

OPINION

THE BATTALION

There must be something wrong with me. I am a Texan, I am an Aggie and I am voting for Al Gore.

Why? Because he is more qualified for the job and has better policy ideas than our governor.

For eight years, Gore has been the most influential and involved vice president in this nation's history. He has played an integral part in the disarmament of the former Soviet Union, cut government spending, protected the environment and represented America in international relations.

In the battles he has lost, such as health care, he has stuck to his guns until the end, fighting for what he believes is the best for America.

His opponent never really stood for anything before this election. Can you name an area in which Texas is better off today than it was six years ago?

George W. Bush has played the part of a governor well, smiling for the cameras and cutting ribbons, but where have the real reforms been? He is not just a Washington insider; he is an Austin outsider.

The difference between the two candidates is that Gore honestly cares about America. He may not exude charisma or boyish charm, but he has the qualities necessary to run this country — qualities that Bush lacks.

Nicholas Roznovsky is a senior political science major.

I believe Al Gore and George Bush are fine presidential candidates. However, I feel Gore would be a better president.

I would not consider myself a Republican or a Democrat — so I am voting for Gore because I agree with him on several issues. The issues that mean most to me as a citizen and a citizen are abortion and equal rights.

I am pro-choice — I believe that a woman should have the right to decide what she can do with her body. I am also in favor of equal rights, which entails equal pay for women.

Bush has made it clear that he is pro-life, while Gore has stated that he is pro-choice. Bush said, "Surely this nation can come together to promote the value of life."

Americans should value life, but the value of life should include the choice of what to do with that life. Bush is ignoring this notion.

As a college student, I am trying to improve my life. This includes being able to support myself. Equal pay for women is a major issue in the work force of America. Gore is strongly in favor of equal pay for women.

Recently, Gore said, "Working women in this country will never have the futures they deserve until they earn the pay they deserve."

I strongly feel that if women do the exact same job as men, they should be paid the same. From a woman's point of view, Gore will protect my rights.

Sunnye Owens is a junior journalism major.

Ralph Nader was born to accomplish two things — save trees and kick ass. And he is almost done saving trees.

His ass-kicking ability is reflected in his current campaign for the presidency. Nader, the Green Party candidate, has sued almost every government agency imaginable and seems to have more experience dealing with the facets of government than any other candidate.

Nader's greatest asset is a well-built progressive character that even the square-jawed Al Gore cannot approach.

The Nader campaign boasts involvement in politics since George W. Bush was still wearing training boots. The Harvard-educated lawyer first arrived in Washington when he was 29 years old and had little on his mind other than making sure automobiles were safe for Americans.

