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Thursday, October 5, 2000

# OPINION

THE BATTALION

## No excuses

College-age voters should turn out on Election Day, regardless of obstacles



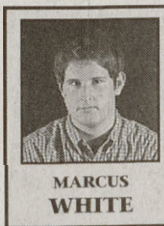
**O**n Nov. 7, America will elect a new president. Among those visiting the polls will be the elderly, the wealthy, people of all races, Republicans and Democrats.

Generally, college-age citizens do not show up at the polls when election time comes around.

As a generation, new voters must break the trend of past generations and make their voices heard on Capitol Hill not only by registering to vote, but by making a choice on Election Day.

A recent poll conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation and MTV shows that only one-half of people ages 18 to 24 are registered to vote, and only 46 percent of those registered intend to vote.

Essentially, only one in four of America's young



MARCUS WHITE

adults exercises his right to vote.

The reasons why they choose not to vote range from apathy to ignorance. Some college-age voters find the voting system difficult to work with while in school.

Also, the youth of America are often convinced candidates and politicians largely ignore issues that concern college-age voters.

Aside from on-campus groups such as TAMU College Republicans and Texas Aggie Democrats, many students at Texas A&M are unfamiliar with the platforms each candidate supports.

As a result, many choose not to vote

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at the polls, leaving their concerns unvoiced in the political arena.

Tim Nevotti, a junior biomedical science major, will vote in this year's presidential election.

What Nevotti finds disturbing about both candidates, however, is the relative apathy toward subjects and issues close to college students' hearts.

"It seems like all politicians discuss are issues like Social Security, gun control or welfare," Nevotti said.

"Granted, these are important to many people, but they do not really affect my daily life."

There is no doubt the candidates make transparent attempts to gain popularity with the young voters.

Most recently, MTV aired a town hall meeting with Gore.

Like his predecessor, current Presi-

dent Bill Clinton, Gore discussed his platforms and campaign promises with an audience of more than 150 young men and women.

Programs like MTV's "Choose or Lose," which sponsored the Gore forum, work to familiarize America's youth with the ideals of each political party.

Often, as was the case with the Gore interview, MTV allows what could be an informative discussion on issues to digress into another episode of "Total Request Live."

Instead of hearing Gore's plans for America's voting-age population in detail, MTV viewers discovered that Gore listens to Sister Hazel and is friends with Tommy Lee Jones.

Politicians, until forced to do so, will not put much emphasis on what they believe college-age voters want.

Issues like financial aid for college students and civil rights will inevitably take a back seat to Medicare, defense spending and Social Security.

They have discovered that, as a group, voters age 18 to 24 do not go to the polls when the time comes.

As citizens of the United States, it is the obligation of all those eligible to vote to become involved in the democratic process by voting.

The Kaiser/MTV poll showed that 70 percent of 18-24-year-olds polled believed that a change in presidents would have little to no effect on their day-to-day lives.

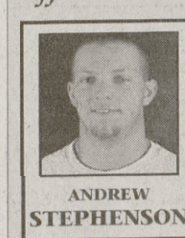
The only way to get issues that college-age voters believe to be important to the top of the political agenda is to prove to candidates that they will vote for the nominee and party that best represent them.

Hopefully, college-age students will find their way to the voting booths this November.

Marcus White is a sophomore general studies major.

## A DIFFERENT VIEWPOINT

Affirmative-action issue skewed



ANDREW STEPHENSON

**M**any articles have been printed in the past few years discussing the perceived racism problem at Texas A&M and other colleges throughout Texas. It seems a study is done every week, or some vis-

iting professor has a comment to make concerning the attitudes on campus.

However, few of these people are doing anything to solve the perceived problem. They are, instead, creating problems where there are none, or in some cases making small problems out to be very large.

