

Martha Raye should stick to dentures, leave politics alone

I have noticed, throughout every election since I was old enough to notice, that celebrities like to come out and publicly support their candidate for president. I think it's a bunch of bunk.

I support celebrities' right to choose a candidate, and their right to vote, and their right to express their opinion. But I do not think they should use their celebrity status to sway voters.

It's just another distraction in a campaign that has already strayed from the issues.

People should be listening to analysts and experts. They should be trying to separate the issues from the media hype and focus on gathering information to make an informed, intelligent choice.

There are probably a few of these big-name stars who are honestly experts in politics, who know the issues and have formulated their opinions based on those issues. But I also think that a majority of those hot shots still can't tell the difference between star wars for defense and Star Wars the movie.

Most of the celebrities honestly do not know anything more about the candidates and the issues than the average American.

But because they have a time slot on NBC and people know their faces, they have a certain power — a power they sometimes use to sway voters for a candidate despite their lack of knowledge in that area.

Picture this: Mrs. Mertz is at home babysitting Little Ricky for Mrs. Ricardo. Mrs. Mertz is the average American who has not really made up her mind about which candidate she will vote for in the upcoming presidential election.



Becky Weisenfels Managing Editor

Mrs. Mertz puts Little Ricky to bed and then turns on the television so she can watch her favorite show, "The Honeymooners." She could watch another show about some weird psycho redhead with a Cuban husband, but Mrs. Mertz thinks the show is stupid.

But the evening news is still on. Before Ralph and Alice hit the airwaves, Mrs. Mertz gets a glimpse of world events. Why, there's Mr. Ed — and look who he's endorsing for president. Gumby!!!

Well, Mrs. Mertz just happens to love Mr. Ed. She doesn't really know anything about Gumby, but if Mr. Ed likes him, so does she. Mrs. Mertz has decided who she is going to vote for, and she didn't even have to read a newspaper or anything!

It's not that society purposely lets celebrity endorsements sway it, but people hold celebrities above the rest of the crowd. How many times have you heard someone say, "I just adore Tom Selleck."

You ask, "Have you ever met the man?"

"No, but I can tell by the way he plays Magnum P.I. that he's just a heck of a guy. I just love him."

When a celebrity comes out touting a

candidate, fans are going to respond. People like to identify with celebrities — they represent money, fame and glamour.

If they say Gumby is the guy to sit in the big chair, then people want to agree.

That's why companies pursue the big names to endorse their products. They know that one word from Martha Raye will have every senior citizen (and a few who aren't) running to the local Eckerd's to buy denture cleaners.

That's why Michael Jackson gets the big bucks to sing about a carbonated beverage (the song still sounds bad — and I do mean bad).

That's why Phil Collins finds it necessary to alter a song and sing it on television in favor of an alcoholic beverage.

Companies pay these celebrities for their influence, and pay big.

People are swayed by celebrity endorsements of products — or political candidates.

People should be careful to make sure that they make their own choices and don't let celebrities influence them. But responsibility also rests on the celebrities.

Celebrities know they have a power over public opinion to some extent. They should be careful with how they use that power. If they do not have the authority and expertise to choose a candidate for the public — if their knowledge of the candidates is not greatly deeper than everyone else's — then they should keep their mouths shut.

The only place they should endorse their candidate is on their own ballots.

Becky Weisenfels is a senior journalism major, managing editor and a columnist for The Battalion.

Mail Call

What's a victim to do?

EDITOR:

This is in response to Karen Hall's letter "Victims should fight back," in Tuesday's Mail Call regarding last week's abduction.

There is no way in the world she or anyone else can say, "I would do this." "She should have done this." How can anyone predict what they would do if it happened to them? When someone pulls a knife or gun on you, different people would react in different ways — there is no "suggested" right or wrong action. The fact that the assailant tried to kill her does not mean that he was successful. The fact that she was not a victim does not mean that she was not a victim. Karen was wrong in assuming that if you choose to go with your attacker, you be killed."

I shudder to think what my friend would have thought had she read this. Ricki Hasou '88

2 of Mort's high classed fans

EDITOR:

This letter is written in response to Dean Sueltenfuss's column about The Morton Downey, Jr. Show. It is obvious that your journalism skills are far less than those of Geraldo Rivera. "How is that," you ask?

Let's work our way through your slop: First, you said that the people who watch Mort are the same people that watch "The Wheel of Fortune" and "Geraldo". Wrong answer. We don't watch these shows at all. What we do watch CNN more than anything else.

Second, you questioned our reasons for watching Mort. I'll tell you why we watch him because he isn't a bleeding heart liberal like Phil, Oprah or Mike Dukakis. He doesn't support every little cause that comes along like homosexuals or communists.

Third, you say that he is a "loud-mouthed, ignorant, incompetent, vile creature who yells, screams and curses. Loud-mouthed, yes. Ignorant and incompetent. In case you weren't aware, Morton Downey, Jr. has a doctorate from Valley Christian University in California. He reads 17 newspapers and magazines a day and three books a week. Can you beat that, Mr. Journalist? Can you even come close? I think not. So what if he screams, curses and smokes? So do many people this campus, including myself and some of my friends.

Get your facts straight. You said that he started reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Actually, he and the audience began singing "God Bless America" when you watch the show or just hear about it from your liberal comrades? How is Mort's show? For purpose, he discusses and exposes controversial issues that conventional journalists are scared to touch. For ethics, he and the show — just not your kind. He just doesn't take any crap. Finally, why should someone be civil to a pimp or a smut dealer?

