

Character loses by a landslide in election

Few people ever quote the first part of Richard Nixon's famous "I am not a crook" line. "The people have a right to know whether or not their president is a crook."

Editor in Chief



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It's funny how we remember the lie and forget the truth he spoke of soon after being elected to a second term.

Decision '96 is over, and we have given Bill Clinton another term. But we still want to know if our president is a crook. And a liar. And guilty of sexual harassment. And guilty of accepting illegal campaign contributions. And...

This column does have a word limit, but the reader should get the point.

The re-election of Nixon and, now, Clinton are two watershed events in the electoral process of the last half of the century. Character was never really an issue until Nixon shamed the office of president and resigned in 1974.

And now it appears that character is no longer an issue. CNN released the results of a poll yesterday that confirms what analysts have been saying throughout the campaign. Of those who said they voted based on the issues, 81 percent voted for Clinton. Of those who said character was the most important consideration, 68 percent voted for

Al Salvi; and in Nebraska, Rep. Bob Torricelli defeated Rep. Dick Zimmer. Nixon in 1960, Clinton's costliest and had been passed on to a new generation of Ameri-

cans. That generation included Dole and the countless others who served the country in World War II.

Clinton borrowed the line in his inaugural address almost four years ago, but it has new meaning. This is a time in American history when our values have changed. We are more pragmatic than ever before. We allow for character flaws if we perceive that the job will get done. Our pragmatism will define how future generations view us. But it should not affect our definition of ourselves.

We may not mind the character flaws of our leaders, but we should not tolerate such flaws in ourselves. Perhaps we have to start there.

It is easy for those who feel like they lost Tuesday to be cynical and disheartened. But it would be more difficult, and far more honorable, to look at our own lives if character is that important to us.

Making character matter again is a battle that has to be fought from the ground up,

not the president down. Especially not this president.

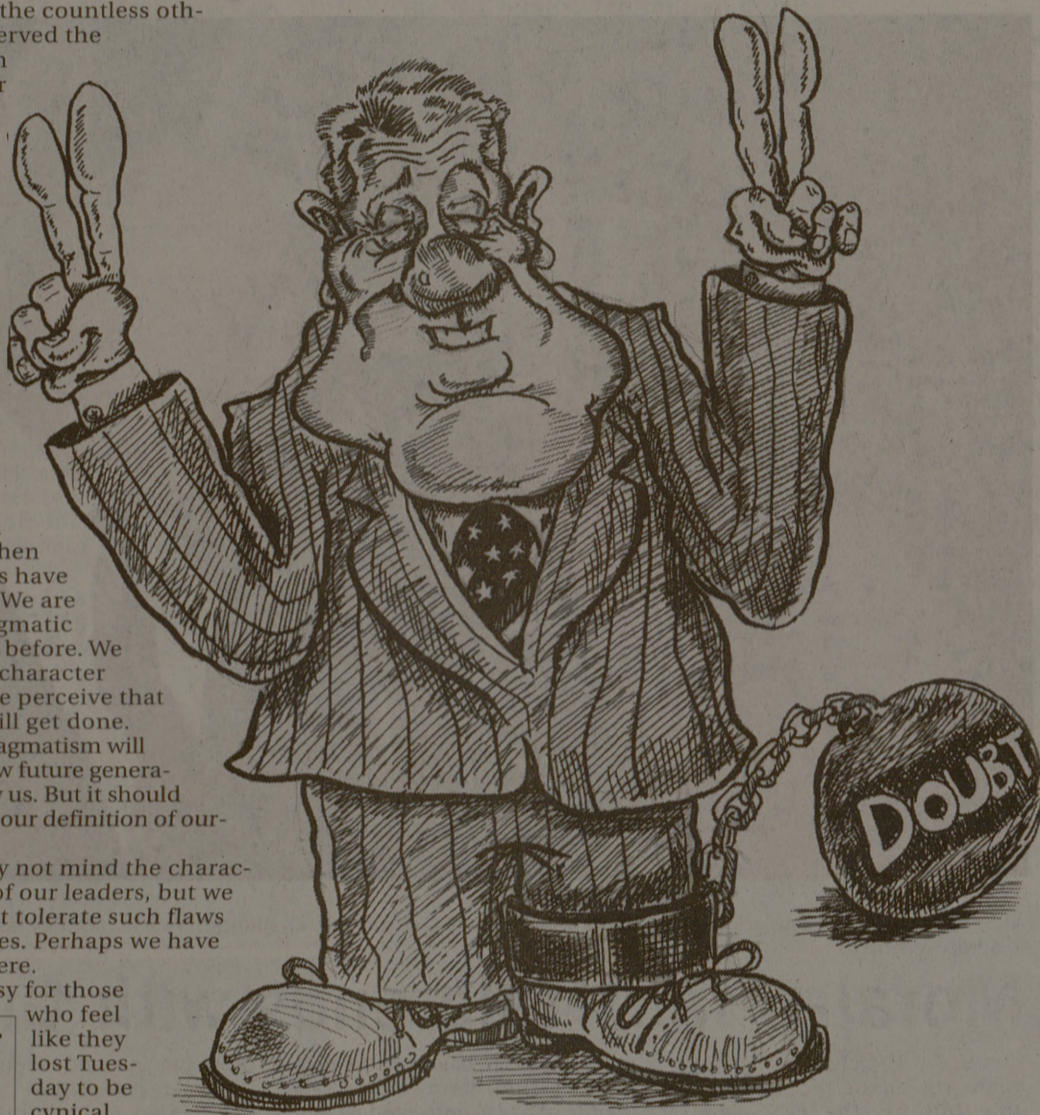
The days are gone when we look at our president for moral leadership, but Clinton has been elected for a reason. The people believe he has done a good job at dealing with the issues that face the nation.

