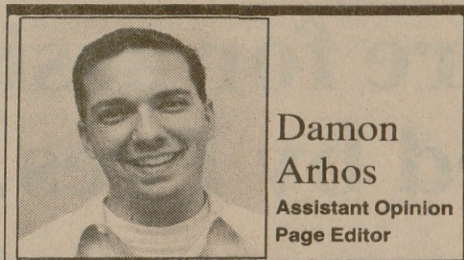


Caution, Texas voters: Watch out for slinging mud

Texas' gubernatorial voters need to put on their galoshes before they attempt to wade through the mud that's been slung around lately. And if the televised debates are any indication of the forthcoming campaign tactics, we in Texas are in store for an election fit for a pig.

The Democratic candidates, (Jim Mattox, Ann Richards and Mark White), started the slinging last Wednesday night in a televised debate from Houston's George R. Brown Convention Center. Jim Mattox, who has been trailing in the polls, swan dived into the fight. He negatively scrutinized White's record as governor from 1983-1987, and attacked Richards, the front-runner saying: "Ann, the unfortunate thing is ... too often you're listening for the applause and laughter rather than dealing with the real issues that face Texas."

The Mattox camp has had a field day with Richards' alleged gaffe: "I cannot arrive at any conclusion but that no legislator, no judge and no bureaucrat has any business in determining whether a white woman has an abortion or not." Mattox says that with this remark, Richards revealed her "white feminist fringe" mentality. (I don't know about her "white feminist fringe"



Damon Arhos
Assistant Opinion
Page Editor

mentality, but it sure has made for some interesting political cartoons. I'll bet of "silver-footed George" is just elated.)

Richards has a pretty good right arm herself. In the debates, Richards accused Mattox of lying in his TV advertisement by misrepresenting the stands of his opponents. In reference to the commercial, she stated: "You need to pull it down." And in a sarcastic response to Mattox's claims that both Richards and White are late supporters of a state-sanctioned lottery, Richards spouted: "Well I'm pro-lottery, how about you Mark?"

Mark White, second in the polls behind Richards, spent most of his time defending his record as governor. His quote: "Well, ... when you can't find anybody else to blame, just blame ol' Mark," seems to hit the spot with most Texan voters. And most of his mud, like Richards', was aimed at Mattox.

While Richards and White teamed up to stifle any Mattox initiative, the underdog GOP candidates did the same to Clayton Williams. Kent Hance, Tom Luce, Jack Rains and Williams, (like their Democratic counterparts), also debated on the stage of Houston's Brown Convention Center. (The GOP debate was last Thursday night.)

Most of the mud came from Hance and Luce and was directed at Williams' "history" of being a fistfighting, beer-drinking cowboy from West Texas. Hance played up this history by saying: "Mr. Williams is a funny guy ... but I have not been in a fistfight since I was 12 or 13 ... I will not get into a fistfight as governor."

And Williams' answer? "I decked (a drunken employee) and I'd do it again." (According to Williams, he struck the employee to prevent harm to other workers.)

Luce on the other hand attacked Williams' cowboy image: "I don't think we can ride horseback into the Space Age." Luce also seemed to mock Williams' intelligence when he said (of his proposals for state funding): "You need to go back to math."

Williams' response to many of these attacks was far from fistfighting. Touting a huge smile, Williams

defended his programs and reiterated his positions that have been airing in his multimillion-dollar television ad campaigns. He was definitely defending his position as the front-runner of the GOP candidates.

And Rains? Rains, a pro-choice Republican, approached the debates from a low-key angle. He stressed the importance of new leadership for Texas with a less-than-ferveat attitude. According to Rains, it's not only time for new leadership, but "It's time for serious leadership." His request for "new" and "serious" leadership seems only to sling mud into the face of Bill Clements.

And of course, both parties spoke negatively of the other, which, I suppose, is to be expected.

These debates conjure up images of the 1988 presidential campaigns in my mind. Each candidate digging up as much dirt (or should I say mud) as they can about the other, and then plastering it across the screen of every television in the United States. But with the impending gubernatorial races, we have only hit the tip of the iceberg.

