

ELECTION '92

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Miller, Riggs stress trust in sheriff's race

By REAGON CLAMON

Reporter of THE BATTALION

The two candidates for sheriff of Brazos County have emphasized trust throughout their campaign — trust of themselves, and mistrust of their opponent.

Lt. Bobby Riggs, head of the Bryan Police Department detective division and the challenger, has brought attention to incumbent Sheriff Ronnie Miller's 1990 gambling conviction as evidence of Miller's inability to serve a third term.

"Myself, I would want someone who can be a role model," Riggs said. "He's been found guilty by his peers in court. I know it's on appeal, but I believe we need a role model that kids can follow."

Miller was found guilty of gambling, a class C misdemeanor, and fined \$1 by a Bryan jury in 1990. Miller is currently awaiting appeal.

"Shoplifting is also a misdemeanor," Riggs said. "I don't



Riggs

think people in our community want their elected officials breaking laws their sworn to uphold."

Miller insists that he is being railroaded by Riggs' supporters.

"What happened to the right of innocence, and the right to call witnesses and prove it in court,"

Miller said. "It's been two years. Capital murderers go to trial in a year. It's unreal."

Miller said he was told by several law enforcement officials that the gambling house in which he was charged with playing dice at was totally legal, and that he was there only to get information for an investigation. Miller also said he had 12 witnesses that were prepared to swear that he was telling the truth, but the court wouldn't allow it.

"This is my reputation and my pride," Miller said. "When this is over, there's going to be some people embarrassed, and it's not going to be me."

Miller said Brazos County voters should not trust Riggs with a \$4.1 million sheriff's budget due to Riggs' financial inexperience.

Miller said Brazos County desperately needs to create more space for its prisoners, and he has shown the experience to get it done right and get it done cheap.

"We're back in a crisis situation," Riggs said. "We're going to have to build another wing on

that jail, and it's going to cost \$1.5 million to build it. Do you want to trust your tax money to someone with no experience?"

Riggs said his administrative experience as head of the Bryan Police detective division at the Bryan Police Department has given him the background to work with a large budget.

"I believe I have the management ability to operate the office of sheriff," Riggs said. "It's been said that I have no ability to set a budget, but I do participate in the budget prepared for the investigative division."

Riggs said his experience in budgeting has come from outside of law enforcement as well.

"For about the past 10 years, I have been the treasurer and on the budget committee in my church," Riggs said. "I am a family man, so I guess I have to have budget skills."

During the campaign, Riggs has pointed to a petition signed by 182 local criminal justice and law enforcement officials as a vote of confidence by his peers.



Miller

Miller said the petition is meaningless because it was passed around in the police department where Riggs works, and it doesn't represent all peace officers in the area.

"There's 470 police officers and

jailers, another 150 criminal justice officers," Miller said. "Take that number, divide it by the number that signed the petition (182), and you get 29 percent. Is that overwhelming support? I'll take 71 percent any day."

Miller also said several of the names on the petition were of officers he had fired or disciplined in the past. He said many of those people signed it just to spite him.

Riggs disagrees.

"I don't think there's any truth in that," he said. "I think the people knew that I did not personally circulate the petition, and it stated up on the top what it was going to be used for — to be put in the paper."

Riggs said the officers who signed the petition believe in him and support him.

"I have looked at it over the past few weeks and I know the people on there, and I think they know me," Riggs said. "They know me to be an honest trustworthy person they can work with."



RANDY NICHOLS/The Battalion

Students wait to vote early in the MSC Thursday afternoon. The last day for early voting was Friday. Election Day is Tuesday and polling places will be open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Third parties weigh in last

Voter loyalty hampers smaller organizations, expert says

By WILL HEALY

Reporter of THE BATTALION

Despite voter discontent and the popularity of Ross Perot, third-party candidates will not play a major role in the future of American politics, said Dr. George Edwards, the director of the Texas A&M Center for Presidential Studies.

Edwards said third-party candidates do not fare well in general elections for three reasons.

First is attachments. Though party ties are not as strong as they were in the past, people are attached to the two (Republican and Democratic) parties, Edwards said.

Second, people do not like to waste their votes. America has a "winner take all" system in the electoral college, and, according to Edwards, even if Perot comes in second in the popular vote in every state, he will receive no electoral votes. This leaves little in-

centive for third parties, he said.

