

Time for Bush to take offensive in campaign



Jon DeShazo

I wrote Dave Barry last week to get one of his campaign stickers. I also await the answer to the question I posed to him: since Perot has dropped out of the race, can I just scratch out "Perot" and insert "Dave Barry" on November's ballot?

The Olympics coverage has severely attenuated the media's normally hyperactive coverage of the political process, leaving me to scour the back pages for any sign of political life in George Bush.

Actually, in the past week I haven't done any scouring, since I've had much more pressing concerns weighing on my consciousness. But I rest assured that my favorite newspaper, the Wall Street Journal (surely you didn't think it was The Batt), would have given me notice of any registerable vital signs in our illustrious one (and future?) president.

Instead of giving us something tangible to chew on (proverbially, of course), Bush's elusive behavior and the Olympic-sized media blitz in Barcelona have given some of us time to think undisturbed about November's election.

Talk, talk, talk

I base the rest of this column on the assumption that Bill Clinton and Eco-Boy Wonder Al Gore — and especially the Democratic Party — do not deserve to win the 1992 presidency. Clinton and Gore's attempts to move their campaign and their party away from the Democratic National Flaming Liberal Image are inadequate. Their talk of moving away from "tax and spend" is just that — talk.

The party cannot, in the words of Crossfire's John Sununu, claim to denounce "tax and spend" on one page of the party platform, then discuss "tax" on the next page and "spend" on the next. The Democratic Party may be moving toward a generational leadership hand-off, but the new, young Party just wants more environmental legislation.

And since Perot is out of the picture, we voters who actually care about economic growth are left with only one choice: George Herbert Walker Bush, who is presently hibernating in the mountains. He briefly appeared last week saying something about getting mad at the Democrats, but that sighting turned out to be Elvis in disguise.

Why did our illustrious president decide to keep quiet until the Republican National Convention? And why did the Battalion elect to send actual reporters instead of me, a columnist who mainly wanted to try to meet Dave Barry? The mind boggles at all the implications.

Should Bush leave?

Bush is nowhere to be found at a time when his image (and standings in the opinion polls) is slipping into oblivion. And his absence has led some conservatives to wonder if he should drop out of the race.

Choosing to not run again has some interesting implications. After all, Bush is

seen as a nice guy who isn't doing anything for the country. Dropping out gracefully would leave a positive image as his presidential legacy. Running, and losing, could give him an image about as poor as Carter's. Running, and barely winning, sets the stage for a poor second term, one that pits a lame duck against an entrenched Democratic Congress.

Image problems

Second terms do little for an ex-president's image. Bush has been floundering about for a year now with little visible direction. Whether this image is his fault or not, the image could stick into his next four years; he might be unable to do anything at all with Congress, which is noted for its ability to attack lame ducks like buzzards.

Stepping aside could give the Republicans an opportunity to nominate a formidable counter to the pretty Clinton/Gore ticket. Head of Housing and Urban Development Jack Kemp could provide the nation with the new leadership the Democrats are trying to claim while keeping us conservatives happy. Dan Quayle would (you know this already) have no chance whatsoever.

Since Bush's withdrawal is unlikely and possibly inexpedient anyway, I await with mixed anticipation his speech at the upcoming convention. I foresee two possible outcomes: the speech will be absolutely phenomenal, rocketing Bush and Quayle up the polls and back into the White House with a real mandate from the proletariat; or Bush falls flat on his face (possibly tossing his cookies for effect), sending him into the record books as another failed president.

I sound pessimistic; but I'm really hopeful for the GOP convention, if for no other reason I don't want Clinton to get his hands on the White House. I have nightmares of Gore coming to my house at night and taking away my baby — my old, anti-PC Ford Mustang (no EGR, no catalytic converter, no emissions control of any kind for that matter... sorry, just had to gloat a little).

Time to strike back

It's time for President Bush to take the offensive, to give the populace some tangible goals. It's time to apologize for breaking his famous "no new taxes" pledge.

It's time for Bush to expose Congress and the Democrats that control it. Who needs Willy Horton when we have Teddy Kennedy to blast?

Bush is losing; it's his fault, and only he can rescue his next term. I hope he can reclaim the presidency over the Clinton-Gore ticket.

I don't want to pay taxes out the proverbial wazoo for the next decade. I don't want the US to turn into Sweden before we find out what the Swedes have learned about socialism (it still doesn't work, in case you haven't been keeping up with Sweden's problems).

Get with the program, Bush. End of discussion.

DeShazo is a senior electrical engineering major and a columnist for The Battalion.

