

VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

FRIDAY
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Garbage man

H. R. Haldeman, who was Richard M. Nixon's White House chief of staff, presently is assigned to the sewage treatment plant of a federal prison camp. Considering the garbage Haldeman has turned out in book form, sewage treatment would appear to be his true calling.

Haldeman is serving a sentence for conviction on charges of conspiracy, obstruction of justice and perjury. In the course of the Watergate hearings, Haldeman testified under oath that neither he nor Nixon had any advance knowledge of the break-in that led to the former president's downfall. When the truth was known, Haldeman swore, the public would be convinced of Nixon's innocence.

Now, for a price, Haldeman squeals that Nixon engineered the break-in of the Democratic National Committee's Watergate offices. He says Nixon was obsessed with the urge to damage Lawrence O'Brien, who was then Democratic Party chairman. According to Haldeman, Nixon wanted to "get the goods" on a large legal retainer that O'Brien supposedly received from the late billionaire recluse Howard Hughes.

Like others of the Watergate crowd before him, Haldeman has further dishonored himself by his writings.

The question remains: When is a perjurer to be believed — when he's lying to save his skin, or when he's lying to make a buck. The best answer may be never.

St. Louis Globe-Democrat

Jim Crawley

April Fool's Day at the polls

Controversy has always surrounded the College Station ward system. The two-year-old system has been through more legal hassles and attempts on its life than even the recent utilities dispute between the twin cities.

Two years ago, the citizens of College Station were to decide on the manner in which councilmen in the city would be elected. The original proposal of the council was a ballot containing three choices. One, to keep the old, at-large system. Two, to split the city into three wards and elect three others at-large. Three, to create an all ward system.

After receiving council approval for the best-out-of-three ballot it was discovered that the ballot failed to meet the requirements set forth in the city charter. The ballot would have to be a simple yes-no proposition, not a multiple choice question.

After some quick maneuvering the council substituted a proposal which allowed the voters to choose between the at-large system and the ward system. It was suggested that the residents of the city would oppose any ward system that placed

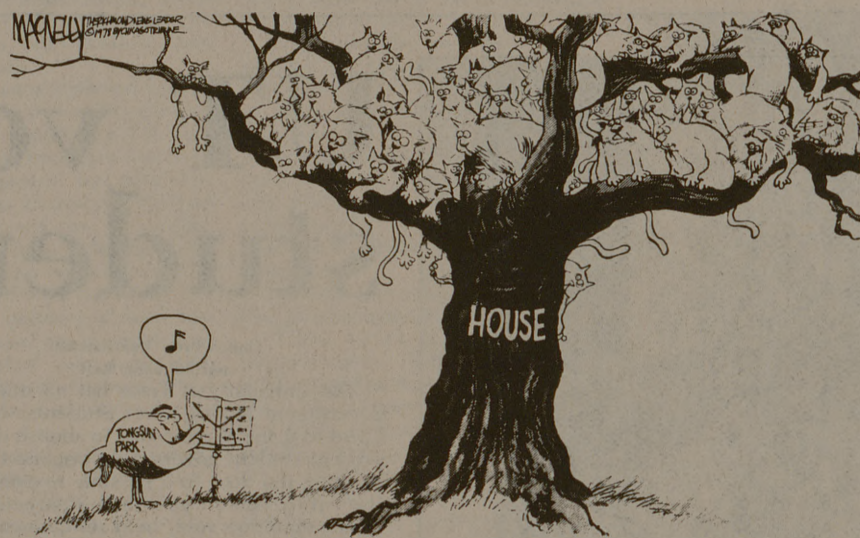
every councilman, except the mayor, into a separate ward.

On election day, the voters of College Station passed the ward system by a mere 29 votes. This prompted outcries of "foul." Many politicians believed the ballot was too complicated for the voters to understand.

This began a legal battle that lasted into fall of 1976. A group of citizens, headed by former mayor D.A. Anderson, filed a petition calling for the election results to be overturned. The ensuing court battle involved both city officials and Texas A&M students.

The battle was characterized by confusing battle lines. Many of the councilmen were in favor of the lawsuit filed against the city. Several students joined the suit when it appeared the city was not defending itself.

The petition form used by Anderson was originally formulated by Mayor Lorence



Bravence. Although the mayor did not sign the petition which named him and the City of College Station as defendants, he did admit that he suggested and typed the original used by Anderson.

When the case came before State District Judge W.C. Davis, of Bryan, the city failed to defend itself. The city attorney, Neeley Lewis, spend most of the trial assisting Anderson with Anderson's presentation. Three Texas A&M students — Robert Harvey, Mary Ellen Martin and Jerri Ward — filed a "friend of the court" brief in favor of the ward system. Davis ruled in favor of the ward system.

Since then rumors have been flying back and forth through the city concerning a new referendum on the at-large system.

The charter requires a two-year wait before the same issue can be voted on again. That time limit ends this year and the council has scheduled another election on the ward system. Most members of the council believe the ward system will be overturned this time around.

