



# VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION  
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

WEDNESDAY  
JANUARY 31, 1979



# TOP OF THE NEWS STATE

## Trial set for UT assault case

A University of Texas fraternity member and two pledges accused of the sexual assault of another student will go on trial Feb. 12. The three, all associated with Alpha Tau Omega fraternity, were indicted in October on charges of aggravated assault, which carries a sentence of 2-10 years in prison. The three are fraternity member Ron Alan Wilson, 19, and pledges James Patrick Henson, 19, and Robert Taylor Herrin III, 18. The charges stem from an Aug. 31, 1978, attack on a freshman student who was walking to his room on pledge night for the fraternity. The victim told police he and his roommate were grabbed by two men and dragged to nearby bushes, then were taken to a garage where they were stripped, robbed and subjected to a sexual attack. The victim later withdrew from school and has filed a \$1.1 million damage suit against the fraternity and the three men accused in the attack.

## Bill to help counties save money

Sen. Roy Blake, D-Nacogdoches, Tuesday introduced a bill allowing counties, at their option, to purchase supplies through the State Board of Control. Blake said the legislation would allow county officials to protect some of their dwindling financial assets. Under the bill, counties would be required each year to submit to the Board of Control a resolution adopted by the commissioner's court requesting participation in the program. Counties would be required to purchase through the board contracts except in cases of emergency and would be responsible for direct payment to the vendor. "Many counties in Texas are suffering from a weak tax base that may be further weakened by enabling legislation of the property tax relief amendment, and this is one area in which they could receive some real help," Blake said.

# NATION

## Judge says 'no' to death penalty

A state judge has declared Illinois' new death penalty law unconstitutional, possibly preventing authorities from seeking the death penalty for suspected mass sex killer John Wayne Gacy. The Monday ruling by Cook County Circuit Court Judge William Cousins Jr. will not bind other judges in the state, though, unless it is upheld on appeal. A spokesman for State's Attorney Bernard Carey said the decision will be appealed. Gacy, who confessed to the sex killings of 33 boys and young men, has been formally charged with seven killings. Cousins' ruling is upheld it could prevent Carey from seeking the death penalty for Gacy. Cousins' ruling came when the state attorney's office asked that Ronald Brown, 19, convicted Dec. 22 of murder, aggravated kidnapping and armed robbery, be sentenced to death. The judge said the law is unconstitutional because it gives the state's attorney in each county "unlimited discretion" in the decision whether to seek capital punishment. The law provides that, after a conviction, the state's attorney may — if he feels the case fits specific criteria — ask for another "trial" to determine whether a death sentence should be imposed. Cousins said that procedure results in "vast differences countywide in the statute's application."

## 4 killed in natural gas explosion

Four men were killed and two injured shortly before noon Tuesday when a natural gas explosion rocked a dormitory building on a federal penitentiary honor farm in Beverly, Mo., trapping them inside. Authorities said between two and four other persons are believed trapped inside the collapsed building but day-long snow was severely hampering rescue efforts. Initial reports said three of the fatalities were inmates and the other a prison guard, but identities were not immediately available. The explosion apparently caused the first floor, where the inmates were working on a truck, to collapse into the basement. "Apparently everyone has been accounted for, there are just some that they can't get to," a Missouri Highway Patrol spokesman said. Rescue crews from Platte County, the highway patrol and the U.S. Penitentiary were at the scene using heavy equipment to attempt and clear the debris and reach the missing persons.

# WORLD

## Snipers kill soldiers in Beirut

Heavy sniper fire paralyzed sections of Beirut's eastern suburbs Tuesday with several soldiers from the United Arab Emirates contingent of the Arab Deterrent Force reported killed. Police said at least three United Arab Emirates soldiers were hospitalized with wounds and two others were killed when their jeep came under fire in a no-mans-land separating rightist Christian militiamen and the Syrian peacekeeping force in an eastern suburb. The soldiers were going to Beirut from their permanent positions further east. "They must have lost their way and moved into the disputed area. Each side must have mistaken their jeep for an enemy vehicle," a police official said. Machine gun exchanges and sniper fire kept most of the Christian rightwing suburb of Ain Rummaneh and its adjacent neighborhoods closed, residents reported.

