

VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

WEDNESDAY
MARCH 15, 1978

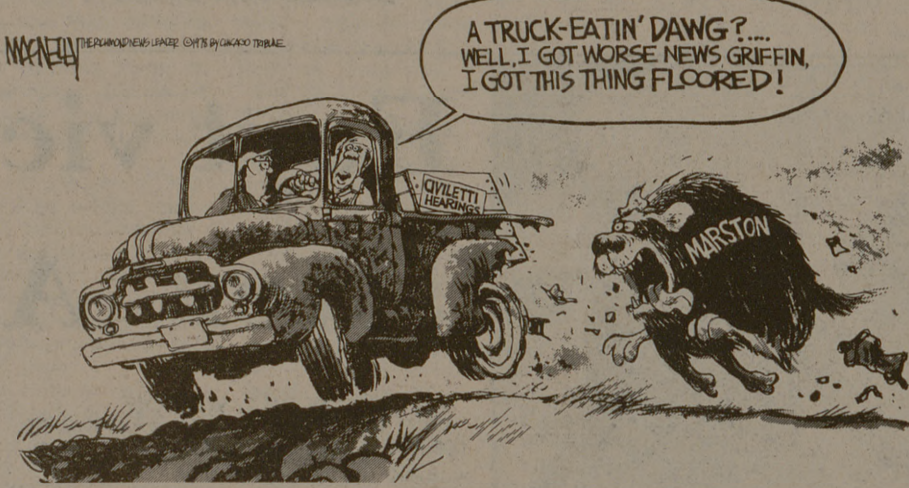
Tuning in

While the Panama Canal treaties debates in the U.S. Senate may give the impression to readers of the news accounts that it is just another desultory near-filibuster, something else is coming through to those citizens who have had the time and interest to stay with the radio broadcasts of the debate brought by the National Public Radio network.

No doubt it is pleasing to the senators to learn that they are being heard and appreciated out there, and if they can achieve an individual sense of statesmanship through the knowledge that millions are listening and evaluating, that should be all to the good.

Frank Manakiewicz, president of National Public Radio, was in town last week for a broadcasting convention, and he found satisfaction in estimating that 10 million were tuned in on the Panama Canal show. That's a lot more listeners than the Congressional Record has readers.

San Francisco Chronicle



The other side of the story

By WILLIAM RASPBERRY

WASHINGTON — Look at it one way and you see 160,000 self-centered, defiant, violence-prone miners, deaf to the appeals of their union leadership, blind to the suffering of their fellow citizens and hell-bent on destroying the American economy.

Look at it another way, as I have been trying to do in recent days, and you see that the miners are victims right along with the rest of us and that they don't dare give in.

It's hard, initially, to see any of the current disaster from the miners' point of

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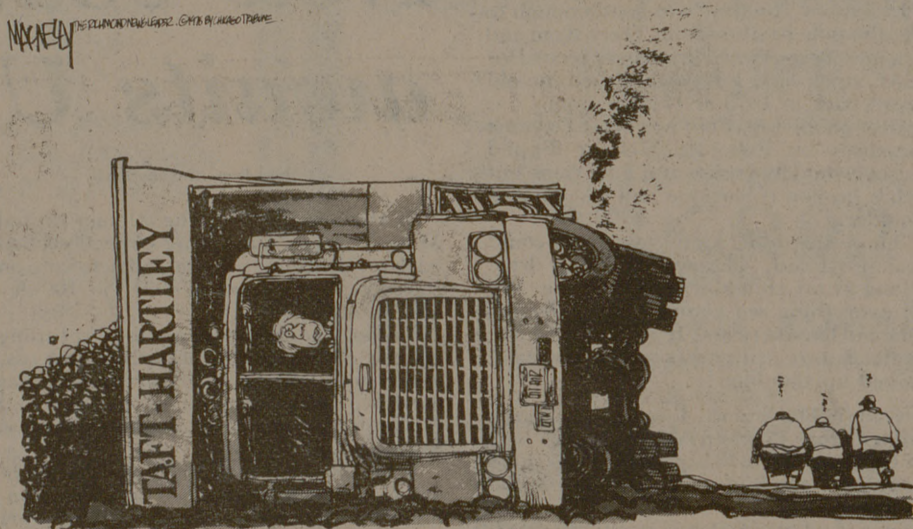
view. The \$10 hourly pay in the contract offer they so overwhelmingly rejected — a pay raise of some 38 percent — sounds pretty good.

