

## Soviet election results offer hope for Communist Party

Two weeks ago the Soviet Union held its first multicandidate elections in 70 years. The results seemed astonishing to many people in the Soviet Union, but to most of the world they seemed an obvious result of decades of Soviet oppression.

One of the results of the first real Soviet election was that many hard-line Communists were replaced by candidates who pledged a commitment to change. This has been taken by Gorbachev and others as an endorsement of Gorbachev's economic and political reforms.

Many candidates for vital positions were defeated, including 34 regional party secretaries, the president and prime minister of Lithuania, several military commanders, the head of the Estonian division of the KGB, and the mayors of Moscow, Leningrad, Tomsk and Kiev.

Those defeats are remarkable enough in themselves, but what makes them more amazing is that those candidates were running unopposed for their positions and they still lost. How? The voters took advantage of a quirk in the election law which allowed voters to reject a candidate by striking his name out on the ballot.

Was the election a significant step towards greater reform in the Soviet Union? Yes and no.

The significance of the election was the election itself and the general patterns of voting rather than whether candidate X was elected. It was not so much the people who won that mattered, but the message that the Soviet people sent to their government. They are ready for



**Timm Doolen**  
Columnist

change, reform, and progress. This is evident in the fact that Moscow voters gave Boris Yeltsin, a strong reformist, 90 percent of their vote.

Though the message of the election results is strong, the actual people elected will have little power to change the Soviet system. Progressive congressional deputies, who serve five-year terms, make up only a small percentage of the 2,250-member Congress of Deputies. The only real function of that body is to elect the president and prime minister, which will undoubtedly be Gorbachev, and to elect the 422-member Supreme Soviet, the legislative branch of their government.

Days after the election, another East bloc country, Poland, made progress towards ensuring some political freedoms. The Polish government signed an agreement that made Solidarity, the labor union outlawed in 1981, legal again.

The government also followed the Soviet Union's example and will allow real elections for the first time in 40 years. Solidarity and other political organizations will probably win a majority in the newly created Senate, which has little power, and a significant minority of seats (about one-third) in the existing Sejm, or Parliament.

This is even more of a reform than

the Soviet model. In the Soviet Union, the elections consisted mostly of two different types of Communists running against each other. But in Poland, harsh critics of the government will be running against long-time government supporters.

Mix this with the fact that the Soviets have withdrawn from Afghanistan, are instituting democratic economic reforms, and are allowing dissidents to emigrate like never before. When we put all this and more together, we realize we are dealing with a kinder, gentler Soviet Union.

It seems the horrible, oppressive, red-menance aggressor of the past forty years has tamed down and has become almost as democratic as the United States. After all, they had a much bigger turnover rate than our own Congress.

So should the United States wake up and accept the Soviet Union as our friend, not our admitted enemy? Definitely not.

Yes, the Soviet Union has made incredible leaps and bounds in the past five years towards achieving greater social justice for its people. But they're still Communists. The Soviet Union continues to support Cuba, Ethiopia, Angola, the East Bloc countries, and other countries that have not instituted the same political reforms as the Soviet Union.

The Soviets have come a long way in the past five years, but they've got a long way to go. With help from the many newly elected progressives in the Congress of Deputies, they just might get there.

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

## Mail Call

### Pesticides are dangerous

EDITOR:

Lately, *The Battalion* has run several articles and columns defending and excusing the use of chemicals in growing food. These articles used "facts" to counter the "hysteria" of the people concerned about safe food.

So here are a few things to think about next time you find yourself inhaling smoke, solvents in perfume, ozone from air conditioners, carbon monoxide from cars and other various pollutants in the air.

If mixing drugs produces unpredictable results, wouldn't mixing toxins also produce unpredictable effects?

Since pesticides tend to decimate predator populations, wouldn't pest problems become potentially worse? Were apples sold before fungicides, insecticides and growth regulators were invented? What other hormones are used in cattle? Shouldn't we be concerned about the environment as a whole rather than just what we put in our mouths?

Our health does not depend on the number of pounds of apples we consume, but the total effect of all chemicals we eat, inhale and absorb, natural and man-made. In general organophosphates and benzene rings are not very healthy.

In the United States, the use of DDT has been banned, but American companies can produce and export it.

Isn't it ironic that there have been shipments of beef from Central America which have been rejected due to excess amounts of DDT in the meat?

**Martin Ebel**  
Graduate Student

### A&M — love it or leave it

EDITOR:

This letter is in response to J. Frank Hernandez' March 10 column concerning the Corps of Cadets.

First let me tell you that I am a non-reg aerospace engineering major. Taking that into account, please read the following carefully and try to learn something.

Mr. Hernandez, the traditions at A&M will not change or end because one confused and distraught sophomore wants them too. Traditions will last. That's why they are traditions.

On to your dining complaint. I understand that the Commons dining center is closed. This gives the dining patrons of that area two choices:

1. To eat at Duncan during the posted times (which it seems you failed to read).
2. To dine at Sbis where the Corps will not affect you.

