



The extra costs of winning politics

by Art Buchwald

One of the richest men I know is Tarbaum. Therefore I was surprised to see him handing the clerk in the supermarket food stamps last Wednesday.

"What happened, Tarbaum?" I asked.

"I lost the election for the school board last week."

"I know that, but why are you on food stamps?"

"I spent \$6 million of my own money. I got wiped out."

"I don't believe it. Why would you spend \$6 million to be elected to the school board?"

"I didn't intend to. When I decided to run the most I was going to spend was \$4 million. But I didn't realize it would turn into such a dirty campaign. My opponent took the low road. He said I thought the Head Start program was a claiming race at the Laurel Race Track. I had no choice but to buy television time and say he believed Remedial English was what Prince Andrew did on shore leave."

"I saw that commercial. It was quite effective."

"It should have been. It cost me a half a million bucks. When I started the race the polls had me leading by 14 points. I hired one of the best professional campaign directors in the country. He told me the only way to win a school board election was to promise to do away with the football team and put more money in textbooks. I bought time on all four TV stations to announce my plan, and the next day my opponent was leading me by 26 points."

"So you had to play catch-up," I said.

"It cost me \$2 million to deny I had said it. Then my campaign speechwriter suggested I hit hard on the prayers-in-school issue."

"Which side did you take?"

"I came out on the same side as the Supreme Court, and even printed their decision in the newspapers."

"That was a stupid thing to do."

"Don't I know it. The Prayer in School Political Action Committee decided to spend a million dollars in my district to defeat me. My campaign manager said we had to match them dollar for dollar or

we'd lose the election."

"Did you ever think of bowing out of the race when it started costing you so much money?"

"Yes. But my wife wouldn't hear of it. She had invited all our friends and people who worked in my campaign to a victory party at our estate, and she said she'd be humiliated with the caterer if she had to cancel it. Besides, I found I loved campaigning and shaking hands with people, and handing out bumper stickers to strangers. Once politics gets in your blood you don't think about what it's going to cost you."

"So you just kept plowing ahead?"

"I fired my campaign manager and brought in two guys from New York who worked on Mayor Koch's campaign for governor. We redid all our television commercials and started with a fresh conservative slant. In the first TV spot I promised if elected to the school board I would fire 20 percent of the teachers to balance the budget. The Teachers Political Action Committee sent in a half million dollars to defeat me. They plastered the town with bill boards saying I was trying to buy the election."

"That must have hurt."

"Not as much as my second commercial when I reversed myself and said if I was elected I would hire 20 percent MORE teachers, and raise their salaries to the national level."

"So that took the teachers off your back?"

"Yes, but it brought in the Political Action Committee Against Paying Teachers a Living Wage, and they decided to get me for caving in to the union."

"When was that?"

"I think it was about the time I had to sell my house to stay in the race."

"You sold your house?"

"And the boat and the car and my wife's diamond engagement ring. You know I only lost by 1,500 votes."

"I saw the results election night. I'm sorry you didn't make it, Tarbaum. You certainly put your money where your mouth was. At least \$6 million of it."

"Oh well, as we say in politics, easy come, easy go."

Memorial scene stirring

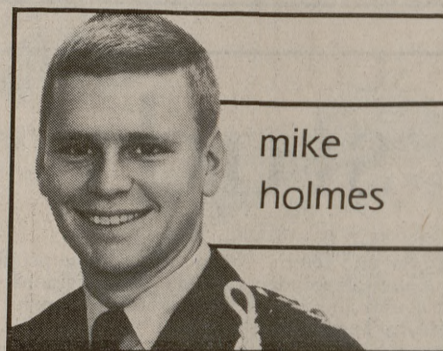
As a representative of Texas A&M at the National Salute to Vietnam Veterans in Washington, D.C. this past weekend, I had the opportunity to learn firsthand about the men and women who served our country in Vietnam. I was so touched, I felt obligated to share this experience with my fellow Aggies.

Prior to my visit to Washington, I hadn't ever given much thought to the situation that our returning veterans encountered. Nor did I have a deep sentiment for those who lost their lives there. However, after participating in these ceremonies, I now feel a tremendous indebtedness to these brave men and women.

There were two different forms of recognition Saturday. The first was a large-scale parade, lasting two and a half hours. In this parade, a delegation of Vietnam veterans from each of the 50 states and five territories marched proudly down Constitution Avenue.

Most of these vets were attired in some sort of uniform. Whether it fit or not wasn't the point. The fact is, they were proud of their uniform, proud of their medals and proud that they had served the United States of America. Many of these men were amputees, propelling themselves along in wheelchairs, and were perhaps the proudest of all.

