

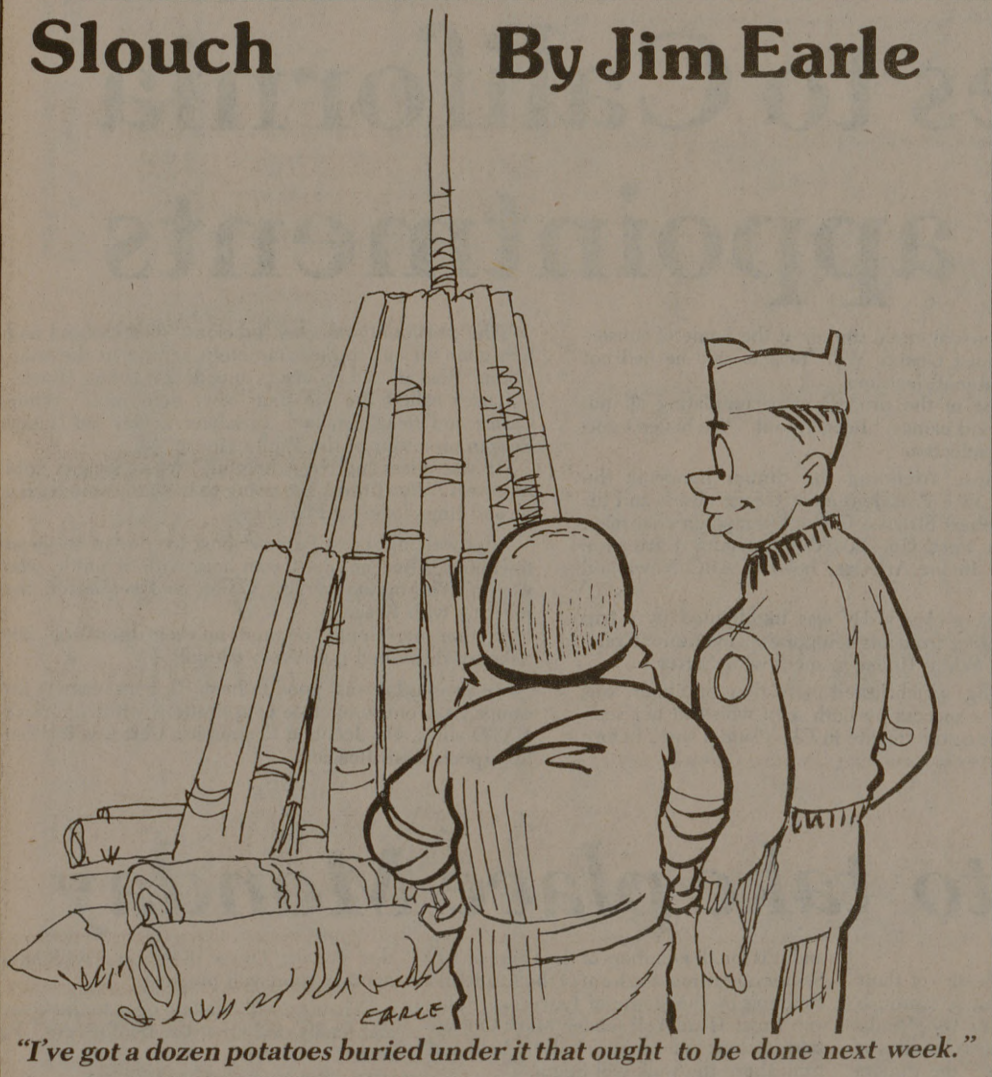
VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

FRIDAY
NOVEMBER 21, 1980

Slouch

By Jim Earle



Worker shortage could hurt bonfire, does hurt Corps

The bonfire doesn't build itself. Sometimes my talent for profound statements amazes even me.

But this isn't meant to be especially profound; it's a reminder. It's a reminder that although we're all going to enjoy the bonfire, usually it's only a few who share the brunt of building the stack. This year is no exception: Members of the Corps of Cadets are again taking a disproportionate share of the work.

The "push" is when most of the stack is built — to no one's surprise, it also requires the most effort. And, as if to confirm Murphey's Law, it also comes at the time when end-of-semester, praying-for-Christmas, turn-in-project, take-test blues hit everyone.

Everyone is too busy studying or preparing for Thanksgiving; it's the time of year when few people worry about the bonfire. Few people — except the redpots and cadets.

Ken Cross, Corps commander, worries about the grades of his organization's members. Part of his job is providing an atmosphere conducive to satisfactory scholastic progress.

From the other side, Cross is continually under pressure from the redpots — bonfire organizers — who ask the Corps to work more and more shifts on the stack.

Cross and the Corps face a dilemma: Without their help, the bonfire might not get built. But

Sidebars

By Dillard Stone

if they help too much, they make a mockery of their claims of a "scholastic environment."

