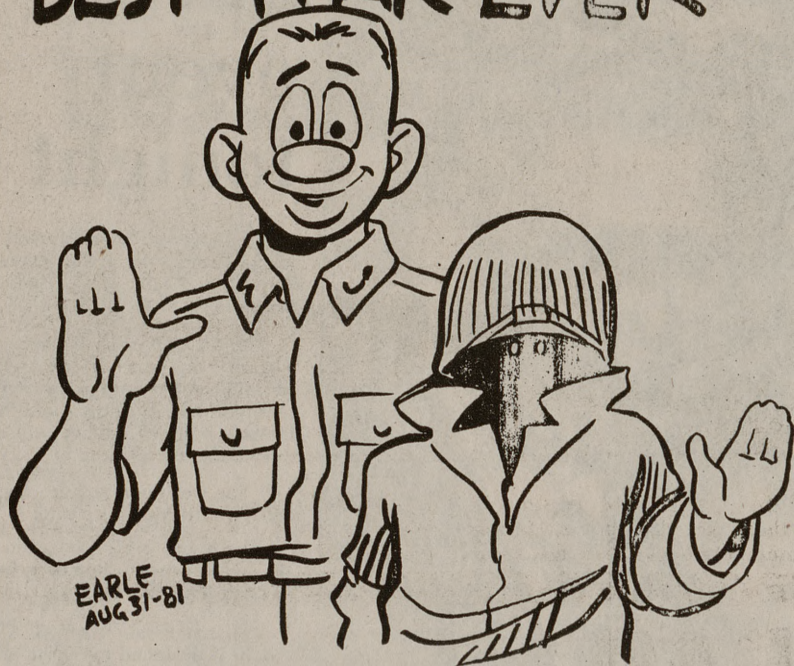


Slouch By Jim Earle

**WELCOME
TO OUR
BEST YEAR EVER**



'Negative ads' new campaign technique

By DAVID S. BRODER

WASHINGTON — Fred Wertheimer, the new president of Common Cause, has an ingenious idea that could solve one of the more vexing problems that has popped up recently in our politics. It is the question of how to deal with "independent expenditure groups" that come into a state or district, not to help elect a particular candidate but to defeat someone else.

The most publicized of these groups, which claimed to have scalped several liberal Democratic senators in 1980, is Terry Dolan's National Conservative Political Action Committee. NCPAC moved in early in such states as Idaho, South Dakota and Indiana — months ahead of the formal selection of a Republican challenger — and began an advertising campaign aimed at the record of the Democratic incumbents.

Encouraged by the victories in those races in 1980, Dolan's group has started in on an expanded program of "targeting" for 1981. Other groups are seeking to imitate the technique, and liberals have organized at least three groups of their own to fight fire with fire.

The clear prospect is that unless some way is found to break the cycle, the airwaves and newspaper pages are going to be filled with a rising volume of "negative ads" blasting away at Senator Jones or Representative Smith.

What is wrong with that? you ask. Assuredly, Sen. Jones and Rep. Smith miss no opportunity to tell their constituents how lucky they are to have such great men speaking for them in Congress. And the Supreme Court has held rightly that when Congress legislated limits on campaign spending, it could not constitutionally abridge the right of individuals or groups, operating independently of the candidates, to say through advertising what they thought of the merits or demerits of the aspirants.

Acknowledging all that, there are still two or three things about the independent expenditure groups that are troublesome. They are not really accountable to anyone

but themselves and — as NCPAC's example shows — they are not exactly scrupulous about the evidence they use in their roundhouse swings at their targets. If politics were as closely refereed as, say, hockey, Dolan would have spent a lot of time in the penalty box.

Second, the din of negative advertising does tend to denigrate and drown out the healthy debate between candidates and parties that ought to be the heart of any campaign. And an avowedly independent negative campaign can tilt the odds in a contest by softening up the incumbent or forcing him to spend from his own funds, not against his opponent but against this outside group.

Wertheimer's suggestion is ingeniously simple: Provide a right of free reply for the target of the independent expenditure campaign. For every negative ad that is run attacking him, give the person under the gun equal time and space, without charge, to respond.

What I like about the idea is that it effectively discourages the negative campaigns without impairing what is, I think, an important constitutional right to organize such a campaign. Anybody would still have the right to get up on the soapbox and holler. But he would know that the fellow he was hollering about would be right up there next to deliver his rebuttal.

There would still be room for the independent campaign expenditures. A group that wanted to go off on its own and publicize its views on policy issues or its support for a particular candidate, without consulting anyone else, would still have the freedom to do so. But if it chose to attack someone, it would do so with the knowledge that its target would gain an automatic right to reply.

My guess is that the effect of such a rule would be to return responsibility and control of the election campaigns to the parties and the candidates, which is where they belong. It strikes me as an idea that is worth Congress considering when it takes up the question of federal election law amendments later this year.

Today's Battalion — a look back while planning ahead

By ANGELIQUE COPELAND
Battalion Editor

Remember when the toughest thing about going back to school was convincing your mom that you really needed the super-deluxe 84-crayon box of Crayolas with the sharpener in the back?

Things have definitely changed. Say you successfully fought the traffic through town and found a place to park within two miles of campus. Say you even survived the registration lines, the drop/add lines and the bookstore lines without giving up and going home. You still have the task of settling into a new apartment or dorm and school life, maybe for the first time.

In this Back-to-School edition of The Battalion, we have tried to supply you with information that will make that transition easier. In Section D there are stories on how to get everything hooked up in your new apartment, as well as where to go for help if it's only been one day and you already want to disown your roommate.

In this section there are stories on how to survive dorm life. Throughout the paper there is information about the campus, its people and the traditions that shape what it really means to be an Aggie.

