

The Battalion Editorial Board

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

After orbiting space for 10 months, I've looked forward to Gorbachev's welcoming me back...

GORBY IS OUT...

to the Soviet Union...

THE SOVIET UNION'S DISSOLVED...

Gorbachev's out?! Soviet Union dissolved?! POUR ME A VODKA!...

Vodka? Sure... that'll be 12 ZILLION rubles...

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Swing the vote

Ballot bias crosses line of responsibility

Last week's elections provided the Texas A&M student population with some insight on the inner workings of the Student Senate. But not until reading the ballots could A&M students see how far the Senate Election Commission has slipped.

The commission presented editorialized information on the ballots about a referendum, an action that is completely out of the bounds of fairness.

Two referenda on last week's ballot were biased in favor of the Senate's position. The Special Events Center referendum clearly presents this bias.

It states, "Our present coliseum, G. Rollie White, was built in 1954. It contains only 7,000 seats and is not equipped to handle the entertainment needs of a major university. The construction of a modern 12,500-seat Special Events Center would allow for the presentation of rock concerts, ice shows, and other special arena shows as well as basketball games, graduation ceremonies and Muster."

The commission presented a rosy picture of a desperately needed addition to the campus. Voters who

first read of the Special Events Center while polling were not given the down sides of such a center, such as the exorbitant cost and a serious question of A&M's need for the complex.

The other referendum was tilted much the same way. "The Student Center Usage Fee is currently \$20/semester-\$10/summer session. The University Center has expanded and costs have increased due to both the additional space and inflation. This fee has not increased since 1986."

Again, there is no statement of the opposing side of the issue, such as one questioning the need for expansion.

There are solid arguments for and against both issues. But the commission forced only one opinion on voters.

Student Government and specifically the Election Commission should refrain from editorializing on ballots.

Student Government has an obligation to print objective ballots which provide students with the information they need to make an intelligent decision about the issues before them.

By the numbers

Statistics show just what the statistician wants them to show

Mark Twain said there are three kinds of lies: "Lies, damned lies, and then there are statistics." Guess what my column is about?

I was going to write that column about something serious, like life, but an article in the New York Times Book Review piqued my thoughts toward another direction.

The review in question concerned itself with a book on the battle of the sexes. The book's premise stated that while some authors use statistics to "prove" some huge disparities between the male and female psyche, the statistics were warped to get this gap.

One study cited in the book centered around reaction to a picture of a man and woman embracing. Men, it seems, are twice as likely as women to view the photo negatively, as somehow threatening. This suggests a huge gap between men and women in the intimacy department. Before we get into discussions comparing males to pigs again, take note that the actual numbers display a different conclusion.

Just over 15 percent of the males in the study and about 8 percent of the women reacted to the photo negatively. True, about twice as many men as women found the

picture threatening, but these numbers hardly indicate male emotional problems of an epidemic scale. The numbers, when seen in their entirety, indicate quite the opposite: the vast majority of men and women have no problem with intimacy or relationships. Now I don't feel quite so out of place when I don't act like a male pig.

We see and use statistics constantly, especially in the media. We are shown colorful pie and bar charts of numbers on television and inside the Batt. Clinton's doing well by these numbers, Brown's up and coming with other numbers. And we believe them, because numbers can't lie.

But the numbers do lie, as they did in Twain's time, because we are rarely shown all the numbers.

Election years flood us with numbers. The latest poll results are everywhere, and Clinton (or whoever is the political flavor of the week) is edging out Brown (or whoever is the political underdog/outside of the week) in New York (or whatever the state of the week). Clinton may be ahead of Brown, but NOTA (none of the above) usually beats them both.

The ugly truth is not necessary, especially if it forces the republic to think. The statistics are presented to sway the hearts and minds of the populace, to help the Remocrats or Democrats stay in power for another few years. Rational thought about what the numbers mean could be disastrous. We might find ourselves resorting to debate about, perish the thought, issues. Far better to keep the proletariat minds on the persons with whom Clinton (or Bush,

if you've been keeping up with the Clinton campaign) has had an extramarital liaison.

So I don't keep harping on politics, I'll note here that advertising twists statistical "facts" around whenever expedient. Buick ran some ads a few months ago comparing its new Roadmaster to a Lincoln Town Car. The Buick compared engines by stating its V-8 has 5.7 liters of displacement, while the Lincoln's V-8 measures only 4.6 liters. Buick conveniently failed to mention that the Lincoln engine is completely new and has more horsepower and a bigger engine than the larger Buick engine. But bigger is better, of course.

Like Twain said, "First get your facts straight. Then you can twist them all you want." Or something like that.

Why do the powers that be use these tactics on the general population? The numbers game works. Few people are willing to search for the real truth about a presidential candidate. The information is readily available, but the search would require treacherous endeavors like reading. And so an elect few of us will dig through the numbers and enlighten ourselves, and the rest will go on being led like proverbial lambs, to be spoon fed the desires of the powers that be. Nothing will change until the proletariat gets smarter.

