



VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

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Carter placates no one with Abzug firing

By DAVID S. BRODER

WASHINGTON — The Carter administration will win no political awards for its skill in firing people. Especially not for firing women.

Having muscled Midge Costanza out of the White House with a minimal show of chivalry, the friendly folks at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue belted Bella Abzug around the last week in so crude a fashion that they almost make that most obstreperous New Yorker an object of sympathy.

In doing so, they raised a serious question as to whether there might not be a double-standard for male and female foul-ups in this supposedly "equal rights" administration, and renewed the old question as to whether or not they understand the nature of interest-group politics today.

TO TAKE THE LATTER POINT first, the thing that strikes you about both Ms. Costanza, who was removed from her position as assistant to the president for public liaison last year, and Ms. Abzug, who was fired as co-chairman of his advisory committee for women last week, is that there was no obvious reason for either of them being there in the first place.

They were hired in an effort to placate, through government patronage, a force within the Democratic party which Carter finds, frankly, threatening.

THE ACTIVIST WOMEN in the party have laid on him, as they do on other politicians, a series of policy demands which he is unable to meet to their satisfaction. In an effort to buy time and perhaps tolerance, he has instead offered the women several symbolic appointments.

Costanza, a feisty former deputy mayor of Rochester, N.Y., who had the wit to join up early with the Peanut Brigade, was announced with fanfare before Inauguration Day as one of the president's senior staff

aides. It was a myth from the beginning. She was given a series of secondary public relations assignments and hand-holding missions with groups of White House visitors no one else really wanted to see.

As a woman of spirit, she rebelled, and when her rebellion included public opposition to the President's stand against federal funding of abortions, she was squeezed out of her job.

The White House was apparently surprised that on that issue, at least, Costanza was a feminist first and a loyalist second. But it certainly should have known what it was getting when it accepted Abzug, for she has made no secret of her priorities. Her liberal Democratic and feminist philosophy was expressed clearly before the press release attacking Carter's domestic budget cuts, which prompted her removal.

THE LESSON of this experience is one the White House should not still be learning. In a system overly porous to interest-group influence, it is a mistake to placate interest groups with symbolic presidential appointments. But Carter has done that, not only with women's groups, but with ethnic, religious and other groups as well, and each time he does so, he invites more trouble.

The other point concerns the way the firings were handled. Costanza was removed in a protracted, embarrassing fashion, being gradually stripped of her duties, her office and her staff, to the accompaniment of a series of humiliating press leaks about her discomfiture at her reduced status, until she finally got fed up and left.

A VISITOR who happened to be backstairs at the White House last Friday, a few hours before Abzug's removal, could not help but notice the lip-smacking glee with which presidential aides were savoring her impending execution. They chuckled at the fact she was unaware of her fate



I know just how ya'll feel, Bella.

and vied in imagining her reaction.

To assure that the firing received maximum publicity, others in the White House were calling reporters to suggest that they come by the building for what they were assured would be a really rip-snorting story. In terms of sheer flackery, it was the hardest White House sell since the recognition of China.

Now, anyone who had dealt with Abzug — including her allies in the women's movement — knows that she employs her personality as an abrasive weapon to achieve her objectives, and they know how aggravating she can be.

But those who invited the world to share their joy in evening the score with

Abzug were the same people who begged for dignity and sympathy and understanding for all concerned when Carter had to separate himself from Lance and Peter Bourne.

Lance and Bourne were loyalists, of course, as well as being male. But their loyalty did not keep them from damaging the reputation of the Carter administration more deeply and indelibly than did any of Costanza's and Abzug's acts of "disloyalty." The public humiliation of the two women, when contrasted with the kid-gloves treatment of the two men, is bound to leave a bad taste in many mouths.

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MSC grass tradition should be preserved

By J. WAYNE MORRISON

Here it is, another letter to the editor concerning the Memorial Student Center grass.

I am co-author of the student senate bill in which the University administration is asked to officially recognize the LONG STANDING STUDENT TRADITION — of considering the MSC grass to be a memorial to all Aggies who have given their lives in defense of our country. In the bill we ask the administration to do this by officially dedicating the grass as a memorial and by publishing this fact in all university publications dealing with student life.

I sincerely believe that this tradition was begun and has basically endured among the student body ever since the MSC was dedicated in 1954. I have personally talked with a number of former students ranging back to the class of 1954 and they have all stated either that they distinctly recall the recognition of this tradition to be prevalent among the student body during their attendance here or that they have always personally believed in the tradition.

Yet, because of the rapid growth in enrollment, the grass not being officially dedicated, and the tradition not being included in any university publications (because the administration does not recognize it) there are some students who are

unaware of its existence.

The reason conflicts occur is because uninformed people (mainly students) walk across the grass and are rudely informed by others of the tradition. In writing the senate bill, J.C. Colton, student body vice-president for academic affairs, and I have attempted not only to gain University recognition for this deserving tradition but

Reader's Forum

also to help end these unfortunate conflicts by asking the administration to erect on the lawn at least one appropriately worded sign explaining the tradition (similar in theory to the signs placed within the MSC entrances asking all men to remove their hats upon entering the building) and to plant a small hedge around the perimeter of the grounds to discourage people from continuously walking across them.

