



THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

VIEWPOINT



TUESDAY
JANUARY 16, 1979

Reflections

Kim Zyson

Expensive rejects

These books are for you. They are worth \$5.25. I paid almost \$50 for them.

I'm tired of getting ripped off. Nobody gives a damn. You could see it on the faces of all those kids trying to sell back their books; it was pathetic. For two years I've put up with this crap, but when that guy said my geology book was worth 25 cents I just couldn't take it anymore.

Does anybody care anymore? Or have we just turned into a bunch of accepting rabbits? I hope someday God grants me the power to graduate from this school. Maybe then I can do something about this "rip off!"

It's time we stopped undermining our educational systems. Just where does the love of money stop? — (Letter to the Editor)

At the end of last semester a guy came into my office and handed me three books. He told me to take them. He wanted The Battalion to have them, do something with them, because they weren't worth anything anymore.

I was perplexed. What had the newspaper done that would make him want to donate his books to it? Or why did he think going to The Battalion would solve his dilemma?

The answer is that he was frustrated. The books that cost nearly \$50 earlier in the semester were now worth only \$5.25 at the bookstore. He said the bookstore told him that the title was overstocked and that they couldn't afford to stock it, or the edition had been changed. A wholesaler had offered to take them for \$5.25.

He wrote down this note and left — saying he was tired of the world.

Editors see lots of people who are tired of the world, and I didn't really think much about him again until this week. I was back in line at the courtesy counter behind 10 students either bringing back books for resale or getting refunds on books.

One conversation: "Well, how much did it cost you?" "Thirty-eight dollars for three paperbacks."

One fellow brought in a big cardboard box of books for resale. Then he carried out the same box — still three-quarters full.

At the first of a semester, money — borrowing it, spending it, needing it — makes you wonder if the "requirements" are worth the price.

Starting a library with books that you can't afford to keep or even want isn't very appealing. Neither is finding that the bookstore doesn't buy back lab manuals, or has overstocked and doesn't need your used books.

It also makes you wonder whether professors think about the money they force students to spend by requiring supplementary paperbacks or the latest edition of a text.

A modern college student can acquire quite an expensive library of unwanted books. And paperbacks don't even look nice on the shelf.

Editor's note: Sometimes staff members run into situations that aren't quite news stories and aren't quite editorials. They may be humorous, or they may be serious. This is the first of that series of commentaries by Battalion staff members.

New papal campaign against abortion

By CHRISTOPHER P. WINNER
VATICAN CITY — Three months into his papacy, Pope John Paul II is embroiled in a controversy over Italy's abortion law that threatens to undermine his popularity as well as his stock among the country's leading politicians.

The 58-year-old former Cardinal Karol Wojtyla of Poland, who became the first non-Italian pope in 455 years last Oct. 16, has come under heavy criticism in the aftermath of several speeches condemning abortions as immoral and praising doctors who refuse to perform them.

Although John Paul's recent declarations on abortion are only marginally different

Italy's abortion law, passed last May 18, permits cost-free abortions in the first 90 days of pregnancy for any woman over 18 years who says childbirth would endanger her physical or mental health.

But a key clause in the law permits doctors the right to refuse performing an abortion on grounds of conscience.

Government figures indicate 70 percent of Italy's gynecologists and 50 percent of its nurses claimed conscientious objector status once the law took effect.

The figures show that while nearly 27,000 legal abortions were performed last year, thousands of objecting doctors helped encourage what is a still-prosperous clandestine abortion trade.

"John Paul is re-igniting the flames of a battle we thought was already won," said Radical party deputy Marisa Calli, an ex-nun whose party drafted the original abortion referendum.

Even the ruling Christian Democratic party, which fought alongside the Vatican against abortion and divorce laws, declined to join the church's new campaign.

"The party fought and lost two battles," said Christian Democratic party President Flaminio Piccoli, "and now it must accept the verdict of the majority. Laws are laws."

For the first time since his election John Paul has become fodder for caricaturists. A leftist newspaper published a cartoon of the pope pushing Italian President Sandro Pertini out of his chair and a mass circulation magazine depicted him talking about human rights while leading conservative Italian prelates.

