

STATE

Legislator wants fuel for flooded cities

Sen. Carl A. Parker, D-Port Arthur, says Southeast Texas cities need more fuel to operate flood cleanup equipment and has urged Gov. Bill Clements to allocate emergency supplies. "At a time when more garbage trucks are needed to remove trash and debris left by rising waters from tropical Storm Claudette, some municipalities are faced with a reduced fuel allotment," Parker said. Parker said some cities face a crisis in operation of trash vehicles and road and bridge repair vehicles because of reduced fuel allocations.

NATION

ICC raises rail rates 1 percent

The Interstate Commerce Commission in Washington has increased rail rates by 1 percent to cover rising fuel costs. ICC spokesman Larry Lesser said Monday the commission approved the rate hike late Friday and it went into effect immediately. The new increase brings the fuel rate hikes approved by the ICC since June to a total of 3.6 percent. The nation's railroads last week asked the ICC for a rate hike of 6 to 9 percent effective Oct. 1, saying without the added revenue the industry's "meager rate of return on investment will plunge to a deficit." The ICC has not yet acted on the new rate hike request.

Truck driver 'fired' for spitting

Patrick Bachman, a truck driver who learned flame spitting from a Minneapolis magician, tried Sunday to beat a 23-foot record set by England's Jack Sholomir two years ago. During an exhibition in nearby St. Cloud, Minn., Bachman first spit flames 18 feet, then 20 feet. Then he took a big mouthful of fluid, lit a small torch 3 feet from his face, took a big breath and spit. The fireball shot out 22 feet—but it set fire to his hair and some of the fluid dripped down his chin. He rolled on the ground in pain. Bachman was taken to a St. Cloud hospital where he was treated for first and second degree burns and released.

Kidnapped girl returned to parents

Caroline Thompson, 5, was returned to her father and mother Monday night in Myrtle Beach, S.C., where police caught her kidnapper, James Keith Tucker, 18, after a 60 mph chase through alleys and between buildings. Tucker, charged by the FBI with kidnapping Caroline hours before they were found, was taken to Florence, S.C., 70 miles away, for arraignment.

Senate committee approves Civiletti

The Senate Judiciary Committee Tuesday approved by a 12-0 vote the nomination of Benjamin Civiletti as attorney general to replace Griffin Bell, who resigned during President Carter's Cabinet purge. The Senate is expected to consider the recommendation before it begins its traditional August recess Friday. Civiletti, 44, joined the Justice Department as head of the criminal division at the beginning of Carter's term. He took over as deputy attorney general, the No. 2 spot in the department, last year.

Woman raped 26 times at knife-point

A Chicago woman walking home from a bar along a West Side street was abducted at knife-point and may have been raped by as many as 26 men, police said. The 19-year-old victim Suneay was treated at St. Anthony Hospital and released, a spokesman said. Police said three men forced the woman at knife-point into a white Cadillac about 4:30 a.m. Sunday, then drove to the South Side, where they said the three and as many as 23 other men sexually assaulted her. Police were investigating the incident.

DC-10 board calls witnesses

The first public hearings into the nation's worst air disaster have brought under close scrutiny American Airlines' inspection and maintenance procedures on its ill-fated DC-10 jetliner. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) members, technical staff and attorneys for a number of parties Monday extensively questioned an American Airlines mechanic who worked on the plane that crashed near O'Hare International Airport May 25, killing 273 people. The NTSB opened the public hearing phase of its inquiry in Rosemont, Ill., into the crash of Flight 191 from Chicago to Los Angeles, first calling witnesses to the crash, then technical experts. The hearings are expected to last about two weeks.

Eleven killed in Cambridge, Ohio fire

At least 11 people were killed and many others were injured early today in a fire that swept through a resort motel in Cambridge, Ohio, officials said. Ambulances and firefighters were called in from several surrounding towns to help with the injured and to help fight the fire, which broke out about 3:30 a.m. EDT at the Holiday Inn motel. The cause of the fire was not immediately determined.

THE BATTALION

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Shake up may prove harmful

By DAVID BRODER

WASHINGTON — It is conceivable — although far from certain — that the extraordinary events of July in Washington may represent a different kind of turnaround than their chief author, Jimmy Carter, intended.

