

# Small cars save energy but are more dangerous

There is a small car in the future of most people as the result of the energy crisis, inflation and proposed heavy taxes on gasoline and low-mileage cars.

However, until the ratio of big cars to small cars greatly decreases, the compact-car driver is in considerable jeopardy according to TAMU researchers.

Researchers at last year's 3rd International Congress on Automotive Safety determined the following:

✓ In most collisions between large and small vehicles, the driver of the large car is at fault.

✓ Small cars are at a great disadvantage in colliding with an obstacle, such as a highway guardrail, sign or light pole.

✓ Small cars, because of their light weight, boxy shape, higher center of gravity and narrow wheel track width, are probably more subject to roll-over than larger cars, but statistically there is little evidence that they are more hazardous.

"As long as small vehicles are in the minority, if they are hit it will probably be by a larger vehicle," said Dr. Don L. Ivey of the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI).

"That spells real trouble for the smaller car. However, the actual vulnerability of small cars is not fully appreciated. Probabilities of injury to small car occupants exceed those of standard vehicle occupants by two to one," he said.

TTI is working on safer designs for crash cushions, along with

breakaway signs and luminaire. However, Ivey notes that not much can be done to make small cars safer without sacrificing the reason they exist — better gas mileage.

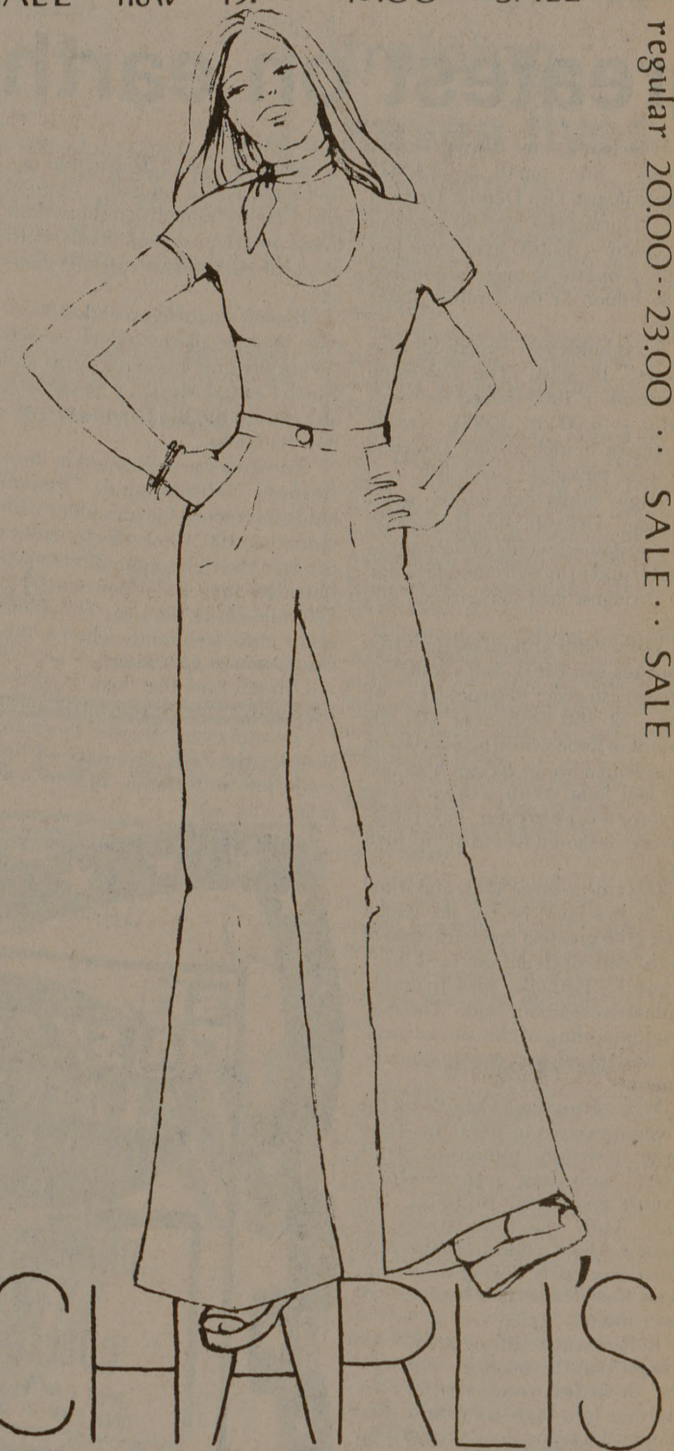
"Actually, with the trend to larger trucks, our truck transportation system will determine the structure of the highways," Ivey said. "The most critical thing to realize is a very greatly increased probability of survival if you use seat belts and shoulder harness, and doubly so in the small vehicle."