And because the beginning of school can get you down, there are some stories that will just help you smile when the person behind the desk tells you you've been standing in the wrong line for the last hour. In Section F there is valuable information for new students on "How not to act like a freshman" and Section D will tell you how to distinguish between a "Good Ag" and "Two-percenter." There is even a word search in Section F to help you pass the time when you finally make it into the right line.

This is the last edition of the paper that is put out by the summer Battalion staff. We've been here throughout installation of the new campus phone system, the College Station water shortage, and the naming of a new University president. For the more than 25,000 students who spent their sum-

mer anywhere but College Station, this section of the paper.

Throughout the coming year, The Battalion will try and keep you up-to-date on informed on campus events and administrative decisions, as well as provide insight into how these things will affect your education at Texas A&M University. It's our job.

But it's your job to tell us more of what you want to see and read in The Battalion. The college newspaper should supply the information that students, faculty and staff with the information they need daily as well as stories on that interest them.

This page, the editorial page, provides you with an open forum to express ideas, concerns and opinions about the way we do our job and any other aspect of Texas A&M. It's up to you to provide with input so we can make The Battalion an accurate, informative resource for the university.

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The future is closer than you think

By DICK WEST

United Press International

WASHINGTON — A Jeep that runs on sunflower oil. A BMW that runs on dates and prunes. A wood-burning Dodge pickup. A garbage-powered Volkswagen. A Saab sedan whose fuel is partly derived from artichokes.

These are some of the 200-odd — and I do mean ODD — vehicles that will be participating next month in a crosscountry "Future Fuels Challenge Rally." They seem to indicate the future is closer than we might have realized.

I was particularly impressed by what was described in a rally poop sheet as "an entry running on wood smoke."

If there is one thing we have in abundance in this country it is wood smoke. But most of it now goes to waste up the chimney.

If, as the entry list suggests, someone has found a way to harness the energy of wood

smoke, that surely would be a giant step toward the ultimate in fuel-efficient transportation — a car that runs on air pollution.

The rally is scheduled to begin Sept. 5 in Los Angeles. In that city, the auto of the future might be the Smogmobile, a vehicle that uses freeway fumes for fuel.

Finding some way to recycle smog is one of man's oldest dreams. And now it apparently is almost at hand.

After stops in Las Vegas, Denver, Omaha, Chicago, Cleveland and Buffalo, the race will end Sept. 12 at Rochester, N.Y. In some of those areas, a car that runs on acid rain would be most welcome.

As things now stand, chemicals that factories spew into the atmosphere and that fall back to Earth with the gentle rain from heaven serve no worthwhile purpose. Indeed, there have been complaints from farmers and foresters that crops and trees are being ruined by acid rain.

But put it into the fuel tanks of automobiles and it wouldn't be long before we

would have a sort of acid rain OPEC of the stuff around the world.

In some ways, though, the participation of participants in the 2,700-mile race would be disappointing.

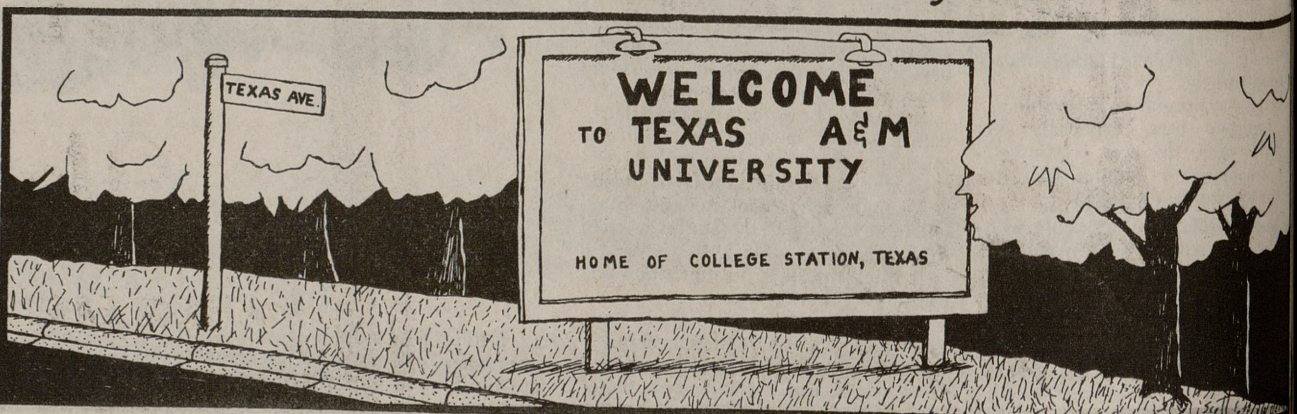
I spotted among the entrants a truck that runs on animal waste. I spotted a Chevrolet that runs on fuel partly made from water the watery milk left over from making cheese. But nowhere did I spot a car that runs on nuclear waste.

That type of car would be an appropriate solution to what has become one of the country's most vexing problems — what to do with the waste material created by nuclear power plants.

A rally information sheet notes "some entrants are very secretive. Some could be such a car already has been invented and is being saved for a surprise."

If so, it may mean the future is close enough to reach out and grab us by the throats.

Warped



By Scott McCullar

THE BATTALION

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Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length, and are subject to being cut if they are longer. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must also be signed, show the address and phone number of the writer.

Columns and guest editorials are also welcome, and are not subject to the same length constraints as letters. Address all inquiries and correspondence to: Editor, The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.

EDITORIAL POLICY

The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting newspaper operated as a community service to Texas A&M University and Bryan-College Station. Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the editor or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M University administrators or faculty members, or of the Board of Regents.

The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Communications.

Questions or comments concerning any editorial matter should be directed to the editor.

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