

Opinion

Polls, panic and political spoils

Apathy saves elections from scandal's impact

Revelations guarantee Republican victories

The most enigmatic aspect of the Lewinsky case is the state of public opinion. In poll after poll, unnerving majorities of American citizens have maintained their approval of the President's job in office.

Scads of pundits continue to insist — against all the laws of political logic — the matter is still none of our business. "And in spite of the lewd and nauseating details of the 'Starr Report,' many Americans still seem able to separate their opinions of President Clinton's 'jobs' in the Oval Office from his job in the Oval Office. Go figure.

To many, the public's resilient ambivalence is a mystery. To others, it is downright disgusting. But take a moment to consider that it is simply the fact of life.

If, as the polls seem to indicate, most Americans still approve of the President's policies while abhorring his personal exploits, then another equally impenetrable mystery immediately presents itself. Why are the Democrats so worried about the fall congressional elections?

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But just as college represents an opportune time for finding friendships that will last a lifetime, it is also a time when students are so burdened by studies, projects and organizations, that friends are put on the back burner.

While many students get caught up in the grind of everyday, they often take the availability of their comrades for granted. After all, that is what friends are for — to always be there, right? Well, yes. And no.

In today's fast-paced society it is easy to get caught up in the hurry of things. In college, it is easy to begin living a hectic life that never seems to slow. And pressing on toward the goal of a huge salary after graduation makes it even easier to become self-absorbed

It is not hard to find pessimists in Washington, but they seem to be having a special heyday discussing how the debate over impeachment will influence the November elections. Determined to make the scandal partisan, Democrats are now stepping to the floor to encourage their Republican colleagues to speed up the inquiry. After all, they know election day is just around the corner.

But Democrats are wasting their consternation. If the American people have done anything right in response to the Lewinsky matter, they have judiciously kept their opinions of President Clinton confined to President Clinton. No one, not even Kenneth Starr, would claim Clinton's shenanigans should reflect on his party. The failures were his own, not the party's.

Most everyone, whether they support or oppose Clinton's impeachment, can agree that the question is whether to impeach Clinton. The question is not about whether the entire Democratic party should be booted from office.

And the polls reflect this impartiality. If they show majority of

Americans are willing to support Clinton's job performance while booing his moral performance, then they imply Americans will similarly keep questions of Democratic policy separated from questions of Clinton's fitness to lead. The polls do not give reason to think there will be a huge political fallout in November because Clinton let too much hang out last year.

This is, after all, the way it should be. You may have no respect for President Clinton. You may deplore his character and his credibility. And you would have good reasons for holding such opinions. But you should not let these reactions influence your views of other Democrats. They are different individuals, and they deserve separate, impartial judgment.

So, Democrats, take a chill pill. People who voted for Democrats before Lewinsky will continue to vote for Democrats after Lewinsky. (And by voting a Democratic ticket, they are not necessarily voting for Clinton.)

People who did not vote for Democrats before Lewinsky will still dump the donkey after Lewinsky. (And by not voting for Democrats, they are not necessarily motivated by Clinton's ill repute.)

Republicans, be aware of this fact. Trying to play the Lewinsky card to get votes in November probably will not work. If anything, it will backfire.

Americans are tired of this ordeal. Being tired of scandal coverage does not mean that they approve of Clinton or disapprove of impeachment proceedings. But it does mean they are weary of war. And they do not want an election blemished by stained dresses. They want an election based on policies, not on a personality.

And if the polls are right, there will not be many surprises come election day.

People will vote for Republicans because they agree with Republican policies, not because Clinton is not a Republican. And they will vote for Democrats because they agree with the Democratic platform, regardless of the fact Clinton is a Democrat.

Imagine it — politics based on principles instead of personalities. Make it happen.

Caleb McDaniel is a sophomore history major.



CALEB MCDANIEL



BEVERLY MIRELES

Forget Monica. Forget Paula. And please forget the provocative headlines that have monopolized newspaper front pages everywhere.

Focus on the real issue at hand. Not only has Bill Clinton diminished the office of the of the presidency by idiosyncratically exploiting the adulterous whims of a 22-year-old intern, he has single-handedly sabotaged the Democratic party in the upcoming elections.

While the Republicans have been sitting pretty for the last two weeks, Democrats across the country, scrambling to save their jobs, have come very close to publicly denouncing the very man that represents them.

