

## Stop, look, listen; trains are killers

Look both ways before you cross the tracks. That seems like a common-sense thing to do. But what if when you look, you can't see anything? Look closer.

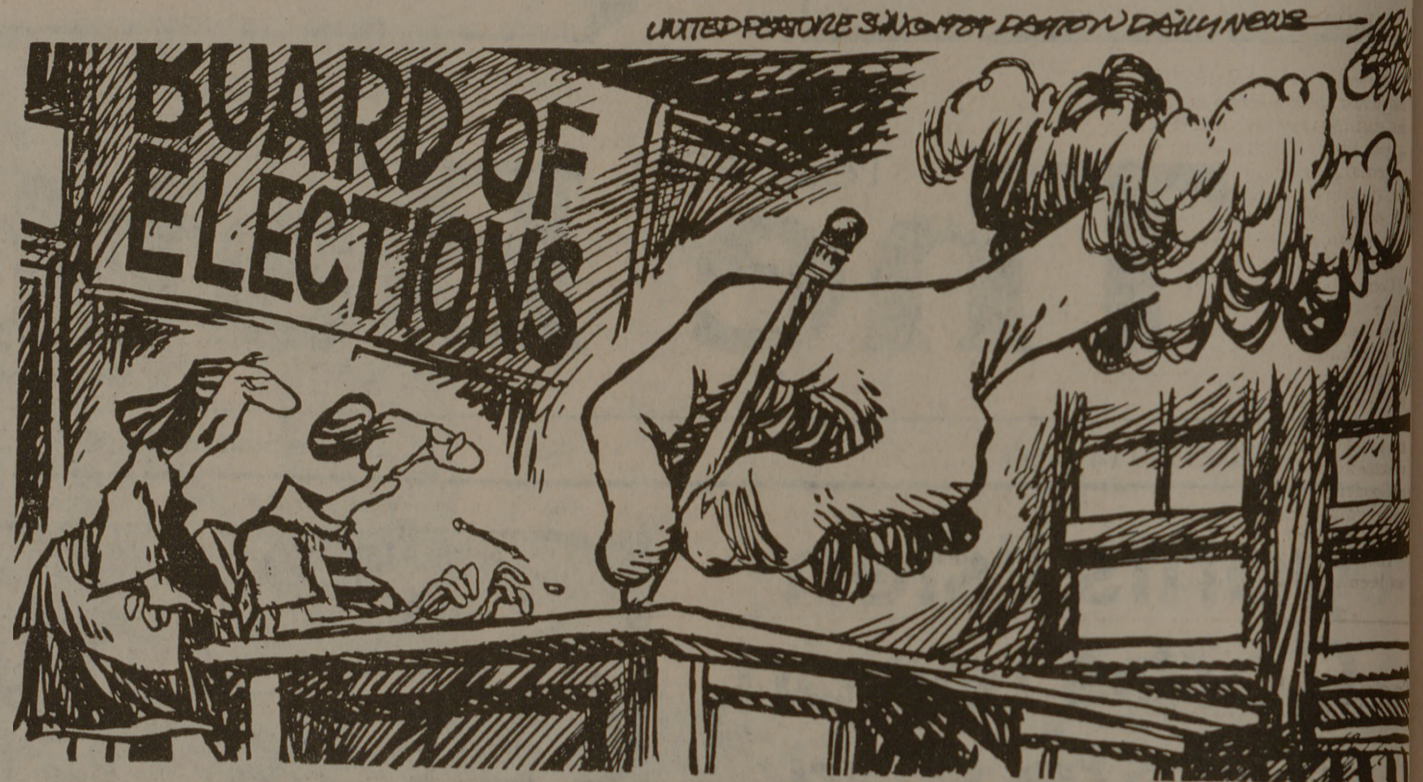
Since late Thursday night, two Texas A&M students have been killed in car-train accidents. It seems more than coincidence that both accidents occurred at the same crossing — on Luther Street — a dirt road just south of Jersey Street, near campus.

The Luther Street crossing is poorly marked. The only warning sign a driver heading east could possibly see is obscured by a tree; there are no flashing lights and gate. But is this crossing really more dangerous than any other?

The engineer who was driving the train Friday said the whole stretch of track adjacent to A&M is hazardous. All train crossings — especially ones with daily traffic such as the strip near A&M — need adequate markings. The city needs to make sure that any crossings — such as the one at Luther Street — that aren't adequately marked are either closed or corrected.

