

VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

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ANALYSIS West Germany: Put your foot down (on the gas pedal) and don't look back

By WOLFGANG WAGNER
HANNOVER, WEST GERMANY — If you're eager to push the accelerator to the floor and try to break the sound barrier without worrying about cops, then come to West Germany. This is the only country in Europe, perhaps in the world, without speed limits on its freeways.

Indeed, the government here recently decided after contemplating the subject once again that it has no intention of imposing restrictions on motorists — as long as they stick to the autobahns, as major West German turnpikes are called.

On other roads, the legal maximum is 60 miles per hour, and it is half that speed in towns and villages. But on the big turnpikes, drivers can go as fast as they please.

Over and over again within recent years, politicians, police officials and others have raised the question of whether to slow down West German motorists, partly for safety reasons and also because of the gasoline shortage. Predictably, the partisans of unbridled speed carried the day.

For one thing, they argued convincingly, very few drivers go above 80 miles per hour, the speed proposed by those

who favored limits. This is because day-time traffic on the highways is so dense that going faster is impossible.

Trucks and buses, which consume the largest quantities of gasoline, usually cruise at between 60 and 70 miles per hour, which is considered reasonable here.

Besides, it has been difficult for advocates of curtailed speed to use the gasoline shortage as an issue, since there is no visible scarcity of fuel in West Germany. Not even during the summer months, when the routes were clogged with vacationers, did I observe lines at service stations.

To be sure, the West German government has been appealing to citizens to conserve energy. But instead of raising threats of rationing, it has used two devices in its approach to the problem.

In the first place, it has issued what might be called "moral" pleas, counting on the disciplined West Germans to discipline themselves. And secondly, it has boosted gasoline prices by some 10 to 15 percent in the hope that this would deter motorists.

Depending on quality, gasoline here now costs in the neighborhood of \$2 per

gallon. That is relatively low compared to the prices in Italy, Spain, Greece and France, where many West Germans go on vacation.

But even though they regard themselves as relatively well off, West Germans have in fact been behaving more moderately on the autobahns because of fuel costs.

Underlying the government's reluctance to restrict speeding, moreover, was another factor. West German's automobile manufacturers were cool to the idea.

The automobile industry here has for years been producing too many cars for the local market, which is packed as well with other European and even Japanese models. Many young people in particular are partial to French and Italian cars, which are cheap to buy and to operate.

West Germany turns out small vehicles such as the Volkswagen, which are popular abroad. But in order to be able to continue exporting big cars, like the Mercedes, it must also build them the way West Germans want them — strong, solid and fast.

In other words, a car like the Mercedes would not be constructed for export unless West Germans found it to their taste. And it would not satisfy buyers here unless

they could drive it at limitless speed at least in theory.

Since the government here is determined to push exports, on which the German economy is heavily dependent, it has been sensitive to the views of automobile makers.

This is not to suggest that many of the big corporations are opposing the gasoline shortage because public might well exert pressure for restrictions as an economy measure.

But this has not been the case and all government has done to date has been to put out mild "recommendations" to motorists to take it easy. As is known, nobody has been punished for speeding or even warned.

So if you want to feel the power engine hurtling you down a highway West Germany is the place. Even if you will probably find that here, at home, you'll be stuck most of the time in traffic jams.

Wagner is editor of the Hannover Allgemeine Zeitung, the West German daily.



OPINION

A giver receives

Some of them are just looking for a clean place to die. Others want food, medical care or schooling. Whatever they need, Mother Teresa gives. But now she is the recipient — of the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize.

The committee explained its decision this way: "Poverty and hunger and distress also constitute a threat to peace." Normally the award goes to people who have somehow prevented conventional wars.

Mother Teresa, 69, fights another war, the war against poverty.

The hallmark of her work, the Nobel Committee added, "has been respect for the individual human being, for his or her dignity and innate value. The loneliest, the most wretched and the dying have at her hands received compassion without condescension based on reverence for man."

Not surprising, Calcutta's "saint of the gutters" will spend the \$190,000 prize on building more homes for the destitute, especially lepers.

This year's award was a special one — and one well deserved.

