

**ANSWERS**  
to today's puzzles

W	A	I	S	T	B	R	I	M	T	O	T	S	
A	L	L	A	H	B	O	C	A	L	A	L	O	E
S	A	L	V	O	G	O	A	L	M	I	N	E	
A	U	T	U	M	N	L	E	A	V	E	S		
P	A	W	N	I	N	S	T	A	L	E	S		
I	R	A	N	I	S	W	O	R	E				
L	I	L	A	C	C	L	A	W	M	B	A		
A	S	T	H	E	S	A	Y	I	N	G	G	O	E
F	E	Z	A	S	E	T	L	O	L	L	S		
T	I	E	R	A	S	P	S	P	O	O	D	L	
B	A	N	A	N	A	S	P	L	I	T	S		
A	S	A	P	M	I	R	E	U	H	H	U	H	
R	E	N	O	I	D	E	A	N	O	O	S	E	
B	R	E	D	D	E	E	D	A	T	W	A	R	

read the fine print.

the  
**battalion**  
Classifieds

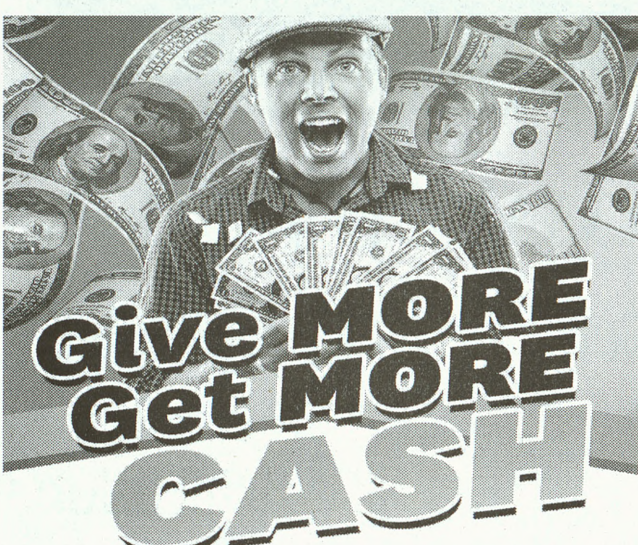
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**THE BATT**  
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**EDITORIALBOARD**

**Handling of Yell Leader elections raises the question: Why 'gig the vote' at all?**

The controversy is in the numbers, but the trend is clear — after four years of inconsistency, yet another ambiguous Yell Leader election result highlights the shortcomings of the election commission's instant runoff system.

The vote-counting method for Texas A&M's most visible representatives has again flip-flopped. It begs the question, Why should students "gig the vote" if the voting system is ambiguous and inconsistently applied?

Students expect the ability to vote for three Senior Yell Leader candidates — one ballot, three equally weighted votes. This year and in 2013, each ballot was only counted once. After a messy 2012 election season, the election commission eliminated the need for runoffs by implementing its current system. In its third iteration, that system continues to fail students voting for Senior Yell Leader.

It didn't matter in 2013, when no candidate posed a significant threat to the Corps of Cadets block, 5 For Yell. This year, though, the race featured four strong contenders — one had to be pushed out.

Incumbent Ben Ritchie fell short in the announced results Friday, while Steven Lanz and cadets Kyle Cook and Zach Lawrence won. But the votes were improperly tallied, and the trio that was announced Friday might not be the same that trots onto Kyle Field in Yell Leader whites after the SGA Judicial Court rules on a filed appeal Wednesday.

For that, the election commission and its system — begun in 2013 by then-election commissioner Allison Krenzien and continued today by Emma Douglas — deserve the blame.

The problem is not a new one. In 2013, an appeal filed by a Yell Leader sought an injunction against the election results announcement and a revamped tabulation process. None of it mattered that year — 5 For Yell's candidates won by a wide margin.

A 2013 editorial in *The Battalion*, titled "Instant runoff system could distort yell results," pointed to the clear weakness in the system. That the commission failed to correct the flaw is an embarrassment and a deterrent to future voter turnout.

There is nothing fundamentally wrong with the instant runoff system if it is implemented consistently and students understand it. Still, a simple look at the voting numbers of the last four years reveal the way it has been misapplied.

In 2012, the last year before instant runoff, about 36,000 votes were cast across 14,600 ballots, or about 2.5 votes per ballot. That's to be expected, as some students can choose not to vote for three candidates.

