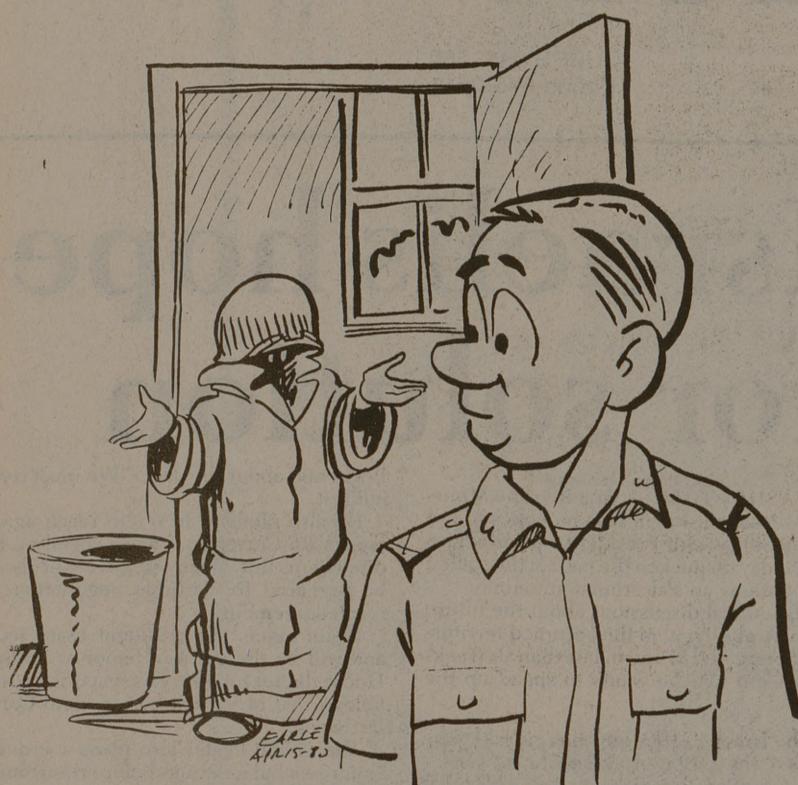


# SLOUCH

By Jim Earle



"Now that we're not going to the Olympics, the world will never know whether or not I could have won the high jump."

## OPINION

### Primary system is a farce

This was to have been the year when the American presidential election was elevated to hitherto unattained eminence.

Thirty-five states, plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico — roughly double the number of a dozen years ago — scheduled primaries.

Relative newcomers were going to have a real shot at the big prize. And the national debate was to reach a level commensurate with the massive problems confronting the United States.

What a dream! What a comedown!

Barely into April, the races have been resolved. Jimmy Carter once again will carry the Democratic colors. The GOP standard bearer, barring some wholly unexpected development, will be Ronald Reagan. Neither fits the image of presidential greatness.

What went wrong?

The winners in early primaries establish momentum and become favored wards of the print and electronic media. The new politics makes it possible for an inexperienced, issues-ignorant nobody to come out of nowhere and win on the strength of a slick set of slogans. And maybe to win again. Or for a fading, issues simplifying somebody to do the same thing.

Our standard of quality is no longer based on past achievement or future promise as much as it is cumulative success in the primary process itself. The losers are sunk without a trace.

Between now and 1984, Americans must devise a nominating system that can produce better choices.

The Denver Post

#### the small society

by Brickman



#### THE BATTALION

U.S.P.S. 045 360

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# VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION  
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

TUESDAY  
APRIL 15, 1980

## With issues confusing voters, candidates may win on charisma

By DAVID S. BRODER

Would gasoline rationing work, or just add the aggravation of bureaucratic frustration to the costs of ever-higher energy prices?

Would wage and price control cut inflation by two-thirds, or simply set the stage for a worse inflationary spiral down the road?

Would the hostages be freed if the United States cut off diplomatic relations with Iran, or threatened unspecified retaliation if they are not back in our hands by a date certain? Or would such a step simply increase their peril while dramatizing the impotence of America in this situation?

Will the grain embargo hurt the Soviet Union, or open up the opportunity for Argentina growers to profit at the expense of American farmers in the Russian market?

Will an American boycott of the summer Olympic Games in Moscow embarrass the Russians in the eyes of the world, or simply leave the U.S. athletes frustrated spectators while their international rivals compete?

