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The Battalion



100 years at Texas A&M

Questionable election Re-vote only solution to debate

The Student Government Judicial Board's decision Monday not to hold a re-vote following the discovery that ballots were altered during last week's student body elections casts a shadow of doubt over the entire election process.

The confusion centers around the ballot for senior yell leader. According to an appeal for a re-vote, the instructions were vague, which resulted in many students filling out the ballot improperly.

Election commission officials said they were concerned that if the ballots were not altered, 10 to 40 percent of those ballots would have been discarded because they could not be tabulated by computer.

Two appeals were filed - one called a re-vote for the entire election, another called for a new senior yell leader election.

The appeals cited the following problems with last week's election:

- Vague instructions for the senior yell leader position on the ballot.
- Election Commissioners "interpreted" individual votes by erasing and remarking ballots.
- Ballots left unattended.
- Sample ballots and voting instructions were not posted at all polling places.

These are significant breaches of what is supposed to be a fair and secure election process.

Worse yet, one election commis-

sioner admitted that ballots were altered in the 1992 races, which compromises the integrity of last year's election.

But on early Monday morning, the Judicial Board ruled there would not be a re-vote because the Election Commission acted in good faith. Does this mean it's OK to violate rules as long as one's heart is in the right place?

Further, the Judicial Board ruled that these violations did not affect

the outcome or integrity of the election. This point is certainly debatable because no member of the Judicial Board is an expert on mass election processes.

In fairness, the Election Commission is faced with a tremendous burden in holding a large-scale election so mistakes are understandable.

Still, Student Government is faced with a serious perception that the election was unfair and incompetently handled.

This issue must be addressed. Candidates and voters deserve student body elections that are handled fairly because these positions provide students with their only "official" voice in the A&M System.

Student Government must accept the burden of proving that the election process was equitable, and a late-night promise from the Judicial Board won't cut it.

The only way to remove any doubts is to hold another election.

Time for a change in attitude Education, awareness break down stereotypes

This semester has been full of changes for me. One of the most enjoyable, and obvious, is that I'm writing for the Battalion. Even though this has been the most visible change, it is matched in importance by numerous other gradual and subtle changes.

I gave away my pet cat in January. I watched the inauguration of a president that I voted for, and then I watched the nation's response to the president I voted for.

Yet, there is one significant change that I am just beginning to fully realize: I got a new roommate, Matt, in January.

Yeah, sure, in a college town like this people are always getting new roommates. Some people I know change roommates as often as they change their underwear. No big deal, right? Well, this time it was a big deal, at least for me.

We have our regular roommate differences and similarities: He's a neat-freak while I'm just a shade better than a slob, and neither of us could boil water if our lives depended on it. But we still don't register as the normal Aggie roommates. The fact that he's straight and I'm not excludes us from the realm of "most A&M roommates."

Originally, I was quite worried about having a straight roommate for this semester. Up to now, I have been lucky enough to have all gay roommates. It would be the first time that I would share a house with a heterosexual.

A billion fears crossed my mind. Would he be gay-friendly? Would he bring his "girlfriend" over and publicly display affection in my living room? Would he throw the Bible at me? Would he ask me to color coordinate his outfits? Would he try to "convert" me? Would he be able to get along with my boyfriend? (oh, Hey Weazler!)

Living with Matt was going to pose all sorts of new problems. Don't get me wrong, straights aren't bad people... some of my best friends are straight, but hets, as we in the homo-world call them, can be so unpredictable.

But I soon decided to give it a try, because Matt met all the important prerequisites - he could pay bills.

Since the time he moved in, I have begun to realize that the issues I thought usually separated the gay and straight communities were quickly dissolving. Sexual orientation became the great non-issue.

Matt was OK with my being gay, and I was OK with

him being straight.

But now, upon reflection, I have begun to realize the greater social significance of this endeavor. Matt and I are just a microcosm of a social universe that is full of change. Discussions about homosexuality and related issues are now commonplace.

People are coming out of the closet left and right, and the neat thing is that nobody really cares. k.d. lang, Lily Tomlin, Elton John, comic-strip characters, and any number of military officers are stepping out of their closets and into modern America.

Yet, the reactions of modern Americans is almost insignificant compared to society's reactions to open homosexuals 30 years ago.

Times have changed.

I suppose that education has been the greatest influence on changing people's view of homosexuals. That brings us to the fact that this week is Gay Awareness Week, sponsored by Gay & Lesbian Student Services (GLSS) of A&M. Most students at A&M think that Gay Awareness Week is primarily for the homosexual community. I have never seen it that way. This week is a perfect chance for the heterosexual community to get involved with and learned about what homosexuals have to offer.

