

OPINION

By David Broder

Nomination won't be dull for the GOPs

The timing could not have been more perfect if it had been planned. Entering the presidential race, from one side of the stage, Gov. George W. Bush of Texas, the embodiment of the Republican Establishment. Crashing in from the other, Patrick J. Buchanan, the scourge of the self-same Establishment. That Bush announced his presidential exploratory committee in Austin on the same day Buchanan was declaring his candidacy in Manchester, N.H., assured that this coming nomination struggle will be anything but dull.

Buchanan didn't beat George W. Bush in the New Hampshire primary in 1992 or anywhere else. But by winning 37 percent of the votes in the leadoff primary, compared to Bush's 53 percent, he exposed the incumbent's vulnerability on economic issues in a way that Bill Clinton and Ross Perot were both able to exploit in November.

The key for Buchanan in his first race was combining the votes of two disparate groups of discontents: social-issue activists, especially anti-abortion folks, and working-class voters battered by the severe recession then plaguing all of New England.

Governor Bush was an unhappy spectator in 1992, when he was riding herd on his father's campaign as an untitled adviser. Next to Perot, Buchanan may be No. 1 on his personal list of "people we don't invite to dinner."

But ostracism does not faze Buchanan. He was back in 1996, in far better economic times, with a message broadened to include bashing imports, immigrants and foreign military commitments. He summed it up in the historically freighted words "America First." This time, he won New Hampshire, exposing Bob Dole as the fragile candidate he proved to be against Clinton.

They are an interesting contrast, Bush and Buchanan. Both grew up in privileged circumstances, private schools and all the rest; both had rebellious youths; and both have made lots of money on their own.

Buchanan was genuinely affected by the stories he heard in 1992 from New Hampshire families struggling with the threat and reality of layoffs and worried about keeping their homes and health care during the last recession. Bush, as a Texas candidate, has spent more time in the Mexican-American and African-American communities than ever before in his life and has absorbed the intensity of the struggle of those families to make better futures for their children.

The prospective rivals have very different policy views. Buchanan would build a fence along the border with Mexico; Bush embraces ever-closer ties with the nation to our south. Bush favors open trade; Buchanan is proudly protectionist. Buchanan is a litmus-test Republican when it comes to abortion. Bush is pro-life, but clearly of the "big tent" school which wants to welcome pro-choice Republicans.

Bush has been embraced by many of the big names in the GOP, notably his fellow-governors. Buchanan is anathema to them; they rallied behind the politically wounded Dole in 1996, in large part because they thought Buchanan spelled disaster for the party if he were to become the nominee.

The Bush-Buchanan dichotomy is so perfect, in fact, that it poses a serious problem for the other eight to 10 people who will make up the likely Republican field. Some, like Steve Forbes, can finance their own campaign. Others, like Lamar Alexander and perhaps Dan Quayle, have already established networks of supporters. Elizabeth Dole likely has the potential to mobilize many women, not all of them Republican activists.

