

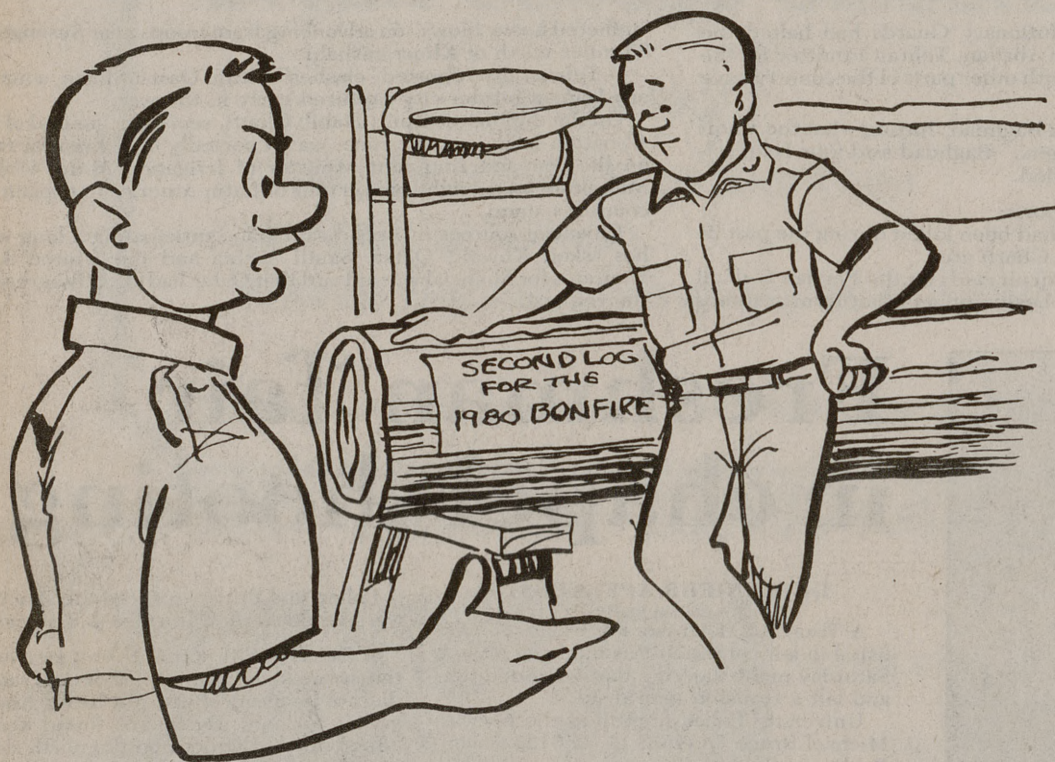
VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

MONDAY
OCTOBER 20, 1980

Slouch

By Jim Earle



"I'm not upset because you didn't cut the first log, I'm upset because you put it in my room!"

Oklahoma appears wrapped for Reagan

By HARRY CULVER
United Press International

OKLAHOMA CITY — It appears Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter have all but written off Oklahoma for opposite reasons — challenger Reagan because he is so sure of winning; the president because he is an almost-certain loser.

Neither plans to visit Oklahoma in the closing days of a campaign in which Democrats and Republicans alike agree Reagan has a strong lead.

"We are fighting overconfidence," said Betty Brake, executive secretary of the Oklahoma Reagan organization. "We have more volunteers than ever before, but sometimes people in the leadership seem to think we don't need to be doing all this work."

"It's uphill all the way," says Democratic Gov. George Nigh. "The president's rating is improving, but his chances are less than 50-50 in Oklahoma."

"I don't think the president has written off Oklahoma," Nigh said, "but I would say in his judgment that Oklahoma and its eight electoral votes would have to be given a low priority."

"I think Reagan has written off Oklahoma in an opposite sense," Nigh said. "He came in and got his million dollars in one night and left. I think he is taking Oklahoma for granted."

Nigh referred to \$1 million raised in a Reagan visit last spring. This was followed by a second \$1 million in contributions for a \$1,000 per head "Prelude to Victory" dinner in late September featuring a visit by former President Gerald Ford.

