

## Tragedy doesn't end news

The show must go on. It's an old cliché that is heard but not often realized. Today The Battalion was put together by a staff consisting of the new and some of the old. That's what it took, in the face of adversity. Our editor was not here.

Instead, he is in a coma in a Bryan hospital after a car accident. Yesterday he was laughing and working with us, planning this semester's goals for The Battalion.

Tuesday night, when it came time to speak of world issues for an editorial, the events of the world were discussed. But the tragedies that face nations seemed small in comparison to the tragedy in our own midst.

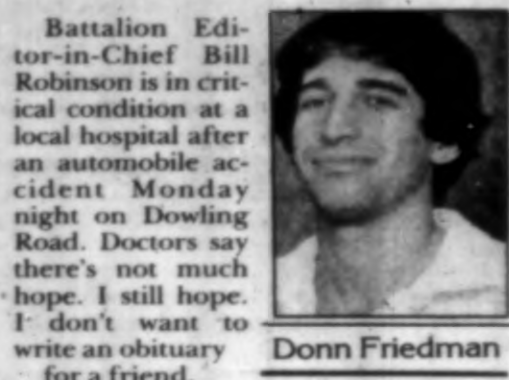
Newspapers are one of those things in life that go on, regardless of holidays or personal tragedies. Between the time we learned of the accident and you read this editorial, enough newsworthy events occurred to fill the pages of this day's paper. To The Battalion staff every paper is important. This one just contains a story that affects us a bit more.

This editorial is dedicated to our editor, Bill Robinson. Our hearts are with him and his family while our minds and bodies produce the first of the Fall semester's Battalions.

— The Battalion Editorial Board



## Bill, you still owe me a lunch



Donn Friedman

Battalion Editor-in-Chief Bill Robinson is in critical condition at a local hospital after an automobile accident Monday night on Dowling Road. Doctors say there's not much hope. I still hope. I don't want to write an obituary for a friend.

Monday when I saw him in the newsroom, I passed quickly. A nonchalant, non-committal hi and it was off to other business for me. Bill wandered around the newsroom busily doing the things new editors do: preparing, organizing, dreaming.

Verbal assault after verbal assault, he would always be there in the newsroom, his lackadaisical smile beaming across his face. For a time last semester after he fell and broke his hip in a freak accident, he was stuck on a pair

of steel crutches that made characteristic clanking sounds wherever he went; sometimes upon hearing his clanking crutches coming down the hall, I would hide.

But like a slapped puppy, Bill would tuck his head. Pushing his body high above his crutches, he would seek me out anyway. Once found, even though I would rather have not been bothered, it always made me feel good — that someone would go that far out of his way to ask my opinion or to ask me to go to lunch.

No matter that I usually ended up buying; it seemed he endlessly needed to go to the money-machine, and I was endlessly in a hurry.

I'd like to write on and on about both the good and bad times we had; college days are always so much better in retrospect.

I'd tell you about the times at the Southwest Conference Basketball tournament, or the long nights in the newsroom putting out the paper and eating cold pizza, or the night Bill fell asleep on the floor of my apartment — his head nestled in the woofer of my stereo's speaker.

Yet the part of Bill that I've gotten to know was just a small piece.

I wish I could send just one message to Bill, my editor and my friend, as he fights for his life at St. Joseph Hospital. It would say: "You can't quit me now, you still owe me a lunch."

(Donn Friedman is a senior journalism major and a staff columnist for The Battalion.)

## Learning to fly a plane can be full of surprises

Learning to fly. Most people think it is a complex process that involves draining the old pocketbook, and flying endlessly until someone thinks you're good enough to get a license.



Eric Evan Lee

Well, it's easier than most people think. It is a little costly, but there isn't much that doesn't cost a lot these days.

Getting your license involves taking a written test, which is just a lot of common sense mixed with a bunch of federal rules and regulations. Most of it is just to make sure you have a safe flight and to help a pilot reduce the number of surprises during his flight.

Then, a person will find a respectable flight school — and there are a

number of good ones in the area — to learn how to actually fly the plane.

The instructor's rate is set according to aircraft type. The least costly way of learning to fly is to rent the cheapest aircraft, so most people will learn to fly on a Cessna 152 airplane.

It is the primary trainer for most pilots and is instrumental in forming lasting memories about learning to fly. The Cessna 152 is a two-seater airplane with very little room for anyone. The small craft looks cute, but my first question was: Will it fly?

There are a few oddities about the airman's language. The number nine is pronounced "niner," because the word nine (nein) means no in German. Another oddity is that the letters in the alphabet all have words attached to the ends of them. So, aircraft are referred to as some numbers and a letter or two, which is really a word or two.

The airplane I am learning to fly is

a Cessna 152, and its identification is Cessna (the type of airplane goes first) 5526H (pronounced 5526 Hotel). Cessna 5526 Hotel is a really fun aircraft — full of surprises my instructor didn't even know about until I began to fly it. Not many people like 26 Hotel, but I think it's kinda fun.

One of my beginning trips in 26 Hotel was really a lesson in safety. We were taking off from Easterwood Field on runway 34 when a voice from the tower said "5526 Hotel begin left turn, oncoming traffic Lear jet." I thought how neat, we'll get to see a Lear jet land. Well, my instructor told me that was an order for us to begin turning left, so the Lear jet wouldn't collide with us. As we turned left about 400 feet from the surface, old 26 Hotel's left door flew open. As I looked down, I began last-minute bargaining with my maker. Oh God, let this ragged old seat belt hold me in this airplane, and

I'll never do anything wrong again. It was sort of like a drunk's promise never to drink a drop again if he could stop being sick now. I made it through the turn, and I'm still flying.

