

# Viewpoint

The Battalion  
Texas A&M University

Monday  
September 5, 1977

## Speaking of rights . . .

Bare-headed motorcyclists reappeared on Texas' streets and highways this last week under a decision by the last State Legislature to no longer require motorcycle operators to wear helmets.

Libertarians call it another blow for every man's right "to do what he damn well pleases." The weak at heart "wouldn't be caught dead on one of those things anyway," wearing helmet or complete suit of armor.

And the cyclists themselves are divided. Some couldn't wait to "feel the wind in their hair" so to speak, immediately casting off their headgear. Others will continue to wear the helmets, not wanting to give up what protection they provide.

Who's right? They all are, in part. Both state and federal safety regulations have expanded more and more in recent years to the point that there are many everyday decisions that John Q. Public can not make for himself — like whether or not to wear a motorcycle helmet.

Many people will argue that John Q. Public shouldn't have the right to decide whether his head will be smashed into mush along with the rest of his body if he wrecks his motorcycle. "Protect that fool from himself — he can't be trusted to decide for himself," they scream. But face it folks. If somebody decides they're going to drive a motorcycle, for whatever reason, they're aware of the increased risk of serious injury they face in a collision.

In a serious wreck, a helmet can and often does mean the difference between the cyclist living and dying. He's the one who should decide. It's his responsibility and his right.

## . . . and responsibilities

On the subject of responsibility, the two-legged side of traffic could use some lessons on "Walking defensively." Particularly on the Texas A&M campus, pedestrians seem to show a disregard for their own safety that would do justice to a kamikaze pilot.

Technically, they're in the right. University traffic regulations specify that drivers and bicyclists must yield right-of-way to pedestrians. However, that does little to remove tire tread from one's backside.

But the real problems start when the those pedestrians conditioned to "yielding" drivers, try to cross University Dr. to reach the University Square Shopping Center. At lunch time, pedestrians crossing University and drivers driving down that street cross paths in swarms. There's no traffic control device there to help pedestrians cross — there are traffic lights less than a hundred yards in either direction — so driver and walker more or less bluff each other out trying to avoid a violent meeting.

So pedestrians, remember that you've got the same responsibilities those drivers do. Look out for the other guy. Walk defensively. L. R. L.

### Reforming the reforms

## Democrats reaching turning point

By DAVID S. BRODER

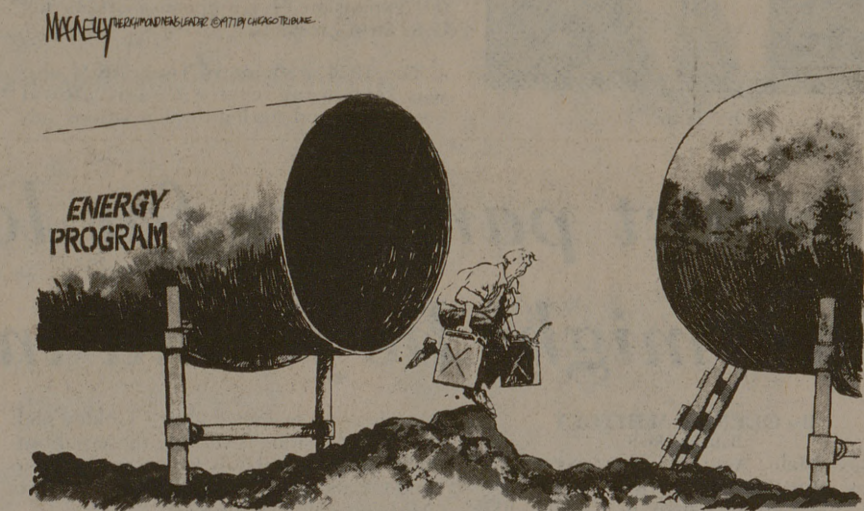
WASHINGTON — After an eight-year fling with participatory politics, Democratic party officials are beginning to turn to the neglected problem of strengthening political leadership in their party and the country. No dramatic changes are likely in the 1980 presidential selection process. But a turning point has been reached which is important in the long-term struggle to preserve an effective two-party system.

The first test of this still tentative counter-revolution will come this month. The party's Winograd Commission (named for its head, Michigan Democratic Party Chairman Morley Winograd) meets in Detroit to frame its recommendations for changes in the 1980 delegate-selection rules.

Since the debacle of the 1968 convention, the Democrats have been constantly tinkering with their party rules. The reform committee led, successively, by Sen. George McGovern (D-S. D.), Rep. Donald Fraser (D-Minn.) and Rep. Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.), enacted a series of rule changes "opening the doors" to women, youths and minorities, and shifting control of the presidential nominating process from party leaders, interest group leaders and elected officials to activist citizens. Unknowingly, the reformers also triggered a dramatic increase in the number of presidential primaries in the past eight years. This further eroded the power of organization leaders and elected officials in the nominating process.

As a result, the last two times out, the Democrats have nominated "outsiders" with few links to the traditional party leadership — McGovern and Jimmy Carter.

