

Viewpoint

The Battalion
Texas A&M University

Wednesday
January 11, 1978

When drawing attention goes too far

LAREDO — Farmers blockade a cold storage plant with tractors, demonstrating against the importation of cheap Mexican beef and fruits which the plant stores.

LUBBOCK — Angered by editorials describing them as "goons", striking farmers surround the offices of Lubbock's Avalanche-Journal with tractors, and block all traffic in and out. Police arrest several farmers and tow away tractors before the strikers disband.

ROCKWALL, HEARNE, BRYAN — Tractor processions parade down mainstreets, farmers gather at central malls or buildings and listen to speakers and politicians, then quietly go home.

So has gone some of the best and worst of the national farm strike, today entering its second month. Most farmer demonstrations have been orderly, peaceful and have done what they meant to do — attract the sympathetic attention of a public ignorant to the economics of keeping food on America's table.

But those occasional violent confrontations may undo all the good the strike may do. Most Americans are just as stubborn as those independent farmers and they dislike being threatened just as much. The farmers need to remember that and keep demonstrations peaceful.

American consumers may need to be hit between the eyes with a 2x4 to get their attention, but they won't stand for a knife pointed at their bellies.
L.R.L.



Carter seeking greener fields abroad

By David S. Broder
WASHINGTON — Jimmy Carter has gone abroad.

That is not just a statement on the President's whereabouts. It is a comment on an important shift of focus that has taken place since he entered the White House almost a year ago.

Carter the campaigner and Carter the novice President was a handy-man eager to fix up the home place — to remove the rust from the economic pipes, rebuild the rickety structure of the federal bureaucracy, replace the eyesore tax and welfare codes and correct the dangerous lean in the budget by putting it back into balance.

When he drained the pond in Plains of its accumulated debris right after the Democratic convention of 1976, it was understood as a symbol of his intention to clean up the mess in Washington and the domestic economy.

Well, after a year of mucking in that mess, a year of nagging arguments with Congress and the interest groups about what ought to be done and in what order,

Carter gratefully shucked his blue jeans and work shirt and jumped into diplomatic pinstripes and set off to see the world.

Nobody can blame him. But equally no one should minimize the importance of what has happened.

The most striking thing, to me, in the President's year-end interview with the four television networks was the sharp contrast between his optimism on international questions and the weariness and resignation with which he spoke of domestic issues.

Sadat and Begin, he said, are well-launched on their quest for a Middle Eastern peace, and the United States is ready to help them achieve it. The SALT talks with Russia are going well, and a treaty — with a Brezhnev summit in Washington — is probable in 1978. The Panama Canal treaties will be ratified this year. The United States can use the leverage of its human-rights campaign, its increased prestige in Africa and Latin America, to advance progress all around the world.

But when the questioning shifted to

domestic affairs, it was as if the lights had been turned down in the White House. Here at home, Carter said, the problems are "intractable" and "very difficult" of solution. The oft-promised balancing of the federal budget by the end of 1980 is "obviously something I can't guarantee" — not with unemployment and inflation stubbornly resisting his economic policies.

The promise of comprehensive tax reform has been abandoned in favor of fast action on the 1978 version of what is becoming an annual tax-cut-and-stimulus package. Welfare reform is in deep trouble in the House. The promised national health insurance plan will be introduced late this year. But a President sensitized by his first-year experiences to the dangers of what he called "building expectations too high," wants everyone to know in advance it will not pass. As for energy, the failure in that area is a "cloud... over the determination and leadership qualities of the nation."

Three quick observations on all this: First, let no one think the shift of focus

is of no significance. Presidents, like the rest of us, work hardest where they see hope of success. Even for a workaholic like Carter, time spent on the international agenda means presidential energy diverted from the unsolved domestic problems.

Second, there are risks as well as rewards in the switch from home repairman to world statesman. The Panamanians, the Palestinians, and the Politburo may look easier to deal with than the tax lobbyists, the energy conferees or the unemployed — but they are not easily managed either.

And finally, on a political note, Presidents — and especially Democratic Presidents — tend to be judged by the voters on their record in domestic affairs. You can stack the treaties as high as the Washington Monument and they won't be as convincing to voters as a healthy economy, with more jobs and better pay.

