

Just remember what I told you last week: it's not who wins, but how you play the game, and that sort of thing. However, I am beginning to understand your point of view.

OPINION

Big Brother's here

George Orwell's predictions in his novel "1984" may be closer than we think, with Big Brother not only telling us what to do, but by thought control, telling us what to eat, what to buy, what to think.

This Big Brother will be housed in a little black box, similar to the sound mixers used by disco deejays. Under a screen of bland music, subliminal messages can be flashed to accomplish such diverse measures as reducing shoplifting, inspiring sales personnel or selling children's toys.

Black box inventor Hal C. Becker said, "I see no reason why there won't be audioconditioning the same way we now have air conditioning."

The black boxes are already in close to 50 department stores in the U.S. and Canada. By flashing rapidly repeated messages ("I am honest. I will not steal.") at a very low volume, one chain store is said to have cut thefts by 37 percent, saving \$600,000 during a nine-month trial.

A Toronto real estate office uses the box to increase the sales volume of its personnel ("I love real estate.")

Children's toy companies interspersed commercials with subliminal messages ("Get it!"). To their credit, the Federal Communications Commission soon put a stop to this and issued warnings on any further TV or radio subliminations.

Just think where this all could lead.

A wife could convince her husband that "football is rotten, football is rotten."

A husband could encourage his wife that "cooking is fun, cooking is fun."

Meddling mothers could manipulate while smiling "get married, get married" or "get a divorce, get a divorce" or even "liver is good, liver is good."

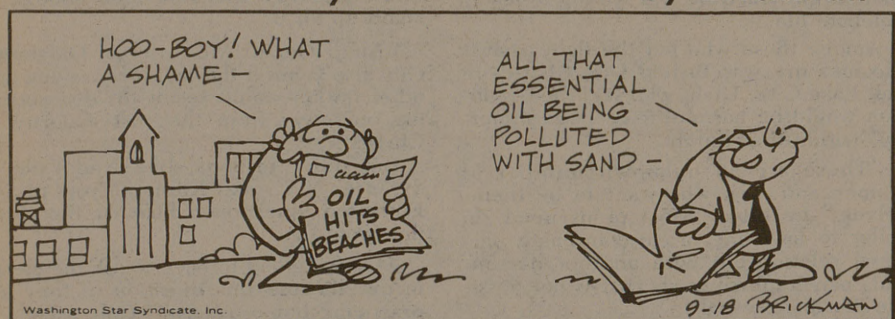
The possibilities are endless and frightening.

Mr. Becker has an idea all right, but its practical application offends us. There are some things we would just rather do for ourselves — like think.

Amarillo Daily News

the small society

by Brickman



THE BATTALION

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DICK WEST Hysteria would play a more useful role if we could agree on what to panic about

By DICK WEST

WASHINGTON — At about the time President Carter was urging everyone to keep calm about the presence of Russian troops in Cuba, I was reading a pamphlet published by the Chicken Little Club.

Born, like so many special interest groups, in California, the club's stated goal is "to give hysteria a bad name in the forming of public opinion and national policy."

That objective appears to embrace the premise that panic is inherently an undesirable reaction in a crisis. I have trouble accepting such an assumption.

There's an old saying, "The fact that you are paranoid doesn't mean they aren't out to get you." By the same token, it may be

said, "Just because you are overwrought doesn't mean there isn't due cause for hysteria."

There also is an old saying, "If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs, it means you don't understand the situation."

Or, putting it another way, "One man's wild alarm is another man's blind spot."

Hysteria can and should play a useful role in national affairs. But its effectiveness is blunted by the lack of consensus as to what to get frantic about.

Conservatives tend to become frantic over such things as Soviet troops in Cuba. Liberals become frantic over such things as nuclear power plants. And so it goes.

Hysteria usually is too diffused to be-

come a potent force in shaping policy. Panic power is something like solar energy; the potential is there but it is largely wasted.

Rather than groups like the Chicken Little Club, dedicated to giving hysteria a bad name, we need an organized effort to harness the power of hysteria and convert it to the common good.

The point is that hysteria stimulates the adrenal glands. In a hyper-activated condition, the body can perform feats far beyond its ordinary prowess. And when there is concerted hysteria, the impact can be galvanic.

