

## The Battalion Editorial Board

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

## Dirty campaigning

### Soiled student elections require clean-up

Recent stunts pulled by members of the Texas A&M Student Government serve as blatant examples of what is wrong in politics today.

Like a minor-league version of the state Legislature, some of the "leaders" in our student government are doing their best to mislead voters before the election in order to protect their political reputations and get elected.

One sickening last-minute stunt is the letter distributed Tuesday night to some of the Corps dorms on campus.

The document, bearing the signatures of Ty Clevenger, 1990-91 student body president, and Trent Kelly, senior yell leader, contains misleading statements as well as blatant falsehoods.

Although the letter claims intimate knowledge of the inner workings of The Battalion, it does not display any knowledge of how the newspaper is presently managed.

The letter also implies that The Battalion misled its readers by allowing a columnist to report on a story and also by withholding a story.

The jury may still be out on whether The Battalion has presented a fair and unbiased view of the student election, but one must realize that as a news-source we are limited by the amount of information we can gather and when we receive it.

Cooperation from within Student Government is necessary to ensure the proper and timely dissemination of information, in regards to Student Government.

Given the Election Commission's reluctance to disclose campaign violations, this cooperation was not apparent.

This is a glaring example of the stubbornness and bickering that keeps student voters in the dark.

Only at the urging of Student Body President Steven Ruth did the commission release the information.

Although candidates in all races have committed a number of campaign violations, Election Commissioner James Phipps wanted to withhold the list of violators until after the election.

When asked why he wanted to wait so long, Phipps said, "To be honest, because that's the way I want to do it."

Voters should stop and consider an important fact: the current and future student leaders of Texas A&M (and other universities) are most likely to be the future leaders in public office. This is not the sort of conduct citizens of the United States should expect of public officials.

We recognize the inherent honesty and caring exhibited by most of the members of Student Government.

This editorial is a call to these people to help rid Student Government and the elections of such childish and unprofessional behavior.

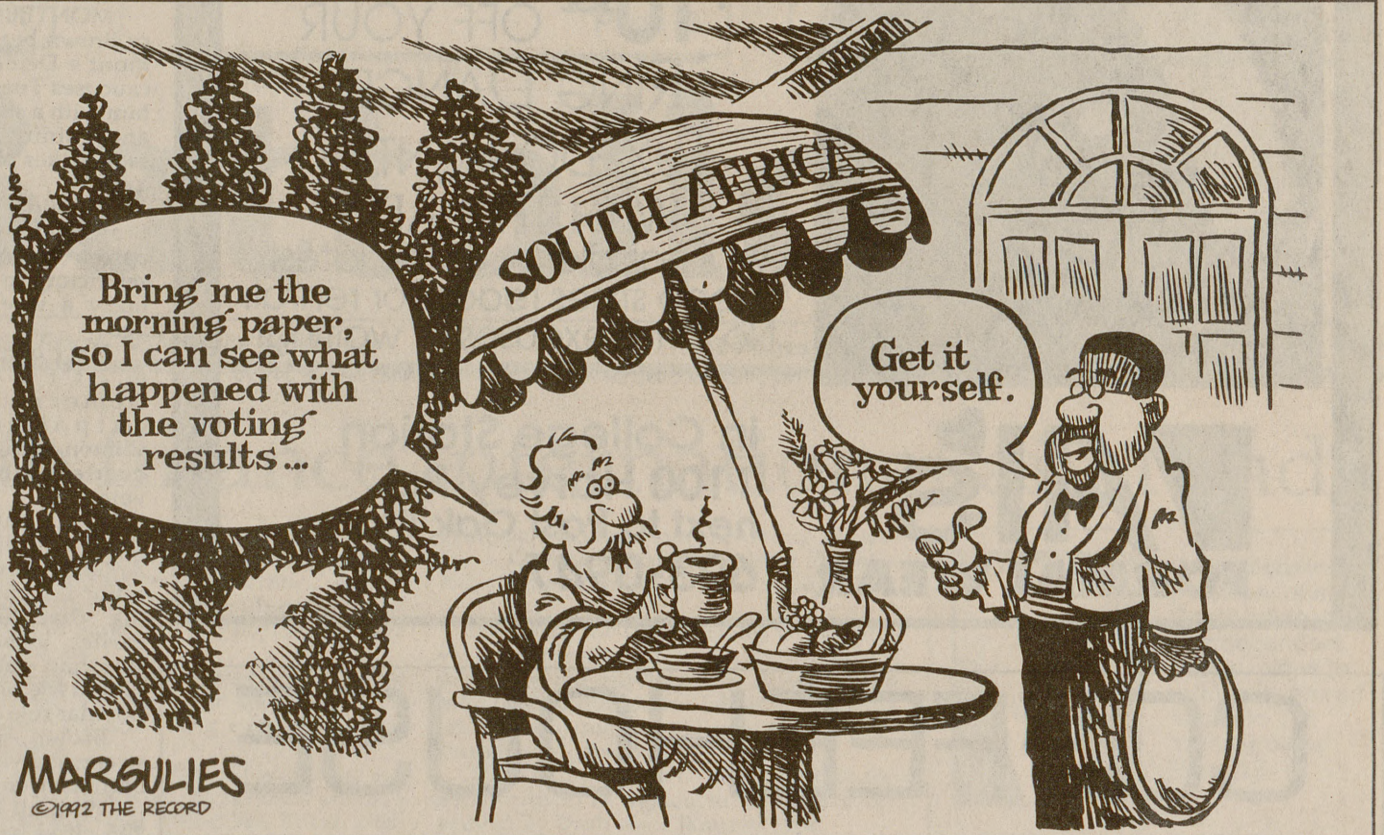
Every candidate obviously takes the elections seriously. Once each person is in office, the influence they might impart on policy at Texas A&M will be important, as well as far reaching.

