

Viewpoint

The Battalion
Texas A&M University

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Trimming costs shouldn't butcher service

Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds.

Few people would argue with any attempts by the U.S. Postal Service to live up to this famous saying, but it seems that at least one regulation in the postal service manual, designed to quicken the postman's completion of his appointed rounds, is denying a very needed service to postal patrons.

The official postal service manual says that letter carriers are not required to pick up mail from residences unless there is mail to be delivered. The rationale: to speed up the postman's job of distributing the mail that daily floods area post offices.

The fact is, this is a very niggardly way to trim the cost of operating the U.S. postal system. There is, at this time, no guarantee that a letter mailed from your residence will be picked up. Unless you receive daily correspondence, it could be days, even weeks, before that bank-by-mail deposit hits your checking account, or the rent gets to the landlord in Houston.

It works another hardship on the elderly, who often are not able to get to the post office to be sure their mail gets on its way. You see, the postal service has even cut the number of corner mail boxes in neighborhoods in its quest to minimize postmen's stops.

According to a spokesman for one of the local letter carriers unions, the veteran carriers still try to accommodate the residents they have come to know from years on the route by checking daily for letters-to-go. But the younger carriers, it seems, are being pressured to cut route time to the minimum. One carrier, the spokesman said, was cited by a postal service inspector for "wasting three-fourths of a minute combing his hair."

If diligent mail-gathering is to be sacrificed, at times denying residents



half of their expected service just to cut a few extra minutes from route time, then the postal service is only trimming itself right out of useful existence. J.A.

Energy battle: Equity vs. efficiency

By DAVID S. BRODER

WASHINGTON — The debate — or rather, the verbal brawl — between President Carter and the oil companies over the pending energy legislation is a foretaste of the basic economic argument of the next decade.

The issue in that debate, as defined by participants in a valuable, continuing forum of the Committee on Economic Development (CED), is "equity vs. efficiency."

The CED, a business-oriented policy research group, has a major project going on "improving the long-term performance of the U.S. economy." A collection of papers from its symposium, headed by Franklin A. Lindsay, the chairman of the Itek Corporation, offers some helpful perspective for those whose heads are reeling from the charge and counter-charge of the energy debate.

At heart, the energy controversy is a struggle between the industry definition of policies that it regards as necessary for in-

creased production and the administration's concept of the fairest way to allocate short supplies and cushion higher costs in a period of scarcity.

The industry wants natural gas prices freed from controls. It opposes most of the taxes Carter wants to impose on energy producers and users. It argues, in effect, for the efficiency of the marketplace as the best guarantee of future oil and gas supplies.

Carter has countered with a vituperative attack on the "selfishness" of this philosophy and has described his program of taxes and controls as the only protection for the powerless consumer.

The usefulness of the CED study, in this context, is that it lets you see that both sides are essentially playing their prescribed parts in what has become virtually the standard script for the economic debates of our age.

As John T. Dunlop, the Harvard economist and former Secretary of Labor,

said at the CED meeting: "If I were to pick out any single subject... as the challenge to this economy in the future, it would be the complicated problem of the interaction of the political process and the economic process and the different ways in which those two arenas tend to be approached."

Dunlop went on to say that, "The considerations of politics are centered very highly on equity, whatever that word means. On the other hand, the economy keeps talking in terms of efficiency, in terms of cost and benefits and such criteria. And those two are often very different worlds."

Carl Kayser, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology economist, pointed out that in addition to emphasizing different values, government and business operate in two quite different time frames on such issues as energy.

Decisions on energy investments must be made with a view to long-term payoff, over a period of 10 to 20 years or more.

Carter's energy plan — while designed as a long-term national strategy — also had to be tailored to pass the House of Representatives, all of whose members are up for reelection next November.

To assert that Carter was oblivious to the political realities would be as naive as to argue that the energy companies are ignoring the impact of the legislation on their balance sheets.

