

EDITORIAL

THE BATTALION

Established in 1893

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VOTING RIGHTS

Students should take advantage of their polling privileges.

Students have heard a lot about how important it is to "Rock the Vote." But in a political culture that thrives on soundbites and slogans, voters should reflect on what a monumental moment in history a presidential election can be.

Many students argue that voting is futile. These are often the same people who complain and whine about America's lack of leadership and the fat cats who rule Washington, D.C. Those who do not take the time to try to change Washington with a simple vote have no room to decry increased taxes or funding cuts in college loans.

Because the next president will lead the United States into the 21st century, it is absolutely necessary that we realize our responsibility as Americans to uphold the liberty we treasure. The ramifications of the next president's decisions will have more of an impact on our generation than any other, especially as the government prepares to deal with such pressing issues as social security and welfare reform.

However, it is imperative that American exercise their right to vote to ensure that the precepts of democracy are upheld. To begin dealing with the problems the nation faces, it is essential that students take a serious look at the candidates.

There are many reasons why

people may choose one candidate over another. Perhaps they support that candidate's political party or believe that the candidate can't lose, so they might as well jump on the bandwagon.

Parties may be a good gauge of where a candidate stands on some issues, but in a country with as many diverse viewpoints as the United States, no one party can truly represent a voter's interests in every race on the ballot. Unfortunately, Texas allows straight-party voting with one swift, easy punch of a ballot, doing a disservice to the spirit of elections.

Although these people are fulfilling their duty of casting a vote, they are selling short a system that exists to give the people a voice. And that voice should not be wasted by selecting candidates on such trivial matters as what political party they support.

With such a monumental decision set before the people, it is important that votes be cast with a great deal of thought. And after the election is over, voters should start paying attention to the newly chosen leaders to be able to educate themselves for the next election.

It takes about five minutes to punch a ballot, but the consequences of voting will last far beyond the four years the next president spends in the Oval Office.

Disappointing ballot demands write-in

Absolute disgust. That was the only emotion I could muster as I stared at the manila-colored absentee ballot.

But being a conservative, I was expected to give my half-hearted support to the Distinguished Gentleman from Kansas. And so I loyally punched my ballot for Dole.

But for two days, the yellow envelope that would carry my ballot back to the courthouse sat on my desk as the feeling of disgust grew, so I committed a malicious act.

After slitting open the sealed envelope, I glued the punch-hole back over Dole's place on the ballot and voted my conscience by frantically writing in my candidate of choice — Patrick J. Buchanan.

"Outrageous!" you say. But this was a man who garnered 3 million votes during the primaries by bringing Republicans, Democrats and Independents together.

And it was disclosed that, had Lamar Alexander come in second place during the New Hampshire primary instead of a close third, Dole would have dropped out of the race altogether (Buchanan won that bell-weather primary, by the way.)

This frightened the "good ol' boys" in Washington, so the Eastern Establishment undertook a successful slur campaign to discredit Buchanan as an extremist.

First, they unjustly dismissed his conservative position on abortion. There is nothing extreme about advocating morality in place of choice. The issue was just one in a series used by Washington's "Beltway Elites" to drag down candidates who didn't fit their own agendas while propelling puppet politicians to the front of the primaries.

They portrayed Buchanan as a left-wing radical because he stood up for the plight of workers while our government allowed jobs to be exported to cheap Mexican labor markets. Of course, as long as some of the record-breaking profits are spent on the lining of political pockets, nobody can complain, right?

The extremely popular Ronald Reagan once said, "A country that cannot defend its



own borders isn't really a country anymore." Yet, Buchanan was deemed a racist after offering a final solution to the plight of southern border states, whose budgets are increasingly devoted to subsidizing illegal immigration. He simply argued it was time to hire more guards and to build more fences.

If that makes Buchanan a nationalist, then call me one, too.

But we cannot continue to leave the back door open; transnational corporations "that show no loyalty to their workers, nor allegiance to any country" are walking out with jobs as illegal immigrants are flooding in. Quite simply, there is nothing wrong with putting America — and Americans — first, for once.

After being locked out of the Republican convention, Buchanan argued that "we have forgotten that, as a nation and a people, we are under God's judgment. We have forgotten that America is more than her Gross National Product. She is our country and our home ... and we have obligations and duties to one another."