Duncan is the Corps dining center. This fact is understood by everyone except you. It also seems that the people at Duncan were more than polite about the whole situation. If you wish to eat at 6:45 p.m. then feel free to eat dinner with me at Sbis sometime with no Corps interference.

"The fact of the matter is that the Corps of Cadets is getting too much respect here at A&M." These were your words, Mr. Hernandez. Cadets were here for many years before non-regs entered this University and they earned every bit of respect they get. If you doubt this fact, try to be a fish in the Corps for a week.

Since you brought up the subject of hazing, I will correct your lack of knowledge on this subject. The Corps is a voluntary organization. You volunteer to join and volunteer to leave. One of the many physical activities includes Corps runs (not every morning though.) The incoming fish are told that physical requirements will need to be met.

I compare and contrast things as much as the average person. If you think for a second that the Corps holds any resemblance to a fraternity or a sorority I would ask you to get your eyes checked.

The last of the items I would like for you to consider is the future of the Corps of Cadets. Approximately 50 percent of the Corps will be entering the service to protect you and your country. In this country, you have the right to free speech. The people you criticize could possibly put their life on the line for you. Be careful on how quick you are to judge them.

Texas A&M — love it or leave it!

**David Hockenberry**

### Power Team promotes Christianity

EDITOR:

This letter is in reference to Dean Sueltenfuss' March 10 column "Biting the heads off live parakeets and other religious feats."

Dean, I think you're missing the mark.

At first, I, too, was skeptical about the Power Team. But realizing everyone deserves a chance, I stuck with the program.

Dean, in my opinion, these men display their physical strength only to prove to this young audience that real strength comes from God.

I've seen the kids scream, cry and even accept Jesus Christ at the end of the program. The program has an appeal.

It's apparently had an impact on you and I. Otherwise, why would we stay on a Saturday night to watch the program?

Before I close, let me leave you with one final example. The heavy metal band "Stryper" advocates Christianity on their album covers, in their songs and at their concerts.

Those who mock them, and there are many, have never seen the band members share Christ with the hundreds of teen-agers in the hallways and corridors of the hall following the concert.

**Paul Cox '89**

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.

## Move over USA Today — the Journal is on its way

My first home-delivered copy of *The Wall Street Journal* arrived the other morning. The occurrence marked an important moment in my life.

Had I chosen a different profession, it is likely I would have been taking *The Wall Street Journal* at home for some time.

Had I decided to be, say, a stockbroker, I certainly would have needed to take the *Journal*. And what if I had become a television minister?

I would have needed the *Journal* near me at all times in case I had a sudden urge to invest one or two of my millions.

I put off taking *The Wall Street Journal* at home until now for a couple of reasons.

One, I felt my neighbors would see it on my lawn each morning and would say things like, "He's just trying to put on airs." Taking the *Journal* at home does indicate one has the need to keep a finger on the world's financial pulse and what would I, a humble columnist, need to do that for?

Two, *The Wall Street Journal* has always intimidated me. You have to work at reading it.

You don't just casually skim over the headlines until you get to the comics, where you can spend a little time.

The *Wall Street Journal's* articles are

### Lewis Grizzard

Columnist

long and there are no comics nor puzzles. There's not even any sports news in the *Journal* unless it has to do with some millionaire basketball player deciding to buy Guatemala.

But all that changed recently when I received a pleasant surprise — a royalty check from a rerun of my critically acclaimed performance on television's "Designing Women."

I am not at liberty to divulge the amount of the check — Dixie Carter finds out and she'll be asking for a new contract — but I can say it was five figures. It's up to you to guess the location of the decimal point.

This windfall starting me thinking. A man who receives royalty checks from television shows can't afford to fool around with his financial future.

I'm certain Johnny Carson must read *The Wall Street Journal* as does Alan Hale Jr., who must be worth millions by now since there is a rerun of "Gilligan's Island" on at least one channel every minute of the day.

So, when I saw a *Wall Street Journal* commercial on television I immediately called the 800 number and subscribed.

My life has changed drastically. I

used to go outside to get the local paper in my bare feet. But you don't walk outside to pick up your *Wall Street Journal* without wearing shoes, so I bought a new pair of wingtips simply for that purpose.

I used to carry a copy of *USA Today's* Life section to read during my lunch. Who's Cher dating now?

But no more. I carry *The Wall Street Journal* to lunch with me now and keep abreast of the latest merger rumors while I'm waiting in line to get my chili dogs.

I feel much more at ease at cocktail parties now, too. If someone asks, "Did you read the informative piece in *The Wall Street Journal* concerning the ramifications of the Exxon Alaskan oil spill?" I don't have to fade toward the hors d'oeuvres tray any more.

I can stick in there and say, "Of course, I read it. And did you read the *Journal's* incisive piece on the possibility of the Beecham Group merging with Smith Kline Beckman?"

And when I've been taking *The Wall Street Journal* at home for a few more months, I may even start putting on a shirt when I go out each morning to pick up my copy off the lawn.

I expect property values in my neighborhood to show a substantial increase.

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