"The type of people who typically watch the show can't read more than three words in a row anyway." Wrong again. We all can read and all read your track, liberal, geek-brained ad. It states that you are a journalism major. They aren't planning on a career as a reporter. You would make a better propaganda writer for Lyndon LaRouche or the communist party. I'm sure they'll have a job for a person who makes up facts and insults the opposition.

Chris Bennett '91
Shean Dalton '91

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for 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.

Enquiring minds want to know about Batt columnists

In the past two months I have had the pleasure of seeing the columnists of The Battalion (myself included) referred to with a number of unkind names and labels. Our patriotism to the United States and to Texas A&M has been questioned and it has been suggested that some of us are conservatives, communists, Nazis or (even worse) liberals.

Well, I would like to take this opportunity to clarify all of these terrible rumors. I will do this by providing our readers with some brief-but-vital biographical information on the columnists here at the Batt. Most of this information has no truth to it and is completely contrived — but I guess that's what everyone expects of Batt columnists.

LYDIA BERZSENYI

Lydia, the illegitimate daughter of Lt. Col. Oliver North, was born in Washington D.C. on the Fourth of July. She is in favor of executing everyone who does not recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Her apartment is decorated with American flags and she has an autographed, life-size poster of Ronald Reagan on her bathroom wall.

When she is not busy with her duties at The Battalion, Lydia (who is a card-carrying member of The American Association for the Proliferation of Firearms) enjoys owning vast quantities of guns and brandishing them in public. Her gun-toting habits recently proved useful when she was able to stop a fleeing bank robber by shooting out his car

tires. "That sucker was a c%\$!# Democrat, too," she said.

TIMM DOOLEN

Timm was born at Woodstock in 1969. As a toddler, he grooved to the funky sounds of groups like Santana and Three Dog Night. He absolutely despises every rock song that has been released since 1978. In fact, he is quite adamant in this conviction.

But despite this happy life of rockin' and rollin' to the groovy rhythms of the 60's and 70's, Timm has seen his share of personal tragedy. In the spring of 1987 Timm was forced by some mischievous acquaintances to listen to Madonna tapes for several hours. He has slowly been recovering from this traumatic experience, but he still occasionally bursts into the newsroom with a glazed look in his eyes, singing the tunes "Papa Don't Preach" and "Like a Virgin."

STEVE MASTERS

Steve (known to most A&M students as "The Whiner") loves to complain about anything and everything. It's not really Steve's fault that he complains so much — he was just born that way. Even when he was a little kid he would complain about the most trivial things. By way of illustration let's go back in time to Steve's fifth birthday.

Steve: "But Ma, I hate your chocolate icing. It tastes like reconstituted cow manure."

Mom: "Shut up, you whiner, and open your presents."



Dean Sueltenfuss Columnist

Steve (opening gift): "Aw geez, it's a Six Million Dollar Man action figure. I wanted a Partridge Family collectors' album. I hate this. Steve Austin is a complete dweeb. Can I return this Ma? Please?"

SUNA PURSER

As a few of our more observant readers have already noted, Suna hates everything about Texas and Texans. She never misses an opportunity to degrade and humiliate the native residents of our state — in fact she can often be seen parading around campus carrying a large sign that reads "I HATE TEXANS."

A few years ago Suna received statewide media attention when she tried to blow up the state capitol in Austin. The attempt would have been a success, Suna said, if she could have restrained herself from yelling "I'm gonna blow this place to pieces!" as she carried boxes of dynamite into the building. But despite her unsuccessful attempt at destroying the capitol, Suna remains hopeful: "Next year I'm going for the Governor's mansion."

BECKY WEISENFELS

Unbeknownst to most of her friends and co-workers, Becky (the Fish Camp Lady) has been working for the past few years as a secret agent for The University of Texas. Her mission: To molest, ridicule and destroy the sacred traditions of Texas A&M University by whatever means possible. She accomplished this task at first by assuming a covert identity and writing hateful, scathing attacks against the students and organizations of Texas A&M.

The fictional identity she created for herself was that of an average American college male — a student who eventually went on to become one of the most famous columnists to ever write for the Batt. That's right. What everyone has suspected all along is true — Becky Weisenfels and Karl Palmeyer are really the same person.

ANTHONY WILSON

Anthony is a native Texan and everyone's idea of a traditional Aggie. A country boy in every sense of the word, there's nothing that Anthony enjoys more than badmouthing fraternities and sororities while he downs a case of Lone Star Beer or runs over squirrels with his John Deere tractor. His hatred of Greeks is so intense that he once proposed that all fraternity members be neutered, thereby saving posterity from a virtual Hell on Earth.

Anthony's only indiscretion concerning traditions at A&M came when he suggested that the bonfire site be changed. However, he later offered the excuse that he was intoxicated when he wrote the column. "Besides," he said,

"mah Levi's 501 Blues was too tight they'z cuttin' off the circulatory mah brain."

ME

I am one of the secret children of Adolph Hitler and it is my sworn duty to spread Nazism to the entire world. I believe that people who are convicted of any crime, no matter how slight, should be executed immediately. This is the only way that we can weed out the inferior members of our society and establish a master race of superhumans.

I am also against all forms of technology because technology is a vile, infernal tool of Satan. In my younger years I was a bleeding-heart liberal who even tried to assassinate a famous television talk show host, but I was caught and sent to prison. In my spare time I enjoy torturing animals by conducting genetic engineering research on them.

So as everyone can plainly see, I am one of the kind of communist, Nazi, conservative, bloodsucking, anti-anti-Texan, anti-American scum on Earth you all thought we were.

Dean Sueltenfuss is a junior journalism major and columnist for The Battalion.

The Battalion

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BLOOM COUNTY

Comic strip by Berke Breathed featuring characters like Dilbert and Dogbert with humorous dialogue.