

VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION • TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

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Carter comes around

At last, President Carter has seen the light. He realizes for the first time why his administration does not have the respect of the American people.

The nation's confidence in him has declined to a meager 28 percent according to the latest poll. People across the country curse him as they watch inflation climb to new heights and morale to a new low. To most voters, Carter is a one-term president. It's just a matter of time before they prove their forecast in the 1980 elections.

He was quoted Tuesday as saying he had "lost control of the government and did not have real leadership among the people." He also admitted that he had failed in an area in which he was supposed to be strong — management. But more importantly, he is asking fellow politicians where he went wrong and what, if anything, he can do to remedy it.

Perhaps Carter's most severe handicap was his inexperience.

His campaign began as a model of sophistication and efficiency, but it soon became tangled with explanations, retractions and side issues.

When a poll indicated he may be too liberal, he swung around and tried to become more conservative. He contradicted himself. He talked of ambitious new programs on one hand while talking of balancing the budget on the other. And some accused him of painting too gloomy a picture of the economy. He even had to apologize to Mrs. Lyndon Johnson after linking Johnson and Richard Nixon as presidents who had deceived their countrymen.

But Jimmy Carter polished his campaign techniques, met with then-President Gerald Ford in a series of televised debates and bested him not only in there, but in the 1976 election.

But his lack of knowledge of foreign and domestic affairs would soon become evident. He had served only

as governor of Georgia. He had had no opportunity to get hands on experience.

He surrounded himself with equally unqualified Cabinet members and some, like Bert Lance, managed to lose any credibility they may have gained from the President's endorsement.

Issues like the Panama Canal, the Middle East peace treaty and the questionable practices of his peanut business further eroded the public's confidence in him. And when affairs at home like the energy crisis and the economy became too pressing to ignore, Carter finally seemed to turn his eyes homeward only to let himself become involved in a treadmill of conferences and speeches, but no action.

Carter's "tell me what's wrong" attitude is a step in the right direction. But let's hope he doesn't get involved in even more advisory meetings that leave the American people holding a bag of hot air and little else.

—K.L.R.

the small society

by Brickman



Gas rationing not best answer

People are starting to tell pollsters that they would prefer formal gas rationing to waiting in long lines at service stations.

This is beginning to change minds on Capitol Hill, where the House roundly defeated President Carter's bill for standby rationing authority last May 10. The White House is encouraged and is thinking of reviving its plan.

Before the country jumps from the frying pan of service station lines into the fire of rationing, it ought to take a hard look at what it will be getting into.

For one thing, rationing would be expensive. The Department of Energy says it would have to spend \$53 million to put a bureaucracy together. It would cost \$350 million to start the system and \$400 million to run it each three months. Those are funds that could do some good if invested in the search for new energy supplies or in making synthetic oil from abundant coal reserves.

Carter's plan calls for mailing gasoline "entitlements" to owners of registered vehicles. This would produce a new growth industry: mailbox theft.

Many people already have bought junk cars to qualify for higher rations. If rationing comes, selling junkers will be another growth industry.

Carter's entitlements will have to be taken to banks and exchanged for coupons. Some estimates are that banks will need twice their current counter space and tellers if bank lines are not to replace gas lines.

Proponents say it is fairer than removing controls and rationing gas by price than the present system, rationing by inconvenience. But many poor and near-poor persons have to drive long distances to get to their jobs. Since coupons would be bought and sold a coal miner in Appalachia would indirectly buy coupons from a Wall Street broker who takes the subway to his office.

There would be a huge transfer of income from rural areas, where residents must drive long distances, to urban areas which are served by mass transit and where incomes are higher. This is fairness?

That adds up to a deeply flawed plan. The public has a right to expect better from the administration. The energy bureaucrats even could start by scrapping their allocations and regulations that admittedly are making the shortage worse.

Scrapps-Howard Newspapers

Group says country moving back toward liberal point of view

By ARNOLD SAWISLAK

WASHINGTON — The declaration by Americans for Democratic Action that the country is moving back toward liberalism brings to mind James Thurber's description of his efforts to use a microscope in high school biology class.

