

# Viewpoint

The Battalion  
Texas A&M University

Friday,  
September 23, 1977

## Changes at the Point

United Press International  
Things are changing at West Point—at the U.S. Military Academy, that is — and only the most reactionary and tradition-bound Americans will object.  
Hazing of plebes is no more. It's encouraging that this anachronistic nonsense, apparently intended as a measure of a newcomer's toughness and ability to "take it," is now prohibited.  
More importantly, the students' academic achievements in class will henceforth be by letter grades, not numerical grades. Expressing an individual's grasp of a subject is difficult by any system, but assigning him an "A" is more meaningful than giving him a 97 percent.  
The academy founder, Sylvanus Thayer, might be spinning, he initiated the number grades in 1817. But West Point cannot stand, in the 20th Century, as a fortress resisting change and perpetuating policies and practices begun nigh onto 200 years ago.

Pawtucket R.I. Times

## The energy man

United Press International  
Sen. Richard Lugar, a freshman Republican from Indiana, may have one of the more essential jobs in Congress this year.  
Lugar keeps enough candy in his desk to supply his colleagues with instant energy during those dreary debates on Capitol Hill.  
Scripps-Howard Newspapers

'Mr. Lance, where did you hide the body?'

## Senate short course in question asking

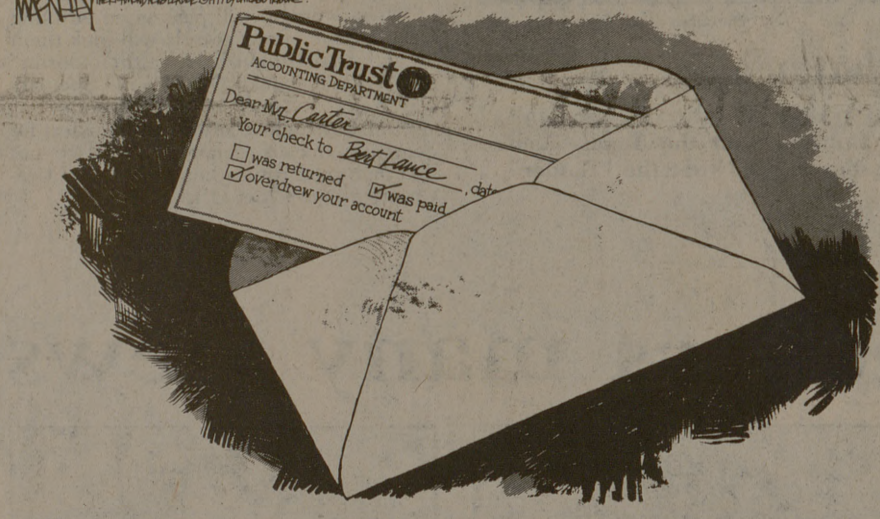
By DAVID S. BRODER

WASHINGTON — The question before us, dear reader, is: Why can't United States Senators ask questions? If you wonder why that topic is timely, it is clear you did not watch last week's gripping, three-day televised non-interrogation of Bert Lance.  
Those of us who were either professionally obliged or personally masochistic enough to watch the hearings have no way of avoiding the issue.  
By my rough calculation, rendered hazy by occasional bouts of sleepiness, the 20-plus hours which Lance spent on the stand broke down this way:  
Lance defending Lance: 7 hours, 40 minutes.  
Senators defending Lance: 2 hours, 20 minutes.  
Senators criticizing other senators: 1 hour, 50 minutes.  
Senators defending themselves against other senators: 2 hours, 30 minutes.  
Senators explaining past actions and inactions: 1 hour 40 minutes.  
Senators praising Clark Clifford (in case they ever need his services themselves): 30 minutes.  
Senators prefacing questions to Lance: 3 hours, 15 minutes.  
Senators questioning Lance: 45 minutes.  
Now, admittedly, that is a strict interpretation of the word "questioning." It counts as questions only those sentences which, in the transcript, will be punctuated with a question mark. But it may help explain why the public apparently thought Lance stood up so well under the "battering" of the senators' questioning.

