

Forget polls — We, the people, elect president

"We, the people of the United States of America, in order to form a more perfect union..."
— The Constitution



DAVID
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The United States, more than any other country, is an ideal. We did not gradually transform from some divine right of kings gradually into a nominal democracy. We have never had an emperor hell bent on making the world into our image whether it wanted to be remade or not.

No, our "grand experiment" simply seeks to find out what would happen if the basic affairs of state were put into the hands of the people. Our ideal is our people.

The problem with ideals is in the translation to reality. Perfect realization of an ideal almost never happens — that's why we call them "ideals."

The United States, of course, is no exception. From slavery to internment camps, our nation has certainly come up short at times.

But no nation in history has come so

close to an ideal.
The reason? Simple: People. When great leaders are required, great leaders emerge. Whether it was the blue-blooded "FDR" during WWII or the red-blooded Lincoln during the Civil War, our people can produce great leaders.

The caveat, however, is also the people. But Lincoln and Roosevelt were elected by the people, and, in hindsight, the people made some good choices. But we can also royally screw things up when we don't pay attention. The budget deficit provides a great example.

For the past three decades, we have listened too much to what our congressmen said without looking too closely at what they did. The result: a monster bill which our generation gets to pay. Thanks, but I have enough trouble with my own Master Card.

Fortunately, the people exercised their power and chose new leaders.

Just in case you've been asleep in political science, it's about that time again. To hear the political "pundits"

tell it, this election is nothing more than a formality. (A pundit, by the way, is someone paid to reveal their own ignorance.)

If the election were held today, recent polls indicate Colin Powell, if he ran as a Republican, would defeat President Clinton. The president, apparently, would defeat Sen. Dole by about four percentage points.

Super. Now that we already know who will win, we can go back to our daily lives and start paying the bills Congress thoughtfully provided. It sure is nice to have a purpose in this otherwise mundane existence.

On the other hand, before we run to the presses with "Dewey Defeats Truman," we could try thinking for ourselves.

Bob Dole loses, right? Well, yes ... by the margin of error of most polls. In other words, Dole is in dead heat with the president.

Colin Powell wins, right? Well, if he runs as a Republican.

As of this writing, the general has not released so much as a position on an issue, much less declared a party affiliation. We don't know anything about Gen. Powell except that he sure is a swell guy.

Shouldn't we find out what he plans to do with the budget, or Bosnia, or anything before we give him the keys to the house on Pennsylvania Ave.?

We should learn a lesson from our parent's blind eye to Congress from the past 30 years. I don't know about you, but my American Government Excess Card (You can't do jack without it!) is pretty much maxed.

For you history buffs, just think back to 01 B.C. (Before Clinton).

President Bush had approval ratings normally reserved for the Deity. A certain Jennifer Flowers had quite a spread in a certain "gentlemen's periodical" almost never read by gentlemen.

Jennifer Flowers claimed ... well, this is a family student newspaper, but the story about Governor Clinton and his erstwhile secretary sure caused a dip in the polls.

To summarize, former President Bush now lives quietly in Houston and dedicates libraries in his spare time.

So much for the polls.

Now we are pretty much back to square one: The people.

Someone — we'll call him Chuck — fed me a line this past week about the

presidential polls.

Chuck said he did not really want to vote for the president, but he just did not care for any of the messengers coming from the Republican presidential candidates.

Being the ever-inquisitive journalist, I asked what he thought of Lamar Alexander's position on educational reform? Or Arlen Specter's position on abortion? Or maybe Alan Keyes' ideas on urban renewal?

My friend began to sound like Beavis and Butt-head.

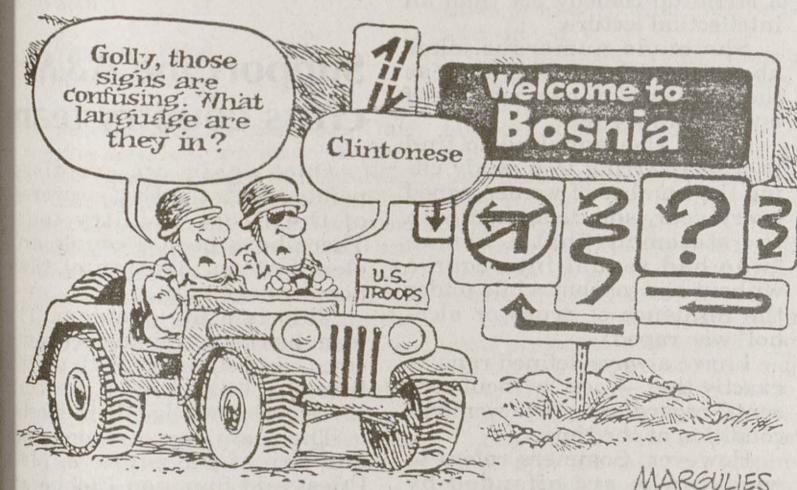
This would be funny, except for that crazy, "we, the people" thing again.

