

## Speakers excellent for graduation

Congratulations are in order for Texas A&M President Frank E. Vandiver and others who scheduled speakers for the spring commencement exercises.

In a space of two days, Texas A&M will host the mayor of San Antonio, the governor of Texas and the vice president of the United States.

Pretty impressive. San Antonio Mayor Henry Cisneros, Gov. Mark White and U.S. Vice President George Bush will no doubt be interesting speakers, much to the delight of all those who sit through the graduation ceremonies. A common gripe about graduation exercises often has been the monotony of listening to what is basically the same speech every year.

But this spring's ceremonies have the potential to be fascinating. Cisneros, who will speak at the May 4

afternoon commencement, recently was featured on CBS's news documentary "60 Minutes." Cisneros is a graduate of Texas A&M, receiving a bachelor of arts degree in English in 1968 and later receiving advanced degrees in Urban Planning and Public Administration. White, who will speak at the May 4 commencement, formed the committee on state public education chaired by H. Ross Perot that has become the center of education controversies. Bush, who will speak at the May 5 commencement, will be in Texas that day for the state's primary elections.

It is important for a university as large as Texas A&M — and one which has 90 to 95 percent student participation rate and a full house in attendance — to have graduation speakers who have some impact on the world. This year, we will.

— The Battalion Editorial Board

## Momentum overrides importance of issues

By ART BUCHWALD

Columnist for The Los Angeles Times Syndicate

The group from Argyle and Sox Advertising Agency was ushered into Senator Dimblebutton's office. They were there to get the account for Senator Dimblebutton's political race.

"Senator," said the vice president of AA&S, "we've worked on a campaign that is going to knock your eyes out."

The AA&S creative VP said, "We're going to give you something that your opponent doesn't have."

Two flunkies set up an easel and put a large white sign covered by a cloth on it.

"Get ready for this, Senator," a VP said.

The cloth was pulled off. There was one large word, "MOMENTUM."

The advertising men all looked at the senator for his reaction.

"That's it?" the senator asked.

"What do you mean, that's it? This is going to get you reelected for the next six years. Our research people have been working on this campaign for six months. The one thing they discovered that every voter in your state wanted was momentum. No candidate who has ever run for public office ever lost a race if he had it, and no candidate has ever won if he lost it."

"How do I get momentum?" the senator wanted to know.

"That's our job. We'll run commercials, plaster billboards and place newspaper ads, and every one of them will say that you have the 'Big Mo.'"

"But where's the beef?"

"Show him the videotape of the proposed TV commercial, Harry."

Harry inserted a videotape into the machine.

A runner wearing a big "M" on his sweatshirt came on the screen jogging along a freeway. He said, "My name is Senator Dimblebutton and I'm running for a third term. If I am reelected I will give this state something it has never had before — momentum." The jogger

started to speed up and passed a car with a driver who looked exactly like Dimblebutton's opponent, and as the TV commercial ended, Dimblebutton was 50 yards ahead of his opponent.

"It says it all in 30 seconds," the VP said.

"Don't you want me to do any TV commercials stating where I stand on unemployment, the Soviet threat, and how big interests are taking over the country?"

"You'd be wasting your money. The only thing the voter is interested in is a candidate's momentum. If he has it they want to be on his side because America likes winners."

"I see your point," the senator said. "But aren't we putting all our eggs in one basket with a momentum campaign? Couldn't we have some backup commercials emphasizing my charisma?"

"Charisma is old hat. Look at what it did to John Glenn. This is new, this is fresh, and if you don't mind my saying so, sir, with your voting record, momentum is the only thing you've got going for you."

"It's not just the advertising campaign that will put you over," a VP said. "The media is crazy about a candidate who has momentum. Look at Gary Hart. Before he ran in Iowa and New Hampshire no one knew he was in the race. But after those victories, the press could talk about nothing but Hart's 'M Spot.' How did the political pundits explain it? Very simply. They said Hart had momentum and Mondale lost it."

