

## Americans look for political 'beef'

It had to happen. Americans are so acutely attuned to advertising slogans and television that it was unavoidable. "Where's the beef?" asks the elderly woman in the Wendy's hamburger commercial.

"Where's the beef?" asks David Lee Roth, singer for the rock group Van Halen.

"Where's the beef?" echo college students, children and rival hamburger places.

The advertising phrase has captured the fancy of America, taking on a variety of meanings.

The latest to pick up the battle cry is Democratic presidential candidate Walter Mondale.

In the March 11 Democratic presidential candidates' debate, he challenged fellow candidate Gary Hart's new ideas platform, demanding, "Where's the beef?"

His supporters cheered, but the tactic backfired on him at a political rally a few days later.

Mondale told the audience that there was only one question that

needed to be answered in the November election. But before he could state that question, the audience finished his thought for him. The chants of "Where's the beef?" went on for five minutes.

Catchy advertising slogans can backfire just as often as they work. But the role of personalities, camera presence and media manipulation in campaigns continues to be a controversial area. Mondale's jump on the "Where's the beef?" bandwagon tends to support the idea that candidates will do anything for media attention.

The tactic is as old as American politics. It's not a big step from "Tippecanoe and Tyler, too" to "Where's the beef?"

It seems the American public is still just as gullible as ever. Until we learn to take a close look at the policies the candidates support and where they stand on the issues, instead of falling for just another pretty face spouting meaningless phrases, we'll elect politically shallow leaders.

— The Battalion Editorial Board

## Candyman should die

Halloween just hasn't been the same since 1974.

That was the year I learned that trick-or-treat could be deadly.

Sure, we had all been warned about accepting candy from strangers, but on Halloween it was different. Wandering door-to-door in my southwest Houston neighborhood, I lost my fear of strangers and their treats.

Mom and Dad always warned us to bring our candy home so they could check and toss out any funny-looking pieces. We always heard stories about people getting pins in candy or razor blades in apples.

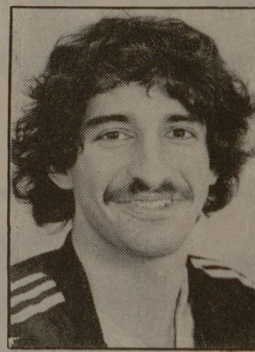
But it never happened to me.

It was trick-or-treat. I was a goblin or a ghost or a dog — and nothing could hurt me.

Ronald Clark O'Bryan's son wasn't that lucky. A pixie stick laced with cyanide ended his life on that 1974 Halloween night. He was eight years old.

No, it wasn't a stranger with an evil sneer who handed him the poison candy. Nor was it the family who sucked on octopus heads and talked with the Transylvanian drawls who lived in the dark house on the corner that really needed to be painted and the lawn that needed to be mowed. It was Ronald Clark O'Bryan — the boy's own father.

O'Bryan was scheduled to be executed on Halloween 1983; he was granted a stay of execution. After James "Cowboy" Autry was executed



donn friedman

O'Bryan is on death row in Huntsville counting the days until his lethal injection is administered. A date has been set. But why should O'Bryan get off so easy?

Let's make his punishment — reunion with death — fit his crime.

First, give O'Bryan the torment of living a while longer. How does Oct. 31, 1984, sound?

On that Halloween, let's pass around a bag of candy to all the prisoners of death row, and allow O'Bryan to dress up in a costume. How about as a prisoner, or better yet, as a loving father?

Then send him from cell to cell, asking, "Trick or treat?" and never knowing which.

Cruel and unusual punishment? He made his son play the same game, but the boy didn't know the rules.

O'Bryan's execution is scheduled for March 31.

Donn Friedman is a senior journalism major and sports editor for The Battalion.

## Consulting the economic guru

by ART BUCHWALD

I climbed to the top of the Washington Monument to speak to the Great Economic Oracle. I placed a bowl of jellybeans at his feet.

"What brings you all this distance, my son?" he asked.

