

Opinion

Voter registration deadline for November elections approaches



ANDREW BALEY

An important day is coming soon. This Saturday, Sept. 28, is the last day to register to vote in this member's election. In order to influence the coming elections, citizens must register more than 30 days before they vote. Registration is the primary obstacle that keeps citizens from voting. Many students are registered only in their home counties, preventing them from easily reaching the polls. In order to vote in their home county students must order an absentee ballot, skip school on election day or travel back home during early voting. The simplest way for students to cast their ballot is to register in Brazos County, which allows citizens to register in multiple counties — as long as they only vote once. Voter registration does not affect residency or dependent status. Students should exercise their rights, and that means they need to register before Saturday. By November, the people will decide who will conduct the business of government. The political careers of numerous congressmen, governors, lieutenant governors and various hopefuls will be decided by those who are registered to vote to do so. Voters will use their democratic right, a right that should be exercised at every opportunity.

This election is a bit different than normal elections. The political atmosphere is very tense due to the Clinton scandal. Virtues and morals are going to, at least for a while, play a large role in the world of politics and elections.

Because of the recent scandal, numerous citizens have been turned off by politics and government in general. It is sad to see society's view of government slip so far. Because of one man's mistake, the entire reputation of American government should not suffer. Citizens have to play a role in one of the world's few governments where everyone has a voice. Let yours be heard.

The first reason to register to vote is because it is easy to do so. Just

go to any local post office or library, fill out the registration card and send it in.

Numerous campus political organizations also have members who are authorized by the local voter registrar to register voters. These options are simple, fast and leave no excuses.

The second reason to register is

Americans are privileged people even if they do not realize it.

People all over the world would give anything to have a voice in how their governments are run.

The theory of democracy is rule by the people. When the people cease to rule — for example when they choose not to vote —

democracy dies. If any Americans has doubts as to the significance of democracy or they

do not appreciate it, let them visit a socialist country. It would not be long before they would hurry back to the land of the free, the brave and the voting with a new appreciation of the democratic process.

The last reason to sign up is to help usher renewal into our government. Our representatives work for us. We have let them forget that their actions are accountable to us as a populace. All of their actions are accountable, including their platforms, votes, honesty and integrity.

It is time to remind office seekers they owe their community respect and integrity. Americans have turned a blind eye, and just like children, the bad apples of the government bunch got greedy and stupid.

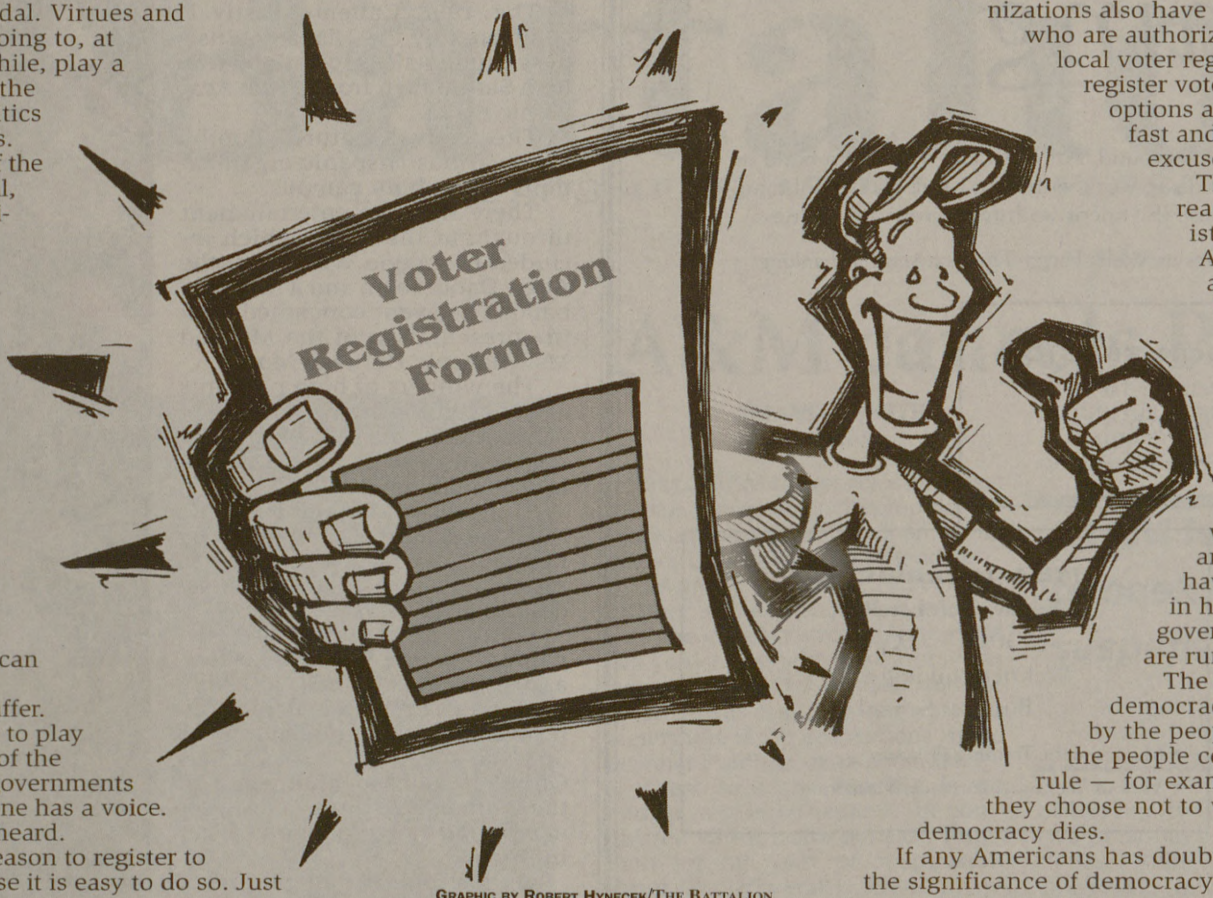
But, with Clinton's antics, Americans have turned around and are beginning to let politicians know they are being held accountable for all of their actions while they serve as representatives.

