

# VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION  
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

MONDAY  
MARCH 6, 1978

## A time for talking...

We have entered the era of world-wide diplomatic discussions. These are the days of the peace talk, the summit conference and the shuttle diplomat. At no time in recent memory has there been such a premium on talking out international disagreements.

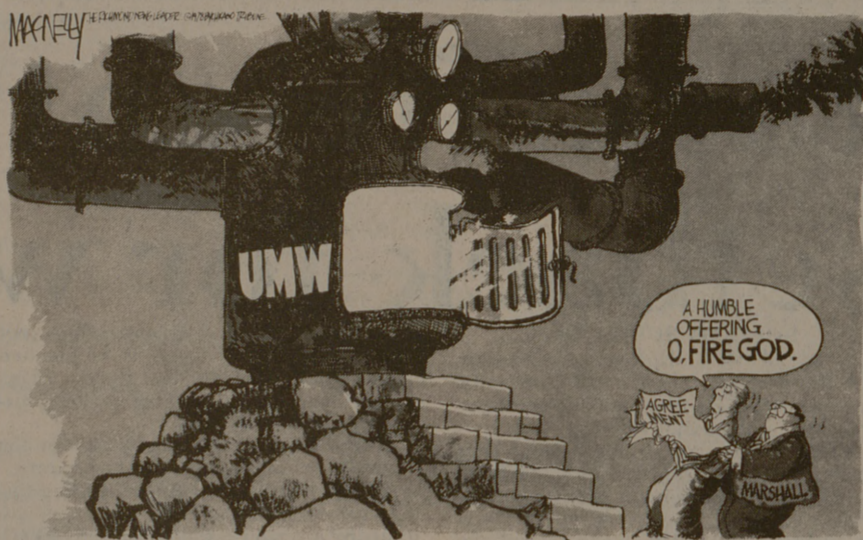
Egypt's President Sadat is talking with Israel's Prime Minister Begin. Rhodesia's Ian Smith is negotiating with that country's black majority leaders. Arab leaders are talking to each other. Most of the world leaders seem more willing to talk and less eager to reach for weapons and sound the battle-cry.

Those discussions aren't always bearing fruit. The rift between Egyptian and Israeli hopes for peace is growing wider again after Christmas-time optimism over Sadat's trip to Israel. New violence broke out in Rhodesia over the weekend, one day after Prime Minister Smith and moderate black leaders signed a settlement for transition to black majority rule in Rhodesia.

But they ARE talking. They ARE trying. They AREN'T fighting — as much. There seems to be genuine interest in world peace.

Historians warn us about past lulls in international strife that preceded world-wide storms. We can only hope this lull is an omen of peaceful and not violent things to come.

L.R.L.



William Raspberry

## Prison reform and the way we are

WASHINGTON — Want to write a TV drama? Okay, here's the premise. Some extraterrestrial visitors invade New York City and, for reasons they don't bother to explain, aim their weird-looking ray machine at all the city's prisons.

Right before our unbelieving eyes, the buildings all melt away, leaving the estimated 6,600 inmates unharmed but temporarily immobilized. The visitors then announce that the temporary paralysis will end in exactly 48 hours, board their spaceships and leave.

Just then, a dark-suited, cigar-smoking, hard-eyed businessman appears on the scene and offers to have every single inmate locked securely away within two days — if the city will agree to pay him \$26,000 per inmate per year.

What, in your script, would the hard-pressed officials do? Would they breathe a sigh of release and cut the deal immediately? Would they offer to pay for the incarceration of only the most violent 10

percent or so, preferring to take their chances with letting the remainder go free?

The scenario occurred to me the other day when I looked at a report on the cost of incarceration, prepared for the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, by the accounting firm of Coopers and Lybrand.

According to the report, total out-of-pocket expenses for the incarceration of New York City's inmates comes to \$71.87 per prisoner per day — approximately \$26,000 per prisoner per year. The figures don't include the costs of running the police department and the court system; nor do they take into account such indirect costs as forgone taxes, lost productivity and welfare payments to prisoners' families.

Perhaps it would be possible to justify these outlandish costs, if it could be shown that incarceration worked to reduce crime or that prisoners tended to become useful citizens after their incarceration.

Nothing of the sort can be shown, of course. In fact, nearly every study of the problem indicates just the opposite: People tend to come out of prison worse than they went in.

At best, prisons provide a temporary respite from the degradation of those who are locked up and a theoretical deterrent to others who might be tempted to criminality. That isn't much of a purchase at \$26,000 per year.

For half that amount per inmate, for instance, those prisoners whose crimes are essentially economic — perhaps the result of joblessness — could be trained and put to work.