Clinton is one of the greatest politicians of our time, a true spin doctor. No one has ever

been so talented at controlling the agenda.

He has a record of cutting the deficit. He has a record of creating jobs and stabilizing the economy. All this is true. But when history judges him, will such truths be remembered? Or like in Nixon's case, will history only record the lies?

Prepare for a second Clinton term — we're about to find out.



Jenny Jones should not be blamed for death

The irresponsible actions of a crapy talk show should not be justification for committing a homicide. However, Jonathan Schmitz's lawyers will try to convince a jury otherwise.

For those Aggies who have been too busy catching up with the latest rhetoric from the campaign trail, some crazy things have been happening on the talk-show circuit. And, no, it doesn't involve lesbian nuns infiltrating the Vatican to demand recognition of their unconventional lifestyles. This case is much zanier than any flock of nuns could point a stick at.

Talk-show host Jenny Jones testified last Thursday for Jonathan Schmitz, a heterosexual accused of killing Scott Amedure three days after taping a *Jenny Jones Show* segment in which Amedure revealed he had a crush on Schmitz.

Here's the kicker: Schmitz had no idea his friend Amedure was gay. Schmitz's lawyers maintain that the show led him to believe the secret admirer was female.

Although the show never aired, Jones denied misleading the public or Schmitz when she did not mention the admirer was gay. Under questioning by the defense, Jones said, "The premise of the show was that it was a surprise."

Everyone enjoys a good surprise every now and then, but Schmitz evidently didn't appreciate the news.

Defense attorneys hope to establish that Schmitz was "mised and humiliated" and to discredit his alleged intent to kill Amedure. Therefore, the charges of first-degree murder will not be upheld.

This angle of defense is absurd. Although it is true Jones acted

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irresponsibly by not revealing the true nature of the show to all parties involved, her actions do not excuse Schmitz from a first-degree murder.

Almost every breathing American is aware of the absolute trash aired on these talk shows. Everyday people choose to appear on these shows

to exploit their personal stories of dysfunction.

Schmitz was undoubtedly aware of the type of program on which he was appearing. He should have realized these shows exist to embarrass guests, and there was a possibility that he, too, might not be entering the most comfortable of situations.

But let's pretend that Schmitz had no idea talk shows do these types of things.

Let's pretend he had somehow lived in a vacuum, completely oblivious to the denigration of television programming. Even within this fantasy-land framework, the fact remains that Jonathan Schmitz killed Amedure.

It should not matter how Schmitz obtained the information that his friend was gay. It should not matter that Jones and her staff acted irresponsibly in their decision to surprise Schmitz.

Upon receiving this information, Schmitz made the decision to kill another human being.

Imagine a country in which its citizens could use humiliation or unexpected surprises as reasons to avoid severe murder charges. Pop quizzes would then establish legitimate rationale for students to murder their professors.

So Jones is not the dastardly culprit of this murder trial. She may be a slimeball, but she shouldn't be the scapegoat.

Making character matter again is a battle that has to be fought from the ground up, not the president down. Especially this president.



University carefully selects foreign profs

Regarding Sean McAlister's Oct. 24 column, "Unintelligible professors shouldn't lecture?"

McAlister wrote recently that the "problem with misunderstanding our professors is an all too familiar scene at A&M."

I disagree. Surely, some problems of misunderstanding occasionally confront students, but recourse is available to students having difficulty with a class for any reason—including professor-student communication.

Simply stated, if the problem cannot be resolved by the professor, it can be referred to the department head.