The message to the touring President really is: You have to come home again.

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Too much leisure time can be dangerous

By WAYNE ANDREWS

Never before have so many people in so many countries had so much leisure time to devote to pleasure, fun and games. Even with this increase in time, money and leisure, people in the United States are still hoping and fighting for a four day work week.

I maintain, and evidence is now appearing, that we are not learning to cope with the increased amount of leisure time at our

beginning and end of the blessed life." This ancient philosopher found some of his greatest followers in Rome. Food, goods and services flowed into Rome and Rome wallowed in luxury and wealth. The Romans soon lost sight of their national objectives. Fun and games became more important than survival. The Romans gorged themselves on exotic dainties, indulged in wild sex orgies and were spec-

tators to many killings in the Coliseum. The main attraction for the masses was the circus. This is very closely related to the thousands who attend American football games. Today, the happiness of many also seems to hang on the outcome of the Grand Prix, the Indianapolis 500, a baseball or football game, or dog or horse races. Juvenal, Roman poet and satirist of A.D. 100, wrote, "The public has long since cast off its cares; the people that once bestowed

commands, consulships, legions, and all else, now meddles no more and longs eagerly for just two things—bread and circuses."

Today, millions of Australians, Canadians, English, and other Europeans, and Americans also seem to have lost their sense of national purpose and destiny. The Romans became obsessed and engrossed with fiction and indecent stage productions. "Almost from the beginning the Roman stage was gross and immoral," wrote Myers in "Rome, Its Rise and Fall."

We are much like the Romans in that we are addicted to watching television, or attending the latest bloody motion picture, absorbing the violence, the sadism, the sex, and the horror displayed. Davis wrote in "The Influence of Wealth in Imperial Rome: "And so the barbarians at length destroyed a society that was more slowly destroying itself." Dr. James C. Charlesworth remarked several years ago that leisure is "growing much faster than our capacity to use it wisely."

Good wholesome leisure is fine as leisure does not become an end in itself. When millions begin putting fun and games before serious business of life, when leisure activities become a form of escapism from reality, when the sole purpose for leisure activities becomes the gratification of the senses—then a whole society is in trouble.

Readers Forum

disposal. As mechanization and modern technology provide more leisure time and less work time, boredom and frustration will increase rapidly. When people become bored with life, lack goals, have nothing to live for or sacrifice for, and have no driving purpose for living, they stagnate, become restless, and are easily irritated.

As more free time has become available, people crave excitement and thrills because there is nothing normally thrilling about modern education, or normal home routines.

About 300 B.C., there lived in Greece, a philosopher who taught that the supreme purpose of life was to get all the pleasure possible out of it. His name was Epicurus and he said, "We declare pleasure to be the



Letters to the editor

The 'painless' way to cook in dorm rooms

Editor: I read, with a certain amount of amazement and disbelief, George Friedel's article (on cooking in dorm rooms) in Reader's Forum in the Dec. 9 paper.

I was amazed only because I had temporarily forgotten how Mickey Mouse certain A&M administrative functions really are. But I come forward today not to speak about the fact that George Friedel is a puppet in a very childish play, but rather, to offer him a simple recipe.

You see, in so many ways, I have been there before.

Back in 1970 when I lived in Leggett Hall, the non-cooking rule was in effect, and many of us had classes that ran from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. It was often impossible to eat, especially if that late afternoon class was a chemistry lab — that tended to run somewhat past 6 p.m.

In 1970 I pioneered a new cooking method that apparently has not survived the rigors of time. (If it had, you would be using it and would have been able to avoid this harassment you are receiving.)

So, I developed a cooking method that worked without hotplates or electricity. It was a method that I published in a small newspaper and which eventually spread all over my dorm (It may have spread further though I have no way of knowing.)

All you have to do is go down to Charlie's Grocery, buy a 15 cent cork, march back to your dorm, poke the cork into the

sink, turn on the hot water, drop your cans of food into the water, and wait. Chili takes 20 minutes, soup 15. Other foods may be cooked at times relative to chili and soup, taking these as extremes of food consistency. (Stew would take, for instance, about 17 minutes.)

After the elapsed time, remove the can, open and serve. You have, presto, a hot meal, and without the expenditure of electric power, without the odor of cooking, without the time required to cook and without the mess of dirty pans to wash.