In 2013 — the first year of instant runoff — 11,800 ballots registered 11,700 votes, or about one per ballot.

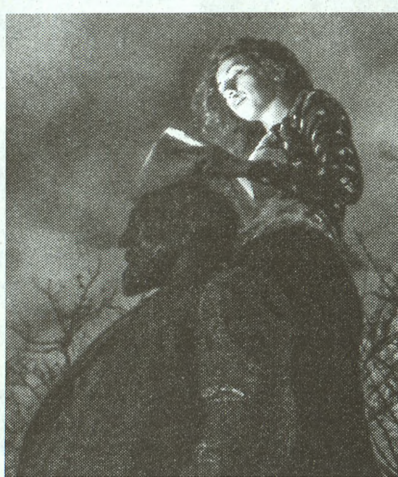
In 2014, under the same instant runoff system, 2.3 votes were counted per ballot, indicating the system can work under the right calculation model.

Then came 2015, when the votes per ballot dipped near one. Once again, the system only tabulated first-place votes. The error could be a simple IT matter outside the commission's immediate control. But the stark contrast in votes per ballot should have alerted the commission to the problem before it gathered the student body around Sully and announced inaccurate results.

Historically, incumbent cadets like Ritchie and Lawrence rarely lose, and non-regs like Lanz rarely win. The rare combination of circumstances should have prompted a second look.

5 For Yell campaigns as a block, so many ballots that named one cadet — Cook, Lawrence and Ritchie — likely named all three. Many Lanz supporters, in contrast, likely voted only for Lanz.

A recount will change the entire landscape drastically. It's impossible to predict where things will land. To some degree, it stands to reason that



SGA Election Commissioner Emma Douglas announces election results Friday in Academic Plaza.

The Battalion's editorial opinion is determined by its Board of Opinion, with the editor in chief having final responsibility.

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**YELL LEADER CONTINUED**

considering each student receives three possible votes for Senior Yell Leader.

"If there were 11,217 ballots cast, there was the opportunity for 33,651 actual votes to be cast (11,217x3.) Now logically, not everyone will use all three of their votes, however, the final vote tally should still be significantly higher than the 11,217 on the results," the appeal stated.

With the results being so close, and a potential 22,282 votes going uncounted, a more precise recount is needed to determine the true winners of the race, the appeal states.

"It is my belief that only people who ranked a candidate in the No. 1 spot had their ballots counted. Their votes placed at No. 2 and No. 3 were irrelevant. This is contradictory to what should have happened — each voter's 'Top 3' should count equally the same," the appeal said.

Emma Douglas, the SGA election commissioner against whom the appeal was filed, said the problems stem from technological issues and work is being done to ensure the accuracy of the results.

"The Yell Leader race had more to do with the IT program that we use to run our elections," Douglas said. "I'm talking to the IT department to see if it's possible to [count the votes] the way that they want it, but I'm not an IT expert so that's why I'm having a meeting with them."

**BENIGNO CONTINUED**

Douglas said she will cooperate fully and listen to suggestions to ensure the accuracy of the results and hear the true voice of constituents.

"We're just wanting to make sure the elections are run in the most fair way possible," Douglas said. "I'm more than open to any questions or suggestions as to how we can make that happen."

Another appeal filed Sunday on Lanz's behalf by Aaron Mitchell, Student Senate rules and regulations chair, argued Lanier's case should be dismissed because it was improperly filed and fails to name the proper parties.

"As it stands, Steven Lanz won the Senior Yell Leader election," Mitchell said. "Because of this, he has something at stake in the case. According to the rules, he deserves representation in J-Court."

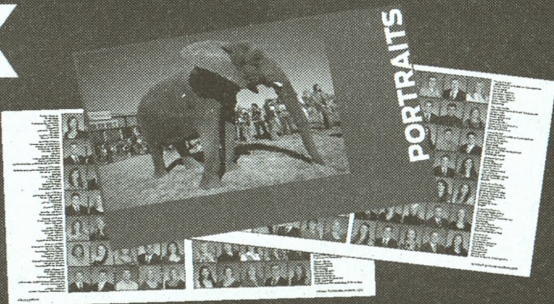
Chief Justice Brenton Cooper opted to consolidate the appeals — now titled Lanier vs. Douglas and Lanz — because of a "historically high concentration" of election-related cases. J-Court will consider two questions: whether to dismiss the case on the grounds it was improperly filed and whether the votes were counted incorrectly.

It will be heard at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday in Koldus 111.

**THE BATTALION**

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