

Mail Call

Batt exhibits unprofessionalism

EDITOR:

I was shocked by *The Battalion's* Voter's Guide. I have never known any professional newspaper to print so biased a piece of written material and then try to pass it off as an objective breakdown of the candidates' views on the issues.

Those responsible for this piece did a fine job of reminding us all that *The Battalion* is not a professionally run newspaper.

Although I realize that what I am writing will be too late to make a difference in the election (I suspect that it was intentional so that it was unanswerable), I feel that it is important that it be written because it seems impossible to allow such an incredible breach of journalistic respectability to pass without comment.

I went to the *Batt* office to find out who was responsible for this piece of Republican propaganda dressed as a voter's guide. I was told that it was none other than the editor, Lydia Berzsenyi.

I spoke with Lydia and was informed that she and the other *Batt* staff person who had compiled the guide had, in their effort to be objective, decided to publish material taken from varying sources. She informed me that the breakdown of stances in the centerfold, the biographies below and the articles on the back page had all three been taken from separate sources.

In fact, as the notes in small print show, everything was taken from a publication entitled "Voter's Guide '88," which is put out by the American Freedom Coalition. I was told this was a nonpartisan group and that several voter's guides had been examined by those formulating the *Batt's*. They found this one to be the most objective.

I examined the publication put out by this group from which the voter's guide had been taken. It was absolutely clear that this was a conservative, pro-Bush, Republican group. All the articles were obviously written in such a way as to put Bush in an agreeable light and to portray Dukakis as a left-wing crazy.

It contained a Congressional scorecard at the end in which all members of both houses of Congress who were running for reelection this year were given a grade 0-100 based on their positions on a list of issues the American Freedom Coalition deemed important. Each page contained several 100's, so I scanned these high scorers for party and found that every single one was Republican. I think most reasonable people would agree that this is quite an unlikely coincidence for a non-partisan group.

To have printed such an article as an editorial endorsement for Bush would have been one thing. But to have actually considered it a piece of objective journalism is quite ridiculous. After leaving the *Batt* offices the afternoon that the voter's guide was published I went to my campus job. There I overheard a political science professor laughing about the guide. He said that he kept checking to see if he had misread the front and was looking at a paid political advertisement.

If *The Battalion's* editor found this particular voter's guide to be the most objective one (she said they had even considered the one put out by the League of Women Voters) I think that serious questions need to be asked about her judgment. She apparently is so blinded by her own political stance that a truly more objective voter's guide seemed biased to her. If she considers this objective journalism, then I fully expect *The Battalion* to start running National Enquirer stories.

Cara Shannon Clark '89

EDITOR'S NOTE: The information in *The Battalion's* Voter's Guide was not taken solely from American Freedom Coalition publications. For example, the biographies were taken from another source. The League of Women Voters' guide was not a considered source. That guide was not obtained prior to the publication date. Also, the AFC, by law, is a non-partisan organization.

And the winner is . . .

EDITOR:

I nominate *The Battalion's* editors for the Dan Quayle Journalism Award — The Most Comically Inept Act of the Inexperienced — for their publication of the ravings of a right-wing fringe group in the guise of a nonpartisan voting guide.

David Stienstra
Graduate student

Apology not accepted

EDITOR:

I am extremely miffed about Monday's Voters' Guide. *The Battalion's* editors said they decided not to publicly endorse a candidate in the Nov. 8 issue. However, I feel the manner of reporting illustrated in the Voter's Guide was a tacit endorsement for George Bush.

Rather than responsibly reporting on the issues, *The Battalion* chose to present one line stabs at Michael Dukakis.

For example: Michael Dukakis "Opposes the death penalty for crimes involving murder, treason and espionage."

Does this mean he supports the death penalty for shop lifters, jay walkers, and traffic violators? Why didn't *The Battalion* simply report that Dukakis opposed the death penalty?

The guide was malicious and inexcusable. It was not labeled as an editorial, but indeed was. As for the apology in the Nov. 8 issue — NOT accepted!

Eventually, Texas A&M will attain the mature attitude which accompanies a world-class university and a responsible newspaper which reflects this. Until then, I suggest you quit editorializing on events which relate to the real world and stick to such issues as final exam scheduling, the benefits of tradition and campus parking!

Andrew Sipocz
Graduate student

Guide blatantly biased

EDITOR:

That so-called "Voter's Guide" you published on the day before the election was a disgrace. It was the most blatantly biased piece of propaganda I have ever seen anyone try to pass as an objective work.

You have done all of your readers a great injustice — not only those of us whose candidate you shamelessly smeared, but all people who read your feature expecting to find any degree of fairness.

I hope that you have learned a lesson from trying to get a political group to write your voting guides for you. Either that, or I hope you show a little honesty and admit that you have become nothing more than a mouthpiece of one political party.

Charles Albert
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.

