

Viewpoint

The Battalion
Texas A&M University

Wednesday
July 6, 1977

America, the optimistic

By DAVID S. BRODER

WASHINGTON — Year One of Century Three of the American Republic is now behind us. We have moved from the Tall Ships' coming to the gas-guzzlers' going, which is not exactly an epoch of progress but is far from a calamity. All things considered, most Americans would be well-satisfied if the next 99 years passed as well as this first year of the Third Century has done. The Great Republic has managed for 35 days to avoid war and famine, flood and flu, crippling inflation or recession. The winter was severe, the drought serious, but power passed peacefully from Gerald Ford to Jimmy Carter and most of us have survived.

For those who had succumbed to cynicism, there is the miraculous fact that the Chicago Cubs are actually in first place. The last time that happened, we won World War II. You could look it up. Fortune Magazine — reduced in size but not in authority — is out this week with glad tidings that the economic recovery should last another 18 months. There was no wave of panic selling on Wall Street.

John Mitchell and Bob Haldeman have found new niches in the federal government more suited to their talents. Richard Nixon has returned to television (is this the ninth or tenth rerun?) as a temporary replacement for Mary Hartman. Washington reporters are complaining at the dullness of the news.

All these are signs of health in the body politic, symptoms of a deeper healing that may be taking place. Outside of Washington, where people maintain a more natural level of interest in the news, a traveler finds an attitude of tolerant puzzlement about the doings of the government.

In New Orleans last week, a young black woman said she wished Andrew Young had remained in Congress to remind President Carter of human rights issues at home, rather than instruct foreign countries on the errors of their ways.

In Minneapolis, a man wondered whether the Korean CIA scandals might not so tarnish Congress that the President could reassert his primacy over the legislative branch.

These were serious concerns, seriously expressed, but without any of the despairing emotion with which similar people voiced their feelings on the Vietnam War or the conduct of Richard Nixon. Americans have somehow surmounted the exaggerated passions of the recent past and — like a climber coming off a steep path onto a high plateau — have found themselves breathing long, deep draughts of fresh air.

Whatever else he has done, or failed to do, or tried too impetuously to do, the President from Plains has managed to continue the process of healing and restoring the public's battered trust that his predecessor began.

The White House doors that Gerald Ford pried open have remained blessedly unobstructed under Carter. Down the hall from where Lyndon Johnson and Nixon

brooded, Hamilton Jordan lolls in open-necked shirt, feet resting on a spare tire that somehow has become part of the office decor. A tennis racket sits on his desk, awaited a call to duty against the President. Better a tennis racket than a secret recorder.

Early this week, Hubert Humphrey stopped at his Senate office en route to lunch in a nearby room with a group of reporters, and poured himself a glass of sherry ("purely medicinal") which he carried casually past the surprised tourists in the corridor. He, too, has learned to relax.

Humphrey looks better after his rugged bout with cancer, and his spirits have never been higher. He has long been an accurate barometer of the national moods — slumping from the mid-60s till 1974, then recovering. In his memoirs, published last year, he wrote that it was "the continuity of the American experiment, after 200 years of our history, that fills my life with hope today."

"I remain an optimist about our country," wrote this magnificent warrior, who has endured more than his share of wounds at its hands. "Our democracy is the most exceptional attempt at popular governance in the history of the world."

The best public affairs book I read in this first year of the Third Century was written by an Englishman, Godfrey Hodgson. It is called "America In Our Time." He concludes it with a description that fits the United States today so perfectly that it had to come, of course, from Mr. Jefferson himself.

Join me, please, in a toast to the birthday of our country, "An America, puzzled and prospering beyond example in the history of man."

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Movement slowing nuclear development

French ecologists gaining political clout

By ALAIN RAYMOND

PARIS — Pressure groups have long been powerful in the United States, but they are a relatively new phenomenon in France. And the most dynamic among them are the ecologists.

In contrast to similar American movements, the French ecologists have emerged as a full-fledged political movement, whose office-seekers are known as "green candidates" because of their pledge to fight pollution and improve the environment.

To everyone's astonishment, they won 10 per cent of the votes in the April nationwide municipal elections. That performance has gained them serious recognition. The Communists have denounced them as "utopians" while France's President Valery Giscard d'Estaing, apparently bowing to their influence, has launched a new program to grow more trees.

