

Voter's Guide not meant to persuade

In Monday's Voters' Guide, a listing was given of the views of George Bush and Michael Dukakis on the issues concerning defense, foreign, economic and domestic policies. *The Battalion* has received several calls inquiring about the partisanship of the guide. The Voters' Guide was neither an endorsement nor a paid advertisement for either candidate. The guide, compiled from information from the American Freedom Coalition, was an attempt to provide an overview of the presidential candidates' opinions on the issues and was not meant as a push for either candidate. We used the information from the AFC because it was the most complete source to which we had access. The AFC is prohibited by law from being a partisan organization, and *The Battalion* has declined from endorsing either party. *The Battalion* Voters' Guide was not published to tell you how to vote, but rather to inform you of the issues and the candidates' views. We apologize if that purpose was lost because of how the information was presented.

The Battalion Editorial Board

No endorsements from Batt editors

As the above editorial mentioned, *The Battalion's* editorial board decided not to endorse a presidential, or any other candidate, in today's election. By keeping abreast of current events, issues and political stances, we have tried to educate ourselves about who would be the most appropriate leaders for our country. And at the same time, we've tried to help our readers do the same by covering as many political races and candidates as possible and by offering a free flow of ideas on the Opinion Page.

However, we would not feel comfortable advising our peers on how to use their vote. But we do feel comfortable encouraging students, faculty and staff to exercise their right to vote.

The Battalion Editorial Board

Constituents must educate themselves before election

Get out and vote. Exercise your constitutional right. Do your civic duty and vote! Make a difference in how this country is run. Don't be apathetic. Use your political "clout," make sure your voice is heard and get out the vote! Take an active role. Ensure your right to complain when the candidate of your choice isn't elected and the opposing party hurls the country into an abyss of destruction, chaos and decidedly bad economic and foreign policy. Be patriotic: show concern for the nation's future and get out the vote.

On and on and on, the list of reasons — all admirable, of course — professing why you should vote goes on. Today, voter, is the day you can make a difference. You know what I say to that? "Hogwash, and here's why."

A few days ago, I heard someone make what many would consider a shocking (but nevertheless insightful) remark, "Don't vote. If you're stupid, don't vote!" Certainly this is in direct opposition to the multitude of reasons why you should vote, but this statement goes a long way in summing up the reasons why you *shouldn't* vote: being stupid.

Voter, you're stupid (perhaps ignorant is a better term here) if you vote just for the sake of doing it. Everyone else votes, everyone else urges you to do it and you're a communist if you don't. Besides, it's the sign of being an adult, of making responsible decisions, of exercising your constitutional right, blah, blah, blah. Join the bandwagon, succumb to peer, parental, political or whatever pressure is applied in convincing you to vote. After all, it's for the good of the country!

No, it isn't! Especially if you're "issue



Suna Purser
Columnist

ignorant." You're stupid if you vote in ignorance. What I mean by this is: Can you make an intelligent and well-thought out choice? Do you know what the issues are and have you studied them? What is your position on defense, foreign, domestic and economic policy? What are the candidates' positions on these issues? Does Candidate A, regardless of party affiliation, address the issues more in line with your position than does Candidate B? What effects will Candidate A's policy have, as opposed to Candidate B's, on the issues, our country, our citizens and the United States' role as a "world leader?"

If your answer to any of these questions is, "I don't know," you're issue ignorant and don't belong at the polls. Stay home, eat bon-bons and watch television. Do the well-informed and issue intelligent voters a favor — don't cancel out their votes, whether they're "right" or "wrong" — by casting a vote when you don't even know what the issues are, much less where you and the candidates stand on those issues.

Whether the informed voters make a "bad" or "good" decision is a matter of perspective, but at least they know what the election is all about and have made an intelligent choice. They have fol-

lowed the candidates and their campaigns, and whether they're right or wrong, the informed voter is *in* the game.

And voter, you really ARE stupid if you vote straight party because your family has voted a straight Democratic ticket since the beginning of time, "the Republicans or Democrats always accurately reflect my political ideologies" or "I'm not familiar with these candidates, so I'll vote straight party because the Democrats or Republicans usually represent my politics."