So before we go any further, here is my advice:

1) Know how each of the candidates stand on the issues. This may not be a

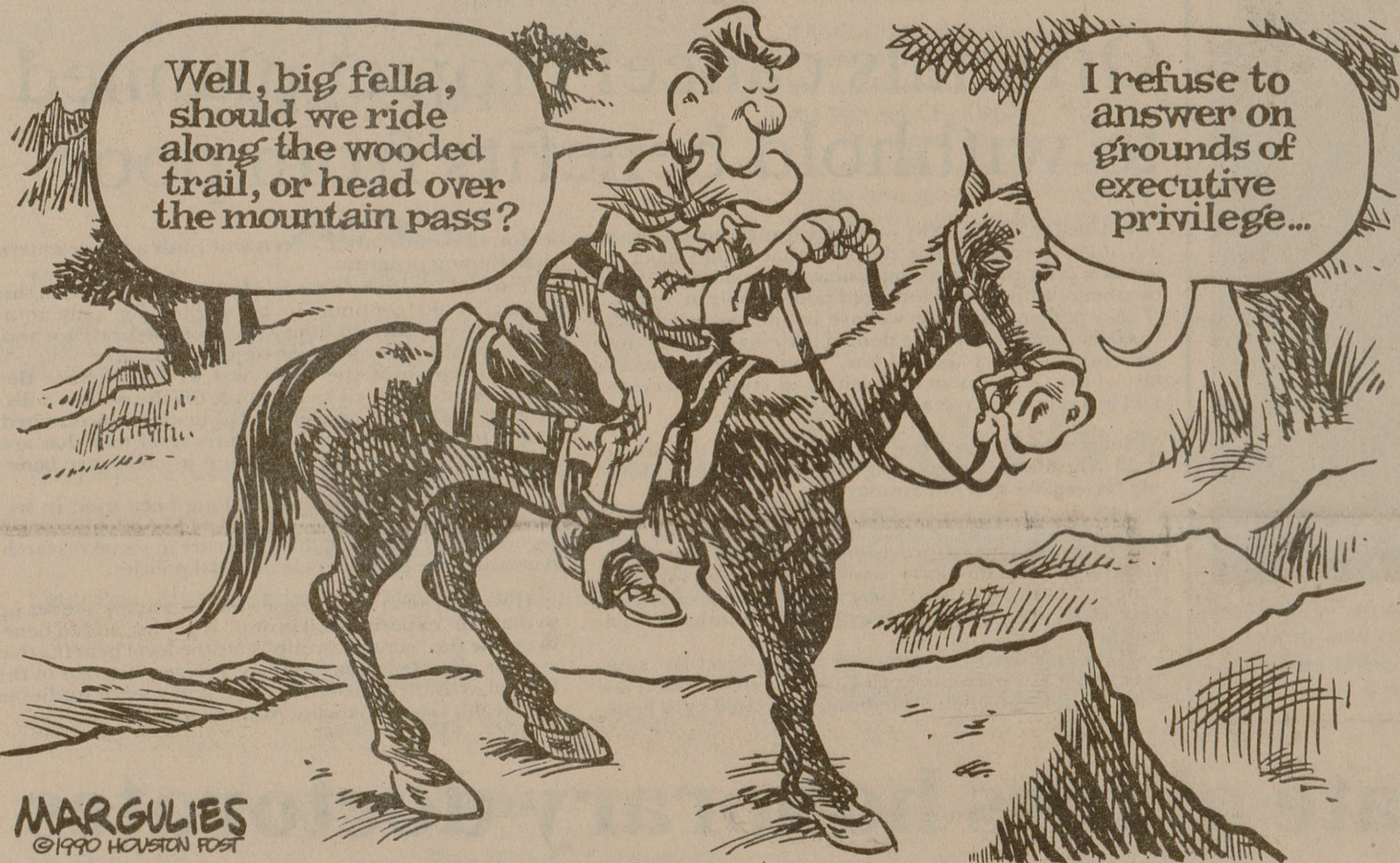
very easy task, but it is a very important one. Know the major issues that are facing our state and how every candidate would handle the important ones. Probably none of the candidates for governor will fit your "mold," but one may come close to the way you feel about abortion, the economy, the death penalty, the state lottery or any other issue.

2) Wade through all of the "mud" and find out the real truth about candidates. Just because one candidate makes a claim about another does not always mean that it is true. For instance, find out for yourself if you really believe Clayton Williams would "fistfight" if he was Texas' governor. Look at Ann Richards' character and record and decide for yourself if she has the "white feminist fringe" mentality that Hance says she does. See if the claims that political advertisements make are true.

3) Vote for candidates because you know how they stand on the issues. Don't settle for voting for a candidate because they are charismatic or because you like their name. Vote for their character and ability.