A small car has quicker braking and steering response than a large car, and that helps give the smaller vehicle a better chance of recovery in an emergency.

Small-car drivers generally are younger (an average of 26 years) than drivers of 3,000-pound cars (an average age of 35). That factor helps reduce the severity of injury in accidents, since younger drivers are more nearly able to withstand accident conditions.

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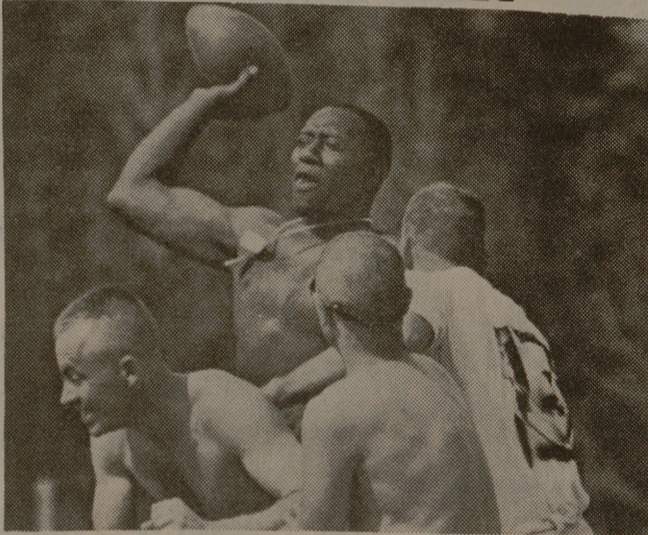
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## Mankiewicz to speak at TAMU

Frank Mankiewicz, former George McGovern presidential campaign director, is to speak at TAMU in mid-October as a part of the Political Forum series.

He is to speak on "Liberalism in Politics."

Mankiewicz has been in Democratic politics since 1950. He served in the Peace Corps administration and was press secretary for Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

Last summer, the author-commentator took part in an exclusive interview with Cuban Premier Fidel Castro. Mankiewicz joined the McGovern campaign in May 1971.

About the campaign he has commented: "I remain immensely proud of what we did. And as for the result . . . we may have lost the election, but we're not going to jail."

"American politics does not include any history of our tolerance for sabotage, espionage, perjury, forgery or burglary," Mankiewicz said in testimony to the Senate Watergate Committee in 1973.

