

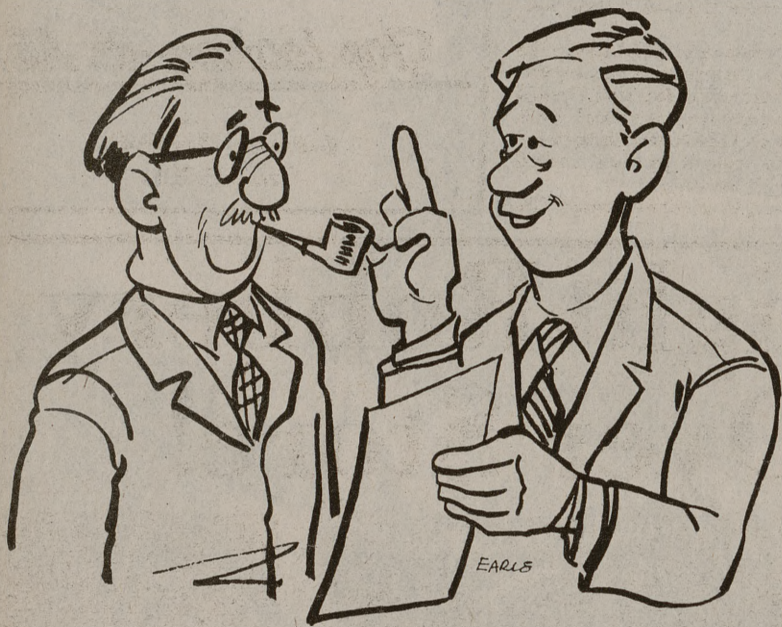
VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY 4, 1981

Slouch

By Jim Earle



"I think I have the proper balance between problems with no answers and those with several answers. This may be the best test that I've ever made."

Policy deserves senate rebuke

Student senator Fred Seals and his colleagues are justifiably upset.

Seals is an off-campus graduate senator; four of his bills dealing with the forthcoming policy to eliminate fifth-year seniors and graduate students from University housing will be voted on in tonight's student senate meeting.

The "Discrimination Against Old Folks" bills are four in number. They express four varying degrees of disapproval:

— a censure of the Department of Student Affairs and a request for a review of the policy;

— a request that student affairs declare a one-year moratorium on the policy's implementation;

— a request that Acting President Charles Samson declare a similar moratorium; and

— a request that student affairs receive input from the groups concerned before making any more such decisions in the future.

The last one is both the most practical and the least offensive; it's also the one with the best chance of passing.

Although the decision and its method of im-

Sidebars

By Dillard Stone

plementation deserve public criticism, the senate will be reluctant to rebuke Student Affairs Director Ron Blatchley or his department. And it's doubtful they would consent to trying to embarrass Blatchley by asking Samson directly to intervene in the implementation.

The decision may be insignificant enough for Blatchley to "guff" and forget about, but it's not insignificant for the students who had not made plans to move off campus next year.

It is something Seals and his graduate colleagues have a right to be upset about. But, since the senate has only a small minority of graduate students, it's doubtful that many other senators will share in the sense of outrage. Thus, any public student chastisement of Blatchley or the decision itself is highly unlike-

ly, since it's an issue that affects a minority of the senate as well as a minority of the student body.

That students were neither consulted in the formulation of the policy nor informed until four months after the decision was made runs contrary to established principles of consulting students in student-related decisions. Such a consultation, even if superficial in instances, at least allows students to feel their opinions are respected.

So while we can hope that the senate stand up and be counted in support of the bills, we must temper that hope with the realism of the moment.

The record of student involvement in student-oriented policies at Texas A&M is a good one. Rather than looking at this setback as one which is critical and embarrassing, perhaps we should view them as a positive affirmation of students' desires to be included in decisions.

An ounce of prevention now might be worth a pound of cure later.