Just five days later, Democrats were struggling to attract guests to a luncheon at \$25 per plate.

Carter Coordinator Sandy Turner, who didn't open the state Carter headquarters until Oct. 1, said, "We're having to rely on old fashioned barbecues, coffee and cake at the church and bean suppers. We're having to raise our own money locally for the state campaign."

Oklahoma has gone Democratic in a presidential race only once since 1948 and that was in 1964 when Texas neighbor Lyndon Johnson was elected. Carter lost the state to Ford by 12,000 votes four years ago despite a much greater Carter effort in that election.

Democratic pessimism and Republican

optimism in the presidential contest have spilled over into the Senate race to fill the seat being vacated by Republican Henry Bellmon, retiring after 12 years.

Democratic nominee Andy Coats, 45, has yet to commit himself on whether he will vote for Carter, a stance he took in winning a mid-September runoff primary against Robert S. Kerr Jr., son of the late senator.

In contrast, GOP Senate nominee Don Nickles, 31, has promoted himself as the candidate "most like Ronald Reagan."

Coats goes into the general election as a slight favorite, with statewide support and a solid following in populous Oklahoma county, site of state capital Oklahoma City, where he won a reputation as a hardline prosecutor in four years as a district attorney.

Both candidates have campaigned as staunch conservatives, promising to balance the budget, chop federal regulations, boost defense spending and make the United States number one. Nickles proposes to abolish several Washington departments outright, including energy and education.

Nickles, campaigning as a "born again Christian," has built an organization around the "Moral Majority," a politically oriented church movement. But a bitter runoff primary campaign with Tulsa industrialist John Zink left scars.

A third Senate candidate, former state Attorney General Charles Nesbitt, 58, a Democrat running as an independent, is given little chance of winning but could be a spoiler.

Oklahoma's 5-1 Democratic-Republican ratio in the House is expected to stand although there will be a change in the 4th District, where Democrat Tom Steed is retiring after serving 32 years. Democratic newcomer Dave McCurdy, 31, appears to have the edge over Republican Howard Rutledge, 52, former Navy pilot who spent 87 months in a Vietnamese prison camp.

Democratic incumbents Jim Jones, Mike Synar, Wes Watkins and Glenn English are favored in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 6th, respectively, and Republican incumbent Mickey Edwards in the 5th. Synar concedes he faces a hard race with Republican Gary Richardson in the 2nd District. Edwards is confronted by a spirited effort by Democrat David Hood in the 5th.

Campus Election Follies: No faults — any alternatives?

Sidebars

By Dillard Stone

The lists which the Corps of Cadets and other groups circulate prior to each semester's elections — and the controversy that invariably ensues — highlight the comedy that is the campus election process.

That process provides plenty of incentive for candidates to conduct superficial campaigns, often based on nothing more than big signs and catchy names.

And it's a process to which students readily acquiesce each fall and spring, when officer elections for the major campus governing bodies are conducted.

But what else is there to do? Especially among freshmen, campus issues are an unknown quantity. Those running for office may have a bare idea of what they'd be doing in that office, but it's only that — a bare idea.

So what's left to campaign on? Personality (friendliness, ability to speak well and look nice), those big signs, and neat names like "Rock" or "Outlaw." And organizational affiliation.

It's legal to pass out campaign flyers with many names on them, so long as each candidate

catalogues the total expense incurred in publishing the leaflets.

And, as is so often the case, when more than one member of an organization runs, the leaflet is no guarantor of victory.

Why shouldn't cadets vote for cadets? At least they'll know *something* about the person they're voting for.

Depending on how big an effort a candidate makes to get to know his classmates — and vice versa — it may be the *only* thing they know.

Corps Staff members make a point when they say that, if a freshman doesn't know any of the candidates, or has no preference, he might as well vote for someone who's in the same group as he is.

After all, a cadet senator will more than have more interest in cadets' affairs than a non-cadet senator.

And that applies to other organizations as well. It's just that the Corps, being the largest "bloc" of potential voters, is the most noticeable group when elections roll around.

