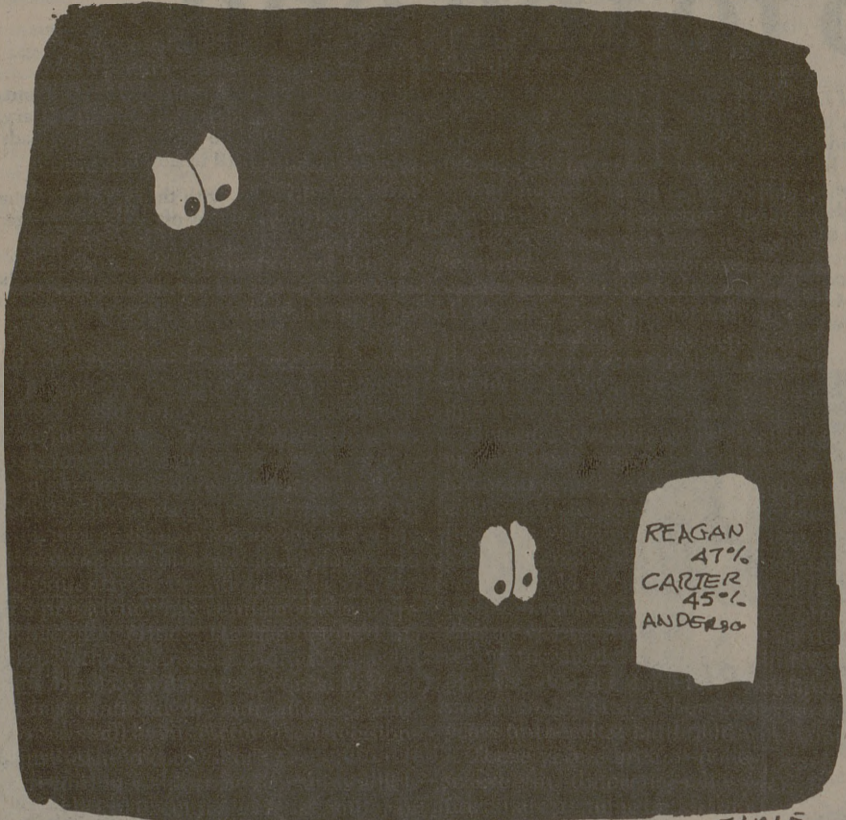


Vote in today's election

We've all seen and read the high and mighty prose of countless editorials before — the editorials which give innumerable idealistic reasons to vote. This won't be a rehash of those reasons — anybody who's passed high school government can sketch the theories behind citizen participation. It's time for words to stop, and action to start.
Vote today!

Slouch By Jim Earle



"Won't you please turn it off so I can get some sleep?"

Reluctant voters make their choices today

By DAVID S. BRODER

WASHINGTON — Tuesday night's debate demonstrated with stunning clarity why it is so hard for so many people to decide whether Ronald Reagan or Jimmy Carter should be President for the next four years. Both showed their skills as campaigners and, equally, both showed the deficiencies that might deter anyone from wishing either of them was President.

Carter, for his part, made a series of targeted appeals to specific constituencies — answering one question as a traditional Democrat, another as a friend of Israel, a third as the champion of blacks and Hispanics, a fourth as the son of the South.

But at no time did he combine those specific appeals into a broad agenda for America, and that has been the failing of his administration. His former speechwriter, Jim Fallows, observed that Carter has "many policies, but no one policy." As Elizabeth Drew of *The New Yorker* put it, "He is constantly blurring the picture."

Reagan, on the other hand, paints in broad strokes with his promises to "get government off your back" and "make America respected throughout the world." The trouble is that his picture is more a romanticized notion of the 1920's than a reflection of realities in the 1980's. So it needs constant readjustment, the kind of policy realignment Reagan made almost weekly during the campaign and would be forced to make as frequently as President.

Carter's presidency has confirmed the skepticism of his early critics. He has botched his relationship with Congress as thoroughly as he burned his bridges with the Georgia legislature. He has confused the bureaucracy (and, often, his own staff) by his introverted decision-making, just as he did in Georgia.

Off his record in California, Reagan is a better bet as a political executive. He is a superior rhetorician and persuader of the public, and he has shown more skill than Carter in searching out able people and delegating authority to them.