Recently, professor Robert Jensen of the University of Texas-Austin spoke at A&M to discuss the attitudes of Caucasians and affirmative action in America. It was his belief that affirmative action is already prevalent in a relatively Caucasian-dominated society for its Caucasian citizens, and that a white man in today's society is granted more privileges than a minority member. He admitted that he was no expert on race, simply a "dumb-ass white boy from North Dakota" exploring a world in which white men receive undeniable privilege.

I do not feel that I have been given undeniable privilege throughout my life. I do not believe that many, if any at all, of my life experiences would have been altered if my skin had happened to be a different color. My family was by no means rich; most of the time we were barely getting by. This was never used as an excuse for anything, and my parents expected nothing less than my best in whatever I did, from band to football to schoolwork. I was able to maintain good grades, and thus I was lucky enough to be admitted into a great school. Texas A&M even gave me a scholarship.

**As a white person, I realize that I may not always be able to see certain examples of discrimination.**

If I was a minority, however, I could have possibly received a larger award. There are even those students who have comparatively lower grades and come from better backgrounds than white students. These students can be given a scholarship that is of a greater amount, while maintaining a lower grade-point average.

As a white person, I realize that I may not always be able to see certain examples of discrimination. Motivated by this realization, I spoke with an African-American student in my dormitory, and got his opinion on racism on campus.

Under terms of anonymity, he told me, "I feel like I should not be judged just because of who I am. I do not think that I should be accepted into this University because I am black. I do not feel like any organization should accept me just because I am black. I do not feel like anyone should give me any special treatment just because I am black."

When affirmative action was brought up, his comment was, "I do not think there will ever be complete equality because... by affirmative action [life] is racist."

Another subject discussed was whether a certain hostility existed on campus toward minority students, whether by other students or by the administration.

"I do not think that [hostility] has anything to do with this University, because anywhere I go there is always going to be one ignorant person in the group that has something to say. I came here not because this is a black school, I did not come here because it is a white school, I came here because I wanted to get an education," he said.

Granted, this one person does not necessarily reflect the views of all minorities on this campus. However, his opinions do provide insight.

Certainly, today's world is not perfect, for any race. How can it be right for people to be judged on the basis of their skin color, one way or the other?

The University recently did a study of minorities who were accepted to A&M but chose not to attend. The top reasons that were cited were lack of financial aid and lack of personal attention. This raises the question, "Why should any students be singled out for special treatment?"

There is definitely no easy solution to the problems of discrimination and reverse discrimination, but a start would definitely be to remove the little boxes that are checked on any forms students and prospective employees fill out.

The fact that A&M gives prospective students little special treatment is a good thing. It shows that the University is doing its best to look at each student as an individual, not as a race.

Once everyone begins to view people simply as who they are — not what color they are or where they are from — it will bring society one step closer to unity.

Andrew Stephenson is a sophomore environmental design major.

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## No children allowed Kids in Olympics questionable



SUNNYE OWENS

**F**rom gymnastics to the pentathlon, there is an alarming trend relating to the age of athletes who qualify for the Olympics — they are too young.

When the average age for girls who participate in Olympic gymnastics is 17, there is something wrong with Olympic age regulations.

There should be restrictions on the age of Olympic participants. It is safe to say that many 17-, 15- and 13-year-olds are physically or mentally mature for the stress of the Olympics.

Many people say that if 13-year-olds are skilled enough to make the Olympics, they should be able to participate.

This is an absurd concept. It is unacceptable for a child to be in the same athletic category as a veteran 25-year-old, no matter how good he or she is at a sport.

It would be more understandable for 13-year-olds to participate in the Olympics if there were not a lower category of Olympics such as the Junior Olympics. Some sports in the Junior Olympics accept athletes ranging from 8 to 23 years of age.

There are no excuses for 13-year-olds in the Olympics; they should only be allowed to participate in the Junior Olympics. The Junior Olympics are designed to be a preparation for larger competitions such as the Olympics.

The Olympics are a very stressful, intensive competi-

tion. The best of the best compete.

