

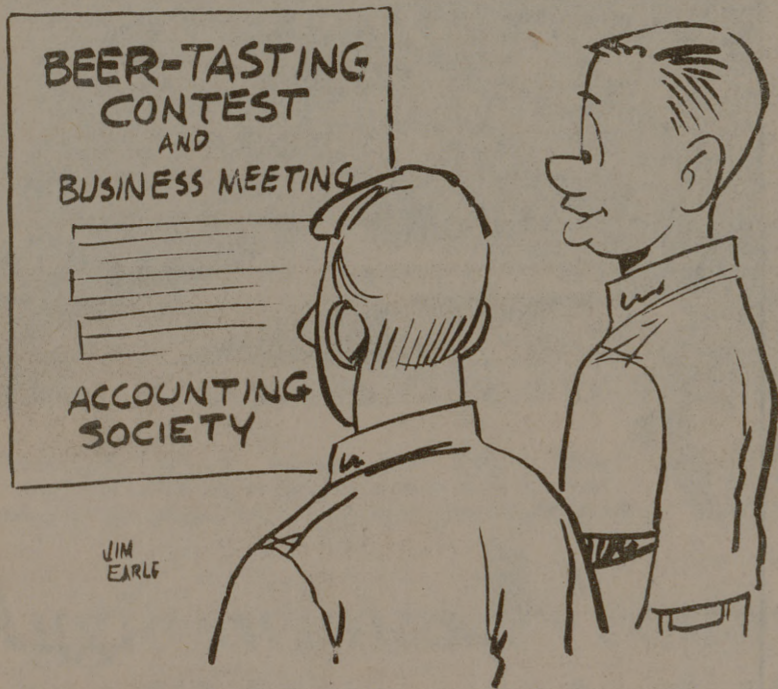
VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

WEDNESDAY
NOVEMBER 19, 1980

Slouch

By Jim Earle



"I think they have stumbled onto a way of picking up attendance."

Three digits in mailbox code useless when nothing comes

I have this terrible problem: I can't remember my mailbox combination.

It's not that my memory is that poor — it's just that I haven't gotten much use out of those three special numbers.

Each day after classes I approach my mailbox, hoping ever so much that something other than emptiness will stare back at me through the window.

But again today, my box was empty. I checked it three times.

What I wouldn't give for a single piece of junk mail! Even the Army has failed to reach my box with a flyer this year.

The only time I get mail is when my phone bill comes. At least a phone bill shows that GTE cares.

I know, I got my phone bill last week, so why did I check my box today? Always the optimist.

I see friends peep into their boxes and happily click their combinations to pull out pen pal notes and fan mail, love letters and notes from home. I always sneak a quick, hopeful glance at my window and then try to look like I don't really care that dust is collecting inside the box.

I think to myself, "Maybe they just haven't

Coffee breaks

By Jane Brust

put it all out yet. Maybe they put my mail in someone else's box. Maybe it's a national holiday."

It's so humiliating to walk away empty-handed.

I know some people send off for things — everything from do-it-yourself bartender's guides to John Travolta fan club posters — just to get some mail. But I'm not that desperate — yet.

Maybe I could join a record club. I'd get a package of albums every month. But then, that could get expensive, just for the joy of retrieving something from my box. If I were to do that, why not join a book club and a wine-tasting club? I could even take a correspondence course in first aid or something.

Last year wasn't like this. Mom wrote every day, reminding me to take my vitamins to brush my teeth and to write back.

That's it! Perhaps I must write in order to receive!

I'd write to Dear Abby but she doesn't write back.

Maybe I could go through my address list and send a photocopied form letter to all my friends and relatives — surely someone would respond.

But then, they all have their own lives. Everyone is so wrapped up in his life that there's no minute to spare, no minute to write. Maybe I'll just drop myself a line:

Dear Jane,

Hi! How are you? I'm fine. I just wanted to know I'm thinking about you. Take care, write soon!

There! If I mail it now, maybe I'll get it tomorrow!

Now then, what IS my mailbox combination?

Reagan's successful pollsters to set trend

By DAVID S. BRODER

WASHINGTON — For most of us Americans, the 1980 election happened once, and that was enough. For Richard B. Wirthlin and Richard S. Beal, it happened many, many times. Their satisfaction with the final outcome was, at least in part, their pleasure at seeing the rehearsals reflected in the results.

Wirthlin is a Ph.D. economist and a former head of the economics department at Brigham Young University, where Beal, a Ph.D. in international relations, now teaches. More pertinent, they are, respectively, the president and the senior political analyst for Decision Making Information (DMI), the firm that was the source of the polling data for Ronald Reagan's campaign. Wirthlin doubled in brass as a member of Reagan's senior strategy board and Beal worked with him in the Arlington, Va., headquarters, designing the sophisticated computer exercises that enabled them to "rehearse" the election many times during the fall.

