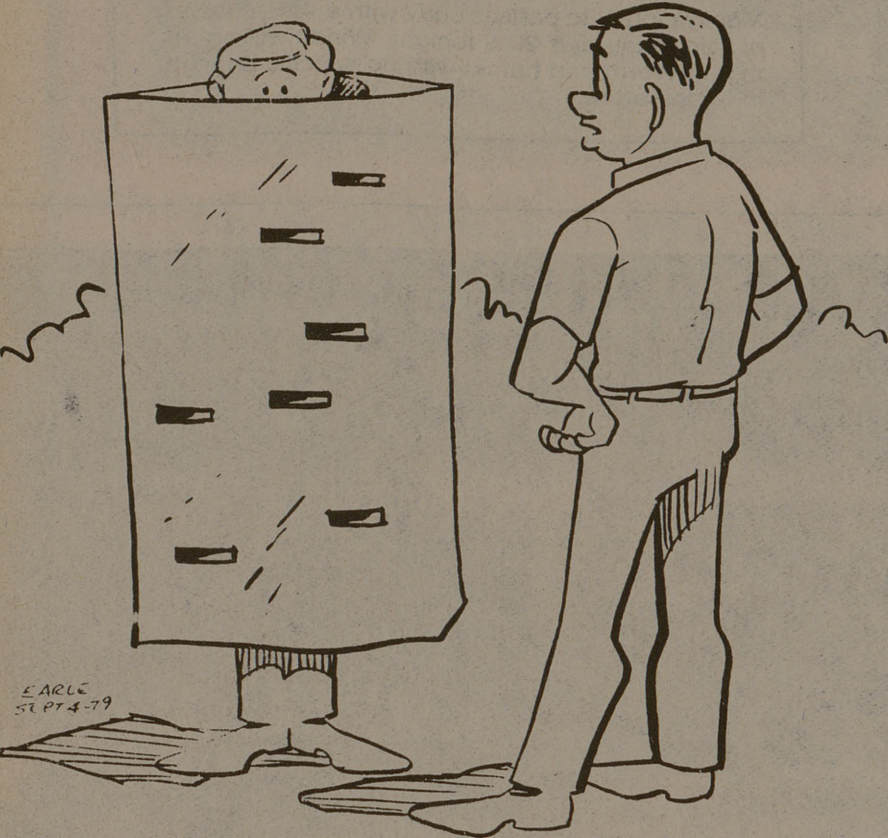


SLOUCH



"YOU ALWAYS COMPLAIN ABOUT BEING TREATED LIKE A PUNCH CARD THIS TIME OF THE YEAR. FRANKLY, I THINK YOU BRING A LOT OF IT ON YOURSELF."

OPINION

Honest, we're frail

Like baseball managers in the springtime, we at The Battalion — as students and journalists — are full of hope for the new school year.

But we want to remind you of some things about our modern media world, to keep us all honest.

—We journalists are not instant historians. What you read is a partial, often inaccurate sampling of what we heard about or thought we heard about during the last few days.

—We are not sociologists or psychologists. We seldom really understand why people do what we report they do — which is why we stick to describing only what we can see or are told.

—We are not movers and shakers of the world. The people who do make the important decisions may read what we write, but we cannot tell them what to do.

—The promises some of us are quick to make — that a free press will save the world — cannot be fulfilled.

Since those promises have not been met by the press, you distrust us, feel betrayed. And we journalists — idealists at heart — disappoint ourselves.

But the disappointments are not reason to quit. We keep trying to report faithfully what we know and see.

And sometimes we succeed — sometimes things do change because of what we write.

So we're reminding you — simply — to keep in mind our human faults and shortcomings, even as we report yours.

Only from that base can we be honest — and that's what makes great newspapers that truly serve people.

Change a-comin'

The editorial page in your hands has changed, as has much of the staff that prepared today's Battalion.

The rest of the newspaper's format will also be changing soon. Our aim is to create a more readable, attractive "package" for the news. If it isn't pretty, it isn't read — no matter how well written it is or how important.

Developing those changes will take some time, and they may be startling, but they should ease the flow of news from the world to you.

VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION • TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

TUESDAY • SEPTEMBER 4, 1984

BRODER

Presidential pickers should be politicians

By DAVID S. BRODER
For those of us who have convinced for most of this decade that the presidential selection system has taken a fundamentally wrong turn, there are a few heartening signs that the long-awaited rethinking of the "reforms" of the Seventies is beginning.

In the space of six days earlier this month, two thoughtful and influential Democrats weighed in with articles making an essential and little-understood point: The frustration many Americans have expressed with the choices they have been given in recent presidential elections and the disappointment they feel with the performance of recent presidents stem directly from the changes that have occurred in the presidential nominating system.

Newton N. Minow, a Chicago lawyer and former chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, made the case in The Wall Street Journal. David

Lebedoff, a Minneapolis attorney and longtime leader of the Minnesota Democratic Farmer-Labor Party, wrote a parallel brief for The Washington Post.