# WEATHER

Partly cloudy with cold nights and mild afternoons through Thursday. High Wednesday low 50's, low early Thursday mid 20's.

# THE BATTALION

## LETTERS POLICY

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words and are subject to being cut to that length or less if longer. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit such letters and does not guarantee to publish any letter. Each letter must be signed, show the address of the writer and list a telephone number for verification.

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# Esoterica gaining new respectability

By DICK WEST

WASHINGTON — It tells us something about our times that the \$4 billion pornography industry in the United States now has its own trade newsletter.

The question is: what does it tell us? I mean, is the advent of a pornography newsletter a commentary on the decline of morals in America? Or is it a commentary on the proliferation of newsletters? Back to that in a moment. First, it should be noted that the pornography newsletter, called TAB (The Adult Business) Report, is itself non-X-rated. I personally would rate it PG.

It is perhaps a bit more racy than Service Station Week but somewhat less salacious than Housing Affairs. I haven't read every line of the, ah, maiden issue, but those I did read contained no four-letter words except words with four letters. And while some of the illustrations included an element of nudity, they had about as much erotic impact as a weather satellite photo of a low pressure area over Lake Erie.

Items in the 16-page monthly publication generally fall into two categories: 1. Accounts of brushes with the law by operators of porn movie houses, adult bookstores, peep shows, go-go bars, swingers clubs, escort services, burlesque palaces, massage parlors and bordellos. 2. New products, services and ideas. (An adult bookstore has as its motto: "Purveyors of Fine Smut Since 1976".)

In short, TAB Report is more or less typical of the newsletter genre we have come to know so well. It should surprise no one that Dennis Sobin, the publisher, also publishes the "Federal Contracts Opportunities Report."

It likewise should surprise no one that TAB Report is published here. New York's Times Square area may be the hub of erotica but Washington definitely is the hotbed of esoterica.

There are more than 75 newsletter publishers listed in the local phone book and they are only the tip of the Xerox. Many of the offices crank out "inside" reports on more than one subject.

It probably would take a newsletter newsletter to keep track of them all. What is the dissemination of so much esoterica doing to the fabric of our society? Talk to any of the newsletter publishers and they will insist they are performing a public service.

"The desire to be in the know is part of the human condition," the publisher of a newsletter on boar bristle imports once told me. "One way or another the lust for the lowdown is certain to find an outlet. In satisfying that passion, newsletters help prevent the spread of shoptalk and scuttlebutt."

This may not make you less furtive about subscribing to Public Land News, but at least you'll know you've got plenty of company.

Slouch

by Jim Earle



"THE BACK SIDE OF YOU SIGN SAYS THAT YOU ARE 'FOR' GRASS WALKING!"

## Letters to the Editor

# Faculty express praise for Williams

Editor:

I have been requested by the faculty of the College of Liberal Arts to express our appreciation for the many contributions that Dr. Jack Williams has made to Texas A&M University during the past eight years.

Scholars are chosen to administer universities primarily because the important decisions in performing this function must be based on judgment, and it can usually be safely assumed that the judgment of a scholar is based on values which academia prizes.

Certainly this is true of Jack Williams. He understands academic excellence and the many facets of what it takes to further it. He values and appreciates a good classroom teacher who has rapport with his or her students, maintains high academic standards, is enthusiastically interested in his or her subject, and is determined that the student be afforded an opportunity to learn something worthwhile.

Dr. Williams understands and appreciates the sometimes lonely role of the researcher and the necessary dedication to the canons of objectivity, rigor and scholarship. He is at home in the organizational maze that is the university and understands the participatory roles that all in the academic community must play if the organization is to be its most effective.

Jack Williams was a highly effective exponent of our interests in areas of which we know little. He represented and defended us to the public, to state and federal agencies, legislative bodies, and other entities. He did so with a wit and style that was no small ingredient of his success.

As an administrator we shall miss him. As a colleague we welcome him. There could not be a more fitting addition to our faculty.