Gays and lesbians on this campus are not here to convert anyone or promote some elitist political agenda. We are here to get an education and, like every other student, to have fun.

Through the education of homophobes, we hope to break through the stereotypes and fears that prevent us from being able to enjoy college life to its fullest. And that is what the Awareness Week is all about - cutting through the fear and the lies of stereotypes.

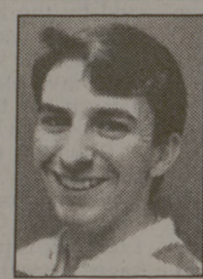
Once the stereotypes are destroyed and homosexuals are seen just as ordinary people, homosexuality will become the great non-issue. At that point there will be no need for GLSS or the Awareness Week, and the prejudice against homosexuals will be eliminated.

Yet, I suppose the sword of prejudice is sharp on both sides. I definitely learned my lesson. My fear and anxiety over living with a heterosexual was just as irrational and prejudiced as a heterosexual's fear of homosexuality.

I guess I owe Matt a thank-you for showing me my own ignorance. I also owe him for this month's rent.

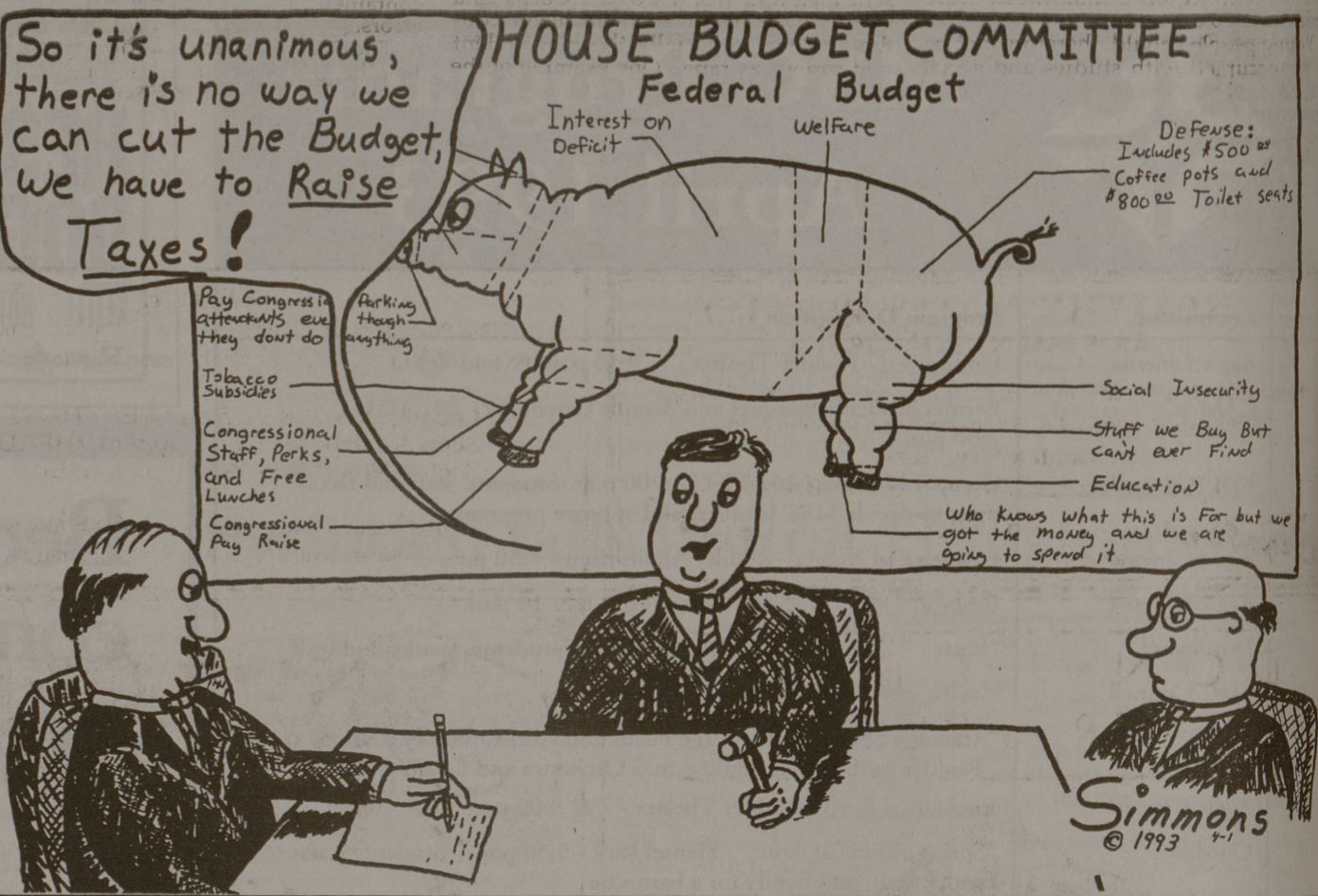
It's just a thought.