But, marked or not, too often drivers fly over railroad tracks without thinking or looking. It's important to slow down and look before crossing any railroad tracks. If you don't, the few seconds you save might not do you any good.

The Battalion Editorial Board



SO MANY CANDIDATES CLAIMED GOD WAS ON THEIR SIDE I GUESS HE FELT OBLIGATED TO REGISTER...

## Candidates want forgiveness, votes

By DAVID BRODER

Washington Post Columnist

PORTLAND, Ore. - Forgiveness is not the quality that candidates usually seek to evoke from their constituents. Approval and enthusiasm are what incumbents commonly hope to arouse; anger and discontent are the emotions challengers try to stir.

But this year, President Reagan and his opponent, Walter F. Mondale, are trying, in their own ways, to seek forgiveness - at least, in this early stage of the game.

Indeed, the first four words of the first speech of the President's general election campaign were: "You will forgive me..."

They always have, as Rep. Pat Schroeder (D-Colo.) commented ruefully in her classic description of Reagan's "Teflon-coated" presidency — one to which no criticism sticks.

In this campaign, Reagan and his managers are hoping the voters will forgive and forget a great many of the policies and personalities that stirred controversy in the past 44 months.

People like James Watt, Anne Burford and Alexander Haig, whose very names were enough to stir angry debate, have mostly been dropped overboard.

While pointing with pride to his record in reducing inflation, boosting real income and slashing taxes, Reagan would like people to forget the worst recession in 50 years, the growth in officially counted families in poverty and the quantum leap in the size of the annual federal deficits.

He would also like them to forget the fiasco of Lebanon policy — and the lives the Marines lost there.

On the other side of the political street, the Mondale campaign's search for forgiveness is alternately stark and subtle.

Mondale would most like people to forget his role as Jimmy Carter's vice president, and the legacy that administration left of inflation, economic stagnation and captive hostages. He would like farmers to forget grain embargoes; home-buyers, double-digit interest rates; and everyone, "malaise."

In conversations this week with two senior Mondale aides and advisers, Mondale's chance of success was linked directly to getting the voters to feel "comfortable" with him as he is.

A top Mondale operative in California said that the state registration drive, aimed at adding half-a-million low-income and minority men and women to the voting rolls, would not be enough, nor would Mondale's challenge to Reagan's environmental, education and arms-control policies, unless swing voters get "comfortable" with Mondale. "They don't have to like him," he said. "They like (vice-presidential candidate) Gerry Ferraro, and they like Gary Hart, who's giving us ten days of campaign time in California. All they have to do is get past feeling uncomfortable about Mondale."

Another Mondale adviser with Illinois roots said he was not counting on Mondale's strength to carry that state. "Harold Washington (the Chicago mayor) and Eddie Vrdolyak (the Cook County Democratic chairman and critic of Washington) both have their own reasons to turn out the votes in the black and ethnic wards they control," this man said.

Forgive Ronald Reagan for his blunders and for his friends, the Republicans seem to be saying. Forgive Fritz Mondale for his history and his blandness, the Democrats implore.

It is a curious campaign.

## Photographers are strange breed

### Hooked on pictures

"I am a photographer."

The first time I admitted to myself that I was hooked on cameras and film and developer, I felt like an confessed alcoholic. And for good reason.

Peter Rocha

Photography takes up more money and time than most people realize. The little profit that I make from my three photography related jobs goes right back into buying equipment. Toss in 15 hours of classes (oops, had to drop a class so make that 12 hours) on top of that and you've got one busy shutterbug.

It's not exactly great for my social life. For the last three years or so my steady date to football games, midnight yell practices, concerts, and speeches has been a Nikon FM. People occasionally stare at me and my camera like a wino and his little brown paper bag. I guess we do sometimes look a bit out of place.

If other people take pictures socially, you know, like at parties and stuff, no one ever really notices them. But those of us who just kind of turn up places with camera in hand and take pictures of strangers...well, it's like drinking alone.

I need it though and I've never denied that. I get nervous if I can't pick up a camera every day. Sometimes I just have to make a print or develop some film. Gotta have that photographic fix.

