

VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

TUESDAY
SEPTEMBER 9, 1980

Slouch By Jim Earle



"Wasn't it just yesterday that we were complaining about there not being enough rain?"

Political straight talk unlikely

By ARNOLD SAWISLAK
United Press International

WASHINGTON — A campaign device that seems to be gaining popularity is the "town meeting," at which a candidate responds to questions from plain citizens instead of from smart aleck reporters.

Questions from salesmen and housewives frequently are more to the point than those propounded by professional journalists, who often seem to be more intent on fine points than on central issues. But blunt and pithy questions do not necessarily elicit answers of the same sort from the candidates.

Herewith, a list of questions that might be asked by citizens with both the probable answers and those most likely not to be given by the candidates:

— Question: Why don't we use nuclear weapons to get our hostages out of Iran?

Probable answer: We are exploring all options in our effort to get our people freed from their illegal imprisonment.

Unlikely answer: First, that probably would kill the hostages as well as Iranians. Second, that probably would start World War III, which

probably would kill everybody.

— Question: Why can't we have a 50 percent tax cut right now?

Probable answer: We will do everything we can to relieve the burden of taxation without fueling the fires of inflation. By cutting waste and bureaucratic boondoggling, we should be able to reduce taxes.

Unlikely answer: We can have a big tax cut. You can start by naming a federal program or subsidy that benefits you that you are willing to see eliminated.

— Question: How can we stop politicians from taking bribes?

Probable answer: Political corruption is a crime that eats at the vitals of democracy, but it should be remembered that the overwhelming number of people in public life are scrupulously honest.

Unlikely answer: If you nonpoliticians would stop offering bribes, the problem would be solved.

— Question: The newspapers are full of help wanted ads. Why can't we make people on welfare go to work?

Probable answer: Work is the answer to wel-

fare. With a healthy economy and a resort with the government providing information will transform tax eaters into taxpayers.

Unlikely answer: Because we don't have a lousy job of education a lot of people can't do the jobs that are available. Some others are just too lazy to go to work.

— Question: If you are elected, what are you going to do about crime in the streets?

Probable answer: The full resources of government must be marshaled to fight crime. Police must be permitted to enforce the law. Judges must not be soft on criminals.

Unlikely answer: Nothing, street crime is my job. Your mayor and your police chief are the ones who are responsible for that.

— Question: Have you made any promises you aren't going to be able to keep?

Probable answer: My word is my bond. I do not keep my word, I cannot expect support in the future.

Unlikely answer: Some of these things are impossible, but if you don't promise to do what your opponent says you are confessing to do, you are confessing to incompetence.

Church report calls nukes 'false religion'

By DAVID E. ANDERSON
United Press International

The Theological Commission of the Reformed Church in America has taken a long look at the world's nuclear arms race and pronounced it an idolatrous, false religion that must be opposed at every step.

The denomination, which grew out of the Dutch migration to the United States, traces its history in this nation back to as early as 1628 and is the oldest Protestant denomination with a continuous ministry in the United States.

It takes its theological lead from the Reformers Zwingli and Calvin and is not a pacifist denomination such as the Friends or Church of the Brethren.

But on the issue of the arms race and the potential for nuclear war, the Theological Commission, in a lengthy report to the church's General Synod, criticized what it called the "modern church's easy conscience" in the face of war.

"The fundamental religious character of the nuclear arms race is seen first in its appeal to the human longing for security," the study said, "or more precisely, its manipulation of that longing."

"The nuclear arms race and the widespread support or acquiescence it enjoys are founded on the illusion that security can be guaranteed by 'strategic superiority,' that is, that salvation belongs to the strong."

"The certain sign of a false security, a false god, is the greater insecurity which inevitably results from its religious pretensions," the

study said, adding that each advance in the arms race "carries us not nearer the gates of Heaven but closer to the abyss."

It invoked Isaiah's word of judgment on the quest for national security:

"Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses,

who trust in chariots because they are many and in horsesmen because they are very strong,

but do not look to the Holy One of Israel or consult the Lord." (Is. 31:1)

"While a measure of defense is necessary in a fallen world, that nation is most secure whose citizens are adequately fed, housed, educated, employed and cared for," the commission said.

It said that while there were many reasons to oppose the arms race, the chief reason for the church's opposition is that nuclear weapons "are idolatrous — an affront to God."

