

We endorse the man, not his picture

The Battalion Editorial Board takes seriously its responsibility to inform the student body about campus issues.

In Tuesday's Batt, we inserted a Voters' Guide. Wednesday we endorsed Stephen Ruth for Student Body President. We also outlined our reasons for recommending him to you, the readers.

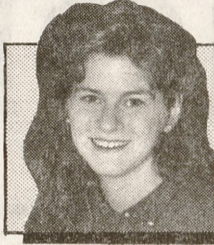
What we did not do is explain how we, a staff of 10 students, arrived at our decision. We owe you an explanation.

When we compiled the Voters' Guide, we called the candidates for Student Body President, Senior and Junior Yell Leaders, Off-Campus Aggies President and Class Council Presidents.

We asked them to turn in written platforms limited to 150 words for the Student Body President and Yell Leaders, and 75 words for the others.

We also took pictures of these candidates. Candidates for the other offices were listed in the Guide, but space restraints kept us from accepting their platforms.

At this point, we were in the same boat as most of our readers. We knew



Lisa Robertson
Editor

only as much about the candidates as they put in their written platforms.

So we invited the three Student Body Presidential candidates in for separate interviews. And they talked, for over five hours. We asked questions that we as students wanted answered.

After listening to them and debating their strengths and weaknesses among ourselves for even longer, we decided to endorse Stephen Ruth.

We think his experience, his ideas about campus unity and his personal integrity best represent the wants and needs of Texas A&M students.

The candidates' platforms are very similar and few differences in their personalities are apparent on paper. The difference is in their pictures. Ruth is black.

We received a disturbing letter today. Jerry Johnson, Class of '94, asked if we knew something about the candidates that he didn't, so we decided to use this column to clarify

how we reached our endorsement decision.

But Johnson went on to write that by picking Ruth we could "soothe our social conscience, be politically correct and come out with a competent student body president."

We were shocked not at the critique of us; we were shocked at his final comment:

"If a silent racist majority does not build a coalition to beat Ruth, then The Battalion couldn't have asked for an easier election to come out shining."

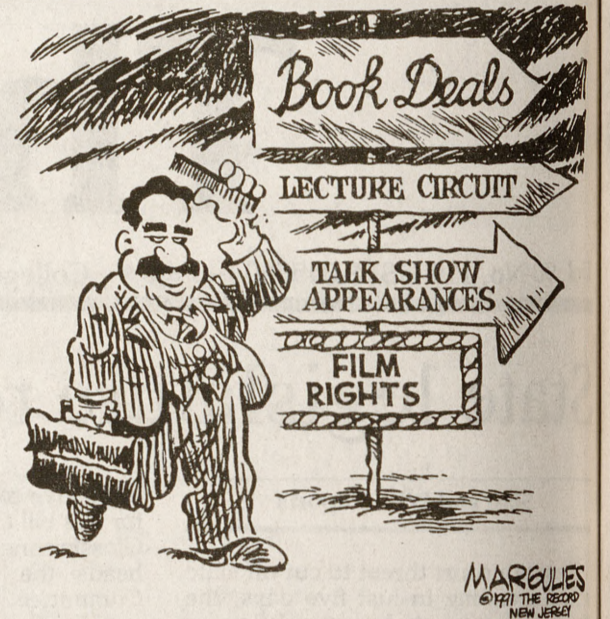
I've got news for you, Jerry. No matter who wins the election, each candidate expressed the need for increased multiculturalism on campus.

In our interviews, Ruth, Charles Phipps and Scott Hantman (both of whom are white), all addressed the need to better educate students about other cultures.

I honestly hope Jerry takes the time to educate himself about other cultures. I also hope he takes the time to talk with the candidates. That way he won't make an uneducated decision based upon what he sees in a picture.

Lisa Ann Robertson is a senior journalism major.

Having suffered a humiliating defeat, I think my path is clear...



MARQUELLES
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NEW JERSEY

Symbol of oppression Norplant has appeal as incentive, penalty

Norplant, the best thing to come along in contraceptive options since the Pill, is becoming a symbol of oppression for the very women who should be liberated by it.

Norplant is a contraceptive implant — women who use it undergo an operation in which six matchstick-size tubes are implanted in their arms that suppress ovulation for up to five years. Norplant is more effective, more convenient and — in the long run — less expensive than the Pill.

However, the approval of Norplant by the Food and Drug Administration has marked not only the advent of a new age of contraception, but also the advent of a new form of control over women's bodies.

Less than one month after the drug was approved by the FDA, a California judge sentenced a woman convicted of child abuse to be implanted with Norplant for three years after serving a short jail term as a condition of her parole.

It can be argued that there is little difference between the use of Norplant in the California case and "chemical castration," which has been advocated for men who have been convicted of sex-related crimes. However, the legislated use of Norplant has not stopped merely at its use in child-abuse cases.

The Kansas legislature has been considering a proposal that would pay \$500 to women on welfare who are voluntarily implanted with the drug. The women also would be given an additional \$50 per year and free checkups to make sure the drug is still working.