It's up to us to find out about the candidates. Don't expect to be told everything in thirty-second sound bites.

We might be told about a middle-class tax cut only to be faced with that great '92 campaign issue — homosexuals in the military — as soon as the election results are in.

Yes, we, the people can, and usually have made the right choices when times called for them. Now that it's our turn, let's take the time to do it right.

David Taylor is a senior management major



First Amendment?

Aggieland ordeal not the same as CRs

It's time to put on your dancin' shoes, boys and girls, and do the First Amendment stomp.

But before we do the Freedom of Speech fandango, let's set the record straight.

The buzz around the campus is that there's a big double-standard here at A&M when it comes to freedom of speech, and it concerns two of the University's most prominent organizations: the Aggieland and College Republicans.

It seems the Aggieland has ruffled a few feathers with its depictions of homosexuality, racism and drinking on campus.

Proponents of the Aggieland say the annual should have every right to publish whatever it wants when covering A&M.

Around the same time, Texas A&M College Republicans were brought up on charges of violating University fund-raising guidelines by presenting "misinformation" about the multiculturalism requirements and other aspects of University policy to prospective donors. The College Republicans defense is built around the argument that the University should not tell student organizations what they can and cannot print in letters.

Both seem to be pretty cut and dried First Amendment issues.

Then why, you may ask, has there been such a drastic difference in public stances taken on the issue?

The Aggieland got a thumbs up from some for its bold look at A&M. College Republicans have been berated for their actions.

Kind of strange, huh?

Not really. Look past the thin freedom of speech veil, and the two instances become totally different.

College Republicans broke the rules. Whether the rules abridge the freedom of speech is not as relevant a point as it may seem at first glance. If College Republicans had not been brought up on charges, then doubtless they would not have taken up the banner of free speech.

It would have been one thing if the College Republicans did not violate University regulations and the administration singled them out because it did not agree with its views. But the rules were there, in black and white, for several years.

Not once did College Republicans feel the need to fight for their free speech rights that, according to them, were being



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abridged for several years.

The Aggieland, on the other hand, followed all regulations and rules. Everything in the Aggieland was done legally. It just really ticked

people off, as can probably be expected with the sensitive issues the yearbook covered.

I realize this looks like splitting hairs, but they're vital hairs we're slicing.

The distinction between freedom of speech concerning legal actions and those concerning illegal actions is about the same as shooting a gun with blanks and shooting with live ammo.

Sure, the blanks may startle a few people, but hell, the live ammo could hurt somebody.

Let's remember as well the motivation behind the two causes. College Republicans were a political organization interested in fund raising. It would be more prone to utilize shock value — a tactic the group's leadership has admitted to using in this letter — to get the precious funds they were searching for.

The Aggieland, however, is an objective publication. It has no reason to use shock value to get what it wants because its goal is only to provide a vivid memory of the A&M campus.

The First Amendment guarantees that people can say what we want too, within reason. One of the major tenets of that right is that we are truthful in what we say, print, send in smoke signals or whatever.

The Aggieland was being objective in what it printed. College Republicans, on the other hand, were not when they printed a statement such as "President Bowen got his job promising to sign this multiculturalism bill and the left-wing professors who hired him are getting restless because he is dragging his feet."

Bowen was not hired by a radical faction of the Texas A&M faculty, but rather by the Board of Regents. It's hard, damn near impossible, to believe that College Republicans missed that little tidbit of information.

Think of the whole situation like the crowded theater. Someone may object to you yelling "Fire!" with a few expletives. That's their problem.

But if you yell "Fire!" when there is no fire, then you have a problem. A big problem.

Wes Swift is a junior journalism major

If only I had the time ...

Planning ahead allows college students the time to do a bit of everything



JIM
PAWLICKOWSKI
COLUMNIST

As college students, we often find ourselves with less time than we need.

Homework goes unfinished due to lack of time. Performance on exams is not as good as it could have been because there was not enough time to study.

We usually blame our professors for the predicament in which we find ourselves week after week. "They obviously don't remember what it was like to be an undergraduate," we say to ourselves. They act like their class is the only one we are taking and pile up enough work to keep us busy throughout the week. Never mind the other three classes and three labs.