The third reason for the ineffectiveness of third-party candidates is the narrow political spectrum in the United States.

"We're a rarity among developed nations because we don't have a large leftist party, and that's an indicator of a narrow political spectrum," said Edwards. "The differences among Americans in public policy are not nearly as great as differences among the Italians or French."

John Kormylo, chairman of the Libertarian Party of Harris County, stressed the importance of the influence of third party candidates and said the Libertarians could provide the swing vote in a general election.

"If everyone who voted Libertarian in the (1990) governor's race voted Republican instead, the Re-

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Debaters discuss media coverage

By ERIK MERK

Special to THE BATTALION

The media's coverage of this year's presidential candidates was the focus of a debate last Thursday in the Memorial Student Center.

The debate, titled "America's Right to Know: Politics, Ethics, and the Media," was sponsored by the Texas A&M Chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists in order to give voters

an insight into what has been one of the most volatile elections in history.

The debaters were Dr. Don Tomlinson, associate professor of journalism — media law, representing the media's position, and Dr. Charles Wiggins, professor of political science, representing the candidates, with Dr. Gary Halter, associate professor of political science, serving as moderator.

Points discussed were the fairness and accuracy of the media

coverage. Topics discussed included the press' handling of the alleged Gennifer Flowers-Bill Clinton affair and Ross Perot's accusations about Republicans possibly breaking up his daughter's wedding last summer before he pulled out of the election in June; ethics of media support for a candidate, including editorial endorsement of candidates; a liberal or conservative bias in media coverage, including the biases of large news bodies versus smaller news orga-

nizations; and what information should not be for public consumption about the candidates.

The topic that brought about the most discussion was the issue of the "new" media: talk shows like Larry King and Donahue, formats that lack follow-up questions like MTV's "Choose or Lose" forums, and the general avoidance of the "traditional" media, such as "Meet the Press."

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Bush, Clinton truant on education issue

School debate mostly campaign rhetoric, professor says

By BRANDI JORDAN

Reporter of THE BATTALION

Underneath the recent hoopla surrounding the race for the presidency, President George Bush's and Gov. Bill Clinton's education plans have gone largely unmentioned beyond the standard political rhetoric.

Dr. Bryan Jones, a political science professor at Texas A&M, explained the silence surrounding the education could be attributed to the fact that education is a function of state and local agencies.

"But, the candidates have to talk about it a little," Jones said. "In my day, it used to be campaign rhetoric about mom, baseball and apple-pie. Today, the rhetoric is shifted towards the economy, the deficit and education."

To satisfy the inquiries and ease the concerns of voters, Bush and Clinton have each addressed education, but the details about both of their plans have remained sketchy at best.

Most of the information concerning the education plans of the two major contenders for the presidency has been presented to voters in the form of printed campaign materials.

Bush's education plan was printed in a brochure. The plan is titled "America 2000." Bush's plan calls for six education goals to be met nationwide. These six national education goals include:

- By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn.

- By the year 2000, the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.

- By the year 2000, American students will leave grades four, eight and 12 having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, history and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning

and productive employment in our modern economy.

- By the year 2000, U.S. students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.

- By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

- By the year 2000, every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.

Phil Meuret, president of College Republicans, said Bush's "America 2000" is the best possible plan, but conceded that Clinton's plan has merit.

"Bush's plan is more reasonable," Meuret said. He's using the school system that's in place and reforming it. It simply will be more affordable.

"(Voters) need to see what you can afford. See

how much money's going to be available. From military cuts and elsewhere."

Jones said, however, the main differences between the two candidates' education plans center around school choice, not cost.

"Bush wants to issue tax vouchers to allow parents to use the vouchers to choose between public, private and parochial schools," he said. "Clinton, though he believes in school choice, just wants choice within the same school districts."

Another difference, Jones said, has been Clinton's National Service Trust Plan. Jones said the idea of a national service plan has been around since 1978 when Ted Kennedy introduced it as an alternative to the draft.

"Clinton's plan involves pooling money into one college fund," Jones said. "Then, he'll tinker with the way students pay it back. They can either pay it back as a percentage of their income over an undetermined number of years or they can pay it back

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