

VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

FRIDAY
SEPTEMBER 12, 1980

Slouch

By Jim Earle



"Frankly, I prefer a more impersonal computer than the one we have now. Look at this note: 'Go to class and quit rerunning your schedule.'"

Media event carries Reagan message hint

By DAVID S. BRODER

WASHINGTON — The process of presidential campaigning has been so corrupted by "media events" — posing the candidates in settings which convey a message on a TV tube without verbal content — that there is a tendency to view all visual spectacles as essentially phony.

At a Common Cause forum the other day, Linda Wertheimer of National Public Radio was ridiculing the "Italian market syndrome," that seems to send every candidate who comes to Philadelphia out shopping for sausage and eggplant as a shortcut to the ethnic vote.

Next Monday (Sept. 15), Ronald Reagan and George Bush will take part in what looks like an equally phony "media event." They are scheduled to meet on the steps of the Capitol with the Republican congressional leaders, members of the Congress and a sizable number of GOP candidates from the House and Senate.

There, according to plans, they will announce a list of specific actions that they jointly pledge to take in 1981, if Reagan is elected with a Republican Congress.

Since the odds are against the Republicans overturning the 26-year-old Democratic majorities in both the House and the Senate this November, the "contract" Reagan and the Republicans are offering can be seen as a cheap promise to make — just another "media event" on the candidate's schedule.

But the ceremony has substantive significance, at least in the minds of the junior House Republicans who concocted the notion and sold it to a somewhat reluctant Reagan campaign. It represents a serious and healthy departure from the norms of contemporary presidential campaigning.

For the last quarter-century, most of the presidential nominees of both parties have run for office as if the presidency were the only job on the ballot and they were the only candidates. Losers like Barry Goldwater and Hubert Humphrey might proclaim their party labels. But for the most part, the successful candidates of both parties from Eisenhower through Carter have told the American people that a change of governmental direction could be achieved by changing the occupant of the White House.

That proposition has been proven false. The inertial forces in the government of the United States — the network of relationships linking the bureaucracy, the interest groups and the congressional subcommittees and their staff — are demonstrably too powerful to be turned around by any one man.

What the Republicans are attempting to say with their Capitol steps theatrical is that Americans who want to change directions have to

change control of the whole government. They have to reverse the majorities in Congress as well as turn out the incumbent from the White House.

It is a proposition that offers great potential dividends for the congressional Republicans. Too often their candidates have found themselves competing with Democratic incumbents who are as vociferous as the challengers in denouncing the "mess in Washington."

The Republicans hope, by the Monday spectacular, to drive home the point that the Democratic Congress is as much responsible for the record of the last four years as is the Democratic President — and that individual Democratic senators and representatives must be held to account for their party's record.

But it is a strategy with obvious risks for Reagan. It will be fascinating to see how far he really goes in expounding the message the sponsors hope to communicate.

From Eisenhower on, Republican presidential candidates have known that they have to run well ahead of their party to have a chance of winning. Most often, that has meant running far away from their party. Ever since the Democrats took over Congress in Eisenhower's second year, Republican Presidents and presidential candidates have been content to seek accommodation, not revolution, on Capitol Hill.

In Reagan's case, there is a special risk in the Monday event. His own strategists say that most voters believe that Reagan is stronger executive than Carter, a man more likely to get things done. But, these strategists concede, there are still grave reservations about the direction that Reagan would move the country.

Many voters — women in particular — are nervous about Reagan's talk about a bigger, more bristling defense, a tougher line toward foreign governments, and a greater reliance on private industry to furnish the jobs and energy the country needs.

Many of those voters who are fed up with Carter but nervous about Reagan would like to hedge their bets by keeping the Democrats in control of Congress — a sort of check-and-balance strategy — as they did when they elected Eisenhower and Nixon three times with Democratic Congresses.

The implicit message of Monday's ceremony is that there can only be one government in Washington at a time, and that if voters want Reagan to lead it effectively, they have to go all the way with the GOP.

