

TV advertisements backfire, turn viewers off

Sunday's Super Bowl dramatically underscored a very long-held belief of mine.

Simply put, at least 90 percent of television commercials and billboards are so stupid that I am inclined to buy any product other than the one being promoted.

I must be the first to admit that my knowledge of advertising techniques is not substantial. My evaluation criteria are quite simple, namely — does the commercial incite any desire in me to purchase the product?

Somehow, probably about four years ago, someone convinced Anheuser-Busch they had an ad campaign that would take the nation by storm. The concept was Bud Bowl.

Unfortunately, I have watched and listened to the play by play of all three Bud Bowls. Gee, this last one certainly was a thriller. After being down by seven, Bud tied the game on a touchdown run by the Freezer. Bud Light, proud signees of top-draft pick Bud Dry, won on a last second touchdown with the band already on the field.

After seeing this, I firmly vowed not to touch another Budweiser as long as I live. What are these people thinking? The Superbowl traditionally carries with it the most expensive commercial air time of the year. Anheuser-Busch poured millions of dollars into what might amount to being the most stupid thing I have ever seen.

Maybe we should all buy Bud Light. After all, they won the Bud Bowl. With a little luck, next year King Cobra will win the malt division and dethrone Bud Light.

At any rate, Budweiser is not alone in inept commercials.

Virtually every large American beer manufacturer employs another sly trick to push their product. They seem to think that buxom, bikini-clad gals will help their business. This is absolutely untrue.