There is no doubt that most of us are extremely busy. If we were limited to a 40-hour work week, I would be finished by Wednesday morning.

However, college is not supposed to be easy. We must challenge our abilities if we are going to improve them. This includes the ability to manage time.

I have often thought that I'll have all kinds of time after graduation. Eight-hour work days sound pretty good. I wouldn't even know what to do with all that free time.

Well, I thought the same thing about college. Only two or three classes a day every other day sounded like a breeze compared to the six or seven in high school. I soon learned, however, that I was not less busy but, in fact, much more so.

Based on this experience and my co-op work experience, I feel safe to say that life does not become a cake walk once we conquer the obstacle of obtaining a college degree.

For people working in the real world,

those eight-hour days are more like nine or ten. Plus, employers don't look too favorably on employees taking two-hour naps in the middle of the afternoon.

Still, professional life sounds pretty good. No tests, homework or papers to consume our attention in the evenings and cause stress.

Well, not so fast.

Schedules and deadlines must still be adhered to. We'll always have due dates. We'll always undergo evaluations.

Throughout life, we'll have to prove that we're doing our job.

And unlike school where failing a test means nothing more than a bad grade, failing in the real world can cost you money and respect. The stakes only get higher.

As college students we must realize that we are on a training ground for the real world. The skills and habits that we develop now will be the ones that we carry with us beyond graduation.

Time management is the first step to success in both school and the professional world.

While I don't mean to sound like a time management seminar, planning your time is the only way to avoid the inevitable time crunch.

Chances are you know all of your test dates and homework and paper due dates well in advance. Chances are you have enough time to adequately prepare with a little thoughtful planning.

The real challenge is acquiring the motivation to study ahead of time. There is an old saying that nothing would ever get done if not for the last minute.

care for themselves or pay someone else to take care of them, then their family, friends, relatives, churches, neighbors and hospitals would step in.

Gee, there were even charities that would help them if no one else was responsible enough. How did we ever live without Medicare — much better than we live now.

I realize that liberal priorities pre-empt the priorities of everyone else because they had legislative control for 40 years.

But conservatives realize they can do a better job with that money. The law may be in the liberals' favor now, but it won't last forever. Sooner or later we will all have to be responsible for our own health care.

I vote for sooner.

Scott Peterson
Class of '93

Rec Center has parking problems

On Monday, Oct. 23, I worked out at the Rec Center. When I walked outside I found a parking ticket on my windshield.

The problem was that I have a bus pass which comes with a night permit, and I am only allowed to park in the Rec Center parking lot between 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 a.m.

When I inquired about my future Rec Center parking possibilities, I was given the following options: a) be finished at the Rec Center by 6:30 a.m. b) purchase an off-campus parking permit for \$66, or c) purchase a Park-N-Ride permit for \$32.

This situation disgusts me. As a student with a bus pass, I am basically being told that I don't have the same rights to the Rec Center during the day as a student with an on-campus parking permit.

I paid the same price for my bus pass as those who purchased on-campus permits.

In addition, I paid the same price for the Rec Center, through increase in tuition.

Riding the bus to the Rec Center is unrealistic. It would take 40 minutes each way and

MAIL CALL

require riding three separate buses (Aggieland, Yell Practice, and Fish Camp).

I cannot afford to purchase another parking permit so I can use the Rec Center during the day. Nor do I feel that I have to.

The Rec Center is for all students at TAMU, and day parking should not be a special privilege given only to those with on-campus parking permits.

Kelly Wood
Class of '97

Take responsibility for health care

One more time for all the liberals — the Medicare budget is going to increase 6 percent per year until 2002.

Everyone who is currently receiving Medicare or will become eligible to receive Medicare in the next seven years will have more options than the current system allows, and there will have to be more money for this variety.

What do liberals think people did before there was a federal Medicare program?

People took responsibility for their own health care and allowed others to do the same. If they did not have the means to

care for themselves or pay someone else to take care of them, then their family, friends, relatives, churches, neighbors and hospitals would step in.

Gee, there were even charities that would help them if no one else was responsible enough. How did we ever live without Medicare — much better than we live now.

I know some students are satisfied with this year's Aggieland, but for those who are not, please keep reading.

I serve as the Student Government University Committees Chair which oversees the undergraduate representation on the Student Publications Board.

After this concern was brought to my attention, I spoke with the representatives on the Board. They, in turn, spoke with the fac-

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor and will print as many as space allows. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class and phone number.

We reserve the right to edit letters for length, style and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald. A valid student ID is required. Letters may also be mailed to:

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