

VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

WEDNESDAY
SEPTEMBER 6, 1978

Try for a new start

Tonight's the first Student Government meeting of the school year — the start of a new year with a new crop of student representatives. Last year the organization accomplished two major things for students — the student purchase program, offering discounts at area stores, and the fledgling intra-campus shuttle system. However, Student Government could have done so much more. Long hours of pointless debate and politicking bogged down results elsewhere. And many times the meetings were just a waste of time for them and their constituents. Hopefully representatives this year will heed the past and truly start anew. And for students — who rarely even see one Student Government meeting during their year's at Texas A&M — tonight's meeting will be at 7:30, 204 Harrington. You might check it out. K.T.



Governors not what they used to be

By DAVID S. BRODER
BOSTON—If the folks who are governing the American states today had been governing the American colonies 200 years ago, you have to believe there never would have been an American Revolution. Instead, they would have met in Boston and resolved to demand greater administrative discretion from the Crown and a larger shipment of gold in the next brig that left Southampton.

THESE GLOOMY REFLECTIONS on the character of American governors are almost inevitable, given what took place here last week at the annual meeting of the National Governors Association. Despite the rich reminders of the glorious past that fill this city, this was as feckless a meeting of the leaders of the sovereign states as anyone can remember. There were no revolutionaries or bold adventurers in this group—just a lot of men and women trying to figure out how to hang on.

Part of the queasiness that afflicted their gathering can be explained by the fact that half of them are facing elections this fall. They came here feeling a bit out of sorts with the Carter administration, the Congress and their own constituents, and they found not much consolation in each other's company.

What passed for policy debate was more dispirited than usual, and the social life that had been a traditional part of these meetings succumbed to the twin virtues of puritanism and Proposition 13.

In the past, the pervasive boredom and occasional tensions of the business sessions at the annual meeting were relieved by the state dinner, which gave the governors and their spouses a change to dress up, step out and dance.

THIS YEAR, the state dinner was cancelled by the wet blankets who feared the voters would turn their wrath against anyone who profaned the spirit of austerity by demonstrating a capacity for having fun. Instead, a giant New England clambake was scheduled in a park on Boston harbor. Regrettably, rain forced its removal to a nearby hockey rink. If our idea of a good time is picking at lobster with a plastic fork while sitting in the penalty box, it was a helluva party.

On a somewhat more substantive level, the name of the game was, "Don't rock the boat." The Democratic governors were tiptoeing around, trying not to add to President Carter's problems by voicing publicly the kind of criticism of his administration many of them are only too eager to make in private. The Republicans were similarly chary of reopening the civil war in their ranks between progressives and conservatives.

The truth of the matter is that the governors find their present political position somewhat embarrassing. For years, all of them have been making speeches about the desirability of putting a governor in the White House. Well, they've finally got one in Jimmy Carter. Moreover, he is a Democrat, just as three-fourths of them are.

DOES THAT MAKE them proud and happy? Not exactly. The only thing that might please them less would be if Carter were succeeded by the most eager of their present company, California Gov. Edmund G. (Jerry) Brown.

A visitor to these conferences inevitably develops, over the years, a certain sympathy for the governors. Many of them are able public servants, but the best of them have rarely been able to expand their influence or reputations beyond the borders of their own states. The governors most admired in recent years within the group—men like Republicans William G. Milliken of Michigan and Robert D. Ray of Iowa and a bit earlier, Democrat Calvin L. Rampton of Utah and Republican Daniel J. Evans of Washington—were and are virtual unknowns outside their states.

The most touching moment of this rather tedious conference came when Milliken, the association's chairman, noted that this was the last such meeting that will be attended by Reubin O'D. Askew, D., the retiring governor of Florida. Askew has been for eight years a model of courageous, constructive leadership in his state.

The standing ovation he received from his colleagues was a gesture of the respect and affection his integrity and good sense command.

Perhaps the harshest thing one can say about the Governors Association is that it is an organization which takes great pride in canceling a party and does almost nothing to let a country know what a man like Reubin Askew has contributed to its well-being.

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WASHINGTON — As summer rambles into fall, Congress approaches its most treacherous season.

Although the time of the year coincides just about exactly with the hurricane period, it is not the high winds and towering waves that pose the danger.

Rather, it is the potential — shared by hurricanes — for devastation, damage and destruction.

As a Congress moves into its final weeks before adjournment, a frenzy of activity overcomes the leaders and the rank-and-file as they seek to put the final touches on two years of work.

As a result, legislation which would, during a more leisurely period, receive the utmost scrutiny is rushed to passage — some time with only a handful of senators knowing its content.

Other bills — perhaps worthy of consideration — are dumped because they would take too much time.