The ecologists' main target is the government's scheme to promote nuclear energy. Not only have they mobilized various local associations and neighborhood groups and hired lawyers in this campaign, but they have organized protest demonstrations that are proving to be as disruptive as those not long ago in New England.

These protests have been aimed at new installations the government-owned utility,

Electricite de France is constructing. These installations include a breeder reactor at Creys-Malville, near the city of Lyons; a uranium enrichment plant at Tricastin, in the Rhone Valley, and an energy unit at Pellerin, not far from the town of Nantes. The May 8 demonstration at Pellerin drew a crowd of 10,000 people.

The protests are expected to escalate during the summer, possibly because students on vacation from school are free to participate in demonstrations.

But whatever its origins, the impact of the opposition to nuclear energy has reached such intensity that regional authorities have been swayed into rejecting projects planned for their localities.

A struggle could be brewing in the department of Isere, in the Alps, where the central government has decided to push ahead with the construction of a \$900 million breeder reactor despite a vote by the local council against the scheme. The reactor, to be built jointly by French, Italian and German firms, is supposed to be completed in six years — if work on the job begins.

In several other areas municipal governments are also trying to stop nuclear enterprises, either through referendums or through court actions.

A few months ago, for example, the 356 inhabitants of the village of St. Etienne

des Sorts, in the Gard department, voted down by a narrow majority a nuclear project planned for their vicinity.

The ecologists have also been successful in Alsace, along the Franco-German border, where French and German opponents of nuclear energy have been able to cooperate in protests against projects in both their countries.

In the Manche department town of Flamenville, however, the anti-nuclear forces could not persuade the local population to rebuff a power plant. They have since been trying to bog down the plant in legal tangles. But so far they have failed to stop work on the site, which calls for a power plant as well as an artificial harbor.

Marcel Boiteux, the general manager of Electricite de France, acknowledged the movement's effect on nuclear construction.

"There is no urgency to build large second-generation plants. Public opinion must be increasingly taken into account," he said.

But it seems doubtful that the central government will make any drastic moves to change its policies, even though the ecologists are gaining influence. For the economy is in the doldrums, and the general view is that nuclear energy is vital to reviving industrial production.

All the traditional political parties share

this view as they begin to challenge each other in the legislative elections to be held next spring.

The Socialists and their Communist allies favor nuclear energy, but differ somewhat on how fast to develop it. Giscard and the Cautillists are also nuclear advocates, arguing that France must attain independence in energy.

So the ecologists are a minority in their appeals for a society that ought to spurn the nuclear option and seek alternative sources of energy. Yet they are a vocal minority and they have carved out a place on the French political map that is not likely to be erased.

(Raymond writes on science and technology for the French News Agency.)

Readers' forum

Guest viewpoints, in addition to Letters to the Editor, are welcome. All pieces submitted to Readers' forum should be:

- Typed triple space
- Limited to 60 characters per line
- Limited to 100 lines

Letters to the editor

Bus schedules made for drivers, too

Editor's Note: The following is a letter submitted last week to Ed Bloser of Transportation Enterprises, Inc., the firm providing Texas A&M's shuttle bus services. The letter is published with the permission of the author.

Dear Sir:

I am writing to complain about the shuttle bus service on Routes 1 and 2 to Plantation Oaks Apartments. I have one request: Make the drivers abide by the printed schedules, strictly.

According to the schedule produced the week of June 21st, the bus is to stop at

Route 2 — on the hour and the half-hour
Plantation Oaks — at 10 minutes after the hour, and at 40 minutes after campus — at 15 minutes after the hour, and at 45 minutes after the hour.

You printed a new schedule. Why cannot you make your employees abide by it? The students and Texas A&M University are paying you for shuttle buses to and from campus at specified times, a service which you are not providing.

Why do you not hire employees who feel a job responsibility and a responsibility to the students? We need to get to class on time. That is why we paid for shuttle bus service. Apparently, your employees do not care about the schedules, or feel such a responsibility. I give examples at the end of this letter.