What will happen this year on April Fool's Day when the voters of College Station go to the polls? Will the voters return

the city to the virtues of the at-large system or will they keep the ward system?

The question brings an emotional response from many residents. Many students think that the wards are the only way a student can be elected to the city council. Many non-student residents are against splitting the city into wards. City officials see the dollar signs flowing out of the city treasury because of the higher cost of conducting ward elections.

The ward system is similar to the districts used by large cities to divide their council seats. The problem cited by most opponents of the ward system is that College Station is not a large metropolitan city. With nearly 40,000 residents, each councilman represents only 6,500 residents.

The six wards were constructed so that each region has a similar population and mixture of races and students. Other factors included the location of the sitting councilmen.

The ward system may be seeing its last election on April Fool's Day. But, then again, who knows?

David S. Broder

Washington's price of independence

WASHINGTON — Patrick Anderson, who wrote a book ("The President's Men") on White House assistants and in 1976 served as a speechwriter for Jimmy Carter, had a consoling thought for Hamilton Jordan. Deep as Jordan's troubles seemed last week, they were not as serious as those of Harry Hopkins, the Roosevelt aide Anderson described as "the most influential and admirable" of all the presidential assistants of this century.

Hopkins, who moved into the White House with his young daughter after his first wife died of cancer, was the subject of endless gossip and criticism. So controversial did he become that, at one point, he hung out a sign saying, "We ain't mad at nobody" — in effect, suing for peace.

But there was no peace for him, and Anderson cites him as a prime example of the general point he makes in his book: "A President's trusted aide can attain power and glory, but the power is precarious and the glory may become tinged with notoriety, for there are many dangers inherent in his position."

Last week, Hamilton Jordan learned again of those dangers. For the second time in a few months, he was the central figure in an unpleasant public encounter with an offended woman. The first involved personal remarks he allegedly made to or about the wife of the Egyptian

ambassador. The second involved a bar-room scene with a woman who alleges he spit his drink at her and who, in any case, undeniably hauled off and slapped him.

In both instances, Jordan affirms that he was not the guilty party. The President and his associates in the White House take

Commentary

Jordan's word for it. His power has risen inside the White House even as his notoriety has grown, and he is today, beyond much challenge, the most important of the President's policy and political advisers. He is also 33 years old and recently separated from his wife. His father, who had been ill with cancer, died last week of a stroke.

I do not know much about Jordan's social life or conversational habits. And I can only guess at the personal pressures under which he has been operating. My discussions with him over the last five years have been in the line of business.

I do know a couple of other things about him, however. He has one of the best political minds I have ever met — a keen

sense of public moods and good judgment about the effect of alternative strategies and policies. His assessments of Carter's situation and prospects — minus as well as pluses — have been unfailingly honest.

Second, in an administration where public relations and polls are given perhaps excessive weight, Jordan is one of the handful of people with access to Jimmy Carter who really cares about the ultimate objectives of politics. The pursuit of peace and social justice are not just slogans with him.

He also happens to be a man whose loyalty to Carter is unquestioned by the President. From all accounts, Jordan uses that position of trust to give Carter very frank advice.

His personal memos to the President, I am told by those who have seen some of them, are models of direct, unhedged, non-bureaucratic prose. He is willing to go toe-to-toe with the President when he disagrees with Carter's proposed course of action.

The presence of someone with those characteristics in any White House is very much in the national interest. But there is no question — even in the minds of White House colleagues who defend him — that Jordan's reported escapades have become a political embarrassment (and maybe more) to Carter.

Jordan himself could probably walk

away from the job with few regrets. Four years ago, when he was the second most powerful man in Georgia government at the age of 29 (as executive assistant to the governor), he walked out to start running a longshot's presidential campaign.

His own casualness about the trappings of power makes him scornful of the power-and-status-conscious society of Washington, D.C. He has gone out of his way to show his scorn — by declining to conform in dress, manners or behavior to what is expected of a presidential assistant. To some this is just personal affection; to others, it has become a symptom of either hostility or of self-indulgence. In either case, it is taken as indicating a serious lack of self-discipline.

Jordan has a right to live his own life. But more than a year ago, Bob Strauss, who shares with Carter a paternal affection for Jordan, gave him some advice.

"You are living in a company town," Strauss said, "and if you're going to thumb your nose at the standards of this town, you better live like a saint. Cause if you do one thing wrong, they'll never let you forget it, and they'll hound you out of town, like you were the devil."

It was good advice then. And it is even better advice today.

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Letters to the editor

Transcendental meditation not religion

Editor:

Some students have taken it upon themselves to remove many of the posters announcing an introductory lecture to transcendental meditation (TM). Is this because they have been misinformed about TM? If so, let me attempt to clear up any misconceptions they may have. I talk only from what I understand of, and have experienced in, TM. I have been a meditator for five months.

