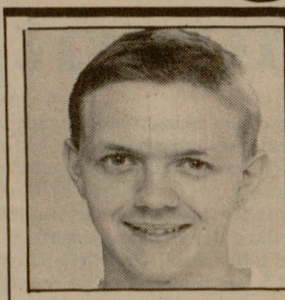
They talked about issues entirely too much. That's where both candidates are weakest. They need to stay away from the issues — it bores the voters and opens the candidates up to attack. The moment a politician says something publicly, he's responsible for it — forever. Just ask Michael Dukakis about his ACLU statement.

During the debates, the candidates were getting bogged down by irrelevant concerns, such as the issues. Trying to teach the average uneducated (unlike us) voter something about the issues is like trying to teach a pig to sing. You're wasting your time and annoying the pig. The Pledge of Allegiance, the National Guard, Quayle's qualifications and other topics should have been talked about more, because they're non-issues which the voters, and the press, just love.

We should have seen more humanity coming from the candidates, especially in the form of one-on-one personal attacks, such as the John Kennedy slur. The most stunning performance of the final debate was Bush's extremely human appeal for five more seconds on his clock after being excessively booed. I feel it was that statement that decided the victor in the match.

Bush should have kept reminding us about the "thousand points of light" (or is it the "thousand pints of Lite"?) thing instead of addressing the panelist's questions. Michael Dukakis should have kept trying to convince the voters that he was more qualified than his opponent, Dan Quayle. Look Governor, your foreign experience is nothing to brag about itself, so watch where you throw stones.

Watching the vice presidential de-



Timm Doolen
Columnist

bate, Bentsen reminded me a lot of my grandfather in his younger years, and had the wit of a grandfather clock my dad once bought at a garage sale. Danny Quayle looked like a cross between Pat Sajak and Robert Redford, though not quite as charming as either. I wondered why Quayle kept repeating himself; maybe because he was repeatedly asked the same questions ("For the 11th time, Senator, what would you do if you became President?" "Well, I suppose I'd have to change my stationery . . .")

Soon after the V.P. debate, the press said Bentsen won because Quayle fulfilled his expectations. They all expected him to lose.

In the last presidential debate, the press said Bush won because he didn't lose. If he had lost, he still might have won, if the press thought he didn't lose bad enough to hurt him. I can never tell who wins or loses a presidential debate. But then again, they never flash the scores.

But if you want a real presidential debate, not the semi-controlled press conferences that they were, let Morton Downey, Jr. be the moderator. He'd slam both candidates for being too LIBERAL (please excuse my language.) You also would see the real George Bush and the real Michael Dukakis debate. They would be yelling at each other to get a word in edgewise, but would have to strain to be heard over Mort. You might make the case that Downey would give an unfair advantage to Bush, but Mort's a fair man. Right.

But in all honesty, an incredible panel would consist of people such as George

F. Will, William F. Buckley and other journalists who have attained the stature of having a pretentious middle initial. I would recognize them on television, unlike any of the four panelists of the last debate. Although I did recognize Bernard Shaw's name; wasn't he a famous writer of some kind?

The sad, real truth is that almost nobody will remember the issues of any of the debates by Nov. 8. The best result the American people got out of the debates is that they got to see the candidates on prime time in front of millions of viewers.

As Michael Deaver said last week, courtesy of MSC Great Issues, the camera doesn't lie. A nation can see what is on the face of a candidate and no candidate can fool the average person of America. The debate issues will be forgotten, but the images of Dukakis and Bush will remain in the voter's mind up until the point they enter the voting booth.

So in the mind of many a voter, the real decision made while he was watching the debate was: which do I dislike less, Dukakis' eyebrows and over-sized head, or Bush's squinting eyes and occasionally flailing arms?

These are not easy decisions for us voters to make. So many of us will vote as we voted in the last election, or as our parents voted. It's easier that way, and, luckily for Bush, it's predictable.

After the last debate, most of the press had already conceded the election to George Bush, because Dukakis didn't land the winning punch in the 14th round. Our country's press now decides the outcome far in advance of the actual election. We should change the Constitution and just let the press decide who won on the basis of polls, saving millions of people the actual task of voting. The average voter knows who's going to win — if he watches the news.

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

Mail Call

South Africa has right to choose

EDITOR:

It's easy for David Luckenbach and his unarmed legion of intellectual soldiers to criticize apartheid. It doesn't take an intellectual to support a popular opinion.

If Luckenbach and Students Against Apartheid want to get intellectual they would like to suggest they ponder the sovereignty of South Africa. With the purpose of changing South African domestic policy, SAA supports U.S. government sanctions against South Africa. If South Africa doesn't have the right to determine its own domestic policy, then what nation has the right of self-determination? A nation's domestic policy, whether right or wrong, is the sole responsibility of that nation.