Hmm. The powers that be have nothing to worry about. Pardon my optimism.

DeShazo is a junior electrical engineering major



Jon DeShazo

Gift of life

Organs could have saved other children

Last week, a baby girl died in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. She had been born 10 days earlier without a brain or skull.

Theresa Ann Campo Pearson was born with only a partial brain stem, which kept her heart and lungs working. The best prognosis for the child was for her to live two weeks. Her parents made a difficult decision they hoped would make something good come from tragedy. They attempted to have the child taken off the minimal life support she had been on since birth, so her organs could be removed and stored for later donation. Doctors warned that the needed and potentially useful organs would deteriorate with the rest of the child's body if they waited to remove them until she died naturally in the coming weeks.

The parents felt their child was not really alive, and were hoping to give other children, and their families the gift of life. While they had been robbed of a child, the Pearson's wanted to ensure others were not. The courts of Florida, however, would not allow the removal from life support on the basis

that the child was breathing on her own, and therefore alive.

When the child died, the only organs that might have been useful were her corneas. The rest had deteriorated too much to be useful.

The Pearson's have said, though, that they will continue their legal fight.

The courts of Florida, and other states, should reconsider their stance in rare instances such as this. Of course, this case also raises an ugly specter: people breeding deformed children to be butchered and their parts sold. This is not an option or what the Pearson's are hoping to achieve. It is up to the legislatures in each state to make sure no one can use such a noble effort solely for monetary gain.

When circumstances go out of control and tragedies happen, such as the one that struck the Pearson's, the courts should show compassion and look past the letter of the law. When the body becomes merely a shell, with no life or even a chance, the family must be allowed to turn the death of a child into a chance at life for someone else.

Mail Call

No government abortion funding

We are writing this letter in response to The Battalion's editorial "Correct Reversal" in the March 25 newspaper. We have one question to ask: "Why is it that the very people who say government should stay out of abortion are the same ones who want the government to pay for them?"

Bill Pilkington
Class of '94
Dave Pilkington
Class of '95

nonsense and make Texas A&M a better place for the students.

There are some articles that are good in The Battalion, but there are some that advocate and support issues that are immoral and unsociable by society.

What has happened to Aggie values and traditions?

Paul Bruce
Class of '93

Aggie pride fails some yell leaders

It appears ironic how every day, the local community proudly boasts about the true spirit and high integrity of Texas A&M as well as how world class and diverse this university claims to be. Yet, on the same breath, such individuals have the audacity to downgrade and insult a fellow Aggie in his moment of victory as one of Aggieland's 1992-1993 senior yell leaders. As maturing adults, preparing for real-world endeavors, one would not expect to encounter the behavior of immature, haphazard adolescents. However, in the hours following the election results, I am willing to overturn this assumption. Of course, no one in their right mind enjoys defeat, especially after long hours of hard work.

But voicing rude and degrading remarks toward a re-elected official and his friends is not exactly a reasonable and valid action - not by true world-class Aggies, if such individuals exist. For

the past two years I've dwelled within this community. I have constantly heard the same rhetoric about Aggies helping other Aggies and the strong compassion present within the hearts and minds of this heavily-bonded student body. Yet, I find this difficult to comprehend when I hear racially-oriented insults and any other demeaning comments toward someone who is supposedly one in the same with all.

To be world class material means to be universal; accepting the ideas and beliefs of all and extending one's reach to all (the Corps, fraternities, non-regs, faculty, minorities, etc.) who function and contribute in the progression of this institution. If we wish to call our home, Texas A&M, such a title, we need to first ask ourselves if we, as individuals, alone are world class.

Vincent Aguilar
Class of '94

Stop graffiti on campus

On the morning of Wednesday, April 1, I was leaving Leggett Hall to go to breakfast. The minute I got outside, what do I see? Chalk graffiti all over the sidewalk and front steps of Leggett. It was apparently someone's 21st birthday and her friends decided to surprise her. This is all well and good, but as a resident, I do not appreciate this one bit. I believe that other ways can be found that would not deface the outside of a building on campus (not to mention the oldest one).

No, this is not the only time someone was

written on sidewalks. But this is definitely the worst I have seen, and since I do live in Leggett, it is like it was done to my home. This not only angers me, but makes me wonder about how much pride these people have in Texas A&M. How does this kind of behavior portray us to visitors of the campus?

Come on Aggies. Let's show a little pride in the appearance of our campus. A lot of work goes into keeping it clean. Let's not trash it with chalk graffiti.

One more question: are you going to clean up the mess you made?

Donna L. Prewitt
Class of '95

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.

Battalion unfairly attacks Clevenger

The cartoon that depicted Ty Clevenger was in bad taste. Whoever was involved in this should talk one-on-one with Ty Clevenger. This complicates matters more, not helps them.

Some of the articles in the newspaper support things that are truly not accepted by most of the society as a whole. The articles also condemn those who are trying to put a stop to this