He went on to tell of a mill town in Oregon where a federal judge had suspended logging in 9 million acres of the surrounding forest. After giving a speech in the mill town, three little girls approached him and said, "Mr. Buchanan, we wish we were 18 years old so we could vote for you, 'cause all our daddies are losing their jobs."

Of course, I am fully aware that Buchanan has no chance of winning tomorrow's election. But I'd rather endorse a worthy candidate than settle for the lesser of two evils.

So after stepping into that polling booth, take a long look at the names on that disgusting ballot. Endorsing a credible third party or writing in a candidate is a much stronger statement to Washington's "Beltway Elites" than mindlessly voting for Clinton. And there is no statute that mandates Republicans must cast their ballots for Dole.

In the days of Chicago's well-greased political machines, cigar-chewing bosses used to say, "Vote ... and vote often." I wouldn't go that far, but at least take the time to vote your conscience.

Columnist



Michael Heinroth
Teaching certification student

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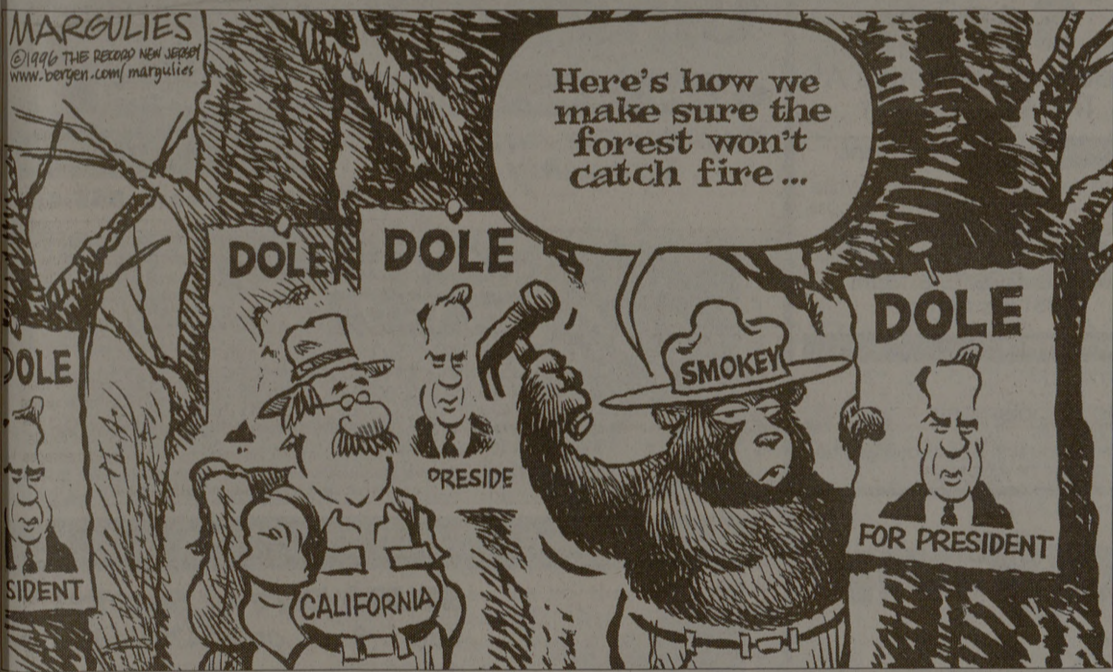
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Patience makes perfect society

America may be well on her way to becoming the world's most efficient nation. In today's society, it is possible to bank from home, have a lip-suctioned body in less than three hours, and pop a pill for an improved personality.

But what Americans have gained in time-management skills, they have lost in their level of patience with other struggles and, more importantly, other people.

Technology, of course, has had an overwhelmingly positive impact on the American economy and the convenience of the average citizen's lifestyle.

If people don't have time to make homemade bread, then a machine can do it for them. If someone can't wait a few days to send a friend a letter, he or she can use e-mail. And for lunch hour, at many restaurants, customers are given stopwatches so they can time the delivery of their food, and if it isn't served in 15 minutes or less, they get lunch on the house.

However, this expectation of efficiency and convenience has been applied to too many aspects of our lives. As a result, worthwhile endeavors are often abandoned be-

cause they take too long. Many are guilty of minor acts of impatience that are intended to save time. In reality, however, only one or two minutes are saved.