Those of us sentenced to watch the Lance hearings have thought a lot about why it took 20 hours for 45 minutes of questioning.  
Veterans of the press corps (including such prematurely gray youths as this reporter) were at first inclined to believe it measured a deterioration in the quality of United States Senators.  
That may be a bit of romanticized nostalgia, however. When one thinks about the great Senate inquisitions of the past, one remembers the bulldog committee counsels, from Rudolph Halley to Bob Kennedy to Sam Dash, and the moralizing chairmen, from Estes Kefauver to John McClellan to Sam Ervin.  
This committee muzzled its staff lawyers. Its chairman, instead of being a

Southern preacher-type, was that sophisticated Yankee, Abe Ribicoff, who had somewhat compromised his moral authority in advance by declaring, with great vehemence but at separate times, both the exoneration and the condemnation of Brother Lance.  
If you are convinced of the witness' innocence, then the surest way to maintain that impression is to ask nothing that might disturb him. Sam Nunn and Tom Eagleton have been known, in other settings, as good questioners. But when they looked across at Bert Lance, they got all sentimental and choked up.  
The second reason some senators did not ask questions is that they were not sure if the man before them was a smiling hypocrite or a saint, but they did know he

was budget director and proclaiming an intention to stay. If he were leaving anyway, one might give him an interrogatory poke to get him moving; but if he were staying, well, my goodness, there was no point antagonizing the arbiter of federal spending, was there?  
But then there were the hard cases — the senators who looked and sounded as if they wanted to ask questions but somehow couldn't get them out.  
They were the sort of detectives who — meaning to ask, "Where did you hide the body?" — would instead say: "Mr. Lance, knowing that you feel as strongly as I do that President Carter has set a noble goal of improving the environment and ending pollution wherever possible, it would seem to me incumbent upon you to be fully cooperative in helping the committee staff locate any possible source of environmental degradation or hazard, that you might have come across, and I just wonder if you think that the fact that there are many fresh mounds of dirt in backyards and parks across America gives you any special exemption from the duty all citizens share — senators as well as common people — to help the environmental movement? I know you've been on the stand a long time, and I see Mr. Clifford speaking in your ear, and he knows how much I respect him, but I would appreciate it if you would supply your thoughts on that subject for the record."  
Of course," says Mr. Lance.  
The reason that senators act like that is that they are senators. And being a senator means you already have the answer for everything. So why ask?  
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## Jody Powell pulls a no-no

By HELEN THOMAS  
UPI White House Reporter

WASHINGTON — Jody Powell hurt his image as White House press secretary by passing along to several leading newspapers a rumor that would have discredited a senator investigating Bert Lance.  
When it turned out to be wrong, most of the newspapers ignored it. But the Chicago Sun-Times identified Powell as the aide who tried to peddle the report and the result was an apology by Powell to Sen. Charles Percy, R-Ill.  
Somewhat chagrined, Powell described his action as "dumb" and "inappropriate."  
He later told reporters he consulted some of his predecessors when he took

over as White House spokesman and learned there were ways of dispensing information outside normal channels.  
Most times Powell's penchant for biting characterizations of other politicians has been protected by reporters—even when  
**Washington Window**  
he didn't put his remarks "off the record" or "on background."  
The press secretary sometimes leaks news to ingratiate himself with a reporter, but always for political or personal reasons or to enhance the President's image.

He admits it and sees nothing wrong in it. Working on that premise, he or his aides have divulged reports from the National Security Council and information from an FBI report, among other things.  
Did Powell view the Percy matter as "dumb" because he got caught, or because he now feels it is improper to pass along unsubstantiated allegations for the purpose of damaging someone's reputation?  
Powell has been riding high. He is well liked, intelligent, articulate, and creates an atmosphere of relaxed good feeling. He also has disarming wit and provokes contagious mirth.  
There is one of the hostility of the Watergate era in the White House press center. But few have any illusions that the 33-year-old Powell, who is almost like a son to Carter, is not a totally partisan fighter. He clearly feels he serves a constituency of one—the President.

Powell has said many times there is no reason the White House cannot retaliate when it feels it has been dealt with unfairly. More than many of his predecessors, he calls reporters to complain about their stories, despite this, he conveys no sense of being anti-media.  
Press relations with both Carter and Powell have been generally good. Carter has been fairly accessible, and usually answers questions during informal circumstances. He holds news conferences every two weeks, and conducts himself deftly and with candor. He does his homework and rarely is caught unawares.  
Powell, too, has shown fancy footwork on the podium. He readily admits when he is hedging or cannot elaborate. Carter said last week Powell has learned he will have to be "more cautious."  
Better advice might be never to get himself into another Lance-Percy bind.

### Letter to the editor

## Info there for the asking

Editor's note: the following is in response to Ana Quintana's letter on Monday, September 20, and the response by the O.C.S.A. on Tuesday, September 21.