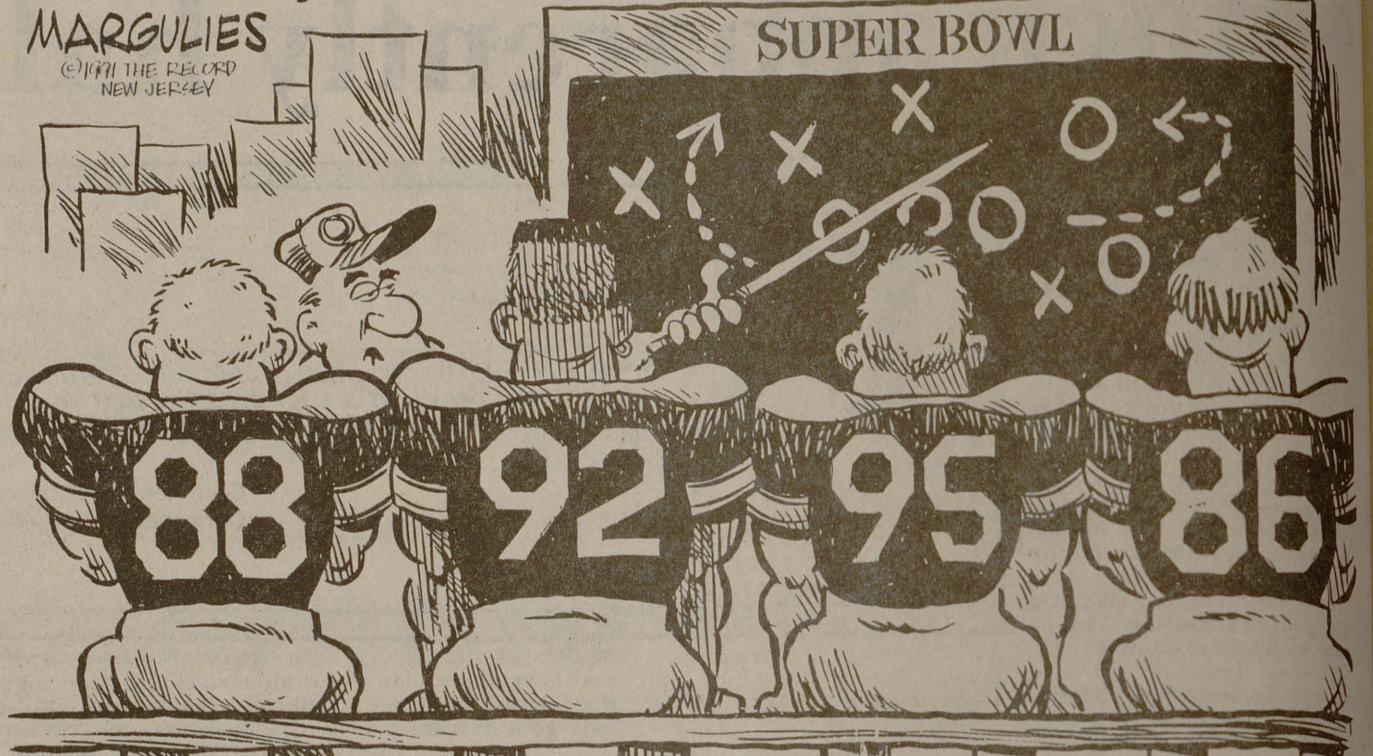
Matt McBurnett
Columnist

First of all, with those commercials and billboards, the actual product goes virtually unnoticed by men. Second, most women probably are offended by these ridiculous displays. Third, we all know that if we buy as much of their beer as they want us to, we certainly cannot have bodies that either look like or that can attract those depicted in their advertisements.

While on the subject of sex in advertising, Camel cigarettes apparently has decided that the phallus is trendy. I always have been skeptical about the phallic symbols which supposedly abound in advertising, but Camel is quite blatant with theirs. I hate to say it but the new animated Camel, the "Smooth Character," has facial features closely resembling the male genitalia. Does that not make you want to pick up a carton or two?

Moronic commercials are certainly not limited to the vices. Levi's has proven that with its Dockers commercials, which tend to perplex more than promote.

Asinine advertising is nothing new. We all remember Madge soaking in the Palmolive for about four years without noticing. How about the Chock Full O' Nuts ads with the dancing coffee can? But back then the bad commercials were mixed in with a few good ones. I personally loved it when Mean Joe Green flung his jersey along with "Hey kid, catch!" to some youngster who had the envy of most boys my age. These days, we are bogged down with stupid commercial after stupid commercial, stupid magazine advertisements and stupid billboards.



"Run 10 yards to the Coca-Cola banner... pivot around towards the Pepsi billboard... fake left at the McDonald's arches... the quarterback will hit you directly below the Goodyear blimp..."

I have some fun with advertisements on occasion, especially the ones targeting dumb people. Take the Sure card. For \$20 you can have instant credit and can buy any of a host of fabulous items. Too bad you have to buy them from the Sure card people out of a Sure magazine. I do not foresee the day when my favorite eating establishments carry the Sure sticker on their door alongside Visa and the rest.

Latenight television more than carries its share of knuckle-headed

commercials. Sadly, the late 1980s ushered in an era of 30-minute advertisements disguised as television programs. Come on guys, you aren't fooling anyone.

We cannot place the blame for our advertising dilemma solely on the advertising agents. Often, the products are to blame. I am glad I did not have to pen the commercials glorifying the Ginsu knives or any of the Boxcar Willie-type singers, each of whom has sold 25 million records worldwide but no one has heard of them. I really feel

sorry for the poor soul who was stuck with coming up with a commercial for Popeet, those wondrous space-saving devices that resemble a collapsible cup collection.

I must close now. Bud Bowl IV tickets go on sale in three minutes. Judy said if I act quickly, I can get, along with my tickets, the new sneaker phone absolutely free. Maybe she will throw in some genuine faux pearls and a Scandinavian snowball ring! *Matt McBurnett is a senior electrical engineering major.*

Silent majority Minority opinions yell louder

I have been pleased with and relieved by the opinion page for the past few days.

Being a strong believer in the First Amendment, I try not only to tolerate other extreme opinions, but I read and listen to them.

These opinions may not change my views, but they give me a chance to understand those with whom I disagree.

Unfortunately, over the past few semesters, there has been an incredible amount of extreme opinions.

There has even been an argument that such an opinion page is not fit to be at Texas A&M if its views are so

Kevin Lindstrom
Reader's Opinion

different from the general populace. This position is invalid because anyone can write in.

The "majority opinion" isn't absent from the opinion page because of some evil plot to brainwash students at A&M, but because very few people who hold "majority opinions" actually write in.

On the other hand, it is frustrating to see one side of life being portrayed

again and again with little argument from the other side.

Lately, though, there has been a flood of "majority opinions." The support written in for President Bush and the coalition troops is overwhelming.

There have been a couple dirty shots at "liberal yellow journalism" which I think is not only unnecessary, but untrue.

On the whole, though, there have been intelligent, calm and honest arguments showing support for the decisions made.

