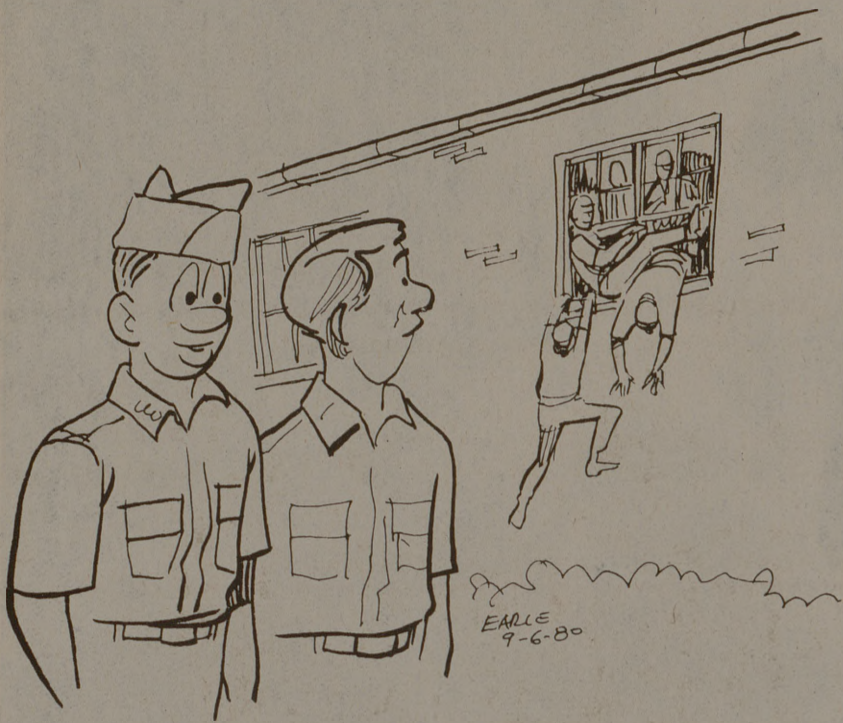


# VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION  
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

FRIDAY  
SEPTEMBER 5, 1980

## Slouch By Jim Earle



"It is true that we have a few space problems here and there."

## Carter plans focus on Reagan's mistakes

By HELEN THOMAS  
United Press International

WASHINGTON — Politics is the order of the day at the White House these days. No one pretends it is anything else as President Carter and his lieutenants begin the re-election campaign from what they believe is an underdog position.

Their aim is to keep the focus on Republican opponent Ronald Reagan, hoping he will make mistakes along the way, and to depict him as a man who wants to turn back the clock.

Their broad smiles these days indicate they believe that Reagan is helping to keep the spotlight on himself with misspoken words that alienate some voting groups and hurt his political prestige.

No sooner had Reagan extracted himself from the mire of a confusing China-Taiwan policy, when he took a swipe at Carter for launching his campaign in Tusculum, Ala., which Reagan erroneously described as the birthplace of the Ku Klux Klan.

The remark gave Carter an opportunity to lash out against Reagan and to express his resentment "as a Southerner and an American."

Those are only the beginning skirmishes. There are nearly nine weeks ahead of unrelenting campaigning for the big prize. And there are signs that the contest may get rough as it goes along.

Carter's battle plan is clear. In television commercials he intends to focus on his accomplishments in getting through Congress the nation's first comprehensive energy program, in bringing Israel and Egypt together in the Camp David peace accords, and in naming more blacks, minorities and women to the federal bench and top government jobs than any other president.

He also keeps stressing that the voters have a choice in this election in deciding the kind of future they want for the country.

Reagan's advisers are urging him to tackle Carter where he is most vulnerable — the economy and the empty pocketbook. But somehow

Reagan has managed to get diverted from this subject, and some of his remarks have been repudiated by his own strategists.

When Reagan spoke of a Carter "depression," his economic adviser, Alan Greenspan, thought that went too far, calling it a "recession."

The question of Carter-Reagan debates is still up in the air with the White House waiting for some "third party" to come up with a solution to break the stalemate. The sticking point is whether independent John Anderson should participate. Each side is accusing the other of being "afraid to debate."

The Ripon Society has issued a white paper entitled "A Call to Excellence in the National Political Dialogue."

The document expresses some of the widespread frustration as to the campaign and the candidates.

"America needs excellence in leadership now," it said. "We are looking in this campaign for the qualities of foresight, courage and direction that make great leaders. To date we have had very little basis on which to judge."

"The real candidates lie hidden behind the defensive tactics of image-makers counting short-term considerations. When ahead in the polls, they avoid engaging in debate; when behind they dwell on the vulnerable attributes of their rivals. We have watched the campaigns for many months but still know little of what to expect for the next four years."

The white paper also urged that the voters not be satisfied with empty rhetoric, sloganeering and rank appeal to special voting blocs. And it urged the candidates to make their language more "meaningful" by not merely stating a position favoring a national goal but setting forth the specific steps it would take to achieve that goal.

"We ask the candidates to speak honestly with us, to show themselves candidly, 'warts and all,' to trust our ability to see them fairly rather than to ask us blindly to trust them," the Society said.