And then there is the session-ending "Christmas Tree" bill, most usually a tax measure adorned with all sorts of goodies, some of them for the most special of special interests.

An old Senate hand, Sen. William Proxmire, D-Wis., has issued a warning to taxpayers and consumers which will, almost certainly, have no effect.

"Get ready," Proxmire said last week, "for the bite from three pre-Thanksgiving turkeys, specially garnished by Congress and scheduled for stuffing after the Labor Day recess."

Although Proxmire singled out only the water resources bill, the public works bill and the compromise natural gas pricing bill, he conceded that there will be more.

"Every year, many bad pieces of legislation are rushed through to final passage in the closing days of a congressional session," Proxmire said.

The temptation to do as much as quickly as possible is understandable, but not necessarily laudable.

Many of the bills still waiting to be called up for action have been in the works for two years.

They may be the products of countless days of hearings, hours and hours of drafting and perhaps even passage in either the Senate or the House, but not in both.

If they don't make it in those closing days when the business hours lengthen late into the night, then the entire process has to be repeated beginning next year.

Every piece of legislation — save treaties — falls when the gavel rap the final adjournment of the 95th Congress.

It is also understandable that Senate leaders turn their back at this time of the year on any measure which carries even the taint of a possible filibuster.

Washington Window

No matter how Senate Democratic Leader Robert Byrd may feel personally, the chances are he will be hesitant to call up such a bill — like the time extension for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment — unless sponsors can show him a list of 60 senators willing to vote to cut off debate.

At this time of the year, even a week is precious.

Few have forgotten the session-ending furor of a few years ago when the Senate found itself embroiled in seven filibusters, threatened talk-a-thons and even personal vendettas that stalled legislation.

It was a brief time when the late Sen. James Allen, D-Ala., the master of the Senate rules, also became its leader, in fact if not in name. Nothing moved through without his approval.

Some of the same could be in the offing as Congress gets more and more eager to go home as the elections near.

The alternative — repugnant to almost all — is a "lame duck" session after the elections.

Hurricane season

By STEVE GERSTEL
United Press International

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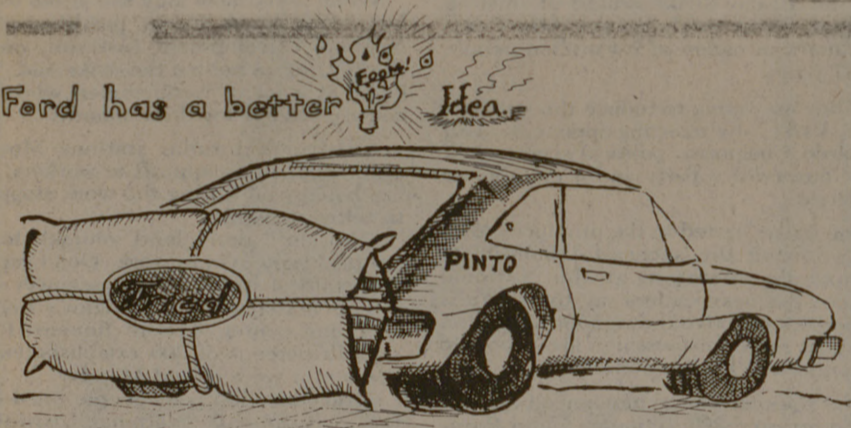
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The low-tar myth

By PATRICK A. MALONE
United Press International

BOSTON — Despite a report to the contrary, recent studies suggest smokers who've soothed their guilt by switching to low-tar and nicotine cigarettes shouldn't feel too comfortable.

One study, conducted by a smoking research project at Harvard, found that smokers tended to inhale deeper and hold the smoke in their lungs longer if smoking a low-nicotine cigarette.

By an unconscious breathing process, they seemed to be getting roughly the same dose of nicotine from a low-nicotine cigarette as from a high-nicotine one. The Harvard Tobacco and Health Research Program now is conducting further tests — by measuring nicotine in the blood — to pin down the suspicion.

Health

Thirty people who smoked a pack a day were involved in the Harvard study, directed by Dr. Gary L. Huber of the Beth Israel Hospital.

Huber also noted that tar content has been decreasing slowly over the past 25 years, while cigarette sales have been increasing at a similar rate, and the incidence of lung cancer has failed to show any decrease in response to lowered tar.

Furthermore, there is not that much solid evidence that tar, the part of cigarette smoke which precipitates into a sticky solid, actually is the cancer-causing component of smoke.

Painting tars on the skin of mice, which smoking researchers have done since 1953, has provided the only clear link between tars and cancer.

