

VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

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Heeeeere's Bert!

Television has an uncanny knack for transforming yesterday's shady characters into today's celebrities. Such is the case with our ol' friend, Bert Lance.

Remember Bert? The Georgia banker who was one of Jimmy Carter's first appointees and also his first subordinate, as federal budget director, to leave office under fire?

Well, Bert is back on TV's silver screen, this time "answering" public questions on economics instead of grand jury questions about his checking accounts.

Bert debuted last night as a daily commentator for Atlanta's No. 3 television station, WXIA, known in the Georgia capital for its Barnum & Bailey style of self-promotion. His 90-minute commentaries are billed as working man's interpretation of the world's financial, business and governmental hijinks. The station's promotional director has said of the commentaries: "It's not the kind of thing you have to hype too much. We want it to be more tasteful than just 'Heeeeere's Bert.'"

Is he qualified? As Bert himself says, "If I'm no good, then I don't deserve to be there. But that's a judgement the public will make, not the news media." WXIA thinks he's qualified enough to pay him a \$50,000 to \$60,000 salary.

Bert, you could probably sell ice cubes to an Eskimo, too. L.R.L.

The cocktail circuit hasn't changed

By ARNOLD SAWISLAK

WASHINGTON — In Washington and perhaps some other towns, there is a bar that calls itself "The Office." This is an accommodation to husbands who arrive home late and are called upon to account for their whereabouts.

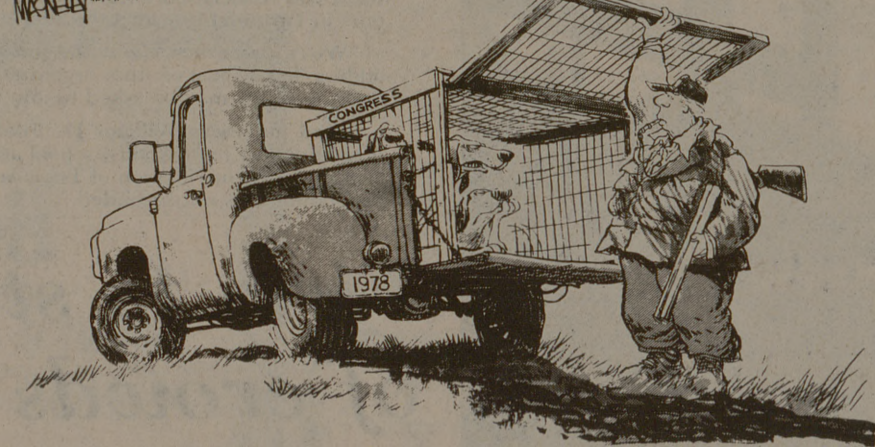
Washington Window

That sounds like a rather weak reed for thirsty and errant husbands to lean on, but it is no less substantial than the myth that serious government business is transacted at Washington cocktail parties.

For decades, Washington "society" has enshrined the ritual of standing in some noisy, overcrowded room from 5 to 7 nibbling salty fish and smelly cheese washed down with expensive booze.

The capital's hostesses tell each other that they are making a vital contribution to the national interest, if not the survival of the free world, by giving desk-weary statesmen and lawmakers the chance to deal with each other in a relaxed environment. What they really give them is a place to get a couple of belts before dinner.

By ARNOLD SAWISLAK



In point of fact, Washington cocktail parties are much like the description of the streets of Hollywood: about half the people are hoping to see someone famous and the rest are people hoping to be mistaken for someone famous.

The conversation at such gatherings fre-

quently consists of recitations from the gossip columns and sports pages of that day's newspapers. Should someone actually attempt to bring up serious business at such an occasion, a likely response, as James Perry recently reported in the Wall Street Journal, is "get in touch with my

secretary and we'll talk it over in the office."

Now we are being told that the reason Jimmy Carter and the people who came to Washington with him are having difficulties is that they don't go to cocktail parties. That is about as plausible as a suggestion that all Idi Amin needs to become a respected world leader is a cram course in table manners.

