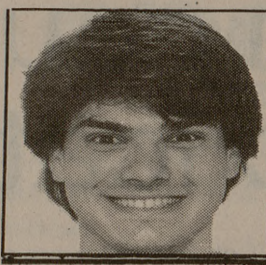


Opinion

For your consideration — a certain GOP speech

Texans rejoice. It appears as though Texas has tripped haphazardly right into the limelight of the '88 presidential campaign. And now, to top it off, Phil Gramm (a senator) has been given the more-than-dubious honor of introducing George Bush (a candidate) to the Republican Convention (a mess) in New Orleans. When I heard the news, I was one excited guy, I can tell you.



Mark Nair

So, as it happens, the other day I was snooping through some pretty sensitive classified government stuff that I just happened to intercept with my microwave oven. Somebody had labeled one of the sealed folders, "Confidential. Secret. Classified. For Your Eyes Only. Clearance Required. Et Cetera. Et Cetera. For Sanity's Sake, Do Not Open." Of course, I had to open it. And what do you know, it was the rough draft of Mr. Gramm's speech to the convention. What a gold mine of wisdom!

Anyway, in the interest of fair, unbiased journalism, I have decided after no thought whatsoever to print the text

of the rogue speech in lieu of my column today. Certainly, this is a day I thought I'd never see. A scoop for The Battalion! Will wonders never cease?

Friends, neighbors, delegates and Dan Rather;

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much. Please, the standing ovation is too much. Please, thank you. Oh, roses. For me? Oh, thank you, thank you very much. Please, take your seats.

I come today bearing tidings of a pretty dang swell guy. (NOTE: It appears here that Mr. Gramm ran into some word choice problems. He had written "wonderful," "fantastic," "intelligent" and "god-like" but had crossed out all these choices, settling on "pretty dang swell.") And when I say "pretty dang swell," you know I mean it.

The man I speak of, the next President of the United States, (NOTE: In the margin are the scrawled words, "Lord help us") the man who has it all and knows it, Mr. George Bush.

What can you say about such a man? Well, the Democrats found plenty to say about him. And all of those nasty things were just that: nasty. Miss Richardson told the Democratic Convention that Mr. Bush was born with a silver spoon in

his mouth. HA! We all know that that is physically impossible. Miss Richards continued to lambast our great leader, calling him nasty names and throwing questions out about where he was during the slight arms to Iran error. Well, Miss Roberts, I'll tell you, it's really none of your business. He could have been in the bathroom for all you know. That's what this great country of ours is all about — making choices. George could have made that simple choice to skip the meeting that day and visit the men's room. Is that a sin? Oh, no, Miss Robinson, your accusations and vicious claims flounder hopelessly in the face of pure Republican reason.

And what's the business with what's-his-name, the Democrat's choice for a candidate? Kennedy, that's it. What's the deal with his picking Lloyd, a Texan, as his running mate? Well, since I'm from Texas and I know what's going on, I'll tell you. Mr. Kennedy from Massachusetts decided to pick Mr. Lloyd in order to rival George's claim of being a true Texan, which he certainly is. I can vouch for that. I know that some Democrats claim that George isn't a Texan because his home is a hotel room. Well, I'll tell you something. Some of my best friends live in hotel rooms. In fact, I've even read of people that live in mobile homes for gosh sakes. And on "Miami Vice" I've seen people

sleeping under freeway overpasses. All that going on and the Democrats squabble about a little hotel room. Posh!

But I cannot defend George Bush all day; there are too many false and ridiculous accusations flying around. I stand here to present the man the best I can. I stand here to tell you why George Bush is the greatest candidate we have. I stand here to praise a great man and hopefully score some major points with the voters so that I'll be president one day, too. (NOTE: The previous sentence was scratched out violently. In the margin it says, "just my little secret. He-he-he.")

George Bush, unlike his Democratic foe, Kennedy, is not a wimp. He'll put the Ruskies in their place, all right. I remember when George Bush was the Badminton champ of the Ivy League. And I mean, BAD-minton. If that doesn't show pure power, pure strength, pure resolve, then I don't know what does.

And then there's George Bush's experience. He wasn't invisible as vice-president. George Bush was a very active participant in government when he wasn't in the restroom. In fact, he is the finest ribbon-cutter that I have ever seen. And when he attends funerals of officials in other countries, well, I'll just

say that nobody can put on a show like George can.

