

AGGIELIFE

THE BATTALION

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To vote, or not to vote

As Election Day 2002 approaches, students face pressure to vote

By Kelcey Rieger
THE BATTALION

On Tuesday, Nov. 5, Texans all over the state will be heading to the polls to vote. While some Texas A&M students prefer not to participate in Election Day, others will be casting ballots.

Jay Slovacek, a senior journalism major, said he will cast his vote in the upcoming election. "Sadly, my motivation for voting isn't to vote for the good guys, but keep out politicians who are excessively self-serving," Slovacek said. "I think more people voting would assure politicians of their status and result in less 'politicizing' of issues."

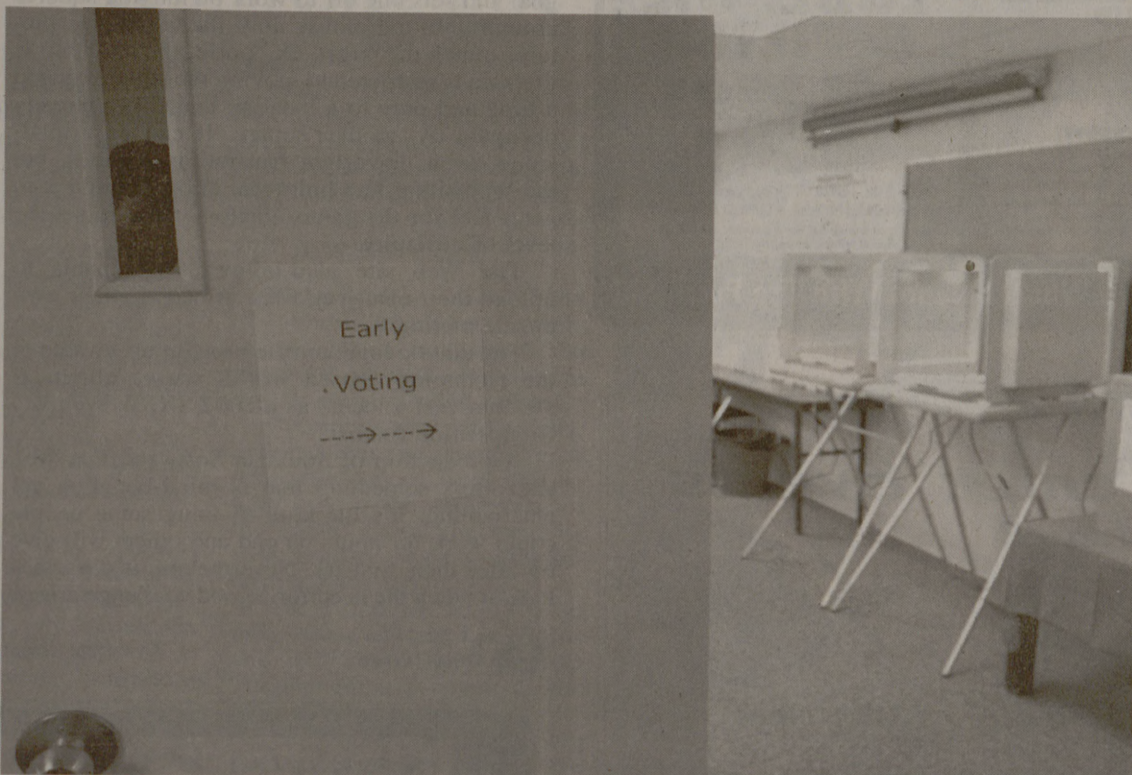
Slovacek considers himself lucky because he is originally from Bryan and therefore is registered to vote in Brazos County. Many students do not have this convenience, which might be the reason politicians fail to take the student vote seriously, said Slovacek.

"Candidates always ignore students," Slovacek said. "I've heard student voters called 'gypsy voters' by one well-known politician. (The term 'gypsy voters') means that students can be great for elections as cheap and free manpower, but candidates couldn't rely on students for votes since many students are from out of state or unreliable."

Lacy Dolsen, a junior political science major, is not voting in this election because he is registered in his hometown of San Antonio. "Not only do I have to make the trip to San Antonio, but I don't think I am directly affected by the politicians and the decisions they make," Dolsen said. "Plus, I don't think I will be in College Station long enough to see the effects of current legislation."

Although he decided not to go to the trouble of making the trip home, Dolsen said he still thinks it is important for students to vote.

"Some of us will graduate and be looking for jobs within their tenure," Dolsen said. "We will have to deal with their policies as individual adults. It is a constitutional privilege to be given a voice in government, so if you feel it is necessary to vote, by all means, vote."



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Berkey said the College Republicans has been busy, not only with encouraging voter registration and working turnout drives, but also with making appearances on the campaign trail with candidates such as John Cornyn, Rick Perry, and Jeb Hebsarling.

"We have brought many candidates to campus to encourage student involvement in the elections," Berkey said. "We have tailgate parties and rallies with the candidates so students have a chance to hear what the candidates have to say."

Berkey addressed issues being debated in the current election that may be of importance to A&M students.

"Gov. Perry is working on legislation that

would provide funding to encourage first-generation college students to attend the university of their choice and also help fund more scholarships for deserving high school and college students," Berkey said.

The Aggie Democrats said there are issues that concern college students that candidates such as Tony Sanchez and John Sharp have addressed in their campaigns.

"Sanchez and Sharp have both made a pledge to stop any further tuition hikes at our public universities," said Jonathan Steed, a junior political science major and president of Aggie Democrats.

Steed said the Aggie Democrats has been working to publicize the elections and candidates around College Station. Steed said the Aggie Democrats have participated in two campus debates, helped block walk in Bryan-College Station's Democratic precincts, worked at the phone bank to call voters and have assisted the party in putting candidates' signs up around town.

"It is very important that college students exercise their right to vote in this election," Steed said. "Many policies and pieces of legislation over the next few years will directly affect our future. If you don't vote, you don't have the right to complain."

Judge John Boyett, who has served as College Station's Justice of the Peace for 14 years, said students should take advantage of being able to vote.

"Voting is more than just marking a ballot," Boyett said. "It requires thought and research to truly make your vote count and vote intelligently."

Boyett is running for the office of Justice of the Peace against two other candidates who are currently students at Texas A&M.

Boyett said it is important for students to think about how a political office affects their everyday lives. He said the office of Justice of the Peace includes handling day-to-day traffic violations, truancy violations, and evictions of College Station — issues students need to consider when voting.

"Aggies need to vote, and if possible, vote early," he said. "Your vote does count."

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