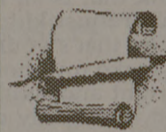


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The Battalion



100 years at Texas A&M

EDITORIAL

Corps election appeal

Lifting fines a good decision

The Battalion supports the Student Government Judicial Board decision to overturn an Election Commission ruling which imposed a fine of \$25 on 24 cadets for a violation of election rules.

The violation dealt with a Corps memorandum which listed the 24 Corps candidates running for office and suggested that cadets bring the list to help them fill out their ballots.

The memo did state that cadets are not required to vote for the listed candidates; however, the Election Commission labeled the memo as campaign literature and fined the cadets because it was distributed during illegal campaigning hours, even though the candidates had no involvement in the creation or distribution of the memo.

Fortunately, the Judicial Board decided that the memo was not campaign material and overturned the ruling after the cadets appealed as a group.

The fact is, however, that Student Government does not have any business poking into the affairs of other organizations, regardless of whether the memo was campaign material.

If the Corps, or any other group, wants to encourage its members to vote as a bloc, they should have that right. And "encourage" is the key word. Despite visions of underclassmen being forced to vote Corps, upperclassmen do not supervise voting and ballots are still secret. Any Corps freshman who wants to vote

for a non-reg is free to do so.

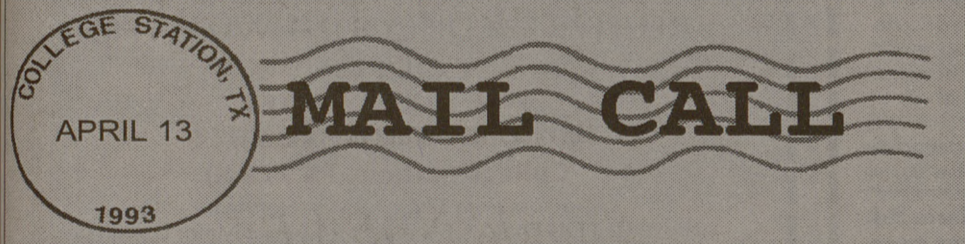
Any cadet who is really concerned about Student Government issues will probably vote along those lines and not on the basis of Corps membership. But many Corps members vote straight Corps simply because they want to support their own, and that is the right of any organization. This can be compared to voting straight Republican or straight Democrat in U.S. elections.

Assuming that the Corps should have the right to vote as a bloc, the Corps Staff should have the right to distribute lists of which cadets are running for office. Such a list should not be treated any differently than a flier listing which residence

hall members or Greeks are running. However, it seems that with an organized structure and 24 members running for office, the Corps - as cadet leaders claim - is being harassed for being organized. If the Election Commission is concerned about a bloc vote by 1,500 cadets then it should concentrate on motivating the other 38,500 students to vote. Five percent of the non-regs, voting as an anti-Corps bloc, could effectively remove all cadets from Student Government.

The Election Commission need not look too far into the Corps' affairs. With students calling for a re-vote after incidents of ballot-tampering and unattended ballots, it appears that the Commission has problems of its own to take care of.

Campus Elections



Election an exercise in incompetence

This past election was a poor exercise in ethics and competency by the Student Government Election Commission and the Judicial Board.

Under what circumstances would the Election Commission and/or Judicial Board see fit to invalidate an election? Ballot tampering by erasing and remarking ballots in an attempt to translate voter intent? Incompetent polling by insufficiently supervised polling places - lack of instruction for volunteers, and lack of supervisors at some polls? Ignoring established and official guidelines for election procedures? All of these have occurred.

None of the involved parties have denied these inexcusable actions. Their explanation of "acting in good faith" is not sound. If these breeches in ethics do not

constitute reasons for an invalidation, then what does? The published election results are a work of fiction by those who took it upon themselves to translate alleged voter mistakes. Unattended completed ballots are an obvious sign of a poorly run election and are reason enough to throw the attempt.

The issue at hand is whether the election rules were violated, and they were. If the election regulations were written with any attempt of enforcement, then those whose duty it is to enforce these rules should invalidate the election. These rules are not on a wish list; they were ratified by Student Senate.

Surely our Student Government can give us election results with some integrity. We see none in this one.

Steven Kutz
Class of '93

Accompanied by three signatures.

Coping with the aftermath of rape

Understanding family, friends help victims heal

Two years ago, I met a woman I'll call Melanie. Melanie is a funny, bouncy 22-year-old woman. I can't help but feel happy when I am around her. Although she is a confident and happy person today, she wasn't always this way. Three years ago, Melanie was raped.

The police found Melanie after the rapist left her. She had blacked out and woke up driving on the wrong side of the road. She was disillusioned, confused, numb and understandably very fearful. She showed all the signs of what is known as Traumatic Stress Disorder, but the policeman didn't recognize this. He gave her a ticket.