You printed the schedules. Supposedly the drivers were given copies. Supposedly they can read. Supposedly the drivers need the jobs to pay for school. If that is so, then they should feel enough job responsibility to read the employer's schedules, and abide by them. If they cannot or do not do this, the logical answer is to terminate that employee.

If there are no students at a bus stop when the driver drops people off, he should assume that the students read the schedules and will come to the bus stop at the specified time. Therefore, he/she should sit and wait till the specified time to leave. After all, is not the whole idea of a schedule for the bus to be at the bus stop at a specified time?

The drivers complain that driving a shuttle bus is boring. Fine. However, if they accept the job, they should accept the job responsibilities.

I want the timely service that I paid for. If you cannot give it, perhaps the Shuttle Bus Committee can find another bus company that can.

My examples of lack of responsibility and not abiding by the schedules follow.

On Monday, 6/27/77, I went to the bus stop at 9:15. (I had not seen a new schedule.) The bus arrived at 9:30 and left at 9:40. The driver said that this would be the new schedule.

On Tuesday, 6/28/77, I went to the bus stop at 9:25. The bus never arrived. At about 9:50 I went home and called TEI. The man who answered the phone said he did not know what the problem was, that as far as he knew the bus was running, apologized, and said he would speak to the driver. There were 3 people waiting — my roommate, a boy I did not know, and me. My roommate and I both drove to school, risking a parking ticket. At about 9:57, I passed the Sausolito Apts. The bus was on that street! Where had it been, if it left campus, as scheduled, at 9:15? It never went to Plantation Oaks. I arrived at school about 10:02, and parked in the golf course parking lot across from the bus stop. The bus arrived at about 10:05. At that time, it should have been on its way to Plantation Oaks for the 10:10 stop. Apparently Plantation Oaks was skipped again! I was late to class, of course. I called TEI again in the afternoon. The man who

answered the phone said that he would talk to the driver for Wednesday, who was supposed to be different, to make sure that the same thing would not happen again.

On Wednesday, 6/29/77, my roommate went to take the 8:40 bus, which never showed up. I called you to discuss the problem on Tuesday, but you were on a long distance call. I told the man who answered the phone that the bus was scheduled to be at Plantation Oaks at 9:10 and 9:40, and it had better be there. I went to the bus stop at 9:32, and the bus left at 9:38. Fine.

However, the afternoon driver pulled that skipping stunt. I arrived at the bus stop at 3:00. So did bus No. 331! At that time, it was supposed to be on Route 2, and it was supposed to be at Plantation Oaks at 3:10. Instead, the driver sat at the campus stop till 3:15, thereby skipping Plantation Oaks. He dropped off the Route 2 people and kept going. He dropped off the Plantation Oaks people at 3:24, and kept going. So, he skipped the 3:30 Route 2 stop and the 3:40 Plantation Oaks stop!

The Route 1 drivers get out of the bus and go to the UtoTem for refreshments. Sometimes this delays the bus 10 minutes, throwing it off schedule for the rest of the day. As with other jobs, refreshments should be bought off company time.

The Route 1 drivers get out of the bus and eat lunch at the campus stop, delaying the bus 10 or 15 minutes, throwing it off schedule for the rest of the day. As with other jobs, lunch should be bought and eaten off company time.

One morning last week, a driver skipped work to play golf. Because of that, Routes 1 and 2 had to be combined, throwing both routes off schedule. I heard this driver telling a friend about it. The driver thought it was hilarious.

One afternoon last week, a bus driver stopped the bus and let a passenger drive! The driver thought it was hilarious.

Please consider all I have said, and discipline your drivers. Thank you.

— Jan A. Baker

Winner loses

Editor:

I am against fraudulent advertising practices and student discrimination. Thus, I relate to you my experience with Benchley Oaks, a land development agency outside Bryan.

On April 27 I received a Lucky Sweepstakes phone call from a Benchley Oaks representative. After I answered the question correctly, I was told I had definitely won and would receive a letter in the mail with my lucky numbers. She also asked where my husband and I are employed and I informed her we are students working part time.

I then called the agency to confirm the list of prizes. I was told I had definitely won two of the following: Mustang II, \$2000 cash, diamond necklace, \$500 savings bond, Miami vacation, \$600 diamond ring, sewing machine.