The perspective of the CED discussion offers on the energy argument does not extend to a definitive answer on which side is "right" or "wrong." But it does suggest that the debate arises not from good or bad motives but from an inevitable difference in balancing two legitimate but conflicting goals — equity and efficiency.

And that implies, at least, that as this fight reaches the closing round, where important compromises must be made if the whole effort is not to be wasted, it behooves both sides to abandon their moral posturing and get down to cases. (c) 1977, The Washington Post Company

Confusion + cynicism = stalemate

Presidents trapped in energy maze

By ARNOLD SAWISLAK
United Press International

WASHINGTON — It is hard to think of anything that has done more to make the presidency look helpless than the energy record of the last three occupants of the White House.

Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford failed in turn to sell Congress on the key elements of their energy programs and Jimmy Carter seems well on the way to proving that this is an area in which a Democrat can flop as resoundingly as any Republican.

It certainly is true that the situation is complicated, that the stakes are tremendous and the disagreements are sharp. Nixon and Ford blamed the Democrats; Carter is blaming the oil lobby. But presidents have prevailed over partisanship and economic pressure on tough issues before.

The difference may be that these three presidents have been operating in a mias-

mic climate of confusion and cynicism that has denied them the most potent force in politics — the weight of public opinion.

The confusion arises from the conflicting views of the energy problems that have been offered to the public.

One voice of authority tells the people that the United States and the world is running out of oil and gas and

Washington window

must find alternative sources of energy. One expert says that means more coal; another says nuclear power; someone else says solar energy is the only way to go.

Another voice says energy supplies are adequate if wasteful consumption can be ended. But again the experts disagree: some say simple conservation efforts can

do wonders, others say basic changes of lifestyle will be required.

A third voice says there would be plenty of oil and gas if the government would let the drillers and diggers seek and sell new supplies without interference.

A fourth blames it all on international politics, contending the energy problem is only a symptom of the Middle East political conflict. And, of course, some blame the Arabs and others blame the Israelis for that sorry situation.

Some or even all of these statements may be true, but more often than not they are put forward as the sole explanation for the problem. The result is a babel of confusion that merely reinforces public cynicism.

The public opinion polls continue to show that many Americans believe there is no real energy shortage. Some think the issue has been manufactured to raise prices. These are the people who re-

member pictures of oil tankers anchored off the coast during the 1973-74 gasoline shortage and believe supplies were withheld to set the stage for doubled prices.

To these people, there is very little difference between proposals to discourage oil and gas consumption by increasing taxes or to encourage exploration for new oil and gas supplies by raising prices. Either way, they figure, the public is going to be gouged.

Government cannot succeed in this country without public understanding and support. When the issues involved are great, the support must be overwhelming.

Energy is such an issue. But so far the leadership of this country — in and out of government — has failed to define it for the mass of the public and to offer solutions that seem both fair and practical. Unless that happens, it is a good bet that confusion plus cynicism will equal stalemate.

Letters to the editor

MSC 'grass' decision needs reconsideration

Editor: What's this we hear about the MSC Council passing a resolution that it's okay to walk on the grounds of the MSC now, because "it's too embarrassing to ask visitors not to walk on it." Since when was a true Aggie too embarrassed to expect others to have the proper reverence and respect for these Aggies who have lost their lives in trying to maintain freedom for our country? Rather than embarrassing, it should be considered a privilege to remind others that the grounds on which the Memorial Student Center sit are what the name implies — a memorial. Are we now to change the name of the building, omitting "Memorial" and forget those to whom the building memorializes? Have the families of those who lost their lives been consulted? Are they in agreement with the council's resolution?

Maybe the council's decision was somewhat hasty and should be reconsidered. — Lisa Rychlik, '79 — Amy Neely, '79

Yell leaders powerful

Editor: Never before have I seen so thoroughly disgusted with the conduct of our so called representatives of the student body, the yell leaders, as I was after returning from the S.M.U. yell practice.