Just before a football game I'm so hyped, so thirsty for it, you just couldn't believe it. I get to the game at least an hour

before kick-off and eat and try to relax with the other shooters. But I'm not really comfortable until I start that first roll. After that I'm okay.

You see it's not really a job; it's more of a lifestyle. First of all, I keep terrible hours. During a regular work week I sleep an average of about six hours a night. Secondly I eat more meals at stadiums, in my car, or in the darkroom than at home. Most working photographers can tell you what kind of food you can expect in each stadium press box.

But worst of all I look at everything as if it were a picture. Sometimes I stop and stare at things, maybe walk around it a little bit, and see a picture there. Other people pass by and don't see a thing. They're my pink elephants.

I can even look at things through different kinds of eyes. I can zoom in on things, blocking out all unnecessary things around it like a telephoto lens. Or I can take in everything like a wide angle lens.

So I'll just have to continue to hang around with other photo bums in our film infested skid-row. They can understand me because they've all gone through the same things. But I wish people could understand my special problem.

I am a photographer not just a guy who takes pictures.

Peter Rocha is a senior English major, a Battalion and Agrieland photographer, and lab assistant for photojournalism classes.

## Is 1984 finally the year of the Cubs?

By ART BUCHWALD

Columnist for The Los Angeles Times Syndicate

George Will, the columnist, and I used to be friends. When it came to politics we didn't always agree, but it never interfered in our social relationship. What broke up the friendship was baseball — the Chicago Cubs to be exact. George is a Chicago Cubs fan, a member of the very, very small band of brothers and sisters who year after year took pride in rooting for a team that had been in the cellar so many times the Preservation Society on Monuments had declared it a National Fall Out Shelter.

George's charm was that he believed in the Cubs, who hadn't won a pennant since 1945. Every spring he would tell anyone who listened how the Cubs would rise from the ashes and regain their rightful place in baseball. To our credit those of us who understood baseball never put George down. We always humored him and said, "Sure, George. This is the Cubs' year."

Whenever the Cubs won a game during the postwar years George considered it a religious experience. One time the team was only 63 games out of first place during the middle of the season, and George had it figured out that if every other team in the National League lost every one of its games the Cubs could win the pennant. As a believer in lost causes George was in a class by himself.

Whether Will's faith in the Chicago Cubs affected his judgment concerning the political subjects he wrote about was something we never questioned. We just assumed that Will was able to separate his emotional attachment to the Cubs from his trenchant commentary. Except for his quirk about baseball, George makes as much sense as any conservative commentator in the town.

But something happened to Will this year. For reasons that no one can explain, the lowly Cubs started winning.

As they started climbing up in their division George became more morose and nervous. He was short-tempered and bitter. He refused to discuss baseball and pretended he wasn't interested in the pennant race.

When he wasn't around we discussed his sudden change in personality.

One of the pundits had a theory. "I don't think George is able to deal with success. He's so used to the Cubs losing that he can't live with the possibility that they may go all the way. After 41 years of being a loser he can't accept the fact that he might become a winner."

"It's even more than that," a Yankee supporter said. "Cub fans took pride in supporting a team that rarely won a game. They enjoyed playing the role of the underdog. If the Cubs go to the World Series there will be nothing unique about them. The fans also resent the fact that after so many years of being shunned and laughed at, everyone is now jumping on the Cub bandwagon."

Their privacy has been invaded. They lived in a fantasy world for so long that it's no fun when their fantasy has come true."

I decided to have a talk with Will. "George," I said, "all your friends are talking about you. You're not the same person you were before the baseball season started. We believe the Cub winning streak has gotten to you."

"Maybe it has and maybe it hasn't."

"You can't be mad at everybody just because the Cubs aren't losing. You've got to come to terms with the fact that they are winners. It was Vince Lombardi who said 'Losing isn't everything; it's the only thing.'"

"Lombardi was never a Cub fan," Will replied.

"That's neither here nor there. You should be happy your team is on top. You stayed in the cellar with them all these years. You now have every right to enjoy their success. We don't begrudge them winning, why should you?"

"I don't think it's anybody's business."

"But your attitude is affecting your work."

"How so?"

"Just the other day you wrote that Reagan would probably win the election. No one in his right mind would make a prediction like that unless he had truly lost his marbles."

### The Battalion

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In memoriam

Bill Robinson, 1962-1984, Editor

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