These men weren't bitter; they were happy that America, although somewhat belatedly, was finally paying tribute to them for fighting in Vietnam. Tears came to my eyes several times as these marching units would stop and sing "God Bless America". The spectators joined in, eager to display the love they have for the greatest nation in the world, the United States of America. I felt an incomparable spirit of patriotism fill my soul as I



watched these men and women march by but the true story was yet to come.

In the second form of recognition, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated. This massive structure pays homage to the 57,939 who didn't return. One may think 58,000 casualties is a large amount, but the true magnitude of the loss can't be truly understood until one can see how large a monument was required to commemorate it. The memorial is 500 feet long with names engraved five per line.

I was greatly moved to see the veteran's reaction to this memorial. There was, and always will be, some controversy over the memorial, but the veterans all seemed to be glad that fallen comrades were finally achieving recognition. However, it wasn't a totally joyous occasion. I watched man after woman walk, stop, and look for names of their loved ones. The grief in their eyes was tremendous. I saw mothers wiping tears away. I saw an ex-Marine walk along, fully dressed in camouflage, looking at names he recognized with tears filling his eyes. After he had walked past the entire memorial, he walked to a nearby tree and sat

down and cried.

Experiencing this and other similar incidents, I began to get a new feeling out the war. Vietnam is the only war that our generation has been involved in and I thank God for that. But I realize that all wars produce these same feelings.

War is not the glorious event that movies portray. It is oftentimes a wanted job, as in the case of many who served in Vietnam. However, for your fellow Americans in the United States Forces is the ultimate in showing patriotism. For the Vietnam veterans, America had never properly thanked them for answering the call of duty. I believe truly realize this Saturday.

Later that day, I approached the Veterans and extended my heartfelt thanks for their serving. These men were overjoyed that someone appreciated what they had done. It was obvious that these returning veterans have had hard time due to America's general indifference towards our involvement in Vietnam.

However, no matter how one feels about our participation, one fact remains: We did participate, these men and women did serve as they were called and deserve our thanks for the sacrifices they made. I would encourage every one of you to show your appreciation by personally thanking anyone you know who served in Vietnam for what they have never received their proper come and America should continue showing of appreciation. A big step taken Saturday and it is our responsibility as Americans to keep this action going.

Mike Holmes, Corps Commander, senior electrical engineering major, Grand Prairie.



West German Vogel faces work

by Maxwell Glen and Cody Shearer

Perhaps more than any of his American counterparts, 56-year-old Hans-Jochen Vogel has his work cut out for him.

As the man slated to face West Germany's conservative Chancellor Helmut Kohl in March's general elections, the new leader of the leftist Social Democrats must unite a party that is more deeply split than the Democrats in the United States. His task may take years, to the benefit of both Kohl's conservative coalition and the Reagan administration.

The once-united Social Democratic Party (SPD) of former chancellor Helmut Schmidt remains seriously divided on the issue of nuclear weapons. Originally proposed by Schmidt, NATO's plan to deploy 214 medium-range missiles on German soil next year drew enough fire from the SPD's left wing, as well as the youthful and increasingly powerful Green Party, to topple the former chancellor.

Vogel may have been the best choice for mending the rift and appealing to West Germans in general. The personal favorite of Willy Brandt, Vogel is also a Catholic from conservative Bavaria. He was highly critical of the left during a stint as mayor of Munich from 1960 to 1972; as minister of justice from 1974 to 1981, he earned high marks from the left for his resistance to demands for strict anti-terrorist laws. Meanwhile, a brief tenure as mayor of youth-oriented West Berlin, where Schmidt posted him last year to repair party splits, brought him into close contact with the Greens.

Despite his experience, Vogel acknowledges that Kohl's party won't go down easily. Though 180,000 trade unionists

turned out last weekend in Stuttgart to protest the new government's economic austerity program, Kohl has refused to comply with a Reagan administration request that West Germany boost defense expenditures in real terms next year (something which Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger will surely mention when his counterpart, Manfred Woerner, visits Washington next week).

Nor will reconciliation with the Greens and their supporters (who, according to opinion polls, number about 10 percent of the populace) happen overnight. Deeply troubled by nuclear proliferation as well as the foreign influences over German economic and cultural life, the Greens repeatedly say that they will not

compromise their principles for the sake of the SPD. Twice in the last year, in SPD efforts to form a majority with the Greens in Hamburg city government, have failed.

As Karsten Voigt, a progressive member of the Bundestag and a security expert for the SPD, told us recently, "If we run to the Greens, the SPD will be in a bigger struggle. It will kill our credibility. Besides, if the cause of their frustration was laid down years ago, we can't overcome it quickly. The Greens will continue to plague us for a couple of years, at least."

When the March election arrives, Vogel's work to revive the SPD may be only begun.

Berry's World

by Jim Berry



"When I grow up, I'm going to be successful and not have much time to spend with my kids, too!"

The Battalion

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