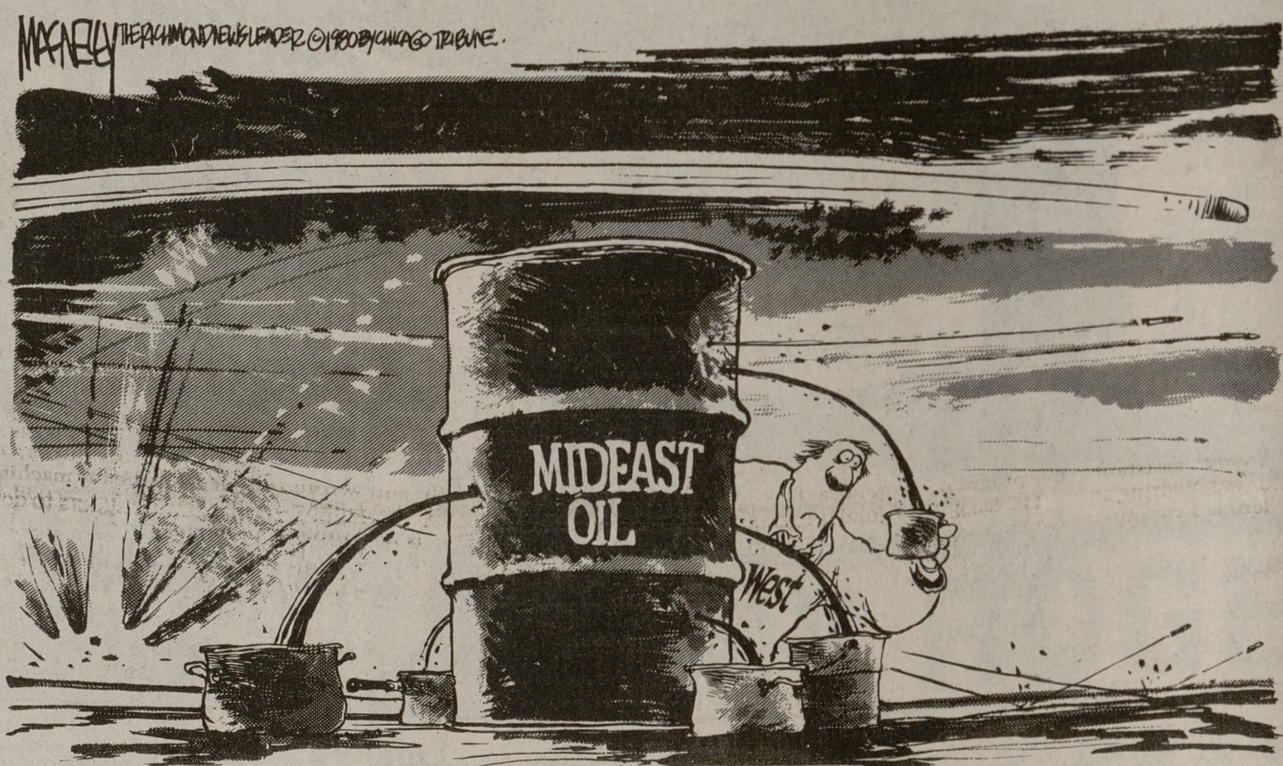
Concentrating on whether or not cadets conduct a "bloc vote" obscures four important issues underlying the Campus Election Process.

First, is the Corps to be faulted for an organizational structure which permits information to be disseminated quickly, and which encourages cadets to participate in the extracurricular electoral process?

Second, shouldn't those who criticize the Corps for its high turnout during elections be more concerned about increasing participation from members of their own groups?

Third, is there a less superficial alternative to the facades behind which candidates campaign for University offices?

And, fourth, even if a less superficial campaign were possible, would student turnout be any higher?



Nobody loves bearer of bad news

Reagan taking flak on tree statement

By DICK WEST
United Press International

WASHINGTON — All journalists soon learn the truth of Shakespeare's observation that "The first bringer of unwelcome news hath but a losing office."

Or if they don't learn that, they surely come to agree with Sophocles that "None love the messenger who brings bad news."