The Carter administration's problems are caused by 1) the tough national and international issues it must deal with, 2) the strong influence wielded by special interests on American government, 3) the heady post-Watergate surge of independence in Congress and 4) its own inexperience in dealing with all of the above.

The Carterites have at least three more years to learn how to get things done in Washington. Lacking the advantage of administrations whose leaders often spent years observing the process before assuming the power, it now appears the education will have to be absorbed on the job.

In any case, it is doubtful there is much Carter or his people can learn standing around an hors d'oeuvres tray in Georgetown except to steer clear of the deviled eggs.

Crime goes down the tube

By DICK WEST

WASHINGTON — According to the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting, violence on television decreased nine percent last fall. The latest FBI statistics, however, show only a 3.9 percent decrease in the violent crime rate.

The Lighter Side

If, as it appears, televised violence is being brought under control more rapidly than murder and mayhem in real life, then here is a situation that fairly cries out for further study.

The next logical step would be to determine what factors help curb violence on the tube, and then incorporate these measures

into anti-crime programs.

A study like that should be good for at least a \$200,000 grant from some federal agency. Meanwhile, I've been doing a little voluntary research just to satisfy my own curiosity. I began by consulting an official of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, LEAA. He attributed the lower violence rate on television to an increase in the number of weekly police shows.

"The mere presence of all those cops on the tube is itself a strong deterrent," he said.

"Don't police shows themselves generate a good deal of violence?" I asked.

"True enough," he replied. "But they help keep down the level of violence on other types of shows. Take Thursday night, for example.

"That evening you've got 'Hawaii Five-O' on one network and 'Baretta' and 'Barney Miller' on another. Plus you've got 'Barnaby Jones,' a private eye with a lot of friends on the police force, and you've got 'Fish,' a retired cop.

"With that many men in blue around, you're not going to see much violence on, say, 'The Waltons' or 'The Price is Right,' which appear on the same evening.

"The increased police visibility is particularly important for a program like 'Welcome Back, Kotter,' which fairly teems with potential juvenile delinquents."

However, the LEAA official cautioned that the report by the citizens committee might be somewhat misleading.

"Their survey only covered prime time network programs," he said. "We have reason to believe there are many acts of vio-

lence in other times slots that go unreported."

In illustration of that point, he noted that tensions always run high in daytime soap operas.

"Yet if they reached the breaking point and mayhem resulted, it wouldn't show up on the committee's tabulation," he pointed out.

Later, I talked with a Justice Department official who had a different explanation for the decline in televised violence.

The main deterrent, he said, may be found in the fact that the judges in various TV shows mete out longer sentences than they once did.

It will, of course, take a much more expensive study to identify and evaluate all of the factors involved. But I'm sure you'll agree it will be grant money well spent.

Letters to the editor

Banks biting the hands that feed them

Editor:

I read an article in the Battalion, 1-25-78 which I believe demands the attention and concern of everyone connected with Texas A&M University.

The article informed the reader that there are presently no banks in the Bryan, College Station area giving loans thru the Federally Insured Student Loan Programs. The main reason given was that "The banks could make more money using these funds to make higher interest, short term loans." This despite the fact that the student loans are federal insured.

Some information very relevant to this issue needs to be added. There is one major reason why this area has shown such recent, rapid growth, why banks have proliferated and prospered, why those same banks are able to make high interest, short term loans; that is the recent increase in the student population and the attendant need for increased services and staff that has resulted. The area owes its prosperity to the students.

The article also mentions that students should apply for such loans thru their hometown bank, but one of the first persons with whom I discussed this article, a resident of College Station for ten years, spoke of his daughter's inability to obtain such a loan locally. There were three advertisements for local banks in the Battalion, 158. They listed 8 members of the staff at Texas A&M among their board of directors. A great deal of student money (savings and checking accounts) is used by local banks to make those short term, high interest loans.

