

VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

WEDNESDAY
JUNE 21, 1978

Saying goodbye to the Chief

He wasn't really a tall man. Maybe six feet or a bit more. But somehow he always seemed tall. Maybe it was because he was always a lean, wiry man, rather like you'd expect a Texas Ranger to be. Or maybe it was because, when you asked him a question, he'd look you straight in the eye and give you a straight answer.

Or maybe it was just that good men always seem tall. And O. L. Luther was a good man. Chief Luther — he was always the Chief — had been the head of Texas A&M's University police since 1971. But he'd already completed one career in law enforcement when he came to Texas A&M.

That first career began in 1942 when he joined the Texas Department of Public Safety. He remained with the DPS until 1961 when he joined Texas Ranger Co. in Waco. He did take one little vacation — a trip to the Pacific courtesy of the U.S. Navy during World War II. He retired from the Rangers in 1971 to take over Texas A&M's police force.

When a policeman dies after an illustrious career, much is always made of the famous crimes he solved and the notorious hoods he brought to justice. The Chief had his share of both. But there was much, much more to this man than a scorecard of crooks and convictions.

The Chief was what Texans respectfully call a "good ol' boy." He loved friendly jokes, a job well done, and people. He was always ready to laugh — but not too loud. He knew when to be tough — but he seldom had to be. He seemed perpetually calm, as though he was incapable of anger. People were his true vice. He never needed an excuse to light up a cigarette, lean back in his chair and "visit" with his friends — and there weren't very many people who met him who didn't become his friend.

The Chief lost a long battle against cancer Monday night. He left behind many a friend who'll miss him.

We'll miss him too. L.R.L.

Roadway inequality

Driving down the Wellborn minefield

By MARK WILLIS
Battalion City Editor

Any of you who saw the movie "Earthquake", Sunday night, may have noticed similarity between the streets of Los Angeles and those of Bryan-College Station.

Of course, I refer to those L.A. streets after the quake.

The streets of this community are disgraceful. I would not, could not, venture a guess as to how many suspension systems have been dealt death blows by streets that don't deserve the name. Streets that resemble World War I battlefield landscapes rather than paths of transport.

More curious is the fact that not all streets and roads here are in such poor condition. Most of the roads in the "nicer" residential areas are really quite well con-

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structed. Concrete slab almost always holds up better than caliche with a two-inch layer of asphalt laid over it. Why this type of road construction is more prevalent in the poor and student-populated areas I hesitate to guess. But evidence of this statement seems rather obvious.

One must realize, of course, that several

factors influence the condition of our streets and roads in this area. First, the weather at this locale is tremendously hard on road surfaces. However, the fact that some roads withstand it better, and are maintained and repaired sooner, prove that it is possible to have a decent road system here.

The second problem is expense. Street and road upkeep and construction is one of the most expensive areas of city governmental concern. Yet, why should some roads be kept in excellent condition, while others are ignored until the danger of the condition forces action? It seems that a system of fair-to-good roads throughout

the community would be preferable to a system where half the roads are exemplary while the other half resemble the Baja.

The answer to these questions is, of course, money and who's got it. That type of logic seems rather odd, since everyone suffers. No one can avoid the bad roads all the time, no matter how nice the street one lives on may be.

Until this community decides to even out its spending for road and street repair and improvement funds, I suppose we will have to enjoy the smoothness of Texas Avenue as we cruise and quietly pray our batteries don't shake loose as we dribble down Wellborn Road.

It's anybody's guess

Voter storm brewing?

By DAVID S. BRODER

WASHINGTON — With the spring run of primaries finished, almost half the states have chosen their candidates for the mid-term elections, but the political community remains perplexed about what to expect from the voters in November.

Evidence points to widespread public vexation with government. President Carter's standing in the polls is low, but Congress' is lower. The attitude toward state government is measured by the tax rollback referendum in California and the wave of bond issue defeats from Texas to Virginia.

Yet, in the 21 states that have voted, only four representatives, two senators and one governor have been denied re-nomination — a measure of the tenacity of incumbents even in times of political turmoil.