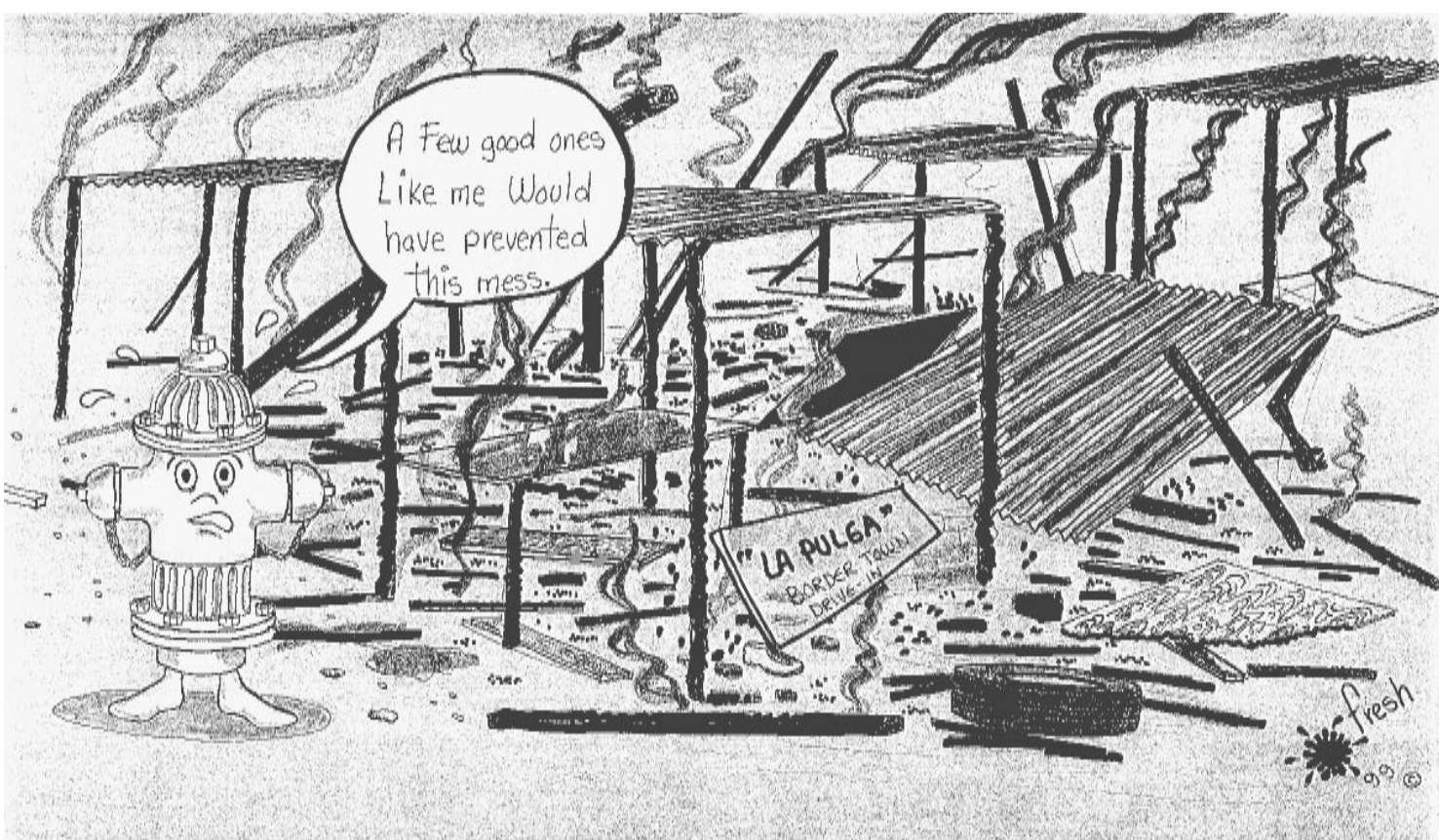
But even if there were enough money and workers for all of them—and for such other candidates as Sens. John McCain and Bob Smith, Rep. John Kasich and conservative activists Gary Bauer and Alan Keyes—there is a finite amount of press and television coverage available.

Elizabeth Dole commands considerable media attention, because of her name, her renown and her gender. But the potential of a second Bush-Buchanan brawl would be so tempting that the other campaigns would have to be inventive to lure reporters and cameras to the sites of their events.

Bush-Buchanan Round Two in New Hampshire. It doesn't get any better than that.

(David Broder is a columnist for the

Money talks



By Odie Arambula

Monday Wash: Debate rages over bridge use

It'll be months from now before the first vehicle crosses the fourth international span, but people already are anticipating problems.

The problem may have to do with vehicles, inspections, logistics and the rest, but the real problem won't have a thing to do with these elements. The problem will be with people.