I would like to make three simple observations:

The time to sing "give peace a chance" was back in August, September, October, November and December.

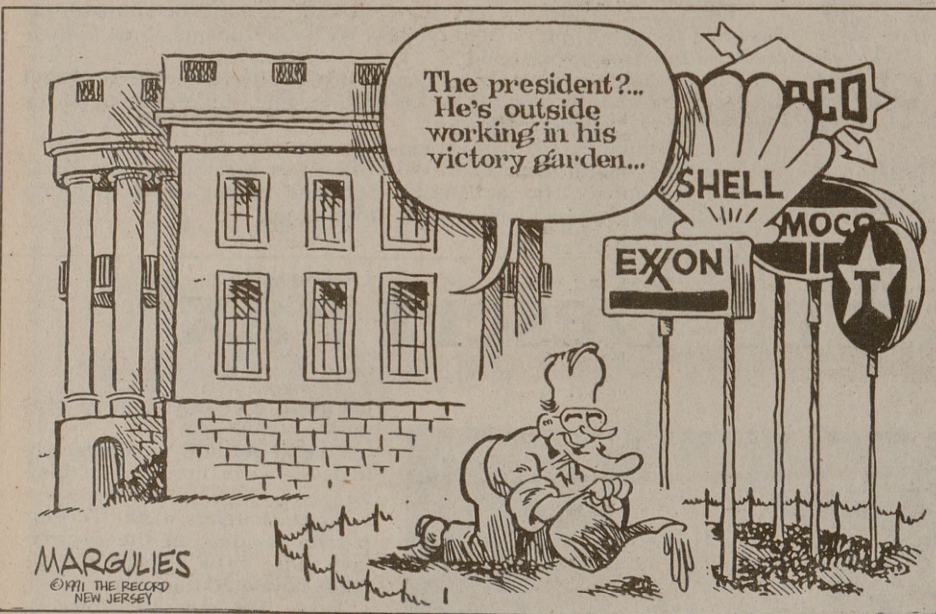
I found it ironic the protests only started in earnest after the Persian Gulf War began, as if they thought that Bush hadn't done his job.

Why didn't you express your opinion when it could have made a difference? Do you honestly think the coalition will stop bombing Iraq because some Americans kept a federal building in San Francisco from opening?

No matter how loud you express your opinion, a vocal minority is still, by definition, a minority opinion.

And finally, it is good to see that the Silent Majority has become silent no longer...

Kevin Lindstrom is a sophomore general studies major.



MAIL CALL

The Battalion is interested in hearing from its readers and welcomes all letters to the editor. Please include name, classification, address and phone number on all letters. The editor reserves the right to edit letters for style and length. Because of limited space, shorter letters have a better chance of appearing. There is, however, no guarantee letters will appear. Letters may be brought to 216 Reed McDonald or sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111.

Reverse discrimination offers no solution

EDITOR:
I would like to say a few words about Larry Cox's column from Jan. 24. If you did not see the column, I suggest you try to find a copy. It was about censorship laws at various universities that were intended to protect women, homosexuals and minorities.

First of all, I agree with what he said. I have no problems with laws protecting Asians or Hispanics or whomever. I realize these laws are necessary. I also agree we should try not to offend anyone. That goes for white men, too — not just minorities or women. I agree that discrimination is wrong, but people are taking it too far. "Reverse discrimination" is not a solution to this problem. We cannot ban the writing of a man or woman because someone does not like his/her opinions. And I would be willing to bet the liberals pushing these censorship laws would be the first to start screaming if I wanted to censor the NAACP. Yes, we need to eliminate discrimination, but that goes for discrimination against anyone, not just minorities.
Robert Worsham '94

Clean up 'the itch'

EDITOR:
I am in full agreement with a letter in the Jan. 24 edition of The Battalion regarding "the itch" by Nito. It is sad that this warped, inconsiderate sense of humor has been allowed to be published in of all places a university newspaper. I am not a prude and enjoy a good laugh also, but find nothing funny in the reality of his ideas. The Jan. 24 copy was not any better.
I appeal to you as someone who loves Texas A&M University, am proud to be a part of Texas A&M and who did enjoy reading your paper until now. I would even venture to forsee a drop in readers and respect for The Battalion if this person's sick, demented, twisted sense of humor is allowed to continue.
Jan Spears

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the itch by Nito