The initial impression was of tremendous White House pressure on the coal operators to settle at virtually any cost, and of eventual capitulation to outlandish union demands. We talked about the costs of the economic package to the economy as a whole: what it would do to the price of energy, of steel, how it would feed inflation, and the rest.

And all these things are fairly accurate.

But now the reporters and the commentators are bringing us another side of the controversy. The miners are defiant and beyond the control of the United Mine Workers leadership, "all right," but we're finally beginning to see that money wasn't the problem from the beginning.

What we are beginning to hear now are reports of outrageous abuse of the miners by their bosses, of abrogation — in spirit if not in fact — of earlier contract provisions



and the miners' total, thoroughly justified, lack of faith in the willingness of the operators to do right by them.

I've just seen an excellent piece by Thomas N. Bethell in the March issue of the Washington Monthly. Even discounting for the fact that Bethell used to work for the UMW, it's impossible to come away from his article without a lot of sympathy for the miners.

Above all, he makes you understand why the miners are so adamant in their refusal to give up the idea of wildcat strikes — work stoppages not sanctioned by their union leadership. They see it as their only leverage in enforcing the gains they make at the bargaining table.

Bethell offers three instructive quotes. First, a spokesman for the operators at the bargaining table: "We are asking and shall

expect to receive something that will make a contract with the United Mine Workers worthy and valuable. A contract with your association has no value because it is not respected by the United Mine Workers."

Next, a rank-and-file miner reacting to a proposal for an explicit no-strike provision: "Our people have a deep-seated prejudice against this. They are not going to surrender the right to strike if they feel they have a just cause to strike for."

Finally, a member of the UMW leadership: "When the contract is made and signed, if we expect the operators to carry out those provisions that are advantageous to us, we in turn must carry out just as explicitly those provisions which are unfavorable to us."

The three statements are a reasonable representation of what is going on. But

they were not made last week, or last month. The first is from the negotiations of 1923; the second is from 1914; the third dates back to 1902.

What the miners are fighting, through (and frequently in spite of) their severely weakened union, is the historically despotic attitude of the operators. Bargaining-table gains, with arbitration as the enforcement machinery of last resort, mean nothing when the operators insist on taking every single grievance to arbitration instead of resolving the issues right at the mines.

The result of the operator's high-handedness has been a needless backlog of unresolved complaints — some of them as critical as safety measures and some as trivial as improved shower facilities — and a deep reservoir of miner bitterness.

The recourse of the miners has been to strike the local mines, whether the UMW sanctions the strike or not. There is no way the miners would give up the right to strike (which they would have done under the rejected proposal), even in exchange for substantial pay increases.

That wasn't the only problem with the White House - forced, UMW-approved offer, but it was enough to force its rejection by the rank and file.

Meanwhile, we all suffer. If the miners refuse to return to the mines under Taft-Hartley, the implications for national disaster are vast. Even if they do go back to work, the money-cost of the contract will send shockwaves through the whole economy.

Either way, the miners' adamancy will cost us all dearly. But the miners aren't the only culprits, or even the principal ones. That distinction has to go to the operators.

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Sneaking past old age

By DAVID S. BRODER

WASHINGTON — With little public notice, Congress is about to pass a bill that will affect the future work opportunities of almost every American. It is a measure opposed by most business organizations and viewed with skepticism by the AFL-CIO, and yet there is hardly a politician ready to raise a word of caution about it.