Courting Congress is Reagan's secret

By DAVID S. BRODER

WASHINGTON — A fact of life in Washington which the Carter administration was still discovering at the end of its tenure is that much of the reputation as well as the success of a President depends on his relationship with Congress. Congress can make or break a President, by passing or killing his program. And it can make or break his reputation, because the congressional press galleries house the largest single concentration of reporters — and what they write about a president comes to them through the filter of the representatives' and senators' attitudes.

All this is by way of observing that Ronald Reagan has done himself and his administration a tremendous service by his skillful courtship of Congress in the opening phase of his administration. The durability of the relationship will be tested when Congress goes to work on the economic package Reagan is to outline, in general terms, this week, but the basis has been laid for a good start on this always perilous voyage.

Reagan himself has been spending a great deal of time meeting key legislators of both parties individually and in small groups. He has assembled an experienced and skillful congressional liaison team, under the leadership of Max L. Friedersdorf, who held the same post under President Ford. And the incoming Cabinet and agency heads have been instructed to give priority to their own dealings with Capitol Hill.

This has been a matter of favorable comment in both Republican and Democratic cloakrooms — and of some astonishment to those members of the House who were in the California legislature when Reagan was governor some dozen years ago. Democrats like Anthony (Tony) Beilenson of Los Angeles and Republicans like Jerry Lewis of San Bernardino say, in almost identical words, "Reagan really learned a lesson" from his Sacramento experiences.

"When he came to Sacramento," Beilenson recalled, "he looked at politicians generally with some disdain. He really didn't want to see us; even the Republican leaders found him rather distant."

Lewis, who came to the assembly two years after Reagan began his first term, confirms that was the case. "He had people around him then who felt from the show-business experience that a celebrity needed to be shielded from others. It wasn't until his second term that Reagan really began to deal with legislators — and that was the reason the second term was a success."

Reagan has picked up where he left off in California. Friedersdorf said that by the time Congress breaks at the end of this week for its first recess of the year, the president will prob-

ably have met with the entire membership of the Senate and most — if not all — the members of the three main "money" committees in the House.

Those meetings have gone well. As Chairman Dan Rostenkowski (D-Ill.) of the House Ways and Means Committee, a hard-bitten Chicago pro, said after his meeting with Reagan, "He's a warm guy — and he's smart. He listened and I talked. I told him I hoped to be able to come back in two years and say that the House Democrats had given him more support than the Republicans — and I think we will."

Rostenkowski also said he told Reagan, "I promise I won't surprise you, Mr. President." And, he said, Reagan made the same promise to him. That is a point Friedersdorf, a veteran of Capitol Hill, is also emphasizing — in unspoken contrast to the Carter record of unanticipated and unannounced policy switches. "What members of Congress most object to is if you surprise them. They hate to be caught unprepared or uninformed," Friedersdorf said.

In addition to hammering home that message, Friedersdorf is being attentive to the small but important gestures many members of Congress was invited — in a first-name note — to the White House welcome for the returned hostages. All will be getting letters with the direct-dial phone numbers of the nine House and Senate liaison people, and an invitation to call them as needed.

In a White House not conspicuous for women appointees, Friedersdorf has made a point of having two women on his staff, "because so many more of the staff directors, AAs (administrative assistants) LAs (legislative assistants) on the Hill are women."

A one-time aide to a back-bench Republican Representative from Indiana himself, Friedersdorf is conscious of the powerful if unpublicized role the staff members play in Congress. He has lunched with the Republican AAs himself and has issued orders that his aides stay in touch with the Capitol Hill aides as often as possible.

Despite the occasional static from right-wing senators, Reagan should have few problems with his economic package in the GOP-controlled Senate. But the Democratic House is another story. Beilenson, who is rated among the more liberal Democrats, said, "Just being nice to people up here pays off. I think Reagan will be surprised; he'll have more support from Democrats who are fiscally conservative than he thinks."

Given the skill with which Reagan is wooing Congress, the Rostenkowski-Beilenson predictions could easily turn into self-fulfilling prophecies. And what a story that would be.