But it is doubtful that age 69 he has the mental energy and drive to put his own stamp on an unfamiliar government. He is as chary of legislative bargaining as Carter, and he is probably not Carter's match in those unique tests of presidential leadership — the Camp David-type negotiations where the outcome may depend on the skill and stamina, the knowledge and perseverance of the man speaking for the United States.

It is impossible to determine which of these men would be the more capable president, because the evidence is strong in Carter's case and suggestive in Reagan's that neither has the range of skills and instincts the job requires. The best that can be said of them is that they have both selected as running-mates and possible successors men who are exceptionally experienced and skilled in the arts of government.

The campaign has focused on economics and national security. Carter's greatest failure is the fact that his own constituents have suffered a decline in their real income during his tenure in the office — 7.4 percent for the typical factory worker with three dependents — and a real increase in taxes to boot.

But the deep tax cuts which Reagan promises as relief to Carter's victims strike even conservative economists as a dubious cure for persistent inflation. His proposal to dismantle an energy policy which is finally beginning to reduce dependence on foreign oil is counterproductive. Reagan's claim that he would balance the budget by "cutting fat," deserves no more credence than Carter's 1976 promise to streamline government by consolidating agencies.

Reagan's election would likely mean a boost in Pentagon budgets, a change some consider necessary and others extravagant. Carter's claim that it would be dangerous to follow Reagan's suggestion of scrapping the stalled SALT II treaty with Russia and starting talks afresh would be more credible, if he were not taking national security advice himself from Zbigniew Brzezinski, a man who deliberately set out to "shock" the Kremlin in 1977 by scrapping the almost completed Ford-Brezhnev version of SALT II and thereby lost at least three years in the vital battle for arms control.

There is one area of policy, less discussed, where the differences between Reagan and Carter are genuine and significant — the area of law and social order. A consistent thread of Carter's career is his tendency to see the law as a tool for change and an instrument for seeking justice. This belief, more than any other, has brought him occasionally to the liberal pole of politics and has made him the agent for elevating to power in the Judiciary and regulatory arms of government people with a strong personal commitment to changing the status quo.

Those who recognize that the appointive power is one that even a President of limited abilities can use with enormous effect may find in this divergence a basis for casting a reluctant vote.

No Silver Taps tonight — no one is going to miss it

While looking through my file of finished stories Monday afternoon, I saw a feature on the Silver Taps team that I was holding to run with our next ceremony announcement.

It was then that I realized that this was going to be the first Tuesday of the month and that I hadn't received an official Silver Taps notice from the Student Affairs Office or the Office of Public Information.

I almost hit the panic button knowing that it had been a month since the last ceremony, and in a University with over 33,000 students I just knew someone had to have died. It seemed at least probable.

I thought at first that the notice was a late arrival in my mail slot, so I checked there. Nothing.

The next place to look was the managing editor's desk. A quick shuffle through the papers on her desk yielded nothing.

On to the editor's desk. I thought it might have been in the unsorted mail. Nope, nothing here either.

Well, somebody goofed. I knew there had to be an oversight.

Whistle-stop

By Becky Swanson

When all else fails, go across the hall to the Office of Public Information and ask Betty, who delivers the University press releases everyday. I thought maybe she just forgot to put one in our basket.

Betty didn't know anything about Silver Taps.

Last resort — ask Jeff — he ought to know since he's the associate director of the office and handles those types of news items, or at least he can find out for me.

I guess he hadn't thought about it either, because the mention of Silver Taps caused an immediate, puzzled look to appear on his face. It was almost like I'd hit him.

I guess since Silver Taps was changed only on the first Tuesday of the month after a student's death, everyone just took it for granted that we'd all be going to Silver Taps that night.

We both had it in our minds that someone had died. Neither one of us could think of the name, but someone. We were almost sure. Jeff said he'd check, so I went back to the office to wind up some last minute details.

Minutes later, Jeff came in and said that there was no oversight — no students had died since the last Silver Taps ceremony.

I was amazed. But mostly I was relieved. I'm one of those people who take Silver Taps to heart. The buglers have never for anyone I know, but I go. In the dark, I pray for our fellow Aggie's family, ask to comfort them and give them strength with their loss.

The feature on the Silver Taps buglers is a neat story, but I'm quite happy to leave it on the desk. Tonight, I'll give thanks that there, and the lights are still burning on campus.

The 1980 Aggieland: Helping A&M make sense to non-Aggs

To my friends at North Texas State, University of Houston, and Southern California who always ask me why I spend \$3,000 a year to attend such a "backwards" school:

Read my \$15 yearbook.