It is the bill that would ban any mandatory retirement age for federal workers and give almost all private-sector employees protection against involuntary retirement up to the age of 70, instead of the present ceiling of 65.

The political appeal of the measure is indicated by the fact that it passed the House last year with only four dissenting votes. And it was approved in slightly different form, by the Senate, with only seven "nays."

A conference committee of the two bodies now has agreed on a compromise version of the bill, which may be up for

approval in the House as early as this week.

It is a politically appealing measure, described by proponents as an answer to the evils of "age discrimination." But, from another perspective, it can also be called an "I'm all right, Jack" bill. For if it becomes law, it means that those of us who have jobs already can hold onto them longer, if we wish, while younger people, scrambling for

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a foothold on the employment ladder, wait still longer in the cold.

The hearings on this measure, which whisked through Congress with extraordinary speed, are full of noble sentiment about the rights of senior citizens. But they are conspicuously lacking in anything that can be called a solid estimate of the legislation's impact on a job market where teenagers are having a tough time finding entry-level opportunities, and minority youth

unemployment rates in some cities run up to 40 percent.

It is known that voluntary early retirement before the traditional age of 65 has become more and more popular in the past decade.

Relying on that trend, the U.S. Department of Labor told Congress that it estimates that only 150,000 to 200,000 older workers would take advantage of the bill's protection against forced retirement at age 65. Even a shift of 200,000 jobs from the young to the normally retired is a social decision of some consequence. But there are indications the effects may be much larger than that.

Arthur C. Prine, Jr., testifying for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, said it was "very clear to us that if this legislation goes through, it is going to undermine in many companies the affirmative action programs which provide for improved opportunities for young and minority workers." Vernon Jordan of the National Urban League ex-

pressed the same fear and so did Bert Seidman, director of the Social Security department of the AFL-CIO.

Despite Seidman's reasoned objections, the AFL-CIO has now adopted a position of neutrality toward the legislation, after winning a provision "grandfathering in" all existing union contracts that have mandatory retirement provisions at an age younger than 70. "We decided," said one AFL-CIO lobbyist, "just to let Congress go its way."

The Carter administration, no more eager than Congress to affront the elderly and their lobbies, is giving the bill its blessing. So there is little to halt its progress.

But the issue is there — whether we like it or not. There are hard choices involved. Every elderly third-grade teacher who decides to stay in the classroom an extra five years means that five more classes will be taught by a 1935 college-graduate, rather than a 1975 graduate.

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Letters to the editor

Decision in Austin could go one step further

Editor: The following is a copy of a letter sent to The Daily Texan, the student newspaper at T.U.

To the students at Austin,

We, as students of Texas A&M University, know the trials and tribulations of student government. Like you, our often ignored, abused and inefficient student gov-

ernment is more concerned with interpreting the myriad of rules and regulations that established it instead of finding a way to get juniors sideline football tickets instead of endzone tickets for football games.

In response to your referendum last week, we would like to congratulate you for voting to abolish your antiquated student government. Perhaps if we're lucky, next year you'll abolish your school.

- George Cowan, '79
- Kevin O'Connor, '81
- Don Jeffers, '80
- Edwin Pickle, '78
- Bruce Shaffer, '81
- Marvin Morris, '78
- D.E. Freed, '80
- Greg Houston, '79
- Jeff Brown, '81
- Al Machemehl, '79
- John Carter, '81
- Geoff Hackett, '81
- Richard Turner, '78
- Brian Molehusen, '78
- Glyn LeBlanc, '81
- Greg Berlocher, '78
- Marvin Chernosky, '80
- Tony Jennings, '81
- Jon Scott, '80

FM service

Editor: I was disappointed on Monday, March 6 to hear that after two weeks of coverage our young radio station, KAMU-FM, was discontinuing their broadcasts of National Public Radio's coverage of the U.S. Senate debates on the Panama Canal treaties. I had enjoyed this first-time-in-history live coverage of the U.S. Senate in an important foreign policy debate. It gave me insights, not just into the Panama Canal decision, but into the strange working of the Senate itself. I must add that KAMU-FM does carry a one hour summary of the Senate debates each evening, and I appreciate it.