Voters should ask themselves if the candidates will continue questionable practices should they be elected.

If candidates feel they have a responsibility to their constituents, then they should start by conducting a campaign free from mud-slinging, dirty tricks and 11th-hour politics.

The bottom line is that these election stunts add up to a very serious matter. The voters need the information to make well-informed decisions. Student Government owes it to the students and themselves to clean themselves up from within.

This is a lesson to be learned now and carried into the future, as the gravity of the situation continues as we grow older and more responsible in our actions.



## For Cindy

### Reports, statistics fail to show how rape destroys a woman's life

A man rapes a woman every six minutes in this country. One woman out of three will face a sexual assault during her lifetime.

The statistics stagger the mind. The sheer volume numbs our empathy for the women who have had their lives ripped apart by this brutality.

They become a seemingly endless series of numbers and news items. We close our minds to the violence, turning to the next page or flipping the channels when yet another rape report bleeds into our consciousness.

We throw the word "rape" around as casually as we talk about the weather. But we cannot allow that to happen. The pain these savage attacks cause lingers for years, spreading from the victim to those who love and care for her. The hurt shatters trust and self-esteem.

It happened to Cindy, a young woman I loved as much as any young man could. Cindy studied dance and advertising at Texas Christian University. A native of Washington, she ventured on her own to Texas, a 20-year-old who dealt with a different climate and culture. Her strength, intellect and beauty overwhelmed me the second I met her at a keg party thrown by mutual friends. That party was her first social event in almost two months.

Six weeks earlier her date drove her to a rural part of Arlington, pulled her from her seat, pinned her to the hood of his car, tore the clothes from her body, mashed his body on

top of hers, forced his penis into her vagina and raped her.

The attack lasted for fewer than 30 minutes, but the rape lasted much longer. Six months after our first meeting, after we had grown very close, she told me the co-worker she thought was cute and funny raped her. I still remember the numbing sensation that hit me at that moment. But it answered many questions.

Cindy never would go with me to a secluded, romantic spot I know of close to TCU. She always seemed to prefer places with many people and lots of activity. When we would sit in her dorm room, always with the door partially ajar, it would take her a long while to eventually sit close to me. Holding her in my arms consumed enormous amounts of time, for she never seemed to relax as they closed around her body. A surprise kiss would result in an automatic, startled attempt for distance.

The night she told me of her rape, she also told me of how she expected a man to attack her if she left herself alone with him. She told me how she expected me to consider her as damaged goods and to walk away. At that moment I told her how much I loved her.

She accepted my offer and allowed me to sit through special counseling sessions with her, which focused as much on loved ones as they did on the rape victims. The session did not concentrate on forcing the women to relive the nights of their attacks. Cindy never told me the details of her rape. Instead, the sessions focused on facing the emotions these women had to contend with every day. The feelings of the others were eerily similar to the feelings Cindy described.

They all felt like they had been treated like some sexual plaything, a living tool to help their attackers ejaculate. Many felt like animals, as if

they had played the role of a mate for a stud horse. They wondered what they had done to deserve their victimization. They wondered what they had done to trigger the animal in their attackers. Amazingly they considered the attack their fault. Of course, they would say the blame did not rest with them. But when the counselor pushed them further, the truth of their feelings came out.