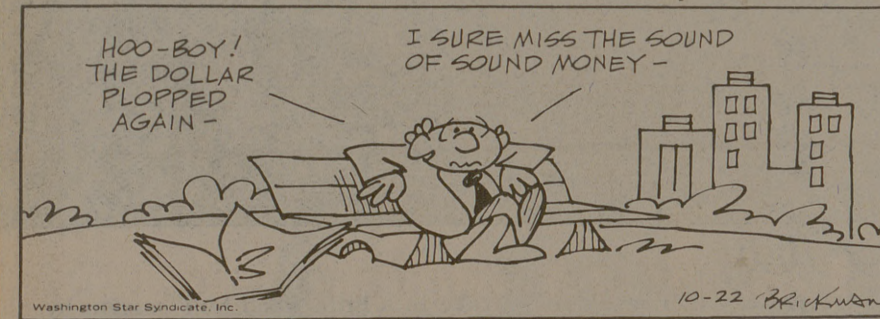
Another tradition falls

Women worked in the Bonfire cutting area this weekend — worked, and not just passing out cookies.

The decision, made just last week, changed a tradition. In the past, women have not been allowed to cut down and carry out the trees needed to build the Bonfire.

Men have been more equal than women here for some time. Maybe they won't be much longer.

the small society by Brickman



THE BATTALION

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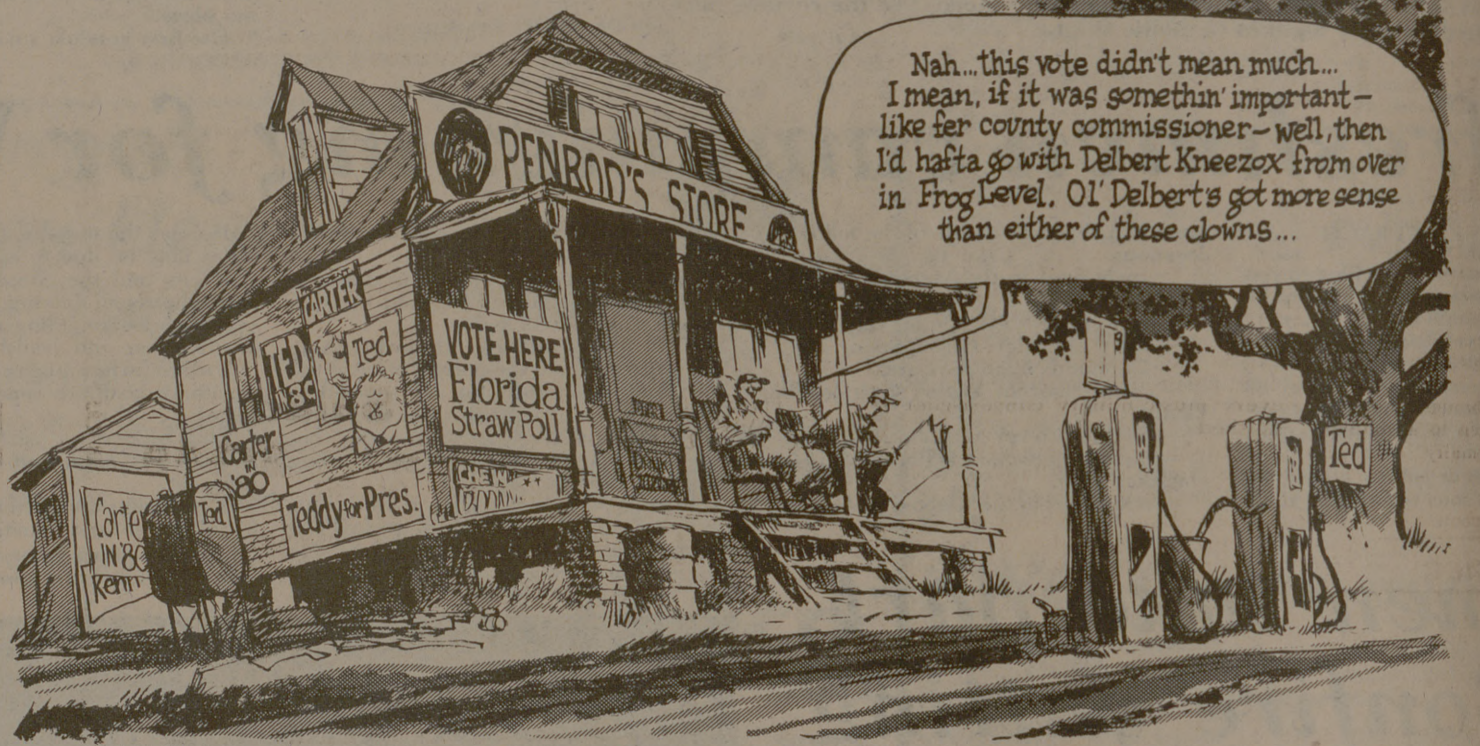
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Exercise for the under-one-year-old

By DICK WEST

WASHINGTON — Edwin Paget, 78, a retired speech professor whose idea of a glorious summer vacation has been running up and down Pike's Peak 41 times, believes it is never too soon to improve body and mind.

