

STATE OF THE UNION

Year of the woman

2000 presidential elections provide opportunity for Clinton, Dole to battle

Thinking about Campaign 2000 yet? Up until these past few weeks, Al Gore's presidential posturing may have been the only reminder that an election for the White House is around the corner. And if you're thinking about the race, maybe you're assuming Bill Clinton and George W. Bush are among their respective front-runners for the presidential nomination.



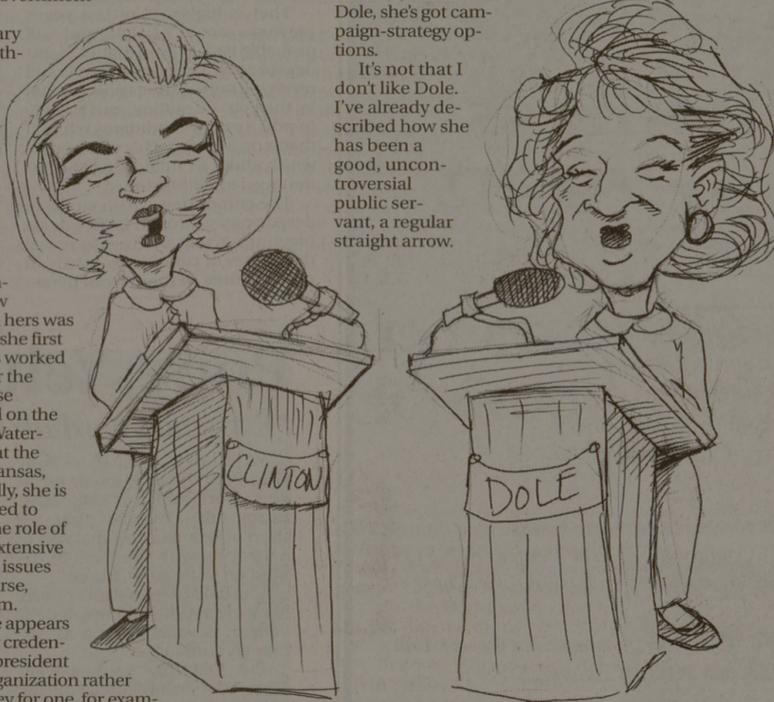
ADAM COLLETT
columnist

What's what you're predicting when maybe you're not thinking enough. Personally, I think both Clinton and Dole have decent qualifications. Elizabeth Dole has a solid record of public service and a smooth transition from candidate-for-lady role to candidate-for-president role. She served the Office for Consumer Affairs under John and Nancy Reagan. She was transportation secretary under Reagan and served as Secretary of Labor for Bush. President, coincidentally, is a title she currently has as the head of the Red Cross. And before all of that she earned a law degree and a master's degree in

education and government from Harvard. First lady Hillary Clinton, on the other hand, has also received public attention of late, mostly for demonstrating savvy and grace in dealing with her husband's most recent scandal. And like Dole, Hillary Clinton received a law degree (although hers was from Yale, where she first met Bill). She has worked as an attorney for the Children's Defense Fund, and served on the inquiry staff for Watergate. She taught at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. Finally, she is generally perceived to have redefined the role of first lady by her extensive work on national issues including, of course, health-care reform.

Although Dole appears to have the better credentials (working as president of a charitable organization rather than as an attorney for one, for example), I still have to give the nod to Hillary

because, unlike Dole, she's got campaign-strategy options. It's not that I don't like Dole. I've already described how she has been a good, uncontroversial public servant, a regular straight arrow.



Unfortunately, that's about the only card she can play. And although straight-arrow candidates have been and continue to be elected to public office, they tend to suffer at the ballot box when competing against someone with an edge, a theme or a scheme. Hillary has not just one, but two possible strategies. First, she can play the role of dutiful yet misused politician's wife. Just before the preliminaries, she can go public with her story of how she supported Bill for the good of the country, in spite of his history of unfaithfulness and shady political deals. She can even detail how he manipulated and/or bullied her into covering up for him all these years. The latter method may not be currently working for Monica Lewinsky, but one has to think that Hillary can probably get a better lawyer. Her second strategy option is to become something of a shady character herself. After all, flying in the face of what's left of American conventional wisdom, Bill Clinton's approval ratings hit a record high shortly after the latest accusations. It seems that all Hillary has to do is leak stories of her own unfaithfulness and improper political conduct, and she'll be on her way to the podium at the Democratic convention. Regardless of the outcome, it should be a fabulous media event. If Elizabeth Dole and Hillary Clinton do win their parties' respective nominations, the female voting block can't lose. The election might even add a new dimension to the good-old-fashioned college rivalry between Yale and Harvard. And when the dust has settled, if Hillary has come out on top, there will be one additional benefit. Assuming that Hillary's tastes won't have changed significantly, we'll be able to spend a little less taxpayer money on the traditional post-inaugural redecorating in the White House.