Wirthlin, a lean, intense 49, and Beal, a roly-poly 34, are two of the brightest men I have met in politics. While their techniques are, in many respects, beyond my comprehension, they began showing me what they were doing back in September, with the understanding I would not write about it until the election was over. I do so now in the belief that you may be as intrigued as I was with the extent to which technology and human ingenuity have moved the art of campaigning beyond the methods of the old bosses.

The Political Information System (PINS) they devised was designed, in Beal's words, "to use polling data, not just to satisfy the information needs of the campaign, but to help the campaign decision-makers with their strategic judgments."

If combined unions scare half their members about Reagan's labor record, should he step up his attacks on Carter or try to rebut their specific claims? Or, if John Anderson's vote begins to drop, should Reagan add a campaign stop in Connecticut, or can he afford to cancel one?

In senior staff meetings, these computer displays help guide the allocation of the candidate's and surrogates' time, organizational resources and media dollars.

Two things were particularly impressive about the parts of the million-dollar operation they showed me during the fall. One was the discipline in their adherence to the basic theorem of Wirthlin's original campaign plan to give Reagan the best possible odds on winning 270 electoral votes, the minimum needed for victory. And the second was the flexibility in building into the computer designs a significant

role for intuitive political judgments. Combining these two principles, Wirthlin and Beal built the most successful model of the ever-changing dynamics of a national election campaign yet designed, and used it to shape one of the most successful campaigns in American history.

With constant injection of fresh data from national-sample interviews and tracking surveys in 20 states, PINS showed in mid-October the Carter surge in Oregon and Washington, and cued the Reagan campaign to start, within two days, a stepped-up advertising effort to counteract it.

At a time in October when the press was reporting Reagan's campaign had stalled, PINS showed a significant firming of his support in key constituencies and blocked what Wirthlin called "some high-risk, off-the-wall decisions on what we had to do."

PINS also analyzed the shape of the election from Carter's point of view, correctly predicting in mid-October his forced abandonment of several Southern battlegrounds in favor of a high-risk "big state" strategy. With that analysis in hand, Reagan was ready for the Carter push and stopped it cold.

In the losing stages of the campaign, Wirthlin and Beal used PINS to run simulations of the election every few days in order to maximize Reagan's chances of winning and to reduce the negative fallout from any "worst-case" developments.

Using current survey data (as corrected, within limits, by the subjective "feel" of campaign strategists), PINS would play out the election results on varying assumptions about the disposition of the undecided and Anderson vote and varying levels of turnout, then flash on the computer screens the simulated election results. Each "election" scenario could be processed through the PINS system in seven seconds, showing the result and its degree of probability.

When I last saw Wirthlin and Beal on the Friday before the real election, the two social scientists could hardly retain their academic composure.

That morning's PINS simulation had shown the very strong probability of a big Reagan win, a probability the public polls never quite reflected.

Reagan won the election through his own campaigning skills, with a lot of help from such intuitive politicians as Stuart Spencer, his de facto campaign manager. But for rival political strategists, looking ahead to future campaigns, the success of the Wirthlin-Beal PINS is enough to keep them on pins and needles for the next few years.



It's your turn

Fundamentalist groups restrictive

Editor:

Although letters like these are somewhat of a social taboo in secular school newspapers, I feel the subject ought to be brought to light.

First of all let me start by saying "Welcome to the heartland of Protestant fundamentalism — the American Bible Belt." If you have not already noticed, Texas A&M is a rather "religious" school when you consider the amount of organizations and activities centered on religious awareness. It is of some of these that I would like to write in respect to their general beliefs and practices. My message is this — that these organizations, although claiming to be interdenominational, represent an opinion (as does any religion) and this opinion is founded in Biblical fundamentalism. Remember that when you approach these organizations, (or are approached as the case often is) that although they claim no denomination or faith, they are in fact stressing their belief in the Bible as it is taken literally, and have set beliefs in salvation, grace and "the end."

My concern is when that time comes in college life, when we each ask ourselves the prin-

cipal questions: Who am I? What is my purpose? etc. some turn to religion, which I feel is good, however sometimes what is found on campus isn't always the best answer.

First of all, since this is a public school, the "mainline" churches have no chance like the so called interdenominational organizations in establishing a ministry to the students. Secondly, that when you approach these organizations, do so "with a grain of salt" as they say: accept what seems right, discard what seems unnecessary. Next, remember that the method of Bible study that occurs on campus, usually differs from Catholic, Jewish and Protestant moder-

ates in that it is more isegetical (reading into a piece of scripture your own thoughts) rather than exegetical (trying to understand what the author meant, and why it was written). Last of all, there are no sure-fire methods to approach religion.