The National Moratorium on Prison Construction has been arguing for years that society does itself far more harm than good by locking away any except the most violence-prone of offenders. The rest, the Moratorium insists, could more logically be punished by other means — including restitution to their victims.

But the arguments haven't had much ef-

fect, probably because they tell us what we already know but find ourselves incapable of accepting. We know prisons don't rehabilitate, that they tend to make people worse, not better, and that they are enormously costly.

Our minds would tell us (if our prisons were suddenly zapped out of existence) to pick out the most violent offenders — the mad dog killers, the repeat rapists, the professional gunmen — for incarceration and simply let the rest go home. Except for adding a few thousand names to the unemployment rolls, it probably wouldn't make any noticeable difference.

That might make a clever ending for a TV show. But in real life, we know what would happen. We'd give the man his \$26,000 per inmate and immediately launch a crash program to rebuild the prisons.

We know that what we're doing doesn't work, but we're afraid to death to stop doing it.

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## A new wrinkle in mind theory

By DICK WEST

WASHINGTON — As part of its 1977-78 lecture season, the Smithsonian Institution is presenting a series of discourses on what the human mind is up to.

I've attended one of the lectures and read extracts of others, but as yet I have found no explanation of what I consider the mind's number one mystery.

I refer to the brain's peculiar habit of spontaneously dredging up bits of long-forgotten lore that had been sequestered in dim recesses of the subconscious.

I suppose everyone has experienced this phenomenon. You are going along minding your own business in a contemporary manner when something from out of the past suddenly pops into your head.

Usually, the mentally regurgitated material bears no relation to anything you are

thinking about at the moment. It simply breaks through to the level of cognizance unprovoked by any effort at recall.

### politics

For me, these unexpected replays most often take the form of old songs. Like the other evening I was in the kitchen preparing a midnight snack. As I was chiseling the snow peas off of a frozen Chinese dinner, my mind became awash with the lyrics of "Indian Love Call."

In case you've forgotten, that's the song that begins, "When I'm calling you hoo

hoo hoo hoo hoo hoo," give or take a couple of hoo hoos.

Making this all the more eerie is the fact that I wasn't aware I had ever learned it in the first place.

At some point, evidently, a covert section of my brain smuggled the lyrics aboard and stashed them away in some remote corner of my memory box.

I wouldn't even try to guess what else might be hidden away in there. The aspect that interests me is what causes this subliminal jetsam to manifest itself occasionally.

If I were delivering one of "The Human Mind" lectures at the Smithsonian, I would offer up the following theory:

Generations of abstract thinkers have evolved a concept of the mind as being

somewhat akin to a sponge — i.e., it is capable of soaking up and retaining globules of information throughout the lifetime of the owner.

It is, I believe, more plausible to think of the brain as resembling a giant prune.

Each new thing the owner learns creates a wrinkle on the brain. Eventually, however, the brain becomes completely puckered. When that happens, any new information the mind takes in either slides right out again, or else displaces one of the existing wrinkles.

In the latter case, the data occupying the old wrinkle is expelled from the brain through the nearest conscious exit.

If I am on the right track here, my own brain has just permanently ejected the words and melody of "Indian Love Call." To which I can only say "good riddance."

### Letters to the editor

## Sports editor Arnett strikes again

Editor:

Paul Arnett you are remarkable. No editorial written about sports, namely tennis, has ever infuriated us so much. We believe "Tennis . . . everyone?" was the

most irksome article we've ever read.

By the way Paul, you and your roommate obviously need to think twice before you have the gall to call someone else arrogant when you publicly announce your

Saturday night accomplishments. The insinuation of your accomplishments are repulsive and we personally are four glad A's that you had to drive to Lubbock to wine and dine women.

Paul, sit down in your damn rocker and recall when you learned to play tennis. Maybe you weren't fortunate enough to have "good old dad" teach you a sport. It takes a lot of time and effort to learn to play a sport correctly. Perhaps you don't realize how much it means to have "dad" take his time out to spend time with his daughter. Certainly when she becomes a good tennis player she will recall when she was taught the game. Personally I, Mona, couldn't thank my father enough for the swimming instructions he gave me and after 14 years of competitive swimming I have my "dad" to thank the most for my "accomplishments." It absolutely disgusts me that you spend your Sundays knocking industrious children and parents.

Your friend also reflected an abundant amount of ignorance when he assumed that anyone driving a 1978 Firebird is rich and arrogant and anyone driving a VW would be a "good old guy."

Your reference to the "weekend hackers" was below the belt. As fulltime students, part-time workers and tennis buffs we find comments of this sort offensive and infuriating. We, as "weekend hackers" sincerely wish we had as much free time as sportswriters do to participate in a sport so frequently that we feel we are superior to everyone else.