In any given election, straight party balloting may not be the best or your choice. You don't have to look for extremists in all political parties; some will always be "left of left" and others will always be "right of right."

Casting a straight party ballot is because it's a family tradition or other equally absurd reason does mean you're electing the best candidate for the job. Let down your facade: study and vote for the candidates who will best serve the city, state, nation, regardless of party affiliation.

In essence, it comes to this: responsible, well-informed voter. Understanding the issues, the candidates, their stands on the issues takes time and concentration — things of us don't want to waste on something as mundane as politics and elections. And if you choose not to understand issues and candidates, so be it. Fine. Just do the nation a favor and in the glow of ignorance at your house and not at the election polls.

Suna Purser is a journalism graduate, a graduate student in English and a columnist for *The Battalion*.

Maybe we should be forced to vote — or stop complaining

Today we're supposed to vote. Today we can exercise our Constitutional right to pick the next leader of our country. Today we must choose between two noble men who have worked their way to the top of their respective political parties and now are one step away from being the most powerful individual in America.

Or we can sleep late.

We can completely ignore the elementary schools and churches where ballot boxes are set up. We can wait and

turn on the 5:30 national news to find that journalists have already correctly predicted the winner of the election. Then we can wait for the new president to take office in January and watch him screw up.

This will lead to complaints about the government, about the party in power, which leads to anarchy in the streets, a violent overthrow of the government and the downfall of American society.

In a last ditch power attempt, we launch a full-scale nuclear assault

against the Soviet Union, which results in the destruction of the Earth (several times with our current capabilities) and leaves nothing but a race of cockroaches which eventually will evolve and go through the same HELL we've just experienced.

And it's all because you wanted to sleep late.

So how come the greatest nation in the world, the place where we let the voices of our enemies speak (as long as they don't talk about anarchy in the



Steve Masters
Columnist

streets or the steps that follow), a place where you can get donuts 24 hours a day, a place where a raving madman can scream obscenities and call it a talk show, how come we don't vote?

Because we were up all night getting donuts and listening to Morton Downey Jr.?

I think it's much deeper than that. (Get ready for *The Voter Revelation*.) I think we're too lazy. I think that just because the polls don't come to you, you don't bother. Right? Right.

We need some motivation. The Soviet Union has over a 95 percent voting rate, the highest in the world. We need to be told to vote. We need pressure and stress, like our boss standing there breathing down your neck saying, "TWO MINUTES TO DEADLINE! YOUR FIRST BORN WILL BE MINE!" (Boy, I sure hate editors.)

We apparently can't respond to voting unless it's a requirement, so let's make it a law. Forget the war on drugs. Let's hear it for the war on non-voters!

All we need is Nancy Reagan in the Red Dress® making her plea to "Just Go Vote."

With this method we wouldn't even need to register. Save time and money, right? Right. I knew you'd see it my way.

Instead of registering or bothering to remember when the elections are, we could just form some militant organization (like the Corps or the PLO) to round people up on voting day, put them in cattle cars, take them to the polls and, at gunpoint, watch them vote. How much could a cattle car cost anyway?

It only gets expensive when you're those ignorant protestors who rather be shot than vote for president. (Although I'd bet there'd be quite a few bullets taken over the choice we use to have — take this year, for example, short Greek or a Republican. "Unexcuse me, sir? Did you say that was a 45?" But bullets don't cost much either.)

Then they could just hold elections whenever they raised enough money for the transportation. But there are drawbacks.

With the Republicans in power, would require deficit-spending, obviously not a high priority with now) without new taxes ("Who's that? Blasphemy! Off with his head!" so it would take longer to get the money necessary. With the Democrats in power, there would be no taxes, but welfare recipients would thrive, so the population would grow much larger and more money would be necessary for transportation.

Of course, after a while, county votes would become obsolete. When is in office could just pick the next (or girl — maybe we'll be liberated) and we could roll right along, sure the party in power would be extraordinarily fair and use infinite judgment before selecting itself to for another term.