For Cindy, the sessions would have to come to an end. She suffered from fatigue, a side effect of the many sleepless nights she spent reliving the attack. She couldn't concentrate on her studies to keep her grades from plummeting. The stress of the attack made all the nagging problems college student face — money, time, relationships, classes — into monstrous burdens she couldn't overcome. She decided to leave TCU to return home. She needed to start over.

I shared her last night in Texas. We tried to make every minute count, knowing we would never see each other again. But when she left the next morning, a large part of my soul went with her.

I can only hope she has since subdued the demons that so tortured her. She deserves the best that life can offer. Her rapist has taken that from her, though. He stole what should have been the best time of her life and left her with a mountain of pain.

So when you next hear casual boasts of "doin' that bitch" or of "giving her what she really wants," don't let the scum get away with it. Let it know how it might feel to be molested, to be used as a pleasure toy.

Do it for all the women who have been raped. Do it for Cindy.

Boney is a senior education certification major



BRIAN BONEY

## Slapped wrist

### Tyson sentence insults rape victims

Last Friday, Judge Patricia Gifford sentenced an unrepentant Mike Tyson to three, 10-year sentences for one charge of rape and two charges of criminal deviate conduct for his rape of an 18-year old Miss Black America contestant. Gifford suspended four years from each count and ordered each of the terms to be served concurrently, bringing Tyson's total sentence to a paltry six years. This conviction sends a pathetic message about the seriousness of date-rape as a prosecutable crime in today's justice system.

Though the perception of rape as a violent crime is slowly changing and the possibility of securing a conviction is increasing, many people still maintain the opinion that a woman has asked to be violated by a stranger or even a friend, a position that is perhaps summed up best by Tyson himself.

"I didn't rape anyone. I didn't hurt anyone — no black eyes, no broken ribs," Tyson said. "When I'm in the ring, I break their ribs. I break their jaws. To me that's hurting someone."

To Desiree Lynn Washington, the woman he raped, Tyson hurt someone. The Tyson conviction demonstrates that date rape is in fact a serious

offense and cannot go unpunished. In a world where high-profile offenders often escape penalty or punishment, neither the money of heavyweight boxing, nor the skill of a high-powered attorney could refute Tyson's conviction or reduce his sentence further.

But the six-year total sentence, with a possible early release for parole, is a greater crime against women as a whole. Hopefully, such a high-profile conviction will make it easier for date rape survivors to come forward. The sentence, however, could make many women wonder why they should bother.

Ironically, on the same day that the Tyson decision was handed down, a man was sentenced in Bryan for 16 years for the acquaintance rape of a Texas A&M student. That length of sentence is much more appropriate for the crime.

When one in three women can expect to be sexually assaulted in their lifetimes and when one in 10 rapes is actually reported, these convictions are somewhat hopeful.

Until we treat rape as seriously as armed robbery and other violent crimes, women will continue to be targets for attack.

## Mail Call

### Med School full of gay harassment

It was with great interest that I read Ms. Sinclair-James' article on violence against homosexuals. As a lesbian, I have a vested interest: at no point in my life would I like to be physically assaulted or further harassed because of my sexuality. Sounds reasonable, doesn't it? Unfortunately, it is a continuing possibility. The harassment has taken many forms: from classmates telling homophobic jokes to giving out awards for the most anti-gay people in my medical school class to very explicit homophobic comments incorporated into the class notes. These are just a few of the incidents I have personally encountered.

It is reprehensible at this professional level that professionalism does not prevail. In this kind of atmosphere, it is no wonder that many medical students claim that they know no gay and lesbian people (ergo: they do not exist in their sphere). Who would want to be so vulnerable in such a hostile environment?

Ms. James, in her article, alluded to the many supposed moral and biblical injunctions that are used to justify violence and harassment against homosexuals. This is a very provocative line of reasoning. For myself, those questions have been answered. Loving a woman is the most natural thing for me, and statistically, loving a person of the same sex is a norm for 1 in 10 people. It is unfortunate that I and

the vast majority of homosexuals live in a society that is both oppressive and demeaning to their personhood. I think that it does not necessarily take a pro-homosexual stance to support human rights: i.e. to respect a person's right not to be physically or verbally assaulted and harassed.

I again commend Ms. Sinclair-James on her timely article and her stance on human rights.

Salma S. Khan  
Medical 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.

