

Opinion

Tuesday, March 31, 1992

The Battalion

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The Battalion Editorial Board

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

Lisa Cash

Vote for candidate with best platform, insight

We endorse Lisa Cash for student body president because of her viable plans for A&M, her efforts to make student government more accessible to students and her personal manner that would positively represent her constituents.

Cash shows the best ability to represent students to the A&M administration and the Legislature. Her plan to have students vote for the teacher of the year would give A&M faculty members an incentive and possibly add more student input into the system of granting tenure. Her plan to initiate a letter-writing campaign to lobby for A&M at the state level is simple, yet effective.

While the other candidates have only vague notions of solving problems that concern this campus, Cash has specific solutions to start right away. Among her many

proposals, she would begin to solve the problem of access to A.P. Beutel Health Center by creating parking spaces from the area left by the razing of Law and Puryear Halls. She would work to create a version of Fish Camp for international students to help welcome them into the A&M family.

Cash best articulates a true concern for her fellow students. That ability will help her when expressing student concerns to those inside and outside the A&M community.

Cash has spent two years in student government. She knows what works and what does not. She has shown she can effect change and get things done through that organization, and she gives credit to those who help her accomplish her goals.

With Cash as student body president, A&M students can feel confident their concerns will be met.

Good attendance

Student Government policy benefits body

The Texas A&M Student Senate relieved eight senators last week for violating the body's attendance policy. The action has drawn criticism from some of the affected senators. However, the policy outlawing unexcused absences is necessary to ensure the Senate retains responsible representatives.

The Senate is an important and prestigious institution at A&M. Although it retains little explicit power, the Senate is visible enough to influence the opinions of the administration and the student body. Such implicit power should not be taken lightly, and the elected representatives who choose to ignore their responsibilities have no claim to a seat on the Senate.

Some Senate hopefuls appear to want the job solely for its high "resume factor" value. Indeed, the position implies the student is willing to bear leadership and responsibility within a large body of people. But the resume factor should be the last on a list of goals for senator; they should

work to benefit their constituents and the student population at large.

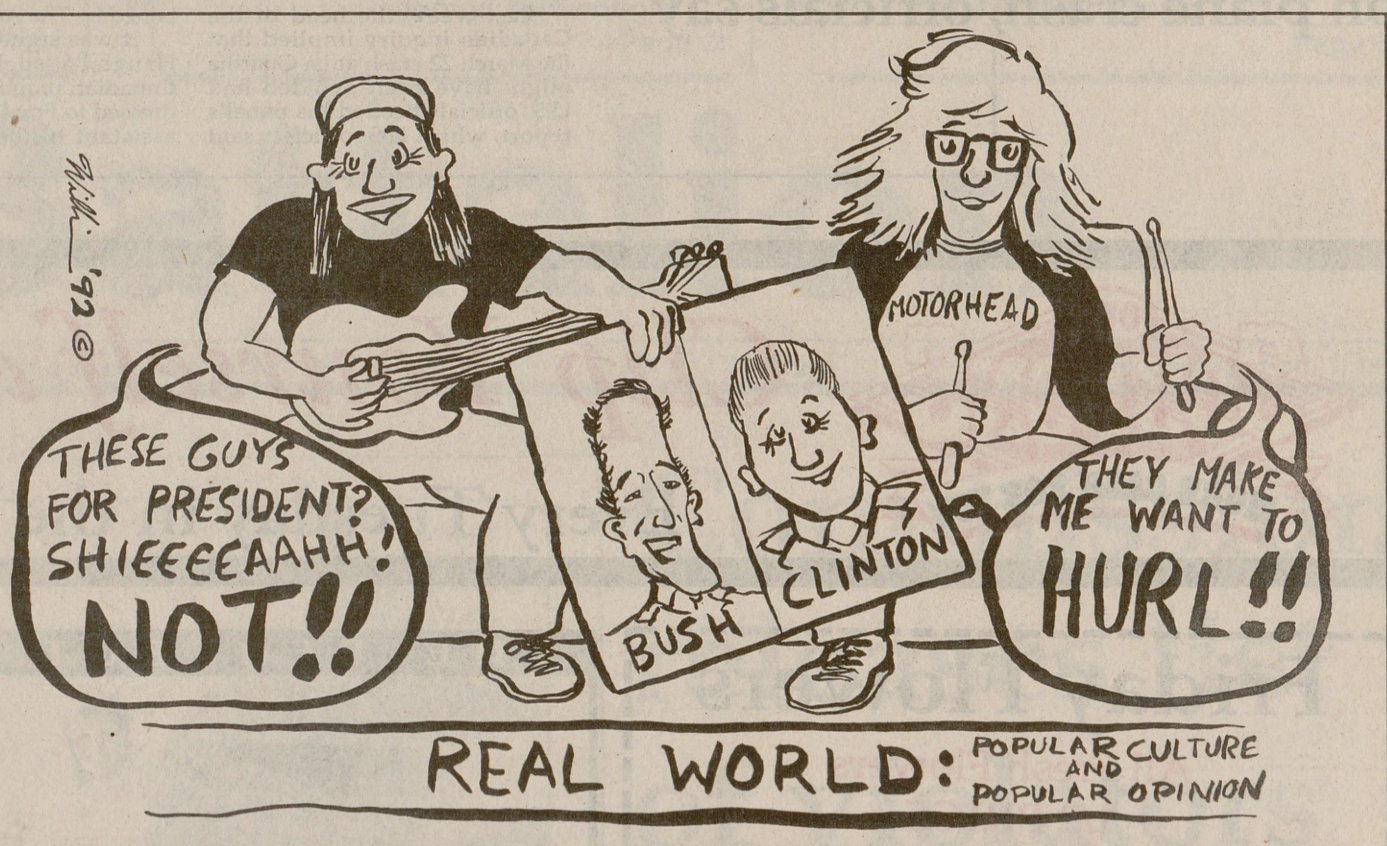
Student senators should actively try to remain abreast of Senate information at all times; they should not be cajoled into going to senate meetings.