A look back at readers' responses



Mack Harrison

As summer draws to a close and the fall semester bears down upon us, we reflect back on the highlights of the season. My summer stint as opinion editor ends this week, but before I fly off into the sunset to catch the Pigskin Classic in California, I want to take one last look at the semester.

I came to the opinion page straight from city desk, where I played editor in the spring semester. It was rather stressful, and Editor Todd Stone suggested a change of pace.

It certainly was. Reader feedback showed us that whether they agreed or disagreed with us (mostly the latter), people were thinking about what we wrote.

We featured two viewpoints on abortion, which certainly drew lots of letters. Readers on both sides of the debate attacked the opposing viewpoint, and even the opposing columnist.

When we ran side-by-side columns on AIDS, however, we only received one letter on the subject — but that one letter did draw a response.

It seems that most issues we took a serious stand on did not seem to matter as much to the readers. Editorials on the administration removing rape sketches or closing the Student Attorney's office did not elicit as much response from you as the columns did.

We debuted, and you defined and debated, the term "Femi-Nazi." One column had animal rights advocates howling in protest, and one reader growled back. We had pro-nukes and no nukes.

One columnist told us, "It sucks to be you." Readers responded with, "No, it sucks to be you."

We had unique insights into South Africa, from two different sources — and replies to those insights. (I still don't know if the shit flew or not.)

And take politics — PLEASE! Some people enjoy the election spectacle the way they'd watch a horse race. The rest of us look at it like we would a gory car wreck — in fascinated horror.

I'll say this, though: The letters and guest columns that dealt with politics and the elections were very well-written and thought-provoking.

Religion got airplay as well, enough that some wits began to call page five the "religion page."

Of course, we had the customary "Thank you, good Ag, for returning my wallet/ring/purse/boa constrictor" letters, and the equally traditional "PTTS

sucks" letter. We even ran an Aggie joke. However, there were no pro- or anti- Corps/Greek/Bonfire/etc. letters. I'll leave those for the sucker that has this job in the fall.

But before I go, I'd like to thank each of my columnists for providing quality work every week. They covered new ground and old cliches, but most of all they made us think. Anas, Anthony, Jason, Jon, Paul, Stacy and Dr. Gastel, thank you all for helping me make the opinion page come alive this summer. Bill, great cartoons, and thanks for filling in when I was too lazy to write a column. Todd, thanks for the editorial writing and the advice. Jason, good luck, sucker (you'll need it).

And *muchas gracias* to you, the readers — especially those of you who took the time to pen your own opinions and send them to us. This is *your* paper, and you're taking good care of it with your letters and guest columns.

Remember, our last day of publication before the interim is Thursday, so if you want to get a final word in, get it here by Wednesday.

My work is done here. See you at Duddy's.

Harrison is a senior journalism major and opinion page editor for The Battalion, at least through the rest of the week.



Nuclear power: Unsafe alternative

GUEST COLUMN

Lara Mears for TEAC

Jason Loughman's promotion of nuclear power was foolhardy in both its basic premise and in his light-hearted and narrowly-focused treatment of a serious national concern — energy policy.

In 1990, less than 5 percent of U.S. electricity was produced from oil, and less than 1 percent from foreign oil. Ninety percent of this oil-generated electricity represents peaking power, for which nuclear power is not suited. Residual oil left over from other processes is used for electricity generation. The U.S. would import the same amount of oil even if none were used to produce electricity, which is the only commercial energy form nuclear reactors can produce.

Furthermore, oil and uranium are both non-renewable resources. The U.S. is as dependent on foreign uranium as it is on foreign oil. Nearly half the uranium used in U.S. reactors is imported, mostly from the former Soviet Union.

Secrecy has obscured a deadly legacy left by uranium mining. U.S. government agencies deliberately kept secret from 15,000 American uranium miners their job's radiation hazard. Over 400 miners have died of lung cancer so far, five times the non-miners' rate. Taxpayer subsidies to uranium mining companies will be used to clean up the tons of toxic uranium mine tailings dumped in areas like the Navajo and Ak Rivers.

The public is largely unaware that uranium mining, processing and enrichment require fossil fuels which contribute to CO2 emissions. A Department of Energy study of the total fuel cycle found that boiling water nuclear reactors produce 7.8 metric tons of CO2 per gigawatt-hour (t/g-h), more than wind (7.0 t/g-h), photovoltaic (5.0 t/g-h), and solar-thermal

(4.0 t/g-h). Biomass (wood) combustion coupled with regrowth actually reduces CO2 concentration by 160 t/g-h.