There are no laws or rules to follow, or couple of verses (usually pulled out of context) that by themselves will attain for mercy or salvation. The greatest religion teacher is your own heart, because usually that is where God is, not in someone's words or theories.

Curt Collier

THE BATTALION

U S P S 045 360

MEMBER

Texas Press Association
Southwest Journalism Congress

Editor Dillard Stone
Managing Editor Rhonda Watters
Asst. Managing Editor Scott Haring
City Editor Becky Swanson
Asst. City Editor Angelique Copeland
Sports Editor Richard Oliver
Asst. Sports Editor Ritchie Priddy
Focus Editor Scot K. Meyer
Asst. Focus Editor Cathy Saathoff
News Editors Lynn Blanco,
Gwen Ham, Todd Woodard
Staff Writers Jennifer Affenbach, Kurt Allen,
Nancy Andersen, Marcy Boyce, Jane G. Brust,
Mike Burrichter, Pat Davidson, Cindy Gee,
Jon Heidtke, Uschi Michel-Howell, Debbie Nelson,
Liz Newlin, Rick Stolle
Cartoonist Scott McCullar
Photo Editor Pat O'Malley
Photographers George Dolan,
Jeff Kerber

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 matter should be directed to the editor.

LETTERS POLICY

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. Each letter must make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must also be signed, show the address and phone number of the writer.

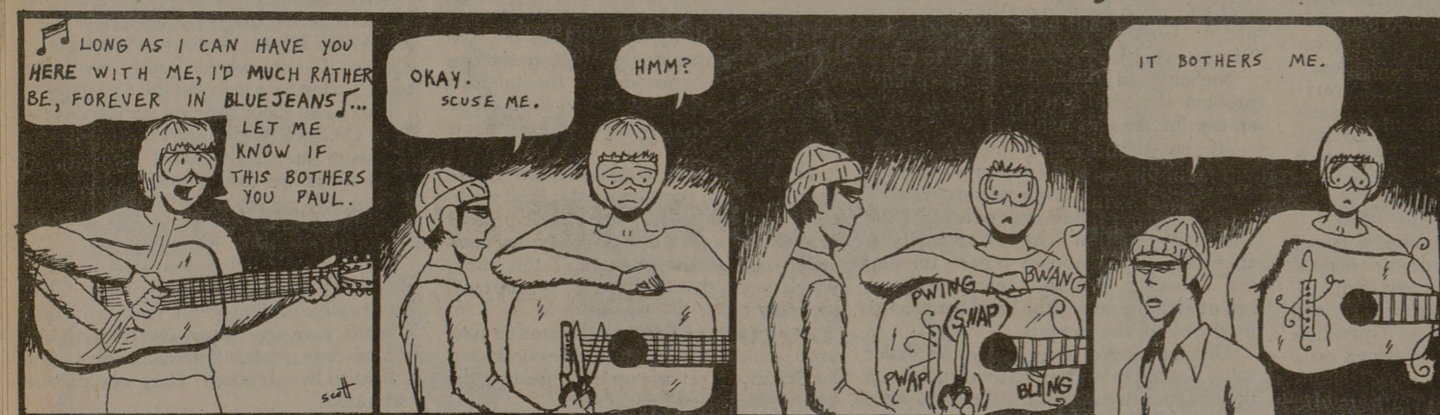
Columns and guest editorials are also welcome, and are not subject to the same length constraints as letters. Address all inquiries and correspondence to: Editor, The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.

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

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

United Press International is entitled exclusively to the use for reproduction of all news dispatches credited to it. Rights of reproduction of all other matter herein reserved. Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.

Warped



By Scott McCullar

Loc
Ru
By NANC
Batt
"I've never l
outstanding?"
The best."
I'm no critic,
the guys sitting
Davidovich is t
ever heard. No
Further I'd like
even I've taken
Music Appreci
Re
Probably not th
reviewing one c
pianists.
But you don't
know that th
She walks or
bearing of royal
and lets you k
queen of the ke
During h
sponsored conc
formed Haydn's
Schumann'
B flat Maj
Variations Serie
and six Chopin
But Davidov
to B flat
the piano, no t
air too, stroking
pages. She driv
white streaks fo
ments later, she
starts picking o
hint-and-peck
And for once
piece ended. I
tently Russian f
She doesn't me
remove her har
throws her han
they were red l
And that's w
C
Dr. W.A.
Station at Te
directors of I
Porter, an
the Institute
Texas A&M
Class of 1950
Randall Rei
Reinisch,
ceived a \$1.0
James R. W
Lunney, a
pient of a Pre
honor of forr
We
THE 1
See w
thursd.
Focus
B
W
400 ML
PYREX
ONLY
The Per
mas Gift
Favorite
Scientist
GRE
GLA