

# VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION • TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

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## City 2; drivers 0

With the exception of a few weekend nights, College Station used to be a relatively safe place to drive. That is, until a study conducted concluded there could be better traffic flow if two areas on Texas Avenue were restriped.

The intersection of Texas and Jersey Streets has become one of the busiest in town and cars turning left onto Dominik were hindering the through traffic. So the Highway Department modified the left lane for easier turns. They also made it impossible for the driver to determine exactly where his lane begins and ends.

The old lane stripes merge with the new ones and the driver can't tell which lane is his. And before he knows it, his lane turns into a yellow median and he's cruising down the center stripe.

Highway Department employee George Boriskie said, "It may appear a little confusing at first, but we assume that everybody drives to the right of a yellow line."

Ah, that's where he made his first mistake. You can never assume anything about Texas drivers. Most of the time, they don't know what they're going to do.

Boriskie agreed that the intersection is confusing and much work remains to be done. Work crews are scheduled to burn off the remainder of the old lane stripes. Hopefully this will relieve some of the initial confusion, but construction should be completed as soon as possible to eliminate any confusion. With all the good weather we've been having lately, there should be no excuses.

Should you make it out of that intersection with no dents, another lies in wait at the corner of Highway 30 and Texas.

Double left-hand turn lanes have been installed — one onto 30 and the other onto Texas. The purpose of these lanes "is to increase efficiency and capacity; and basically it has," Boriskie says.

Perhaps we use different dictionaries. Let's see how efficient it is. The catch is that the southbound light on Texas always stays green. When unsuspecting motorists try to turn left onto Texas, they are fed, by means of a large yellow hump, into the left lane.

Granted, this is proper driving procedure, but most people prefer to ignore their blind spot, turn wide and go directly into the right lane. When neither the motorist going straight nor the one turning left knows to look out for the other, you have the makings of an impromptu destruction derby.

A sign warning drivers of the situation seems like an easy answer. Not so, says Boriskie.

"It could create an even bigger hazard if they stop to read a sign. They could get rear-ended." So, take your choice — rear-ended or side-swiped.

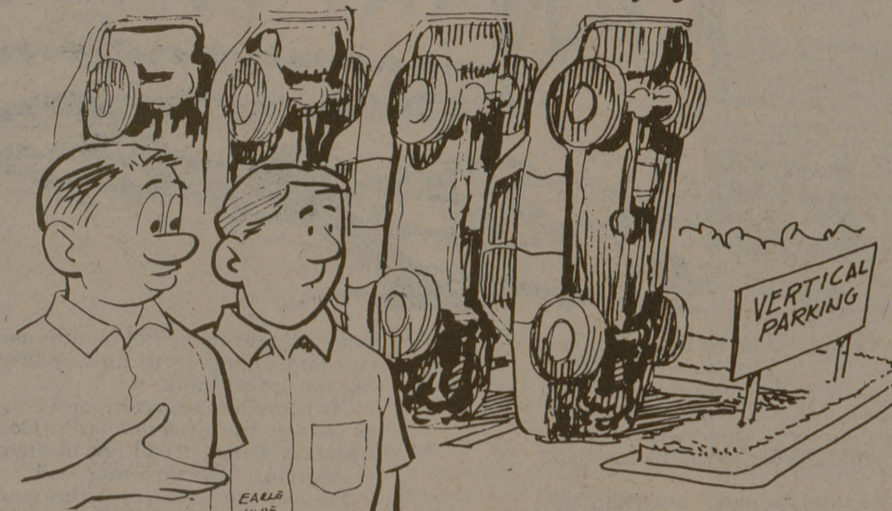
Another problem with a sign, Boriskie says, is that there is no way to fit that information on a sign.

How about "Merging Traffic" or "Keep Left"? Perhaps the Highway Department should consult some of our Aggie engineers. Things couldn't get any worse.

—K.L.R.

Slouch

by Jim Earle



"IT MAY SEEM A LITTLE INCONVENIENT, BUT THEY HAVE MANAGED TO CREATE SIXTEEN MORE PARKING SPACES THIS WAY."

## Mayors' conference

# Misery out of place these days

By DAVID BRODER  
PITTSBURGH — Something was missing from the annual meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors this week. Or perhaps several somethings.

President Carter was missing, but since he rarely shows up at gatherings of — ugh — politicians, his absence caused no great surprise.

Senator Kennedy was also missing, and that was a bit more unusual. Whatever invitations Carter snubs these days, Kennedy usually rushes to accept.

But the missing ingredient that caused the most comment was neither Jimmy nor Teddy but Misery.

In the good days, you could count on a mayors' conference to furnish a full year's supply of misery. You could fill your cistern with the tears that were shed in the three or four days that their honors were comparing their miserable plights.

Mayors rose to the top of the organization because of their talent for publicly tearing themselves to tatters. John Lindsay's rendition of "Broadway — the Street of Broken Dreams" made even budget bureau auditors weep. Moon Landrieu of New Orleans had a soliloquy about local tax burdens ("... and if it moves, we tax it again...") that became as famous as Edwin Booth's reading of "To be or not to be..."