Does a deep cut in federal income taxes promise the restoration of incentives for

growth and productivity in the American economy? Or does it guarantee deeper deficits, more federal borrowing, higher interest rates and worse inflation?

These are some of the issues the voters are being asked to decide as they weigh the choice of the Democratic and Republican presidential nominees. All of these questions — and more — are being argued on the campaign trail in 1980. Despite the complaints that the candidates and the press are "ignoring the substantive questions" in this election year, the impression of this reporter is that just the opposite is true.

There is more issue content in this campaign than in any other recent election. Candidates have found that the voters are insisting on such discussion, because they recognize the seriousness of the problems facing America at the start of this new decade.

It is not coincidence that Ronald Reagan, the Republican front-runner, is also the Republican whose advertising and speeches have been strongly issue-oriented from the start. John B. Anderson escaped from the GOP pack by stressing

"the Anderson difference" on the issues. George Bush, getting the message, switched his faltering campaign from vague talk about being "up for the Eighties" to specifics on foreign and domestic policy.

Ted Kennedy's whole struggle has been to shift the focus from personal issues to substantive policy questions. And Fritz Mondale, the chief surrogate for President Carter, has talked endlessly — and specifically — of the administration's energy, economic and foreign policy initiatives.

If there is a problem in the content of the 1980 campaign, it is not that issues are being ignored or incompletely defined by the candidates. The problem is that the propositions the voters are being asked to judge are not questions on which most prudent people would want to give categorical answers.

There is little in the national experience — or in most people's personal experience — that prepares us to cope with a world of double-digit inflation, recurring energy shortage, nuclear parity, Islamic militancy and Asian tribal wars. The solutions to these problems are less obvious than the experts would like to pretend.

If there is great volatility in voter opin-

ion, as there has been, it may be an irrational response to a game where each deal seems to be a joker.

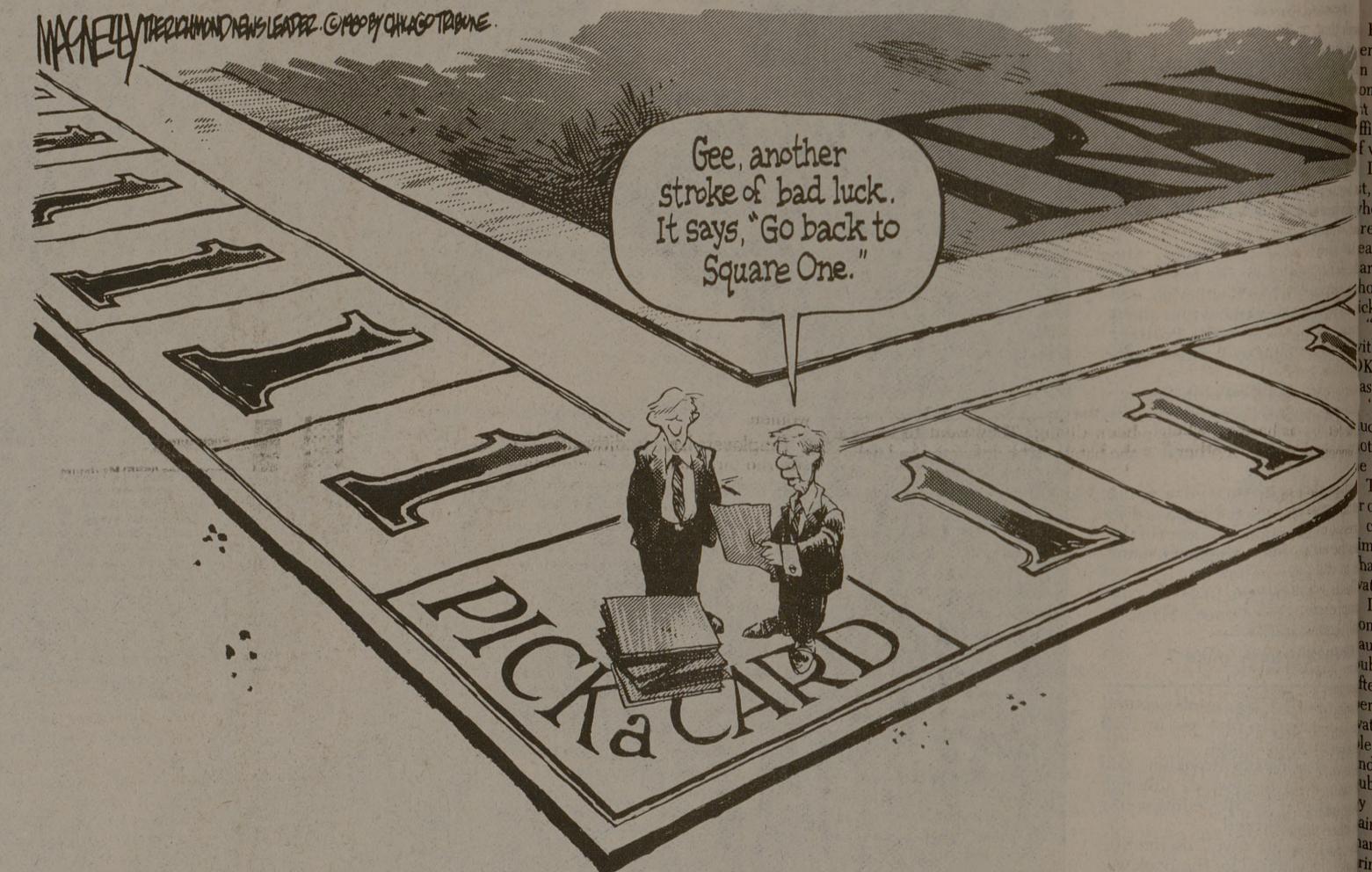
Faced with this kind of situation, the impression is that voters are putting aside the search for honest answers to policy questions they cannot be expected to resolve satisfactorily for themselves and are focusing on the human qualities of the candidates.