And the school of thought that suggests "hate the sin, but love the sinner" must be a veritable slap in the face to all Democrats running for office these days, seeing how the leader of their party jeopardized their job security.

The public, thoroughly sick and tired of the Starr report and its implied consequences of impeachment, still expresses a desire to move past the Clinton issue.

Keep in mind this does not mean that everything is forgiven and forgotten. It is almost certain that the nation, weary of Clinton's incessant denials, will take out their resentment on many incumbent Democrats, and shut out a whole slew of up-and-coming ones.

Clinton regularly refers to "his place in the annals of history." He is guaranteed one now, though it will probably be more of the infamous type than a visionary one.

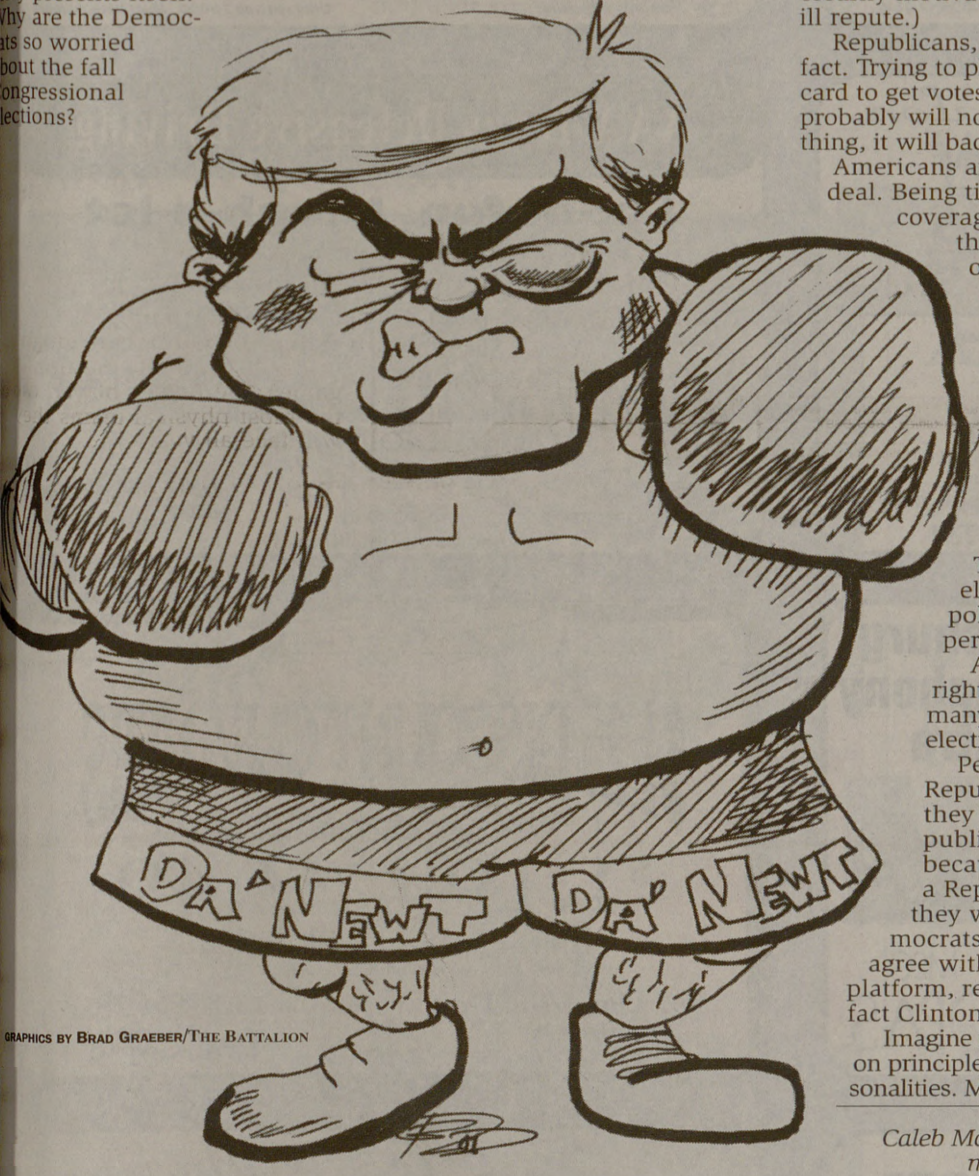
Twenty years from now, Clinton may be somewhat redeemed, as Nixon was in the public's eyes, but historically he will still be the man who put the Republicans back in power in the executive and legislative branches.