Melanie told me she felt like dying. Many counselors who deal with rape victims have found several different emotional reactions to rape including denial, confusion, fear, depression, anger, withdrawal, loss of self-esteem, suicidal thoughts, distrust of people and intense fear of men or anyone similar to the rapist. According to "Recovering from Rape," victims experience dysfunctional responses to sex ranging from abstinence to homosexuality to promiscuity. These reactions may last years if they aren't dealt with through counseling.

When Melanie's father found out she was raped he blamed her for it. According to "Recovering from Rape," it is not unusual for the family and friends of rape victims to blame the victim especially if the woman was in a high-risk situation, such as hitchhiking. Rape often occurs in everyday low-risk situations. A study funded by the National Institute of Mental Health found that more women are raped in their own homes than any other place. The next most frequent place was the car. According to this study if people stay off the streets, out of cars and out of their own homes, they can reduce the chance of being raped by "more than 90 percent." It is impossible for any person to live in this way.

Melanie's father also blamed himself for not helping her ward off the man that was harassing her and for leaving her alone at the night club. It is not uncommon for family and friends of rape victims to blame themselves. Although Melanie's father might have prevented the rape, it is unreasonable for him to blame himself. It was not Melanie's or her father's fault that she was raped. The rapist was at fault. He was the one who committed the crime.

Melanie said that although her family was not perfect in dealing with her as a rape victim, they did help her in many ways. They did believe that she was raped. Many rape victims aren't as fortunate. This is particularly important if the

victim decides to charge the rapist. The defense attorney may say that because there are no injuries to the victim, she could not have been raped.

This is far from the case; according to "Recovering from Rape," only 20 percent of all rape survivors are cut and bruised as a result of rape. In another study only 23 percent of the victims used physical means such as hitting, biting, kicking, or pushing to resist the assailant. Over half the victims were too frightened to use any physical means of resistance.

The reasons why women in particular aren't aggressive range from childhood sexual abuse to socialization. It is important to note that no matter the reason the victims still did not consent. It was still rape. The rape victim needs to be reassured that she acted on her instincts at the time. She did all she could do. This is not the time for the victim's family and friends to ask her why she didn't do certain things. She needs constant reassurance that it was not her fault.

One other thing that Melanie's family did was listen to her. She had been through the biggest ordeal of her life; she needed to talk about it. Victims need to know they can talk about it without being judged or criticized.

The rape victims need to know that their stories are safe and won't be spread around. They may need to tell their story many times and share their related emotions. Those around the victim should make them feel free to talk about the rape. Melanie said she knew that her family couldn't relate to what had happened, but that they could help her sort through the emotions by listening.

Another important step Melanie's family did was encourage her to get counseling. Now three years later, Melanie is open to having a relationship. Although she still struggles with some problems, she is able to deal with them day by day. She has overcome her adversity with the help from others. Now Melanie helps other victims. She is not a victim anymore; she is an overcomer.