Through this occupational hazard, I long ago absorbed the painful lesson Ronald Reagan has just been taught the hard way: Never knock a tree.

Had the Republican presidential candidate consulted me, I might have spared him the flak he has been catching from environmentalists and others since asserting on the campaign trail that trees contribute to air pollution.

As I could have predicted from bitter experience, negative reaction to his allegations has been fierce and intense.

Sample: A Californian newspaper proposed a comparison test in which the head of the Sierra Club would be locked in a room with a tree and Reagan would be locked up with an automobile emitting exhaust fumes.

Another sample: At a college where Reagan made an campaign appearance, someone draped a tree with a banner reading: "Chop me down before I kill again."

One reason I could have foreseen this type of

backlash is because much the same thing once happened to me.

In the course of trying to look out after the public interest, I came across a report that cited trees as a major source of certain air pollutants.

At the time, I was as shocked as anybody else. Having been reared in the Kilmeresque tradition, I subscribed to the view that trees could do no wrong.

But, as journalists must, I put aside personal feelings and became a messenger of this unwelcome news. I proposed that anti-perspirant companies undertake the development of an under-limb spray that would prevent trees from befouling the air.

I was only trying to be helpful. Yet the reaction was vilifying and abusive. Readers accused me of slandering innocent trees, being disrespectful of Mother Nature and other heinous deeds.

I was, of course, only a bringer of the news. I had no part in preparing the report; nor had I

planted any of the trees that reputedly give off noxious vapors.

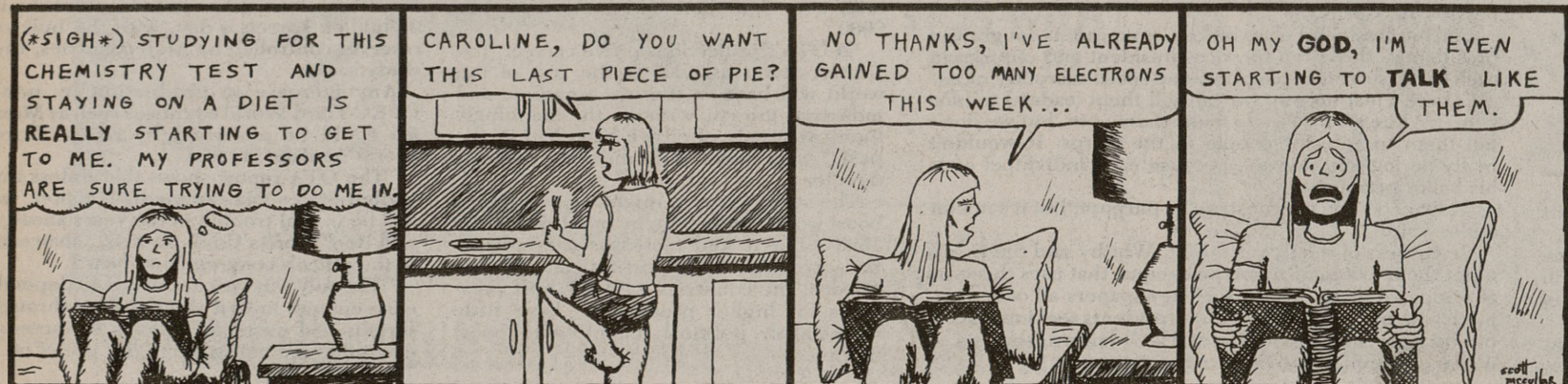
Nevertheless, it was a losing office. Well, such is a journalist's lot. But dreadful it would have been had I been reared for president. For that report on arboreal pollution likely would have cost me the electoral vote, and probably the decisive vote as well.

Reagan, who is running for president, now be in exactly such a pickle. If so, there still is time for him to smooth things over.

Fortunately for his campaign, there has become available a government study to sort the tree lobby loves. It finds that apart from their "grace and beauty," trees can "significantly reduce heating bills in the winter and cooling costs in the summer."

Let Reagan quote that report on the campaign trail and voters offended by his previous comment might forgive if not forget. It is the Bible says: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings."

Warped



By Scott McCullar

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