Soft on crime like those Demos. Hardly! In fact, George Bush is so nosed and so conservative on crime... that... well, that he's really tough on crime, that's what he is. And he'll take the economy the same way, following the footsteps of our great mentor, old Reagan, father of our country.

(NOTE: Several paragraphs here unintelligible scribbles covered with fee stains. They didn't look that important, so I've deleted them from translation.)

Yes, my colleagues, George Bush is the choice for 1988. He is a man... who can... who can do so many different things all at the same time. He's a man who can kick some butt. Really, ask yourself what ever happened to Geraldine Ferrari. That's you get for messing with the Bushes.

So my friends, neighbors, delegates and especially you Dan, put your hands together for the one, the only, the publican's Republican, George Bush.

Thank you very much.

OK. That's it.

Mark Nair is a graduate student opinion page editor for The Battalion.

Telephone answering machines — not just a swell time anymore

You heard it here first. Answering machines are the root of all evil in American society. They have already created a clique (Thurston Howell III voice: "I'll just leave a message on your machine. Oh, you don't have one. When will you join the 20th century?"). And since they don't have answering machines in Iran, they are the basis for the hatred of our nation. ("The 'Great Satan' is too lazy to answer his own phone. KILL, KILL, KILL!!!")

Stephen Masters
Guest Columnist

Mistake number one — you listen to Thurston and Lovey. First you do years of research to find the best model available ("Look honey. Here's one for our car phone. Only \$3,000. It says here it will even park the car for us." "That's great dear. Now all we need is a car phone.") You search high and low reading all kinds of electronic magazines with companies that always seem to have three capital letters making up their name (IBM, AT&T, JNK, PAY, RIP, ETC.)

Then you look at the pictures. There are apparently two schools of thought in the answering machine industry. One school provides a machine as small as possible. Their ads usually say things like, "Need extra space? No problem. Our system is so small it fits right inside your phone! Just unscrew the receiver cover and put it right in." The picture is magnified 1000 times. Of course, tapes for this model cost somewhere in the neighborhood of a socket set bought by the Defense Department. And listening to your messages can be tough when you can't see the machine.

The other type of recorder provides every feature you could possibly want today and some that won't be fashionable until your children are very old. Since these models do so much, they are usually very large. One that I've seen

looks like the flight controls for the Concorde. You don't need a phone with this machine; it's so difficult to figure out, you never have time to call anyone anyway.

Once you've spent all this time and a month's pay on your new toy, it's time to make up a message. Now you could use the suggested message that usually goes something like this: "You have reached the residence of (INSERT YOUR NAME HERE) but I can't come to the phone right now. I'm sorry. Really, I am. But if you'll leave your name and number, the time you called, your sister's number, a brief message and three references other than relatives after the tone, then I'll call you back just as soon as I figure out how to listen to my messages."

The main problem is this. Half the reason you bought the dumb machine is after hearing all the neat-to-keen messages your friends have, your creative powers (just one step away from pure evil) told you you could make up a message just as witty and tricky. Making up a message sounds easy, but when the time comes, those once-friendly creative powers have suddenly left for the Bahamas and you're left with an empty answering machine message and no hope in sight. All you can do is sit with your mouth open and look stupid. (Lucky for you this isn't the 21st century with a picture phone.) See what you get for listening to those tricksters?

Finally you come up with an idea that you like, and you call all your friends and tell them that you just got an answering machine and they should call you. This is a serious mistake. If you really want people to call, NEVER TELL THEM THAT YOU WANT THEM TO CALL. This has the same effect as putting a sign on your door that says, "Plague victim inside — Please come in and share a meal." By asking your friends to call, you effectively guarantee that your phone will not ring for about two weeks.

Once this quarantine period is over, calls start to trickle in. The problem is

that people either hang up or don't give their name. It's your responsibility to guess who is talking before they end their message, kind of like a really bad game show ("Now Bob, for the new Yugo, the trip to Guam, and the year's supply of Rice-A-Roni, identify these 10 mystery callers." "But Jim, I don't know 10 people.") Don't laugh. (Okay, maybe a little.) Mark my words though. If it's available, Channel Three will pick it up and air it right after "Hollywood Squares." That would be an intellectual twin bill.