Vatican Radio, reacting to the fuss, took time out to "clarify" John Paul's remarks, insisting the pontiff was addressing "moral and not political issues." But veteran church observers suggested the pope's abortion statements had definitively ended the three-month honeymoon between the Vatican and Italy's political leaders.

Commentary

from those of his predecessors, they have coincided with a stepped up anti-abortion campaign by some of the most powerful prelates in the Roman Catholic church.

Cardinal Giovanni Benelli of Florence began the flurry of Vatican activity last month by denouncing abortion as "legalized homicide" that has "obliged the Italian state to become a killer."

John Paul wasted no time in picking up Benelli's lead, saying the church would never "countenance those who violate the sanctity of marriage or destroy life conceived in the womb."

But the pope edged ahead one step, enough to turn the matter into a political issue.

"I want to express my sincere admiration," he told a Catholic action group, "for all health workers who follow their conscience and resist, daily, the enticements, pressures, threats and physical violence so as not to stain that right that presupposes all other human rights — the right to live."

Legislators seeking 'safer' committees

By DAVID S. BRODER

WASHINGTON — If you want a clue to the likely character of the new Congress beginning work this week, a good place to look is at the committees the members want to join. According to House Majority Leader Jim Wright (D-Tex.), far and away the most sought-after committees are Appropriations and Budget.

Those two money committees have 21 applications each from new members and veterans seeking new assignments. By contrast, the Education and Labor Committee and the Judiciary Committee — both traditional "liberal" bastions — have barely enough applicants to fill their vacancies.

The clear signal is that the dominant Democratic majority knows this is not a Congress that will pass new social legislation or seek new guarantees of social justice.

Rather, its principal work will be allocating scarce dollars among existing programs and deciding who gets a bigger or smaller slice of the pie.

There was a time when serving on Education and Labor meant charting a war on poverty, raising the minimum wage or building thousands of new classrooms.

But now those committees deal with the most intractable "social" issues dividing America, from busing to abortion to private school aid, and receive the complaints of constituencies who find the old programs delivering far less than they promised.

So Congress, that most sensitive of political barometers, sees its members moving, en masse, to what looks like safer ground in the "money" committees.

Appropriations has always been an attractive committee for those who wanted to put themselves close to the federal trough.

Democrats or Republicans, liberals or conservatives, Appropriations Committee members knew that in times of austerity, they were well positioned to protect the projects they cared about most, and in times of prosperity, to see that their friends got their share — and more.

The popularity of the Budget Committee

is both more recent and more interesting. It has existed for only six years.

Except for Brock Adams, who parlayed a successful term as its chairman into an appointment as Secretary of Transportation in the Carter cabinet, it has yet to be established that Budget Committee service is a boon to anyone's political career.

Current House rules limit the number of years a member may serve on the Budget Committee, so there is little likelihood for making it the basis for a long and increasingly influential House career.

Yet, those who were already members of the Budget Committee fought successfully last month to extend their stay by an extra two years, and there is a long line of applicants waiting for the few vacancies.

What is the explanation? For the thoughtful members of the House — of whom there are more than most newspaper readers suppose — the Budget Committee is one of the few places where one gets to see the whole picture of government and influence basic policy choices.

Here is where the most fundamental economic decisions are debated — where the level of revenues, expenditures and deficits are set. And here is where priorities between defense and domestic needs and among the major activities of the government are determined.

It is challenging work for the ablest and most broad-minded members of Congress.

But that is too idealistic to be the whole explanation. The Budget Committee is also the place where one can most visibly say no to spending proposals. And in the current political climate, as perceived by House members, that is a highly advantageous occupation for a public official.

As one present member of the Budget Committee says, "These Democrats want to get on here and embellish their reputations as economists."

And that is about as good a clue to the character of this new Congress as you can find.

(c) 1979, The Washington Post Company

TOP OF THE NEWS CAMPUS

Taps for Earley Thursday

Silver Taps for Andrew Sinclair Earley, 18, has been rescheduled Thursday to avoid conflict with other functions, University officials said. The memorial service will honor the freshman marine biology major who died in a local traffic accident Dec. 13. He was buried at Ahoskie, N.C. Earley was the fifth student fatality of the current academic year. Silver Taps, usually held on Tuesday nights, was originally scheduled tonight for Earley.