Misconception: TM is unnatural. What is TM? TM is a simple mental technique for relieving both physical and mental stress. This allows the system to function with the least possible effort, and consequently allows the person to enjoy life to a greater degree. TM is capable of relieving all mental and physical stress. Stress on any system is not natural. Can TM be unnatural?

Misconception: TM is a religion. I believe TM is a religion to TMers in the same sense as football is a religion to football players. To get the maximum benefit from either, one must put forth a maximum amount of effort. I believe an absolute atheist can gain as much from TM as any Christian.

Misconception: The purpose of the Texas A&M International Meditation So-

ciety is detrimental to students.

TM has a religious origin. In some areas it may even be taught as a religion. The Texas A&M International Meditation Society (IMS) in no way promotes TM as a religion. Article II of the IMS constitution states, "The objectives of this organization shall be to present introductory lectures on the transcendental meditation program and provide follow-up programs and activities."

I hope this letter sheds light on the beliefs of some misinformed students.

— George E. Sofka
President — Texas A&M IMS

'Stone' reshaped

Editor:

Thank you very much for the very good and informative piece on the Austin-based group, "Kiwi." They should be a welcome change from the mediocre Hollywood productions which "Aggie Cinema" dishes out to us every weekend. We could also do without the very loud local bars and discos if more such groups would be invited.

By the way, why must you pay someone (assuming you do) to rehash an article from the latest "Rolling Stone"? I was referring to the critique on Jackson Browne.

— I.A. Chisti

Slouch

by Jim Earle



"MIND YOU, IT'S JUST A RUMOR, BUT I'VE BEEN TOLD THAT HE'S A HIT MAN FOR PIES INCORPORATED!"

TOP OF THE NEWS

CAMPUS

Handicapped can register early

Texas A&M University students who are handicapped, temporarily handicapped, or have some type of mobility problem can take advantage of an early preregistration program offered for the fall semester. The early preregistration, to be held April 19-20, will allow students the special schedule they need. Handicapped students should contact Donnie Albrecht, assistant director of student activities, at 845-1134, by March 22, if interested in the early preregistration. Information on the program can also be obtained from the Texas Rehabilitation Commission at 846-4741.

Deadline set for Basic Grants

All undergraduate students are reminded that March 15 is the last date for receiving applications for Basic Educational Opportunity Grants for the 1977-1978 academic year. The application must arrive at the Basic Grant Office, P.O. Box B, Iowa City, Iowa 52240 on or before March 15 to be processed for this 1977-78 academic year.

STATE

Texas may get parimutuel betting

Beside choosing candidates, Texas voters in the May primaries will have a chance to express their feelings on legalizing horse race betting. Leaders of a group supporting parimutuel betting said Wednesday they have more than the required 75,000 petition signatures needed to place the issue on the May 6 Democratic primary ballot. Douglas McCrary of Calvert, president of the Texas Horseracing Association, said more than 95,000 Texans will have signed the petitions before the March 13 deadline. Allen Wisenbaker of Longview, president of the Texas Thoroughbred Breeders Association, said the Republican party already had agreed to place the local option referendum on its primary ballot. The racing promoters said a significant margin of voter approval would prompt the legislature to pass their proposal to authorize local option elections on the issue.

NATION

Civil Service may get overhaul

President Carter Thursday proposed a major plan which would make it easier to fire incompetent federal workers, and some automatic federal pay increases and limit job preferences for veterans. The plan, outlined by Carter himself at the National Press Club, would overhaul the 95-year-old Civil Service Commission. The President, in sending the plan to Congress, said much of the public's criticism of federal workers is unfair. In addition to weakening ironclad job protection for many federal workers, the plan would cut off automatic pay hikes for many high-level government officials who get those hikes whether they are merited or not.

WORLD

Hijack attempt in Pakistan foiled

Three passengers foiled a hijack attempt aboard a Pakistan International Airlines jumbo jet Thursday, but were injured when a hand grenade held by the would-be air pirate exploded during the struggle, airline sources said. The lone terrorist who tried to hijack the Boeing 747 with 350 passengers and a crew of seven had a hand blown off when the grenade exploded. He was knocked unconscious by the blast. The plane landed safely at Islamabad. Airline sources said Abdul Malik, a retired Pakistani army officer, grabbed the hijacker near the cockpit door when the man announced the plane was being commandeered. Malik was aided by two other passengers.

Thieves take Chaplin's body

Grave robbers have stolen the coffin containing the remains of Charlie Chaplin, Swiss police announced Thursday. A statement by the state police headquarters said the coffin was dug up and taken away Wednesday night or early Thursday. Chaplin died on Christmas Day at the age of 88. Thursday evening, police said neither they nor Chaplin's family had received any telephone calls from persons claiming to be responsible. Police did not rule out the possibility of a ransom demand for the return of the coffin and Chaplin's remains.

WEATHER

Cloudy, windy and colder today, tonight & tomorrow. High today mid-40's, low tonight upper 30s. Thirty percent chance of rain today. Winds from the north at 15-20 mph.

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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