While differing somewhat in their suggested remedies, both men put their finger directly on the heart of the problem. The changes in the nominating rules made in the Seventies effectively eliminated any real screening of the presidential hopefuls by the people who are best able to judge their talents and shortcomings, namely, the politicians and officeholders who have worked with them over a period of years.

"The pros," as they were called, dominated the makeup of the nominating conventions until this past decade. Then, in a spirit of reform and with the belief that broader participation might make the conventions "more representative," the system was changed to encourage a lot more amateurs and average citizens to join in

the selection process.

The main device was to switch delegates in relatively closed caucuses or conventions, where past party service and public leadership credentials count, to primaries, where everyone's vote is equal to everyone else's.

There are two things wrong with this switch. First of all, the primaries themselves are very unrepresentative processes. As Minow pointed out, President Carter's great "victory" in the New Hampshire primary was achieved with the support of 7 percent of the people who voted in the 1976 general election in that state.

The second problem is that even that unrepresentative fragment of the citizens has little chance to learn or judge the real qualities of the candidates they are considering. Their exposure consists of a single meeting, a handshake, a glimpse on the television tube.

As Lebedoff pointed out, candidates who seek the nomination in such a system quickly learn to display those qualities that are most easily communicated in that brief exposure each possible voter gets.

As a proxy for competence, the candidates show off their detailed knowledge of even picaresque issues. As a proxy for emotional stability, they show themselves deliberately low-key. As a proxy for leadership, which always risks being divisive, they learn to read and echo the polls.

And, as Lebedoff argues, the very qualities that serve them so well in the primaries — fascination with detail, a lack of passion, a preoccupation with polls — are the qualities for which they are criticized when, as presidents, the people finally have a chance to judge their real

abilities.

The point of the Minow and Lebedoff articles — and of this one — is not to more abuse on Jimmy Carter, who is presently being blamed for more evils than any one person could have caused. The point is that as long as we have this selection process, this is the kind of candidates we are going to get.

It is too late to change the selection process for 1980. But the discussion represented by the Minow and Lebedoff articles cannot begin too soon, if the changes going to be made by 1984.

Because most of the nominating rules were rewritten and most of the laws passed by Democrats, it is appropriate that the debate begin there.

But there are also hopeful signs on the Republican side. The pre-primary presidential preference poll being conducted by Florida Republicans this fall represents the ultimate absurdity of the system. A lottery is being run among those who get to vote in the November general election. Candidate organizations are spending thousands of dollars to turn a few hundred bodies at the caucus into hopes of winning the lottery.

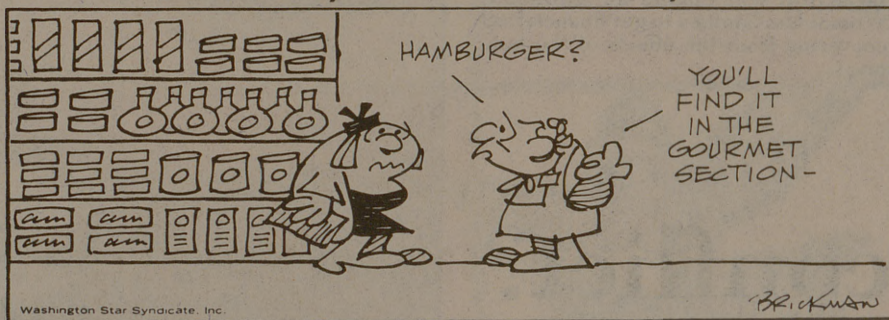
No one could possibly pretend that anything but a parody of a sensible presidential selection system. And most candidates and campaign managers, their credit, despite it. "I wish we could kill the guy who thought of it," one of them told me, sounding as if he meant it.

Don't kill the guy. Change the system if not for 1980, then surely for 1984.

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the small society

by Brickman



Here's the ultimate Good Ag reply

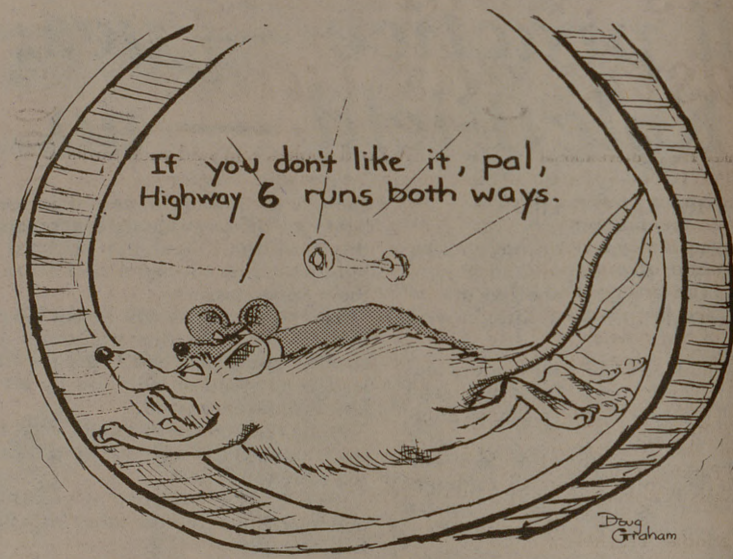
Dear Editor:
To _____, you are full of _____ ALL GOOD AGS (sound
Mr. _____ orange tea
Miss _____ feathers
Mrs. _____ doo-doo
Ms. _____
Thing _____

of trumpets) know that _____ is a tradition here at A&M.
(blank should be filled in with appropriate issue in question, e.g. "eating mashed taters with a spoon")

I have went here for three years now and am a GOOD AG (trumpets again). If you don't like it here (big drum roll) HIGHWAY 6 RUNS BOTH WAYS. We don't need YOU TWO-PERCENTERS HERE NOHOW. A GOOD AG and proud of it.