That is an honest statement, and it is as commendable for the Republicans to dramatize it as it is risky.

First ladies rely on friends

By HELEN THOMAS

WASHINGTON — Presidents have often said you do not make friends in the White House. They rely on old steady and true friends.

So do first ladies. Pat Nixon's closest friend was Helene Drown, who lives in Rolling Hills, Calif., but when she was needed, she came to the White House and spent days.

Bess Truman, Mamie Eisenhower, Jacqueline Kennedy, Lady Bird Johnson and Betty Ford also had their small circles of friends — not many, and only a few who were confidantes.

The same is true of Rosalynn Carter, whose good friend and relation, Edna Langford, has written a book about her in collaboration with Linda Maddox, wife of presidential aide Robert Maddox. It's entitled "Rosalynn, Friend and First Lady."

Langford is the mother of Judy Carter, wife of Jack Carter, the president's eldest son. A native of Calhoun, Ga., she has known Mrs. Carter for years and has been her constant traveling companion during past political campaigns. Her book is about their friendship, and Langford says she bristles when the first lady is described as "the steel Magnolia."

"I keep thinking if only they knew her the

way I do," Langford writes. "She is strong. She's a woman of deep convictions. When she has a purpose, nothing deters her, no matter how unpopular her actions appear. But she is not that unfeeling caricature the media has sometimes presented."

Somewhat apologetic over her flattering portrayal of the first lady, the author wrote, "Because we are close friends, it is hard to be objective about her. Friendship has a way of cluttering up a person's point of view."

The separation of Chip Carter and his wife Caron (they're divorced now) was "very painful" for the entire first family and especially Mrs. Carter," Langford wrote. "It was like a death in the family."

"For a long time, Rosalynn hoped against hope that the marriage could be saved. But as in other times when her children had problems she did not interfere, giving them room to work them out in the best possible way."

"The day Caron and little James (Chip's baby son) left the White House, no one wanted to be around. Annette and Jeff went out of town. Other family members scattered. A waiter who had grown quite close to James became so emotional Rosalynn sympathetically suggested that he go home. It was a time of suffering for all. "Because one is famous or in the limelight is

no guarantee of immunity from trouble of what many onlookers think," Mrs. Carter wrote.