I mean, there were some great tragedies in those days.

For about five years, when Richard Nixon was in power, the "Mayors' Miseries" became, not just a once-a-year spectacular, but a traveling road show. A dozen of the best actors in city hall would don sackcloth and ashes, and travel from one bankrupt metropolis to another, pausing at each stop to cluck sympathetically at the local atrocity stories and then assuring

everyone that conditions were even worse where they lived.

The Misery Merchants became less visible after Nixon went West, and by this year, there was hardly as doomsayer to be seen. It may be that Dick Carver of Peoria, the new president of the group, or Bill McNichols of Denver, his predecessor, lack the tear ducts for which the Lindsay-Landrieu duo became so famous. But there is a lingering suspicion that things may, in fact, have turned better for the cities in the last five years.

We are so unaccustomed to receiving good news in this country that one feels almost embarrassed to mention the possibility.

But it was Mayor McNichols, in the speech that formerly set the keening keynote for the meeting, who said this year: "I believe there is too much gloom and doom about the problems and challenges we face. I believe it is time that we sound a positive note about our country."

Here, then, is a positive note. During the 1970s, there has been more than a three-fold increase in federal aid to state and local governments. More of the money is coming to city hall in a fashion that permits some local ingenuity to be applied to its use. And, from what the mayors themselves say, much of it is being used to attract multiples of private investment.

Here is a second positive note. A lot of changes in the social and economic environment of America are now working in the cities' favor, not against them.

So there was a reason why Misery was among the missing at the mayor's meeting. It's really out of place these days.

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# Even smart people can flunk in college

By CAROLYN BLOSSER

The note said it all. To Professor X: I have taken my life because I cannot do my BANA. I felt that the course load was extremely too much.

Janie Roper, 7534630  
Janie's still alive. She left this note on my desk as a joke last spring when she was struggling through her business analysis class. I guess she wanted a little sympathy for all the mental strain BANA was putting her through.

Balancing precariously between a passing D and the all-for-nothing F isn't a privilege reserved only for dim wits. Not in college. Or at least not at Texas A&M.

Here, anybody can flunk.

When I was a freshman I believed that no one flunked a course unless he absolutely didn't try. After all, college couldn't be that much different from high school, which most of us breezed through with minimum effort and semi-regular attendance.

Failing a course in high school was a difficult task. A student had to never show up in class, never score above 25 on an exam, and never turn in homework. If he slipped up and came to class for a day, or scored a 60 on a test, the teacher rewarded his progress with a passing grade.

Those days are long gone. For all the naive freshmen who enter college with this false sense of security, A&M has some cleverly designed flunkout courses to kill their misconceptions.

Probably the most notorious of these is Biology 113.

I learned about this course my first semester at A&M, the day my roommate came home from class in tears.

I thought she'd probably broken up with her boyfriend until she told me what was wrong.

"I'm going to flunk biology."  
"What? Is that all?" I was relieved she was crying over something trivial.

Like Janie, Lana's no dummy. She graduated Cum Laude from our high school class of 500 and had been in the Honor Society.

In high school when someone said they "flunked" a test, it meant they didn't do as well as they could have; it did not mean they got an F.

I pointed out these optimistic facts to Lana and assured her she was worrying over nothing. I couldn't believe a bright student who spent hours studying would really flunk.

When I saw the F on her final grade report, I became a believer. She took Biology 113 over the following semester and passed with a D.

Janie did pass her BANA course last spring. She's sweating through another one this semester, but I kept reassuring her that she'll do fine. In fact, some of my encouraging words sound a lot like the ones I told Lana.

# TOP OF THE NEWS

## STATE

### Testimony begins in Henley trial

Two police officers from the Southeast Houston suburb of Pasadena testified in Corpus Christi Tuesday that Elmer Wayne Henley Jr. first admitted killing Dean Corll the morning of Aug. 8, 1973, then led police to the bodies of 27 boys slain in a bizarre three-year torture spree. Henley's killing of Corll, a 33-year-old electrician, was later ruled self-defense, but it led to the unearthing of the remains of the teen-age boys in three graves in and around the Houston area. Henley, 23, is standing trial for a second time on murder charges in the deaths of six of the victims.

### Fleener may go free within 2 weeks

Presidential clemency for former Texas student Terri Fleener means she may go free within two weeks, her lawyer said Monday. "Tomorrow I will go to the parole board and ask that she be set free at the end of the month," said Felicia Langer, attorney for the 24-year-old former Kuwait Airlines stewardess. Miss Fleener was arrested on arrival in Israel in October 1977 and charged with aiding elements hostile to the Jewish state. She was said to have taken pictures of military installations and the Israeli coastline on a previous visit, at the suggestion of a Lebanese acquaintance.

