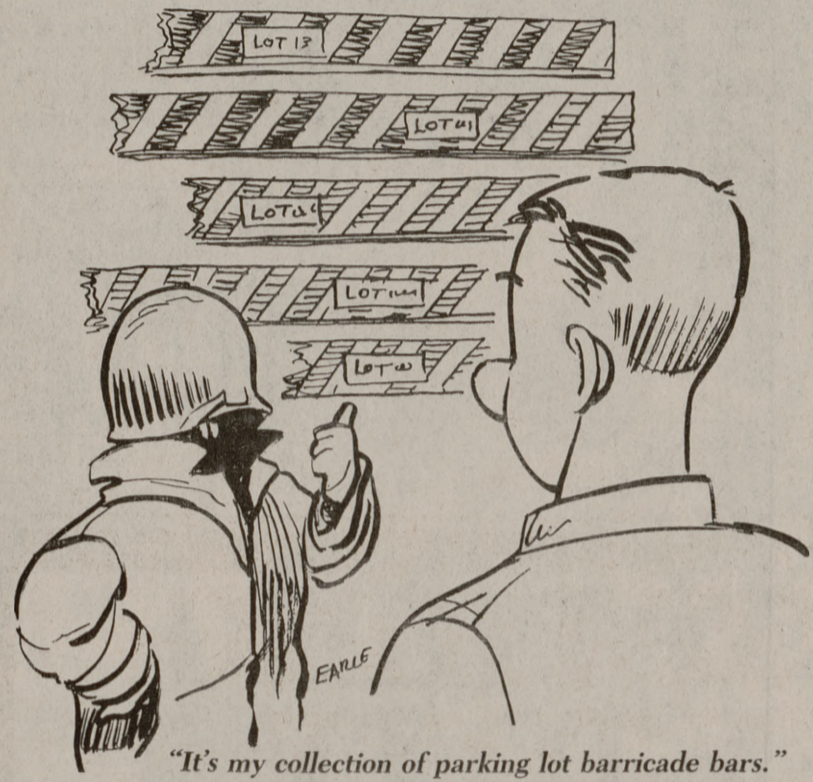


VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

MONDAY
DECEMBER 8, 1980

Slouch By Jim Earle



"It's my collection of parking lot barricade bars."

What is Dead Week? A farce

Name comes from pushing students until we drop

Dead Week — What is it? As a high school senior, I thought it meant no class the week before finals.

As a college freshman, I soon learned that I still had to go to class. But I thought, "Well that's okay; it's probably better to go to classes and have a week of review sessions anyway."

As a college sophomore, I'm beginning to catch on that dead week is just like any other week of school, maybe worse. It seems to me that it's more like a week for professors to cram in all of the material that was supposed to be covered earlier. (You know the five remaining chapters in your psychology class that are supposed to be read by Friday.)

I have to admit, I was really feeling cheated. After all we're supposed to review and study that week, not learn new material. And after all my friends at Texas Tech and t.u. have the week off. Don't they?

I'm sorry to report that all of my preconceived notions about dead week were wrong.

Texas A&M University Rules and Regulations say: "During the regular two semesters no examinations (except in courses carrying one credit hour of theory or practice, optional tests, for special credit, and make-up tests) shall be given during the week beginning five (5) class

Staff notebook

By Cindy Gee

days prior to the first day of final examinations."

Nowhere does it say anything about having to review, and all of those exceptions can keep a student very busy. There are lab finals, P.E. finals, night class finals, make-up tests, tests to help improve your grade, and even tests you can choose to take instead of the final.

Another misconception I had about dead week was that student organizations aren't supposed to schedule meetings that week. Dr. Carolyn Adair, director of student activities, said there never has been anything that says activities should be slowed or speeded up that week. She said, "We're not for or against it."

And furthermore, where I got the idea that my teasing and Red Raider friends didn't have class that week, I don't know. I guess it's really just like any other week for them too — to go to happy hour instead of class.

Dr. Len Ainsworth, interim vice president for academic affairs at Texas Tech, said Tech

still holds classes during dead week — don't have any examinations unless bona fide make-up exams.

Dr. James Hurst, dean of students at University of Texas, said: "We just don't have classes the Thursday before a formal dead week, and we don't have it."

He said they do have a "dead day." For example, finals begin on Friday, but doesn't have classes the Thursday before.

"There's a lot more commitment to that week," he said. "Most use it to scramble for their lives."

So why do they call it dead week? The name comes from a practice where you have to see just how far they can push without killing him? I don't know.

Then again, I have to ask myself: do we have the right to feel cheated. After all, we have been learning the material throughout the semester, right professor? And then would I really spend the whole week knowing me I'd probably take off to the Christmas shop or something.

So what have I concluded? Dead Week is a farce!

'Hysteria' warning can't be taken lightly

By DAVID S. BRODER

WASHINGTON — Vernon Jordan, the president of the Urban League, is one of the few people I have ever known — John B. Connally is another — who could go through an assassination attempt, be severely wounded and come away from the experience as clear in his judgment and unemotional in his tone as he was beforehand.

So when Vernon Jordan says on a national television program, as he did the other day on CBS' Face the Nation, that "there is an unusual amount of hysteria in the black community," it needs to be taken seriously.