"I am confused," I told him. "I came to find the secret of budget deficits."

The Master stroked his bald head. "There is no secret to budget deficits. If one spends more than one earns, then one must borrow what one owes."

"I know that. But the question I came to ask is what does one do about a deficit that is so large that all the wise men of the land cannot agree how to cut it?"

"When the highest type of men see deficits they recoil at them. When the average type of men see deficits they half believe them. When the lowest type of men see deficits they laugh heartily at them."

"But how does one get the lowest type of men to become the highest?"

"It can't be done during an election year," the Master said, popping another jellybean into his mouth. "Why not, oh wise one?"

"Because those who are responsible for the deficits will not admit they are bad, and those who take no responsibility need them to attack those who made the deficits. It is written in the 'Book of Politics' that in an election year one talks about deficits, but one does not do anything about them."

"Why is that, Master?"

"Because to do something about deficits is to cause pain. And if one wants to rule one must promise not to cause anyone pain."

"If one does not do anything about deficits will there not be greater pain later on?" I asked.

"A wise ruler never mentions future pain when his throne is at stake."

"How long can one live with deficits before they cause pain?"

"Depending on the size of them, one year, maybe two, perhaps forever."

"Doesn't the ruler know that?"

"Yes, he does. But true words are not beautiful. And beautiful words are not true."

"Master, there are those who say in order to reduce them, one must raise taxes and cut back on military spending. There are others who say one must cut out domestic spending and do no-

thing more to tax the people. Who is right?"

"It is this simplicity that makes the uneducated more effective than the educated when addressing popular audiences during an election year."

"So it is your opinion that nothing can be done about deficits when a country is contesting for a new ruler?"

"Nothing of substance. One must think of the budget as a lovely river. The deficits are like the snow in the

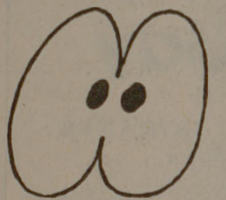
mountains that no one sees. One spring comes, the snow melts and becomes a torrent of water and the river becomes a flood washing away everything that man has built, and there is nothing left but a depression in the land."

"You sound like Martin Feldstein," I said.