What Carter clearly set out to do was to reverse the decline in his personal fortunes, which had carried him down to the point of political extinction. Whether he achieved that objective cannot be clearly measured for some time, but there is some reason for skepticism.

Robert S. Strauss, the President's favorite troubleshooter, says he expects no real upturn in the Carter polls for months. Given the economic mixture of recession and inflation, an energy squeeze which will not go away, a protracted and precarious Senate battle over the SALT treaty, and what many informed people see as a growing threat of Communist infiltration in Central America and the Caribbean, Strauss' caution seems well-merited.

The turnaround that may have been marked this month is a more fundamental, less personal one. It is an institutional reflex, centered in the White House but spreading across Washington, that may in time be seen as a swing back toward the centralization of authority.

It was perhaps most clearly expressed by the comment of Hamilton Jordan, the newly named White House chief of staff, that "We've had too much of a democracy around here and not enough organization."

Jordan was talking about the White House staff, where the lack of discipline and structure was most evident. But the comment is valid in a wider context, for, in large part,

the history of the past five years has been one of "democratization" of politics and government — meaning the decentralization of authority and the diffusion of power.

The challenge to centralized authority drew its energy from many of the protest movements of the Sixties and from a cultural climate that exalted individualism. But, in the political arena, it was given its greatest impetus by the collapse of the Nixon presidency, just five years ago this summer.

Nixon had moved boldly — and, it was discovered, recklessly — to centralize power in his White House. The excesses he indulged led to a furious reaction.

The post-Watergate presidents, Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter, yielded significant power to their Cabinet officers and agency heads. They acquiesced — because they had little choice — in successful incursions on their authority from a newly assertive Congress, or, to put it more exactly, from assertive individuals in Congress exploiting not only the weakness of the presidency but the parallel decentralization of power in the legislative branch.

A series of party rules "reforms" and campaign finance law changes led to a proliferation of primaries and candidacies. These weakened the post-Watergate presidents' grip on their own party organizations. Ford was forced to battle hard for nomination to a full term and Carter faces similar struggle if he seeks re-election.

What Carter is saying — in his speeches, his press conferences and his Cabinet shakeup — is that he has discovered after 30 months that he cannot govern in this kind of diffused system.

The clear intent of the changes he is making — whether or not they succeed — is to strengthen the discipline within the White House and to reclaim some of the authority he had surrendered to the Cabinet.

He is also fighting back against the assertiveness of Congress by attempting to rally public opinion to his side in what he hopes to structure as a showdown on energy policy.

All of this has shocked and confused people — and for a good reason. Carter's nomination and election were so much the product of the diffusion of power that no one expected him to turn around and lead the counter-revolution.

Were it not for the radical decentralization of the nominating system, the decline of traditional power-centers in Congress, and the depletion of the position of the incumbent President, Jimmy Carter could not have made his implausible 1976 journey from Plains to the presidency.

For the man who profited so handsomely from this diffusion of power to be suddenly decrying it, is, as the old Mort Sahl line goes, "a little like Steve Canyon repudiating Milt Caniff."

The inherent incredibility of Carter's role as leader of the counter-revolution may make a difficult task impossible — for him. But it is surely something of a milestone to have a man who is symbol of the decentralization of the Seventies thought of as democracy recognize that the institutions of government are desperately in need of being glued back together.

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Tax evasion — a new corporate game

Tax evasion—it's the game some say everybody in America plays.

But, whether that be the case or not, it can be a very profitable game for some corporations.

Last week a federal judge allowed Firestone Tire & Rubber Co. to plead guilty to two counts of filing false tax returns. U.S. District Court Judge William K. Thomas fined the corporation \$10,000—the maximum fine for

filing a false return. Thomas accepted the guilty plea and dropped conspiracy charges against Firestone when federal prosecutors advised him it would be difficult to prove any tax evasion conspiracy.

Firestone had been charged with failing to report in 1973 and 1974 tax returns about \$13 million in income earned but not reported between 1966 and 1971. Federal attorneys say

the firm may have to pay \$1.5 million to \$2 million in back taxes, penalties and interest to be assessed in a pending civil case over the same returns.