THE DEMOCRATS, who have most of the incumbents, see improving prospects in the governorships and the Senate races. But the House remains the greatest mystery for November.

The Democratic picture in the state house contests has improved since January. Democratic incumbents appear in better shape — or the challengers weaker — in such states as Arizona, Colorado, Maryland, and Oregon.

Yet there are still at least eight or nine governorships that could switch to the GOP, including such political powerhouses as California, Pennsylvania and New York. Should that parlay work — with the election of Evell Younger, Dick Thornburgh and Perry Duryea — the Republicans' weak progressive wing would be immeasurably strengthened. Along with the GOP incumbents in Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, Iowa and Kansas — all favored for re-election — Duryea, Thornburgh, and Younger were aligned against Ronald Reagan in 1976. They could be the main barrier to Reagan winning his expected comeback bid in 1980. And their election this year could also help the GOP standard-bearer's chances against President Carter.

IN THE SENATE, odds now favor a gain for the Democrats that was not predictable six months ago. Democratic chances are looking up in Massachusetts, New Jersey and Virginia, while only in Minnesota and Mississippi have the odds shifted against the Democrats. Overall, Democrats have a chance for a two or three-seat Senate gain among the dozen seats that might change hands.

It is in the House where the vagaries of the voters' moods make the outlook least certain. Many of the current measures point to the Democrats escaping essentially unscathed, with their extraordinary

2-to-1 majority intact. The most recent Gallup Poll shows 57 percent of the probable voters favoring the Democrats in House contests — exactly the same percentage they won to gain 292 seats in 1976. District-by-district analyses by various interest groups point to a Republican gain of less than 10 seats.

But there is a different set of indicators — historically accurate — that predicts a much bigger Republican gain. Historically, the size of the mid-term loss for the President's party has been closely related to the state of his personal popularity and the past year's performance of the economy.

Edward R. Tufte, the Yale political scientist who has demonstrated the mathematics of this political equation in his new book, "Political Control of the Economy" (Princeton University Press), is betting his reputation that the Democrats will suffer a 20-to-40 seat loss. "My best guess today," he said in an interview, "would be 26 seats."

THAT PREDICTION is based on Carter's popularity stabilizing near its current low (44 percent approval), while inflation over the next six months erodes some of the 5 percent gain that has been achieved during the past year in real per capita income.

Whether Tufte's formula works in 1978 depends on the survival power of incumbents when faced with adverse political and economic forces.

There are 47 House seats open, where the incumbents are not running for re-election — 29 now held by Democrats and 18 Republicans. If the turnover were confined to those districts, Republicans would have to achieve a near-sweep for Tufte to be right. That is not likely.

But for a significant number of Democratic incumbents to be defeated, the Republican challengers will have to overcome the service-and-publicity operations that have helped make the incumbents as conspicuously and ubiquitously available to their constituents as insurance agents are to their customers.

The latest official directory lists no less than 1,070 district offices, staffed full-time by employees of House members who take care of constituent problems with government. Most House members have at least two such service offices at home and some eager-beavers have five or six.

The 1978 election may give us the best test yet of the capacity of these modern, publicity-conscious, service-oriented incumbents to beat the historical odds against their own political survival.

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The honor of taxes

By DICK WEST
United Press International

WASHINGTON — Ma and the kids heard there was a tax revolt headed this way from California and wanted to know if they could go out and watch for it.

I told them they could do no such of a tomfool thing.

These anti-tax movements are dangerous," I said. "An innocent bystander could easily get trampled by politicians rushing up to call for rollbacks."

In the distance came the sound of protesters chanting "Hell, No! Our Dough Won't Go!" Young Elrood got very excited.

The Lighter Side

"This is where it's at, Pa," he pleaded. "Why can't I go out and demonstrate against confiscatory taxes like other kids my age?"

"Son," I said, "your ancestors came over here from the old country to escape low taxation. They lived in a land where only the rich and high-born were taxed excessively."

"Our family has always been in the thick of the fight for universal high taxation, and I hope you kids will carry on the tradition after I'm gone."

"Has it been a long, hard struggle, Pa?" asked little Owly Sue.