Sure it costs to run the hot water, but they don't have a rule against it — I've checked.

I hope this recipe will help you — I couldn't have lived without it.

Oh, and George, there is one other thing. Before you heat your cans, take the label off. Otherwise you run the risk of it coming off in the hot water and clogging the overspill drain. If you develop a clog, your sink will run over. I've done that before, too.

—Douglas W. Kirk
Psychology, M.S., B.S.
Journalism, B.S.

Corps doesn't 'boo'

Editor: I have recently seen some newspaper articles that indicate that the Cadet Corps actually booed David Walker during the

A&M-Houston game this year. I find that very hard to believe but the prospect of such a thing bothers me even more.

Traditionally, the Cadet Corps and the spirit of the twelfth man have staunchly supported the Aggie team through good times as well as bad. There has always been the realization that you must support the man in the arena unless you get in there and do a better job, or said another

way, if you haven't tried it, don't knock the man who is.

I hope the reports are unfounded but if they are not, it may be time to reintroduce the principles of cooperative effort, teamwork and the twelfth man spirit that have, in the past, distinguished Texas A&M from institutions who do boo the players who represent them.

—John B. Ferrata, Jr., '57
Colonel, USAF



Top of the News

Campus

Registration begins today

Registration for spring 1978 classes will run today through Friday this week from 8 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. each day. Registration begins at the office of the student's department head with processing completed in the Exhibit Hall of Rudder Center. Fees will be collected at the Exhibit Hall the day after registration.

Add-drop opens at G. Rollie

Add-drop begins today at 8 a.m. at G. Rollie White Coliseum. Add-drop will continue through Friday this week and will be open from 8 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. each day.

Off-campus problems aired

A session for all off-campus students needing housing or roommates will be held from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. today. Women will meet in Rm. 139 of the Memorial Student Center and men in Rm. 201 of the MSC.

Announcement orders available

Spring degree candidates may order graduation announcements now through Feb. 17 at the Student Finance Center, Rm. 217 Memorial Student Center. Students expecting to graduate May 5 or May 6 should place orders between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. weekdays.

State

Research funds climb for colleges

Research money at Texas public colleges and universities totaled \$189.9 million in 1976-1977 — a 12.3 percent increase from a year earlier, the College Coordinating Board reported Tuesday. The federal government provided 58.4 percent of the money; 24.3 percent came from the state, the rest from private sources.

Tower seeks re-election

Sen. John Tower, R-Texas, formally announces his candidacy for re-election today prior to a three-day statewide campaign tour. Tower is not expected to face opposition in the Republican primary, but two candidates already are in the race for the Democratic nomination and the right to oppose Tower in November. The Democratic candidates are Rep. Bob Krueger, D-Texas, and former State Insurance Board chairman Joe Christie.

School taxes rise despite help

Speaker Bill Clayton said Tuesday only one 256 of the state's 1,066 school districts cut taxes this year despite massive increases in state funds for education. Clayton reported on the results of the state's \$1 billion school finance bill at a meeting of Texans for Equitable Taxation. The House Speaker said he was disappointed more districts did not use the additional state money to cut local property taxes. He said 159 school districts increased their tax rates and 651 did not change their levies.

Nation

December retail purchases drop

American retail purchases dropped 0.7 percent in December — the largest drop in nearly a year. Retail sales are considered the trust indicator of consumer spending trends. But the Commerce Department, in releasing the figures, said most of the decline was due to a 0.2 percent falloff in automobile sales and a 6 percent drop in building materials, neither of which is traditionally related to Christmas purchases. Department store sales, a more accurate gauge of Christmas shopping, climbed 0.5 percent, the department said.

Weather

Mostly cloudy, rainy and cold today with a chance of thunderstorms this afternoon. Continued cold with 70% chance of precipitation today, decreasing to 50% tonight. High today in the mid 40's, high tomorrow in the mid 50's. Winds at 10-15 mph. Clearing and warmer for Friday and Saturday.

The Battalion

Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the editor or of the writer of the article and are not necessarily those of the University administration or the Board of Regents. The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting enterprise operated by students as a university and community newspaper. Editorial policy is determined by the editor.

LETTERS POLICY

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.

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