

McCain deserves media attention, voter support



MARK PASSWATERS

When looking for an opening almost anywhere, you will find the employee to "Do you it tries that?" have a section mentioning qualifications. This may not be the case in the U.S. presidency, when looking at people who have entered the race for the presidential office or who are considering it. Two qualifications being looked for are experience and charisma. George W. Bush has an excellent job as governor of Texas, but only for one year. That is still more experience than Elizabeth Dole, Steve Forbes or Pat Buchanan, and less than Warren Beatty, Don Trump or Cybill Shepard. The Democrats have "Mr. Clinton," Al Gore, and his wife for the nomination, Bill Clinton. Both of these experienced gentlemen can put in a coma. So there is no candidate out there with at least some experience and passion needed to run the country? There is at least one. His name is John McCain, Republican senator from Arizona. If the media would pay attention to the man, they would recognize he is not only a decent person with good qualifications, but he also has the rare character trait of courage. It is unfortunate that the current political flavor that the media enjoys (with the exception of Buchanan's Reform Party) is vanilla. Hours of coverage are wasted waiting for other candidates to say something of substance, when McCain has been speaking his mind from the start. McCain's father was an ad-

miral in the U.S. Navy, which gave his son some advantages most children do not get.

McCain graduated from the prestigious Episcopal High School in Alexandria, Va. and the Naval Academy. Instead of occupying a desk in the Pentagon and resting on his father's laurels, McCain volunteered for combat duty in Vietnam as a fighter pilot.

He was shot down over Hanoi and served six years as a prisoner of war, repeatedly turning down offers to be exchanged by the North Vietnamese since his father was chief of naval operations. McCain was the ranking officer in the "Hanoi Hilton," and he was not going to abandon his post.

John McCain is out there, quietly swimming upstream.

During his appearance on the "Tonight Show with Jay Leno," McCain was asked what politician he most closely identified with.

His joking answer was the governor of Minnesota Jesse Ventura. McCain, a former high school and college wrestler, noted that he had been "pinned in the finest gymnasiums on the east coast," and that he had been known to wear a flower boa around the halls of the U.S. Senate.

In a serious vein, he is somewhat like Ventura in that he has the same determination to stick to his guns no matter what popular opinion might dictate. McCain is the sponsor of the McCain-Feingold Campaign Finance Reform Bill, which has angered the Republican leadership in Congress.

He has also repeatedly blasted the Clinton administration for its involvement with Chinese fundraisers and the administration's poor treatment of the military.

Unlike most politicians, McCain is not willing to compromise his core values. He is also willing to admit his mistakes, such as being involved in the "Keating Five" scandal and, unlike some other candidates, addressing the wild behavior of his youth.

McCain has separated himself from the rest of the field in terms of qualifications and commitment, and how has he been rewarded for being different? His campaign has been largely ignored by the media.

While candidates such as Bush, Gore and Bradley deserve their share of attention, McCain's heroic service to his country should at least get as much press as Buchanan's crazy rantings that Adolf Hitler should have been left alone to deal with Joseph Stalin during World War II.

His willingness to buck the trend on campaign finance reform should be noted by the American people, especially when candidates have cajoled foreign nationals for donations.

When the press sits around and complains that all the candidates are saying the same thing and "Campaign 2000" is boring, they have nobody to blame but themselves. McCain is out there, quietly swimming upstream.

If courage, passion and experience are something people might be looking for, they should be given the opportunity to find out about McCain. Maybe the media will give the nation that chance and get themselves out of the doldrums in the process.

Mark Passwaters is a graduate student in electrical engineering.



RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

Can you spare a dime?

Philanthropists must contribute to important social ills

Every year, billions of dollars pour into universities, private schools and museums, while more important social needs continue to sit by the wayside.



BEVERLY MIRELES

Perhaps it is just the nature of philanthropy that donations have a tendency to flow from the rich to the well-established — that contributions tend to end up in the coffers of alumnates and museums rather than in soup kitchens.

Donations often bypass the needy social causes, like homelessness, disease research and worsening economic disparity, and are instead given to institutions that name buildings after donors.

While no institution, business or museum has a large enough budget to fulfill its yearly wish list, it would be false to say there are not more socially deserving groups in desperate need of funds.