"The redpots, justifiably, are saying they have a job to do," Cross said. "They need help, and they're not getting it from the civilians. I know that I can't break on scholastic provisions we made for bonfire. If I did ease up on the policies, chaos would result. Someone's got to do it, but I don't want to see a bonfire built if it means the Corps flunking out."

Nor can the redpots can't do all the work themselves. For one thing, there are too few of them — after all, they're supposed to be the chiefs, not the Indians. And they've got to study, too. More than once a redpot has flunked out because of over-dedication to the project. One is still remembered for posting a grade point ratio of 0.0000 after one fall semester.

Corps Commandant Col. James R. Woodall asked Residence Hall Association and Off-

Campus Aggie representatives what they do to provide more civilian labor on the stack. Those organizations are stymied — the figure out how to make people want to work.

They've tried flyers, meetings and even with kegs of beer going to the dorms with most people working. People in some even have run around early on weekends, waking up people to go out.

But the enthusiasm isn't there. That enthusiasm is vital; without it, not enough will show up. And only in the Corps can it be mandatory for someone to work on the stack.

The University administration isn't the problem. A faculty advisory committee under Dr. John Koldus, vice president for student services, is in the initial stages of mending the bonfire height by reducing the near-80 feet to which it now rises.

That will surely cause a howl. But a measure could also go far in helping to mend the bonfire-vs.-grades problem the Corps finds itself in every fall semester.

Unless more civilians contribute to the bonfire might go from being a mostly project to a mostly nothing project — should be a project for all Aggies.

As Cross said: "The bonfire's important, it's not a Corps bonfire. It's not a non-fire. It's an Aggie bonfire."

Small college reaps benefits of drilling for gas

By PATRICIA McCORMACK

United Press International

"It's manna from heaven," said Patti McGill Peterson, 37, new president of Wells College on the shores of Lake Cayuga in Aurora, N.Y.

She was referring to a campus gas well that started coming in Monday — providing Wells a unique kind of relief from one of higher education's biggest pains: budget-rocking fuel bills. The school's heating bill is \$250,000 a year.

"A gas well doesn't really 'come in', not in the sense an oil well does," Peterson said.

"It is fractured — that is, the ground around it is fractured and sand and water are forced down and then the pressure of the gas pushes all that out and gas comes with that stuff. But first, you must have proof gas is there."

"Having its own on-campus isn't the only thing different about the women's liberal arts school founded in 1868 by Henry Wells, who made his fortune through his Wells Fargo stagecoach lines and American Express Company. The Wells Fargo mark lives on in some of the school's traditions.

"I rode to my inauguration in a Wells Fargo coach," Peterson said. "Our seniors ride to commencement in a Wells Fargo coach, too."

Peterson, who was born and raised in Johnston and Bedford, Pa., is ecstatic over the well.

"I've been putting on my hard hat, heavy sweater, boots and jeans and going out to that drilling site for days now," she said.

"I've peered where the bit goes down and watched when it came out, spattering red clay and sand over me. Last Sunday I was told 'it doesn't have the vapor shimmer yet' and I thought maybe we missed it."

"Then at 10:30 p.m. the crew put a lighted paper over the hole flames went up 10 feet. That was proof."

Some \$100,000 of the school's money was riding on a gamble Peterson took a month after inauguration.

She ordered drilling. A feasibility study recommending it had been done by her predecessor — Frances "Sissy" Farenthold, of Houston, who was president of Wells for three years and twice an unsuccessful candidate for governor of Texas.

With the "fracturing," Wells becomes the third education institution in the Pennsylvania-New York-Ohio lake regions to benefit recently from its geological treasure.

Lake Erie College in Painesville, Ohio, has a producing natural gas well.

At Wells, the story goes, Farenthold made energy bills a top priority.

And her mind started thinking "drilling" — a la Texas style — when she saw Lake Erie's well while there to accept an honorary degree.

Peterson said: "Sissy took one look at that well and said, 'I'm going to do that, too.'"

In Erie, Pa., nuns at Mount Saint Benedict got the gas bug in 1979. They ordered drilling that commenced April 1. After the bit had chawed down to the 2,700 feet level in a month's time, the well came in.

"The expectation is that we'll get 75 to 85 percent of our heating needs from the well," said Sister Mary Grace, secretary for the religious community of 140, most teachers.

A feasibility study of the order's 120-acre base shows three more wells could be drilled, with likelihood of success.

What the sisters would do: use any additional gas for cogeneration — that is, use it to generate electricity, providing surcease from electric bills.

Peterson has the same idea. "Our study shows it would be smart to drill for a second well," she said. "If we do and it comes in we will use that to co-generate electricity, saving more on utility bills."

