

The Battalion Editorial Board

DOUGLAS PILS, Editor-in-Chief

BRIDGET HARROW, Managing Editor	MACK HARRISON, City Editor
BRIAN BONEY, Opinion Editor	KARL STOLLEIS, Photo Editor
JASON MORRIS, Night News Editor	SCOTT WUDEL, Sports Editor
MORGAN JUDAY, Night News Editor	ROB NEWBERRY, Lifestyles Editor

The following opinions are a consensus of The Battalion opinion staff and senior editors.

Murderous support

Veto of trade penalty kowtows to Chinese

President Bush's veto Monday of a bill attaching conditions to most-favored-nation trade status for China was a bad decision. To the Chinese students who courageously stood up to the hardline Communist leadership and its armored enforcers at Tiananmen Square, this action is a stinging slap in the face.

At the same time, it amounts to an admission that, in this case, pragmatic political concerns outweigh the idealistic notions of freedom and human rights espoused by our own founding fathers. This idea must be rejected. Undoubtedly, there will be times when blind idealism will ultimately cause more harm than it is worth. This is not one of those cases.

Defenders of no-strings-attached preferred trade status for China argue that tying this to China's future conduct will cause the United States to lose some of its influence in affecting that conduct. Events continue to plainly show just how precious little influence we have had. The behavior of China, not only in the repression of their own citizens but in the irresponsible and inflammatory

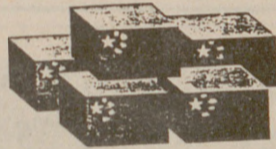
practice of selling military technology to Third World nations, demonstrates the stubborn determination of its leaders to pursue their course, regardless of world opinion. It is self-evident that offering this status is not an effective tool in generating political reform in China.

At any rate, willingness to trade with an unjust regime on a most-favored basis is unfathomable. Just what is it about China that earns it Bush's favor?

The vetoed bill also included a provision that would have banned importation of products manufactured by Chinese prison labor. Purchasing goods made by the hand of what is, in effect, slave labor, is taking free enterprise

into the realm of the absurd. Whatever we expect of American workers, we cannot believe that they can work for less than nothing in order to compete.

Former President Woodrow Wilson once described America as "the only idealistic nation in the world." If there is a shred of that spirit left in the Senate, they will somehow muster the votes they need to override the President's ill-considered veto.



Charity woes

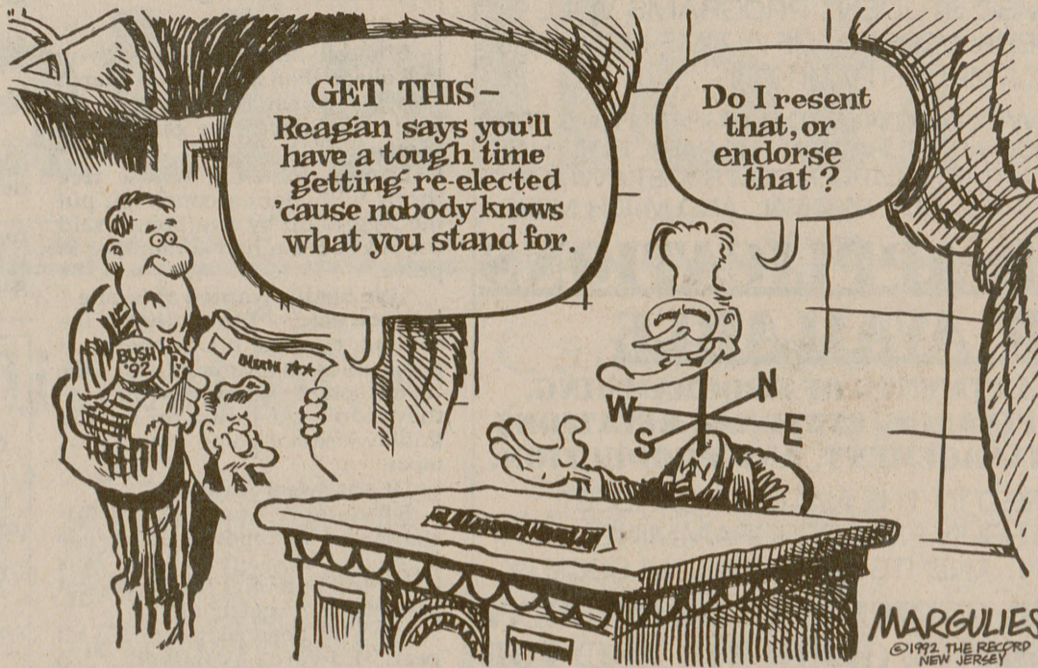
Keep giving to local charities, United Way