James Burns '89
Mike Trabue '92

Sueltenfuss' solutions 'naive'

EDITOR:

Dean Sueltenfuss' column on the crime problem was very misinformed, poorly researched and a little naive. He does not provide any support for his many assertions and if he would have tried, he would have found that neither current research nor history will back him up.

Getting "tough" on crime is not a new idea. Sueltenfuss may think that he discovered the perfect solution to the crime problem by suggesting harsher punishments, longer sentences and more executions, but he is only reciting the same old list of methods that have been practiced since the beginning of time.

Throughout our history, accused criminals have been banished, beaten, tortured, starved in dungeons and executed in the most horrible ways that mankind could dream up. Executions were carried out in public because it was thought to serve as a greater deterrence. Instead, executions became a source of entertainment for the masses and people became numb to the act of killing. It was all a matter of providing a harsh punishment to serve as a deterrent, then crime would have been eliminated hundreds of years ago, but the crimes continued and in many cases they increased.

Sueltenfuss suggests that we can solve our crime problem by building more prisons. That is like trying to fix a leak in your roof by buying more buckets to collect the dripping water. Today we have more people in prison than ever before and the crime rate is still going up. The problem is that we continue to concentrate all our efforts on cleaning up the crime that already exists while we ignore the root of cause of crime.

In 550 A.D. Magnus Cassidorus, a Roman historian, wrote that "poverty is the mother of crime." Many great thinkers have echoed his observation and today it is not hard to verify. The highest percentage of crime is found in the most poverty stricken areas.

Over 90 percent of the people in prison today are too poor to afford an attorney. I believe that we can decrease crime significantly if we work harder to eliminate poverty.

Sueltenfuss wants to put prisoners into huge concentration camps and march them into gas chambers for extermination. Does that remind you of anything?

Crime is an old problem. To deal with it effectively, we need some fresh ideas — not the same old rubbish.

Mike Thomas '87

Old Ag critiques yell leaders

EDITORS:

With six football games still to come this season, I hope that this letter is the last I am writing to express my disapproval and disgust at the way the yell leaders have performed so far this year.

First, I must ask where you were for midnight yell practice Friday night before the LSU game. I understand that you chose to remain in Baton Rouge rather than come to New Orleans for the traditional midnight yell practice on Bourbon. A large crowd of students and former students gathered in the street at the traditional spot, only to be led by a former yell leader who, unlike his replacements, remembered the tradition.

Second, I must ask where you were for midnight yell Friday night before the Cougar High game in Houston. In this case, I heard that you decided to have practice at some night club in far north Houston instead of the traditional Miller Outdoor Theater near downtown where the newspapers published the yell practice would be (as usual). Once again, a disappointed crowd of former students gathered for another yell practice that wasn't.

Third, is it too much for the fans to ask that you arrive at the football game on time? Missing the national anthem and the "Spirit of Aggieland" at the Cougar High game is inexcusable.

Fourth, I was disturbed at the presence of one of you at the Cougar High game in uniform with a broken arm. I understand you were injured. However, it seems to me that you could just have easily dressed in the yell leader uniform instead of what you were wearing. If not, why not sit out the game instead of serving as a distraction out of uniform?

Finally, I can only gather by your continued practice of attempting to lead the crowd in an improper manner that you have not yet learned a basic rule: When Ags have the ball on offense, the crowd should remain quiet until the ball is snapped so that the players can hear the quarterback call the plays. When the Aggies are on defense, the crowd should roar with thunder. As I watched you at the Cougar High game, you were each doing different things, one calling, one shouting and the other calling for quiet. Come on guys, let's get it together.

I hope that you can correct these violations of basic yell leader tradition and just another friendly reminder: Yell Practice should be held at midnight before the t.u. game in Austin on the steps of the state capitol. Hope to see you there!

Gary A. Finkelman '83

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and include classification, address and telephone number of the writer.

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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.

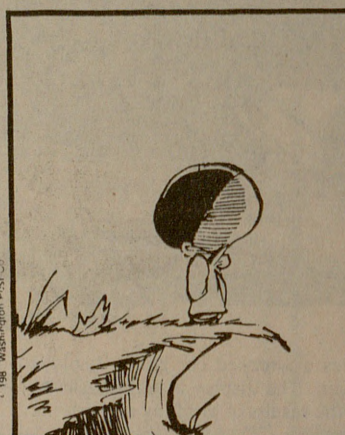
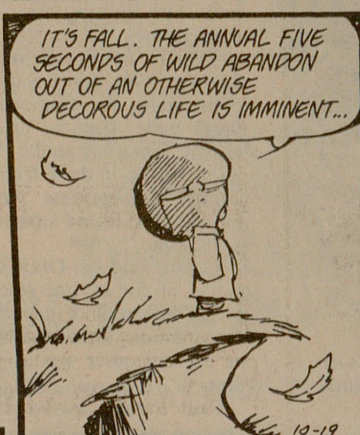
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