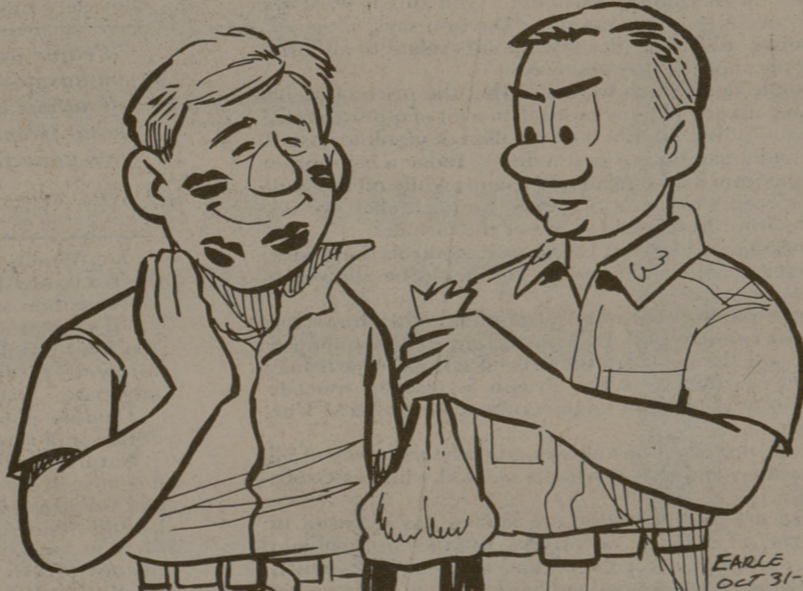
I am a freshman and I certainly have much to learn about Texas A&M, but I was not under the impression that yell practices were to be used as political forums for the yell leaders' biased views. I thought yell leaders were supposed to promote unity and spirit among the student body at Texas A&M, not cause descension. I was totally unaware of the awesome power the yell leaders possessed, in front of approx-

imately 25,000 people, being able to classify a fellow student as a two percent center, simply because of differing views concerning "our" football team. Also, I was not informed that the S.M.U. yell practice would turn out to be a one sided decision concerning the MSC council's decision relating to the use of the MSC grounds.

Both the football team, and the MSC council's decision are debatable subjects, but this is not my point. My point is, the

Slouch

by Jim Earle



"TH' NEIGHBORHOOD WE 'TRICK OR TREATED' IN ONLY CAME UP WITH A LITTLE CRUMBY CANDY!"

back the Aggies in beating the classes of '78, '79, '80, and '81 hell out of Arkansas, T.C.U., t.u., and Houston!

Vic Cooper, '81

Refs need training

Editor:

In a recent I.M. football game there were two losers and one winner. The losers were the two competing teams, and the victors were the referees. The past I.M. season has caused me to question the ability of those hired to officiate student sports events.

If any exam is required of refs to test their knowledge of the rules before being hired, it must surely not be a challenge to even the feeble of mind. A complete ignorance of flag football rules was demonstrated on multiple occasions in each game I played in. They also have difficulty in discerning between such things as a dive and a fall, or a tackle and a fall. I've seen better eyes on a potato. Any protests to the refs were met with an impenetrable cranial barrier or an unsportsmanlike conduct call (more like an unreferee-like conduct call).

I do not mean to imply that I.M. referees are a worthless breed. But there should be something done with those who develop into petty tyrants with their domain being the gridiron. Current I.M. policy discourages any formal player protests and hence rectification of any problem has the same chance as an Edsel comeback.

If other teams have had the same problems, I encourage them to make their views known to the I.M. office. If not, we can expect a repeat performance with each new season.

—Al Atkinson

Top of the News

Campus

Silver Taps to be tonight

Silver Taps will be held in memory of John Lee Scott III tonight at 10:30 in front of the Academic Building. Scott died Oct. 23 in an automobile accident. All lights on campus should be turned off from 10:20 until 10:50 p.m.