4) Vote. It is your right. Take advantage of it.

Damon Arhos is a senior journalism major.



Mail Call

Poor attendance not Metcalf's fault

EDITOR:

This letter is directed to all of the people who have written letters or columns blaming the lack of attendance at A&M basketball games on Coach Metcalf.

Pull your head of the sand! The poor attendance at the games is not the fault of Coach Metcalf, his staff, his recruits, or (and this is a good one) the fact that G. Rollie White is so old. It also will not miraculously improve now that Coach Metcalf has been fired. The problem with attendance lies with the student body. I admit that I have not gone to many games in my career here at Texas A&M, but by the same token I certainly do not go around complaining about the program and using one of the finest coaches around as a scapegoat for my lack of enthusiasm. What really amazes me is that when there were fewer students at this University, the attendance was higher than it is now. The fact that A&M has so many more students now would lead you to believe that attendance would increase. WRONG! I do not understand the apathy that has started to take over this campus. Where is the Aggie Spirit that we all used to possess? One final comment: When the athletic promotions department was given the task of promoting other athletic events (in particular basketball) like had been done with baseball, they did not say, "Find ways to improve Coach Metcalf." What they said was, "Find ways to improve the student attendance." So come on, Ags, support your team and do not blame others.

Troy L. Minaldi '89

Hit the deck and quit complaining

EDITOR:

Hit the Deck! I barked the command as I got very intimate with the moist soil of an exotic land. Distance and unfamiliarity were the rules of this rather strange geography. Suddenly I realized our dangerous situation. I kept my cool as rounds were zinging over our heads in what was not an "official action." The environment was disgusting, dirty, wet and steamy. My thoughts about A&M kept me going. I had no time for myself. I must look after my men. A&M — what a paradise. I called it the American Utopia. Everyone smiles and says "howdy." Ags, it is time to stop complaining. Stop complaining about the parking, the Aggie Band and the Corps runs. There is a lot more to life on campus than moaning. Live! Live your college days! A&M is a once-in-a-lifetime deal. Later you'll see incredible places and have wonderful adventures. A&M is unique. Perhaps we don't understand what our school stands for. We stand for education, brotherhood, leadership and service. Instead of complaining we should experience A&M in the most positive way possible. Sooner or later life will call on you to take a critical stand, to make hard choices and tough decisions. Ags, this is the time to learn how to be strong. Stop complaining and begin appreciating our unique environment. Perhaps we need chaos around us to realize what we had before.

Pete Muñoz-Dones '86

Have an opinion? Express it!

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer. All letters may be brought to 211 Reed McDonald, or sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111.

Daytime parking getting worse

I read with great enthusiasm and appreciation the letter written by the two graduate students, D.K. Mills and C.J. Bischoll, which appeared in the February 2 of The Battalion concerning the parking situation on campus at night. Unfortunately, their letter missed the essence of the real problem for many off-campus students — daytime parking on campus. During the past four years, the parking situation for off-campus students has rapidly deteriorated to its present all-time low of just two available lots.

It has become apparent that the administration would prefer off-campus students to commute to school on the shuttle bus; however, this is not a viable option for many students who, for instance, do not live on the shuttle bus route or who have educational activities or jobs off-campus.

While parking on campus is a problem for both undergraduate and graduate students who drive to school each day, the lack of campus parking

D.A. Krause
Reader's Opinion

puts graduate students in a particularly difficult situation.

Many graduate students, for instance, are relied upon to teach courses and perform duties integral to the valuable research that goes on at this institution. Fighting for parking places on campus impedes the timely performance of such duties.

As pointed out by Mills and Bischoll, if the administration really wants to improve graduate education, they need to start with parking. In consideration of the duties essential to the successful functioning of this university, it is nothing short of reasonable that they be allowed higher priority parking on campus.

To make the parking situation even

more frustrating, one need only drive past Lot 19 (random staff) each day, only to see that many parking spots sit empty. While allowing day students to use part of this lot would by no means significantly lessen the immense parking problem on campus, it would at least provide some additional campus parking. Allowing these parking spots to remain empty each day while day students fight for parking spots is a travesty.

In conclusion, it is high time that the administration do something to improve the plight of off-campus students who may need to park on campus. Paramount to this is a need for the administration to grant higher priority parking on campus to graduate students.

D.A. Krause graduate student in psychology.

Adventures In Cartooning

by Don Atkinson Jr.



The Battalion

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