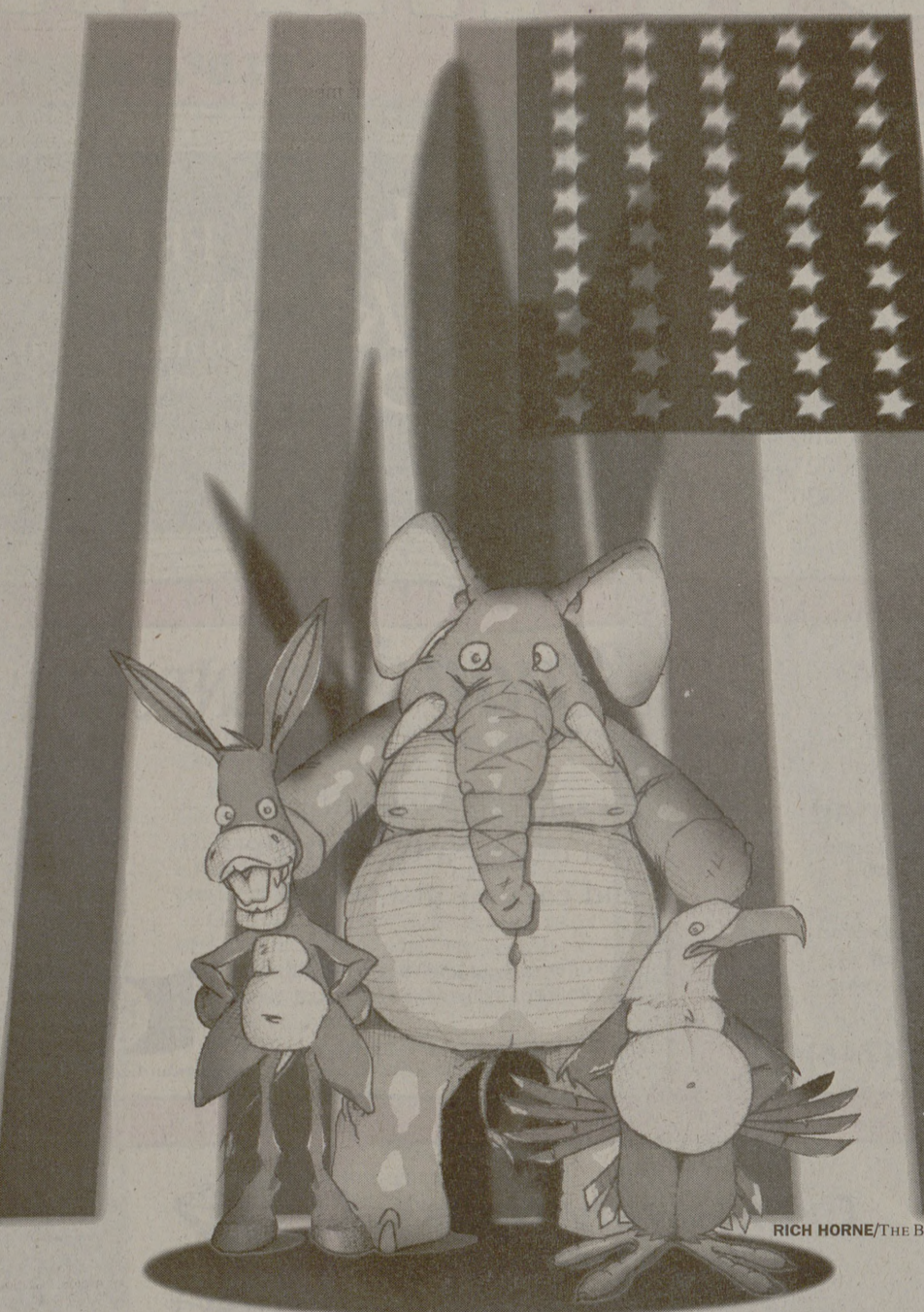
What transpired from that is a legacy of consumer protection and standing up to practices that hurt people. Thanks to Nader and his "Nader's Raiders," the American public is more at ease than ever before in the areas of automobiles, drinking water and the loss of American wildlife.

Vote for Ralph Nader. His history of disregarding the needs of big business in favor of the needs of the consumer reflects that he is the candidate who can lead America to the next century.

Reid Bader is a junior political science major.

"We solemnly declare that the foundation of our political position and moving principle of our political activity is our full submission and unshakable faith in our Savior and Redeemer, our Lord Jesus Christ."

Agreement with the Constitution's preamble should draw a vote for the nominee who represents Biblical values — Howard Phillips of the Constitution Party. While third-party candidates never win the presidency, one should vote for the person who



RICH HORNE/THE BATTALION

Election roll call

Columnists advocate their picks for president

best represents the voter's ideal political universe.

Those who rightfully fear a Gore win need not choose between the Republican and Democratic candidates, especially in a state where a Bush win seems inevitable.

In a likely close election, the opportunity for one vote to make a striking impact is present; one should not waste it on a candidate whose platform, like those of Bush and Gore, is insipid and avoids issues.

So, patrons of a pro-life stance, advocates of a strong American defense infrastructure, activists against drug abuse, supporters of the Constitutional right to bear arms and champions of other truly conservative causes should write in Howard Phillips.

Jennifer Ramby is a sophomore journalism major.

Anyone with an ounce of sense knows who to vote for — the candidate who cares greatly about the people of our nation, despite their sizes — the candidate who will make our nation happier and healthier — the candidate who likes to wear pink short shorts — Richard Simmons.

Genius minds think alike — Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "New Deal" shows striking similarities to Simmons' "Deal a Meal." Simmons has shown dedication to ending our nation's epidemic of obesity with his ingenious programs and emotional personal visits. Simmons needs to go beyond "Sweating To The Oldies" to solve the rest of our nation's problems.

Simmons obviously can trim more than waist sizes; he can trim the national budget. He has shown his cost-cutting abilities by wearing short shorts.