Senate rules will not allow representatives to run for next year's Senate, a regulation that will prevent some of the terminated senators from running in today's election. This policy should be lauded, not condemned, as a means to keep Senators involved and properly representing their constituents.

The Student Senate is the major link between Texas A&M administration and the student population. Its members must maintain active links between their constituents and the rest of the Senate.

Every member must put forth a reasonable amount of effort in order to accomplish the Senate's task.

Students who skip Senate proceedings simply are not doing their jobs as they should.



Right to choose

Endorsements help students make better-informed decisions



DOUGLAS PILS
Editor-in-Chief

Election time is a time of choice. Voters have the choice to decide who will be their voice in political and legal matters. The need for that undeniable choice formed our nation and whether it was for the right or wrong reasons, we have fought many times to preserve that choice, both here and abroad.

The choices of voters have a profound effect not only on immediate times but on history. The effects of Franklin D. Roosevelt's programs are still felt today. What would the '60s and '70s had been like if Nixon had won the close 1960 election against John Kennedy? Would the Kennedy assassinations and Watergate be benchmarks of political life in the last 30 years?

The fact remains that the voter's freedom of choice is central to our democratic way of life. When we start infringing on that right we hover dangerously over a socialistic

state. A state where a few with a semblance of power attempt to inflict their views upon the population.

Not long ago a bill was brought before the Texas A&M Student Senate that was meant to limit the number of choices that the student body had for student body president; only those seen fit by the Senate. Fortunately, that bill never had a chance after it was decided that the choice should be left up to the voters as to who was qualified to be president.

However, last week brought more scary news out of the illustrious Senate. It seems a few junior senators wanted to restrict a different kind of choice basic to our democratic way of life. A bill was brought to committee that sought to keep *The Battalion* from endorsing a candidate for student body president.

This is not only absurd, it is a very poorly researched idea for a bill to be voted into law. First of all it would be unconstitutional to try and restrict such an endorsement. Secondly, it is a common practice everywhere within the newspaper industry.

Presidential candidates are interviewed by major newspapers, congressional candidates are interviewed by papers in their districts and sheriff candidates by their constituent newspapers. These

interviews are not for stories, they are for the much sought after endorsement on the paper's opinion page.

This bill never saw the light of day, as it was nixed in committee.

Now, the Academic Affairs Committee of the Student Senate (what does Academic Affairs have to do with this endorsement?) is begging *The Battalion* to not endorse a candidate for fear that it would influence the student body.

The endorsement process consists of an interview with each candidate and what usually turns out to be a lengthy discussion among the nine members of the editorial staff. This is not a perfect system, and we by no means declare it to be perfect.

What it is however, is our informed decision on who we think will make the best student body president for 1992-93. We are afforded the opportunity to sit and discuss each candidates platforms and issues pertaining to the A&M student body.