Editor:  
I have been fortunate enough to live on-campus for two years and am now enjoying living in an apartment. I looked forward to this semester because I grew tired of living in one open room with no personal privacy and people constantly coming in and going out. But I do not feel like I am uninformed about activities that are going on on-campus just because I live off-campus. Like anyone else at TAMU, I have to walk to class, from building to building, and I am constantly passing bulletin boards. I have breaks between classes and I always take time to stop and see if there is anything going on I would be interested in. I also try to pick up a Batt every day and it tells the student what different activities are going on.  
Of course, I understand that some people do not have breaks between classes. Yet, they could take time before or after class to see for themselves the various activities that are posted. And the MSC is the greatest means of communication between student and activity. There are always flyers posted, signs hanging, and the televised listing of activities. Also, the

posters by Town Hall and the Aggie Land Cinema list concerts and movies and their dates and times. These are free to any student.  
As for the OCSA, I feel it is a very worthwhile organization. After all, being uninformed of campus activities is a relatively minor problem of being off-campus students, as far as I'm concerned. I wish the OCSA good luck and offer any help I can give. But, as far as being uninformed goes, I feel some people do not try hard enough to find out "what's happening."  
—Bruce Bradley  
Class of '79

### Ags still honest

Editor:  
I am taking this opportunity to praise the honesty of students on this campus. Last Saturday at a mixer, I lost a James Avery Sandollar from my necklace. When I realized that it was gone, the disc jockey was kind enough to ask everyone to look for it, and a girl immediately came up with my charm. I didn't know who she was, but I am grateful to her for returning it. To me this incident is a true example of Aggie spirit.  
—M. P.  
Class of '81

## Top of the News Campus

### Yell practice in Lubbock

Yell practice for the Texas Tech football game will be held Friday at midnight in Lubbock. To get there, take Highway 84 to Lubbock, then turn left onto Loop 289. Turn right off 289 to 19th Street, and drive until you find 4707 19th. That's John Moore's house — located about three blocks off the Loop. Yell leader Jeff Hancock says to "look for the crazy Aggies."

### Ticket policy changes for Michigan

The procedure for picking up out-of-town game tickets will be altered for the A&M-Michigan game. The plan, proposed by the Athletic Department to prevent scalping, will allow one student to purchase one ticket. Previously, students have been allowed to purchase up to 10 tickets. Also, the ticket will not be given to the student. Instead, the purchaser will be given a receipt and the ticket will then be marked with his student ID number. Purchasers will be told where at Ann Arbor stadium to go to pick up their tickets. There, the student will present the receipt and his ID and be given his ticket. A&M was allocated only 180 tickets for the game.

### Regents to meet Tuesday

The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents meet Tuesday to face an agenda dominated by construction. Members will consider one contract for the renovation of the Agronomy Building on campus and six requests for appropriations for future projects. The Regents also will be asked to approve a \$1 increase to \$15 in Texas A&M's Beutel Health Center fee to help cover salary and other expenses at the center. If approved, the increase will begin spring semester.

## State

### Mennonites gain time

Five hundred Mennonites, who have been trying to establish a permanent colony near Seminole, have been granted additional time in their fight to avoid deportation. The Immigration and Naturalization Service in Washington Thursday gave them until Oct. 1 to prove that forcing them to leave would cause them unnecessary hardship.

## Nation

### Shell workers to undergo tests

The Shell Chemical Co. said Thursday that 44 employees of its Rocky Mountain Arsenal plant who worked with a worm pesticide linked to sterility in men have volunteered to undergo fertility tests. A Shell spokesman said results of the tests would be compared to those conducted on 28 other workers not exposed to dibromochloropropane, called DBCP. The Denver-based Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union has blamed DBCP for the sterility of six workers at an Occidental Chemical Co. plant in California.

### Valentine's Day killer convicted

Roger Drollinger, accused mastermind of the Valentine's Day killings of four brothers, was found guilty Wednesday of four counts of first degree murder by a jury in Hartford City, Ind. The jury deliberated for only an hour before reaching a verdict. Three more defendants are awaiting trial for the slayings.