Politically speaking, this is more substantial to the public than Clinton's wrongdoing. His alleged perjury may be a punishable offense, but the real punishment will lie on the shoulders of

the Democratic party. At this point, many Democrats are thinking about what a relief it would be if Clinton stepped down. At least it would spare the American public months of verbally elusive rebuttals from Clinton's legal team, and they would not have to stand behind a man that blatantly lied to them.

cy to the Republicans for at least two terms. Clinton's wrongdoing may not "get him" in the end, so to speak, but before he has even packed up and left the White House, the American public will be trying to wipe the slate clean of the scandal. In other words, they will clear the political arena of Democrats next election.

Truth be told, the American public may resent the Republicans for their enduring image as a group of overprivileged "fat cats," but they really distrust the Democrats.



GRAPHICS BY BRAD GRAEBER/THE BATTALION



Makes sense, right? The group that has continually and adamantly supported racial

Whatever or whoever Clinton manipulated, covered up, perjured, groped or misled, the fact that he took something as honorable as the presidency and then demoralized it is the true insult to the American people.

The Democrats, unfortunately, will likely pay the price for it.

Democrats in positions of power already seem to be few and far between. Besides Al Gore and Richard Gephardt, are there many other Democratic options for the presidency?

Al Gore really should not even be counted, since his hopes of claiming the presidency have been ripped right out of his sweaty little hands by Clinton and Kenneth Starr.

This is assuming the Democrats have a chance at the presidency. As of now, it looks like Clinton relinquished the presiden-

equality and attempted to give back to the less fortunate through funding is now considered the "shifty" party.

The way things look now, the Republicans have the chance to rid themselves of more than a few Democrats this November, at least until the next set of elections comes around.

The Republicans are already in control of both the House of Representatives and the Senate. The Clinton scandal will definitely not loosen their grasp on either one, unless the Republicans misstep and overplay their scandal card.

For now, they have a clear path to the White House, and it is all thanks to Bill Clinton, leader of the Democratic party.

Beverly Mireles is a sophomore microbiology major.

Friendships demand attention

Some say friends make the world go round. Some say All-American everyone knows good times are better when you can share them with someone.

But just as college represents an opportune time for finding friendships that will last a lifetime, it is also a time when students are so burdened by studies, projects and organizations, that friends are put on the back burner.

While many students get caught up in the grind of everyday, they often take the availability of their comrades for granted. After all, that is what friends are for — to always be there, right? Well, yes. And no.

In today's fast-paced society it is easy to get caught up in the hurry of things. In college, it is easy to begin living a hectic life that never seems to slow. And pressing on toward the goal of a huge salary after graduation makes it even easier to become self-absorbed

and forget the ones who kept you going through it all.

Although classes are the primary priority, friends are what make college more than an education. Friends make it an experience.

And although throwing back a few and enjoying a Robert Earl Keen concert may seem like an experience, friendships deserve the more quality times too.

College often creates cookie-cutter friendships. Everyone falls into their routines and friends are made to fit that routine. Every week is the same — after the projects are done, work is completed and after other obligations are met, then time can be spared for friends.

Unfortunately, waiting until a more convenient time to be a friend can be costly. People often forget they are living on borrowed time, and today is what counts.

Like any relationship, what you put into it is what you get out of it. Friendship requires an investment. To build strong friendships, students must make them a priority.

Each student has a unique schedule, some with more time on their hands, some with less. And although school and activi-

ties are important, Chemistry 101 only stays with you a while, but a good friend is there to stay.

Everyone likes to know they are appreciated, and friendships would be stronger if people were willing to make sacrifices — an hour of their day for lunch, a minute to just drop by and laugh over coffee or an evening to go on a drive and just get away.

Now is the time to make each day count, to meet new friends and cherish the time spent with old ones. After this it is nine to five — a wife, a husband, a dog, kids, a mini-van (or maybe not) and the time you thought you would have just is not there.

Students have such great dreams and potential in college, and they should make it count. It is possible to be the studious student, the over-involved Aggie and the kind of friend that makes a difference. It is all about priorities.

College is a time for making memories, and there are wonderful memories to be made ... but it is the people that make them precious.

Corrie Cauley is a senior journalism major.



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