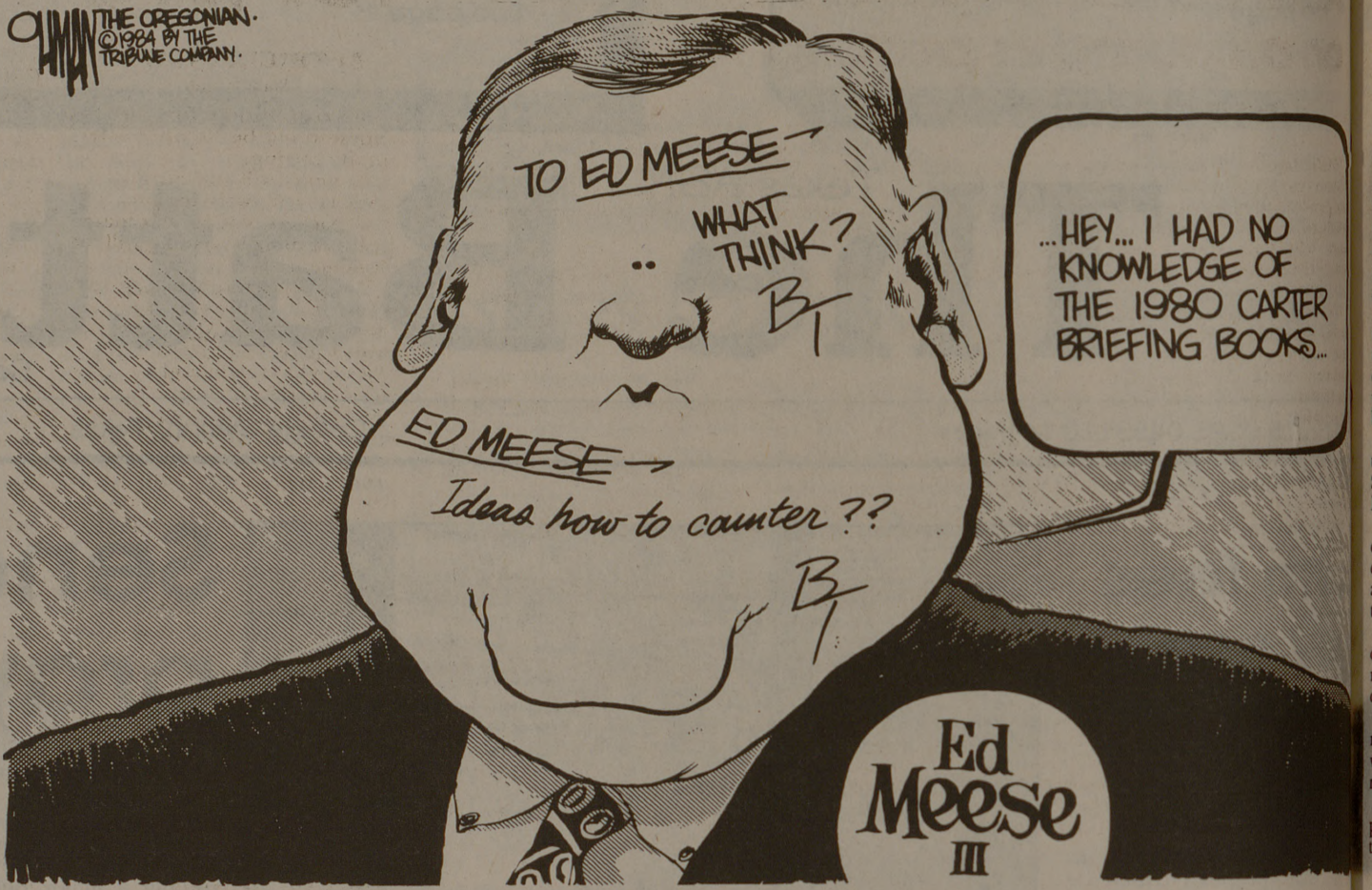
"Okay, you persuaded me," the senator said. "How much will it cost me?"

"Ten million dollars, including the jogging suit."

"That's a lot of money."

"Senator, that's the beauty of momentum. Once the lobbyist think you have it, the campaign money starts dropping from the sky like acid rain."

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## A vote for the little man

The student body elections are upon us once more. This has to be — by now — old news.

If you don't know elections are coming up, you either have been strolling around campus with your eyes closed, or you simply have not set foot on this campus since Sunday night.

You see, in the span of one night Texas A&M underwent a tremendous change. You might write a movie about it and call it, "The Invasion of the Campaign Signs."

These signs spring up, seemingly out of nowhere, to take over countless yardage of struggling grass sprouts that thought spring was on its way. Towering masses of plywood, lumber and sandbags have invaded this campus, sparing nothing — not even the grass that Texas A&M prides itself on.

These signs (some call them billboards) will be with us until the election ballots are in, counted, and a winner has been declared beyond a shadow of a doubt.

The Oceanography and Meteorology Building has seen stiff competition lately. This years' creations are BIGGER, better, mightier than the ones in years past.

Gone are the days of simple poster-board campaigning. In keeping with this country's progress — everything has to be bigger, better, faster, catchier, jazzier, classier, etc., etc. — the runners have made their signs reach for new heights.

Heights, that is, of eight or nine feet. These signs, like the oil rigs in Luling and the tower at Six Flags, have now taken on such heights that they dominate the campus horizon.

Some signs are so big, they have to be weighted down with sandbags. Every street corner has become a hard hat area.

I almost feel sorry for the "little man" — you know, the one that went "conservative" and decided to keep his sign under four feet tall and use only two colors.

And what about the guy whose dad didn't know the first thing about high-speed, high-tech woodworking tools, and had to do the best he could with a simple hammer and two-by-fours?

The guy that is an architecture or art



shelley hoekstra

major certainly has the advantage over the animal science major.

Some campaigners have adopted the logos of well-known establishments, which catch potential voters' eyes since they automatically identify with the design.

Is this fair? Or, an even more serious question — is this legal?

If it is, I think I'll change my name to Pearl Beer and run for Dixie Chicken Senator at Large and see how many people vote for me in the next election.