Former student dies after crash

Loretta Kay Davis, 22, who was a student at Texas A&M University last spring, died at 1:10 p.m. Tuesday as a result of injuries sustained in an accident. Davis was the passenger on a motorcycle that collided with a car at 5:15 p.m. Thursday in Bryan. She died at Methodist Hospital in Houston, where she was taken after the crash. She was a life-long resident of Jasper. Services are pending at Stringer-Walton Funeral Home in Jasper. She is survived by two brothers, Lynn and Jimmy Ray Davis of College Station; her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Doyle R. Davis of Jasper; a grandmother, Mrs. E.S. Nichols of Jackson, Tenn.; her grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Davis of Jasper, and a sister, Terrie Lee Davis of Jasper.

Overdue books billed to staff

In a continuing effort to account for long overdue books, the Sterling C. Evans library has begun billing faculty and staff of Texas A&M University for books that are 15 or more days overdue. A letter notification is sent with a list of extremely overdue books charged to the individual. The letter requests that the faculty or staff member either return or renew the material overdue. If, after three weeks, there is no response, the individual will be billed for each overdue book and a non-returnable processing fee will be assessed. Last year, the library started a similar policy for students with extremely overdue books.

STATE

Texas tractorcade goes to D.C.

An estimated 500 American Agriculture Movement supporters started a 1,800-mile trek to the nation's capital to protest the possible "phasing-out" of the Texas farmer. The AAM points to recent figures they say indicate that about 4,000 Texas farmers will be phased-out this year. Ultimately, farmers hope to attract as many as 50,000 agricultural producers in their "tractorcade" to Washington D.C. for a Feb. 27 rendezvous. AAM spokesman Gerald McCathern said thousands of farmers will demonstrate upon arriving in Washington. McCathern said, Mike, a spokesman at AAM's state headquarters in Hereford, was jubilant about Monday's turnout for the departure. He estimated 20 tractors and 500 supporters assembled on Interstate 40 and 20 after leaving Amarillo and Abilene.

NATION

St. Louis teachers go on strike

St. Louis public school teachers went on strike Tuesday despite a court order issued late Monday to prevent the strike. A spokesman for the teachers' union said that a majority of the local's 3,700 members voted Sunday night to reject what the school board termed its final offer for pay raises. Teachers began setting up picket lines at 6 a.m. Tuesday. Classes were scheduled to be held as usual for the district. A 73,000 students with administrative personnel and non-striking teachers expected to assume the teaching load. Circuit Judge Ivan Le Holt scheduled a hearing on a temporary injunction for next Wednesday. School Superintendent Dr. Robert E. Wentz said that the Missouri Supreme Court has ruled that the board cannot bargain with the teachers on strike.

Wayne's progress is excellent

Actor John Wayne, recuperating ahead of schedule Tuesday, was expected to be released from the intensive care unit of the UCLL Medical Center and moved to a private room. Wayne's stomach was removed last Friday, but he was to be allowed his first swallows of food Tuesday since the operation. Bernard Strom, associate hospital administrator, said Wayne's progress "continues to be excellent. Surgeons had originally found 'an unusual low-grade cancer' in Wayne's stomach, while conducting what was expected to be a minor gall bladder removal. The doctors fashioned a smaller replacement for the stomach from intestine tissue.

WORLD

Hijacked 707 back in Beirut

A Middle Airlines Boeing 707, with 73 passengers aboard, was hijacked Tuesday while on a flight from Beirut to Amman. The plane was diverted to Cyprus and then returned to Beirut, airport sources in Beirut said. The identity of the hijacker or hijackers was not immediately known. However, there was speculation in Beirut that the air piracy was carried out by followers of a missing Shiite Moslem religious leader, the Imam Musa Sadr, who disappeared with two companions while on a visit to Libya several months ago. The leader was last seen in August.