Civil rights activists say the bill says there are certain segments of the population — especially impoverished minority group members — that the population at large would rather not allow to reproduce. Opponents also argue that many women might take part in this program merely because they need the money, not necessarily because this long-term form of contraception is appropriate for them.

Other groups, including the National Organization for Women and Planned Parenthood of Kansas, say the bill has its redeeming qualities; but their fear that the bill could lead to less meritable measures is real.

Kerry Patrick, the Republican representative that introduced the bill



Ellen Hobbs
Columnist

to the Kansas legislature, told reporters he plans to introduce a proposal that would require women convicted of cocaine or heroin trafficking or possession to be implanted with the drug for at least a year. Patrick says the measure would help prevent the birth of drug-addicted babies.

The idea of putting a lock on the reproductive systems of women who have committed crimes not related in any way to sex or child abuse should be enough to show that legislative use of Norplant is on its way to abuse. Already an editorial in the Philadelphia Inquirer has suggested long-term female welfare recipients be required to be implanted with the drug. The paper apologized after receiving negative publicity.

The attempt by government to control social problems by controlling the population's collective uterus is a blatant display of sexism. And the people should nip it in the bud.

It's nice that women on welfare would have a chance for free contraceptives. But at the cost of women's privacy and their control over what they can do with their own bodies, it's not worth it.

Norplant should be used in the most effective way possible: Out of the hands of legislators.

Women's organizations should begin a campaign to get funding to help poor women get access to the contraceptive, and that might very well include grants from the government. But giving judges and legislatures the ability to pick and choose who is implanted with the drug and why is only opening up a door to abuse and government-sanctioned oppression of women.

Feeding kids on welfare and caring for addicted babies is something a lot of people might not want to pay for; however, coercing women with Norplant is just another kind of drug abuse that needs to be stopped.

Ellen Hobbs is a senior journalism major.



MAIL CALL

The Battalion is interested in hearing from its readers and welcomes all letters to the editor. Please include name, classification, address and phone number on all letters. The editor reserves the right to edit letters for style and length. Because of limited space, shorter letters have a better chance of appearing. There is, however, no guarantee letters will appear. Letters may be brought to 216 Reed McDonald or sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111.

All the advantages women enjoy

EDITOR:

I am writing in response to Tim Truesdale's March 25 column.

Truesdale, your attempt to procure solutions to the undermining of feminism fails to embrace the full implications of capitalism: Your light-hearted and jocular analogies of furniture polish-producing women undercut the seriousness of the problem.

Really, Truesdale, "all the advantages women enjoy." I suppose you mean the bountiful advantages women enjoy in regard to our rape laws. Yeah, right.

Likewise, you fail to see the full implications of the body. It is not that the man's body is any less beautiful, as you so aptly observe from a man's perspective, but the female body has served as a source of power and big money

for corporations run by men and women alike.

Naomi Campbell and Christi Brinkley certainly are beautiful women, but what have their bodies done for the progress of women's equality? They are simply tools to perpetuate corporate control over our perception of the body and its role in a capitalist economy.

Playboy is the epitome of this: Man should be free to reap the harvest of the female plenty. Where would alcohol commercials be without the golden Aphrodite holding a beer as water dapples her succulent skin?

The next time you approach feminism as an ideology, Truesdale, I hope you will examine the full implications of capitalism.

While the body is the most exquisite possession of human beings, one must be aware of its role in a corporate-controlled society.

Kevin Cole '91

The Battalion

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Bush deserves less criticism

Andy Yung's column bashing George Bush on the grounds that he hasn't done much for education, civil rights, the war on drugs or the national debt is exactly why these problems remain. Continually, people lay the problems of the nation on the President. Let's remember just how much power and time this one man really has.

Yung feels Bush has done a poor job with education. I agree, the current system needs improvement. But even if George picked God as Secretary of Education, little would change. Most of our educational systems are run and controlled by state and local governments. Let's cuss them, then maybe something will change.

As for the Civil Rights Bill, I'm a minority and I disagreed with it. Forcing businesses to hire "token" minority men and women only would raise resentment from the white part of society now under reverse discrimination. This resentment would further di-

Jose Rodriguez
Reader's Opinion

vide already tense racial factions. Bush knew this bill wasn't going to help anything or anyone.

I feel Bush has done remarkably well against drugs. He's created numerous task forces and has used the CIA, FBI and U.S. military to try to put an end to the madness. Drug use, sales and smuggling all have decreased in the past few years according to such pessimistic magazines as Time and Newsweek.

Blaming the national debt on Bush practically has become a national pastime. Get original Yung. Bush has little control over national spending. He draws up a budget,

sends it to Congress and catches hell when there's a national debt. Remember, Congress writes the checks, Bush just suggests what to spend on.

Maybe if congressmen were willing to take some political risk and drop or reform the hundreds of worthless programs that waste billions each year, we might not have a debt. But why should they change anything when they can just sit there and let people like Yung put all the blame on one man, our popularly elected President?

If we want to change the world, we should start with the population, our local and state governments and our elected representatives who reside in the most powerful branch of our government, the Congress. "Bush Bashing" will not change of help anything.

Jose Rodriguez is a senior mechanical engineering major.