

VIEWPOINT

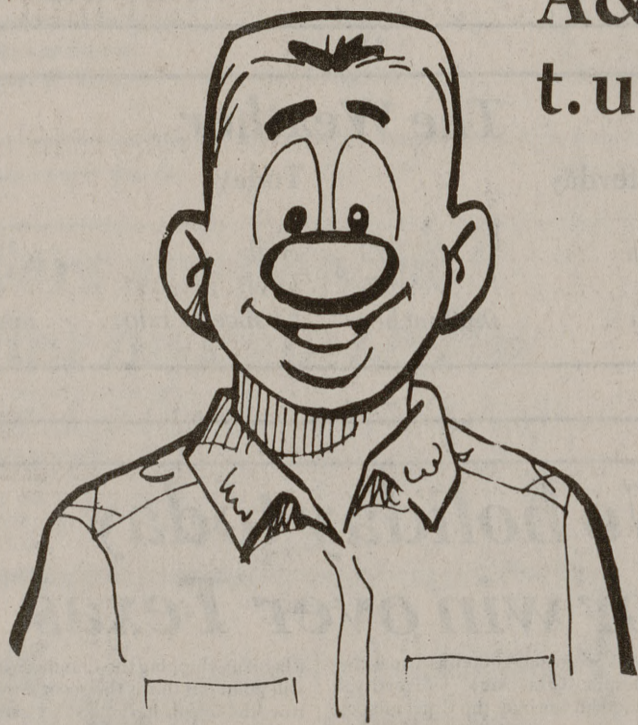
THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

MONDAY
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Slouch

By Jim Earle

A&M 24
t.u. 14



"That makes it four out of six. Next year it will be five out of seven, then six out of eight, then seven out of nine"

We could — and did — do without taunting refrain

I'm glad I didn't have to listen to "Poor Aggies" Saturday afternoon.

Some of you — Class of '83 and '84 members primarily — are lucky: You haven't had to sit through a bleak fourth-quarter and post-game celebration that includes thousands of University of Texas students chanting that haunting refrain.

Other schools do it, sure; but no one does it with the unanimity and contempt that the UT throng does.

It makes me kind of smug when a crowd of UT partisans doesn't get the chance to rub it in. So I'm glad.

I'm even more glad, though, that turnabout wasn't fair play. I didn't hear "Poor tea-sips," either.

I heard that one last year, and it bothered me more than it does when Texas students chant their little ditty.

"Aggies just don't do that sort of thing," my traditionalist conscience screamed. My conscience quickly got an education.

Sidebars

By Dillard Stone

Forget the Aggies-as-good-sports concept I was brought up on. When the tables were turned, the Aggies rubbed it in just as unmercifully as the Longhorns ever did.

High irony prevailed. Two years ago, after being blown out yet again in Memorial Stadium, I heard many Texas A&M backers comment on the "Poor Aggies": "That just reeks of poor sportsmanship. I'm glad we don't do that sort of thing."

Oh, but we do. We used to be able to pride ourselves on being the best sports in the conference. To a high degree, we still can; Aggies are downright

benign when compared to the folks in Fayetteville or Lubbock.

They say imitation is the sincerest flattery. Well, I guess so.

I can think of better people and practices to imitate, however, than Texas students and their "Poor Aggies." It doesn't make us to criticize them for poor sportsmanship, then turn right around and do the same thing to them.

I didn't hear "Poor" anything Saturday, well, I did hear traces of "Poor tea-sips" didn't catch on. We were too busy celebrating and having fun to worry about the other guys feel miserable.

We were having too great a time ourselves to really care that we could kick dirt in the Longhorns' faces.

We were supporting our team, not downing the other one.

Supporting the team: After all, isn't that it's all about?

'Reagan steamroller' won't accomplish much

By BRIAN GROSS

Much has been written of the remarkable Reagan election victory: what it symbolizes, what it will mean. One of my highly partisan friends wrote me, trying to collect a debt, gloating that the "Reagan steamroller had made its presence known ..." The "Reagan steamroller?" Reagan won with 51 percent of the popular vote; fully 49 percent of the voters refused, apparently, to be steamrolled. The election was not so much Reagan's victory as it was Carter's loss.

I spoke with numerous people before the election, most of whom (not surprisingly) were "for" Reagan. When asked whether I was going to vote for Reagan, I responded "No!" and usually "No way!" I was then usually accosted with a most interesting argument (for voting for Reagan): "You're not going to vote for Carter, are you?" The argument was never positive, i.e., "Look, Reagan is a great guy; he was a great actor, and he'll make a great president because..."

