

Batt book review

# 'Mother Night' shows moral

By MIKE PERRIN

Kurt Vonnegut's "Mother Night" is uproariously funny and even contains a moral for the rest of us: politics, especially a lack of politics, may lead to strange bedfellows.

The story unfolds around an American named Campbell who made propaganda broadcasts for the Nazis during World War II. He made them as a cover for his American espionage duties, but at the end of the war was simply told that he would have to begin life again, since his true nature could not be revealed for security reasons. So he lived an eccentric life in New York City (what other kind is there in New York?), just drifting along.

Events take off from this point. A right-wing tabloid identified Campbell as the man who made "racial sense during WWII." Of course, in his broadcasts, Campbell had pushed the theory of a master white and slave black race.

Others sought him out as a Nazi war criminal. He was taken into safety by the right wing publisher, whose driver is a black militant separatist. Campbell asked the publisher how he can stand to have a black working for him if he considered blacks inferior. The answer is that the two agree on the most vital point: the races need to be separate; there is only the small matter of which is superior.

Campbell discovered in quick

succession (a) he was in the company of an unreconstructed Nazi involved in whipping up a Youth Corps, (b) his neighbor was a Russian spy, (c) he was declared officially dead by the US Government, (d) Israel planned to arrest him for war crimes after these 25 years, (e) his wife did not die in 1944, but was in East Germany, (f) the Russian

government planned to abduct him as potentially important and (g) there was no help for him anywhere.

This insane group of events is brought about in an earnest, orderly fashion by Vonnegut, writing here at his prime. The book is a delight to read, yet is provoking in its consequences.

# Twin poles accent Kyle

The Stars and Stripes and Lone Star of Texas will fly from two new 100-foot Kyle Field flagpoles Sept. 14 at the Texas Aggies football opener against Clemson.

The flagpoles have just been set in their bases and are the gift of 1945 Texas A&M graduate John R. Blocker who gave \$10,000 to purchase them.

Blocker, who has two sons attending TAMU, donated the funds for the poles in memory of his brother,

Lt. William B. Blocker, Class of 1945, who died in World War II.

While attending the football game last year, Blocker, a Houstonian, noticed the old flagpole was almost hidden by the scoreboard and that prevailing southerly winds tangled the colors on the board while they were being hoisted.

The flags also were partially blocked from view during the game.

Blocker, who is president of the Petroleum and Minerals Group of

Dresser Industries Inc., made an offer to A&M President Jack Williams to get a flagpole that would be more impressive. The offer was accepted by Williams.

The final design called instead for two flagpoles flanking the scoreboard. Each would be 40 feet taller than the one replaced.

Each pole weighs 4,100 pounds and has a 13-inch base with a four-inch top. Crowning the summits are golden spheres.

The gift will be acknowledged during Military Day ceremonies Oct. 19 at the Texas Christian University game here, although colors unfurl for the first time on Sept. 14, according to TAMU Development Robert L. Walker.

A plaque will be placed on the poles with an inscription reading, "In Memory of Lt. William B. Blocker, Class of 1945, by John R. Blocker, '45."

## New tires have labels

Within the next year, information will appear on the side of auto tires indicating skid performance, tire life and high-speed performance.

George Schute, researcher at TAMU's Texas Transportation Institute, told how the testing methods were developed. TAMU is one of two centers in the U. S. where tire grade labeling tests can be satisfied.


"The Department of Transportation had the feeling the public wasn't getting what it needed in tire information," Schute said. "There used to be nothing but the size. Now, it is beginning to look like the Gettysburg Address.

"When this test program began, there was little known about tire dynamics outside the tire companies," he explained. "Now at least three facets will be known to the public: traction, treadwear and high-speed endurance. The labeling has been confusing with each company using their own system. Now there will be more standardization."

The treadwear grades will range from 60 to 15. This represents the projected minimum life in thousands of miles of the tire on the test course. A tire marked 'X' is ungraded and may have a mileage life of less than 15,000 miles on the government course.

Stars from one to three (highest) represent the tire's ability to stop on wet pavement. A tire marked 'O' for traction is ungraded and may have poor traction performance.

The high-speed performance grades are A through C and represent the tire's resistance to heat and its ability to dissipate heat. Excessive heat can lead to sudden tire failure. The Grade C represents the resistance to heat which all passenger car tires must meet under the federal motor vehicle safety standards.



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