

Editorials

Political debates evade real issues

Press conferences have become as much a part of campaigning, as any public rally or fund-raiser. The format of the first Presidential debate, which covered only issues concerning domestic affairs, consisted of a series of questions posed by a panel of journalists and timed responses by Reagan and Mondale.

This format of debate allowed the candidates to escape from attacking each other, and instead they concentrated on responding to the journalists that questioned them rather than each other.

In a true debate, there is an issue or issues that are argued affirmatively and negatively, then each candidate is given the opportunity to rebut or refute what has been said. In the debate between Reagan and Mondale both candidates avoided directly answering questions on religion and abortion.

To the viewer, the debate would have clearly been just another press conference where the candidates echoed their differences of opinion which have been a part of Campaign '84 since its Labor Day kickoff.

Ideally, a debate would inform and interest voters in the issues that affect them not only now, but in the years ahead as well. But, to talk about who "won" the debate between Reagan and Mondale would be ridiculous. Assistant Professor of Communications, Dr. Anne Ponder said of the debate, "One debate on domestic policy does not clarify a candidate's position. Getting off the subject with rhetoric is easier, as is arguing emotionally or personally when the proposition is unclear."

While a real debate between leaders would give voters the opportunity to know more about issues they are debating, the negative aspect would be that the best debater is not necessarily the best president. In last week's debate Reagan sermonized on the economic success of the country in the last couple of years and Mondale criticized the large federal deficit, the arms race and nuclear war.

The journalists who ask questions are surrogates for the public interest in a timely and perceptive way. But, perhaps there is too much of an image problem involved in a televised debate. The time has come for voters to close the gap on the two candidates by listening to the real issues of the campaign. Unfortunately, it is doubtful that this Sunday's second and final debate before the election next month will have the effect of showing the candidates as they really are.



Letters to the editor

Reagan's pro-life stand

To the editor:

I am proud, as a pro-lifer, to support President Reagan in his bid for re-election. I am most proud of the way in which, during his debate with Walter Mondale, he refused to falter about his stand on the issue of abortion. President Reagan is not ashamed to proclaim that abortion is murder.

He has the personal fortitude necessary to refrain from bowing to political expediency. I am also proud that President Reagan chose to support his

stand against abortion on constitutional ground, by stressing that the unborn child deserves full protection of his constitutional rights unless the unborn child is unequivocally not a human life

Doesn't the electorate recognize that Walter Mondale refused to answer whether or not he believes that abortion is murder? When Walter Mondale was in turn posed with the same question he chose to ignore the question and instead involved the issue of a

woman's right to a personal choice in the matter of abortion.

President Reagan in turn responded by saying that any murderer could confess a personal choice motivating in his decision to murder; however, this personal choice is invalid when it infringes upon the personal rights and constitutional protections of his victim.

In the same way, the unborn child deserves by his constitutional rights the protection of his life and liberty from the personal choice and preference of another.

Bev Stadermann

Librarian responds to complaint

To the editor:

I would like to thank Mouche Maggio for her letter to the editor ("Library quiet urged," *The Pendulum* XI, no. 6: October 11, 1984) because it provided a perfect opportunity to point out to her and other concerned students that appropriate mea-

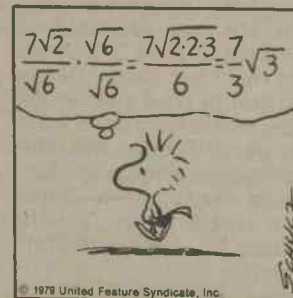
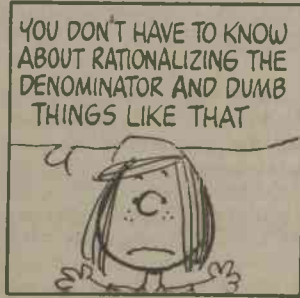
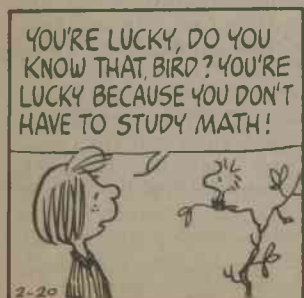
sures have been taken in response to criticism appearing in past issues of *The Pendulum*.

Her objectives fall into two categories: (1) the cleaning schedule in the library; and (2)

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The Pendulum welcomes letters, limited to 250 words, from our readers. Longer material may be submitted as opinion articles. All letters submitted must be signed, and a phone number given so that the letters validity can be checked. The editor reserves the right to edit for length, libel, good taste and accuracy. The deadline for submitting material is 2 p.m. Monday. Our office is located in 102 Williamson Avenue, phone 584-2331 or 584-2467.

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