So Firestone may eventually pay \$2 million for filing those false returns. But consider the potential revenue the firm might have generated from not reporting that income.

Say Firestone had invested that \$13 million, earned through 1971, in tax-

free municipal bonds at 10 percent interest. In the last eight years that investment could have generated at least \$10 million—almost doubling itself. That's almost keeping pace with inflation.

Even having to pay \$2 million in back taxes and penalties, Firestone could have realized a hefty \$8 million return from that unreported income. Who says crime doesn't pay?

L.R.L.

the small society

by Brickman



Open umbrella policy

Air Force not all wet

By DICK WEST
United Press International
WASHINGTON — Coincident with the start of Senate hearings on the SALT II treaty comes word that the Air Force has unilaterally adopted a new "open umbrella" policy that will substantially improve its defense against downpours.

Dress code revisions approved after a four-month test period at the Pentagon

permit airmen for the first time to carry bumbershoots while in uniform.

Nobody is suggesting, as in the case of the MX missile, that the move was deliberately timed to strengthen support for the arms limitation pact with Russia.

Even SALT supporters do not argue that a massive increase in Air Force umbrellas will tip the strategic balance in favor of the United States.

Nevertheless, certain indirect factors could well influence the thinking of senators who have not yet decided how they will vote on the ratification issue.

For example, I am informed the Pentagon tests showed that umbrellas, when unfurled in combination with raincoats, afford much greater raindrop diversion than is provided by raincoats alone.

That extra measure of protection could be decisive if there happened to be a missile alert on a rainy night.

Having bumbershoots in a state of readiness means that Air Force officers called in for duty in response to the crisis would be less likely to arrive in damp uniforms, one military analyst told me.

"This insures they would not be distracted by such extraneous worries as whether any shrinkage might occur and whether their uniforms will need pressing."

I feel sure that pro-SALT senators will hammer that point home.

But what significance should be attached to the fact that the Army and Navy intend to continue banning umbrella-carrying by male soldiers and sailors except when they are in civilian clothes?

"I interpret that as a signal to the Russians that the stepping up of wet weather preparedness is not necessarily a hard line policy," the analyst said.

"But should the Soviets beef up their military capability, we would have no choice but to authorize all-out, armed forces-wide umbrella utilization."

Finally, there is the matter of verification, which is so vital to SALT debate.

When U.S. airmen raise their umbrellas, will the Soviet Union be able to verify that it is raining? Certainly they could do so by monitoring U.S. weather bureau forecasts.

And if reliable verification is not available, might some of the airmen start carrying parasols as well as umbrellas, thus expanding their defenses against sunstroke?

Such questions probably are too technical for the average layman to discuss intelligently. But this is the very stuff of which Senate debate is made.

—K.A.T.

Cheer up. Things could be much worse than they are

Things are not faring well. There has been a dearth of news this summer. I am failing Spanish in a big way. The Astros are only three games ahead of Cincinnati and that could change for the worst soon. The United States is entering a recession if it is not already in one. I owe money to everyone except the mafia and they are next on my list. The David Bowie tape drags. Of course things could be worse. I could be audited.

The only good thing I can think of is I graduate in May, but then I have to find a job.

So why am I subjecting the readers of the Battalion to my lamentations? To make

you feel better. People love to read about other peoples problems. That is why newspapers deal in bad news. It sells.

This is the way it works. You have just failed your thermodynamics final so you can't graduate on time. Your girlfriend ran off with a Bandido and took the \$300 engagement ring you bought yesterday with her. Your father lost his job and your student loan didn't come through.

