

VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

WEDNESDAY
SEPTEMBER 24, 1980

Slouch

By Jim Earle



"it's not an armadillo hat, It's an armadillo."

Reaction, not thought, typifies student opinion

Panties in a truck window apparently bother more people than the firing of the president. Many things in life are more important than whether the Aggie band arrives late for a yell practice — but wouldn't you know it by hanging around the Battalion offices.

In the past nine months, the Texas A&M University System has been reorganized and a president has been fired. Implications are serious for the future of the academic quality of Texas A&M.

Through it all, the Battalion has tried to provide complete and accurate reportage and commentary on the most significant actions taken at the University in the last decade. And many outside sources have said we've done a good job of it.

But there's one unanswered question: "Who cares?" No one evidently.

When Dr. Jarvis Miller was ousted from the presidency, the Battalion received several letters to the editor. Only two showed their authors had any idea that the main issue was Miller's fight against reorganization of the system and his subsequent loss of power.

Most students believed that Miller's removal was caused directly by his refusal to shake cadet Melanie Zentgraf's hand at graduation in May. Zentgraf has filed suit against Miller and the University, alleging sexual discrimination in the Corps of Cadets.

The Zentgraf idea is hogwash — Miller's firing just wasn't that simple. Friday the Battalion was able to present a little more of the complex picture through two exclusive interviews — one with Miller, the other with Hubert. The articles attempted to describe both men's feelings about the series of actions, which were as startling in their suddenness as they are important in their implications.

Included in the story based on the Miller interview were some surprises:

- 1) The regents publicly ignored Miller's resignation offer, which was made at least a month before he was fired;

- 2) The regents are trying to run the day-to-day operations of the university; and

- 3) The regents "lack vision" in their role of guiding the university.

Who cares? No one, apparently. However, in a sports article Tuesday labeled "Analysis," a Battalion reporter said the Aggie Band was late for Friday's midnight yell practice, and that it finished a one song in a somewhat disjointed manner.

Who cares? A lot of people apparently. The writer and any other staffer close to a telephone were berated by upset bandmen, their fiancées, and, it seemed, anyone who had ever had a bone to pick with the Battalion.

The callers were considerate and reasonable. But there are more important things to worry about than:

- panties in a truck window,
- whether or not the band was late for yell practice,
- the price of coffee refills in the MSC, or,
- whether all "bad Ags" should take the hint "Highway 6 runs both ways."

And one issue — the reorganization — demands careful consideration because it affects us all.

Instead we get knee-jerk reactions, complaining about all sorts of "bad Ags" who upset "good Ags."

Students worry more about the state highway system than they do about the state of this system.

You'd never guess that Texas A&M's average SAT score is 137 points above the national average, or that we enroll more national merit scholars than any public school in Texas.

Aggies, it seems, don't think. They react. And to the silliest things.

What's more important, the band or the future?

The band, of course. The other answer would require the respondent to think. And that's too much work.