How many of us have honked a horn in frustration at a driver who is crazy enough to obey the speed limit? Or maybe you're one of those who will spend 15 minutes

waiting for the closest parking spot at a store, when it would have only taken two minutes to park farther away and walk.

These senseless acts are usually harmless, though.

However, more serious problems occur when instant gratification is demanded in situations where patience is critical to success.

Although the diet industry once lauded the idea that success in weight loss was determined by how much one lost and how fast it was lost, many diet experts now say it is better to lose the weight over a long period of time if one wants to keep it off.

Yet, to appease those who want the weight off and want it off now, many weight-loss systems still advertise the idea that you can drop a dress size in two weeks or have miracle abs in 30 days or less.

Even more disturbing is the alarming increase in the rate of divorce in the United States.

Because divorce has become so easily obtainable, couples no longer have an incentive to work through problems they encounter in their marriage.

Wedding vows become rephrased so that they read: "Til death, or financial problems, or misunderstandings or losing that giddy in-love feeling do us part."

Americans may be saving time in the minor activities of life, but by the same token, many have lost the ability to persevere through struggles.

And when people stop considering the possibility of working through a problem rather than looking for a quick-fix Band-Aid for it, they lose the opportunity to develop something even more important: character.

While it is a worthwhile goal to save time doing the little things in life, people shouldn't expect the same out of more important issues.

Despite having all the technology in the world, America will not continue to thrive if she loses her patience.

An unwillingness to work hard and make sacrifices will result in shaky foundations that will crumble in the blink of a surgically enhanced eye.

Columnist



Jenni Howard
Senior economics and international studies major

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MAIL CALL

Northgate shouldn't have responsibility

Regarding Frank Yates' Oct. 31 Mail Call letter, "Kudos to RHA for clean up support!"

As a concerned Aggie, I agree with Yates for applauding the RHA for helping to clean up the church parking lots. This shows that Aggies are truly concerned with the surrounding community in which we live.

On the other hand, as an employee of the Northgate District, I disagree with Yates for putting the responsibility on the businesses to clean up at quitting time (which is already 2:30-4 a.m.).

I suggest that we appeal to the conscience of Joe Aggie and Joe citizen that discards his/her trash onto the ground to place this trash into a receptacle.

I know this is not as easy as pitching it to the ground, but we talk about how much pride we have; why not take pride in the community in Aggieland?

Leo Angele
Class of '97

Choices should be made intelligently

I don't want to alarm Henderson, but there are some students at this campus that came here because of the unique traditions that we uphold.

I know that E. King Gill would roll over in his grave if he read an editorial attempting to convince the student body to sit down during football games.

With so many universities in this state that have apathetic students, why would somebody come here that didn't want to honor these sacred traditions?

Reading Henderson's criteria for choosing a presidential candidate is something that makes me worry where our country is headed.

An intelligent voter should not vote on a candidate because of how "hip" he is or what type of instrument he plays. Maybe Henderson heard that Lincoln was one hell of a guitarist.

I would hope that most Aggies choose their presidential candidate by his stance on issues, not by whom they would most like to party with.

Maybe someday we can all sit in Kyle Field and watch Michael Jack-

son take the presidential oath. Maybe his brothers can be appointed to cabinet positions.

Luke Albert
Class of '97

Missing arguments weaken column

Regarding Erin Fitzgerald's Nov. 1 column, "Men make menstruation taboo topic":

Fitzgerald's argument was poorly articulated, and did not seem to contain the slightest attempt to enlighten or educate. Furthermore, Fitzgerald is guilty of presenting the opinion of some men as the opinion of all men, which is stereotyping — a form of ignorance.

You might be able to fight fire with fire, but fighting ignorance with ignorance is ineffective.

Fitzgerald also ignores culture as a factor in the forming of taboos. Furthermore, most men know that menstruation involves blood and pain, but it is a phenomenon they are unable to experience: the mysterious nature of menstruation is probably a large factor in explaining why many males are spooked by the whole thing.

Although I can agree with her basic premise — that this subject really shouldn't be entirely taboo — I dislike her inflammatory attacks, which do not encourage communication, but widen the chasm between the genders unnecessarily.

Georgina Kennedy
Graduate student

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or fewer and include the author's name, class, and phone number.

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