If the student body does not agree with the decision we have made, I urge you to "do your own research and pick the candidate who will best serve Texas A&M."

It's your right and your choice.

Pils is a senior journalism and economics major and is editor of The Battalion

Mail Call

Don't follow only Batt endorsement

The Academic Affairs Committee of the Student Senate of Student Government would like to address an issue that concerns our committee and the campus as a whole. With the upcoming campus-wide elections, much attention is being focused on the election of the Student Body President. This attention is well-placed because of the extreme importance on finding the best candidate for the highest student position on campus. The Academic Affairs Committee feels that *The Battalion's* policy of endorsing a candidate based on an interview with the Editorial Board interferes with the fair election process.

The *Battalion*, as the official and only newspaper of the Texas A&M student body, acts as the main source of information for most student about the race for Student Body President. The candidate receiving *The Battalion's* endorsement has an unfair advantage over the other candidates. As the *Battalion* editor has admitted, only two candidates in the last ten years have won without the endorsement.

We are not trying to limit free speech, rather we are expressing our opinion that each candidate should be given equal press and an equal chance. If each editor wanted to throw their support to different candidates, it would give the student body the positive and negative aspects of each candidate and be much fairer to all students involved. The endorsement of a single candidate carries too much weight and swings too many votes of students who are willing to let others form their opinions without researching the issues.

When the Student Senate was looking into requiring the Student Body President to have Student Government experience, *The Battalion*

editorial Board printed its disapproval of the measure. They wrote that the policy "suggests that A&M students are not smart enough to pick a qualified president." They went on to talk about elitism and exclusionary tactics. Needless to say, the amendment failed. The Academic Affairs Committee feels that these same quotes can apply to the practice of the Editorial Board endorsing a single candidate for the Student Body President.

The Academic Affairs Committee sincerely hopes that the Editorial Board will listen to our recommendation and end its current practice of candidate endorsement and strive toward informing student voters without the attempt at forming their opinions. If the Editorial Board is unwilling to listen, we encourage the student body to ignore the endorsement, do your own research and pick the candidate who will best serve Texas A&M.

Cody Don Burke
Dalma Hall
Academic Affairs Committee

Experience week of gay awareness

Gay and Lesbian Student Service is a group that experienced a struggle for recognition from Texas A&M. The university acknowledged the student group only after an 8-year-long lawsuit that went to the Supreme Court where it was refused to be heard. That left the 5th Court of Appeals ruling for the university to recognize the group to stand. University recognition of GLSS was made June 6, 1985.

This large-scale struggle for recognition is a reflection of what most every lesbian and gay male must go through individually. GLSS offers support to individuals as they struggle with being

homosexual in a heterosexual world.

But GLSS and the individual members of the group have an underlying goal. Many lesbians and gays work toward creating a tolerant and accepting world where it won't be necessary to have a separate meeting in which it is OK for two men to hold hands or two women to sit in a loose embrace.

"I think we're a little behind the rest of the world," said Brian Reinhardt, president of GLSS. "But we're where we have to be right now, moving slowly forward. A big thrust of our group is toward the future and hope for change. We also want to provide support for individuals and help them feel better about themselves... One of the ways people draw together is through a common traumatic experience. I don't think anyone can say growing up and being gay isn't traumatic, given the non-gay world in which we live. We all need support."

Being gay isn't just what the person is in the bedroom. Being lesbian or gay impacts one's who life. It affects who you have as friends and your relationship with your parents. It can affect your social life, where you shop and what career you choose. It affects your behavior when you are in public.

"We can't walk down the street and hold hands," said Teri, a lesbian. "We'll be in the store and say something like, 'Honey, did you get the bread?' and have to look around to see who heard."

"I think I can dream if I want to," said Linda, a lesbian. "The perfect world is being able to walk down the street, holding hands with a girl and not getting beat up... Basically my goal is to make the community here better for lesbians and gays who live here."

In the reaching out that GLSS has done, members have often met with positive responses. Panels of gays and lesbians volunteer to go into classrooms to talk about their experiences, what it is like to be gay and facilitate classroom discussion. During Awareness Week GLSS

sponsors a variety of educative events. These events are an opportunity for non-gays to learn more about gay and lesbian people and their lives. This greater understanding can lead to greater acceptance which benefits us all.

Lucinda Sinclair-James
Graduate Student

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.