—W. David Maxwell, Dean  
College of Liberal Arts

## Obnoxious fans

Editor:

I had the pleasure of going to Waco this past Monday night and watching our Aggies crush the Baylor Bears 71-58. It was an excellent game, perhaps the best I've seen the Ags play in. Yet even in this great game, there was something that took away from the class of it — the Baylor fans.

I was amazed at how the fans reacted to any official's call which they considered controversial. Paper cups often flew onto the court followed by miniature Baylor basketballs — these occasionally striking the referees. At the end of the game, one fan even jumped out of the stands onto a ref. That's sad.

Perhaps the single most enraging incident was the paper and verbal insults which flew at the Aggie bench when David Britton fouled out. Not to be outdone, the outspoken Britton kept his cool and taunted the crowd with very humorous facial expressions. He made sure that the obnoxious crowd was aware of every point that the Ags scored. To David Britton: a well-done job, both on and off the court.

Verbal abuse is one of the only ways that basketball fans can feel like a part of the game, but I think that the Baylor fans went a little bit too far. Standing in the midst of the Baylor students, I was proud to say that I was an Aggie. I don't think our well-mannered, intimidating crowds at G. Rollie would ever stoop so low.

To the entire Aggie team — thanks for a superb win, as well as the accompanying kick in the butt to Baylor fans.

—Robert E. Green, '82

## Needed: witness

Editor:

Since I've come to Texas A&M all I've heard about are the "Good Ags." Now I need help from them.

Last Thursday night (Jan. 25) while traveling up Texas Avenue through the intersection directly in front of the campus, I was broadsided. The car that hit mine ran a red light, but after the arrival of the police, the driver swore that the light had been green. Needless to say, as a result of his false testimony I am faced with more than \$1,000 worth of damage.

I'm sure someone must have witnessed the accident involving the white Firebird and blue Thunderbird and would appreciate contacting me to help clarify the situation.

—Mike Lasseter, '81

## Tricks not revealed

Editor:

I would like to clear up a few misconceptions concerning "The World of Illusion" performance last Thursday night (Jan. 25). In his review of the performance, Battalion staff reporter Roy Bragg claimed that illusionist Andre Kole told how each trick was done and thus took all the fun out of magic.

Bragg used an example to clarify his opinion: "For example, when a performer pulls off his top hat and then empties thirty pigeons and a box of panatella cigars out of it, I call it a 'neat trick.' However, if the guy tells me beforehand that he has a collapsible bird cage and a secret compartment full of cigars in his jacket..."

I was in attendance that night, and the closest Andre Kole came to telling how "something does or doesn't work" was stating that a particular trick was accomplished by "purely natural means" (i.e. no spirits, spooks, goblins, etc.). This is possibly a small discrepancy, but I was under the impression that a review contains the reporter's opinion of the event and not a misrepresentation of the event. I commend Mr. Bragg for admitting that "It was apparent from the crowd response that I'm probably alone in my opinion."

—Mark Albers, '79

## Pie-miscuity strikes

Editor:

Monday afternoon a brown grocery sack containing a box which held a rhubarb pie was taken from in front of my dorm room. The pie had been set outside to keep it cold and fresh. This was a homemade pie that had been sent by my mother for my brother. The sack had a name and phone number on it so that it was obvious that it was not trash.

I realize there is little chance for the pie to be returned but it really surprises and shocks me that a "fellow Ag" would choose to take it.

Quite a bit of care and consideration went into that pie and I feel this gives an unfavorable impression of an Aggie.

Put yourself in the shoes of the intended recipient. A care package from home is always welcomed with anticipation. I hate to see such excitement end in disappointment.

—Adelaide Bratten, '82

## Seeing not believing

Editor:

After reading the article in Friday's (Jan.

26) Battalion entitled "Illusionist blows magic's fun," I felt it necessary to more fully explain Andre Kole's approach.

From the opening of his act (and even in the advance publicity), Mr. Kole made it clear that he wanted his audience to be entertained. However, he didn't want the audience to actually believe he was capable of performing supernatural "magic." This relates directly to his faith in Jesus Christ and God's supreme authority in the realm of the "spirit world."