Now, in much the same way that Democrats in the House of Representatives have turned from the game of dispersing power and undercutting chairmen to welcome the leadership of Speaker Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill (D-Mass.), party officials are turning from participatory politics to a search for structure and cohesion. They are searching for ways to limit the primaries and to assure the presence in



convention hall of the elected officials who were the main targets of the old reforms.

That shift was evident at the Winograd Commission's meeting here in August — and nowhere more so than in the views of Don Fraser, who helped frame the reforms that made the 1972 convention so different from that of 1968.

When a commission staff member remarked that "the whole thrust of (past) rules changes has been for representativeness," Fraser said he agreed. "But," he added, "to reduce all questions to an issue of representativeness is to degrade the political party. There is also a role for leadership."

Several factors explain the shift in emphasis. For one thing, the Winograd Commission includes a large number of professional political scientists. They tend to be skeptical of the claims of participatory democracy and protective of the traditional role of the political party.

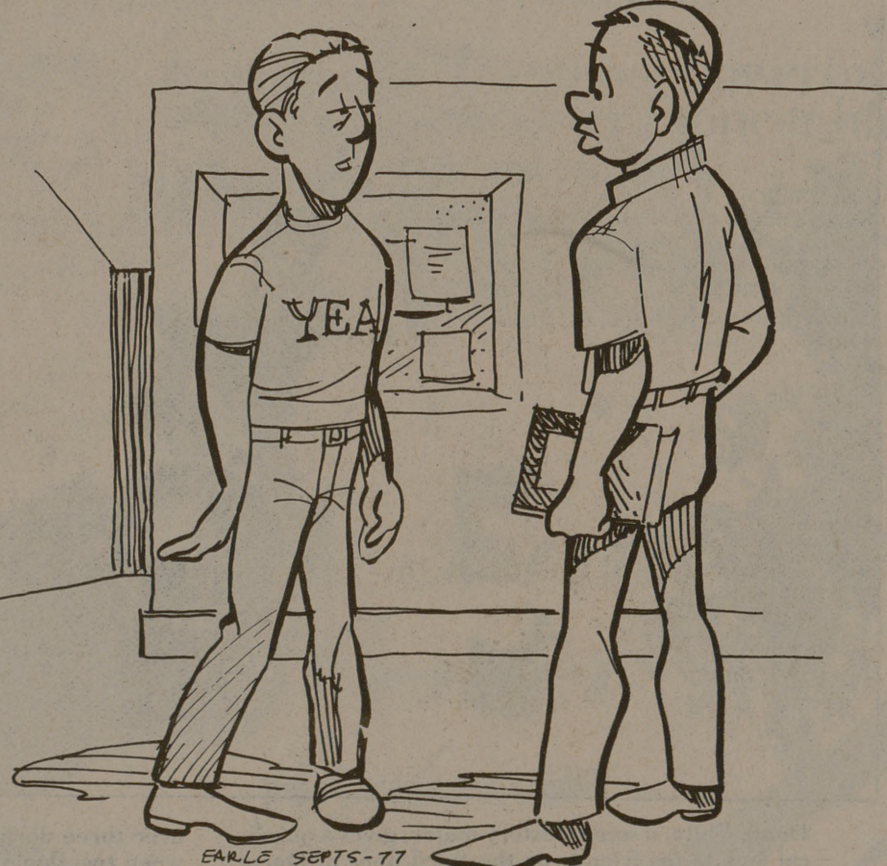
But they are not the only ones disillusioned with the spread of presidential primaries to 30 states. Not one member of

the commission appears to favor taking the trend further by legislating a national primary or even a set of regional primaries. Rather, the desire is to limit and if possible reduce the role of primaries in the delegate-selection process.

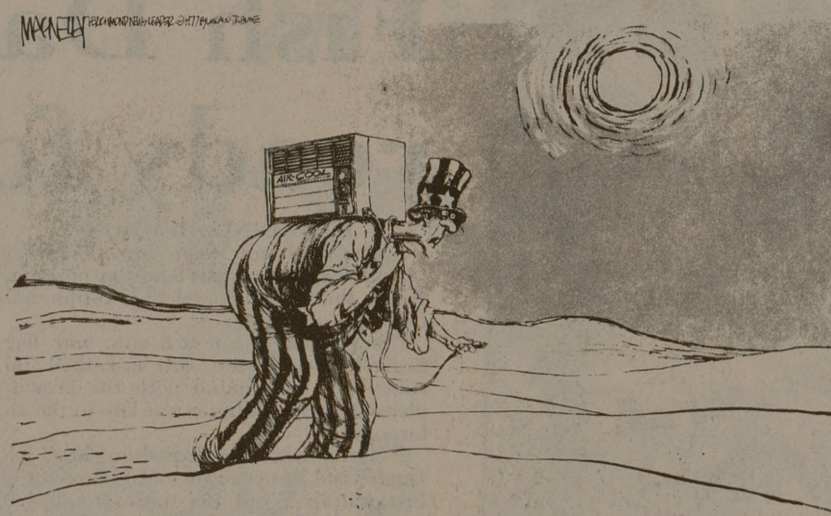
Interestingly, nervousness both about and by Carter are contributing to the desire to tighten up the delegate-selection rules. Many party leaders now see how easy it is for a President who is nominated

### Slouch

by Jim Earle



"ARE YOU SURE WE DIDN'T PLAY KANSAS LAST WEEKEND? WE CELEBRATED TH' VICTORY ALL NIGHT!"