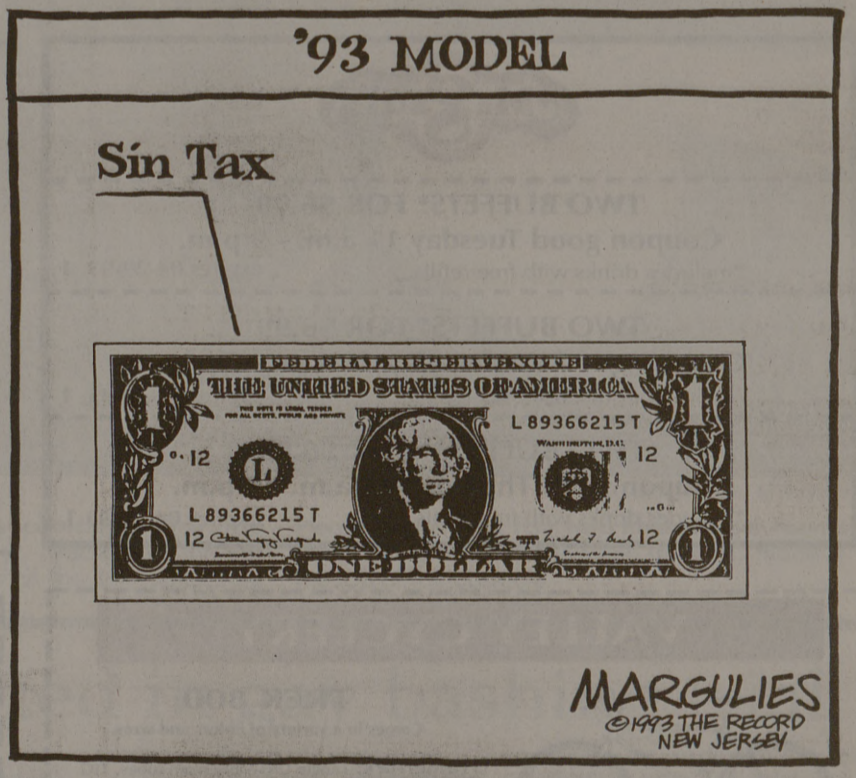
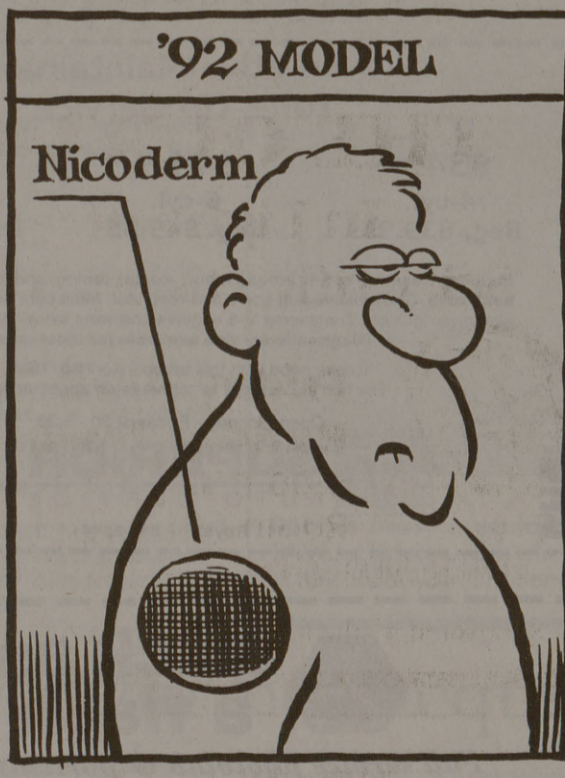
The chances that a person knows a rape victim is great. According to "Talking Back to Sexual Pressure," one in four women could be raped in their lifetimes. Twenty-five percent of all college women have been the target of rape or attempted rape according to a survey of over 6,000 college students. We, as students, must help rape victims by listening and by supporting them whether they report the crime or not. Go with them to the Rape Crisis Center. Go with them to the Student Judicial Affairs office at A&M. The office can potentially help by dealing with the person who is accused of rape. They can help the victim feel safer about walking across campus. The point is learn how to respond in a caring way to rape victims. Chances are you probably already know one.

Holder is a senior journalism major.



JANET HOLDER
Columnist

The Anti-Smoking Patch:



MARGULIES
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NEW JERSEY

Sports page hits a winner with Winder

My letter is in response to sports writer David Winder's article on shoes. Hey David, nice little story there.

Peter Tighe
Class of '96

Stop silly taunting, start leading country

No, I'm not the PC thought police. My subject is rather different. From what I've read about the College Republican meeting, there were speakers personally "lambasting" others at the meeting with "ruthless attacks." A popular vulgar hand gesture was used and a vulgarly hostile poem was circulated with other papers of interest to the audience. What kind of people are you? I'm rather shocked. There seems to be a maturity problem here. Republicans always sell themselves as the most responsible types to be elected. Looks like that was missing here.

Steven Kutz
Class of '93

Accompanied by three signatures.

I know that some Republicans hate gays. They hate a lot of people. I don't care. That was no surprise. When a good military officer is confronted with a problem, he doesn't gripe about it; he deals with it. Our country has a lot of problems to deal with right now. So stop the childish in-fighting and give us some leadership. We need everyone's help to deal with deficits, health care, jobs, military cuts, a host of international issues, and yes, gays in the military. The list goes on. Please, grow up and help us.

Andrei Blozinski
Class of '94

Aggie volunteers help school excel

In February, South Knoll Elementary in College Station was named Outstanding Campus Volunteer Program for a Small District (less than 10,000 students). The recognition that South Knoll has received and the success of our program is due in large part to the hundreds of Aggies who have volunteered at South Knoll in the past several years. The teachers and parents have seen the wonderful work that these Aggies have done

on our campus tutoring our children, acting as Big Brothers and Big Sisters, working our Parent-Teacher Organization fundraisers and being there to help in whatever way was needed.

The things that make Texas A&M special are seen on our campus on a daily basis and on the faces of the children that the Aggies help.

Thank you Aggies, for all you do for us and we hope that this wonderful spirit of helping and caring follows you for the rest of your lives.

Ranga Parasuraman
Cindy Skinner
Parent Volunteers

Becky Eden
Campus Coordinator

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