There is no mystery about the source of that "hysteria." It has been fed by economic forces, instances of violence and fears of political reprisal. While inflation has been a curse for every American, the decline in real incomes has been felt with particular severity in communities where there are more poor and unemployed than anywhere else.

But black communities have also reacted with anger and fear to unsolved waves of murders in cities like Atlanta, and to the acquittal of whites involved in deaths of blacks in Greensboro, N.C., and Miami, among other places. Even the unsolved assault which hospitalized Jordan and nearly claimed his life earlier this year has added to the tension.

Last month's election was an added blow to confidence of black Americans about their prospects in this society. It is easy — and, to some extent, accurate — to say this fear resulted from the exaggerated rhetoric President Carter used in his efforts to rally black support to his side. But there is also a reality which blacks understand and which whites need to understand as well, in order to recognize the danger of social disintegration which men like Jordan foresee.

The political reality is this: Blacks were transformed by the 1980 election from being at the very center of a coalition which brought a President to power to being the most conspicuous outsiders at the new government's victory celebration. It is only by understanding the extent of that power transformation that one can glimpse the reasons for the "hysteria" of which Jordan spoke.

Jimmy Carter was more indebted to black voters and black leaders than any President in our history. It was the testimony of black leaders from Atlanta that first persuaded skeptical white liberals to support the lame-duck governor of Georgia against George Wallace in the Florida primary of 1976. Their testimony rescued him from serious trouble in the "ethnic purity" escapade in the spring of 1976. Their votes provided the margin of victory for him in the crucial Florida and Pennsylvania primaries and in the general election of 1976.

When Carter acknowledged that debt by recognizing blacks with more appointments to positions of power in government than they had ever previously enjoyed, he was doing no more than politics and conscience dictated. Blacks — including Jordan — had their disagreements and disappointments with the economic policies of the Carter administration, and they voiced them vigorously.

But in the election last month, as Jordan remarked, just about "the only group of voters who stayed on the sinking ship were black voters." About 85 percent of the blacks supported Carter, a figure that was approached only by the Hispanics. Almost every white element of the old Democratic coalition saw serious defections to the Reagan-Republican column.

And that was not the end of it. Despite pre-election assurances from some prominent white liberals that the future of the courts would be "protected" from the consequences of a Reagan victory by the Democratic majority in the Senate, that safeguard too was swept away in the political revolution of Nov. 4.

Now, blacks know that it will be Sen. Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.), who bolted the Democratic party to protest its commitment to civil rights, and not Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), who will be conducting the hearings on Reagan's judicial nominees.

Thurmond has called already for repeal or substantial revision of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, perhaps the most effective step ever taken for the political empowerment of blacks. Other new Republican Senate committee chairmen are talking about curbing or outlawing affirmative action programs, curtailing food stamps and other programs whose benefits are of particular value to the victims of poverty and discrimination.

Under the circumstances, it requires no great sensitivity on the part of whites to understand the "hysteria" of blacks. Reagan himself, his transition budget supervisor, Caspar L. Weinberger, and such prominent Reagan supporters as Rep. Jack Kemp (R-N.Y.) have gone out of their way to assure blacks that they need have no fear of the consequences of the political shift.

Jordan, for one, says that he is prepared to give Reagan "the benefit of the doubt" and to defer judgment until he sees the appointments, the budget and the program of the new President. That deference is appropriate.

But in the meantime, all of us — in our own communities and groups, our own jobs and associations — ought to be mindful that this is a time when it is particularly important for communication across the racial lines that tragically still divide American society.



It's your turn

Bonfire efforts could go elsewhere

Editor: I must agree with Sam McClatchie's letter of Dec. 4 about the wastefulness of Aggie bonfire. However, I believe it's a fact that the trees are used usually from an area that will be cleared and burned anyway. Also, even though poor people in other parts of the world could greatly benefit from this firewood, the cost of getting it to them is prohibitive. I have no quarrels with the waste of wood or any possible contamination of the environment caused by this tradition. What I do lament is the waste of human and other non-wood resources, like cutting, hauling and stacking equipment.

I have heard that if the equipment was all rented, necessary supplies, like gasoline, bought, and workers paid the minimum wage, the bonfire would cost over \$1 million annually! That figure may be inflated, but think what a million dollars in effort could do! A million dollars could construct 20 decent houses, fix all the streets in the Bryan-College Station area, or even build Kyle Field that much bigger, if that's what you wanted.

Or think what a million dollar annual charity project could do for the well-being of this area and the reputation of this university. It would give us Aggies something to really be proud of!

Guy Hallman

Apologies for chimes

Editor: I would like to address this letter to Mr. Jay Stanish and to anyone else who attended Silver

Taps on Dec. 2. The music heard from chimes during the ceremony was a mistake. An error was made in programming the new chimes and unfortunately the set of songs was played. The Class of '81 intended these chimes to the University of Texas, among other things. As president of the Class of '81, I accept the ultimate responsibility for this most unfortunate error and assure you such a mistake will not be repeated in the future.

Class of '81

Warped



By Scott McCullar

THE BATTALION

USPS 045 360

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Columns and guest editorials are also welcome, and subject to the same length constraints as letters. All inquiries and correspondence to: Editor, The Battalion, Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.

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

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

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