Simmons has shown that he can achieve his goals with the structure of his "Deal a Meal" program. Simmons would reduce Medicare costs with a nationwide "Sweatin' To The Oldies" program to make his constituents happier and healthier.

It is obvious that anyone who wants this nation to be healthy and full of glee will write in Simmons on the ballot today.

Shannon Greenwood is a senior computer engineering major.

People can argue about who would make the best president until they are blue in the face, but the differences between Bush and Gore are not obvious enough to make a noticeable difference.

The president is just one man, and a relatively powerless one at that. Even if the new president did have strong, life-changing beliefs, he could not singlehandedly change the course of the entire nation.

However, neither presidential candidate is offering anything the American public has not heard before, so these concerns are unfounded. Both majority candidates are mas-

ters at riding the political fence in garnering as many votes as possible.

There is more variation within each political party than there is between them, which makes it unlikely that either president will advocate any drastic legislation — it might hurt his chances of being re-elected.

Jessica Crutcher is a junior journalism major.

After a great deal of mind-numbing deliberation, I am voting for Gov. George W. Bush.

Let's be honest — both major candidates are seriously flawed.

Essentially, Bush was a failure in life until he reached middle age. His string of disastrous oil busts in the '80s solidified his legacy of being a terrible businessman.

As governor, Bush skillfully rode the coattails of an aggressive state legislature and claimed credit for welfare and education reforms that were well on their way to approval before Bush was sworn into office — all of this on top of the shameless exploitation of his family name.

Vice President Al Gore is no better. His tendency to embellish his accomplishments — "inventing" the Internet, "serving" in the Vietnam War — rides that line between bending the truth and flat-out lying.

Furthermore, I have no tolerance for the current campaign finance system. Simply stated, it is legalized bribery. The lingering question marks over Gore's improprieties during fund raising are too murky to ignore.

Despite his flaws, there are two compelling reasons I am voting for Bush.

First, I wish to see Roe vs. Wade overturned by the Supreme Court. There have been rumblings that Chief Justice William Rehnquist and Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg, among others, are pondering retirement. Last year, Roe was narrowly upheld in a 5-4 decision. As president, Bush would be in a position to appoint pro-life justices and change the balance of power in the court.

Second, Bush is a "Washington outsider" who has a track record of erasing party lines in the name of the greater good. In his re-election campaign for governor, he earned the surprising endorsement of the Democratic lieutenant governor, Bob Bullock.

Even with my vote, I admit I do feel a bit jaded. Both major parties have moved so close to the center that, in many respects, they are indistinguishable.

I guess I have been listening to too much Rage Against the Machine.

David Lee is a senior economics and journalism major.

The problem with elections is that you have to pick somebody. Well, technically, you do not have to — you can abstain. But if you do not want to take an op-

portunity half the world envies, then you might as well move to one of those other countries.

I am fairly skeptical of politics and do not believe an ambitious voter who casts his or her vote will change the system.

However, I do believe that, since the historical shift from monarchies to representative governments, heads of state have been bound, however loosely, to speak for the will of the people.

And it is this belief that keeps me speaking and keeps me angry at politics, because as John Steinbeck said in *The Grapes of Wrath*, when people stop being angry, they lose all influence.

I voted for George W. Bush. Not because I believe he is a "reformer with results," but for the same reason I call in repeatedly to MTV's "Total Request Live" and ask them to play more small-label rock bands — because I can, and because I want MTV executives to know that someplace, somewhere, somebody is still angry for having to listen to Britney Spears and her clones.

So I wish Bush the best of luck. He is going to need it. And blast Carson Daly for not playing more Elliot Smith.

Eric Dickens is a senior English major.

I fully support George W. Bush because I believe him to be a true leader and the most capable man to lead our country.

Though it is not blaringly evident, there is a major difference between Bush and Vice President Al Gore: Gore deals with details, plans and programs, while Bush uses a value-oriented approach to leadership.

Karen Hughes, who has been Bush's communications director since his campaign for governor in 1995, said in 1999 that it is possible to know Bush's positions on issues without consulting him.

Hughes said that when Bush first took office, he told his staff that all his positions could be known by asking several questions: Does it promote the family? Does it facilitate and promote control for localities? Is there an existing law that clarifies the subject?