I have read and heard a great deal about Aggie Spirit. Could it be anything better than trying to help fellow Aggies who are trying to help themselves? Could it be anything better than refusing to sit idly by while Aggies are treated in less than an equitable manner?

But what could be done? What power do we have to influence local banks to moderate their loan making practices.

(1) Let every student ask the loan officer at the bank he trades with that bank's

policy as regards Federally Insured Student Loans, and further, suggest it be changed.

(2) Identify those members of the staff at A&M who are members of the boards of local banks and ask that they advocate and change in that bank's policy toward Federally Insured Student Loans.

(3) The student government could circulate a petition expressing student support of the F.I.S.L. program and present it to local banks.

(4) Finally, would it be unreasonable for students to withdraw their funds from those banks which refuse to make funds available to students.

Aggies, the spirit calls. I never have, nor do I ever contemplate making an application for a Federally Insured Student Loan.

— J. Beaudette, '78

Math inequalities

Editor:

I am writing in response to a problem which I am sure has plagued many more students than just myself. In a world where grades can make or break a person's future, it seems to me that such important marks should be based on standard measurements of learning, not just the whims or grading policies of different professors. My main complaint on this subject lies with the math department.

Math is required in many advanced courses, so a basic understanding is essential. However, if you happen to have a harder professor than most, your "C" in calculus could be worth more than an "A" in an easier class — but try to show that on your G.P.R.! Such lack of learning standardization is hardest on students applying to medical or law schools where grades are a deciding factor in gaining entrance. Identical classes may have tests made up of difficult problems, while others may be multiple choice questions. I realize such standardization would be

difficult for the more advanced classes, but consistency on the lower levels would at least put everyone on equal footing. Texas A&M is growing school, but if our chemistry department can still manage to maintain a high level of standardization, why can't the math department? It's a shame that a person's worth should be measured on such a faulty scale, but if it has to be that way, at least let's make it fair.

— Patricia S. Young, '81

Shop by mail

Editor:

Due to the absence of letters in our mailbox, we are sending out a plea to the male population of that fine University, Texas A&M. We would sincerely like to receive letters from any available Aggies. Our interests include: wildlife, art, camping, the environment, cooking, candy and flowers (hint, hint), horses, poetry, medieval literature, and collies. (And various and sundry other topics — or if you're interested in it, we're interested in it.)

We know that you love to get letters too and so it would be a mutually beneficial relationship. While we're not QUITE Charlie's Angels, we're not Phyllis Dillers either, and upon request we will mail you our pictures (autographed).

Included in your first response we would appreciate:

- 1.) brief biographical sketch (20 words or less, typewritten, double-spaced)
 - 2.) photograph (8 by 10 glossy)
 - 3.) GPA, classification, and major
 - 4.) summary of interests and hobbies
 - 5.) a critical essay on Carter's energy plan (bibliography included)
- All of the above may be omitted except for #4, if you so desire.

We will anxiously await your letters. PLEASE write soon.

— Anne Herget, Elaine Dye,
119 North Russell,
Baylor U., Waco Texas 76703

Ed. note: This is not a date solicitation section, but we thought this deserved publication.

Give support

Editor:

An open letter to all Aggies: Come on now, what separates Aggies from the run-of-the-mill fan? A spirit, a kinship! I thought that meant through the good and lean of everything. What am I getting at? The lack of this kinship when an athletic team is not winning — particularly, the lean season our basketball team is having, but it holds true for any of the sports. It doesn't mean those athletes are not playing as hard nor a coach doing less. We in the stands are not coaches nor players. Let us, as true Aggies, win or lose gracefully and show your SUPPORT of the teams by ATTENDING the games and keep that special spirit alive... "Win, Lose or Draw, the Texas Aggies are Our Team!" Quit grouching and cheer all the louder — Gigem Aggies!

— G. M. Brundidge

Writing the editor

Letters to the editor are printed as a service to our readers. Publication of a letter is not guaranteed. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters to remove grammatical errors and to avoid litigation.