Last week, United Way president William Aramony resigned amid allegations of unnecessary, extravagant spending and wasteful appropriations of the charity's funds. The announcement of his wrongdoings and of his subsequent resignation reverberated down to local chapters, where United Way officials reported fundraising problems with regular contributors. Reports that Aramony received a yearly salary of \$463,000, and that he took advantage of travel benefits by often flying on the Concorde destroys the credibility of United Way, the nation's largest charitable organization.

Known for its contributions to homeless shelters, food banks, employment of the handicapped and assistance to the elderly, the actions of Aramony impact the efforts of United Way immediately and in the long run as donors struggle to repair their lost faith in a benevolent but tarnished institution.

However, the tradition of charitable giving and volunteerism nurtured by the activities of the United Way need not cease due to the irresponsible actions of a former president. While the national headquarters of the United Way reels from the reprehensible activities of Aramony — activities contrary to the goals of an institution committed to helping the disadvantaged — local chapters remain untouched by his indiscretions. Local United Way chapters pay dues to the national headquarters on a voluntary basis. Therefore, contributions to local chapters will not necessarily be sent to the national headquarters and local charities will continue the tradition of charitable work established by United Way.

Volunteerism and financial donations to United Way and other charitable organizations need not halt due to the actions of one bad apple, especially in these pressing economic times.



Vote for beer

If it takes booze to get college students to vote, then bottoms up

My fellow Americans, we, as citizens of these great United States, face the mightiest decision we have ever faced. In the coming weeks, we, the people, will be asked to cast our ballots as Americans, as Republicans, as Democrats, as Libertarians and as college students to determine the future leader of the free world. The choice before us promises to change the course of history forever. It is a weighty choice, a mighty choice, a choice that will alter the scope of our lives, of our children's lives, of our grandchildren's lives.



Stacy Feducia

My fellow Americans, my fellow collegians, my fellow voters, could you hand me a beer? I think I might join the rest of you and sit this one out.

College students, as if you didn't already know this, are about the single most apathetic voting group on the planet — or at least in the United States. In fact, we are so apathetic, that most politicians refuse to address us as a potential voting block — not that we would want to be addressed by any politicians anyway. Unfortunately, because they overlook us during election time (a.k.a. "Suck up to the taxpayers who will be footing the bill for my presidency" time) when elected, politicians tend to overlook issues which hold prominent importance in 18-25 year old hearts, i.e. the drinking age.

Consider if we had posed a potential threat as a voting block in the '80s, do you think the Ronald "I don't remember" Reagan government would have co-opted (I should get extra credit in my poli-sci class for that one!) the states into raising the drinking age to 21? No way. They would have talked about lowering it to 12.

This great "College Student Voter Apathy Syndrome" stems from two

factors: college students have no candidates or issues with which they can identify. Consequently, college students have no incentive to vote.

Of course, the lack of voter interest among college students results from the fact that we have no candidates to call our own. Politicians never listen to rock and roll. Politicians never wear bandanas. Politicians never let their hair down (most of them don't have hair — or they let it down when they were in college and deny it when some crafty journalist exposes it) and most importantly, politicians don't drink beer.

Beer is probably the most important commodity in the college student budget. Now imagine if a candidate actually stepped forward and revealed the fact that, yes indeed, he/she as a politician drinks beer. POW! Instant college votes!

Take President Bush, for example. The polls are not his friend. His approval ratings are on the skids. He's wondering if Millie will have a home at the House of White on Pennsylvania Avenue come next January. Now if Bush were just to admit the fact that he tossed back a few too many on his recent trade trip to Japan and consequently yakked on the Japanese prime minister because of his taste for "liquid bread," the lucrative college student demographic bloc would vote in droves, and Millie would be set for another four. (You don't actually believe Bush had the intestinal flu, do you?)