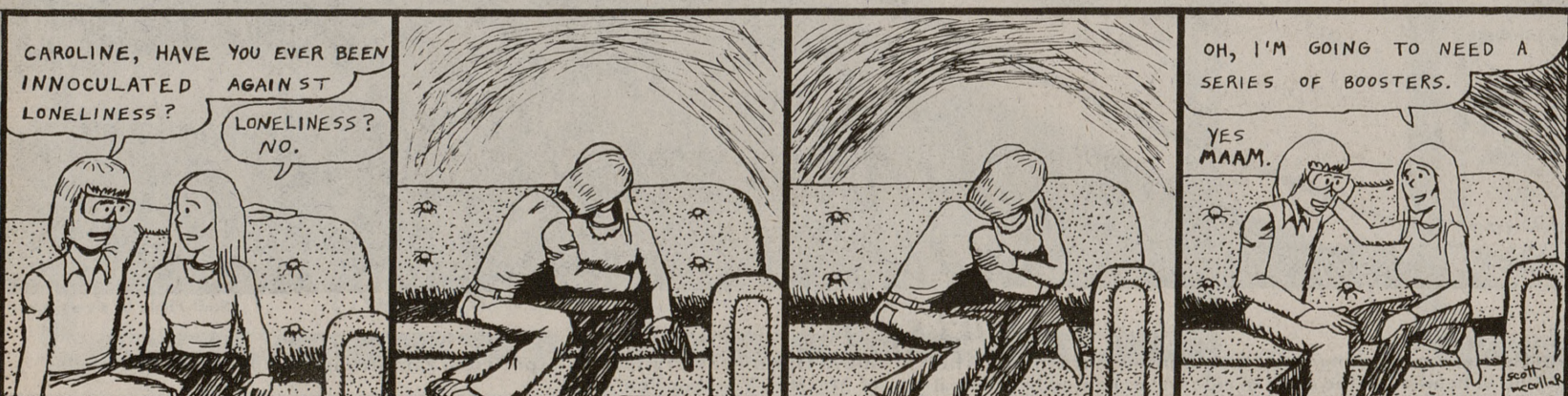
Dillard Stone

Page 2 is your page, too

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length, and are subject to being cut if they are longer. The editorial staff 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.

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Warped



Socialistic transformation began with Social Security

By MOSC MELCHIZEDEK

America's transformation from laissez-faire economy to a socialistic one began with the passage of such programs as Social Security. When Social Security became law, the United States suffered from the worst depression in its history. In an effort to combat deflation, Franklin Roosevelt initiated a policy of government spending to create jobs.

Roosevelt believed that by implementing a National Pension Program, consumer spending would increase, and this would help curb deflation. This inflationary program, along with many others accomplished just that, but we have had to live with it ever since.

The Social Security Program for 39 years existed as a proportional double tax. In 1976, an individual annually paid 6.05 percent on the first \$14,400 he earned. The Feds then included the money paid into Social Security with

the individual's pretax income. Thus, the federal government taxed this \$17,700 twice.

In 1976, workers who retired got \$459 or so a month if they had received the maximum taxable salary for their working lives, (\$3,000 when the system started in 1937). In comparison, workers who earned the median level (around \$9,250) paid probably one-half the amount of taxes. Therefore they received about half as much in benefits.

However, under the new Social Security Tax schedule, benefits will not differentiate between the amount of taxes individuals pay into the system. Under the new law, the Social Security tax rate will rise from 6.05 percent to 7.15 percent by 1968. The maximum salary base will also rise, from \$17,700 to \$42,600 by 1987. A person earning \$42,600 or more by 1987 will pay as much as \$3,045. Considering the double taxation involved, this will consume something like \$6,000, or 14 percent of his pretax income. Workers with a history of max-

imum earning should receive \$779 a month in benefits. Now for the punch line — with average earnings (projected to be \$17,200 in 1987) will receive almost as much in benefits — around \$610 a month. This would have to pay \$16,000 more in taxes over a period of ten years.

However, if you're now thinking about asking your congressman to complain about the soak-the-successful scheme, you should know that Congress isn't stupid. When it has the opportunity to enter social insurance, it chooses the ludicrous idea. Why heck, the pension programs, Congress and government employees have offered lower insurance premiums and give more benefits. Something to think about next time some Congressman starts asking you that "he really is interested in your welfare, and that if you vote for him, he'll look out for your interests."

It's your turn

A belated 'Thank you' to Jarvis Miller

Editor:

I have read with much interest your articles of July 15-16 and of Sept. 1, 1980, pertaining to the Board of Regents' reassignment of Dr. Jarvis E. Miller.

Since I taught at A&M and at Washington State University and since my husband taught at the University of California-San Jose, I should like to respond to some of the thoughts in The Battalion and to share some observations regarding Dr. Miller's services as our President at A&M.

Like the Association of Former Students, I have heard "many laudatory and complimentary statements of Dr. Miller's abilities for the superb manner in which he has discharged his responsibilities and duties as President in the growth of Texas A&M."

He was eminently qualified for the presidency. Evidence attests to his outstanding performance. His expertise, based on his educational background and experience, and his visions of academic excellence helped to make A&M a great university, further achieving state, national, and international recognition.

President Miller's inspired leadership lent strong support from every outside group important to A&M: the agricultural leaders, the business and professional leadership of the state and the political leadership at both the state and national levels. Within the University community he enjoyed unprecedented support from students, faculty, administrators, and alumni. Student leaders, unhappy with the Board's action, remember that "Dr. Miller brought with him to the presidency an open-door, student oriented attitude reflected in all levels of his administration."