The Battalion

(USPS 045 360)

Member of
Texas Press Association
Southwest Journalism Conference

The Battalion Editorial Board

Lydia Berzsenyi, Editor
Becky Weisenfels, Managing Editor
Anthony Wilson, Opinion Page Editor
Richard Williams, City Editor
D A Jensen,
Denise Thompson, News Editors
Hal Hammons, Sports Editor
Jay Janner, Art Director
Leslie Guy, Entertainment Editor

Editorial Policy

The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting newspaper operated as a community service to Texas A&M and Bryan-College Station.

Opinions expressed in *The Battalion* are those of the editorial board or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty or the Board of Regents.

The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Journalism.

The Battalion is published Monday through Friday during Texas A&M regular semesters, except for holiday and examination periods.

Mail subscriptions are \$17.44 per semester, \$34.62 per school year and \$36.44 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.

Our address: *The Battalion*, 230 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-1111. Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Battalion*, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77843-4111.

Gotta complaint? Have n Sh fear, I've got the solution

Whine, whine, whine.

Sometimes it seems like that's all anyone ever does around here, doesn't it? The worst part is that no one ever offers any constructive criticism to go along with their complaints. They just go right along ragging on Texas A&M without offering any solutions to the numerous problems they point out.

It is for this reason that I would like to offer some solutions to a few of the more widespread complaints that I have heard since I've been at A&M.

• **COMPLAINT #1:** Nobody ever says howdy anymore.

One solution to this problem would be to tell everyone who brings it up that this is a free country and people don't have to say howdy unless they darn well feel like it, dammit. But considering the importance of this tradition to many Aggies, this solution would probably not be acceptable.

A better solution would be to assess fines on everybody who gets caught not saying howdy. Not only would more people start saying howdy, but this would provide another method of generating revenue for our poverty-stricken University. It would also provide an excuse to hire even more Kampus Kops (glorified meter maids) to give out tickets. (Lord knows there just aren't enough of them to go around right now).

• **COMPLAINT #2:** The parking situation on campus stinks.

I think that the ideal solution to this dilemma is to eliminate all parking zones — no faculty lots, no red lots, no 24 hour reserved areas — just one, giant, free-for-all, campus-wide parking area. This would mean, of course, that there would be no more parking stickers, no more towing and no more tickets. People could park wherever they want to.

Late to class? No problem. Just pull



Dean Sueltenfuss
Columnist

off the road and take a little cross-campus spin over to the Academic Building.

But hey! Watch out for that pedestrian.

Oh, it's all right. You just nicked him. I think I can see him getting up now.

What's that hanging off of your hood ornament? Oh, his book bag? You really should be more careful.

Better hurry and find a parking spot. I think I see a good one over there under that tree. Yeah, just to the left of the trash can.

• **COMPLAINT #3:** Nobody upholds the Aggie Code of Honor anymore.

Supposedly, Aggies do not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do. But lately a lot of people have been violating this code. The way I see it there are two possible solutions. We can somehow force everyone to follow the code, or we can just change it.

Changing it would be a lot simpler.

Here's one version of the updated Code of Honor: Aggies rarely lie, cheat or steal, and they don't tolerate those who do unless it's convenient.

I think that I'm on the right track here, but perhaps I'm still being a bit unrealistic. Here's another version: Aggies may lie, cheat and steal as long as they don't get caught, and Aggies do not tolerate those who lie, cheat or steal unless they happen to be football coaches.

• **COMPLAINT #4:** Telephoning a friend is extremely inconvenient (due to the words to that effect).

The solution here is quite clear: we must do is go back to the old way of registering by standing in line from upon end. It should be obvious to any rational person that this is by far the best solution. After all, who would rather spend a few minutes on a phone or stand in a line from eight until noon?

Another alternative here would be to randomly assign classes to every student at A&M. Not only would it be cost-effective, but it would eliminate the need for having to register for classes. And by random assignments such as people would probably have a better chance of getting the classes they want.

• **COMPLAINT #5:** A certain columnist for *The Battalion* keeps writing stupid, mindless columns that are posed to be funny, but aren't.

One solution is to determine if the columnist is guilty of writing these columns, and then take the columnist out and shoot him. For some known reason, however, I find myself opposed to this answer.

I believe that the best solution in this case would be to take up a large collection for said columnist and present (oops, I mean *him*) with all the money that was donated by the concerned students and faculty of A&M. The aforementioned columnist would then be free to take an extended vacation for at least a few years and Aggies would be liberated from having to read meaningless dribble.

Contributions can be dropped at *The Battalion* in 216 Reed McDonald.

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

Did you know 'gullible' was taken outta the dictionary?

People are so gullible.

You can make anyone believe anything as long as you keep a straight face and act like you know what you're talking about. Ask President Reagan — he knows the trick. Or Jackie Sherrill.