I've gained quite a few experiences that have raised new meaning to the word scared. Astroworld will never be thrilling again. After I had learned my basic maneuvers to flying the aircraft, my instructor thought I might like a thrill. So he suggested we do a spin or two. Being the inquisitive person that I am, I thought, now here's another opportunity to learn something.

A spin results when the aircraft almost straight up but the power is no longer sufficient to pull the plane. A turn begins, and the plane falls to one side, spinning wildly to the ground. At the instant the spin "kicks in" — and it does — you'll feel heavier than you have ever felt. I could not move my arms, which were forced to my side by

the resulting dive. My instructor was kindly and calmly telling me how to pull out of the spin as I was thinking about what I had done with my life until now. I even thought about my funeral. Would all the people for whom I sent graduation invitations also attend my funeral? Well, as the ground rushed toward my face, I accepted death, and even remembered to pray. Then my instructor pulled us out of the spin and said we were safe. I just sat there and finished my prayer. When I finished praying and found I had not been killed, I then thought how lucky I was.

We continued practicing spins, but I will never be thrilled at an amusement park again. The thrill of a spin was almost too much for my bladder.

(Eric Evan Lee is a recent journalism graduate and was a The Battalion photographer.)

## Policy platform debates not empty

# Economic theory may be tested in '85

By DAVID BRODER

Columnist for the Washington Post Writers Group

Political party platforms are widely supposed to be empty platitudes. When the platform debate gets down to a question of punctuation, as happened in the Republicans' economic-policy panel last week, the presumption is that the issues are what you might call epically picayune.

That is plausible, but in this case, plain wrong. Make no mistake: the intellectual and political stakes in the Republicans' tax debate are very large indeed.

There are two basic views of the economic future. One holds that the current strong growth is threatened by historically unprecedented budget cuts and tax increases starting in 1985 if economic ruin is to be averted. The other view is that the recovery will continue and deficits will automatically decrease, unless the government is foolish enough to raise taxes.

The Democrats as a party, most economists, many big businessmen and several strong figures in the Reagan administration and the Republican Senate are of the first view. After the platform debate, the Republican Party is officially committed to the second proposition.

The GOP platform says: "Our most important economic goal is to expand and continue the economic recovery. We therefore oppose any attempts to increase taxes, which would harm the

recovery....We favor reducing deficits by continuing and expanding the strong economic recovery...and by eliminating wasteful and unnecessary government spending."

Whatever your view on the merits, that is a clear-cut, unequivocal policy statement. It says economic expansion — not deficit reduction — is the highest priority, and that tax increases are out. "We categorically reject proposals to increase taxes in a misguided effort to balance the budget," another platform section declares.

The platform is more plain than President Reagan himself has been. When Democratic nominee Walter F. Mondale accused Reagan of harboring a "secret plan" to raise taxes in 1985, as Mondale openly said he would do, the President floundered around, finally declaring that for him, a tax hike would be "a last resort."

Reagan's agents here fought to keep some "wiggly room" in the platform, but lost to a group of congressional conservatives — backed by most of the grassroots delegates — who wanted to sharpen the issue with Mondale, not blur it.

Now the White House men are putting out the line that Reagan will do what he feels necessary to do, whatever the platform says. But the platform language so much reflects Reagan's own anti-tax sentiments that I think the prospects of Reagan en-

dorsing any form of deficit-cutting tax bill in 1985 have been made significantly more remote.

That is what makes this past week's events so important. Given the odds on Reagan's re-election, 1985 may well bring an intellectual and political test of economic theory of truly historic consequence.

The young conservatives who framed the economic plank of the GOP platform are true believers in the proposition that the 1981 tax bill was the start of a new era. Rep. Jack Kemp (R-N.Y.), one of the major proponents of the policy, told the platform committee that the "noninflationary economic expansion" triggered by those across-the-board tax cuts defied conventional wisdom and started the nation down a new road. To continue on that road, he and his colleagues argue, there must be further rate cuts — not tax hikes — in a 1985 tax bill, which they would like to see eliminate progressive tax rates entirely.

That is more than the administration can swallow, and it is heresy to the Democrats. Most conventional economists are sceptical of the notion that we have entered a new economic era. They believe the 1981 tax cuts, fully implemented just last year, applied a classic Keynesian stimulus to the recession-wracked economy and — along with easier Federal Reserve policies — produced the current boom. But in

their view, that boom cannot last unless deficits are cut and interest rates reduced, and that will require a tax boost next year.

For now, Reagan can sidestep this debate, and revel in the current happy state of the economy. He has the luxury of a man who is running his last election campaign under ideal economic circumstances.

But for his party, and for the Democratic opposition, the gamble is very large indeed. Someone is right in this debate, and someone is wrong — and by 1988, it will be very clear who it is.

If the Republicans resist a 1985 tax hike and economic growth goes on, without severe inflation, for another few years, thereby bringing down the deficit, there will be vast and perhaps enduring political benefit for the GOP. That is what Kemp meant when he said here that the 1984 GOP platform "will make our party the realignment party."

But if the skeptics are right, then Republicans as a party will be in deep trouble by 1988. An economic slump that starts with the budget already \$160 billion or \$170 billion in the red could leave this nation in the worst trouble since the Depression.

All that — and more — is at issue, after last week's platform decisions.

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