I commend the statement made by the Board of Directors of the Association of Former Students: "... that Dr. Miller's removal in such an abrupt way has caused an injustice to the University and to the people of this state ... such a step was ill-timed, ill-conceived, and effectuated without any planning or thought of the consequences or the future." This sordid event tarnishes A&M's image, making difficult the recruitment of renowned educators.

At this date no comprehensive, penetrating analysis of current developments has been given. It is shocking to know that President Miller was given neither prior warning nor an opportunity to defend his position. I agree with you, Mr. Stone, that "Decisions of this nature go against basic management theory and practice, which say that employers should discuss problems with and complaints against their employees." Do the regents want to exercise control over all decisions at the University? We must remember that "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

Dr. Miller's leaving the presidency brought grief to the community, to the state, and to the nation. In this area he and his family are deeply loved and respected.

On numerous occasions he opened the presi-

denial mansion for cultural and social activities. Students appreciated knowing that they, too, could receive an audience from him and Mrs. Miller. Indeed they will not forget such understanding and care. At the many functions Mrs. Miller represented the University with grace and dignity, frequently enlisting the assistance of the four talented daughters.

Dr. Miller is held in high esteem. Since "Gratitude is a memory of the heart," he will be remembered for his integrity, his expertise, and his outstanding contributions. For all of his good works, a genuine thank you.

Margaret (Lemmon) Robertson

Yell leader on soapbox

Editor:

Leaving yell practice, I had to wonder. In over four years of such events I'd never once heard a yell leader use the occasion as a soapbox to voice his own opinion about something totally unrelated. Traditionally, yell practice is a mammoth get-together to voice spirit and backing for our football team. Up until the unveiling of the (the squeamish should close their eyes here) Ag Flag.

First to get one point straight. I have absolutely no affiliation whatsoever with the Student Aggie Club, the subversive perpetrators of the article in question. I'd merely like to comment on the extremely poor timing of the yell leaders exhibited to express their opinions.

Now, what was it he said? It's DETRIMENTAL Ags. (that big word, detrimental). Detrimental because they're reviving something, which as he said, was used a LONG time ago.

Come on, who are you trying to kid, all Aggie traditions are deep rooted in some age old piece of granite. Nothing wrong with an old tradition I thought. If it's an old tradition, then it's generally sacred.

Or, perhaps the feeling was that some money-mongering capitalist was ripping people off, stealing away our precious bodily fluids. I think not. \$1.50 is not that much to pay for something that can be used over indefinitely. Paying \$8.50 a shot for mums is much more of a pocketbook drain. And concessionaires seem to be able to sell totally untraditional pennants without suffering a verbal browbeating.

Or was it just that you didn't think of it first yourself? Do elucidate.

Steve Wilczynski '80

Traditions should flex

Editor:

Saturday evening eight "Good Ags" demonstrated their allegiance to our traditions standing throughout the football game. How different about this? These eight persons standing near the front of Section 126 were predominately contained Penn State fans. Parents of A&M students. When these "Ags" politely were asked to be seated so those behind them could see, they refused. These Ags also refused the requests of policemen, however, they apparently were unsure of their grounds and appealed to the yell leaders for guidance. Unfortunately after consulting with the other yell leaders, a young man signaled to these eight fans to stand.

The result was that some Aggie parents and number of Penn State supporters were left with the impression that TAMU students are a bunch of boors whose best assets are revealed while humping it! Older A&M supporters, fans of other schools (who are our "guests" on this campus) should not be forced to witness "Twelfth Man" tradition. If you can't get a seat in the student sections, either move to where you don't block the view of others while standing, or sit down! Common courtesy also is an Aggie tradition. In any case, traditions, individual rights, must remain flexible and that their exercise by one person does not violate the rights of another.

For those ready to rush to the support of asinine performance of these eight "Good Ags" I should note that five of these "loyalists" gustedly left the stadium during the first quarter, despite being reminded of the tradition of staying for yell practice when we're "outscored." The other three sons left yell practice was over. Apparently, loyalty tradition only applies when you are winning.

Paul F. C.

Thank God for Beal

Editor:

Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, pray the Lord my soul to take.

God bless all the people of the world, thank you so much for David Beal.

Laura Hertenberger

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