This silly notion surfaced during a Laredo delegation visit with Washington, D.C., officials last week. The presidential permit on the new bridge under construction mandates that the span be dedicated to truck traffic. Isn't that what we've been told from day one: The plan is to move all truck traffic from the downtown area, which means the Juarez-Lincoln International Bridge and Gateway to the Americas International Bridge. Wanna bet?

PEOPLE CALLING ON Washington asked about passenger cars like the ones generally driven by U.S. and Mexican tourists traveling into the interior of each country. Someone at this DC meeting was actually quoted as saying that, if a car got on the bridge, it would have to be sent back. Wanna bet?

That international span at an upriver location northwest of downtown Laredo is shaping into another state of the art facility, judging from what the schematics on both sides. The transportation infrastructure on the U.S. side details overpasses and underpasses to access I-35 and major thoroughfares. On the Tamaulipas side, we'll have to wait and see months down the road. Perhaps we'll see better and quicker results on the Mexican side than has been the case with infrastructure on the other side of Colombia Solidarity.

Laredo interests want the regulatory people to consider expanding the role of the new bridge. It's in the talking stages, but we suspect that in time the dialogue will turn to an official request and, finally, the demands.

The international trade community on both sides has been down that road before with Juarez-Lincoln and Colombia Solidarity. The diplomatic requests and demands at different times have been confrontational.

DURING THE TALKS IN Washington, the Laredo representatives proposed a designated lane for customs broker and freight forwarder traffic. Presumably, those international trade personnel having to travel back and forth for would use the lane.

Time will tell where all of this will take government and the business interests on both sides. Unquestionably, government regulatory officials and business interests on both sides refined the art of negotiation during countless meetings in the offices of the port director at

Juarez-Lincoln.

More recently, a group of Laredo and Nuevo Laredo international trade people voiced their concerns to the U.S. ambassador at a Laredo dinner meeting.

On the item of tourists making the wrong turn and ending on bridge number four, someone actually suggested that tourists merely be directed to another bridge.

City Manager Florencio Peña, nevertheless, is optimistic that in time, the new span would be open to all traffic. He's absolutely right. With rising traffic to and from Mexico, passenger car traffic would have to be diverted to other crossings. U.S. Customs wants the request in writing.

ANOTHER KEY ISSUE completely out of U.S. control is how the Mexican interests will manage and promote the upriver spans. One is in Tamaulipas (No. 4), and the other is in Nuevo Leon (Colombia Solidarity). Truck crossings at Colombia continue to outnumber the crossings at Juarez-Lincoln.

The Laredo delegation dropped an earful on Washington on the need for additional funding for infrastructure to improve the border trade corridor. At the top of the list was highway construction and maintenance, technology to maximize traffic control and border crossings. Focus was put on FM 1472 (Mines Road) and a weigh-in-motion system to expedite truck traffic on the bridges. They also lobbied for that much debated river road to help ease downtown traffic congestion while helping to better monitor the river.

The Laredo group surely can't ignore the message from U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison: "I think you (Laredo) are going to be the major beneficiary of the added highway funds, which you deserve."

Again, it remains to be seen if the executives and engineers be at TxDOT will hold the Hutchison statement to heart.

WITH PASSING TIME, Mexican lawmakers continue looking for ways to generate revenue. It's getting to the point that the Distrito Federal (DF) legislators realize that there's so much they can expect to extract from fees, taxation and operations. In addition, municipalities and states where these revenues are generated are asking that more of the collections be retained at the local levels instead of sending all the money to Mexico City.

In more recent days, Mexican Congress has been hearing presidential proposals to privatize the power commission (Comision Federal de Electricidad). A combination of subsidy and waste continues to pose super red figures for the national budget.

With that in mind, the lawmakers are seriously looking at laws to legalize and regulate gambling casinos. Casinos are outlawed in Mexico, but gambling is legal at some horse and

greyhound tracks.

The government also operates a national lottery.

MEXICO'S RULING PARTY, the PRI, outlined the casino proposal last week. The idea, according to a legislative spokesman, is to generate revenues and create new jobs. Two congressional committees are looking at the proposal before Congress convenes March 15.