This is no downstream annual. It's the Texas A&M University Aggieland, proving that a picture is indeed worth a thousand words — or at least a hundred explanations. Face it, Aggs: at most schools, football means pom-poms, and ROTC is a Wednesday afternoon exercise. Until they come on campus, skeptics have every right to call this University fruity and its students nuts.

What sane University allows its students to stumble into the sacred stadium at midnight?

Actually, my friends won't even come on campus to experience midnight yell practice or bonfire, so I'm correct in using the yearbook, which is the next best thing to a visit.

The word's been out around the state that Texas A&M, in spite of its "Aggie-ness," produces a beautiful and well-conceived yearbook worthy of any school at any price. The 1980 Aggieland, which covers the 1979-1980 school year, again is one of these masterpieces.

The Aggieland is a success because it mirrors Texas A&M. This year the inside cover is — in cinematic terms — an opening shot, an overview of the campus at night providing a lovely

Duck soup

By Kathleen McElroy

exaggeration of the urbanity of the school.

The next pages are glimpses at those Texas A&M quirks that, as we all know, make this school unique. The pictures don't explain them, and the copy is unnecessary to Aggies and worthless to outsiders.

But anyone with a semblance of curiosity has to know why the picture on pages 6 and 7 shows strange military men with no hair carting off a strange man in white clothing.

At this point, we Aggies give a simple explanation of the Corps of Cadets, yell leaders and quadding. Then our skeptic laughs and says something highly intellectual like, "Those Aggies, what will they think of next?"

The Aggieland proceeds to show exactly what Aggies think and do next. There's a calendar of the 1979-1980 events for those who don't remember when Playboy came to Texas A&M or when home loans hit 14 percent.

It's followed with photo features of last year's

speakers, plays, concerts and, of course,

There aren't many color photos of football season (let's hope the staff is busy next year), but there're plenty of angles on the game. Again the copy seems a waste to us who remember last year, but in time the shudder of Kyle Field after the victory of the Longhorns is lost, perhaps the war portrayed with the pictures will replace, in our minds, that feeling.

The Aggieland also has its usual allotment of Corps pictures, which is fine for the reg, who doesn't know a brigade from a pany and thinks a battalion is a new word. There're hundreds of pages of student testimonials from the well-known MSC Committee, the glorious, proud clubs that acknowledge in towns and counties we Houstonians even know exist.

The Aggieland isn't perfect, and some borders on sexist. But after three years I've become more tolerant of sexism, which irks my liberal friends at Cal-Berkeley. "How can you tolerate such a conservative college?" they ask.

I can't take it all the time, but I'll remember, "but look at the guys in the Haggal Club or the members of the Vidor Haggal Club. Ain't it great?"

It sure is.

It's your turn

Response from Jeff Brown's campaign

Editor's note: Charles Bredwell, campaign manager for Jeff Brown, who is the Republican candidate for Brazos County attorney, responded Monday to charges made against Brown in Friday's Battalion.

A letter in Friday's Battalion rebuked Brown for using a Houston law firm's name in connection with the Brown campaign. An attorney in that firm said that Brown had implied that Brown had worked for the firm as an attorney, when in fact he had merely done case preparation work.

"In no way did we mean to imply that Jeff was a lawyer with the firms," Bredwell said.

A Brown "push card" says, "Jeff Brown is currently practicing law in College Station, and has previously worked for two outstanding Houston law firms ... as a law clerk."

A pamphlet used in the Brown campaign says, "He has done case preparation and research for two outstanding law firms."

Congratulations, Emory

Editor:

Ags, I think we should once again congratulate our former student friends who helped run Emory Bellard out of Aggieland. I realize revenge is an ugly thing but it did my heart good to hear about Coach Bellard's outstanding victory over the No. 1 team in the nation. I believe justice has now been served. It is just sad that the small minority who control the political MESS at this University decided to oust the winningest coach in TAMU history. I realize

there will be those who say "But he's naive. To you all, I say "Don't be so naive."

I do not mean for this letter to shed Coach Tom Wilson's unfortunate season away. In fact, I hope we Aggs don't make the mistake twice.

I realize this letter may be a bit severe, but I hope no one, (including the all-powerful hold my family or friends responsible content. These are my feelings alone.

Once again, congratulations Coach Bellard (You too, alums.)

Britt J.

THE BATTALION

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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. We 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, and subject to the same length constraints as letters. All inquiries and correspondence to: Editor, The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.

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Warped



By Scott McCullar