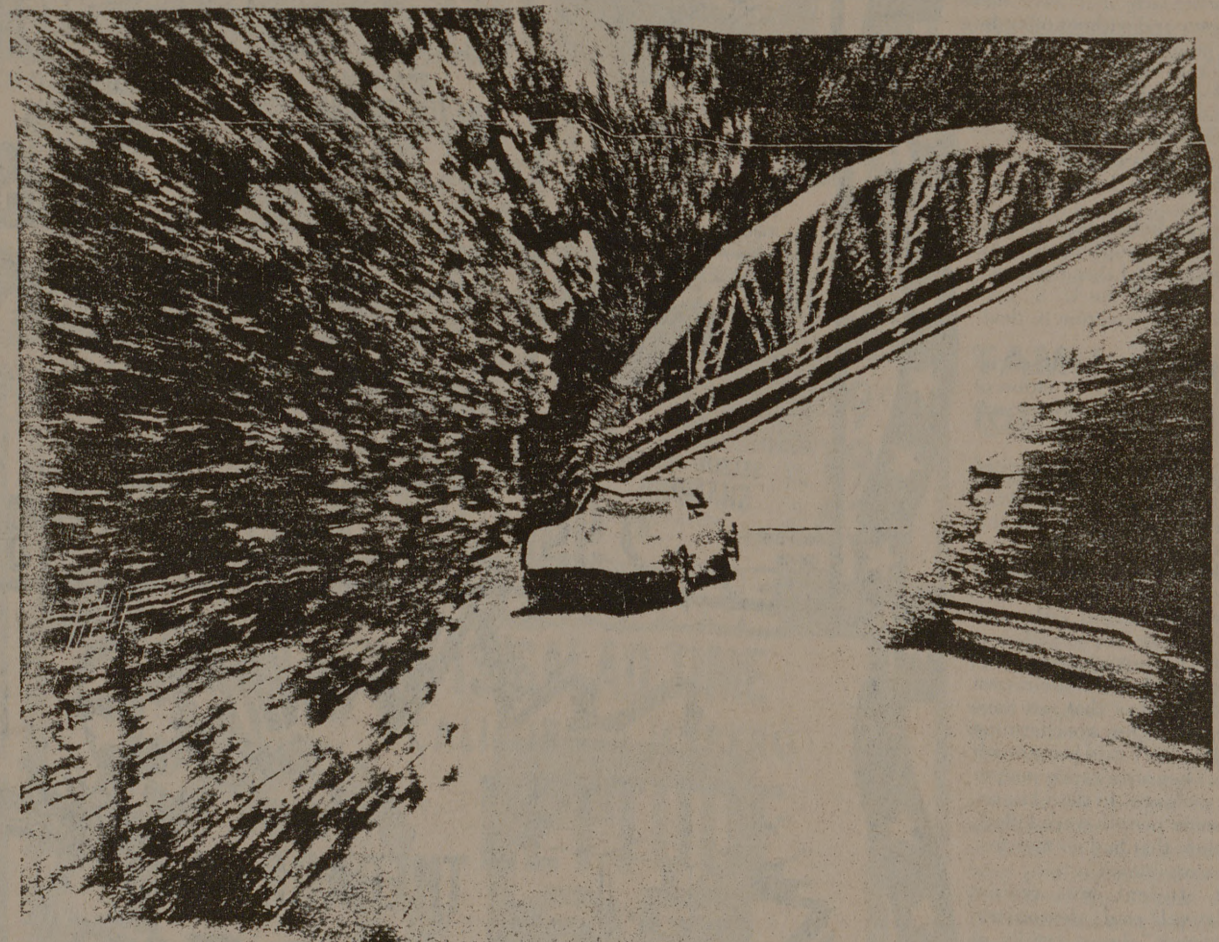
The fall theme of Political Forum is "A Look at the American Political Process." Political Forum will provide TAMU students, faculty and staff and the public an additional means of learning the names, personalities and issues of the 1976 general election.

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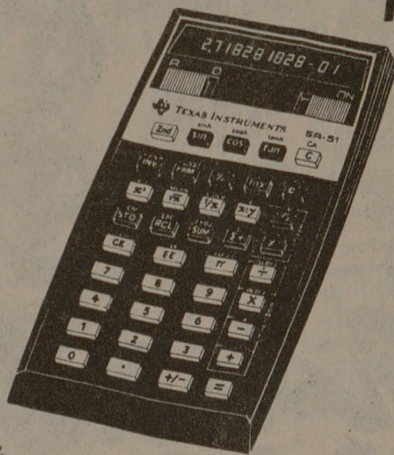
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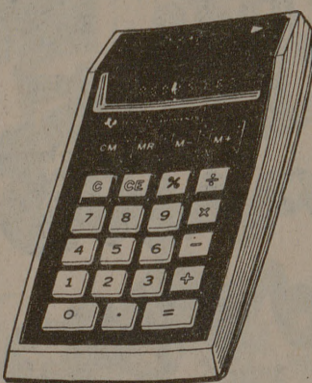
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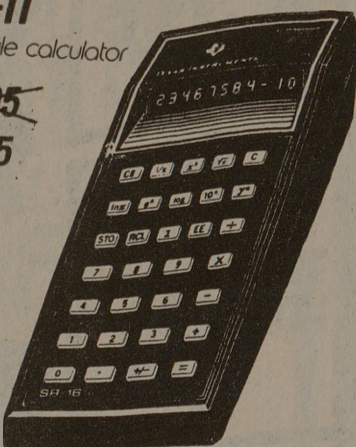
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