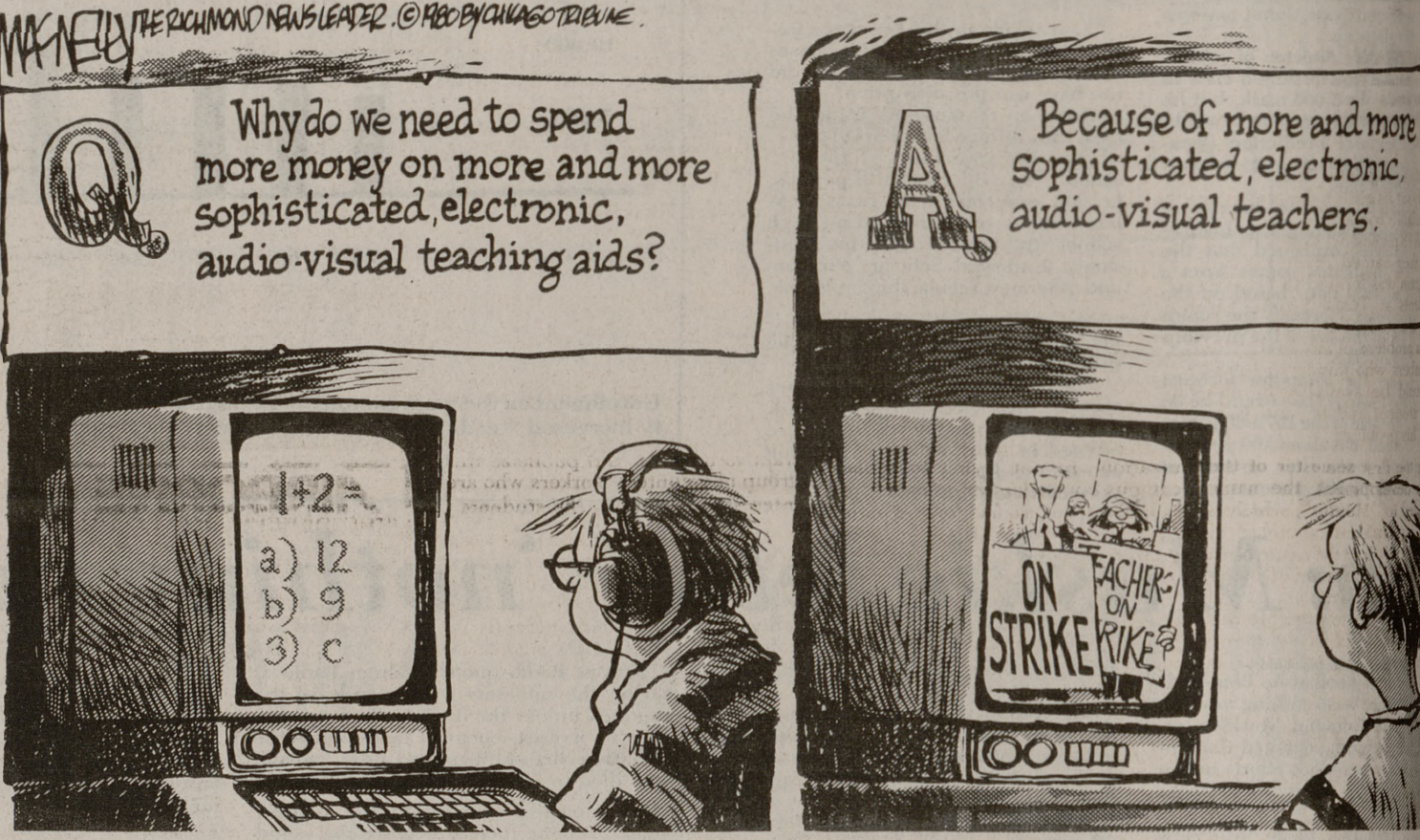
"Although she is as familiar to me as any movie star, few people know Rosalynn Carter."

Langford said that the first lady "rose from the obscurity of being a farmer's daughter in south Georgia" to becoming "one of the recognized women in the world."

She said that she had "matured" and had become a "political strategist" in the White House, but she has "not changed a cent."

Langford also said that she "can't understand why Jimmy and Rosalynn and their families thoroughly appreciate" the accommodations, but they are extraordinary. The accommodations, she explains, include a pool, sauna, tennis, "gorgeous walking and hiking trails."

She quotes Mrs. Carter as saying Camp David is a good place to get away from the pressures, from the clamor of the press corps, and just to be alone with nature. "I have a chance to think about what I want to do and about this country, to focus on what I generally enjoy the beauty and peace of the mountains."



It's your turn

Close encounter of the too close kind

Editor: Something happened on Monday, Sept. 8, that really scared me to death but also made me very angry! I was on my bicycle at the intersection of College Main and University Drive waiting for the light to change so I could cross the street. The light then changed to green and I started on my way.

Suddenly, I saw some fool run the red light and if I hadn't braked my bicycle, well, I probably wouldn't have been around to write this letter! That driver of that car didn't even see me and that really upsets me. I can tell you that I was really upset and it took a lot to keep from breaking apart. It wasn't until I did get home that all my anger and tears did come out. When I think of what might have happened, how upset my parents would have been, and how upset my friends would have been, I still get upset.

I sincerely hope that the driver of that car got a little scared and upset too. Maybe then he or she won't be running anymore red lights. I also hope that everyone out there will always watch out for the other guy, because not everyone on this campus is "a good Ag." There are some out there (especially that driver) who are stupid and thoughtless!