Adam Collett is an educational administration graduate student

PERSPECTIVES

American Indians serve as an example

Over the past few decades, great strides have been made toward the goal of reparations in the case of past injustices perpetrated under the banner of racial or religious degradation. All in all, the world is more sensitive today than any other point in history, and the list of apologies and reparations just keeps coming. It appears as if humanity is making some effort to heal itself of past wrongs and is trying to prevent the same grievances in the future. However, at least in America, one obvious element is consistently missing from the politically motivated, media-induced, regret list.



LEN CALLAWAY
columnist

From the moment that American colonies began to form, the American government and people ordered, raped, robbed, shunned, institutionalized, confined and attempted to ruin the American Indian community. One is inclined to view this as her hypocritical behavior from people searching for a better life or trying to escape one form of oppression for another. Americans are all co-conspirators in this great travesty, whether by direct action or by silence. In short, the buffalo that the Indians used for food, shelter and weapons were slaughtered by the thousands in the name of sport and to rot upon the prairie while a civilization began to face its demise. The government made treaties it never intended to keep, while allowing the systematic extermination of a people. The land the Indians occupied on became flooded with strange people and European disease, for which the Indians had no immunity. Over the years, American children have played "cowboys and Indians" in the backyard while the men responsible for the slaughter and abuse of thousands of people are still touted as heroes in schools across the country.

Although it is true that no one alive today had an active role in the demise of the various Indian tribes,

it is also true that Americans continue to give their consent to actions long past by their silence.

Americans have been beaten over the head for years about the woes of slavery and the evil of the Holocaust; yet if silence is the meter, we must be proud of our predecessor's behavior toward the Indian peoples.

Americans today have determined, or forced the media to determine for them, that they must take responsibility for the institution of slavery and the people of Germany and Switzerland must take responsibility for the Holocaust; even though none of them had a part in perpetuating either sin, they must also take responsibility for the destruction of a once peaceful and powerful people.

Many use the argument that American actions were justified because of violent and inhumane raids by the "savage Indians" on settlers camps and wagon trains, yet think of the way that America would react to a new people invading our soil by the millions.

The Indian people never had the opportunity to try to exist as one with Americans because Americans could not tolerate any difference in beliefs.

From the moment Americans began interacting with this community, they attempted to change the Indians by using the mission system to acquaint them with "civilization" and introduce them to Anglo-Saxon religion. Settlers attempted to teach them in their language and values, but made no effort to understand or tolerate the Indian's customs or form of religion.

Long ago, America took a pass on the opportunity to learn and take example from a peaceful and content civilization that lived communally and took care of its own people. In today's cold harsh world where it seems as if it is every person for themselves, maybe Americans could use the American Indian as an example.

It is sad that in a society where people collectively claim to care for those who have suffered in the past and seem to express a desire to make some sort of reconciliation, society still neglects to acknowledge the harm done to these people in the name of securing an avenue for the pursuit of the "American Dream."

Len Callaway is a junior journalism major.

CAMPUS CONNECTION

SGA could help implement Vision 2020

Texas A&M recently formed the Vision 2020 Committee to prepare the University for future glory as it strives to become "world class."



STEWART PATTON
columnist

The first order of business should be a bold move to give students power to aid in the transition to world-class status by creating a bicameral legislature consisting of the Faculty Senate and the House of Student Representatives.

Let's face it folks. The Student Government Association is little more than a social club to which the members are elected by a largely ambivalent student body. Students do not care who represents their side of campus or college, because student government can only recommend policies to the unseen hand of "The Man" who controls the activities of the University. Since they do not have any power, the student representatives themselves are also lax to respond to the needs of their constituents.

For example, how many of you have seen your representative this semester? Do you even know who he or she is?

Under this new system, bills could originate in the Faculty Senate or the Student House, but unlike the national government, the administration, acting as the executive branch, could also propose bills to Congress.