But to truly realize how gullible everyone is, you have to try it yourself. Walk up to average Joe American and start to talk about something — anything. Politics is a good subject because no one really understands what is going on anyway (except political science professors and maladjusted social outcasts).

Now, after throwing around a few words that sound political — like deficit, polls and fund raising — take a left turn and enter The Gullible Zone.

"Oh, did you hear the latest about Bush?" you say nonchalantly. "In a fit of anger he announced that he hates Reagan and that he was the mastermind behind the Iran-Contra scandal. It was a ploy to have Reagan impeached so Bush could sit in the big chair. (Remember, this is not a true story. Don't go telling this at home.)"

I can almost guarantee that if you play it right, you can get your victim to fall for this story hook, line and sinker. Ker-plunk.

What is sad is that if someone did the same thing to me, I would be standing there saying, "NO!! Really? Get outta here. Really? Oh my gosh. Really?"

Granted, this gullibility is funny because it results in products like Impulse body spray (If someone you never met suddenly gives you flowers . . . he is probably certifiably loony) or those 1-



Becky Weisenfels
Managing Editor

900 numbers (dial 1-900-ima-geek for the latest scoop on Eddie Haskell and Geraldo Rivera).

But if you think about it, the gullibility is sad.

It's honorable to trust in your fellow human beings so much, but get a ticket on the train to reality. Honk. Clack, clack, clack, clack.

Most of the time, people are just passing along second-hand information. And most of the time, you will believe it.

Even in newspapers, most information is second hand.

Paul Harvey tells of a group of four Boulder, Colo. reporters who wrote a story saying the Great Wall of China was being torn down.

The story was total make-believe, but each of the reporters worked for one of the four newspapers in town.

The story was picked up by the Associated Press, and reprinted in other newspapers. Before you knew it, the whole nation believed that China was ripping down the old wall. And China was not happy.

But what is even worse is that we

never learn. Hoaxes are pushed on us from the time we are born — Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, leprechauns, the tooth fairy and Hee Haw (I have thought for years that those people lived in barns).

And in later years we discover the truth — Santa is a fraud, the real rigged, leprechauns aren't legit, the tooth fairy is bogus and Santa pays those jerks on Hee Haw to act that way.

Disillusionment can be an ugly thing. But still we believe.

We believe that the president can balance the budget (suckers) and Palmolive will make our hands soft (you're soaking in it).

We believe that America is free (not free parking, for sure, but that we will get a job when we graduate) (HAH!!!)

We believe that Aggies do not cheat or steal and that we will get Social Security when we retire (this could be interesting).

When will we learn?

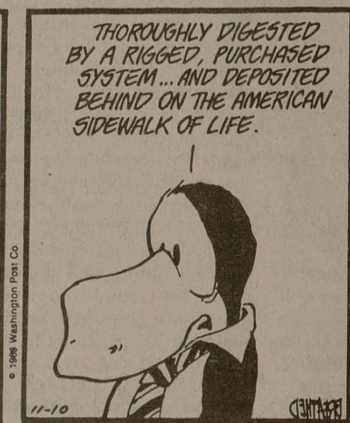
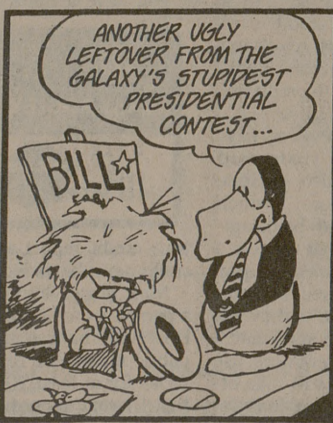
And now we find that one of the great hoaxes of all time is plaguing our great nation: Is Elvis alive or isn't he?

I don't think he is. But if I made up the movies he made, I would still be hiding, too.

Why are people so gullible? I don't know. But then again, would you believe anything I told you?

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

BLOOM COUNTY



by Berke Breathed

The Brazos...
dent Chapter...
Medical Asso...
are combinin...
responsible pe...
This is the...
puppies come...
the relationsh...
ing one. Son...
fluffy puppy...
Anim...
of its own, an...
the day-to-day...
is cleaning up...
Training a p...
is a lesson in g...
simple techniq...
enjoy the bene...
lot of spot clea...
breaking reliev...
eliminate in a...
taking the pup...
accumulated st...
nation. This v...
that eliminatio...
Ar...
By St...
Se...
At 7:17...
Cow Hop Ju...
minutes aft...
and with on...
listed on...
A...
Rather info...
ready had...
lectd 256...
short of vict...
We had...
can party...
clear that I...
president. B...
What I g...
in the world...
win what s...
rately.

FR...
GET C...
Buy any s...
regular p...
identical...
Price varies on...
plings. Valid on...
pating Little Ca...
other offer. On...
Carry out only.
B-TB-11-1...
Expires 1...
NOV...
26...
Univer...