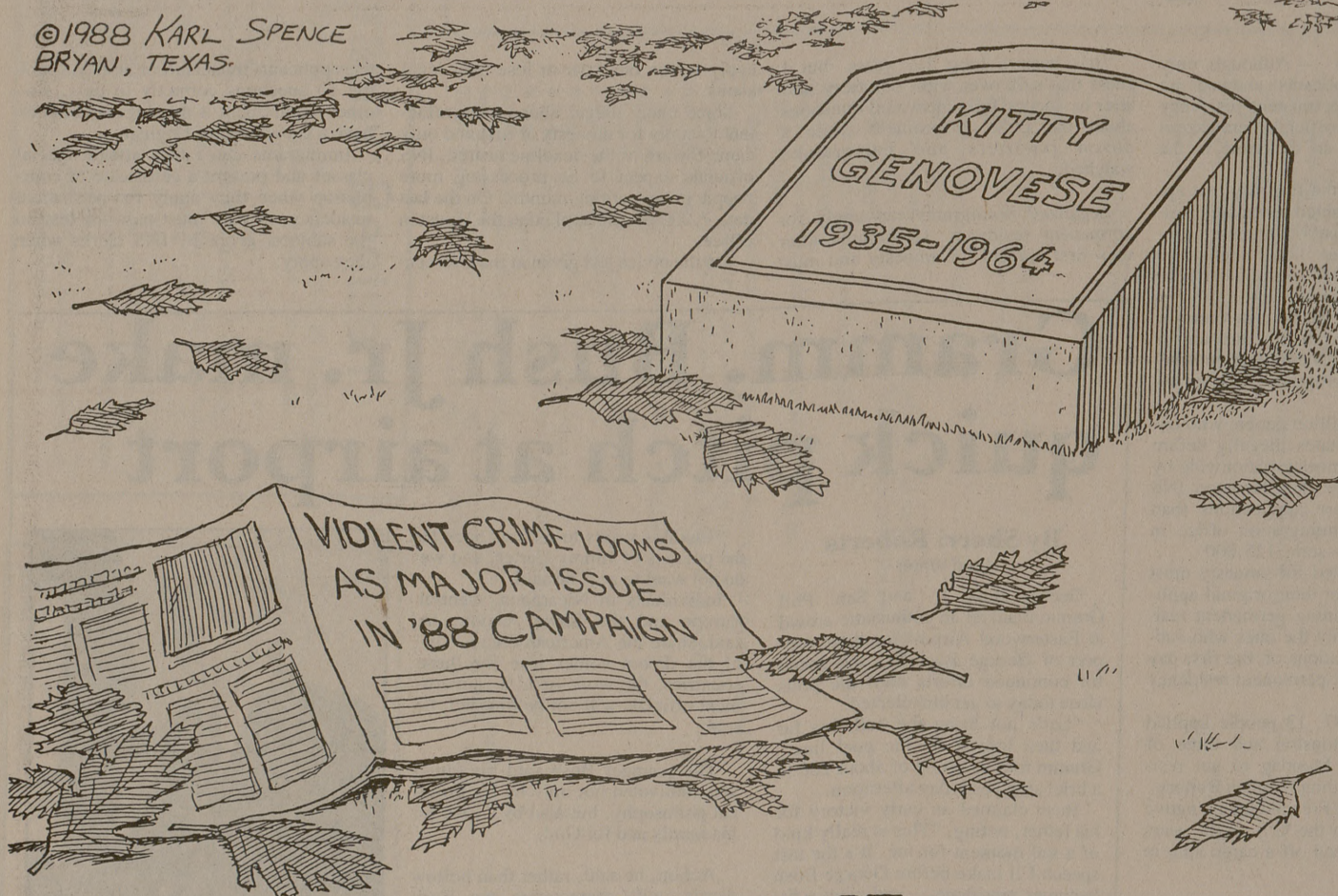
By this time though, revolution in Soviet Union would have turned it around to a republican form of government. China would follow suit and would be alone in our oppressive society. We would try the last ditch play and end up nuking the world.

So our choice is that we destroy ourselves while enjoying our freedom, or destroy ourselves without freedom. I am known widely for my optimism, don't think that decision is too tough.

As for me, just wake me up when 5:30 news comes on.

Steve Masters is a senior journalism major, senior staff writer and a columnist for *The Battalion*.

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AT LONG LAST

The Battalion

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