Now, many political pundits, commentators, and strategists are heralding a "new" era in government. The New Deal/Fair Deal/Great Society programs, they tell us, are (finally) deceased. The public has rejected liberalism. The '80s (and, implicitly, Reagan's election) represent the advent of conservatism, the rejection of collectivism, and the abandonment of welfarism. Really?

There's really no telling what Ronald Reagan has said over the past twelve years, during which time he has been campaigning, on and off, for the Presidency. He may have indeed argued against liberalism and the welfare state. (In fact, I'm sure he did.) But, politics is a tricky game: what, in fact, elected Reagan and defeated Carter? I don't remember any candidate

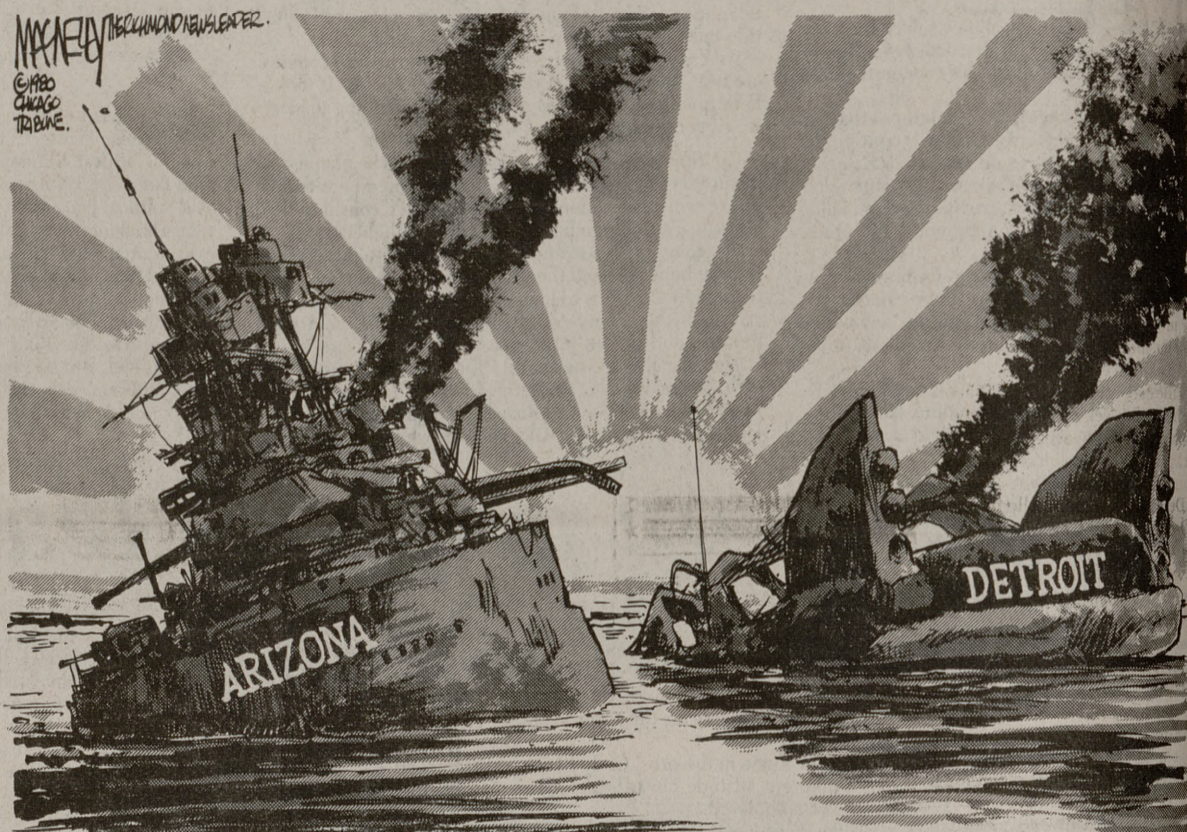
— even Reagan — promising to shut down Social Security, end Medicare/Medicaid, eliminate AFDC, or abandon the aged and Meals on Wheels. If anything, the candidates, and especially Reagan, promised to restructure these programs, to make them "work."

In fact, it was Jimmy Carter, at least four years ago, who was the "reform" candidate: Elect me, an outsider, who knows nothing about the federal government, who owes nothing to no one (and expects the same), and I'll straighten out the system, I'll reform the civil service, I'll eliminate graft, I'll whip the bureaucracy into submission. At least that's what Carter said then.

Was this the election, then, that nailed the New Deal/Great Society coffin shut? Was this the election battle to end all others? The battle of conservatism vs. liberalism? (Jimmy Carter is about the farthest thing from a liberal I can imagine.) No, friends, don't expect Reagan to reform the system, at least in the conservative sense, or abandon liberalism. More than anything else, Reagan is the "relief" President — the rejection of a sometimes pathetic, bumbling, discredited incumbent.