"Reformed theology emphasizes both the majesty of God and the ever-present human propensity toward idolatry," it said. "Ultimate weapons, ultimate enemies, ultimate ends that justify any means require a false god to sanction them."

The report used the Apostle Paul's category of "principalities and powers" — superhuman, transpersonal realities that condition earthly life — to categorize the driving force behind the arms race.

"The nuclear arms race has taken on a life of its own, compelled by superhuman powers of evil that seem to defy the best human intentions," the report said.

It's Your turn

Editor:

Every fall, students write letters to the Batt discussing the subject I am about to address. I usually take it with a grain of salt, thinking the problem is not that bad, or it will alleviate itself by the end of the first week of school.

Well, here it is, the end of the first week and the "problem" still exists. As you have probably guessed by now, I am concerned that students are not saying "howdy" like they used to. Understandably, the campus is much more crowded and the weather is much hotter than it has been in the past.

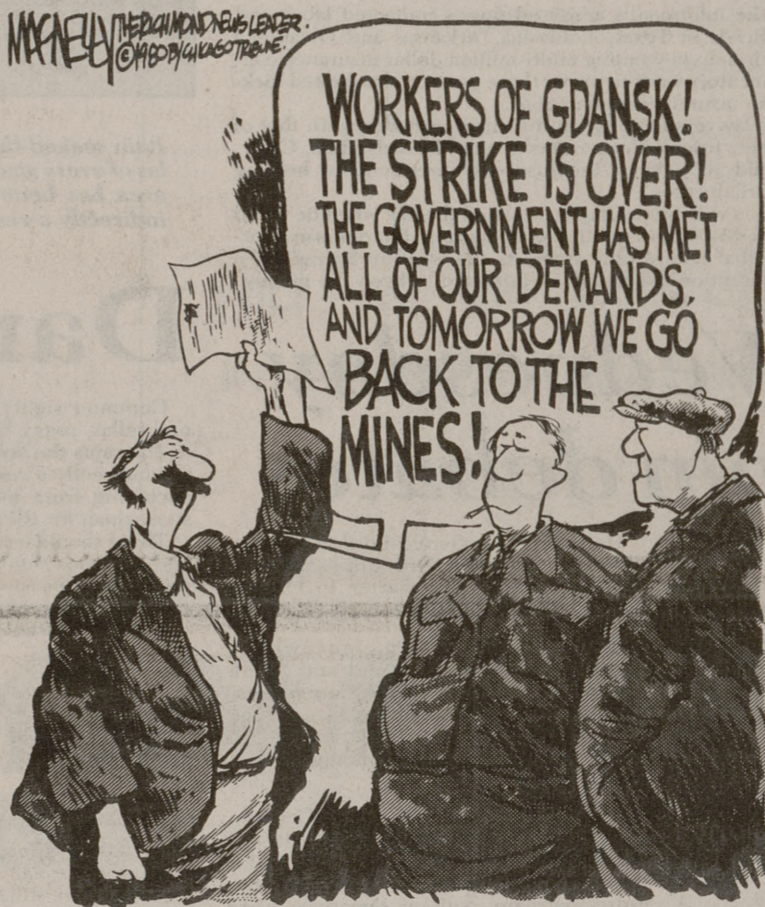
But we have freshmen to impress upon and each other to keep sane. I guarantee by the end

of September if the situation is not corrected, we will all be turning into zombie-like creatures — long before finals week.

Yes, I believe that a good semester — in every respect — is partly a product of good cheer among Aggies on the campus. It is the sort of thing that gets communicated to everyone, directly and indirectly.

And it isn't hard to do. Just say "howdy," and say it with "feeling." And before you know it, the whole campus seems friendlier. If you need a little "booster" now and then, think how good it felt to beat the hell out of 't.u. last year. And think what an experience your college career has been so far. And most importantly, "Howdy!"

Dwain Handley '82



The case of the 'two-syringe' man

Cola agents search for real thing

By DICK WEST
United Press International

WASHINGTON — It was reported the other day that the Coca-Cola Co. had filed suit to stop a Pennsylvania hotel from "passing off" other kinds of colas as Cokes.

This case sounds like it might have been the work of a soft drink secret agent.