The next time you would like to play tennis why don't you just load up and drive to Lubbock; and by the way Paul, speaking for these four A's we wouldn't mind if you took up permanent residence there.

—Mona Schweppe, '78  
—Sandi Matthews, '79  
—Caryn Cosper, '79  
—Susie Bailey, '80

### As others see us

Editor:

After the SCONA Conference on energy politics two weeks ago, a lot of questions remain unanswered. One of them deals with the image of North Americans abroad. How do others see us? Do we waste too much energy too fast or is it all right?

An answer presented itself to me the other day and I hope you will let me share it with you. Cycling away from campus towards Texas Avenue, my South American friend suddenly jumped up from the saddle and pointed at the large field northeast of the Systems Administration Building: "Look — they're playing soccer over there. I wonder if I know them." (He plays soccer himself.)

But then he sat down again and as his face saddened he look at the long line of vehicles parked alongside the field. Said he: "No . . . can't be. Must be gringos. Look at all those cars. Too many for the number of people."

— Jeff Stuyt

### Correction

In Friday's Battalion, Gail Smila's article on Texas A&M cafeteria food evaluations gave an incorrect number for students who took the survey. The article said between 200 and 300 students evaluated the meals. A spokesman for Food Services said Friday that between 700 and 800 students took the survey in each of Texas A&M's three dining halls. Therefore, out of the 7,300 students on board plan, more than 2,000 evaluated the food. The Battalion regrets the error.

### Slouch

by Jim Earle



HE CLAIMED IT WAS A VIOLATION OF HIS RIGHT TO PRIVACY IF I KNEW HIS MID-SEMESTER GRADE, EVEN THOUGH I'M HIS TEACHER!

# TOP OF THE NEWS

## CAMPUS

### Intramurals for handicapped

Handicapped Texas A&M students interested in sports are being actively sought for a new intramural program. Jim Jeeter, associate director, said, "Texas Rehabilitation Association figures show there are some 25 handicapped students on our campus. We feel there are a lot more. Our goal is to reach these students and let them know of the services we can offer." Sports open to handicapped students include everything from wheelchair basketball and swimming to archery and track events. Handicapped students seeking information about the programs should call Jeeter at 845-7826 or come by the intramural office in DeWare Field House.

### Last call for basic grants

All undergraduate students are reminded that March 15 is the last date for receiving applications for Basic Educational Opportunity Grants (BEOG) for the 1977-78 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.

### Teague speaks on Koreagate

Congressman Olin Teague said Saturday that only four or five members of Congress are in trouble because of the South Korean bribery scandal now being investigated. Teague, who represents the 6th Congressional District, was at Texas A&M University for military weekend. He also warned that if the South Korean government does not cooperate with the investigation, "we will cut off every penny of aid we give them. They have cast a big doubt on the integrity of Congress and that doubt has to be cleared up."

### TSA elects Beall, Brockman

Two Texas A&M University students were elected to state offices during the Texas Student Association (TSA) Spring Convention held March 3-5 on the Texas A&M campus. Joe Beall, a junior from Tyler majoring in political science and electrical engineering, was elected president of TSA. Laura Brockman, a junior political science major from San Antonio was appointed secretary. TSA is open to many college or university in Texas which has a student government. Ninety delegates representing 19 schools attended the convention.

### Corps forms special block T

Members of Texas A&M's Corps of Cadets lined up in a block T formation on the drill field Saturday to honor Congressman Olin Teague of the 6th Congressional District. Later, the Corps passed in review before Teague, A&M President Jarvis Miller and Corps Commandant James R. Woodall to highlight military weekend. According to Cadet Colonel Michael Gentry, the corps decided to form a block T because it wanted to do something special to honor Teague, who is retiring at the end of his current term. Also in attendance was Mrs. Earl Rudder, widow of the former A&M president.

## NATION

### Miners say 'no' to settlement

So much for predictions of a close vote on the proposed UMW-BCOA settlement. The miners said "no" in a landslide of more than two-to-one, and the 91-day-old strike goes on. President Carter is expected to invoke the Taft-Hartley Act, probably in conjunction with one or two other actions, in an announcement expected by noon EST today.

### Energy may be compromised

Sen. Henry Jackson, D-Wash., said recently Senate energy conferees may reach a compromise on remaining energy issues by early this week and permit renewed House-Senate talks on the administration's overall bill. Jackson is trying to find a common position on natural gas regulation and prices that will win the support of a majority of the Senate members on the House-Senate conference committee. A split on those issues has stalled any progress on President Carter's energy plan for three months.

## WEATHER

Partly cloudy and mild today with a chance of showers. Partly cloudy and cooler Tuesday. High today low 70s, low tonight low 40s.

## THE BATTALION

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