Told to draw what he saw in the lens, young Thurber was called to the front of the room and chewed out for turning in a sketch of his own eyeball.

ADA President Patsy Mink's jubilant announcement that "the country's move to the right is over" and "support is growing for the kind of solutions for which liberals have always stood" is no surprise to students of the group's recent history. ADA has been looking at the political scene and drawing its own eyeball for years.

ADA apparently comes to that conclusion in the following way: First, in Mink's words, Sen. Edward Kennedy "according to almost all public opinion polls, is the country's first choice for president." (He also is ADA's first choice, which may have something to do with what comes next.)

Second, Kennedy "is also the foremost liberal voice in the U.S. Senate."

Conclusion? "The country has not rejected liberalism; people are instead rejecting leadership that is inept and ineffectual."

To conclude that the polls which show Kennedy ahead of other presidential contenders 18 months before the 1980 election are the harbinger of a liberal renaissance requires more than logic. A blind leap of faith may be more like it.

Utility bill fliers provide unique communications

By DICK WEST

WASHINGTON — There is more to a utility bill, usually, than a mere statement of how much the customer owes.

Accompanying the main bit of bad news will be one or more pieces of ancillary literature, most commonly a pamphlet setting forth the company's rationale for the latest rate increase.

Despite increased use of utility bills for educational or propaganda purposes, their potential as a communication medium has never been fully exploited.

One direction future billing information might take was pointed to last week at a House hearing on civil defense aspects of nuclear power plant accidents.

Chairman Joseph Hendrie of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission was asked how the public could be made aware of

possible radiation dangers without causing undue alarm.

"We may want to wind up using the little fliers in utility bills," Hendrie replied. "I can hear it now."

"We interrupt this program to bring you a bulletin from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Due to a malfunction in the reactor, a small amount of radioactive gas has escaped from the Tinkerbell Atomic Generating Plant. For further details, see your next month's electric bill."

I would imagine the trick in preparing such a flier would be presenting the warning in a way that nobody gets alarmed. A cartoon symbol might be helpful.

I can see it now. A cute little squat body shaped like a reactor cooling tower. A face like a "Have a Nice Day" button. A hat that looks like a tiny Geiger counter. Arms and legs like zigzag lightning bolts.

It is no one's business but ADA's who it endorses for president. But it really doesn't have the best record in the world for selecting successful candidates, and perhaps we may be excused for suggesting that Mink's line of reasoning based on ADA's early choice for 1980 may be more of an exercise in wishful thinking than political shrewdness.

TOP OF THE NEWS

STATE

Estes jury asks for definition

Jury members who have labored for the past four days over a verdict in the complicated fraud and tax evasion trial of Texas swindler Billie Sol Estes in Dallas interrupted deliberation Tuesday to ask a federal judge the legal definition of "reasonable doubt." Judge Gordon Gray said the jury also queried him about the possibility of a partial decision in the thick 22-count indictment. But the judge declined say what he told the jury and refused to speculate whether he felt a verdict was near. Estes and Horton were charged last year with collaborating to defraud three industrial leasing companies of about \$600,000 through an arrangement to market 36 heavy duty steam cleaners used in oil field work. The government said the cleaners did not exist. Estes also was charged with trying to conceal his assets from the Internal Revenue Service at a time he owed \$10 million in back taxes.

Houston firm accused of bribery

International Systems & Controls Corp., a Houston-based construction firm, paid \$23 million in bribes to top government officials and their associates and members of ruling families in Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Ivory Coast, Nicaragua, Chile and Iran — including Nicaraguan president Anastasio Somoza — the government has charged. The Securities and Exchange Commission filed a complaint in U.S. District Court in Washington Monday which also said that J. Thomas Kenneally, who resigned as ISC board chairman in March and owns or controls 42 percent of the voting stock, used about \$1 million in company funds to buy, improve and furnish an 85-acre mansion near Dublin, Ireland beginning in 1970. In addition, the SEC alleged that executives of the firm started to shred documents that pertained to the purported bribes after learning of the SEC investigation. The SEC asked the court to order the firm to halt the payments and to appoint an agent to seize custody of all company assets.