Those judgment have been changing shape, but there is no need for each state to bring its own constitutional active participation in the process first time.

Those who would decry the practice as cause it seems to produce predictable candidates of whom they do not approve are probably not doing so. Rather than wracking their brains to resolve inherently equivocal positions, the voters are making more precise judgments on the skills of the candidates.

That may not meet everyone's standard of excellence in picking a President, but it will do until a better system comes along.

(c) 1980, The Washington Post



### Salting streets in Hamburg killed trees

## Massive effort used to spare foliage

and lakes.

Professor Julius Speer of Munich discovered, for example, that Schlier Lake in Upper Bavaria had a salt content that approximated that of the Atlantic Ocean.

Until recently, these findings made little impact on local officials, who argued that their primary responsibility was to motorists. But last December, a new study presented to the environmental commission of the Hamburg city legislature altered old attitudes.

For the millions of tons of salt already spread across Hamburg in years past have caused irreparable harm to its trees, and the prospect is that the only green that may be visible in the future will be traffic lights.

As far back as 1968, Hamburg botanist Ulrich Ruge was warning that salt was destroying the city's foliage, and his observation was echoed in other quarters elsewhere in the country.

Engineers pointed out, for instance, that salt had a corrosive effect on steel bridges. And hydrologists complained that salt, used to create traction on rural roads during snowy winters, was polluting streams

and lakes. The lindens that line the Esplanade, one of the main thoroughfares here, were found to be standing in soil that contains 55 times more sodium and 24 more chloride than normal.

A heavy concentration of sodium is dangerous because it displaces potassium, which is vital to foliage. It also kills nutrients and chokes roots, affecting trees in much the same way as drought.

Even if no more salt were spread on streets, the soil in this city is so highly saturated with sodium that many trees cannot survive. The older ones will die first, and the younger ones are likely to be stunted.

A similar phenomenon is taking place in Vienna, where studies indicate that between one-fourth and one-third of that city's trees will be lost within the next decade because of salted streets in winter.

Besides fighting against salt, moreover, specialists here have been campaigning to

care for trees in various other ways: surgery, irrigation and building berms to reduce sodium chloride penetration through flooding.

This effort to save trees is extremely expensive, often eats into environmental budgets. For example, the cost of liquid fertilizer enriched with organisms may be more than the new tree.

The increasing costs of research certainly contributed to the decision to curb the use of salt, since the estimated that prevention is better than attempts to cure dying foliage.

A good deal of damage has already been done. But it looks as if a lesson has been learned — and in time, hopefully apparent in this city's greeneries.

(Haaf writes on science and technology for Die Zeit, the West German newspapers.)

By Doug Grimes

## THOTZ