Scroggs is a senior English and philosophy major.



JOHN SCROGGS
Columnist

Campus Elections



Sexism through socialization, an invisible process

What do you do when the dishwasher breaks down? You slap her...

And on that note, the United States has made great strides in reducing the gap of inequality that separates women and men. It's a great thing that we can turn the clock back 100 years and see the progress that's been made. We can only imagine how "backwards" the mind set of 1893 must have been.

I'm grateful that we've evolved since those ol' days. However, this is where my praise stops. The truth is that in 2093, our great-great-grandchildren will be writing this same article. They'll be saying the same thing. In 2093, our grandkids will be able to imagine how "backwards" the mind set of 1993 was.

I'll give it to you straight: In this country, we are socialized to treat women as if



LAMAR HARRIS
Guest Columnist

they are second-class citizens. That's right. You, me, our relatives, bank tellers of Idaho, employees at Freebird's - all of us are socialized to treat females as if they are inferior. The reality that results from this socialization is the society of inequality in which we live. Why does this continue to be our reality?

The socialization process is mostly unconscious; therefore it is extremely dangerous. By and large, the above attitude towards females is standard procedure. It is sad because it is what we know. It is sick because it is the thought of the day - the social norm.

With the exception of cave dwellers, no one can fully avoid society's general message. From day one, gender is defined for us. We are told what it means to be a girl. We are told what it means to be a boy. As we develop into mature adults, we are reminded of the separate paths that men and women should travel. The outcome is that we have our present situation - mature society of inequality filled with women who desire equality and men who are constipated with emotions that society says should not be expressed (but that's another topic).

To support these abstract generaliza-

tions, let's talk about the influence of the socialization process that we know as pop culture. Its influence is inescapable. Take, for example, the Doe twins, Jane and John. Like most of us, they were raised in a house with a television. They grew up watching an average amount of television. A general image of women was portrayed through the tube. As the twins aged, this image was consistently pushed into their heads.

Now the J. Doe twins are 22 years old. They have seen more that two decades of females portrayed as puppets, something to look at, or as pieces of meat. To be sure, they have also seen Murphy Browns on the screen. But for every Murphy, there's a body of bodaciously big-chested, predominantly blonde, brainless and bimbo-voiced babes posing aside a macho man with the beer of his choice. This is what the twins know to be the norm in t.v. land.

If they are like most of us, it does not phase them to turn on the box and find Budweiser's bikini-fitted body parts selling brew. They might even completely buy into the message: John salivates in front of the television, and Jane fulfills her self-esteem through Maybelline Cosmet-

ics. Or, maybe they are like myself. The truth is finally registering that television is feeding us a lie.

A likely reaction is to think, "Oh, come on Lance, lighten up, man! It's just an image." True, I'm glad you said that. It is this image that holds three options for a person. A person can either be for, against, or apathetic about the image. The first option is that of the salivator, the second is that of the lie-rejector, and the third is that of the innocent by-stander. Most of us are innocent by-standers. It's not our fault that we don't view the lie as a lie. It's simply what our vulnerable little selves have always known.

Recently, I've realized that for most of my life, I have lived like an innocent by-stander. I'm finally being honest with myself in realizing that I have innocently accepted the lie. Last, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to go to topless and nude beaches in France. The French experience was a bit different from the old spring break experience at South Padre. In France, I did not see the pieces of flesh that my socialized mind had always seen at Padre. I was not participating in a horny parade. There were no gyrating women that shed their tops and cupped

and pressed their huge breasts together on top of a tan-line contest platform. There were no hormones dressed as people. It was simply a bunch of naked people passing time on the coast. There were no cages, so there was no reason to howl.

The process of socialization is very much like an undetected disease that slowly spreads throughout the body. In the end, they both amount to an incurable situation. All of us are lucky because it is not the end. I myself am in the process of treating the disease that society has passed on to me. We have to continually remind ourselves to throw away the garbage that society has dumped on us. We have to fight the sickness before it is incurable. I know that the writer of 2093 will look at Lamar Harris in 1993 and imagine how backwards he must have been. Someday, I'll be able to make the same reflection.

And on that note, what do you do when your dishwasher breaks down? You slap the - it rhymes with 'astard' and begins with a 'b.'

Harris is a senior speech communication major.