At several points in the program he made it clear that he wanted to present the truth. He referred to extensive studies he's done in black magic and the occult and came to the conclusion that communication with the dead is impossible.

This is consistent with the Bible's teaching on that subject. He also exposed the face of the Bermuda Triangle based on well-documented evidence. As a Christian

he desires to speak the truth: "For our appeal does not spring from error or uncleanness, nor is it made with guile, we speak to please God who tests our hearts" — 1 Thessalonians 1:3,4.

Mr. Kole had a message to communicate with great sincerity and love in his heart for every person in the audience. He made it clear that the last part of the show would be devoted to the "spiritual part of our lives" and that anyone who might feel uncomfortable would be free to leave during a short intermission — few chose to leave.

What followed was a moving testimony of God's love for us through the life, death, and resurrection of His beloved son Jesus Christ. Contrary to what is implied in the article, the only people invited to pray were those who wanted to make a sincere commitment to Christ.

—David L. Bierschwale, '80

# Public funds to finance congressional elections?

By DON PHILLIPS

United Press International

WASHINGTON — In the last election, private political action committees spent \$32 million to support congressional candidates. This was more than six times the amount spent by the national Democratic and Republican parties.

In 1976, Sen. John Heinz, R-Pa., spent \$2.3 million of his own money in his successful election effort.

A survey by the House Democratic Study Group of 90 House races in 1978 showed that 81 of the 180 candidates spent more than \$200,000 on their campaigns.

These examples have frightened many House and Senate leaders. They have concluded that money is becoming far too important in elections, and they are making serious moves this year to do something about it.

Their solution — campaign spending limits and partial public financing — likewise frightens many others, particularly Republicans, who fear that placing the heavy hand of government on the election process will only make things worse.

Presidential elections already are publicly financed through the \$1 income tax checkoff system. But opponents say this is a special case and quite simple to accomplish, compared to developing a fair system for 435 House districts with varying geographic and expense problems.

Running for office in New York's silk stocking districts is far different from running for the one House seat in Alaska.

House Republican leader John Rhodes of Arizona is one of the chief opponents of public financing. He calls it "so ludicrous that I'm surprised that anyone would recommend it."

Rhodes and others feel that campaign financing would give incumbents an edge because challengers would not be able to spend as much money as they like to become as well known as the incumbent. Since the House is 2-to-1 Democratic, most challengers would be Republicans.

Proponents of public financing — led by Rep. Abner Mikva, D-Ill., and including the entire House Democratic leadership — dispute these claims and say that money is a far worse threat to the political system than any possible problems with public financing.

"We're afraid we will get to the point that elections will go to the highest bid-

der," said House Democratic whip John Brademas.

The reputed villains in this case are political action committees — called PACs — which are set up by corporations, labor unions, trade associations and others to further their own interests by supporting candidates who support them.

PACs still could contribute to campaigns under public financing, but their powers would be severely diminished.

Whatever the arguments for and against public financing, this appears the year that it has its best chance of passage.

The Democratic leadership is pushing public financing as its No. 1 priority. And even the GOP camp is not solidly against it. Its main sponsors include Reps. John Anderson of Illinois, No. 3 House Republican, and Barber Conable of Illinois, ranking GOP member of the Ways and Means Committee.

The House Administration Committee, which last year rejected a public financing plan, has been packed with new members this year who support public financing.

The Mikva plan would limit campaign spending to \$150,000 plus 20 percent for fund raising plus 10 percent for one mailing within the district. The candidate could not spend more than \$25,000 of personal funds.

Public funds would be available to match dollar-for-dollar each contribution of \$100 or less.

Candidates would not be forced into the financing system. But if they did not, then their opponents would not be forced to adhere to spending limitations.

For now, the Senate has not been included in the bill. But the Senate would have to pass it and there might be some effort to include Senate campaigns before final passage.

The House Democratic leadership will attempt to have the bill signed into law before the August recess, giving public financing its first real test in the 1980 elections.

But many will remember that public financing last year appeared assured of passage when key mistakes were made and dozens of supporters jumped ship at the last minute. When politicians deal with a subject this close to home, and that subject is complicated by the presence of big money, anything can happen.