Mr. Loughman greatly understated the adverse health effects of nuclear plant accidents. Unusual clusters of leukemia, birth defects and hypothyroidism have been reported around the Three Mile Island plant. The Chernobyl disaster killed thousands of people, left untold numbers of people contaminated by radiation, and destroyed the Lapland culture by poisoning the reindeer population.

In addition to Chernobyl and Three Mile Island, cancer clusters have been noted around other U.S. reactors, statistics with human faces the U.S. government and nuclear industry successfully keep hidden.

The Massachusetts Department of Health concluded that adults living and working within ten miles of Boston Edison's Pilgrim reactor had a four times greater risk of contracting leukemia during 1973-83 than those living elsewhere, and that the risk increased the closer one lived and worked to the plant.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission admitted in 1985 that the odds of a severe core meltdown in the next 20 years is 45 percent. Although the nuclear industry promises new inherently safe reactors, it continues to hide behind the Price-Anderson Act, which limits the industry's liability if a power plant accident occurs.

In Texas, the Comanche Peak nuclear plant was fined \$50,000 in 1991 for falsifying records. Recently it was revealed that Comanche Peak is continuing to install a fire barrier called Thermo-lag, even though their own tests showed Thermo-lag performs inadequately.

There are additional serious problems with nuclear power. There is no safe repository for nuclear waste, no satisfactory decommissioning of a large reactor.

Nuclear power is the foot in the door for nuclear weapons development in other countries, regular radioactive releases

from nuclear plants, attempts to deregulate radioactive waste through "linguistic detoxification," emergency evacuation planning, \$45 billion in subsidies for research and development alone, relicensing of aging and brittle reactors, government deception, and human error — an uncontrollable variable.

Fortunately, there are alternatives. Wind power potential in Texas is 250,000 megawatts, four times the current electrical generating capacity. Pacific Northwest Labs reports that by 1995 the U.S. will be technologically capable of producing more electricity from wind than from all current generation sources. The price of wind power electricity per kilowatt-hour went from 25 cents in 1980 to 6-8 cents in 1989 — without government subsidies.

Widespread use of energy efficient light bulbs and lighting designs alone could save the equivalent of 40 large nuclear power plants. The Rocky Mountain Institute, an independent energy think-tank, says each dollar spent on energy efficiency is up to seven times more effective at reducing global warming gases as a dollar spent on nuclear power.

There is also solar energy, ocean thermal energy conversion, ocean wind systems, tide power, hydrogen energy systems and energy savings from recycling, highly efficient motors, and more plant-based diets.

In most parts of the country there are substantial energy reserve margins, which gives us time to develop sensible energy alternatives to coal, oil, and nuclear power — a strategy the Texas Environmental Action Coalition strongly supports. TEAC also encourages campus, community and national effort to promote and implement energy conservation measures to make the best use of whichever source we do use.

Mears is president of the Texas Environmental Action Coalition.

Mail Call

Sinister column on sororities

Mr. LoBaido's opinion column on Monday, August 3, 1992 is one of the most sinister yet I have seen in the Battalion. Apparently he views all women in sororities as bubble-headed, incompetent blondes. Obviously he has not met the women who make the other half of these organizations: the women who maintain the day-to-day existence, provide the reach-out and community care for which these groups are known. My undergraduate career was "saved" by the care and compassion of one of these women, for whom I am eternally grateful.

Granted, there will always be women like Devaney, but before you class all sorority women as this, I suggest you look further within these organizations for the other half.

Mr. LoBaido, it is apparent that you live in a dark, cold world.

C.J. Peoples
Graduate Student

Spell-checkers check out fine

The article by Barbara Gastel on computer spell-checkers, in the July 30, 1992 Battalion, deserves comment. Some examples presented included abbreviations and place names. These "misspellings"

could not even be checked if one used a dictionary. One would need a map or atlas to check the spelling of place names and a telephone directory for company names or last names. Slang words would also be a problem with a normal dictionary and a computer spell-checker.

I find spell-checkers useful, even for technical documents. So as not to use "to" when I meant to type "too," I use a grammar-checker (which includes a spell-checker). At the very least, these tools (grammar- and spell-checkers) are a way for us lesser mortals to think about spelling and writing more correctly.

I believe that the article may lead students and staff in thinking that all spell- and grammar-checkers are useless. This is not always the case.

M. J. Savage
Professor, Department of Soil and Crop Sciences

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 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 a letter will appear. Letters may be brought to The Battalion at 013 Reed McDonald, sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111 or faxed to 845-2647.