NATION

Arthur Fielder dies of heart attack

Boston Pops Maestro Arthur Fielder died Tuesday in his Boston home was 84. Fielder, the white-haired conductor familiar to millions of Americans, was found sprawled in the bedroom of his home about 7:30 a.m. by his wife. He had been in ill health for some time.

Fielder had been in and out of hospitals with various ailments since last December, was unable to conduct the Boston Pops Fourth of July concert along the Charles River last week for the first time in 54 years because of his weak condition.

Illness delays Chi Omega trial

The Miami, Fla., trial of Theodore Bundy, accused of slaying Florida State University coeds Margaret Bowman and Lisa Levy, was recessed Tuesday because of a juror's illness. Mazie R. Edge, a recently retired assistant elementary school principal, apparently began coming down with the cold Monday while prosecution witnesses were painting a graphic word picture of the murder scene at Florida State University in Tallahassee. She asked for water several times during the trial.

Circuit Judge Edward Cowart did not indicate how long he would permit the 62-year-old woman's illness to delay the trial. There are three alternate jurors.

Rockets found; ignorance is Bliss

A flatbed trailer carrying three U.S. Army Hawk missile launchers to Fort Bliss, Texas, was left in a parking lot in Jacksonville, Fla., for a month and finally had to be picked up Monday from Walt's Auto Salvage. Apparently no one knew the equipment was missing. Police found the trailer Sunday. On Monday, FBI agents discovered the missile launchers belonged to Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas, and that they were being transferred there from Key West. Then police received a phone call from a representative of the Lightning Trucking Co. asking if they had custody of any missile launchers. The spokesman said the company had been forced to delay hauling the launchers to Texas because of the truckers' strike. They were left on the lot, he said, because their regular storage facility was full. Late Monday, police said, the launchers had been returned to the trucking firm and were en route to Texas.

WORLD

Sandistas closing in on Managua

Sandinista guerrilla radio broadcasts monitored in Managua, Nicaragua said the rebels have launched a general attack from all sides on Managua, Anastasio Somoza's last bastion defended by 5,000 national guardsmen. Washington, bracing for a possible "breakdown of public order," Monday placed three planes and two helicopters on alert to evacuate U.S. Embassy personnel and other citizens from the war-torn nation. Informed sources said Somoza's soldiers were down to a three-week supply of 9.5-caliber machine gun and heavy mortar ammunition. The sources also noted that most of Somoza's generals had applied for and received U.S. visas for themselves and their families.

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.

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Letters to the Editor

Locker break-in bad news

Editor:

To the person who raided basket B72 in the women's locker room: I waited until I calmed down slightly before I wrote this letter, because the profanity would have prevented it from being printed. Still, I am furious! How dare you (and how did you?) break my lock and steal my P.E. clothes and my \$32 running shoes! Perhaps you didn't realize the extent of the consequences of your act. First, I had a racquetball skills test and a game, and not having shoes forced me to borrow a pair that didn't fit. Try running around in a pair of shoes that are too big for you and see well you play!

Secondly, I was so mad I couldn't concentrate on playing anyway, so I lost the game and did poorly on my skills test.

Thirdly, I loved those shoes! They were barely a year old and I had worn them just enough to where they were comfortable. I also can't afford to replace them anytime soon.

Last, and most definitely not least, the total charges for the P.E. clothes you took is \$14.50. You didn't even leave the towel! Frankly, I don't have the money to pay it. Since registration is this week, I will have to pay tuition, buy books, etc.

You have also put a big dent in my faith in human nature, and especially in Aggies. I used to be a fairly trusting person. Now I look at every girl's feet with suspicion.

To those who haven't been warned: Don't leave anything in your basket you don't want stolen. A combination lock is apparently no protection. Also, there is no attendant on duty from 5 until 6:30 p.m. when the doors are locked. So there is every opportunity for a dishonest person to take advantage of you. Beware! Texas A&M has decided those socks cost \$2 and it goes up from there. When you sign that card saying you take responsibility for your

P.E. clothes, that means paying for them if they are stolen. If you're feeling guilty, call 845-4892 and I'll offer you a chance for redemption (if I get my shoes and my \$14.50).

—Cheryl Richardson