Elected officers should be representative in every way. One key way to keep officials accountable is to use the vote.

Many students are only recently eligible to vote. They should take the time to register and vote because it is easy to do, they have a right to do it and our country needs them.

Student concerns should not be put on the back burner. The Aggies' spirited voices should be heard, and with action, they will be in November.

Andrew Baley is a junior political science major.



GRAPHIC BY ROBERT HYNCEK/THE BATTALION

MAIL CALL

University requires open mindedness

In response to John Lemons' Sept. 24 column, "Play Abuses Free Speech":

Some of our greatest leaders honored organized religion. To name a few: Freud, Nietzsche, and Voltaire.

Should we disregard their thoughts and theories because we do not agree with them?

The First Amendment gives citizens the right to free speech, press and assembly. Lemons' column describes the play "Corpus Christi" as abusing the freedom of speech. The play simply is a different portrayal of Christ that he does not agree with. An opinion cannot abuse freedom of speech.

We live in a country influenced

by many cultures and religious sects, making it a unique nation. We can pretend to live in a world where everyone thinks and acts alike or we can open our eyes and learn from the diversity surrounding us.

Jennifer Nevill
Class of '99

Playwright earns praise, not hate

In response to John Lemons' Sept. 24 column, "Play Abuses Free Speech":

In Lemons' column, he claims the play "Corpus Christi" is an abuse of free speech because the main character, a Christ-like figure, is gay. Well, so what?

Jesus has been subject to interpretation since the beginning. Even

the gospels do not agree entirely on Jesus. There are non-canonical texts that describe Jesus engaging in homosexual behavior.

I understand people might be upset by this portrayal, but it is not an act of bigotry. Terrence McNally has won three Tony awards and is an esteemed playwright. He would not write this play without personal meaning as simply an attack on Christianity.

The gay community suffers constant attacks by the religious community. Where were the reprimands when Pat Robertson warned Florida of disaster because of Disney's support of the homosexual lifestyle? Apparently there is a one-way street but I do not believe it flows in the direction you seem to think it does.

Jason Romero
Class of '98

McGwire's nutritional supplement use blemishes race for home-run record

The marvelous home-run race is drawing to a close, and Mark McGwire has taken an astonishing lead — with a little help, that is.



JOHN LEMONS

With a count of 70 home runs to Sammy Sosa's 66 and only one ball game to go, McGwire's place is virtually secured in the record books as baseball's greatest home-run hitter. But if there is any justice in this world, McGwire will share his record. Oh, he will probably not have to share the record with Sosa, but with androstenedione.

Androstenedione, sometimes called andro, is the muscle-building supplement that McGwire took throughout the baseball season in an attempt to improve his performance. McGwire's andro use, however, has tainted his impressive achievement. Undeniably, McGwire is juiced up on something. The man is enormous. Even body-builders appear somewhat small and girlish next to him.

McGwire's action-figure proportions are unnatural. Indeed looking at him, one wonders if he is going to rip a home run or leap tall buildings in a single bound. When McGwire faced Houston Astros pitcher, Randy Johnson, two weeks ago, it was a match-up that was best described as He-Man versus Skeletor.

McGwire's use of the hormone is not cheating — major league baseball has not banned the substance. However, andro use skirts

pretty close to being cheating. It offers an unfair advantage for McGwire over players who wisely choose not to risk themselves at the hands of andro.

Andro is a precursor to testosterone. Thus, when taken, theoretically at least, it is converted into testosterone. Increased testosterone levels are linked to increases in muscle mass and decreases in body fat.

The problem with andro use, however, is nobody knows exactly what its long term effects are. So, there is no telling what andro use today will do to its users tomorrow.

This is a frightening prospect, especially when companies are using McGwire's success to market the supplement. McGwire's hero-status makes andro attractive to young athletes who are willing to risk their health to maximize their athletic abilities.

Many have tried to justify andro by noting that it is a legal nutritional supplement. But if andro use was completely innocent, then it would not carry so much controversy, nor would it be banned by so many sports organizations.