Peterson talked of other survival tactics needed by small, private liberal arts colleges — be they for women, men or a mixed student group.

Numerous studies say innovation — and the gas well is one idea — is necessary if small schools are to remain viable through the 1980s, a period of decline in pool of college-age persons.

Peterson, a graduate of Penn State University and University of Wisconsin, Madison, said: "How we deal with inflation is very much a part of our survival plan."

"If we in the private sector can't deal with inflation, we run the danger of pricing ourselves out of business."

A year at Wells costs \$7,800 — more than at a state university but less than at the highest-priced colleges, upwards of \$10,000 a year.

Why are women's colleges needed, anyway? "If you saw the purposefulness of these young women, you would know," Peterson said.

She said graduates of women's colleges are more than twice as likely to be listed in "Who's Who" than are female graduates of coed schools.



Conservatives gloating

By ARNOLD SAWISLAK

United Press International

WASHINGTON — Liberals, and to some that erroneously includes everyone whose words regularly appear in print, have been getting an earful of derision from conservatives since Tuesday twice past.

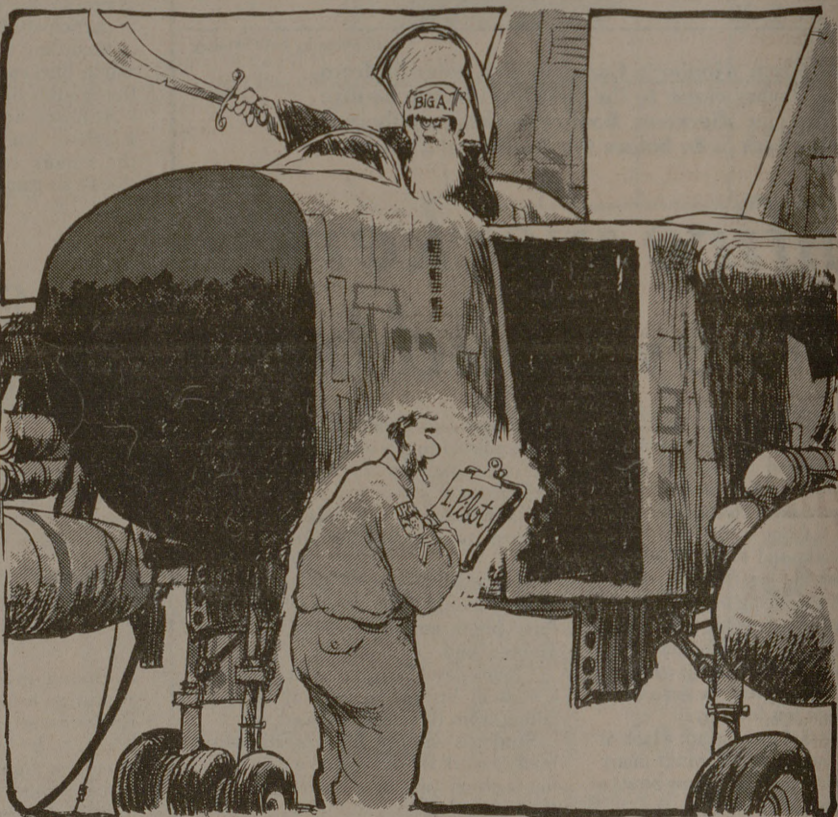
However, sauce for the goose, etc., and after the razzing folks of the right have had to take in previous Novembers, it seems only fair that they get to do some strutting after their big and unexpected 1980 victory.

Actually, the liberals may find this loss and the minority status they will have to assume in Washington come January good if bitter medicine.

Someone said recently American political liberals haven't had a new idea since the Peace Corps. That seemed to be the case with Sen. Edward Kennedy's ill-fated challenge of President Carter, which left behind a lot more clever bumper stickers than original suggestions for dealing with national or international problems.

The conservatives haven't done much in the way of innovation, either, but after all, that isn't supposed to be their role.

The fact that they have latched on to an old liberal Democratic idea for restoring the economy — John Kennedy's stimulative tax cut —



It's your turn Elephant Walk Monday

Editor: "Before the Thanksgiving Day football game, the seniors gather in front of the flagpole on Military Walk and wander about the campus like old elephants on parade. This symbolizes the fact that the class will graduate the following spring and have no further use to the Twelfth Man."

Monday, November 24, at 12:00 p.m. Elephant Walk will begin for the Class of '81. We'd like to encourage all you Seniors to come on out and meet in front of the Academic Building here we will begin our aimless deriding around campus. Watch out sergeants!

Jess Mason Class of '81, Pre-Head Yell Leader
Mark Outlaw Senior Red P
Kyle Gish Class of '81, Treasurer
Patti Heaton Class of '81, Secretary
Nancy Kelly

THE BATTALION

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