

Editorial

Gas rate structure passed by council extremely unfair

The natural gas rate structure passed by the College Station City Council while in the process of granting Lone Star Gas Co. a rate increase last week is extremely unfair to the users of small amounts of gas.

Under the rate structure, College Station citizens, individually the users of the smallest amount of natural gas in the city, are helping pay for each cubic foot of natural gas over 25,000 cubic feet that the large-scale users consume.

This comes about because under the last two steps in the six-step rate structure, consumers actually pay less for natural gas than Lone Star Gas Co. pays for it.

Even though Lone Star Gas reports that only one-tenth of one percent of its Bryan-College Station customers fall into this category, the principle behind the rate structure is wrong.

With today's energy shortages and wastefulness, the rate structure should incorporate every means available to encourage conservation. Making gas cheaper as the amount

used increases is no way to attain this goal.

It seems that College Station followed Bryan's lead in adopting such a rate structure in order to avoid making Lone Star Gas have to maintain separate billing systems for customers in each city.

The College Station and Bryan city councils should work together and try to institute a rate structure with less disparity between the rates for large- and small-scale users.

Large-scale users may be entitled to a discount gas rate because the billing and distribution costs for each consumer in that range probably are the same as for the small-scale user. But going to the point of actually subsidizing the large-scale user out of the pockets of the average resident is an injustice.

The city council should adopt a more equitable rate structure at the earliest possible time, at least to the point where the large-scale users are paying for the gas what it actually costs.

J. N.

Republican Party skilled in geriatric art

KANSAS CITY — To capture the atmosphere in this Republican convention you have to imagine what it would be like if an intense but decorous feud developed among the patients at a really nice suburban home for the aged.

Emotions might run high, but there's only so much damage that can be done with wheelchairs and crutches. It's the same way here.

Not much blood will be shed in the presidential nomination battle between Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan. But that's because the GOP has not much blood to give. Reporters watching this struggle in the enervating heat of a Midwest summer have the feeling that the Republicans don't need a nominee as much as they need a transfusion. Instead of being in Kemper Arena, this convention should be held in an oxygen tent.

During the preliminaries, some of the members of the Republican National Committee spoke nostalgically of their roles in the great Eisenhower-Taft battle of 1952 or the Rockefeller-Goldwater war of 1964. They have the paths of all wounded veterans. Even those who were too young for those campaigns somehow look as if they might have been there. Whatever it may lack in political skills, the Republican Party has no peer when it comes to the geriatric arts. It can age everyone.

John Sears, the 35-year-old Reagan campaign director, looks middle-aged. Dean Burch, the 48-year-old Ford strategist, looks a decade older. Those like Rockefeller aide George Hinman and former party chairman Ray Bliss who have actually attained the status of elder statesmen — well, they look like Republicans.

Mothers' Club execs to meet

The first meeting of the season for the new executive board of the Federation of Texas A&M Mothers Clubs is scheduled here Aug. 28.

Federation officers will be hosts for a coffee at 8:30 a.m. in the Memorial Student Center. The board meeting is set for 9:30 a.m., with Mrs. Don G. Kasper of Shiner, federation president, in charge.

Presidents of mothers clubs, members of Aggie Moms, district chairmen and members of the federation's executive board will be among those taking part.

University representations will update federation officials regarding campus activities. Federation projects and those of individual clubs will be discussed at the meeting.

The decades of the 1960's and 1970's have been a lot harder on the Republicans than the statistics of GOP decline convey. It's one thing to read the survey data saying that only one American voter in five labels himself or herself a Republican, and that the percentage of Republicans below age 30 is dipping dangerously close to the single digits.

But it's something else to mingle for a week with the leaders of this diminished flock and recall the experiences now etched into their faces. Back in 1964, Dean Burch was a bright young lawyer, a pal of Richard Kleindienst and a protégé of Barry Goldwater. Goldwater named him Republican National Chairman and he was the first man ousted after the disaster of that election year.

He recuperated in Arizona, came back in the 1968 Nixon campaign, served honorably as chairman of the Federal Communications Commission and then was recruited onto the White House staff just in time to organize the former President's last-ditch battle against impeachment.

When one reporter commented that the ash-faced Burch looked like he had seen a ghost, another said, "He's seen several."

He isn't the only one. Young as he is, John Sears went through the rise and fall of Richard Nixon — joining Nixon in 1966, shepherding Spiro Agnew through the 1968 campaign, and then being purged from the White House staff by John Mitchell before the voters purged Nixon,

Agnew and Mitchell. Sears looks it. That John Dean is covering the convention for Rolling Stone magazine is a gratuitous reminder of the main reason this meeting is being conducted in such a funerary atmosphere.

But even without the living reminder of Watergate on the scene, the Republicans would have a bad case of historical twitches. From the chaos of the Cow Palace in 1964, through the false hopes of the two Miami Beach conventions to the traumas of the Agnew and Nixon resignations — too much has happened that is too awful to be remembered. And not enough time has elapsed for anyone to forget.

The Democrats had their own rough passage from 1966 to 1976, but their last real calamity was four years back, and the healing process had worked well by the time they reached Madison Square Garden. There, they experienced the exhilaration that Winston Churchill said could be savored only by those who have faced enemy fire — and survived.

The Republicans expect no such emotion here. But that is not to suggest that their survival is at stake. The organizational shell of an American political party is as tough to crack as a turtle's. Come what may in 1976, there will be a meeting in 1977 of the Republican National Committee — and a lot of the same old faces will be back, looking just a bit older.

But there is a huge gap between survival and success. And the serious question about the Republicans in

Kansas City is whether they can muster the will to compete for power with the eager and relatively unscarred Democrats rallying behind Jimmy Carter and Walter Mondale. To make the investment of energy and will that it will take to win in November, a party must be willing to risk defeat for the reward of victory. The Republicans here have not

forgotten how awful was the defeat and how empty their memories. It will be remarkable if they can put those memories behind them and focus on the future. The hardest thing for old people to do. And these Republicans are spiritual septuagenarians.

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