

# Bentsen out-debates Republican opponent

An Associated Press panel of veteran debate judges and an instant ABC news poll have determined Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, the democratic nominee for vice president, as the winner of Wednesday night's vice presidential debate.

We concur.

The debate, held in the Civic Auditorium in Omaha, Neb., was strongly partisan, with republicans voicing a victory for Dan Quayle, the republican nominee for vice president, and democrats praising Bentsen's performance.

And truthfully, the debate appeared to be a draw until Quayle had the audacity to compare himself to the late John F. Kennedy. When Bentsen retorted, "Senator, you're no Jack Kennedy," Quayle was visibly shaken, and his strength dwindled from there.

Quayle also spent a majority of his time attacking the democratic party and presidential nominee Michael Dukakis, while ignoring the questions asked of him by the panel.

Bentsen, however, stuck closer to the debate format and only failed to answer questions when his opportunity to speak allowed him to refer back to Quayle's personal attacks.

Quayle's crowning blow was a self-inflicted one. He failed to answer the question about assuming the presidency three times, before panelist and NBC anchor Tom Brokaw pointed it out to him.

But again, Quayle said he would pray and assemble the president's men for a meeting. Quayle does not appear to have a keen grasp of the obvious.

The AP panel of six judges unanimously found Bentsen the winner. The ABC news poll showed Bentsen as the victor by 51 percent to Quayle's 27 percent.

The debate also swayed some undecided votes over to the Democratic ticket, according to the polls. Before the debate, 50 percent favored George Bush, the republican presidential nominee and 45 percent picked democrat After the debate, Bush maintained the same figure, while Dukakis received 48 percent.

Apparently, Quayle was wrong about the one point he adamantly drove home (in fact, he was beating a dead horse) — age, or rather maturity, does indeed matter when selecting the next president and vice president of the United States.

True, the Republican party won't need to clean up any damage Quayle might have done to the race, but Quayle was undoubtedly out-debated.

## Format needs adjustments to further understanding

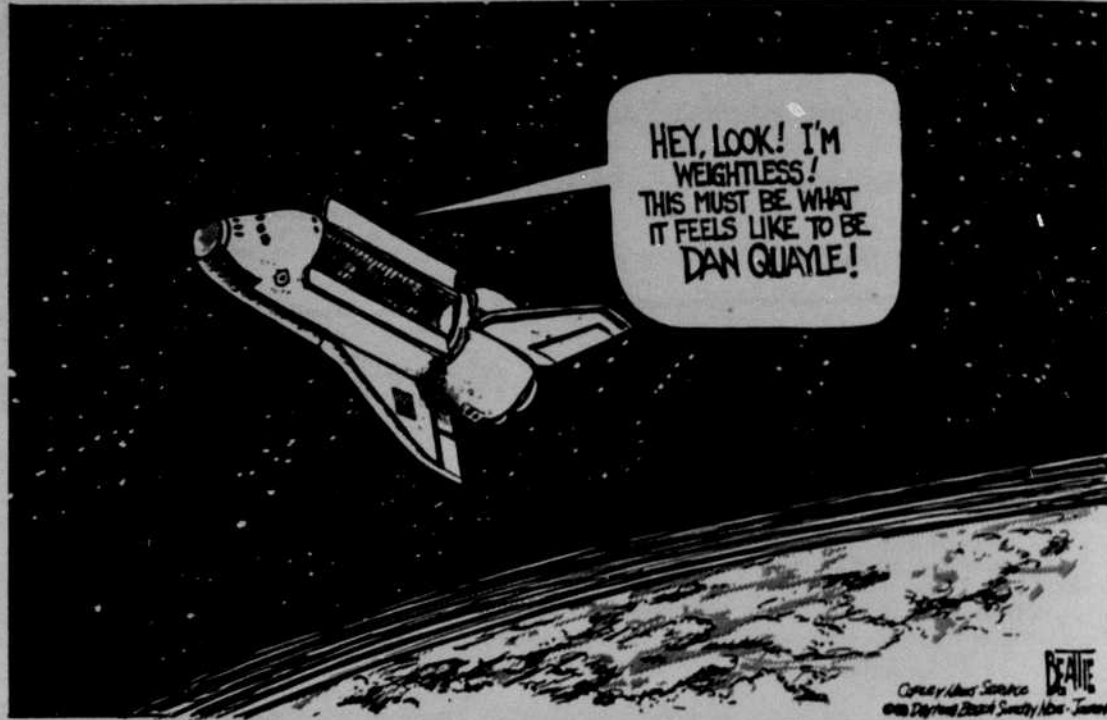
The format of both the presidential and vice presidential debates may be good for "sound bites" — those little snippets like "You're no Jack Kennedy" that make their way onto the evening news — but it does little to educate voters about the candidates and needs to be changed.