I nodded vehemently. "This very house we are living in is testament to how far we've come."

"When your Ma and I first bought the place, the assessed value was so low the property tax was inconsequential. Now, thanks to the miracle of modern inflation, we can live in a more expensive neighborhood without having to move."

"Over the years, we have seen real estate prices go up and up until our humble abode now is evaluated high enough to make the property tax a genuine burden."

Ma shook her head wonderingly. "Only

in America," she mused.

"And it's been much the same situation with income taxes," I said, warming to the story.

"Your own grandfather was well into middle age before he was eligible to pay income taxes. I'll never forget how proud we were the first time his salary finally topped the minimum required for filing a return."

"Nowadays, of course, even the most modest wage earners start having their taxes withheld from the day they first land a job."

Elrood shuffled his feet in chagrin. "I never thought of it that way," he said quietly.

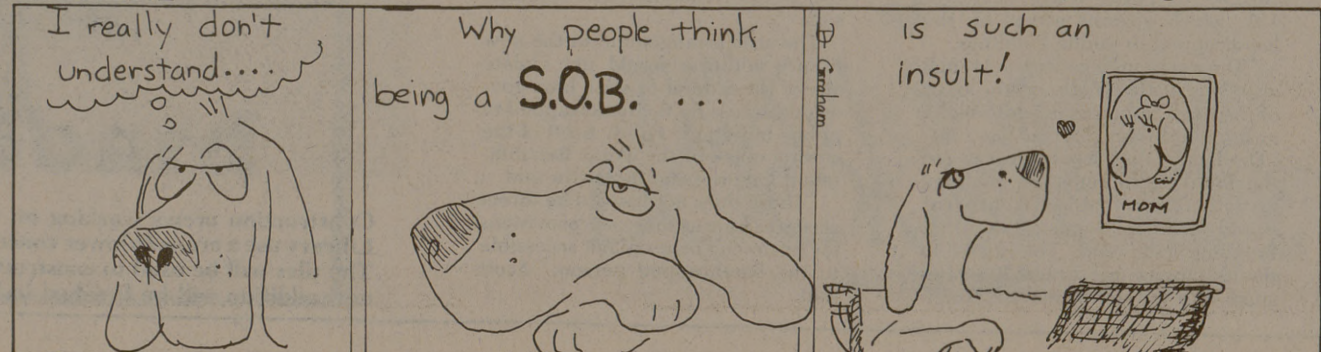
"And that isn't all," I continued. "My own income has failed to keep pace with living costs. But, again thanks to our dynamically inflated economy, the dollar amount has risen to the point where I am in a much higher tax bracket."

I have never seen Owly Sue look more impressed. Her little jaw was as slack as an IRS loophole.

"Without getting into Society Security taxes, which are an inspiration unto themselves, I think you can see that our forefathers' dream of exorbitant taxes for the masses has been largely fulfilled."

Shooting a thumb in the direction of the tax revolt, I added, "Don't let them take it away."

FEEM



Readers' Forum

Guest viewpoints, in addition to Letters to the Editor, are welcome. All pieces submitted to Readers' forum should be:

- Typed triple space
- Limited to 60 characters per line
- Limited to 100 lines

by Doug Graham

TOP OF THE NEWS

STATE

Repeal of state utility tax urged

Rep. Bill Caraway, D-Houston, Tuesday urged Gov. Dolph Briscoe to call a special session of the Legislature to consider property tax reform and repeal of the 4 percent state tax on utility bills. "Certainly the present surplus in the treasury should be used for some immediate tax relief for property taxpayers," Caraway said. Comptroller Bob Bullock has indicated there will be a \$2.75 million surplus available by January when the 1979 Legislature convenes.

Rabid puppy dies

The Laredo-Webb County Health Department Tuesday reported the second case of dog rabies this year and began an intensive 20-square block survey in Laredo around where the rabid animal was found. Officials said the latest rabies case occurred in the same vicinity as the first case a month ago. The confirmed case was in a 6-month-old puppy which had not been vaccinated, a spokesman said. The puppy died and its head was sent to Austin where the dog was confirmed to be rabid.

