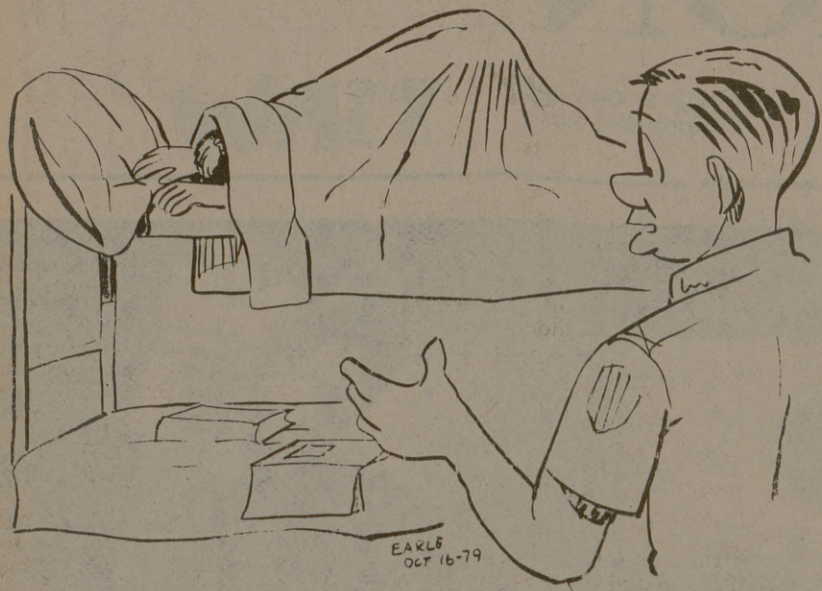


# SLOUCH by Jim Earle



"I think it's time you came out. Football is just a game."

## OPINION

### Don't shuffle flags to make ships safer

It seems that almost every ship collision, tanker breakup or freighter grounding you read about involves a Liberian ship. The reason is simple. The tiny African nation of Liberia has, on paper, the world's largest merchant marine fleet. Nearly 30 percent of the world's tanker fleet sails under the Liberian flag.

It is called a "flag of convenience." American and foreign ship-owners register their vessels in one of the flag-of-convenience countries such as Liberia or Panama because of tax advantages and because it is cheaper.

A ship sailing under American registry must be built in America by union-scale shipbuilders and must have an American crew paid salaries that average more than \$800 a month. American-owned ships that are registered abroad are not subject to those restrictions, and salaries for foreign crews run as low as \$120 a month.

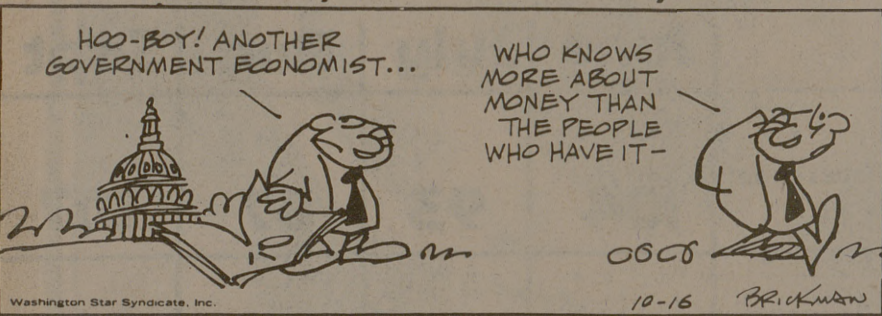
But critics claim you get what you pay for. Cheaply built ships run by cheap crews, they say, are floating timebombs.

Eliminating flag-of-convenience registry may not be the answer. As long as the financial considerations and safety shortcuts are available, there is the very real prospect of shipping companies rather than just ships flocking to foreign countries.

What is really needed is not regulation of flags but regulation of ships. International safety and licensing standards for ships sailing under all flags would have much more effect on safety at sea than a reshuffling of flags.

The Charlotte, N.C., News

### the small society by Brickman



## THE BATTALION

USPS 045 360

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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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# VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION  
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

TUESDAY  
OCTOBER 16, 1979

## DICK WEST

By DICK WEST  
United Press International

WASHINGTON — If you are looking for something positive to hold onto in a period of mostly negative developments, consider feathers.

Historically, chicken and turkey outerwear has not been deeply appreciated, except by chickens and turkeys. But in recent days, poultry plumage has been sharply upgraded.

And while it might be overstating the case to describe fowl feathers as the hope of the future, at least we have been made to realize that their potential for the betterment of mankind has not been fully realized.

Two events in the news this month serve to open our eyes.

One was the publication of a once-secret document disclosing that in 1950 the U.S. Army conducted tests on the feasibility of converting feathers into biological warfare weapons.

The idea was to treat the feathers with rust spores and drop them from airplanes over enemy oat fields, thus contaminating the crop.

As anyone who has ever had any dealings with the Army might have predicted, the device used to release the airborne feathers was called a "M16A1 Cluster Adapter."