The legislature would operate under the same rules as the national legislature: the house that originates a bill must pass it, then the bill is sent to the other house. Once the Faculty Senate and the Student House have passed the bill in the same form, the bill would be sent for final approval to Bowen and the Board of Regents. A two-thirds vote in each house is required to overturn a veto by the executive branch.

One qualifier for the introduction of bills will make the new system complete: all bills related to decreasing tuition or fees must originate in the executive branch. Spending issues are too complex and far-reaching to be fully comprehended by either the faculty or students. I do believe the student leaders are responsible enough to not let their new power go to their heads, but every once in a while the House would inevitably get some yahoo who

would propose the "End the University Authorized Tuition Bill."

The beauty of this system is it requires virtually no additional spending by the administration. All of the pieces are in place. The administration needs only to allow them to work together to create a better Aggieland.

This system is much closer to how current national and state governments are run, so it will do a much better job of training students to enter the "real world" beyond the University setting. The students who serve as representatives are not the only ones who will be better prepared.

The student body will actually pay attention to who they are voting for, because their representative will have real power to affect their lives. Students will make voting decisions based on the candidate's policy stances, not because she put a Glamour Shot next to some witty rhyme on her 6-foot by 6-foot fluorescent pink sign.

Students would then carry their voting habits into their lives after college and help reverse the trend of fewer Americans showing up at the polls.

Instead of getting maroon in the face ranting and raving about all the problems with the University, students could campaign for office and make changes for the

better. Our new system would end much of the complaining and moaning that is so prevalent as the academic year draws to a close. Students would know that they have the power to change the situation — or their friends would tell them to shut up and run for the Student House.

Texas A&M University would receive the attention of the world from this bold statement of trust form the administration to the students. No other university in the nation has allowed their students and faculty as much influence in policy matters as would occur under this new system.

Instead of wondering why A&M should adopt this system, I wonder why Student Government has not been given some real power already. My mother always told me, "If you are going to act like a child, then I will treat you like one." If the administration desires that A&M produce responsible citizens, it is time it started treating students like responsible citizens.

By creating a bicameral legislature on equal footing with the administration, A&M and the world could witness the awesome power of a fully-armed and operational Aggie student body.

Stewart Patton is a junior sociology major.



MAIL CALL

Character counts for President Clinton's job

In response to Frank Stanford's Feb. 9 column:

I'm not sure which is more scary, the fact the President of the United States may have had an affair in the White House or that Frank Stanford, and others like him, try to justify the president's actions.

If Bill Clinton considers his marriage vows "flexible," regardless if Hillary cares or not, then how strong is his word he gave in

his oath of office. The basis of anyone's "word" is character.

Character does matter. Without good moral character, the president's word isn't worth the paper Stanford's article was printed on.

Keith D. Gatewood
Class of '99

Purpose of yearbook missed by columnist

In response to Amber Benson's Feb. 6 column:

Let me start this letter by saying that I agree wholeheartedly with our First Amendment rights. They are essential to our freedom ... that's great.

My problem actually stands in Benson's comment that, "just as it is important for a student newspaper to report the news of the year, so is it with the yearbook."

Wrong. A yearbook, as I see it, is something I can glance through with my kids ten years

from now to reminisce and giggle at the goofy hairstyles and such.

This is not what most yearbooks give.

A good example of this, which Benson even brought up herself, is the 1995 *Aggieland* in which the "controversial opening pages explored the problems of alcohol abuse and racism on our own campus."

These are pretty serious issues concerning our University and world, but a yearbook is not the proper forum to place this in. I rue the day that I'm thumbing through that tome, turn to my kids and say, "... hehehe. Yup, that was Ol' Army; we was all a bunch of drunken bigots back then. Ahhhh, the good old days."

No. That's wrong. Some news does belong in the *Aggieland*, as well as *The Battalion*. This news is what will be the historical text of the future: war, famine, controversy. The stuff that memories are made of. If Dr. J. Malon Southerland

were caught in a kinky love-triangle with David Duke and that friggin' purple dinosaur, hey, that's news.

I'll probably remember that and have a good story to tell, but generic issues like the social strata and entertainment won't be worth a dime.

So please, all of you who are in charge of the *Aggieland*, give us a break. Don't sugar-coat it for the sake of comfort and political correctness, but don't give us controversy for the sake of controversy. It's a waste of my future 'quality-time.'

Clint Van Horn
Class of '97

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or less 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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