I used to know one of Coca Cola's undercover operators and envied him mightily. He had what I still regard as the most glamorous, exciting and fascinating job I ever heard tell of.

His assignment was to travel about the country ordering Cokes in establishments where soft drinks were sold. Then he surreptitiously collected specimens of whatever he was served and sent them back to the home office for analysis.

If the boys in the lab determined a sample was something other than pure Coke, the company would have a basic for legal action, if it came to that, to stop the deception and protect its trademark.

My friend specialized in collecting specimens in bar rooms. Or at least that was the only aspect of his job he talked about when I was around.

His modus operandi, he once confided, was to belly up to a bar and order a shot of hooch

with Coke on the side. When the bartender wasn't looking, he would whip out a small syringe and suction off a portion of the chaser.

For a time, I was told, Coke agents customarily tossed down the hard stuff so as to avoid suspicion. But legal complications arose.

Coke agents occasionally had to give evidence in court and attorneys advised that if the defense could prove they had been drinking on the job it might discredit their testimony. So my friend became a two-syringe drinker.

With one syringe he would suck up enough cola for testing against the secret Coke formula. With the other syringe he could drain the shot glass, thus being in a position to swear under oath that no liquor had touched his lips.

Once back in his hotel room, my friend would empty the booze syringe into a bottle that already contained various brands of spirits from other parts of the country. He even gave it his own private label — "Old Syringe."

Many's the evening I have spent sipping "Old Syringe" and listening spellbound to his recounted his thrall it was tough going back to the real world I then, as now, inhabited.

As to whether Coca-Cola still employs secret agents who stock their liquor cabinets in a manner, I cannot say. But if ever you attend a private party at which the host serves flavored scotch laced with bourbon that has a tequila after-taste, you'll know it's the real thing.

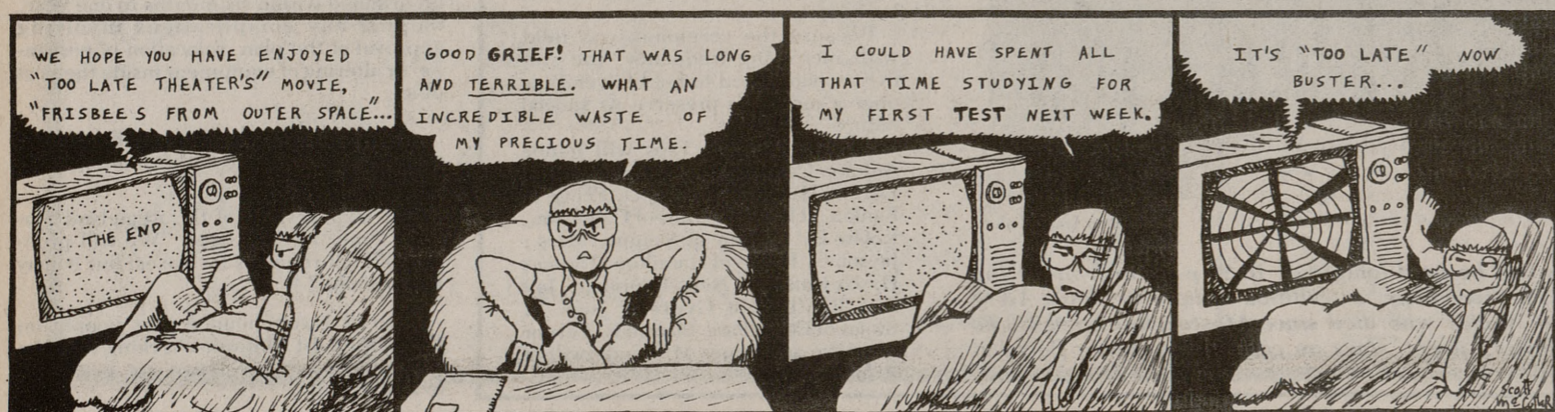
Correction

Friday's Battalion incorrectly reported that Friday was the last day to drop classes with no record.

Tuesday, Sept. 16, is the last day to drop classes with no record.

The Battalion regrets the error.

Warped



THE BATTALION

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Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length and are subject to being cut if they are longer. The editor reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must also be signed, show the address and phone number of the writer.

Columns and guest editorials are also welcome, and are subject to the same length constraints as letters. Address all inquiries and correspondence to: Editor, The Battalion, Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.

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