This brings up the whole question of KAMU-FM's purpose as a community service radio station. The KAMU-FM people apparently see as their chief role in community service the broadcasting of "easy listening" music. But such music is already provided both by commercial radio

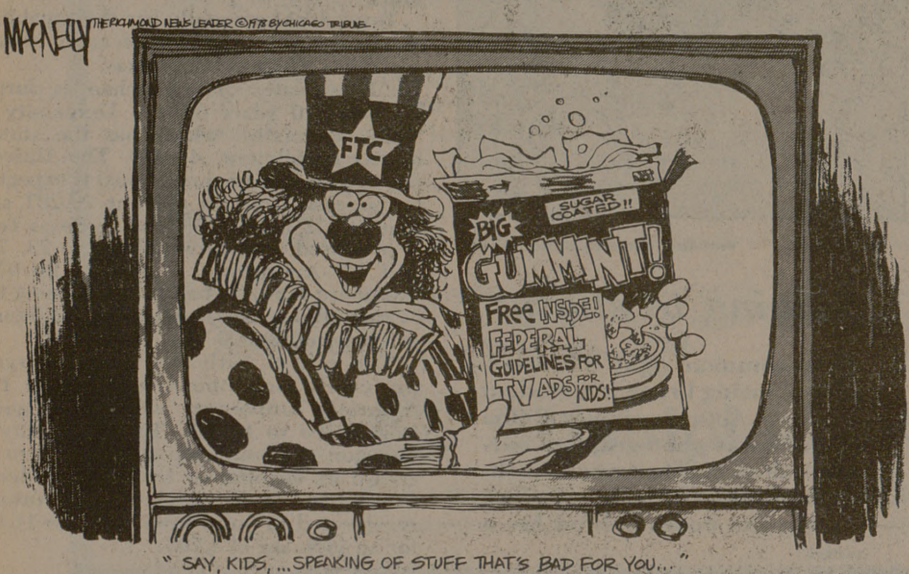
stations and home music systems. And if KAMU-FM is going to be primarily an easy listening music station isn't it competing unfairly with commercial radio stations who must subject their listeners to obnoxious commercials while KAMU-FM can broadcast uninterrupted music?

I feel that KAMU-FM's major role is community service should be the broadcasting of programs dealing with international, national, and local social, political, economic, cultural and humanitarian affairs. The Senate debates on the Panama Canal treaties and the weekly broadcasts of the National Press Club luncheon are two examples. Then KAMU-FM would be an alternative to commercial radio rather than just another station. It would provide listeners with programs that could be heard on no other station. It would provide programs which serve to increase the listeners awareness on a wide range of vital topics.

Many such enlightening programs are being produced by National Public Radio but not broadcast by KAMU-FM.

I ask then, who makes the decisions concerning KAMU-FM's programming? What do other people feel KAMU-FM's role should be in providing the community with a radio service?

—Douglas Schwepler
Editor's note: Questions concerning KAMU-FM programming may be directed to the station manager, Don Simmons, at Texas A&M Educational Television on campus.



SAY, KIDS... SPEAKING OF STUFF THAT'S BAD FOR YOU...

TOP OF THE NEWS

CAMPUS

Symphonic band on the road

Texas A&M's University Symphonic Band will be presented March 30-31 in performances at El Campo, Refugio, Portland and Kingsville. The 71-member band will perform 8 p.m. concerts sponsored by the local high school bands in El Campo and Kingsville. The organization will play for Refugio and Gregory-Portland High School assemblies. All four tour performances will be in 24 hours. Completing its fourth year, the band is composed of students from all segments of Texas A&M University. More than half of its members of the all-male Texas Aggie Band.