If you don't know the person whose name is on the sign, how is a conglomeration of impersonal, painted splinters supposed to grab your vote? What is one

to do? Vote for the guy with the sign?

Since they've gone to the extreme, ready, the very least they could do

a quarter slot on the sign so that it will play a recorded campaign slogan at least then students would get a little of semi-acquaintance with the particular candidate they listened to.

I am quite aware of the fact that campaigners use a lot of time and money, traipsing around campus, producing themselves and running through their campaign speeches for who will listen.

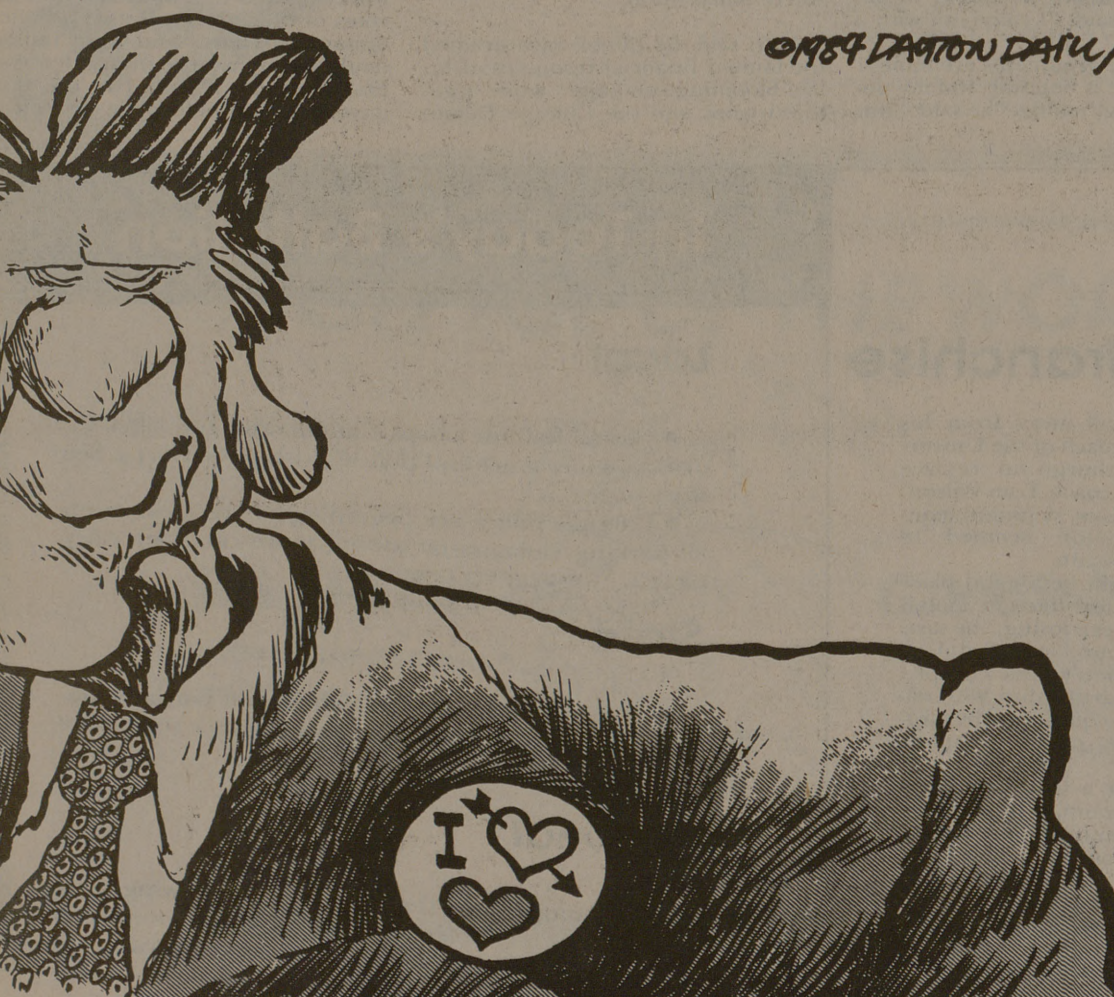
But let's be realistic. I, for one, am NOT like having my dorm knocked on at 7:00, 7:30, 8:00, 8:17 ... (GO AWAY!) by campaigners who wish to meet me during my study time. Especially now, just after the end of my mid-term grades has finally moved off.

I've tried to remedy this by putting a sign on my door that says "No campaigners, please. I'm studying ... at." Even this does not work, as the campaigners persist.

When I bring my signs to the attention of gung-ho campaigners, they get ten, somewhat chagrined, say, "I didn't notice. Yes, I want to vote for the person who is the most with-it, the one on top of things, the one that makes what is right in front of his face."

Help them, help the little green sprouts, help the candidate with the smallest sign (who probably spent more time meeting and greeting than making and sawing), and help me to understand just who these bunches of lumber are supposed to compel me to vote for.

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

#### Letter Policy

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 100 words in length. 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 be signed and must include the address and telephone number of the writer.

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

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