WEATHER

We are experiencing an overcast of dense fog with a 30% chance of rain today, 50% tonight, and 60% Thursday. High today will be in the upper 60's and a low of 60. Winds will be light & variable. It will continue to be cloudy & cold throughout the rest of the week.

THE BATTALION

LETTERS POLICY

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.

Address correspondence to Letters to the Editor, The Battalion, Room 216, Reed McDonald Building, College Station, Texas 77843.

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.

Mail subscriptions are \$16.75 per semester, \$33.25 per school year, \$35.00 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request. Address: The Battalion, Room 216, Reed McDonald Building, College Station, Texas 77843. United Press International is entitled exclusively to the use for reproduction of all news dispatches credited to it. Rights of reproduction of all other matter herein reserved. Second-Class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.

- MEMBER
Texas Press Association
Southwest Journalism Congress
- Editor Lee Roy Lovett
Managing Editor Andy W.
Assistant Managing Editor David
Sports Editor Scott Pe
Campus Editor Steve
News Editors Karen
Beth Calhoun
Staff Writers Debbie Rogers
Patterson, Sean Pethy
Blake, Dillard Stone
Bragg, Lyle Lovett
Cartoonist Doug C.
Photo Editor Lee Roy Lovett
Photographer Lynn
Focus section editor Gary
- Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the editor or of the writer of the article and are not necessarily those of the University administration or the Board of Regents. The Battalion is a non-profit supporting enterprise operated by as a university and community member. Editorial policy is determined by the

Seniority's iron grip on Senate positions

By IRA R. ALLEN

WASHINGTON — It is January in the year 2009, and the survivors of the congressional class of 1978 are entering their sixth term in the Senate. Joe Biden of Delaware, seated at age 30 back in 1973, has just retired after a long term as president pro tempore and fourth in line to the presidency.

In this scenario, only two Democrats — Max Baucus and David Boren — and two Republicans — Thad Cochran and Gordon Humphrey — who were elected in 1978 remain in the Senate.

But there would be no contest to succeed Biden as president pro tem. If Democrats controlled the Senate, Boren would get the prestige, extra pay, limousine and added office space and staff that go with the post. If the GOP was in control, Cochran would beat out Humphrey.

That was all decided in recent days, as was the line of succession to committee chairmanships and choice office space. Seniority controls just about everything of importance in the Senate, and even though 20 members were elected at the same last Nov. 7, some are more equal than others.

The seniority champ in the class of '78 is Republican David Durenberger of Minnesota, followed by Democrat Donald Stewart of Alabama — both sworn in two days after they were elected because they were filling seats held by widows whose interim terms expired with the election.

Although Stewart was sworn in 30 minutes before Durenberger, the strict rules that determine seniority gave the nod to the Minnesotan because his state is larger than Stewart's.

Seniority is determined first on the basis of when the new member is sworn in. Often an outgoing senator will resign early to let his successor get a seniority edge. Other new members who took their seats before the Jan. 3 date set in the Constitution are, in order: Max Baucus, D-Mont., Nancy Kassebaum, R-Kan., Thad Cochran, R-Miss., Rudy Boschwitz, R-Minn., Alan

Simpson, R-Wyo., and John Warner, R-Va.