And the feathers themselves were identified in classic military nomenclature lingo as "washed, fluffed, white turkey." Although the trial runs in turkey feather

### 'Turkey feather attacks': the newest biological warfare here if we need it

bombardment apparently worked out pretty well, there was no word on whether this type of crop dusting ever became operational.

However, any military analyst will tell you that turkey feather attacks sound exactly like something that would have been tried in Vietnam.

If feather merchants have not become a part of the military-industrial complex, it must be because of political considerations. The feeling may have been that if the Pentagon went ahead with the formation of turkey feather strike forces, the Soviet Union would retaliate by sending a flock of combat turkeys to Cuba.

Who knows, someday we may be reading headlines like: "U.S., Soviets Sign

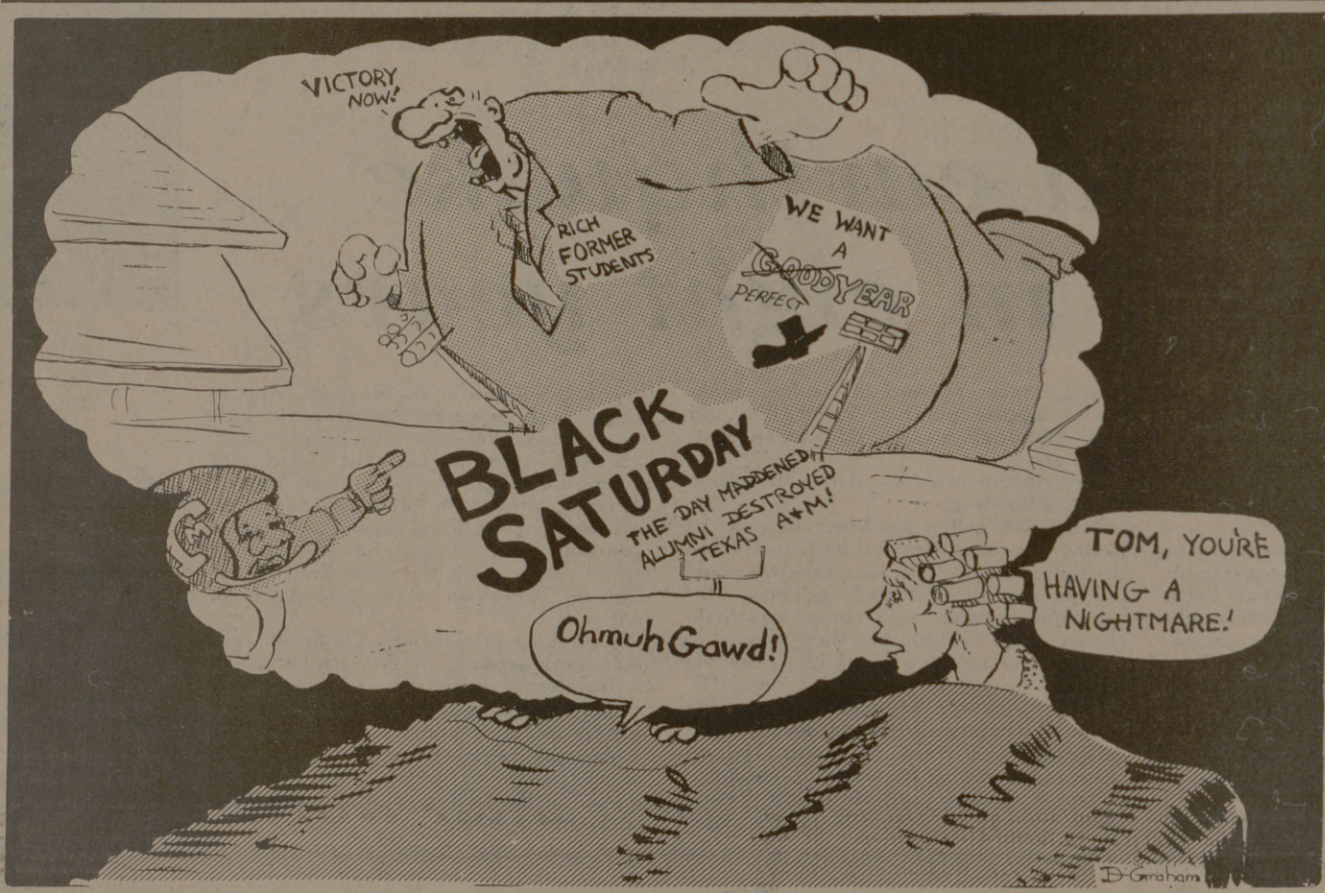
Strategic Turkey Feather Limited Treaty." Meanwhile, it is gratifying to know the potential is there if we need it.

Equally heartening was a report in the Atlanta Journal that researchers have patented a process for extracting protein from chicken feathers for possible use as food supplements and cosmetics.

That development could open up a whole new world for chicken pluckers. Up to now, the purpose of plucking is to get rid of the feathers. Is the time coming when we will keep the feathers and throw the rest of the chicken away?

Is there a new Colonel Sanders on the horizon — a Kentucky Fried Chicken feather tycoon?