Some researchers believe that one or more of the complex chemicals in the gas part of smoke may be responsible. Low-tar and low-nicotine cigarettes have just as much gas as the high-tar brands.

Another researcher, Dr. Freddy Homburger, head of the Bio-Research Institute, Inc., of Cambridge, Mass., said eventually there may be a different safety standard for cigarettes from the tar and nicotine measure, one which takes into account the hundreds of chemical compounds in smoke which are lost to the air when tar is solidified and measured.

Slouch

by Jim Earle



RECKON THEY HAVE A FIVE-HIGH BUNK?

TOP OF THE NEWS

CAMPUS

Students' fall addresses needed

Students who did not notify the Registrar of their fall address during registration last spring need to go by the Records Section on the first floor of Heaton Hall to do so.

STATE

Grand jury hears Davis evidence

A Tarrant County grand jury Tuesday began considering evidence in an alleged murder-for-hire scheme by millionaire T. Cullen Davis and officials indicated formal indictments may be returned by the end of the week. Davis, currently jailed without bond, is charged with soliciting capital murder and possession of an illegally equipped firearm, a .22-caliber pistol with a silencer attached. Tolly Wilson, chief prosecutor in the case, said he presented essentially the same evidence to the grand jury that he presented in a bond hearing last week that resulted in Davis being held without bond on the charges attempt to present all the appropriate evidence to the grand jury within two days so that indictments could be returned as early as Thursday or Friday. Davis was arrested Aug. 20 and, under Texas law for a person being held without bond, must go to trial within 60 days. Wilson said that because of the speedy trial law in Texas he would.

NATION

Ford cars in trouble again

A government warning that says some Ford vehicles may have potentially deadly automatic transmissions has deluged the Denver office of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration with reports of accidents involving Fords. "The phone has been ringing off the hook ever since the report came out," said Brad Marks of the administration's Denver office Saturday. Marks said in just two days, 12 accidents involving transmissions were reported. He said some of the accidents occurred five years ago. The federal government is investigating allegations from car owners that 777 accidents, 21 deaths and 259 injuries have resulted from the alleged defect.

KKK leader gets new trial

The Louisiana Supreme Court in New Orleans Tuesday reversed the inciting a riot and simple battery conviction of Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke and granted him a new trial. Duke, 26, was convicted of stirring a group of KKK followers to threaten and harass Jefferson Parish sheriff's deputies who were observing and photographing them outside a 1976 Klan meeting. The incident took place in the parking lot of the motel where the meeting was held. Duke, self-proclaimed Grand Wizard of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, received a six-month jail sentence. However, it was nullified by the Supreme Court's reversal.

Copter crash kills seven

Seven people were killed and 18 others injured when a helicopter hired to drop prizes into a holiday crowd plummeted to the ground. The helicopter had been hired as a special first-time treat at the annual St. Joseph's Church and School Labor Day Festival in Derry, Pa. A witness, Bill Blair, 14, said the helicopter had made two passes over the parking lot dropping pingpong balls marked with prize numbers into the crowd. The helicopter fell into the crowd on the third pass. Eleven people remained hospitalized — two of them in critical condition. Federal Aviation Administration representatives were en route to try to determine the cause of the accident.

Firemen get blaze under control

Firemen put under control a 1,900-acre range fire Monday in a jagged-walled canyon about 40 miles southwest of Twin Falls, Idaho. Five helicopters and four planes dropping water and fire retardant along with 150 firefighters and eight ground tankers had battled the lightning-caused blaze for five days. The Bureau of Land Management said no structures were damaged and there were no injuries. A Forest Service lookout spotted the flames last Wednesday burning in the canyon situated near the Nevada border. The land is used for cattle grazing and is covered by grass, brush and juniper trees.

WORLD

Rhodesian guerrillas kill ten

Rhodesian troops searched rugged bushland Tuesday for guerrillas who massacred 10 survivors from a plane which the insurgents said they shot down. Thirty-eight of the 56 persons on the flight from Kariba to Salisbury were killed in the crash. The survivors, who hid in the bush all night, said those massacred included two girls, 4 and 11, and seven women, one of whom was shot and bayoneted. Nkomo, co-leader of the Patriotic Front guerrilla alliance, said in Lusaka that men from his Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army were responsible for shooting down an Air Rhodesia plane Sunday. But Air Rhodesia Manager Pat Travers rejected Nkomo's claim that the plane had been shot down. "There is at present no evidence to suggest that the aircraft was brought down by hostile action," Travers said. The last message from the crew explicitly stated that the plane's two starboard engines were out of action.

WEATHER

Mostly sunny and hot today. The temperature high in the upper 90s and low in the low 70s. Slight variable wind at 5 to 10 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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