It's just a proposal, but Nuevo Laredo residents first would like to see tougher teeth on liquor control and gun control measures. A municipal magistrate confided that there are an estimated 2,500 liquor licenses displayed on walls across town. He says that half of them are delinquent and illegal, or both. "They have not paid the required permit fees and others are frauds because they have been expired for years or were issued without legal authority."

Casinos have been an item of discussion among Nuevo Laredo business interests in the past. A group of Nuevo Laredo businessmen lobbied for the proposition last year, but the idea didn't seem to attract many movers and shakers. It did give rise to the operation of bingo halls with very little fanfare. Some sectors of the Nuevo Laredo community, nevertheless, have openly opposed casinos in the Sister City. At one point, a Las Vegas, Nevada, group called on local interests and detailed plans for a casino.

FIVE LOCAL BARRISTERS are among the 4,100 members of the College of the State Bar of Texas to be recognized recently in Austin.

According to Bettie Saunders of the College of the State Bar, the honorees represent less than 8 percent of the 63,500 lawyers licensed to practice law in Texas. The Laredo honorees are Isirdo R. Alaniz, Joseph M. Dickinson, Charles B. Dickinson Jr., Kenna Giffin and Juan Francisco Hernandez.

The College of the State Bar was created in 1982 by the Supreme Court of Texas to recognize State Bar members who voluntarily attain an extraordinary number of continuing legal education credits each year. To make the roll, attorneys must complete 80 hours of continuing legal education within a three-year period or 45 hours during the current year.

Saunders said that to maintain said status in the College, an attorney must do at least 30 hours of continuing legal education, twice the number of hours required of all lawyers in Texas.

(Odie Arambula is editor of the Laredo Morning Times. Dial 728-2561. You can e-mail odie@lmtonline.com Visit the Laredo Morning Times online services on the World Wide Web.)

By Jack Anderson

Anti-drug drive beneficial to PR firms

It seems fitting in today's political climate that one of the most high-profile administration initiatives in recent years will primarily benefit an industry that's hardly in need of government help: Spin-control.

Last month, despite advice from a growing body of experts to just say no, the Office of National Drug Control Policy launched a \$1 billion advertising and public-relations campaign — the most expensive crusade in government history to curb teenage drug abuse.

The linchpin of this campaign will be a series of prime-time TV ads, and the government will provide an estimated \$175 million in matching funds to the print and broadcast media that run them. "There is every reason to believe that this absolutely will turn around drug abuse by youngsters," boasted retired Gen. Barry McCaffrey, who heads the ONDCP.

The federal government is not the only one using the airwaves to spread the anti-drug message. In 1996, The Partnership for a Drug-Free America, a private sector group, consumed \$265 million worth of donated broadcast time and print space.

McCaffrey's campaign comes near the end of a decade that saw teen-age drug experimentation skyrocket before leveling off in 1997. Federal drug-abuse data show that between 1991 and 1996, first-time use more than doubled for marijuana, quadrupled for heroin, nearly tripled for cocaine and crack and more than doubled for hallucinogens and inhalants.

But so far the main beneficiaries of the media blitz have been the firms overseeing the project. In the first year of the campaign, two public-relations firms, Porter Novelli and Fleishman-Hillard, have taken in \$10 million, and one ad agency, Ogilvy & Mather, has collected nearly \$130 million.

Fleishman-Hillard expects to collect \$50 million out the campaign, but ONDCP officials declined to confirm the figure.

What's good for the spinners may not do much to help the kids, unfortunately. Social marketing — or using mainstream marketing techniques to sell societal change — is a relatively new advertising technique. While proponents cite a number of public health victories in developing countries, such as a 32-fold increase in condom use in India, social marketing has been noticeably unsuccessful in the United States. Despite a decade of anti-smoking propaganda, for example, more than 4,000 American teens take up smoking every day.