We may indeed live to see that the turkey feather bombs don't get us



## READER'S FORUM

By JAMES TELESE

Male discoers are flocking to discos for an opportunity to dance and prance. Male prairie chickens also flock to a place for dancing and prancing. Discos, compared to the dance ground of the prairie chicken, are artificial; both are used to attract the attention of a possible mate. Similarities exist between the prairie chicken and the male discoer, even though they are different beings.

The prairie is the dance ground of the male prairie chicken. His dance is performed among the short grass for maximum visibility of the spectators; hidden in the tall blue winter grass are the females.

On early April mornings, when spring is in its joyous flowering time, his dance takes place. The morning sun stirs the air and illuminates the stomping ground. Each rooster has his own beat and song (that sounds like "ooh-den-do-o-o-o-o") which fills the early April morning air, and is carried over the prairie.

In contrast, the male discoer is ready for action as the sun sends out the stars. He

flies to the disco with unchecked speed to catch the right time for attracting the most females.

Arriving at the disco, he encounters a smoked-filled room, the dance floor surrounded by mirrors to catch sight of his act, illuminated with strobe lights and alternating red, blue, and yellow lights flashing from the dance floor to create a world of false beauty.

Dimly lighted corners hide the watching, sullen faces of the females, making it easier for the male discoer to dance. Though each song seems different, the beat is the same one-two-three-four, over and over and over, and over, bouncing off the disco walls at a volume heard throughout the valley.

Each dancer has his own costume, and neither is original. Male discoers dress in their best three-piece suit fashioned after John Travolta's in "Saturday Night Fever." The human roosters wear the three-piece suit to accent forms, to draw attention to themselves. The colors depend on the moods of the roosters. They may wear white suits if especially lonely, for white

### The disco scene can be compared to prancing of prairie male chickens

enhances their movements by reflecting the lights of the dance floor.

Unlike that of male discoer, the prairie chicken's fashion is predestined; he has no choice of clothing. He has his natural feathers: shades of brown, black, and white.

But all these comments emphasize the differences, and I promised to write about similarities. When the dance begins, the prairie chicken is a beautiful sight. He inflates his saffron sacs under long pinnate feathers on each side of his neck to an orange color; wings trail, and his tail shapes into a fan and stands erect, looking like that of small peacock. The rooster lowers his head and prances to his own beat in one spot. At the climax of the dance, he shakes his head slightly, flaps his wings and flies three feet straight up in the air.

The disco rooster does not dance alone; society demands that a male should dance not by himself but with a female. But like the prairie chicken, he is dancing for all the females that care to observe his antics. The disco rooster begins by walking tall

and strutting to the dance floor. Once on the floor, his body begins to gyrate and jerk with violent spasms. He jumps up and down, feet prancing to the monotonous beat, arms flapping at his side, at the going over his head for style. At the climax, the disco rooster twirls, his coat flies loosely, looking like a second of wings. His head pecks in the second colored air. A beautiful sight.

Discos allow mankind, the noblest animals, to act like prairie chickens. Here the similarity ends. At 2 a.m. unclear who chooses whom. Does the female of the disco choose the male because of his dance? Or does she choose the female with the widest eyes?

A prairie rooster takes a chosen mate and builds a nest in the tall blue winter grass of the prairie. But lonely discoer who have flown to discos for lusty center for Wednesday Night Chickens find only their reflections in the mirror of the female and the mirrors of the floor. They do not find themselves cure they seek.

## LETTERS

### Cash-for-cups: a student's new idea for conserving concession dollars

Editor:

In these days of wasteful spending in government-related contracts and businesses, it is a welcome relief to see signs of thriftiness. Such was the case prior to the football game at Kyle Field last Saturday.

I saw a vendor filling the "Aggie size" plastic cups with ice when approximately a dozen empty cups fell into a puddle of muddy water. Not to be discouraged, the vendor quickly gathered up the dirty cups, put ice and sodawater in them and sold them.

After witnessing this incident, I had an idea. Why not offer a cash-for-cups rebate for dirty cups. Football patrons could sell the cups back to the vendor for 25 a pound. This would provide needed small change that everyone has a shortage of. Besides, the vendor could reduce costs because fewer new cups would not have to be purchased. In the long-run reduced costs would insure lower concession prices.

In addition to the monetary savings, think about the added flavor to the soft drinks resulting from the use of dirty cups. What about disease, you say? What could possibly be more sickening than seeing your team lose in the final 60 seconds?

— Stuart Schroeder

### 12th man missing

Editor:

The Fightin' Texas Aggie Football Team was outscored again this weekend. However, that was not nearly as disheartening as the sight of my fellow Ags who left early and did not fight until the end.

It is a well established tradition at A&M

that the Twelfth Man (of which every true Aggie is a member), remain in stands on such occasions for a short yell practice. This unique display of continued support for our team is one of the traditions that has set A&M apart from conventional schools. We can only imagine that the disgraceful number of fans who did not fight until the last yell either were uninformed, were cougar supporters, or were members

of that disgusting band of traitors known as two percenters.

We hope that in the future all Ags will proudly stand together, in good cheer and bad, and show the true "Spirit of Aggie."

— Scott Roberts

Editor's note: This letter was accompanied by 58 other signatures.

## THOTZ

by Doug Graham