### EPA checks for Chinese fallout

The possibility of radioactive fallout in the United States from a Chinese nuclear test has prompted the Environmental Protection Agency to take milk samples Monday in Missouri and other states. A Kansas City, Mo. EPA office spokesman said Thursday the milk test are designed to check for higher-than-normal levels of radioactive fallout. The Chinese test produced a cloud of Iodine-131 estimated at 40,000 feet high, moving fast in an easterly direction. The EPA spokesman said the cloud, extending from Oklahoma to the Canadian border, would traverse the nation in two and one-half days. Tests will be taken Monday because it would take at least four days for any possible radioactivity on plants to get through the cows and into the milk. The samples will be sent to Montgomery, Ala., with results expected back by the middle of week. Bill Brink, a radiation protection specialist with the Kansas City EPA, said it is unlikely that any high levels of fallout will occur because the cloud is so high that only severe thunderstorms would release the radioactivity. He said if the tests revealed increased radioactivity in small amounts, the EPA would suggest that farmers take cattle off pasture grass which may have been contaminated and switch them to stored feed. "Another measure would be to store the milk for a few days to allow the radioactivity to decay away," Brink said. "Another, more stringent measure would be to convert the milk to ice cream or cheese and store it for a much longer period. And finally, if it were very heavily contaminated, the milk would be destroyed."

## World

### Haitian political prisoners freed

One hundred four political prisoners were released Thursday from Port Au Prince prison in Haiti to mark the 20th year in power of the rulers of that country. The amnesty was announced Wednesday. President Jean-Claude Duvalier ordered the release to commemorate the 1957 election of his father, Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier. Jean-Claude succeeded Francois who died in 1971.

### Israeli troops fight in Lebanon

Israeli armor and troops are deep inside Lebanon and hammering away at Palestinian and leftist forces. They are reportedly pushing perilously close to Syrian troops in the southern war zone. Palestinians have retaliated with a rocket barrage on an Israeli border town, while Israeli gunboats have reportedly blockaded the ports of Tyre and Sidon to cut guerrilla supply lines.

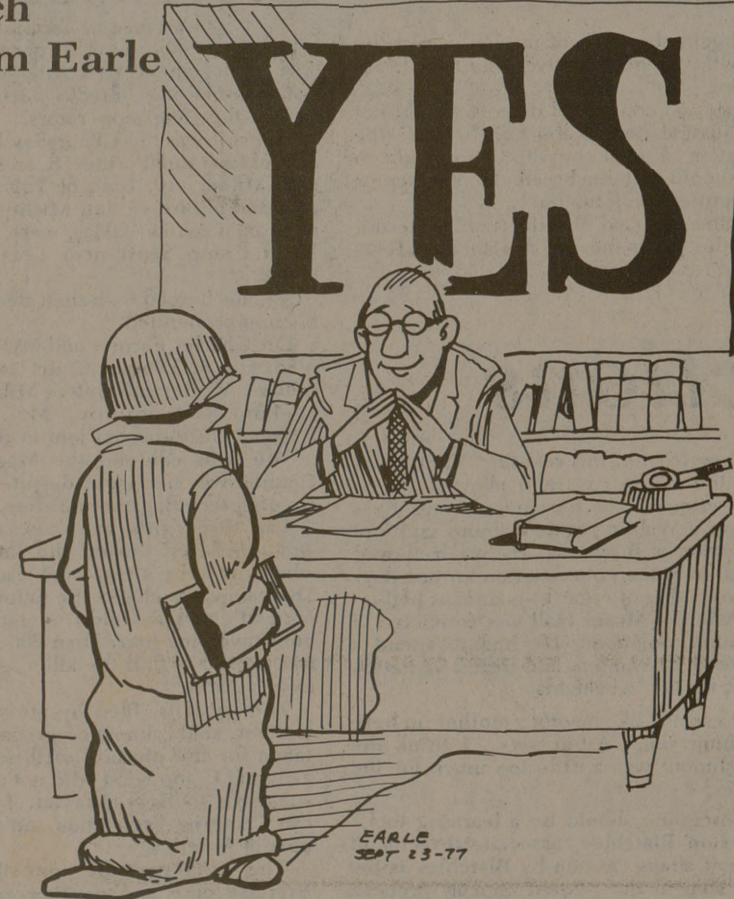
## Weather

Partly cloudy and mild today. High today low 90s. Winds out of the southeast at 10 mph. High Saturday 93 degrees. No rain today or tomorrow.

## The Battalion

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### Slouch by Jim Earle



I have decided to take a positive approach, like 'Yes, you should forgo your dental appointment in Lubbock,' and 'Yes, your grades will suffer if you cut!' How can I be more positive?