Many of the foot soldiers in the war on drugs are dismissing the ad campaign as a feel-good way for politicians to look like they're doing something about a problem that nobody's really sure how to solve. And while teens are getting lectured by their televisions, the hard-core addicts who need help the most are having a harder time getting treatment.

In less than a decade, Marti Potter, administrative team leader of the Pathways drug and alcohol treatment program in Maryland, has seen the average stay for an adult in her inpatient drug treatment program shrink from 28 days to seven.

"The admission criteria handed down by the HMOs make accessing appropriate levels of care extremely difficult," Potter told our associate Ashley Baker.

Potter's program remains one of the lucky ones, however. At least they're still in business. As funding for the "war on drugs" continues to rise, hundreds of drug and alcohol prevention and rehab programs are shriveling or dying.

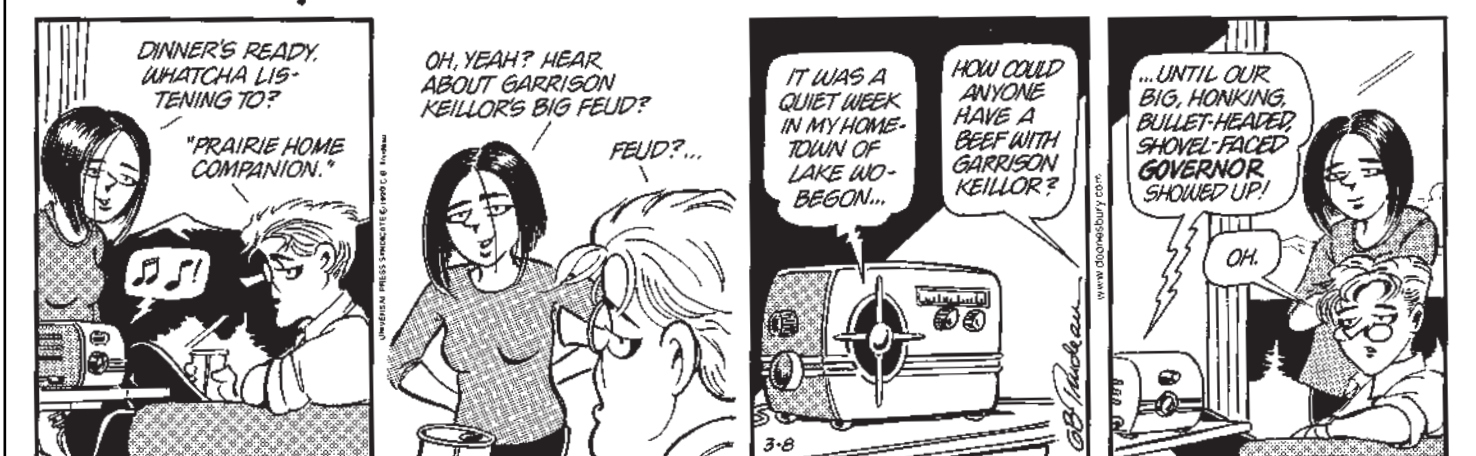
"I don't believe the ad campaigns are effective," said Harvey Oaklander, a clinical psychologist for the Drug Abuse Treatment Center in Arlington, Va. Oaklander has been treating drug addicts since the late 1970s, when penalties for possession and use were far less stringent than today. "The more they make (drugs) forbidden, the more tempting it is. The most effective way (to curb use) is to give community support to families under stress. Kids should have a parent there when they come home," Oaklander says.

Not everyone in the PR industry is optimistic about the campaign either.

"The fact that it's a negative message doesn't stop the desire to investigate," said Pat Jackson, editor of PR Reporter, a public-relations trade publication. "Communication merely puts the ideas or products in people's mind. You need to go one-on-one with the potential drug user, you need parents, you need community."

(Jack Anderson and Jan Moller are columnists for United Feature Syndicate, Inc.)

Doonesbury



BY GARRY TRUDEAU

(David Broder is a columnist for the