Because of the disproportionate philanthropy, it can seem like the days of social improvement through generosity died with Andrew Carnegie.

Perhaps it is true, as Peter Hall was quoted in the *New York Times* as saying, that "Philanthropy is, intrinsically, not even-handed."

It is hard to dispute the claim made by Hall, a senior research scholar at the Yale Divinity School, when the unevenness of philanthropic charity is witnessed in the way many of the rich have distributed their assets, giving faddishly to popular charities or to causes that are widely publicized.

Such indiscriminate giving obscures philanthropy's true meaning — to increase the well-being of humankind through charitable aid.

True philanthropy demands social change, and giving should be an informed decision. It is in society's best interest for benefactors to educate themselves about problems more pressing than the need for new football stadiums or private school vouchers.

Philanthropists obviously have the right to distribute their money as they see fit — being able to make important decisions is one of the perks of having monetary excess. However, if donors are intending to become true philanthropists, the need for responsible philanthropy should be the first initiative, not something that is done after one has given to popular vanity causes.

For example, while AIDS research is continuously funded, many have overlooked the most deadly disease of all, tuberculosis (TB). One in three people across the globe is infected with TB, according to the World Health Organization.

What is even more worrisome is that a new strain of TB, multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB), is the cause of some cases of TB reported in New York, California and Texas.

Poorly funded and negligently managed, TB control projects are the primary source of MDR-TB. It is possible that if programs were better funded, these incurable cases of MDR-TB would decrease.

Another problem is the lack of technology in low-income areas.

The ramifications of being computer illiterate in the computer age are a terrible burden to carry. However, many children in low-income areas will have to deal with this problem. It is hard enough trying to better one's situation.

Imagine how much that is compounded when one was never allowed to learn the necessary skill for socio-economic advancement.

Certainly helping to get low-income families access to technology is more important than funding some type of detrimental voucher program, or paying for another stadium.

Some have already started to return to socially-conscious philanthropy. In a recent endeavor to spread some of their tremendous wealth, Bill Gates and his wife, Melinda, pooled their resources and joined their separate charities into a \$17 billion charitable entity.

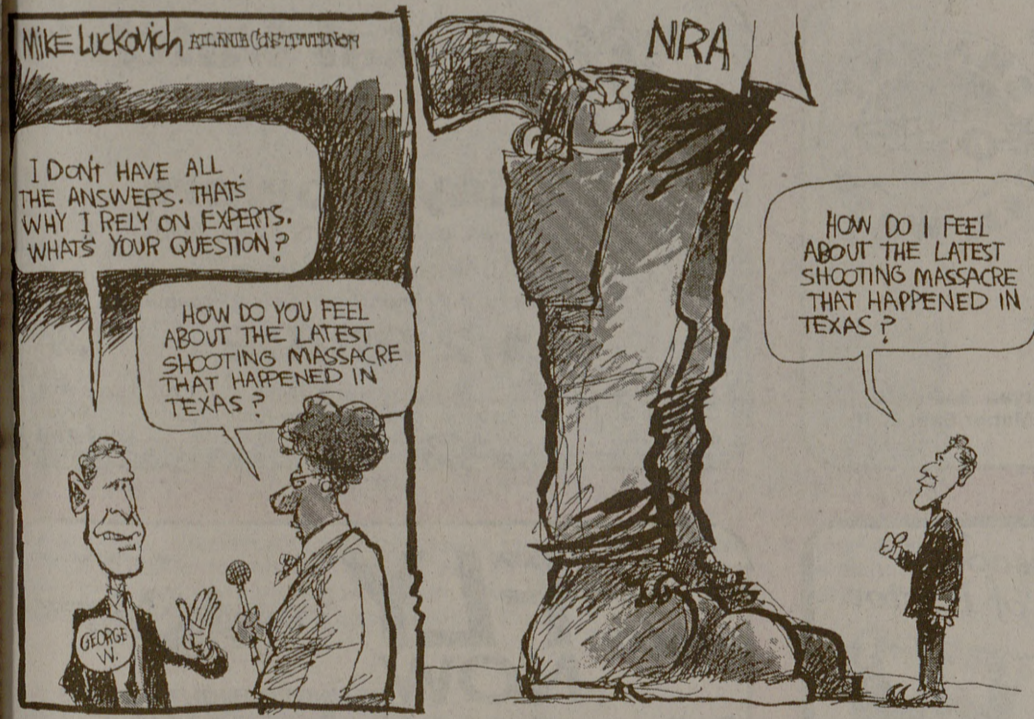
The new foundation has pledged \$1 billion in college scholarships to the neediest high-school seniors over 20 years. The \$1 billion amount broken down over a period of 20 years means \$50,000 per student, if the Gates' pursue their goal of subsidizing 1,000 students a year. Such a scholarship program has the power to benefit students who would otherwise not have made it to college, or if they did, would be swimming in debt after four years. The foundation's first contribution dwarfs all other donations not only with the impressive amount of money, but in the well-thought out philanthropic effort.