## NATION

### Findley: 'corn for oil' won't work

Rep. Paul Findley, R-Ill., said in Chicago Tuesday attempts to trade corn and wheat for oil with the Arab nations will not succeed unless the American grain industry becomes nationalized. "Swapping grain for oil may sound good but it can't happen unless farmers are willing to have their grain business nationalized," Findley told a luncheon audience attending a two-day conference at the O'Hare Ramada Inn. Findley said trade opportunities with the oil-producing nations also could be dampened by government efforts to use agricultural products as political weapons.

### Two more men to die in Florida

The state of Florida, which put John Spenklink to death in the electric chair May 25, Tuesday ordered two more convicted killers executed later this month. Gov. Bob Graham signed death warrants in Tallahassee and scheduled executions for Charles W. Proffitt of Tampa and Robert A. Sullivan of Miami. Graham set the executions for the week beginning Friday, June 22 and ending at midnight on Thursday, June 28. Both men are to die in the electric chair at Florida State Prison at Raiford.

### Damaged tanker arrives safely

The damaged tanker Exxon Chester, laden with 7.14 million gallons of asphalt, arrived in Boston Harbor Tuesday and the Coast Guard began an immediate investigation into its collision with a freighter that sank within 40 minutes. The 575-foot Regal Sword sank in 270 feet of water Monday night 30 miles southeast of Cape Cod. All 38 crew members abandoned ship in life rafts and were rescued by the Exxon Chester. No injuries were reported aboard either ship.

### House defeats windfall tax change

The House Ways and Means Committee, working on legislation to set a 70 percent tax on windfall oil profits, Tuesday defeated a move by oil state representatives to lower the proposed tax to 55 percent. By a vote of 20-16, the committee defeated an amendment by Reps. James Jones, D-Okla., and Henson Moore, R-La., that would have set the tax at 55 percent and completely wiped out the windfall tax on new oil by Dec. 31, 1990. The committee planned to consider whether the 70 percent windfall tax it already has approved should be replaced by a \$3 per barrel tax on all domestic crude produced as a result of deregulation of federal price controls.

## WORLD

### General strike paralyzes Italy

More than 14 million Italian workers staged a nationwide general strike Tuesday, paralyzing essential services for more than four hours and throwing the country's tourist-filled cities into chaos. The general strike, called by Italy's three major trade unions, came after the June 3-4 national elections in which the Communist Party suffered parliamentary losses for the first time in 31 years. Major demonstrations were staged in Rome, Bologna, Milan and Turin where union leaders harangued the government and vowed new "get tough" policies.

### Sandinistas hold onto positions

The Nicaraguan national guard Tuesday bombed a stalled Sandinista column at Rivas, where the insurgents plan to establish a capital for "Free Nicaragua" but rebels around the only guard fort in Leon beat back government reinforcements. Sandinista guerrillas were holding the cemetery and the public market on the southern outskirts of Rivas, 21 miles north of the Costa Rican border. Radio Reloj de San Jose, Costa Rica, reported Tuesday a guerrilla landing on Great Corn Island, 125 miles in the Pacific Ocean, in an attempt to seize boats, presumably for an amphibious operation. The report could not be confirmed.

## THE BATTALION

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## More miles to the control

By DICK WEST

WASHINGTON — If, as Richard Franck once wrote, "necessity is the mother of invention," then I think we all can agree the mother of reinvention is adversity.

It was adversity brought about by the oil shortage that prompted Transportation Secretary Brock Adams to challenge the auto industry to "reinvent" the motor car.

And now it appears adversity of another sort will force the administration to reinvent the wage-price guideline.

From the looks of it, the guideline has become even more of an anachronism than the gas-guzzling automobile.

The darn thing only gets 7 percent to the wage-price hike. Which in these inflationary days is about as unrealistic as a car that gets 7 miles to the gallon.

Moreover, the guideline operated on intimidation — the threat that violators would lose government contracts.

But a federal judge has declared such sanctions unconstitutional. Which is the equivalent of having a motor fuel attacked by Ralph Nader.

So it's back to the drawing boards for President Carter's economic advisers. They will be trying to design a guideline that has a workable wage-price boost percentage and is powered by something besides threats.

Many of us have fairly firm ideas of what the reinvented auto should be like. Trying

to picture a reinvented guideline is considerably more difficult.

Some engineers have suggested equipping the guideline with a new and better jawbone. The claim that if jawboning is used to its maximum potential, the guideline can operate on the power of persuasion.

But others say a guideline that can run efficiently on the power of persuasion is about as remote as a battery-powered auto.

"The power of persuasion has a very limited range," one economist told me. "At the moment, we simply do not have the know-how to come up with a jawbone that would make guidelines acceptable to wage-price boosters."

I said, "Is there anything else that might force the president to recall his guidelines?"

"Tests show the guidelines cannot withstand inflationary jolts," the economist replied. "Even a mild shock from the consumer price index can cause the wage guideline to crumble."

"What would it take to make the guidelines effective?"

The economist shook his head. "Given the present state of the art, they probably would have to be equipped with some sort of mandatory controls."

"The technology for that already is available, but many people feel it would be too potent. I fear we may wind up importing guidelines from Japan."