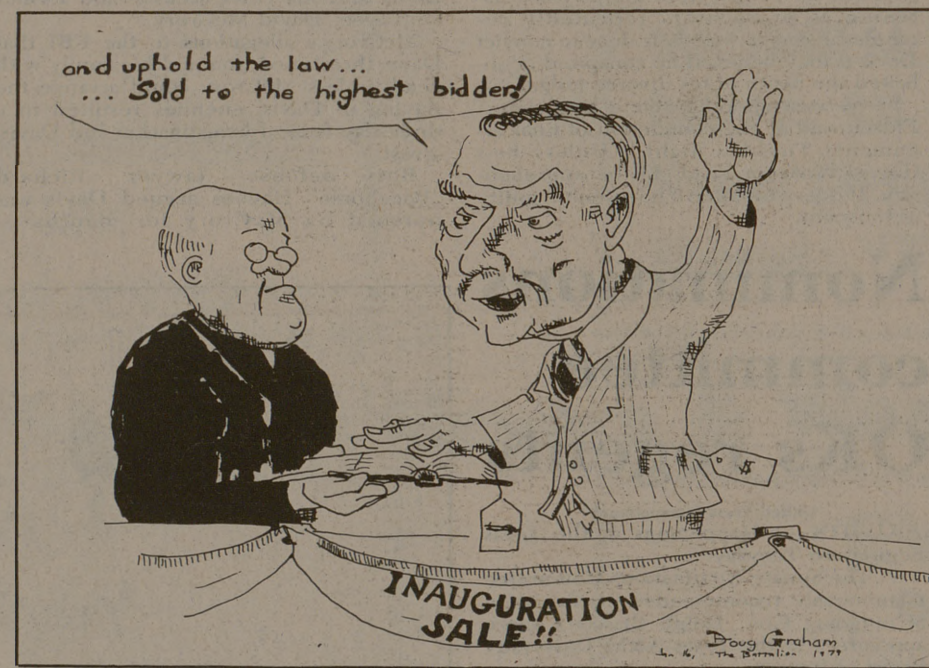
When many members are seated on the same day, the rules give precedence to former senators, former vice presidents, former House members and former governors. If a member has no previous experience, the size of his state determines seniority. That is why Gordon Humphrey is 100th in seniority — his New Hampshire is smaller than No. 99 Roger Jepsen's Iowa. When more than one former House member or governor is seated, the one with more seniority in the former job gets the edge.

It's not very important now, but throughout the next 30 years the distinctions could attain almost life and death importance. For example, both James Eastland, now retired, and John McClellan, now dead, were seated on Jan. 3, 1943. Upon the death of Allen Ellender in 1972, it was Eastland who became president pro tem because he had been in the Senate for a few months in 1941 filling out part of the term of a senator who died in office.

A more modern example, however, should be of cheer for the new members who are in 90's in seniority. Given the rapid turnover of recent years — more than half the Senate has been in office six years or fewer — advancement up the ladder can be swift.

John Glenn, D-Ohio, was elected in 1974 and ranked 93rd. Today, little more than four years later, he has jumped to 55th in seniority. And as long as they remain in the Senate, Glenn will outrank classmates Wendell Ford, D-Ky., by four days and Richard Stone, D-Fla., by eight days. That's insignificant now but of utmost importance the day an encrusted Foreign Relations Committee chairman steps down and Glenn gets the prestigious post by four days over Stone.

That's academic, of course, because the old fogey will probably be Biden, now 36, who, according to the actuaries, would be president pro tem long after Glenn and Stone are gone.



Letters to the Editor

Brains, not brawn

Editor:

The other night I came in contact with two types of assistance. I won't go into every detail, but my car and I got into some difficulty. The experience pointed out some priceless wisdom to me.

At any rate, I called on a visiting friend since I thought some simple physical force should send me on my way. I soon had a troop of four who worked about for minutes and said they couldn't help me. Alas! I went back inside, as it was getting dark and colder. Finally, from anger and the frustration of knowing I couldn't get any more help for a couple of hours, I decided to take another look at the situation. My roommate and I felt there had to be a simple yet intelligent way out. After all, there is a solution to any problem — right?

While surveying the situation and trying our idea, two weary travelers happened upon us and offered their assistance although it was now dark and quite cold. They saw we were on the right track, and

improved our idea. (Didn't intend that to sound arrogant.)

However, they used some of their infinite knowledge of engineering and outsmarted that mechanical monster quickly. And I must add, even made it look simple.

In my roundabout way, the intent of this letter was to again express our thanks to those helpful Aggies, and to point out an interesting idea. Four plus brute force equals an effect of zero. And the corollary — two plus time plus ingenuity equals success.

To the heroes — you know who you are and I want to repay you with your choice of hot chocolate, coffee, cokes, a pitcher, or a pizza if you so desire. (I am talking about the green LTD, and you should know where it was. Try going by unit number four.) To the almost-heroes, and everyone else, take a little time and the problem will practically solve itself. But what a way to start the semester!

—Margie Lincecum, '81