As Sens. Paul Tsongas (Massachusetts) and Gary Hart (Colorado) both point out: people aren't abandoning liberalism so much as they are reacting to inflation, a declining standard of living, unemployment and an unworkable/unbearable bureaucracy. It is the liberal "programmatic" approach to poverty, unemployment, inflation, productivity and energy which people reject.

We'll see what Reagan ends up doing, but I predict the big government-welfare system is here to stay: too many people have vested interests in it to let it fail. Brian Gross is a senior economics major.



The survey with the fringe on top

Polls didn't detect voter swing

By DICK WEST
United Press International

WASHINGTON — Here it is three weeks after the election and despite tenacious winnowing of the returns by political analysts some aspects of the voting remain indistinct.

For one, the question of why the polls were so wrong is still largely unanswered. For two, we still have no clear picture of how the lunatic fringe voted.

Speculation that the lunatic fringe might be in a position to tip the scales one way or the other proved groundless, as we know. The election was so one-sided that even cohesive voting by a single faction would not have made much difference.

And the lunatic fringe is anything but cohesive.

The schizophrenic vote is always split and this year it appears there was a great deal of vacillation in the other components.

It could be, however, that a misreading of the crackpot vote was what threw the pre-election polls so far off.

To be scientific, a poll must accurately reflect the views of the electorate in miniature. By projection, the percentages are then applied to the body politic as a whole.

Even a small error in the sampling can knock the projection out of kilter, and that apparently is what happened in most of the polls this year.

My analysis of the crackpot vote leads me to believe that representatives of the lunatic fringe who participated in the polls listed their position as "undecided" whereas, in fact, they had already made up their minds.

That bit of duplicity caused the polls to give an inordinately high number of percentage points to the "undecided" column.

Moreover, it now seems evident that lunatic fringe voters who were misclassified as "undecided" changed their minds a lot during the final stages of the campaign.

These switches were never picked up by the polls, and hence further distorted the estimates of relative strength among the candidates. Let's

examine this a little closer.

What apparently happened was that fringe voters depicted by the polls as "undecided" but who actually had decided to vote for Carter ultimately voted for Reagan.

And those listed as "undecided" who made of their minds to vote for Reagan also voted for Carter.

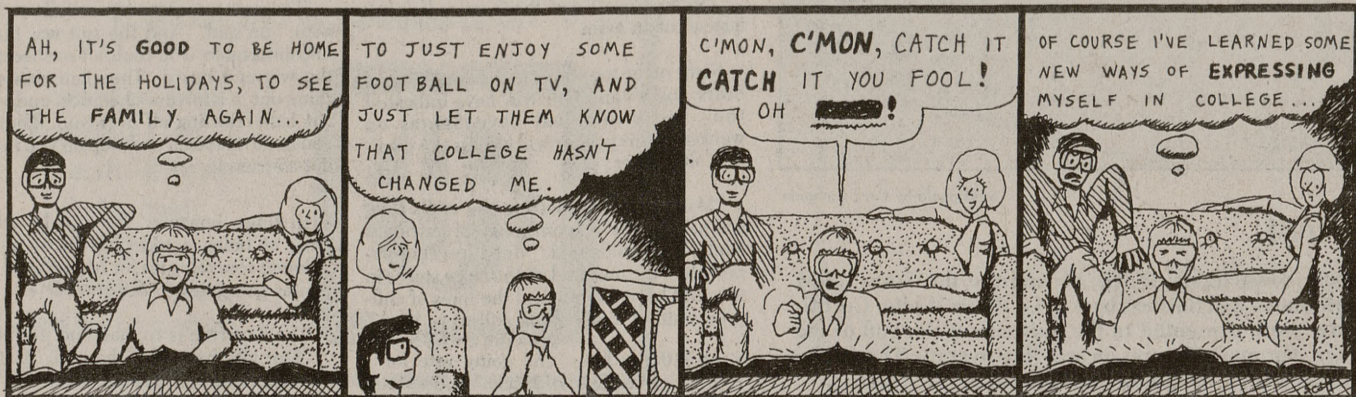
Putting this another way, presumably "undecided" voters were telling pollsters just what they entered the voting places that they were going to vote for Carter. Then, as they emerged, they reported they had voted for Reagan.

Or vice versa.

Either way, it was a mess.

And until opinion sampling techniques become sophisticated enough to detect trends within the "undecided" factor, the polls will remain susceptible to error.

Warped



By Scott McCullar

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