Energy-saving advice available

Practical energy conservation advice is now available to Texas residents and businesses from the Texas Energy Extension Service (EES), according to director Stephen Riter. In addition to the EES state office at Texas A&M University, the service has five regional offices operating energy conservation programs and responding to energy-related questions from the public. Area offices are operated by the University of Houston, University of Texas at San Antonio, University of Texas at El Paso, University of Texas at Arlington, and the Texas Agricultural Extension Service in Lubbock. All offices have a variety of energy conservation publications available to the public, including information about insulation, air conditioning, heat pumps, windows, lighting, hot water conservation, and methods to incorporate energy efficiency into new homes. The EES office here offers assistance to home builders, home buyers, savings and loan officers, real estate agents and appraisers, manufacturers, small businesses, public institutions, city governments, hospitals, architects and engineers.

STATE

Ranger settles in invasion suit

A Texas Ranger has settled a \$1,250,000 federal invasion of privacy suit out of court against Metro-Goldwyn Mayer and the National Broadcasting Co. in the showing of the movie, "The Deadly Tower," an attorney disclosed Tuesday — the day before trial was to have begun. Attorney Donato Ramos, representing Ranger Ramiro Martinez, would not disclose terms of the out-of-court arrangement. "The Deadly Tower" was on based on the Aug. 1, 1966, sniping attack at the University of Texas in Austin by Charles Whitman which killed 14 persons and wounded 32 others. Martinez, an Austin policeman at the time, climbed the tower and he and another officer shot and killed Whitman. Martinez and his wife, Vernell, sued for invasion of privacy, breach of contract, fraud and for exemplary and punitive damages in connection with the showing of the movie in 1975 and again in 1977. The suit alleged that "such intrusion into plaintiffs' seclusion and personal lives was in no way related to the pertinent incidents that 'The Deadly Tower' purports to account."

Zindler in on ticket-fixing

Marvin Zindler, reporter-commentator for KTRK-TV in Houston, said the Texas Commission on Judicial Conduct, at its regular meeting this weekend, will discuss alleged ticket-fixing by local police and judges. A commission spokesman refused to reveal the subject of the meeting Friday and Saturday in Austin, Texas. A police spokesman and the presiding municipal judge in Houston denied improper dismissal of traffic citations. Zindler said the commission staff has asked him to bring videotapes that he said prove illicit fixing of traffic citations for friends and fellow officials.

TP&L rate increase challenged

The staff of the Public Utility Commission began presenting evidence Tuesday to show Texas Power & Light Co. is not entitled to a requested \$118 million rate increase. The commission staff announced before the hearings began March 6 it would recommend an increase for TP&L of \$32 million — \$86 million less than the company requested. The PUC hired a Dallas firm to audit TP&L and its parent company, Texas Utilities Co., before the rate case began.

WORLD

Suspected hijacker Vietnam vet

An unemployed 27-year-old man suspected of commandeering a jetliner over the San Francisco Bay area and forcing it to fly to Denver was a Vietnam war veteran with a history of nervous disorders, the FBI and the suspect's father said Tuesday. Clayton Thomas father said the hijacking "was just some pathetic cry for help." Thomas surrendered to FBI agents at Stapleton International Airport Monday night after three crewmen on the United Air Lines 727 jumped to safety from the cockpit. Thomas was charged with air piracy and held on \$250,000 bond. His father said he was being treated for a nervous disorder following a breakdown several years ago while in the Army, and was taking a strong tranquilizer at the time of the hijacking.

WEATHER

Partly cloudy and mild today. Fair and cooler tonight and Thursday. High today near 80, low tonight mid-40s. High tomorrow low 70s. Winds from the northwest at 10-15 mph, diminishing tonight.

THE BATTALION

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