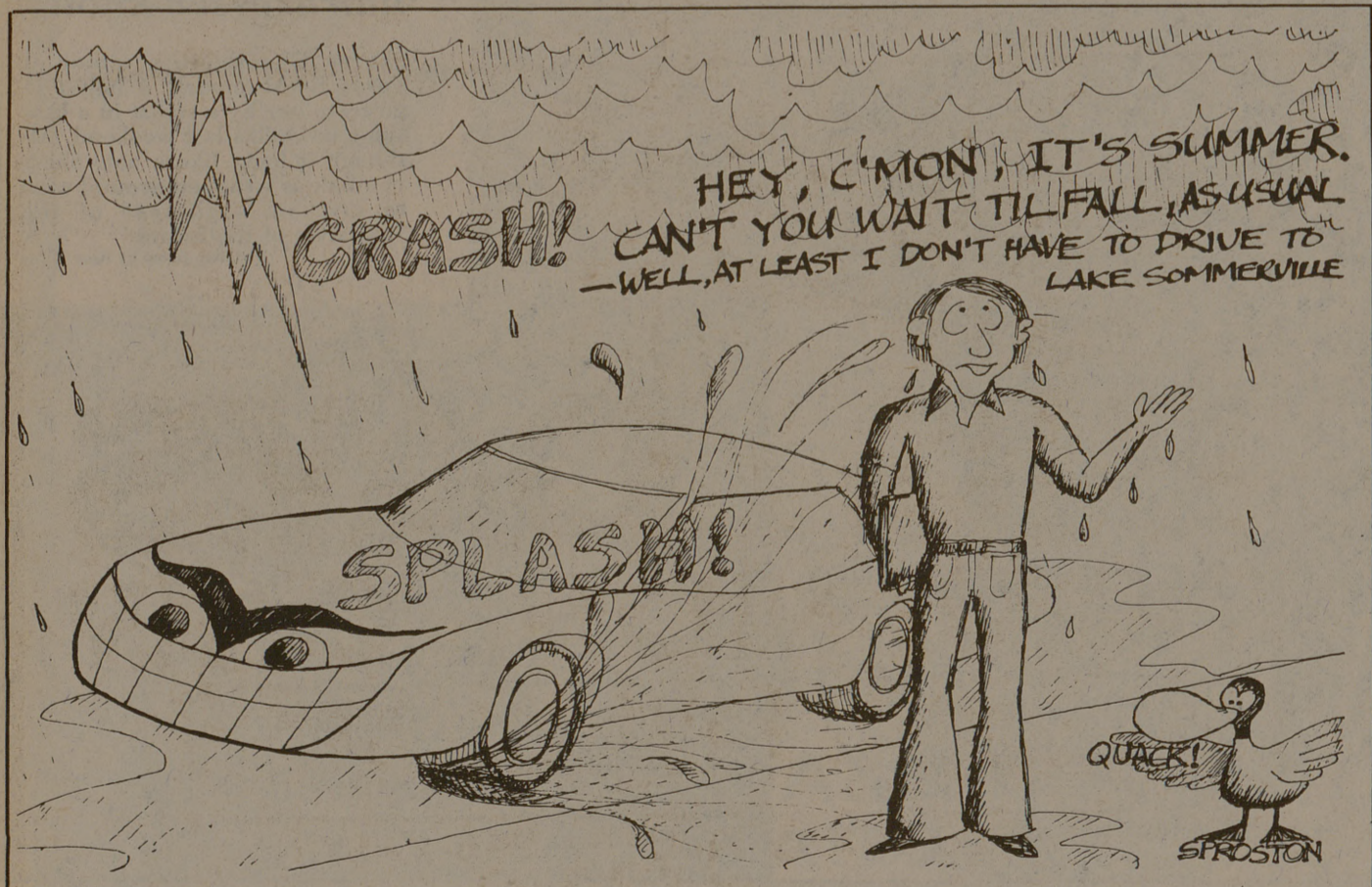
So, you pick up the newspaper or flip on the television and find out what is happening in the world. You read about murders, the lack of confidence the American people have in President Carter. You hear that the Ayatollah Khomeini has assassins

looking for the shah and Somoza just lost a whole country. This makes you realize things could be worse.

All you've lost is your girlfriend and \$300. Besides no one is trying to kill you and your mother has confidence in you.

Now don't you agree the news media is wonderful medicine for depression?

Read the Battalion, write letters to the editor, solicit our advertisers. I'm counting on you, otherwise there my not be enough money to pay me this week and I need a root canal and someone ran into my car and my girlfriend ran off with a Bandido, etc.



Readers' Forum

Guest viewpoints, in addition to Letters to the Editor, are welcome. All pieces submitted to Readers' forum should be:

- Typed triple space
- Limited to 60 characters per line
- Limited to 100 lines