## Report urges parental discipline

By PATRICIA McCORMACK  
United Press International

If a kid turns mice loose in the lunchroom, plays a radio full blast in the library, or does something else disruptive in school, do parents bear any responsibility?

Or is it a plain case of teacher failing to keep order?

The question's more than academic for this reason:

A just-released poll reports parents would be made to bear more responsibility for acts of kids in class if teachers had their way.

Ninety-one percent participating in the 1980 National Education Association Nationwide Teacher Opinion Poll said so. But only one out of five said such a policy has been instituted in their school districts.

The point about parents was made when teachers were asked if selected practices had helped or would help with student behavior problems and whether or not each had been instituted.

Other practices the teachers were asked about and the percent feeling the practice would help:

- Strict discipline, 91 percent.
- Special classes for problem students, 80 percent.
- Teachers allowed more authority to suspend unruly students from class, 80 percent.

— Special schools for problem students, 75 percent.

— Corporal punishment allowed, 85 percent.

— Security personnel during school day, 40 percent.

About half the teachers said student behavior interferes with their teaching — 21 percent to a great extent and 33 percent to a moderate extent.

Elementary teachers said they have, on average, three students with chronic behavior problems; junior high teachers, six; high school teachers, five.

Discipline policies within respondents' schools were described as being in writing 69 percent, and clear, 60 percent.

But such policies, the survey showed, are not consistently applied — 67 percent; not strict enough — 61 percent; and not comprehensive enough — 58 percent.

The survey also showed:

— Almost 490,000 — one-fourth or 23 percent — of the teachers had personal property stolen by a student over the past 12 months. An estimated 310,000 or 14 percent said their personal property was damaged intentionally during the year.

— An estimated 113,000 — 5.2 percent — were physically attacked by a student over the past 12 months. Some 13,000 were attacked twice; 13,000 others, three times or more.

Teacher attacks are more common in school systems or in systems with 25,000 more. But the report said "there are significant numbers of attacks in other school systems."

— About three-fifths or 59 percent of those attacked believe the attack was intentional. 15 percent weren't sure and 26 percent was incidental — that is, they were struck breaking up a fight among students.

— Of those attacked, about 2,600 or 27,000 or 24 percent, a minor physical injury, 43,000 or 38 percent, emotional trauma and 40,000 or 36 percent — apparent injuries or diehards — suffered neither a physical injury nor emotional trauma as a result of an attack.

— Ninety percent of those attacked did not miss any school time but two percent missed part of a school day and eight percent missed five school days, on the average.

— About 15 percent of those attacked did report the incident to school officials or law enforcement officers. Most feared being seen as a failure by their bosses. A few did not report because of a "what's the use" attitude or fearing the administration wouldn't act anyway.

— About 10 percent of the attacks resulted in charges filed against students — 6 percent teachers; 2 percent, by the school system; 12 percent, by law enforcement officials.



## Human brain like giant prune

# Study on daydreaming flawed

By DICK WEST  
United Press International

WASHINGTON — In me you see one of the world's foremost air castle architects. I probably spend more time ruminating than most full-blooded Guernseys. But try convincing your employers that reverie enriches the mind.

Now comes supportive evidence from a Minnesota psychologist, Eric Klinger. He has made a study of daydreaming that directly challenges the old canard about woolgatherers being shiftless fantasizers who never amount to much.

Daydreaming, says Klinger, is good for you. Relaxes the body and stimulates the brain, often resulting in creative insights, he reports.

Which is exactly what I keep telling them down at the office.

I must admit, however, that the study is flawed in spots. It offers spurious statistics to the effect that people occupy 30 to 40 percent of their waking moments with abstract musings.

The thing that makes the validity of those figures questionable is the fact that the volunteer subjects who participated in the study were college students.

Everyone knows the daydreaming habits of college students bear no relation to reality elsewhere.

College students are by their very nature deeply into reverie. With them it's a defense mechanism — a way of surviving classroom lectures.

Unless college students let their minds wander off into cloudland during learned disquisitions, their heads soon would be so cluttered with knowledge they would suffer erudition overloads.

The human brain once was commonly assumed to have sponge-like qualities that enabled it to absorb enlightenment almost indefinitely. We now know from neurological research that this concept was fallacious.

We now know that the human brain is more like a giant prune.

Each new tidbit of information forms a wrinkle on the brain until, at some point, the brain

comes completely puckered. When that happens, all subsequent information entering the brain either slides right out again or displaces one of the existing wrinkles.

College students, being constantly exposed to pedagogy, are especially vulnerable. Without wisdom intake restrictions, the brain of a college student could become entirely congested before his sophomore year was out.

Daydreaming, fortunately, is an ideal anticrinking technique. It stops the flow of extraneous material to the brain without creating any furrows of its own.

In any event, a daydreaming study based on college students must be viewed as scientifically unscientific. There's a big difference between woolgathering and torpor, you know. A more representative study off campus might show that what passes for daydreaming in the general population is mostly bumbumbrong brought by the 1980 presidential campaign.

## Warped



By Scott McCullar

## THE BATTALION

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