

Editorial

Negative campaigning hurts voters most of all

Elections were held Tuesday and many winners are predicting the beginning of better times for their constituents.

At least one aspect of politics will get better for a while. Voters won't have to suffer through any campaigns for the next couple of months. They won't have to be turned off by all the negative campaign tactics employed during the past few months.

The lack of professionalism many candidates display in the way they run their campaigns keeps many voters away from the polls on election day. After hearing so many bad things about all the candidates voters don't know what to believe and end up not casting a vote because of it.

Poor voter turn out hurts everyone.

Candidates should spend less time trying to dig up dirt and drag their opponent's name through the mud. Instead, they should take a stand on issues and address the voters' needs and concerns.

With straight answers and honest promises candidates would stand a much better chance with the voters. These methods will at least get more voters to the polls. And that should be a goal for everyone.

Opinion / Editorial



Reader Forum

Flag burning: protect the idea not the symbol

by Andrew Festa

"You can't burn the flag," said Flint. "It's against the law."

"No it's not," said Fred.

Flint jumped in with, "Well, it should be."

"Who cares anyway?" someone asked.

A voice in the bathroom called out, "Hang all them commie bastards. Hang the next flag burner as an example to the rest of the world."

"And what are we trying to tell the world?"

"We're telling them that this is America and we don't take no bull from non-Americans or anti-American thinking," said the voice.

Several people nodded their heads in agreement.

"But, don't you realize what this country was founded on?"

Someone told me to shut up, but the host said, "Let him speak. We might learn something and he does have the right to talk."

"Yea, right," said the voice.

"America was founded by people looking for freedom in a new land. Those people fought long and hard for the right to be free. Thousands of people died protecting that idea. They then built a constitution which guaranteed the heart of that idea for every generation to come. They did a great job. Now, in the recent past, we've decided that the flag, the symbolic

representation of the idea they fought for, died for, designed the constitution around and built our nation upon should be placed on a higher level than the idea itself.

"The flag was only a symbol, but the idea was much bigger than the cloth used to create the flag. A symbol is only a representation of an idea."

The voice interrupted. "Man, you're talking b-s. The flag is America and America is the flag."

"If so, then America is a symbol which has no body, an empty symbol without meaning."

"Explain," said the host.

"Well, think of a church. The building is held in reverence. If people were to place it in higher esteem than God, then they would be guilty of idolizing the symbolic house of God while devaluing God himself (or herself) and that act would take away the very foundation upon which the symbol sits."

"If we make the symbol carry more value than the idea itself, then we devalue the symbol by destroying the idea. No symbol exists except as a representation of what it stands for. If we protect the symbol of freedom, then we destroy freedom itself. If we destroy freedom, or even limit it through legislation, then we take away the very idea represented by the symbol. If we take away the idea behind the symbol, the symbol

becomes meaningless. If the symbol becomes meaningless, we, in effect, will be protecting red, white and blue threads. When we reach that point, we are no longer free. If we are no longer free, then all those who died for the idea of freedom died for nothing.

"We should not protect the symbol, we should protect the idea it represents, even if that means allowing people to burn the symbol. People can always burn a flag, but, as long as we don't give up the idea, they can not burn freedom. If we allow a blind government to make flag burning illegal, then the idea ceases to exist and freedom, left in the threads of a piece of cloth, will be burnable."

"I'm not saying that we should protect the constitutional right to burn flags. What I am saying is, let's not protect a symbol at the cost of the idea. I would hope we're too great a nation to allow that kind of stupidity to influence our future as a free country."

Andrew Festa is a seventh semester English major.

Ed. Note: Reader Forum is a format for our readers to express their feeling on an issue in a piece longer than a Letter to the Editor. It's still in the experimental stage so let us know what you think.

The Collegian

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