The intention of our bill is not to legislate this tradition but to give it the recognition it so readily deserves.

Yes, Kim, Texas A&M students do see some of their school's time-honored customs crumbling and I for one am going to fight to hang on to this one.

J. Wayne Morrison is a senior and vice-president for finance in student government.

Letters to the Editor

Respect for the dead

Editor:

To whom it may concern in Hart Hall: For whatever reason you saw fit not to attend Silver Taps this past rainy Thursday night, could you please have enough courtesy to hold down the laughter the next time we are unfortunate enough to have the ceremony?

—P.K. Imbrie, '79
Bill Fisher, '79
Joe Uдеми, '79

Editor's note: This letter was accompanied by 97 other signatures.

Right, wrong ways

Editor:

I can no longer sit and suffer in silence. After coming to a screeching halt for the second time tonight, I must make a stand. Who do these pedestrians around this campus think they are — gods? Do they honestly believe they can stop moving cars with their minds?

I firmly believe in the supreme right-of-way of the pedestrian, being one myself. But the blind carelessness, the almost nonchalant recklessness, the blatant disregard, the wanton inconsiderateness... Am I reaching some of you out there? ... is beyond lawful justification.

The prevalent feeling among most pedestrians is that the responsibility for the safety of all pedestrians lies in the hands of the motorists.

After careful consideration of all facets of the pedestrian-motorist relationship, I cannot help but feel that the pedestrian must surely have as deep a personal interest in any incident that may occur as the driver of a moving vehicle.

I do not ask for impossible measures. To have to wait as groups of students pass by

at an intersection is merely frustrating (and I have even been told it builds character). But to have to slam on the brakes to barely miss the mindless inconsiderates who step out in front of moving cars is unnerving.

All I ask is that people crossing any of the streets on campus will show the presence of mind to simply look carefully before they step out. If pedestrians continue to wield their right-of-way as a shield to protect themselves from all harm, someone is going to get hurt.

—Sue Emanuel, '81

Wanted: more fans

Editor:

I am writing this letter on behalf of all those who not only enjoy watching a good game of basketball, but in particular enjoy watching Aggies play the game.

There is on our campus a team known as the Aggie Ladies and their brand of basketball is just as exciting to watch as their counterparts (i.e. the men's team).

It is however, discouraging for these 13 young women and their coach to play before less than 200 fans. It is not only discouraging for the fans in attendance, but the too few media who cover the games as well.

Coach Bender and her Aggie Ladies work long hours practicing each day for upcoming games, and equally deserve the support that other A&M teams have received from Aggies.

The A&M women have three home games left this season, (Jan. 31.—UH; Feb. 12.—UT; Feb. 15.—UT at Arlington), and nothing would please them more than to have 7,500 fans cheering them on to victory.

—Jon Copeland, '79
P.S. Gig'em Aggie Ladies.

TOP OF THE NEWS STATE

Study: Helmets off, deaths up

Deaths and injuries resulting from motorcycle accidents have increased dramatically in Texas since repeal of the rider helmet law. A statewide study by Texas A&M University safety engineers has concluded. One of every four motorcycle accident fatalities can be prevented simply by requiring drivers and passengers to wear helmets, says the report, which was issued jointly Friday by Texas A&M and the Texas Office of Traffic Safety in Austin. It also states an unhelmeted rider is 2.5 times more likely to die and 2.67 times more likely to sustain a head injury that is incapacitating or fatal.

New abortion fund to award grants

A fund established to help poor women obtain legal abortions will award its first grants today, more than two years after the fund's namesake died from an illegal abortion in McAllen. The death of Rosie Jimenez, 27, in October 1977 gained national attention because it was believed to be the first reported after the federal government cut Medicaid funds for abortions. Jimenez, who was living on welfare, working part time, attending college and raising a 5-year-old daughter alone, went to a midwife for an illegal abortion when she could not afford the fee charged at a legal clinic, said fund chairman Frances Kissing. She died of an infection believed caused by the midwife's use of unsterilized equipment. On Monday the Rosie Jimenez Fund will award \$1,000 to various Texas abortion clinics to provide free abortions for indigent women.

Dallas police, firemen voted raise

Dallas voters approved a 15 percent pay increase for police and firefighters Saturday by an almost 8,000-vote margin, election officials said. More than three times the expected number of voters turned out for the referendum vote, with 33,893 voting for a city ordinance approving salaries 15 percent and 25,854 voting no. Voters also were asked to express their sentiments on a second proposition in a "straw vote" on City Council-sponsored 7.5 percent gross pay package for the city's 3,500 public safety officers. The vote was 29,754 for and 19,468 against. Election officials Saturday night said the city ordinance now would become law.