## Making a buck

Alexander Esau was a victim of the Son of Sam killer. He died last April 17. His corneas and kidneys were removed with his mother's permission because she "thought it would help another."

Then came the attempted robbery. Esau's family received a \$1,000 hospital bill for the cost of removing the organs. Mrs. Esau's kindness had become an opportunity for the hospital to turn a quick buck.

The hospital offered an incredible explanation: it apparently routinely bills the survivors of organ donors under the assumption that Medicaid or Blue Cross would pick up the cost.

Grave robbery is considered proper if the cost can be spread around. Philadelphia Daily News

under these rules to ignore the party in charting his path in office.

No one seriously disputed South Carolina Democratic Chairman Donald Fowler's assertion that "the primary process as such is destructive of party cohesion. When candidates get elected because they're on the (television) tube, they're responsible to everybody. And therefore, they're responsible to nobody."

As for Carter, it appears that he is at least somewhat nervous about a new "outsider" — perhaps a Gov. Jerry Brown or a Sen. Pat Moynihan — using the primaries and the proportional representation rules to demonstrate an embarrassing degree of opposition to Carter's policies in 1980.

There was no effort at subtlety by Rick Hutcheson, a deputy to Hamilton Jordan and the White House spokesman on the commission. He proposed that the cutoff point for receiving delegates in a primary or a state convention be raised from its 1976 level of 15 per cent of the votes, to 25 per cent in 1980.

Hutcheson called this a "cohesion-building mechanism." But it is also an effective device for discouraging campaigns by anti-establishment outsiders.

In the wisdom of 1977 hindsight, Jimmy Carter — like a lot of other Democratic leaders — can see the virtues of a slightly more closed and structured process.

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# Top of the News

## Campus

### Silver Taps honors eight

Silver Taps ceremonies are planned tomorrow night for eight Texas A&M University students who have died since the end of last semester. Douglas Martin Burns, Howard Allen Fiebrich, Ronald Joseph Goertz, Michael Grima, Howard Allen Johnston, Carl Wayne Lane, Richard Frank Miller and Dr. Darrell Shefstad will be honored at the ceremony.

## State

### Highway death toll low

The number of deaths on Texas highways grew steadily yesterday, but the list was running considerably behind the pace set a year ago and below the predicted rate of 44. As of 8 p. m. Sunday, the state had recorded 20 traffic deaths, five of them motorcycle accidents. The Texas Department of Public Safety had predicted as many as 44 persons might be killed in traffic accidents in the state during the three-day Labor Day weekend. Last year 50 persons died. Officials of the Parks and Wildlife Department have predicted another 10 persons may die in drownings as Texans flock to lakes and beaches for the last major outing of the summer.

## Nation

### Gov. Thomson favors canal suit

New Hampshire Gov. Meldrim Thomson says if the U.S. Supreme Court fails to act on a suit brought by four attorneys general to force full disclosure of the proposed Panama Canal treaty, it will be another "day of infamy" for America. Thomson said this weekend he supported the action of the attorneys general of Louisiana, Idaho, Indiana and Iowa. The state officials filed papers with the U.S.

### Indians may get land

Former Watergate prosecutor Archibald Cox says that if the Maine Indian land claims dispute turns into a constitutional battle, he feels the Indians eventually will win. In an interview with the Maine Sunday Telegram, Cox said any attempt to wipe out the claims made by the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy tribes to some 12 million acres in Maine, without providing adequate compensation, would violate the U.S. Constitution and be a moral outrage.

### Gov. Longley blasts rhetoric

Gov. James B. Longley says Maine and Canada's eastern provinces should form a regional energy compact to assure adequate supplies for the next 100 years. "Our State Department should be ashamed of themselves, and so should the foreign service in Canada. There's been too much political rhetoric," Longley said during the weekend.

## World

### Presley still No. 1

The late Elvis Presley has an unprecedented 14 hits in the top record charts, according to the current issue of Britain's Music Week. An Elvis single tops the single charts, eight others made the top 50 singles, and five of his albums placed among the top 50 albums.

### Brezhnev back after vacation

Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev returned to Moscow yesterday from his vacation in the Crimea, the official news agency Tass said. Although Tass gave no reason for Brezhnev's return, he apparently came back to Moscow because U. N. Secretary General Kurt Waldheim is in town for an official four-day visit.

### Pope preaches

Pope Paul VI celebrated an outdoor mass yesterday at Albano, Italy, south of Rome and said following Christ's gospel is not easy. The pontiff, who turns 80 Sept. 26 and who suffers from painful arthritis, celebrated the Mass alone for 90 minutes under a hot late summer sun. About 5,000 persons, including Albano's Communist mayor, attended the services.

### Weather

Partly cloudy and hot today and tomorrow. No rain. High both days upper 90s; low tonight low 70s. Variable winds 5-10 m.p.h.

## The Battalion

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