UT profs injunction denied

A federal district judge in Galveston has rejected a University of Texas associate professor's plea to rescind her firing by the UT regents. In his ruling Monday the judge refused to issue the injunction sought by Dr. Susan H. Houston, 35. Dr. Truman Blocker, president of the UT Health Science Center in Houston said the regents fired Houston April 7 because she disobeyed his order to devote full time to teaching.

Prostitute convicted of forgery

A prostitute has received a five-year prison sentence and a \$5,000 fine for forging traveler's checks. Prosecutor Paul Meves said Sharon Kelly, 25, was convicted Monday in Houston without testimony from a complaining witness and this case could set a legal precedent. Meves said victims of the thefts were reimbursed by the traveler's check companies. Testifying would involve admitting they hired prostitutes, so no victims appeared. Meves said he showed that the traveler's check companies were the actual victims.

Old chicken ranch auction set

The La Grange Chicken Ranch, a house of prostitution which inspired a Broadway musical, couldn't cut it as a restaurant and will be auctioned off June 28. The white framed ranch house with a dozen bedrooms was closed in 1973 by Gov. Dolph Briscoe. It was moved to Dallas and opened as a restaurant, but closed in early January after four months of operation.

NATION

Hill condemns oil tax proposal

The National Association of Attorneys General Tuesday in Minneapolis, Minn., unanimously approved a resolution by Texas Attorney General John Hill to condemn the Carter administration's proposal for a crude oil equalization tax. The state attorneys general instead urged phased decontrol of crude oil prices: Hill, chairman of the NAAG's Energy Committee, called the crude oil tax a "multi-billion dollar burden on ordinary Americans, which would mainly benefit federal bureaucrats."

Unpredicted tornado dangerous

National Weather Service officials said Tuesday weathermen cannot predict — nor warn against — tornadoes such as the type which capsized a double-decked showboat and killed 15 persons on an east Kansas lake. Bud Shaffer, assistant chief of the NWS regional office in Kansas City, also said there were no plans for further investigation of the matter. "We have examined all the data and we really don't find any fault," Shaffer said.

Man survives lethal alcohol level

A house painter has baffled authorities by surviving an infusion of alcohol which should have killed him, officials said Monday. James Thomas Cook, 30, of Ashland City, Tenn., was arrested for drunk driving June 8. When tested for blood alcohol, he registered .57 percent. "It's a miracle the man's alive," said Vic Bellos, executive director of the Alcohol Safety Course. "All the doctors I've talked with tell me that when you get past .45 or .50, you're legally dead."

Boats collide, skiers injured

Two boats towing water-skiers collided late Monday on Lake Texoma, injuring three persons. The Lake Patrol said Nancy Yvonne Woodruff, 13, of Denison, Texas, and Jasen Taylor, 23, were hospitalized in Denison in fair condition. Letha Castleman, 15, of Denison was treated for a broken nose and released. The patrol said Tyler and Woodruff were passengers in a boat operated by the girl's father. Castleman was a passenger in a boat operated by Ricky Wayne Lock, 15, of Denison. Both operators and the two unidentified skiers escaped injury.

WORLD

Portillo to visit China

Mexico's President Jose Lopez Portillo said Tuesday he will visit China next October to strengthen relations between the two countries. Portillo made the announcement before representatives of China's Popular Assembly who are on a goodwill tour in Mexico. Commenting on Mexican-Chinese relations, he said, "We are friends and we want to be even more still." Chi Peng-Fei, leader of the Chinese delegation, told Lopez Portillo he would receive a grand welcome when he visits China.

WEATHER

Partly cloudy and continued hot today through Sunday with little variation in temperature. High today in the mid-90s, low tonight mid-70s. High tomorrow mid-90s. Winds from the southeast at 5-10 mph.

THE BATTALION

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Address correspondence to Letters to the Editor, *The Battalion*, Room 216, Reed McDonald Building, College Station, Texas 77842.

Represented nationally by National Educational Advertising Services, Inc., New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles.

The Battalion is published Monday through Friday from September through May except during exam and holiday periods and the summer, when it is published on Tuesday through Thursday.

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