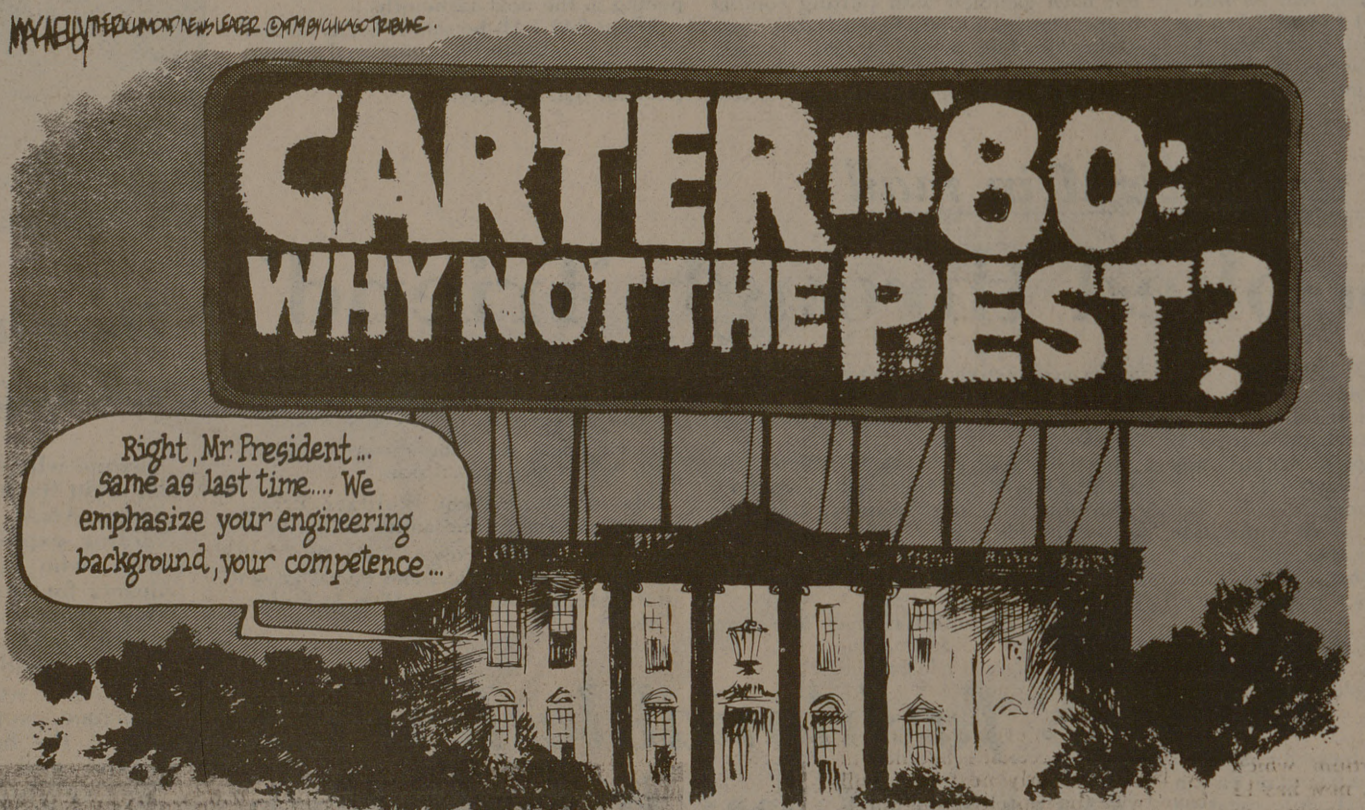
During the gasoline shortage last spring, for example, there was mass hysteria at the pumps. Today, supplies have

increased to the point where most are repealing oddeven rationing.

Would anyone seriously suggest that improvement would have been the same if the motoring public responded in a rational matter, calmly accepting and adjusting to the shortage? Hal Or words to that effect.

It's too late now to panic over the Russian troops. The moment for hysteria, grabbing up guns and rushing down

Key West to patrol the beaches has been lost. And with it, the chance for a resolution of the matter. But in the future when unnerving situations arise, let us record them the jumpiness they deserve.



WASHINGTON Statements made near the White House carry more clout than if on Capitol Hill

By DON PHILLIPS

WASHINGTON — In politics, attention given to a politician's statement depends not only on what is said and how it is said, but on where it is said and to whom it is said.

Example: Rep. John Brademas, D-Ind., the No. 3 ranking House Democrat, emerged from the regular meeting of President Carter and the Democratic leadership at the White House last week and was immediately surrounded by reporters asking what happened.