It's your turn

Economic practices get U.S. in trouble

Editor:

Sometimes I wonder about the possibility of a Third World War occurring, and it seems highly probable with the current powers at work. Of course the obvious motivator would be to protect oil supplies and the not-so-obvious motivator would be to keep the most powerful businessmen wealthy. The goal of most successful businesses is to make as large a profit as possible. Therefore, it makes good economic sense to continue depending on oil for our energy source rather than switching to less profitable sources which would require quite a bit of investment. But these sound economic practices lead the U.S. into trouble. Many of the countries which supply us with a major portion of our imported oil are experiencing changes in their political make-up at this time. Some might be headed for a more communistic government, which would lead the oil Russia's way instead of ours. It seems changing our energy needs and sources would be a more humane, although less profitable, solution rather than war to protect our oil interests.

Besides avoiding war, other reasons exist now for the U.S. to stay away from intervening in other countries' internal political struggles. We have always felt threatened by the spread of communism, and with good reason — its stated goal is to have communism throughout the entire world and to abolish capitalism. Marx believed society goes through many political stages, the last and most successful and ideal being communism. Could it be, perhaps, that

his theory is backwards? Poland's struggle to shake the clutches of communism is evident to anyone who reads the front page of a newspaper, but Russia seems to be having problems also. Productivity and quality of farm and other products is low compared to those produced privately. Even China is making use of capitalistic ideas and encouraging freedom of expression. Maybe capitalism is the step after communism in a society's evolution. If communism is a step that many countries need to go through, maybe we should let them go through this step. We don't need anymore Vietnams, and we certainly don't need another world war.

What can we do? Write letters.

Thanks for reading.

Melissa Wilson

False alarms dangerous

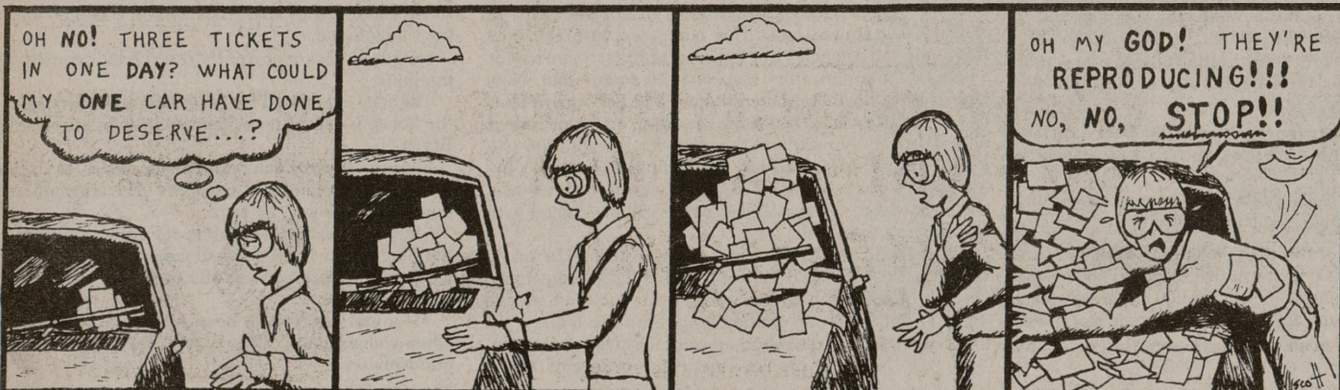
Editor:

This letter is in reference to the fire alarm

that went off at the library last Thursday night. I have worked at the library for two years, and have been through many similar alarms, and otherwise. People continue to ignore the alarms, and due to their ignorance, and senseless, one of these days, a real fire will break out, and many people will die. The staff at the library is responsible for clearing the building and when people hang around, or refuse to leave when an alarm goes off, they are endangering staff members' lives, as well as their own lives. People do not think it can happen, and least ignore the reality of the situation, for it happened. The survivors of the MGM Grand Hotel fire can attest to that fact. If a fire breaks out, and any of the numerous chemical plastics, or other materials that can give off poisonous gases burn, fumes will fill the room rapidly, just as they did in the Las Vegas fire. You want to die, a brave death, or be a fool, it some place besides the library.

Jeff West

Warped



By Scott McCullar

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

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