They should:

- ✓ Not exceed 300 words or 1800 characters in length.
- ✓ Be neatly typed whenever possible. Hand-written letters are acceptable.
- ✓ Include the author's name, address and telephone number for verification. Names will be withheld only in extreme circumstances.

TOP OF THE NEWS

Campus

Degree application due Friday

A key date is near for Texas A&M University students who expect to receive degrees at May 5 and 6 commencement. The deadline to apply for a degree is Friday and application is the student's responsibility, says Registrar Robert Lacey. Graduate and undergraduate students should first pay an \$8 degree fee at the Fiscal Office in the Richard Coke Building. The fee receipt must be presented to complete application. Graduate students apply at the Graduate College in the Teague Center. Undergraduate students' applications will be accepted at Heaton Hall, the new headquarters for the Office of Admissions and Records.

State

Attempted eagle kill draws fine

The federal judge in San Antonio Monday fined three men a total of \$6,000 for conspiring to kill at least 70 federally protected golden eagles from a helicopter at Leakey, Texas, but warned further killings could lead to penitentiary terms. U.S. District Judge John Wood Jr., saying the case was the most controversial he had dealt with in 32 years as a trial lawyer and eight years as a judge, advised ranchers not to threaten continued violation of the conservation law but instead attempt to change or repeal it. Wood noted he could have sentenced each of the defendants to one year in prison and fined them \$5,000 on each of seven counts of indictment charging conspiracy, violations of the Airborne Hunting Act and killing of the birds.

Largest cities may increase tax

The Treasury Department has estimated the nation's 48 largest cities might have to increase property taxes if President Carter's jobs, public works and anti-recession programs are not continued and economic conditions do not improve. The Treasury Department said the general impact would be for the average property tax to increase 65 cents for each \$100 of full market value in the ten largest cities of the nation. The analysis indicated average property tax increases of 40 cents per \$100 full market value for 28 cities with moderately strained budgets including Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, and San Antonio. Average tax increases of 24 cents per \$100 full market value were estimated for ten cities with low budget strain, including Houston.

Nation

Strangler suspect sends letter

The mayor of Los Angeles, Tom Bradley, disclosed Monday he had received a letter indicating the writer was the Hillside Strangler suspected of the sex-killing of 12 young women and offering to provide further information if given assurances for his safety. Bradley said at a city hall news conference he wanted to assure any individual connected with the case that he could surrender himself to the mayor's office with complete safety and would be provided with any necessary protection. Disclosure of the receipt of the letter left in question whether it was the work of someone actually involved in the killings or just a crank communication. Bradley said he felt it important enough to make a public statement.

World

Israel must make next move

Egyptian President Anwar Sadat said Monday the Israeli position on Mideast peace is hardening rather than softening and it is up to the Jewish state to make the next move to reopen stalled peace talks. He accused Israel of "a vicious cycle" of nitpicking in the negotiations. In prepared remarks for a luncheon speech at the National Press Club, Sadat said "efforts will have to be doubled if we are to re-affirm the faith of many people in the area that peace is attainable." Sadat, who discussed the troubled talks with President Carter over the weekend, today accused Israel of going back to "the vicious circle of arguing over every single word or comma" in peace proposals.

Jet hijacker nabbed in Germany

A Czechoslovakia engineering specialist who claimed he had a bomb in his briefcase hijacked a Czechoslovakia jetliner over East Germany today and forced it to fly to West Germany, where he asked for political asylum. A police spokesman said 24-year-old Ladislav Molnar left the plane and surrendered to police as soon as it landed at Frankfurt. There were no injuries in the incident and police said Molnar did not carry a bomb.

Weather

Overcast skies today with rain and drizzle. Possibility of freezing rain & sleet tonight. High today 36, low tonight 28. Winds from the east-northeast at 8-20 mph. Continued overcast & cold through Wednesday with the possibility of rain & sleet.

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.

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