_____ (name (check your ID)),
Class of _____ (match the numbers on your ring)
'80
'81
'82
'83
'84

Editor's note: This "letter" was submitted by Les Palmer, a Communications Specialist with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service.



LETTERS

Students asked to help with A&M government

An open letter to the Student Body:
As your Student Body President, I must say that I am honored to serve in this capacity. I am very proud of our university and those ideals on which it is based. Maintaining those ideals of a university for the students is our responsibility, not simply mine or Student Government's. I know that the quality of students at Texas

A&M is surpassed by no other university. However, A&M as we have known it will be challenged in the coming years. The traditions, attitudes, and values we hold so dear will be questioned. Are we as students ready for that time? Will we stand up for what we believe, to uphold the ideals of Texas A&M?
I know that we can, through open lines

of communication with the administration and surrounding community, state and nation, show that we are ready and able to undertake the responsibility. I hope you will join me in this by becoming more involved with, and expressing your opinions and suggestions to your representatives in the Student Senate. Student Government will work for you; but remember, it is your

Student Government, and the responsibility for its success rests on us, as students would encourage you to become more active by serving on one of several committees within Student Government. Your involvement, we will be one step closer to maintaining the Texas A&M we've known and loved. —Ronnie Kay
Student Body President

ANALYSIS

Baker faces hard fight to stay GOP floor leader

By IRA R. ALLEN
United Press International
WASHINGTON — Senate Republicans are grumbling among themselves over Sen. Howard Baker's intention to remain GOP floor leader while running for president, but he is not likely to be ousted in the current session.
Baker himself may find it difficult to keep doing an effective job in the Senate — which requires compromises — while wooing support from conservative Republicans he needs to get the 1980 GOP presidential nomination.
The Senate leadership job, however, gives him a lot of free publicity, so the double burden may well be worth the effort.
Baker was elected Republican leader in 1977 by just one vote and has been effective in making sure the minority GOP members have an influence on legislation and procedural matters in the Senate.
While there is a growing body of conservatives who would like to see a more hard-line ideologue in the leadership post,

the consensus is that Baker's job is safe — at least until January when the second session of the 96th Congress convenes.
He is expected to formally announce his candidacy for the GOP nomination this fall.
A spokesman for Sen. Robert Dole, R-Kan., another GOP presidential contender, said that — contrary to reports — Dole is not leading a dump-Baker move within the caucus of 41 Senate Republicans. He said there is no "overt effort" to remove Baker now but, "There may be an appropriate time" later.
The spokesman also noted there are "coalitions within the Senate interested in having Baker step aside," a reference to the Ronald Reagan contingent, which includes Reagan's campaign chairman, Sen. Paul Laxalt, R-Nev., and his 1976 would-be running mate, Sen. Richard Schweiker, R-Pa.
That group feels it is unfair for Baker to use the leadership position as a daily forum for his views.
But there also are pitfalls in being Senate GOP leader. Baker alienated con-

servatives last year by helping President Carter win passage of the Panama Canal treaties, and made no new friends in sponsoring a Federal Election Commission nominee opposed by half the Senate Republicans. Thus, hanging on to the leadership post — with more controversial questions sure to arise — could be damaging to his ambitions.
Baker has said that after the autumn Senate debate on the strategic arms limitation treaty, he will "step aside" — not down — and let assistant GOP leader Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, run the minority interests on a day-to-day basis.
That, however, does not sit well with some members. Despite Stevens' popularity, he was not elected leader, and would not win if he ran for the post, according to one line of thinking.
If Baker should be challenged in the Senate, his spokesman said, he can count on at least 30 votes — enough to ward off a successful challenge.
"I know of no effort to do anything," the spokesman said. "There's no effort to screw with it now, but I don't know what

will happen at the first of the year."
"All the precedent is in favor of the minority leader or the majority leader keeping that post (while running for president)," the Baker aide said.

In fact, there is not much precedent at all.
Only one floor leader has ever run for president — Lyndon Johnson in 1960 and despite his legendary effectiveness in the Senate, he did not succeed in his presidential campaigning that year.

Correction

Stage Center will be showing the one-act play Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, not just one. They are, "The Wind," "17 Seconds" and "Crazy Papa." Show starts at 8 p.m. "Crazy, Crazy Papa" will not run later in the season as stated.

THE BATTALION

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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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