Andro is banned by the NFL, the International Olympic Committee and the NCAA because of its unknown health risks. Last week, after initially agreeing to show andro advertisements, ESPN and Fox Sports Net banned andro commercials on their respective channels.

Furthermore, major league baseball is considering banning andro. Last month, Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig and Union Chief Donald Fehr announced that a

committee of doctors would be investigating the hormone.

"Obviously, the health of our players is of vital concern for all of us, and we want to take every precaution to assure they receive the most accurate medical and scientific information," Selig said.

The worst consequence about McGwire's andro use, however, is not its effect on McGwire's record, but the message it sends to the nation's children.

McGwire's run sends out the message that it is ok to do anything to get ahead, even if it means risking one's own body. This is a dangerous lesson to teach kids.

Outside of his andro use, McGwire could make a great role model. He is amiable and a good sport. When he tied Roger Marris' home-run record three weeks ago, the first thing McGwire did after running the bases was pick up his son in his arms.

It is too bad he has compromised that image. One would hope the lesson McGwire would teach the nation is that success comes with hard work and determination, not elevated testosterone levels.

McGwire is a national hero, albeit a tainted one. His accomplishment is admirable, his use of andro is not.

In taking the single season home-run record by any means necessary, McGwire will have shown too much testosterone is never a good thing.

John Lemons is an electrical engineering graduate student.

Fraternity death exposes deeper flaws



STEWART PATTON

Scott Krueger, an 18-year-old student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, became another victim of a male Greek

death last September when he died from alcohol poisoning.

Krueger fell into a coma and never recovered after he was allegedly forced to drink excessive

at the Phi Gamma Delta house, a fraternity he was pledging.

This case, however, is different from the many other deaths that have occurred as a result of fraternity drinking. In this case, District Attorney Ralph Martin chose not to indict the fraternity members or the people present at the party, but rather chose to indict the Phi Gamma Delta organization itself.

The indictment of Phi Gamma Delta is the first step toward the realization that alcohol abuse is inherent in social fraternities and, indeed, may be the sole reason for their existence.

Social fraternities have a long history in America beginning in the 1700s. Many of America's great states and other prominent personalities were active in the Greek system when they attended school. The unavoidable truth, however, is fraternities in the 1990s have almost completely narrowed their focus to two activities: drinking a lot of beer and passing a lot of women.

On their Website, the members of Phi Gamma Delta say the group prides itself on its dedication to scholarship, community service and the building of lifelong friendships among members.

An honest observer would be forced to admit, however, that the reality of fraternity life diverges wildly from these lofty goals.

In most fraternities, the grade point ratio necessary to remain a member either equals or barely exceeds the standard set by the university to remain enrolled. Pledges are usually the only members of a fraternity who actually perform any official function relating to scholarship through mandatory pledge study hours. Older members are too busy planning parties and initiating pledges to the rigors of fraternity life to be bothered by difficult academic goals.

Community service is another area in which the rhetoric does not match reality. Again, pledges are often the only members of the fraternity who perform community service, such as visiting the section of highway the fraternity adopted. Pledges also generally serve the community by mowing lawns, buying groceries and washing cars — all for the benefit of the older members of the fraternity.

Additionally, it is a shame some fraternity members must die for the others to develop "lifelong friendships." With friends who force each other to drink enough alcohol to cause death, who needs enemies?

Freshmen who enter college do not join fraternities out of their zeal for academic excellence or their desire to better the college community. Simply enough, freshmen see a fraternity as an easy way to get beer.

The first step in fraternity rush each semester is to get drunk with the young hopefuls and gander at the lovely "Little Sisters" or "Sweethearts" who appear at every event. The freshmen who attend these parties only learn about the fraternity's commitment to high values and academic integrity later when they are probably surprised to read these goals in their pledge books.

Is it really all that bad to join an organization for the sole pur-

pose of drinking with a group of friends? After all, many college students drink with friends all of the time, but in a less formal setting. The problem with fraternities is that they do not own up to their motives. Instead, they surround themselves with an aura of achievement and values that they do not fulfill.

Phi Gamma Delta's charter states that the fraternity "exists to promote lifelong friendships, to reaffirm high ethical standards and values and to foster personal development in the pursuit of excellence." Scott Krueger's mother believed Phi Gamma Delta's rhetoric: "We thought he was safe in that frat [sic] house."

Had the fraternity been honest with themselves and the rest of the world this tragedy may well have been avoided. A more appropriate charter for Phi Gamma Delta might have included the fact pledges had to drink a required amount of alcohol before the older members allowed them to leave a party.

It could be argued that one cannot understand the Greek system if he is not a part of it. However, it is clear to anyone who has spent any time at all on a college campus that there is a distinct difference between social fraternities and organizations that truly support academic achievement and community involvement.

Additionally, non-involvement in Greek life may be a key factor in truly understanding it.

The man or organization living a lie will not only hurt others, but will wind up hurting himself. It should be the hope of all Aggies that the indictment of the Phi Gamma Delta organization brings the truth to light and helps save the lives of many other young men.

Stewart Patton is a senior sociology major.