After a follow-up call, I finally received my letter and promptly took it to the Benchley Oaks land site. There, my husband and I were again questioned about our employment. Unfortunately, the salesman said, students are not eligible for any of the prizes. However, he said he would be happy to take us on a tour.

After checking several sources, it appears there is little we can do about such practices — except, perhaps, to take our business elsewhere.

— Toumonava Mullins, '79

Top of the News

State

Yarbrough hearings set

Speaker Bill Clayton announced yesterday the House will hold hearings July 15 on ousting Don Yarbrough from the Texas Supreme Court. Yarbrough will be given a chance to defend himself during the hearings, Clayton said. Under the Texas Constitution, the governor may remove a judge from the State Supreme Court with the approval of two-thirds of the House and Senate. Yarbrough has been accused of plotting to commit murder, forgery and perjury.

Living proof

Fred Duesenberg, a 76-year-old federal prisoner, got religion, then his freedom, but it may prove to be temporary. Serving a 10-year sentence for robbery, Duesenberg was released from the Federal Corrections Institution in Fort Worth so he could attend services at the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Keene, Tex. Duesenberg accused himself from the services to go to the restroom. He didn't come back. He was scheduled to be released August, 1978.

Nation

Court wars over 'Star Wars'

R2D2 would not be happy. Somebody is muscling in on his territory. Two firms owning the rights to market paraphernalia of the movie "Star Wars" filed suits in Los Angeles yesterday against 18 other companies using the "Star Wars" theme on buttons, shirts and other items. Image Factory and Factors Cts. want a total of \$100,000 in general damages and \$1 million in punitive damages from all 18 defendants.

Emergency immigration considered

The White House is considering admitting an additional 15,000 Indochinese refugees into the United States on an emergency basis. A spokesman said the State Department had recommended lifting normal immigration procedures for refugees in Thailand and Southeast Asia.

Under similar emergency legislation two years ago, some 150,000 Vietnamese refugees were allowed to settle in the United States after the close of the Vietnam War.

One-hundred-thirty-five and counting

The oldest American was grumpy on his 135th birthday July 4th. But he perked up when the presents and the cake and the Kool-Aid showed up. Charlie Smith of Bartow, Fla., a former slave, cowboy and alleged associate of outlaw Jesse James received a new cowboy hat from his friends in the nursing home in which he lives. His son, Chester, gave him a shirt, pajamas and a robe. Chester is a mere 78.

Soldier wants backpay

An American soldier captured during the Korean War and who decided to live in Communist China for 13 years, wants to collect \$15,000 in back pay from the military. Clarence Adams of Memphis says the military owes him his corporal's salary plus interest for the three years he spent in a Manchurian prison camp. Though Adams contends he cooperated rather than collaborated with the enemy, he received a dishonorable discharge for living in China until 1966. "I served my time and more," Adams says. "I gave seven years and never received anything for the years I was a prisoner of war."

Heroes — old and new

Four thousand students in Denver were asked who their heroes are. They listed, in no particular order: former astronaut Neil Armstrong, evangelist Billy Graham, psychologist Joyce Brothers, writer Alex Haley, comedian Jerry Lewis and — former president Richard Nixon. The students also supported reinstating the death penalty and opposed laws discriminating against homosexuals.

Square gets scrubbed

St. Mark's Square in Venice, Italy was thoroughly scrubbed yesterday after a mysterious killer poisoned 70 pigeons. The city veterinarian said the poison wasn't very strong. "The pigeons had eaten a lot before they died," he said. But the square, teeming with tourists as well as pigeons, was ordered swabbed down anyway.

Chivalry isn't dead — just hiding

Just because this is the age of sexual equality, chivalry need not be dead. Britain's top judge said yesterday. Lord Denning and the Court of Appeals ruled on a case involving women workers leaving a factory five minutes early. The company involved said this was done to "avoid the risk of women being bowled over in the rush for the factory gates." Male workers challenged the rule, demanding extra days off to match the women's five minutes a day. "There is clearly no discrimination in men treating women with courtesy and chivalry," Lord Denning said. "The difference between the sexes has to be recognized, even in the interpretation of acts of parliament."

The Battalion

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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. Address correspondence to Letters to the Editor, The Battalion, Room 216, Reed McDonald Building, College Station, Texas 77843.

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