

# Cartoonist Profile: Kevin Thomas "Waldo"

By Keith Spera

Of The Battalion Staff

Remember the little geek who gets sent off to school in Van Halen's "Hot For Teacher" video? He became an inspiration to Kevin Thomas — an inspiration for him to draw, anyway. The kid in the video gave Thomas the idea for his character Waldo, who is the star of Thomas' cartoon of the same name. First gracing the pages of *The Battalion* in 1985, "Waldo" has grown over the years to encompass a

host of unusual characters. Thomas hopes that he can develop the characters and the strip as whole to the point that it is accepted by a newspaper syndicate and distributed nationally. Thomas said he considers drawing for *The Battalion* an invaluable learning experience, but he also says that it is not exactly a perfect situation. He believes that the paper should be distributed earlier in the day, which he thinks would make it possible for more students to read *The Battalion*. "People don't get into the groove of reading it," he said. "They think

of it like those tabloids things that are free. Only a small percentage of the students can read it on a regular basis." This, he says, takes away from the readership of "Waldo." "People can't follow it every day," Thomas said. "I do continuous stories. It's tough to expect people who want to read it to be able to actually follow it every day." For those who do read "Waldo" this semester, they will get to hear about campus topics through the eyes of Waldo and friends. A new plot twist will be the springboard for Thomas' discussions of campus life. "The basic plot is going to be that a robot is going to replace President Mobley," Thomas said. By putting a character in a position of power, Thomas said he can address a variety of issues directly. Probable topics include sports and, more specifically, football ticket distribution, the MSC oaks controversy (should they stay or should they go?) and graduate student health insurance.

Thomas is especially sensitive to the grad school issue. "I'm considering going to grad school (he has a bachelor's degree in computer science and is currently working for the architecture department), but I don't know how I'd make it," he said. Thomas said he tries to avoid be-

the University. They may not change the world, but they can make people notice things." As an example of a cartoon reaching "the right person," Thomas cited a cartoon he drew for the opinion page of *The Battalion*. In the cartoon, Thomas contrasted a jam-packed intramural weight room with

thrown out of the perimeter area at the bonfire site. Thomas did a "Waldo" cartoon that painted an unflattering portrait of the residents of Davis-Gary Hall by blaming them for the incident. "Apparently the guys who actually did it had switched helmets with the guys from Davis-Gary, so the Davis-Gary guys were upset that I made fun of them when they hadn't actually done anything," Thomas said. The presence of four cartoonists working for *The Battalion* has intrigued Thomas, as it has the other cartoonists. "There's going to be competition between us," Thomas said. "But if it's used in a positive way, it can push the envelope in certain ways and give you new ideas. Whatever it is that makes certain people enjoy "Waldo" is beyond the grasp of its creator. "There's a certain appeal to those who like it, but it's hard to put it in a word or phrase," Thomas said. "It's weird because whatever works, you just say, 'It works.'"

**"The right people do read the cartoons. In their own small way, cartoons can have a positive effect on the University.**

**— Kevin Thomas, Cartoonist**

## WALDO

### "WYLBUR LOSES HIS HEAD"

STARS IN...

I DON'T FEEL GOOD!  
OH, FOR CRYING OUT LOUD!  
SAY, YOU ARE SICK! YOU'VE GOT A FEVER!  
COUGH!

DR. GLADSTONE! COME QUICK! WYLBUR HAS A FEVER!

GOOD GOSH! WYLBUR HAS A COMPUTER VIRUS!

WHEEZE!

I'M AFRAID THERE ISN'T A CURE!  
WAIT! A GUY ON TV SAYS HE CAN CURE COMPUTER VIRUSES!  
MOAN!

HELLO? VIRUS-MAN? WE'VE GOT A SICK COMPUTER!  
I'LL BE RIGHT OVER!

CRASH!  
IT IS I, VIRUSMAN!

VIRUSMAN! CAN YOU FIX WYLBUR?  
HMM...  
HOW ABOUT FIXING THE HOLE IN THE WALL!

THIS WILL BE A TRICKY PROCEDURE, BUT DON'T WORRY! HE WON'T FEEL A THING!

KA-POW!

HE'S CURED! NO MORE VIRUS! I'LL SEND YOU A BILL! TA!

WYLBUR'S DEAD!  
THIS IS GREAT! I CAN MOVE INTO HIS ROOM NOW!

EVEN THOUGH IT SEEMED HOPELESS, DR. GLADSTONE AND WALDO SET THEMSELVES TO PUTTING WYLBUR BACK TOGETHER. IT WAS A SLOW AND PAINSTAKING TASK TO SCAVENGE FOR PARTS AND WIRE HIS BROKEN CIRCUITS, BUT IF THERE WAS A CHANCE TO SAVE THEIR FRIEND...

WELL...THE ONLY THING LEFT IS TO RE-LOAD WYLBUR'S SOFTWARE!  
I'LL GET THE COMPUTER TAPE!

NED!  
TAPE STORAGE  
MUNCH!  
MUNCH!

BAD LITTLE MUTANT! SERVES YOU RIGHT IF YOU'RE GETTING A TUMMY-ACHE!  
I GLUED THE REMAINING TAPE TOGETHER - I HOPE THIS WORKS!  
RBLX!

ZZT!

WYLBUR! HE'S BACK!

HEY! HIS HEAD! THAT'S MY TV SET!  
LOOK, DR. GLADSTONE! YOU GOT A BILL HERE FROM VIRUSMAN!

I DON'T FEEL GOOD!  
ME EITHER!  
OH, FOR CRYING OUT LOUD!  
FTP!

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