Bush knows what it means to govern without bias or partisanship, as evidenced by his administration in Texas. He will govern on the premise of what is right for America, not what is right for approval ratings or an overly controlling government.

Bush will lead our nation with unrivaled dignity and bold vision, and that is why he has my vote.

Chris Carter is a senior speech communication major.

One could take many things into consideration when choosing how to vote for president. For me, the one thing that sticks out is the issue of respect.

Al Gore has been less than truthful with the public regarding his personal life, his political beliefs and his actions while in office. The public now questions his credibility, and he lacks its respect.

If Gore is not respected by the nation, how can he be respected by foreign leaders? If Gore is not negotiating from a position of political and personal strength, America suffers.

George W. Bush is a man who has been honest with the nation about his personal life, his shortcomings and his hopes for the future. He has surrounded himself with a group of people who command respect.

When he deals with foreign leaders, the American people will not have to question whether Bush can be counted on to do what is right for the country.

It is important for a president to have the respect of the people and the world. Gore cannot deliver on this issue. This is the primary reason my vote has gone to George W. Bush.

Mark Passwaters is a senior electrical engineering major.

In order for a government to be stable, there must be a willingness to cooperate on both sides.

Gov. George W. Bush has shown greater responsibility in handling bipartisanship than Vice President Al Gore.

Gore, who favors the abolishment of the internal combustion engine, is much more liberal than he would have voters know. The points on which Bush differs from Gore happen to align with my conservative, religious nature.

Bush showed courage in addressing his stance against both abortion and same-sex marriages during the presidential debates and Republican conventions. Bush displayed the desire to give tax cuts to everyone, not just a select few, as with Gore's plan.

Since the two candidates seem closely aligned on many issues, the deciding factor was image. Though President Bill Clinton did a fine job during his tenure, he brought no respect to the Oval Office.

It is time to change that image by bringing in a Washington outsider, not by electing an individual already tied to not only an immoral presidency, but scandals of his own.

Marcus White is a sophomore general studies major.

Mail Call

Student body shares views on today's presidential election

As a junior wildlife and fisheries science major, I have followed the environmental policies of both candidates closely, and the choice is black and white.

Al Gore will be the most progressive environmental president we have ever had, and George W. Bush will be the worst.

Case in point: Al Gore helped arrange the Kyoto Protocol, a worldwide treaty to reduce global warming gas emissions.

It has already been signed by every world power except the United States. Bush, on the other hand, openly opposes this treaty.

Instead he supports "voluntary" regulation of industry. This policy has only reduced emissions in Texas by 2.4 percent and has helped Houston become the most polluted city in the country.

In addition, Bush recently appointed two chemical/oil executives to the Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission, the very board that serves to regulate those industries.

In short, Bush is owned and his priorities do not serve the best interests of the United States, while Gore looks to make our country an example of environmental responsibility.

*Christopher Shull
Class of '01*

This election period has taught me so much about why the American people, in general, are frustrated with politics.

Each year voter turnout decreases, political cynicism increases and indifferent armchair analysts debate which of the two major-party candidates is the lesser of two evils.

Bush is running for the sole purpose of winning so he can add president to mediocre businessman and ineffective governor on his resume. Gore has had to fundraise himself into Washington so many times that the values that he initially brought to his career in politics have been compromised to the point of uselessness.

Why has no one taken a step back to analyze why it is that people in this country are really not given a true voice in this election?

Government is no longer the supreme force behind our national motivations.

Large corporations have bought our representatives and customized their appointments to corporate likings.

One of this season's debates, for instance, was funded by Anheuser-Busch.

Who gave these corporations, whose minds are consumed by no greater good than human greed, the right to decide how our democratic process will proceed?

This certainly is not the moral voice I want governing our nation.

Our nation is moving into an era superseding modernism, and like any transition period, it is time to throw out these old and ineffective ways of conducting government and replace them with government that is truly for the people and by the people. Only one candidate, Ralph Nader, has even addressed these issues.

Nader has built a career fighting large corporations on behalf of the general public.

Isn't that what you want a politician to do for you?

*Joshua Hamilton
Class of '03*

Editor's note: The Battalion received no letters to the editor in support of Gov. George W. Bush, nor any for third-party candidates other than Ralph Nader.

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class and phone number.

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