If feasible and absolutely necessary, reassignment of the student to another class resolves the problem. Experience has shown these matters are nearly always resolved at the department head level. If that fails, the student should go to the dean of the college.

Regarding McAlister's doubt that fluency in English is a factor in selecting faculty at A&M, let's review the process.

First, the high public regard afforded a Texas A&M education today is a direct result of the quality of our faculty.

We compete for these exceptional educators with other top universities, and we recruit them on an international scale.

Consequently, some speak with accents.

In the selection process, candidates undergo a rigorous review of the departmental, college and diversity levels.

Their credentials, including letters of reference, are examined. Personal interviews are performed by faculty and administrators and a public presentation is given.

MAIL CALL

Church has perfect place for women

Regarding Heather Pace's Oct. 30 column, "Catholic Church's policy evolves slowly to present day?"

Pace used a very common and misinformed line of attack against Catholicism — she targeted the "one-liners" of the faith, which, on the surface, are difficult to understand. The "rule" of no women priests is one based on 2,000 years of interpretation of the Bible and church tradition. The Church is known for its veneration of the woman figure by its particular respect for Mary as the Mother of God. The Church's refusal to endorse artificial means of birth control is explained throughout history in papal encyclicals and Church writing.

The Church is not opposed to, and teaches courses in, natural birth control. It does oppose, however, artificial means to prevent conception because such means profane the sexual act and mock half of God's purpose in giving the gift of life to us. From the Protestant Reformation until 1930, no Christian faith endorsed artificial birth control. Surely we aren't so naive as to think that the problems and poverty in Third World countries can be alleviated if only the Catholic church would distribute condoms there. Their problems are deeply embedded in cyclical processes of corrupt politics and an uneducated populous.

Mary McDougall
Class of '97

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

The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:
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Ronald G. Douglas
Executive Vice President and
Provost



Hazing serves definitive purpose

During my freshman year I acknowledged that I was not worthy of their acceptance. I did not participate in rush week, nor go to any Corp of Cadets informational meetings. I stayed away because I knew I might not survive the hazing.

The University's anti-hazing policy is stupid. All those pencil-pushing, bleeding-heart bureaucrats who are working hard to crack down on hazing in the fraternities and the Corps never stopped to realize that hazing serves a useful purpose: It dissuades candy-asses like me from joining and tainting their gene pool.

Hey, all of you self-appointed regulation writers — haven't you ever heard of Darwin? Saying that good Ags don't haze contradicts the evidence gained from thousands of years of evolution. The groups who paddle, push and poison their initiates are working to ensure survival of the fittest.

Both the Greeks and Corps thrive on the concept of legacy. The pledges who join will spawn many of the hardy individuals who will comprise the next generation of the elite. If it weren't for the hazing, groups would be overrun by the hordes of lesser Aggies who can't stand up to today's challenges.

Fraternities challenge their members to drive safely. If they can't hack binge drinking at a barn in the boondocks before they hit the road, they aren't good enough to be Greeks. Pledges who cause messy traffic accidents shouldn't be allowed to join the fraternities that so graciously volunteer their time to the Texas Adopt-A-Highway program.

University regulations also overlook the fact that hazing can be a powerful motivational tool. If doing push-ups until you puke while someone gives you a wedgie doesn't motivate you to get out there and steal a

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swing set from a church playground, nothing else will. Fraternities are full of future business leaders who need to start learning how to influence people.

Hazing is more than just a way to prepare for corporate America. In the life-and-death struggle to procreate, hazing often weeds out people with physical weaknesses. Every time cadets are strapped between two mattresses and hurled out of a high window, they know that if their spines can't take the impact of hitting the ground, they aren't fit to parent a future cadet.

Ultimately, hazing serves to scare away the human refuse that just doesn't deserve to wear the group uniforms, do the special handshakes and form the secret societies. It is horrible that rules are trying to demolish the barriers that keep people from forking over huge sums of money to gain admittance to illustrious events like the Omega Kappa Beta "Dixieland Love in the Lemon Orchard" formal.

If the University regulators had their way, hazing would involve nothing more unpleasant than forcing applicants to brush their teeth with Crest and then gargle with grapefruit juice. Geeks and outcasts of all shapes and sizes would take advantage of the new wimpy initiation rites, crowding into the groups and undertaking any number of real community-service projects. The first date party would have guys and girls paired up by their favorite punctuation marks.

So as the University tries to rid the Corps and fraternities of the rituals that have worked so long to keep them pure, the rest of the campus watches with mixed emotions. We're upset that the lack of hazing may lead to lower standards for the organizations we revere, yet we anxiously wait for the fence to drop low enough for us to climb over.