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FORUM

Continued from Page 1

"You may not know this, but there have been over 200 candidates for president in each of the last four elections," he said. "We have a committee to study these and determine which are viable candidates.

"The primary question we ask ourselves is do they have a legitimate chance at being the next president of the United States."

Fahrenkopf said that in the last election there was considerable debate within the commission on whether or not to include independent candidate Ross Perot.

"Eventually we decided to include him," he said. "And looking back, I think that was the right decision."

The next election will likely feature a third party candidate, Fahrenkopf said, and the commission will determine whether to include them based on the candidate's national following.

Another issue the commission will face is the format, which Fahrenkopf said can have a great impact on the educational value of the debate.

A panel of reporters interviewing the candidate was thrown out, as was the idea of using network anchors, he said.

"With a panel of reporters, if one reporter asks a question, the next reporter wants to show how good they are," he said. "And it has been our view that some of those anchors try to compete with the candidates."

Fahrenkopf said the 1992 campaigns used a variety of formats, including a town-hall style meeting with randomly-selected uncommitted voters.

"Some of the people in Washington think, 'What do private citizens have to do with this?'" he said. "But we thought it worked out all right."

Kirk said no formats are set for 1996 at this point, but there will probably be a small number of debates, each dealing with a variety of topics, rather than focusing on one particular topic per debate.

Kirk said the commission evaluates its results by setting up focus groups consisting of citizens who watch the debate and discuss what they learned from them.

"Almost all of the people in the focus groups said that by watching the debates they learned something new about the candidates," he said.

Currently, 41 communities and university campuses are bidding to hold the 1996 round of debates.

Evan Zimmerman, THE BATTALION

KIDDIN' AROUND

Whitney Elder plays outside Bizzell Hall. Her father is Class of '84.

NORTHGATE

Continued from Page 1

the most feasible plan would be Tax Increment Financing. TIF is done with local funding and requires the cooperation of all taxing entities.

With a TIF district, there would be no assessment or tax increase, and local property taxes will be used exclusively for local projects.

Pobiner outlined many projects that ranged from short- to long-term actions. Some projects included streets being repaired and sidewalks widened with more lighting for safety.

Local business owners who are in danger of losing there businesses were also at the meeting.

Tara Sopasakis, owner of Burger Boy and Aggieland Tutoring Services, said she is still upset because her businesses and others are not located on the map of the future Northgate.

"We have been told that they will not leave us out, but where are we on the map?" Sopasakis said. "We designed our businesses especially for the Northgate area, and I don't want to relocate."

Other small businesses have had trouble because they said it seems like their businesses have already been designated as parking lots.

Tami Selbi, owner of the U'R grocery store, said she lost a prospective buyer for her business because the owner of her land told the buyer it would soon be owned by the city and become a parking lot.

"I was selling my business so I could join my husband," Selbi said. "I had a deposit check from the buyer when they were told my store would be a parking lot."

Selbi said she is stuck because they have invested thousands of dollars in her store, and she can not just walk away from that investment.

Another community meeting will take place in a few weeks to discuss more details about the revitalization project before the finals plans are voted on by the College Station City Council.

ELECTIONS

Continued from Page 1

engineering major, "voted on names that I heard or signs that I saw."

Like many freshmen, Smyer knew little about any of the candidates and found the voting process to be a prime example of "how people vote when they don't know who they are voting for."

Scott Kulle, a freshman general studies major and a member of the Corps of Cadets, said candidates who were Corps members made more of an effort to reach their classmates.

"From my perspective, I saw a lot more of the Corps members trying to make themselves known," Kulle said.

Many freshmen eagerly voiced their disagreements with the voting process.

Emily Redman, a computer engineering major, said she wants to change the process.

"I don't agree with it," Redman said. "We don't have any information about the people we are voting for. It just doesn't make sense."

Greg Krueger, a freshman physics major, said the lack of information about the candidates can discourage freshmen from voting.

"You have no idea what the candidates stand for, what they're going to do for you or why they even have these offices," Krueger said.

Cochvan said students are better informed of the platforms for other student body elections. For freshman elections, though, candidates have not been around long enough to formulate ideas or platforms.

Melanie Conner, a freshman political science major who ran for a Senate position, said that the new senators should establish contact with their constituents.

"I hope that the winners stay in touch with the freshman and don't forget who they are representing," Conner said.

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