His theories about oxygen stimulating human brain cells have never been scientifically verified.

Nevertheless, a man has got to think about something during the long dashes to the summit, and this summer, in the course of making his 866th career ascent of

the Colorado mountain, Paget got to thinking about the International Year of the Child.

In particular, he got to thinking about all those millions of infants lying there in their cribs, doing nothing much of anything except drooling on their bibs.

In his mind's eye, Paget could see their little brains deteriorating from inactivity. And that is when he hit upon the idea of promoting an exercise program for babies less than a year old.

"Soon after birth, the brain of the typical baby begins to decline in effectiveness," the peripatetic pedagogue says.

"Vigorous exercise will correct this deficiency, and will usually increase the mental efficiency."

Paget seemed a little vague as to how anyone who hadn't even learned to walk and talk, much less do push-ups, could be motivated for strenuous regimens. But he insisted there were "various things" parents could do to raise infant exertion levels.

"Cribs are much too small, too stationary," he said. "Babies are forced to spend most of their time in almost a comatose state."

Paget was asked if it might be feasible to

attach elastic bands to a baby's arms when it sucked its thumb it also was developing its biceps.

"That's certainly a possibility," he replied with notable lack of enthusiasm. "Once the public becomes aware of need, all kinds of suggestions will be pouring in."

Well, then, might his proposal open the door to commercial exploitation, the market with Adidas diapers, warm-up suits, special kicking boots, the like?

Paget responded with what was like a snort of indignation.

LETTERS '64 alum didn't want football tickets: 'Bellard's a winner, A&M's a joke'

Editor: This new "wide open, exciting" brand of football that you and a couple of rich alumni were so anxious to have at A&M prompts me to write this note. For the first time in 20 years, I didn't order any A&M football tickets. My instincts certainly proved correct.

Personally, I enjoyed being in the Top 10, going to bowl games and winning \$ to 10 games a year. I guess what people find "dull" is a matter of definition. I notice Oklahoma and Alabama don't find the wishbone dull — but what do they know.

When you treat a man of Coach Bellard's caliber as you did, it usually comes back to haunt you. As expected, he has remained a winner and a highly respected gentleman while A&M — on the other hand — is a joke.

— J. Barnes, '64
Editor's note: This letter was sent originally to Jarvis Miller. Copies were sent to Emory Bellard and The Battalion

More unhappy fans
Editor: Fellow Aggies, we are witnessing the downfall of A&M football. In our six years here, never has A&M's reputation as a football power been so tarnished. Why is this so? Witness the first and sixth games of the season.

In each of those games, decisions by the coaching staff have cost us what otherwise were imminent victories. Case in point, the decisions to go for a first down on fourth-and-one situations late in both games, with victory on the horizon. If Emory Bellard were coach, his decision in those two instances would have been "punt". His decision to punt would have come, as the old adage goes, "quicker than 90 cars could skin a minnow." But, we do not advocate his return as coach, nor debate who is or should be head coach.

It is not only the things happening on

the field but those off the field as well. Why was a 218-pound tight end who has no experience as a quick tackle, playing against the likes of Hosea Taylor and Leonard Mitchell, both 6'5" and 270 pounds or better, and potential All-SWC as well as All-American? Why is it that such talented, experienced, and bigger players as Tim Ward, Thomas Gregory, Curtis Jennings, Kyle Golson, Mike Robbins, and last but not least Doug Holmes (an All-SWC pick last year) sitting on the bench? Confront the offensive line coaches with this inquiry. Decisions by play

younger and/or inexperienced players the offensive line instead of experience and All-SWC players does not sound like good football sense.

Somewhere along the line, political favoritism have reared their ugly head and affected the decisions and related to Texas A&M football.

Armchair quarterbacks we are not. I am a tented A&M football fan and we are not. — Doug Joseph

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

THOTZ



by Doug Graham