Trucks needed for sawed logs

More than two-thirds of the wood cut for the Nov. 25 bonfire still at the cutting area at Cook's Point, 20 miles west of campus, because of a shortage of trucks to haul the logs to Texas A&M, according to bonfire officials. Anyone wishing to donate the use of a truck to transport the logs to campus is asked to contact Kim Malloy at 85-5385 or Charlie Cotten at 845-6440.

State

Oil dumped into Galveston Bay

A collision between two barges Monday caused 42,000 gallons of thick black oil to be dumped into Galveston Bay. No one was hurt in the 4 a.m. accident, but Coast Guard Lt. Jack Hardin said a ribbon-like slick several thousand yards long lapped at Bolivar Peninsula and threatened wildlife on Pelican Island. Cleanup equipment and crews were called to the scene. Hardin said it seems that neither vessel saw the other. There was no fog.

Carter's sis buys Texas ranch

Ruth Carter Stapleton, President Carter's evangelist sister, has bought a 30-acre ranch near Argyle, Tex., for what she said could become the beginning of a network of faith-healing centers around the world. The center, which will be open only by invitation, was described as a nurturing and protective sanctuary for business and political leaders. The ranch will be called "Holovita," meaning whole life. It will serve as world headquarters for "Behold," Ruth Carter Stapleton's faith-healing corporation.

Bakers say need more 'bread'

Some 1,000 Houston area bakers were on strike Monday seeking increased wages and voluntary overtime. Bread marketers said retail supplies may be reduced if the walkout is prolonged. Samuel T. Pryor, secretary-treasurer of Baker and Confectionary Workers Local 163, said strikers seek increased wages and want all overtime to be voluntary. He said bakers want up to 12 hours weekly in voluntary overtime on request. Union bakery workers in Houston currently earn \$4.75 to \$5.63 an hour. Clayton Baird, president of the Texas Gulf Bakers Council, charged the union "has made some demands which we do not feel recognize the perishability of the bakery product."

Nation

Rabin says U.S. policy dulled

Former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said he believes President Carter's Middle East policy has dulled the effectiveness of the United States in negotiating a peace settlement. Rabin was in Kansas City Sunday speaking to Jewish leaders about political and economic support for Israel. He said the United States had succeeded in bringing about agreements between the Arab nations and Israelis because it had remained a neutral party. "Once the party that goes between takes a position, it loses its effectiveness in serving as a go-between," Rabin said. He said that in the long run the Carter administration would learn to do the same as previous administrations.

'Peaceful' nuclear test talks fail

U.S., British and Soviet arms experts have failed to reach agreement on a comprehensive nuclear test ban at the current round of talks in Geneva, Switzerland. The talks will resume in December. Soviet insistence on excluding "peaceful" nuclear explosions from a test ban treaty remains the major problem, diplomatic sources said. The United States, supported by Britain, argues that the prohibition of all nuclear tests should include peaceful explosions because they are no different from military blasts.

Mexican prisoner treaty signed

The United States and Mexico Monday signed a prisoner exchange treaty which will make it possible for many jailed Americans and Mexicans to start home by Christmas. The treaty, which was negotiated in 1976 by former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, was signed by President Carter last Friday. It becomes effective Dec. 1 and will make it possible for many of the 570 Americans serving in Mexican jails — mostly on drug charges — to return home. A similar treaty has been negotiated with Canada.

World

Council moves for African vote

The U.N. Security Council moved swiftly Monday to vote on four black African proposals to impose a variety of arms and economic embargoes against South Africa. The United States was expected to veto any black African attempt that would impose economic sanctions. Western powers, spearheaded by the United States, proposed a six-month arms embargo, to be renewed if South Africa fails to improve the situation. Black African states were demanding a permanent weapons embargo and a ban on investments in white-controlled South Africa. West Germany, Britain, France and Canada are the other western powers. The crisis was brought about by South Africa's latest crackdown on black leaders and other dissidents, and the closing of leading black newspapers.

Weather

Decreasing cloudiness this afternoon with a 30% chance of rain. High today mid-80s. Low tonight mid-40s.

The Battalion

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