Mary Alice Tijerina '80

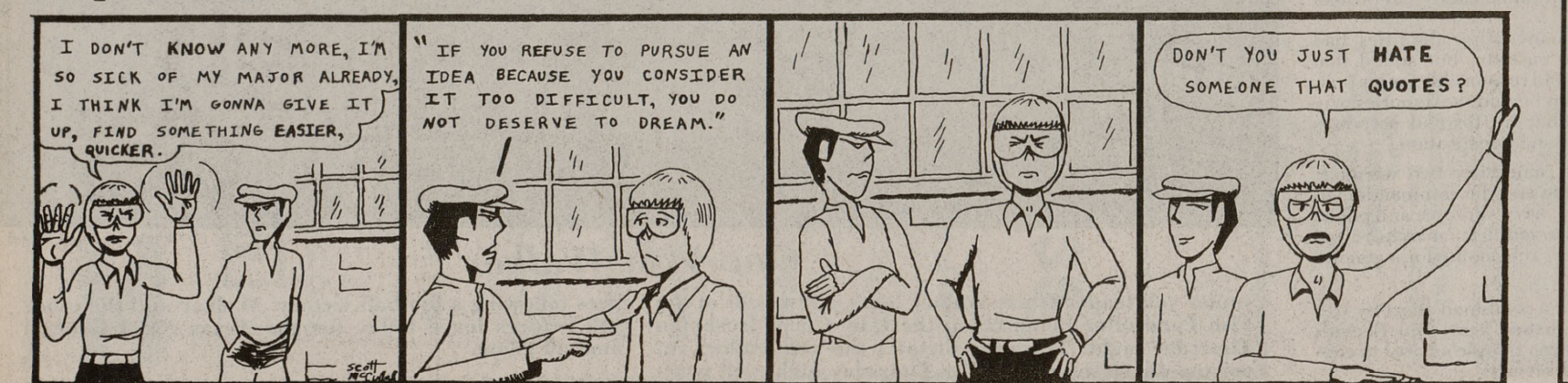
Editor: were what sorority girls got when they put on their lip gloss on cold morning lizard boots were reserved for iguanas to keep from getting stickers in their hair.

The Texas legislature passed laws in the past year. Perhaps one should have been designed to curtail cowboy activity by people who have ridden a horse, hauled a bale of hay, or, forbid, stepped in a pile of bovine excrement. The law should also go so far as to recall two-dollar straw hats, feather bands, bottom jeans, and shiny brass belt buckles better suited for melting down and making lead chains for all the pet armadillos on the planet.

While dealing with this social disease created by the sure enough "hands" should provide for sending the urbanites to the discos, pinball parlors, and from whence they came.

I'm mad too, Eddie. Arthur M.

Warped



By Scott McCullar

THE BATTALION

MEMBER
Texas Press Association
Southwest Journalism Congress

Editor: Dillard Stone
Managing Editor: Rhonda Watters
City Editor: Becky Swanson
Sports Editor: Richard Oliver
Focus Editor: Scot K. Meyer
News Editors: Lynn Blanco, Gwen Ham, Scott Haring, Todd Woodard

Staff Writers: Kurt Allen, Nancy Andersen, Marcy Boyce, Mike Burrichter, Pat Davidson, Jon Heidtke, Uschi Michel-Howell, Kathleen McElroy, Debbie Nelson, Liz Newlin, Cathy Saathoff, Jana Sims, Rick Stolle

Cartoonist: Scott McCullar
Photo Editor: Pat O'Malley

EDITORIAL POLICY
The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting newspaper operated as a community service to Texas A&M University and Bryan-College Station. Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the editor or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M University administrators or faculty members, or of the Board of Regents.

Questions or comments concerning any editorial should be directed to the editor.

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

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

The Battalion is published daily during Texas A&M spring semesters, except for holiday and examination periods. Mail subscriptions are \$16.75 per semester, \$33.25 per year and \$35 per full year. Advertising rates furnished upon request.

Our address: The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.

United Press International is entitled exclusively for reproduction of all news dispatches credited to it or reproduction of all other matter herein reserved. Second class postage paid at College Station, TX.