

Waldo

Music video prompts cartoon depicting lifestyles at A&M

By JEAN MANSAVAGE
Reporter

Texas A&M cartoonist Kevin Thomas, creator of The Battalion comic strip Waldo, has been drawing cartoons since he was a child.

As he sits at his cluttered yet organized desk in Moses Hall, Thomas describes the development of his interest in cartooning.

"I've always just enjoyed doing it," Thomas says.

"When I was in junior and senior high school I drew cartoons for the school newspaper. The cartoons dealt with student and teacher situations."

Following graduation from a Milwaukee high school, Thomas continued his education.

Before coming to Texas A&M he attended Bell and Howell technical schools in Phoenix, Ariz., and Kansas City, Mo., and graduated from the program. Thomas also took classes at North Harris County College in Houston.

In each of those cities Thomas continued to use his creativity.

"It has always been a constant thing," he says. "I'd draw cartoons about the schools I went to and the places I worked at. Sometimes I would draw maps with goofy landmarks for party givers."

"Last spring my brother reactivated my interest in serious cartooning."

Thomas' brother had been making about \$100 extra a month by submitting humorous material to comedy services.

The idea of getting paid for writing

jokes was very appealing to Thomas.

The renewed cartooning interest led to the creation of two comic strips before Waldo, his third, was accepted by The Battalion.

The first, Captain Tamu, was an Aggie who turned into Captain Tamu whenever traditions were threatened.

The second, Sully, had Sul Ross statue and a friendly pigeon observing and commenting on Texas A&M student life. Now, Waldo runs in The Battalion daily.

"I stole the idea from a Van Halen rock and roll video," he explains. "The main character in the video was a nerd who just didn't fit in."

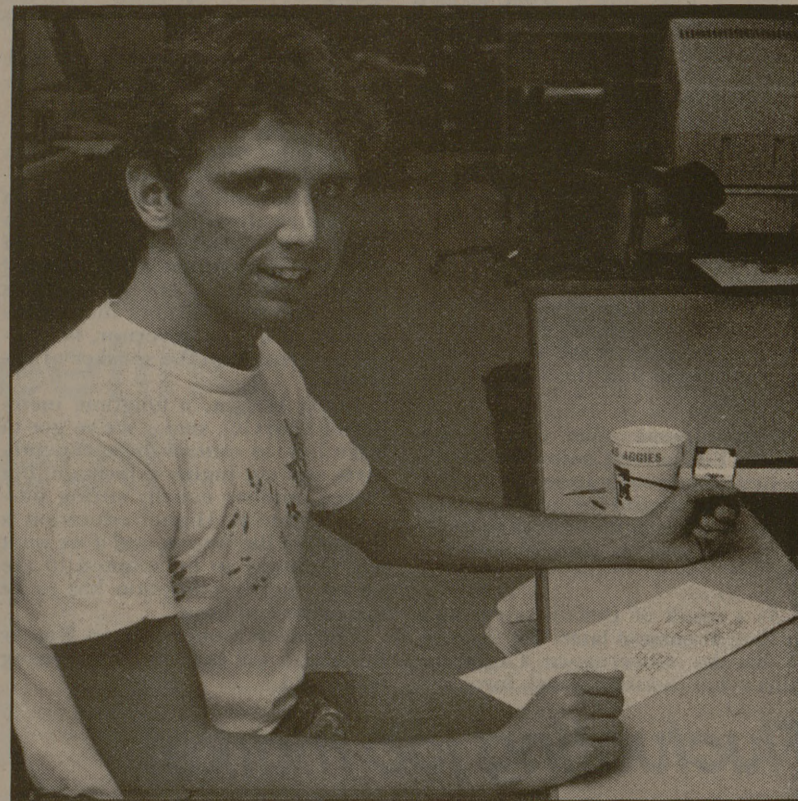
Thomas developed that idea into Waldo. He is a character who wants to be like everyone else, but always comes out second best.

Waldo and his roommate Wade observe everyday life at Texas A&M. If Waldo chooses to become involved, he remains a neutral character, Thomas says.

The success of getting his comic strip run in the paper has led Thomas to solicit his material to other comedy services.

Reaching for one of his writer's how-to books from amid his computer science texts, Thomas explains that submitting gags to those services requires following certain rules of protocol.

"You could come up with a great, fantastic joke, but you don't just call up Bob Hope and say 'Hey, I have a



Kevin Thomas

great joke for you," he says. "There are certain ways to approach joke services."

Thomas exhibits index cards upon which are his neatly typed gags.

He has Reebok shoe boxes filled with material and copies of letters he has submitted to the addresses that

line the pages of those writer's how-to books.

Though some of his gags are in the correct channels for future professional use, Thomas does not foresee a total commitment to cartooning in the near future.

"My studies are my first priority, and there just isn't enough time to fully commit to a strip any more complicated than Waldo," Thomas says.

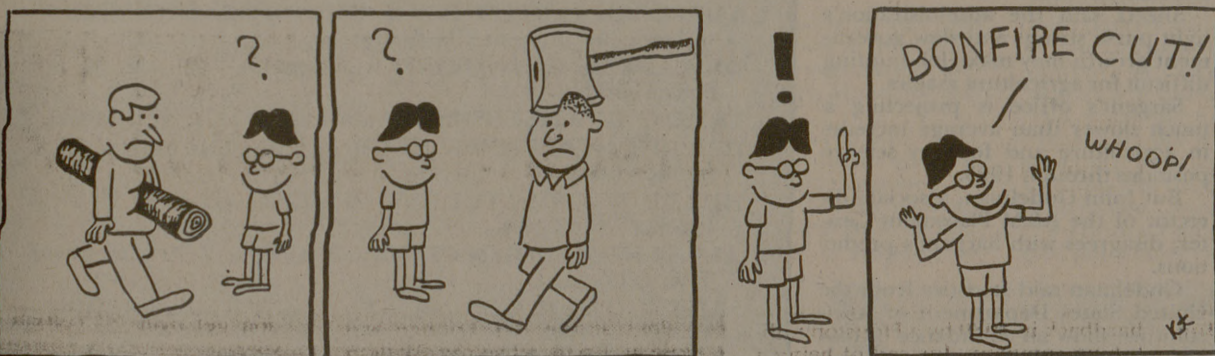
Developing ideas for the strip is not one of the time problems for Thomas.

On a legal pad tacked to the wall under his loft are enough ideas to last him the rest of the semester, he says.

Thomas says he hopes that those ideas do not offend too many of the people too much of the time. He wants readers to enjoy Waldo.

"When I watch people read Waldo, I love to see them smile," he says with a grin.

Waldo



by Kevin Thomas



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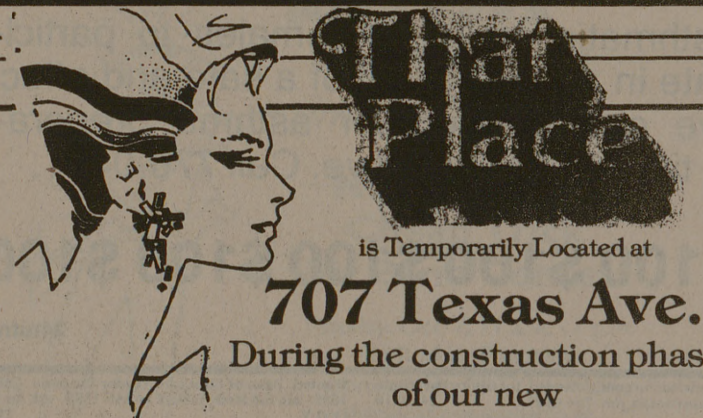


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