Realizing that none of the potential candidates would make so bold a move as to expose their tastes for beer and therefore appeal to college voters, I thought I might hook up with a candidate and run myself — therefore providing a candidate with whom college students could identify. Needing someone of like-minded interests and opinions, I chose a fellow columnist, syndicated no less — and no, not Buchanan (could you imagine me and Buchanan as running mates?) — I chose Dave Barry. He drinks beer — heavy beer, not lite. He's syndicated. He's running for president. I even

sent him a resume and a rundown of all the potential voting groups I could muster.

Being from Louisiana, I figured I could steal the "I'm-from-the-Deep-South-and-I-married-my-cousin" vote from Gov. Bill Clinton of Arkansas (there is way too much inbreeding up there). Being a bandana-wearing, buttcrack lover that I am, I knew I could wrest the "I'm-a-fruitcake-and-I-like-it" vote from Jerry Brown. And being a typical, apathetic college student, I assured Dave that I could garner the lucrative "I'm-an-apatetic-college-student-and-I'd-vote-if-they-offered-drink-specials." And unfortunately for me, potential vice presidential contender, Dave's only campaign promise is to keep Dan Quayle. I was crushed and now my political ambitions are hung on the possibility of being Dave's Supreme Court nominee.

Having a candidate with whom we can identify, of course, is incentive enough to vote. Having an issue is even more of an incentive — the Elvis Stamp vote commences April 6 at a post office near you — vote Fat Elvis!

However, because Congress is hesitant to put the drinking age issue to referendum and because no pro-college student/pro-beer candidates have the money to run (because they already spent it on beer), we need an extra incentive to get us to the polls, like beer, for example.

If the election commissions provided complimentary beer at all of the polling places, college students would vote — in fact, most of us would vote two or three times. I would. We could have exit beers instead of exit polls. Instead of the canned food drives that most precincts hold, we could have happy hour: Vote with a college ID and get another drink free. It works for me, and it could work for this great nation! So get out there, get out the vote and get me a beer.

You heard it here first.

Feducia is a senior English and history major

Mail Call

People kill people with legal guns

I've never owned a gun, shot a gun, or even held a gun, nor do I ever care to. Therefore I do not attempt to judge those who enjoy firearms. All a layman can do is look at what effect guns have in the hands of the general populace.

Since we could argue both sides of the Second Amendment until we're blue in the face, let's set it aside. A study conducted by the Injury Prevention Research Center of Seattle compared gun-related killings in Seattle, a city without gun control with those of Vancouver, it's sister city with a similar population and strict gun control. Not surprisingly, from 1980-1986 there were over five times as many people killed by guns in Seattle.

Maybe you can attribute that ratio to Canadian levelheadedness or better American aim, but

either way, five times is a big difference.

Granted, getting guns away from serious, career criminals would be next to impossible, but a significant number of shootings are results of domestic disputes and arguments between individuals.

How many times have you heard of a couple of guys in a bar who get into an argument, go outside to settle it, and one pulls a gun. Just watch the Houston news. Afterward the gunman will say, "I didn't mean to kill him, but I was so angry."

Fisticuffs may not be the ideal solution to disagreements, but one can vent a lot more frustration with comparatively little damage in hand-to-hand combat. Once the trigger is pulled, it's all over.

Finally, as far as home protection is concerned, statistics have shown for years a gun in the home is approximately three times more likely to shoot a member of that family than to fend off an intruder.

Please don't tell me it's people, not guns, who

are killing people. It's the people with the guns who are killing people.

Grant Ruple
Class of '93

Tell me about College Station

Hi! My name is Dave Teverbaugh and I am a fifth-grade student at Abraham Lincoln School in Belleville, Illinois. This year in social studies we have been studying about the 50 states. I would like to know more about Texas, especially the area around College Station.

I would like to ask your readers to send me interesting postcards about your state. Please send the postcards to: Abraham Lincoln School, Fifth Grade, 820 Royal Heights Rd., Belleville, IL 62223

Have an opinion? Express it!

The Battalion is interested in hearing from its readers.

All letters are welcome. Letters must be signed and must include classification, address and a daytime phone number for verification purposes. They should be 250 words or less. Anonymous letters will not be published.

The Battalion reserves the right to edit all letters for length, style and accuracy. There is no guarantee the letters will appear. Letters may be brought to 013 Reed McDonald, sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111 or can be faxed to 845-2647.