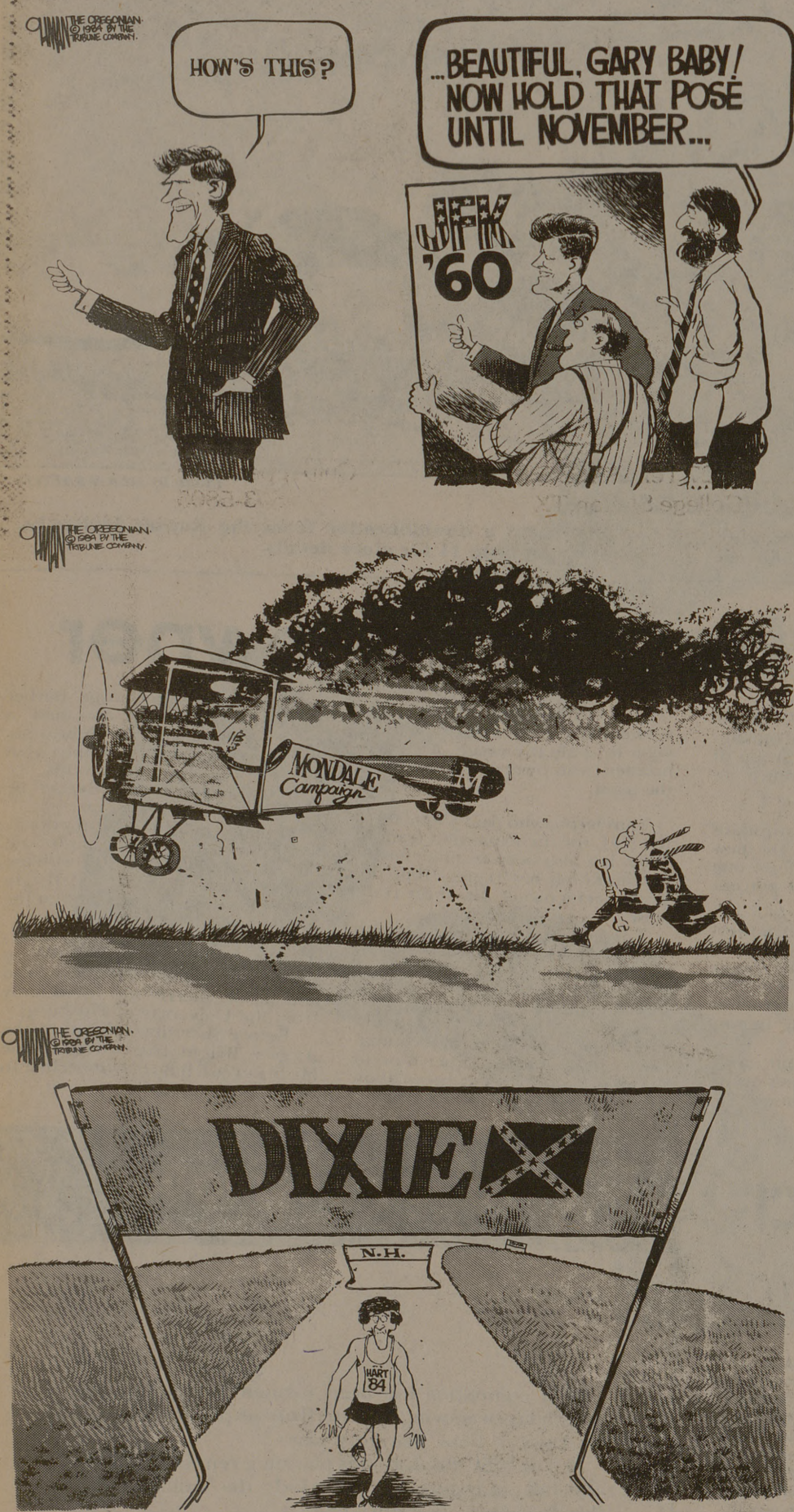
"It's Feldstein, not Feldsteen," the Master said angrily. "And don't you forget it."

Slouch

by Jim Earle



"Was that your can of shaving lather that exploded?"



## Letters: Basketball team deserves more support

Editor:

As a Class of '81 member of the Fightin' Texas Aggie Band, I attended every home basketball game for four years, headed numerous road trips for away games, and saw every SWC tournament game and NCAA tournament game the Aggies played.

Since graduation, I have been a season ticket holder and have traveled from as far away as Alabama for games. This season, I missed only two home games.

I did not miss the March 6 game with U. It was the smallest crowd of students I have ever seen at a home game. The band was close to outnumbering the rest of the students.

What's going on?

Two percenters has taken on a new

meaning since my graduation. It must now mean that only 2 percent of the students care enough to support the school at athletic functions. It must mean that only 2 percent know that being an Aggie means more than just attending class and wearing an Aggie ring.

If so, it is a sad state of affairs, and must surely be a symptom of a much deeper problem. Does it mean that "Old Army" really has died?

Have traditions been replaced with the selfish pride of petty individuality? Have college students become so wrapped up in their desire to be different from the masses that they are unable to give two measly hours of their existence to help support a team that deserves much more than that?

I know the players and coaches, and they are an exceptional group of people. They deserve much more support than they have gotten this year.

Tuesday night I was embarrassed for every person who could have come to the game, but elected not to.

You missed a good game. You missed Winston Crite's best game of the year. You missed seeing Texas A&M win and advance to the second round of the SWC tournament, and you missed seeing t.u. lose.

Will this apathy carry over to football season? Prove to me it won't. See you at the alumni game...or not.

Wesley Pate  
Class of '81

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

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Reader's Forum columns and guest editorials also are welcome. Address all inquiries to the Editorial Page Editor.

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