The National League of Women Voters pulled out of their traditional sponsorship role for the final George Bush-Michael Dukakis debate, and with good reason. The GOP set the ground rules for the debate and left little room for negotiation. The league pulled out because it claimed, rightfully so, that the approved format for the encounters was not a debate at all.

These are not debates, they are photo opportunities without risks or clearcut winners. The loser, however, is unmistakable. It is the voting public. With two minutes to respond to questions and one minute to rebut, the candidates are not given sufficient time to explain policy, philosophy or agenda. These are the Headline News debates, around the world in 30 minutes, once over lightly.

In a campaign bereft of substance, voters are hungry for information. The format under which the candidates have squared off avoids that like the plague. Instead we get one-liners and quips; it is as if the candidates capsulized nine months worth of "quotes of the day," and regurgitated them as the definitive word on the issues.

As voters, we deserve much more. Unfortunately, we aren't likely to get it. Keeping that in mind, viewers should temper their expectations. Those who are undecided would be better served spending the 90 minutes reading old issues of the New York Times than sitting through another sham of a debate — if Bush and Dukakis can find a shamus to play host to the fiasco. Better yet, they should revamp the format and allow adequate time for the candidates to answer questions and offer rebuttals.



## Letters

### Initiative

The Daily Emerald showed initiative in seeking out a retired professor, Bayard McConnaughey, for an article on his recent trip to Nicaragua.

There are those who considered Bayard an eccentric for his annual crusade against the ROTC during his teaching days.

But he is an intelligent and caring person. Those qualities are reflected not only in the issues he raised on campus, but also in the risks he and Ms. McConnaughey were willing to take by visiting Nicaragua to bring us perspectives of value.

George Beres  
Eugene

### Cooperation

In response to your editorial "Shakeup Bodes Well for Soviet Economy," (ODE, 10/6) I believe that a flaw in your argument needs to be pointed out.

In your piece, your main thesis stated that General Secretary Gorbachev has "forgotten...that cooperative relations among his colleagues and a belief in the work ethic would do more for the economy than the removal of a few bureaucrats."

It should be pointed out, however, that Gorbachev has been the initiator of the economic policies that he hopes will stimulate the economy. If his conservative rivals are do-

ing all they can to retard his effort, I congratulate Gorbachev on this bold move to introduce new blood into the Soviet hierarchy. In hopes that his new colleagues will work with more cooperation in order to accelerate the growth process, Gorbachev has shown that he is willing to go to any lengths for his countrymen's gain.

I believe that Gorbachev is a leader who intends to introduce new forms of domestic and foreign policy that will benefit not only the Soviet economy, but that will promote cooperation and good will with nations around the world.

Justin McKenna  
Political science

### Worthless

Kevin Allen's commentary on "The Last Temptation of Christ" is worthless to any intelligent debate about the film, and I am genuinely embarrassed for both him and the Emerald for publishing it.

Tell me Kevin, do you also write personality profiles about people you have never met? Ever covered a football game you didn't see? You've set a new standard in journalism that we can all look down to, Kevin. I hope your fellow reporters on the Emerald staff do not follow your lead.

David Bates  
Senior, journalism

### Letters Policy

The Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community. Comments must be factually accurate and refrain from personal attacks on the character of others.

Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.

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