The Gates' donation should be a catalyst, sparking other benefactors to give to worthy and viable causes. Bill and Melinda Gates will have to lead the way for other philanthropists. Instead of donating to pet causes, would-be philanthropists should take on pressing issues.

Most donors will not be able to attempt the large pledges the Gates couple has promised.

However, present philanthropy should focus more on the consequences of donations, not the sums of money. The benefits of philanthropy can be great indeed if the donations go to where they are needed most.

Beverly Mireles is a junior microbiology major.



Students should choose careers with care

Finding the ideal career can be as hard as finding a good parking space in time for class. First, commuting students have to gamble on which parking lot will have an empty spot.



STEPHANIE DUBE

Next comes an even bigger decision: Do they take the first space that comes around? New students learning to park would have a lot of heartache if they sought advice from expert seniors on parking strategies before joining the hunt.

In the same way, the pains of hunting for an ideal career can be lessened by seeking the advice of experts. (Do not ask seniors, though, because they will be too busy waiting for a parking space.) Certainly, one expert to avoid at all costs is the job projections list released by the Texas Workforce Commission.

The list predicts what occupations will grow the most by 2006. For that matter, avoid any list predicting the "fastest-growing jobs."

First, such lists can often be misleading.

Second, and more important, no one should base his or her career choice on what jobs are going to be most available.

Dr. Glen Payne, associate director for placement in the Career Center at Texas A&M, said he helps students look at their natural interests when choosing careers.

This is a better method of choosing a career than a job projections list.

"I often use a two-question diagnostic tool when talking with students," he said. "The object is to find out what this person naturally likes and then look into those kind of careers that utilize their natural traits."

Students can also gauge their potential interests by taking a written test offered by the Student Counseling Service.

Once students find the type of job that may match their interests, the next step is to meet people already working in the field, Payne said.

Students can do this through internships, co-ops, career fairs on campus, or special corporate presentations offered by businesses visiting A&M.

The Career Center can be a great resource for finding such opportunities.

Another source of expert advice may be found in the Bible. Students who use the Bible believe that "many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails" (Proverbs 19:21).

If a student thinks God's plans prevail in the end, then it only makes sense that he or she should consult God first when searching for the ideal career.

Choosing a career involves more than using a projections list to find a job field with a lot of open positions, or picking a prestigious company known for paying good salaries.

The ideal career would combine a student's natural interests with the chance to make a lasting, positive impact on other people's lives.

But finding such a career can be as hard as finding a parking spot on campus that is far away from busy birds.

That is why God is the best expert to consult when picking careers. He knows the best parking spaces because he built the parking lot.

Stephanie Dube is a journalism graduate student.

MAIL CALL

Most student loan deals worthwhile

In response to Jeff Webb's Sept. 27 column.

Webb's column on student loans and personal responsibility missed several important facts about student loans.

The overwhelming majority of students pay their student loans with no problem.

The idea of sending bills for school costs, room and board to the government to insure that student loans are used strictly for educational expenses would increase the costs of loans.

This extra step and the paperwork it would require would not be worth the effort.

Besides, all student loan funds are first presented to the University to ensure all academic expenses are taken care of before students receive one penny.

The federal student loan program does not cost the taxpayer money every year.

The millions of students who have been presented with the opportunity to obtain a degree makes the student loan program well worth the cost.

Additionally, the tax base built from these millions of college graduates makes the whole system worthwhile.

Gregg C. Baird
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