How can children handle this pressure? Some physicians believe that with a younger Olympian, more injuries are likely to occur during the Games. Most 13-year-olds do not have the physical abilities to handle the stress on the body the Olympics create.

Dominique Moceanu is an example of a child who was allowed to participate in the 1996 Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta at the ripe old age of 14. The effects of her winning the gold at the 1996 Olympic games have been dubious.

Since the Olympics, she has legally divorced her parents. Moceanu wanted to control her life because she said her parents and her coaches pushed her too hard and forced her to compete in major competitions too early in her life.

During a gymnastics exhibition tour of the United States last year, Moceanu said, "When I was young, I had no clue."

Maybe if the Olympics put age

regulation on their participants, then things like this would not have to happen.

When children at a very young age are forced to give up their whole lives and divorce their parents because they have the chance to go to the Olympics, there is a huge problem that needs to be dealt with.

It is ludicrous to consider the Olympic sport of women's gymnastics.

These little girls are by no definition women. When a 20-year-old is considered to be in the last years of her Olympic competition, something is wrong with the way the Games are structured.

No matter what, the Olympics should be revered as successful and respectable athletic events.

The athletes who participate in these Games are the best at their sports, but some are just too young.

There must be some regulation of the age of Olympians.

Sunnys Owens is a junior journalism major.



RUBEN DELUNA

### Mail Call

#### Criticism of polygamy column hypocritical

In response to Sarah Albers' Oct. 2 Mail Call.

"I heartily applaud Albers' defense of her religion from the ungodly hordes of polygamists, but I must take issue with her accusations against Greenwood and his research practices."

His column, though not uproariously funny, was a satirical stab at an almost dead practice in this country.

Albers' holier-than-thou message was unwarranted, as were her accusations of deceit. She asserts that Greenwood has not done his homework. I suggest that perhaps she has not done hers, either.

Of four Scripture passages she cited, I found three of them to have nothing to do with polygamy.

Two of those (Jer 3:1 & Proverbs 5:18-19) were warnings against adultery (which differs from polygamy), and one was an excerpt from a love poem in which the author expounds on his lover's beauty but makes no mention of the polygamy vs. monogamy issue (Song of Solomon 4).

The only passage relevant to the issue was Ephesians 5:31. One should consid-

er, however, that most of the original Christians were Jewish converts, not strangers to the concept of polygamy, as seen by Old Testament writings.

Paul, author of the passage, was one such convert. He, however, was born a Roman citizen and therefore shared the Roman cultural distaste for polygamy, as mentioned in Greenwood's article.

I find polygamy to be an immoral practice, but I seriously doubt that Greenwood's article is going to inspire Aggies to take up the practice.

Remember John 8:7, "Let you who is without sin cast the first stone."

Kevin Gifford  
Class of '03

#### Red Raider impressed by Aggie unity

I am a proud Red Raider — have been and always will be. However, my recent visit to your University showed me a new meaning of the word pride.

As I sat shoulder to shoulder in Kyle Field playing "Fight, Raider, Fight" with the Goin' Band from Raiderland, I saw for the first time what true school pride

should be.

I looked upon a stadium filled with maroon and proud Aggies screaming "Beat the Hell..."

We are sometimes lucky to have our student section — two sections of Jones Stadium — even partially full. Half of Kyle Field seemed to have been made up entirely of students.

For your pride, unity and spirit that you show for the simple fact that you are Aggies, I commend you all.

Matt Holt  
Class of '03, Texas Tech University

#### Photo misrepresents student's support

In response to Sept. 21 photograph. The picture displayed a group of Bonfire workers listening to the Student Senate's debate on President Bowen's Bonfire resolution. I was featured in this picture with the caption, "Students in support of off-campus bonfire listen to speakers at Student Senate meeting..."

I was not there in support of off-campus bonfire, nor was there in support of Bowen's resolution.

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 014 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:

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