NATION

Marvin to testify in 'soap opera'

Actor Lee Marvin, who said the whole case would be "like a soap opera," takes the stand Tuesday to tell why he is saying "no" to a former live-in girlfriend who wants \$1 million for the six years they lived together. Marvin, 54, has sat silently in court during a week testimony from Michele Triola Marvin, 46, who lived with the Academy Award winner from 1964 to 1970. In four days of testimony in the Superior Court non-jury trial, Miss Marvin, who took the actor's name just before they separated, has tearfully told of two abortions and a hysterical breakup at a Malibu beach home. Marvin has limited his out of courtroom comments. He said the case had not affected his career but changed his lifestyle. "It forced me to wear suits," he said.

More ice, snow for Midwest

Mountains of snow that clogged the Midwest since the Blizzard of '79 struck a week ago glistened under a fresh layer of ice Saturday as forecasters predicted new snow for the nation's blizzard-battered breadbasket. Thunderstorms swept the South, spawning at least one tornado and raising the threat of flooding in some areas. An ice storm slinking across the Midwest has been blamed for at least 10 deaths in auto and plane crashes. The Blizzard of '79 claimed 98 lives. Another potent storm is brewing. And winter is not quite a month old.

Apartment manager shoots tenant

A 76-year-old San Francisco apartment superintendent, enraged at his tenants for months, exploded over a parking dispute with barrages of gunfire, killing one tenant and seriously wounding three others before taking his own life Saturday. Thomas E. Hufnagel, sniping with a shotgun and .38 caliber revolver from a second story window, peppered a residential street, keeping an army of police at bay. Police negotiator Chris Hatcher said Hufnagel had threatened to kill everybody in his apartment six months ago, including three of the victims, but no one paid much attention to the old man.

Duke heads home after operation

John Wayne, living up to his tough-guy screen image and "doing beautifully," is to go home in about a week to continue recuperating from a second serious bout with cancer. Wayne underwent removal of his stomach Jan. 12 after a malignant tumor was found during a gall bladder operation. Doctors later said cancer was found in microscopic amounts in the lymph nodes near his stomach, but that there was no evidence it had spread. Dr. Carmack Holmes, a cancer specialist at UCLA Medical Center and consultant to the surgical team that removed the 71-year-old actor's stomach, said there was "no clinical evidence" to indicate the cancer had spread.

WEATHER

Fair and mild changing to cloudy and warmer tonight with a chance of drizzle. High today 60 and a low of 40 with a 20% chance of rain today and a 30% Tuesday. Winds will be southerly at 10-15 mph. Outlook for the rest of the week will be cooler with a cold front moving in on Tuesday.

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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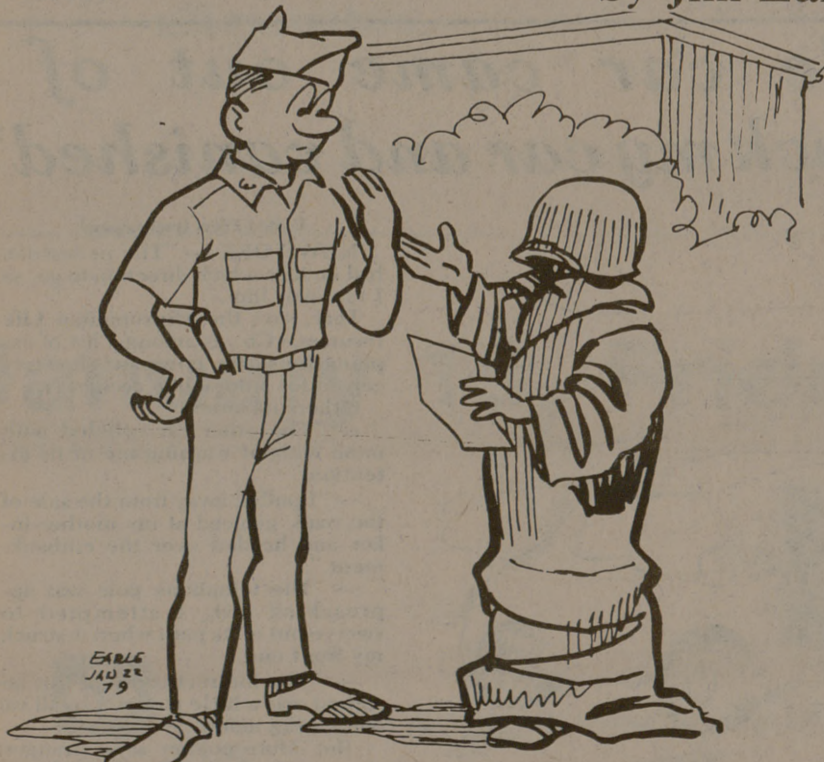
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by Jim Earle



"I'M HAVING TROUBLE GETTING BACK IN THE SWING OF THINGS AFTER SUCH A LONG BREAK. COULD YOU DIRECT ME TO THE ACADEMIC BUILDING?"