Brademas, who has a reputation as a good "reporter" of events, gave reporters a briefing on the meeting, which was concerned mainly with energy.

Then he was asked: "Are you supporting Carter for reelection?"

Brademas gave his stock answer: He will support the Democratic nominee. But he did not give a ringing endorsement of Carter.

Brademas, who is seldom shocked by

anything, was shocked at the coverage given his non-statement. Both wire services, the television networks and several major newspapers moved major stories saying that Brademas had "sidestepped an opportunity" to endorse Carter.

To Brademas, nothing new had been said. He had said the same thing to reporters on Capitol Hill on numerous occasions and never a word appeared in print or on the air. Now he was big news.

The Brademas story is a good example of how news is often affected by where an event happens and who sees or hears it happen.

First, consider the location.

It is true that Brademas had said essentially the same thing numerous times to Capitol Hill reporters. But what Brademas failed to consider was that he had just emerged from a meeting with Carter and was standing in the shadow of the White House as he spoke.

Politicians learned long ago that a statement outside the White House usu-

ally makes far more news than the same statement on the House or Senate floor.

Reporters covering a congressman stepping out of the White House can concentrate on one politician making one statement, and they know that statement may give a better indication of what the president is thinking than the President's own statements.

On Capitol Hill, that statement would be one of many thousands made every day. Also, almost anything happening at the White House is news, while many hundreds of potential stories on Capitol Hill go unreported.

Basically, this is because Americans are more interested in — and can understand better — the one major personality in the White House and those few aides surrounding him.

Congress, on the other hand, is a complicated, slow-moving and spread-out body which is not easily understood and which lacks the trappings of the White House.

Stories coming from the White House often are more interesting to the average person; they are heavy with political reports on the personalities.

That brings us to the second point: Who hears the statement.

Since everything that happens at the White House is considered news, reporters covering the president are under constant pressure to produce.

Reporters in Congress, since they have the freedom to ignore some happenings and have the time to dig into the background and the substance of the more important news.

Therefore, when Brademas made his statement, they didn't have the time to wonder if he had said it before. They heard he made the statement at the White House just after seeing the president.

He had made it in that location known to Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., moving closer to a possible race against Carter. That alone was enough to make Brademas big news.

Push-buttons don't indicate a lazy society

By JAMES J. DOYLE

LOS ANGELES — Here's a scenario for the times:

A homemaker pushes a button and an oven is timed to begin cooking dinner an hour later. The oven will cook the dinner in six minutes, turn itself off and open its own door.

Madam homemaker, meanwhile, pushes a few more buttons and talks to a friend a thousand miles away. The TV goes on automatically and changes its own channels to a pre-selected show.

It also tapes the show for later viewing as a result of a couple of other buttons previously depressed.

It will go off by itself hours later after having selected a series of channels. The TV set also will turn on a nearby lamp at dusk.

That's not the future, it's the present. It's a push-button world, or it can be if you wish. And television sets are the major indicator.

It's a great age for a sloth. But an official of one of the large companies that makes life so leisurely says laziness is not the point.

"It's speed and convenience," Robert Shortell of RCA said. "I don't think it has anything to do with laziness."

Although push-button and remote controls have been around for a long time, it's

only recently that they've begun to proliferate in our quest for "the good life."

"Just about everything is programmable," he said. "Without pushbuttons some things on the modern TV sets would be awkward."

"Now, there's one keyboard. You can program the set to go on and off at certain times of the day. It enables you to attach a lamp to the TV go on independently so a thief will think you're home when you're not."

"What makes this all possible," Shortell said, "is solid state electronics, integrated circuits — small chips with hundreds and

hundreds of electronic components on them."

"It does many functions with incredible speed, and it's very reliable," he said. "I think we all look for that in some respects."

The older sets, pre-chip days, had to heat up all those tubes. "Very energy wasteful," Shortell said.

The television set he described above, large color set, remote controls, lamp monitor, sells for an average of \$550.

In the push-button era everything from the automatic dishwasher to the TV, to garage doors — there's even a lawnmower

that can be operated by dad from his hammock — to most kitchen appliances can be controlled with less energy than it takes to open a can of beer.

The remote control business has doubled in the past three years, reflecting growing consumer demand for its convenience.

"Solid state electronics has made possible the era of push buttons," Shortell said. "You can call a remote Alaskan village on the phone by pushing just 10 buttons."

Families with small children will be happy to hear that.

THOTZ

by Doug Graham