When you aren't guessing who is calling, it's because first they tell you who they are and then they provide their own unsolicited opinion about your message. Often this is not a positive response. Personally, I think they're just jealous.

By now you've had this piece of modern technology for about a month and all you have is bad game show fodder and insults about your creativity, which is relaxing on the beach of some uncharted Caribbean island. Perhaps it would be a better idea to get a roommate to answer the phone for you. At least you don't have to have to tell him what to say (most of the time).

Stephen Masters is a senior staff writer and wishful columnist for The Battalion who has the odd habit of muttering "honk, honk, clack, clack" to himself after a hard day's work.

Mail Call

The movie reviewer knows all

EDITOR:

Recently, Ian Dick pleaded fellow Christians to campaign against the showing of "The Last Temptation of Christ," directed by Martin Scorsese, and distributed by Universal Pictures. At the very least, his proposal implies that (1) we can judge things, ideas or people before we know or study them; (2) we must be protected from "evil" because we have no ability to think for ourselves and/or because our belief in Christianity is too tenuous to withstand a direct confrontation with heresy; and (3) the world can be made blissful by ignoring the "evil" products, i.e., let's focus on the effects and not the causes.

Dick concludes that the film is "evil" based on "all the information I have seen." Since he has not seen the movie, just what information is he talking about? Someone else's synopsis? Maybe from Bill Bright, national president of the Campus Crusade for Christ? Dick seems to react to the movie much like Bright: Invited to a July 12 screening of the film — along with many other religious leaders, Bright declined; without seeing it, he has tried to buy and destroy the film without it ever being distributed for release. At least Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart said, "I'll know it (pornography) when I see it." Some are so omniscient that they don't need any substantive evidence to judge.

In dealing with this "evil," Dick suggests that the film be banned: An "out-of-sight-out-of-mind" approach. This demonstrates a rather simplistic view of vice: It is not a problem of the individual but of things.

All of this points to an aversion to scrutiny. Why? The only reason I can think of is that there is a doubt in men's reason and beliefs: We are all "monkey see, monkey do." Either we lack sincerity in our beliefs or we cannot reason. But we do reason. We can believe. And we face the world with these abilities.

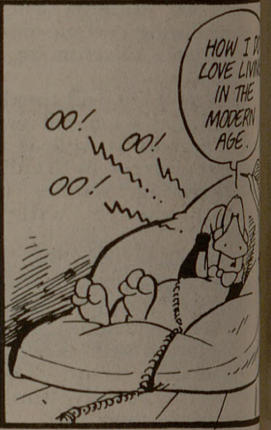
But obviously, some fear the abyss: "Battle not with the monster lest you become the monster." This fear, however, is that of individuals, not of all men. Personally, I refuse to be hobbled by someone else's fears. Adults are generally categorized as those who accept the responsibility of decision making.

Finally, several religious leaders did attend the screening, and many found it worthwhile, such as Rt. Rev. Paul Moore (Episcopal Bishop of New York) who, in a letter to the *NY Times*, wrote, "The movie affirms (the classic definition of Christ.)" Moore's letter proves nothing except the movie — like most things — is not so absolutely "evil" or "holy" that it can be judged without examination.

Gary Beason, grad student

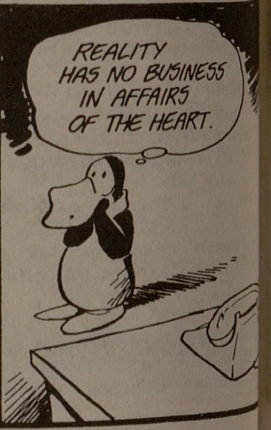
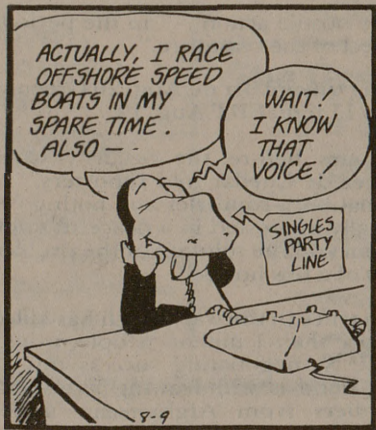
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BLOOM COUNTY



by Berke Breathed

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The Battalion

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