

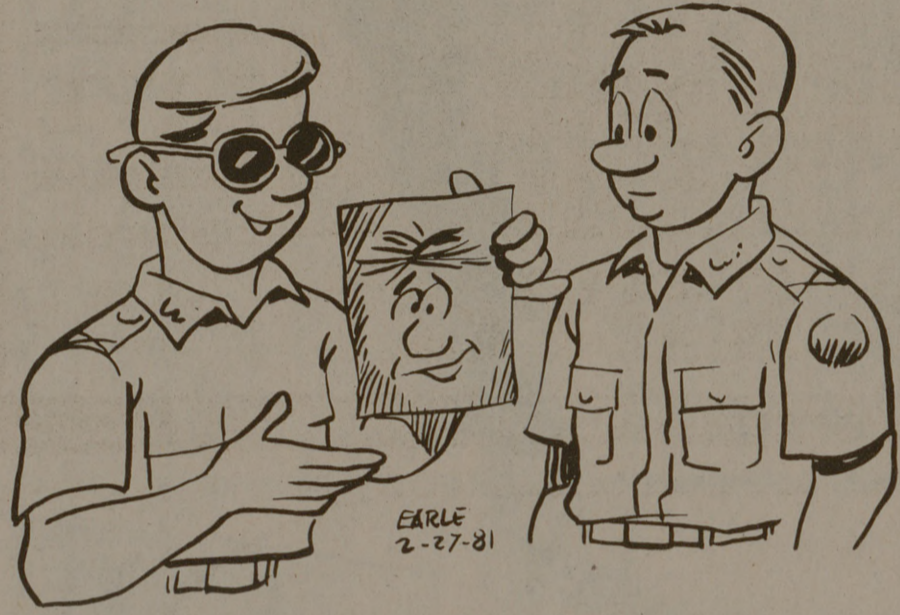
VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

FRIDAY
FEBRUARY 27, 1981

Slouch

By Jim Earle



"I've a piece of advice for you: When you photocopy your face, be sure and close your eyes."

Reagan's plan is form of shock therapy

By DAVID S. BRODER

WASHINGTON — British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has come to Washington at an opportune time. Her presence is a reminder to President Reagan and the nation that good intentions do not always produce desired results.

Eighteen months ago, the Conservative leader was pointing Great Britain toward a new economic course, with a bold show of energy and confidence that even a David Stockman might have envied. But today, with inflation and unemployment both on the rise, the prime minister is a bit beleaguered, if still far from bowed.

When Stockman, Reagan's young budget chief, was asked about the Thatcher experiment at a hearing of the congressional Joint Economic Committee last week, he answered — a bit ungallantly — that the lady had got it all wrong.

"Taxes and government spending (in Great Britain) have increased, not decreased," he told Rep. Parren J. Mitchell (D-Md.). "The growth of the money supply has been high, not low. What has been implemented has failed, as one would have expected," said the fellow who invited the congressman to call him by his new nickname, "Deep-Cut Dave." And besides, he said, this has nothing to do with Reagan's program for economic recovery.

Well, maybe. But there is one similarity. What Thatcher was trying to do was administer shock-therapy to a slothful economy, not just with policy but with rhetoric. She told inefficient manufacturers they were coming off the government dole, like it or not, and she told workers, "You'll enjoy a German standard of living when you work like Germans."

The more one examines the Reagan economic program, the more it too appears to be a form of psychological shock-therapy. There is an underlying economic theory, but at root, the President's proposition is that economic problems will get better when we think they are getting better.

As Reagan's budget document put it, "Central to the new policy is the view that expectations play an important role in determining economic activity, inflation and interest rates.... Establishing an environment which ensures efficient and stable incentives for work, saving and investment now and in the future is the cornerstone of

the recovery plan."

"Establishing an environment" is also a tricky exercise in mass psychology. Reagan has been masterful so far in creating a sense of confidence in his leadership and an expectation of rapid and salutary action.

But the more people examine the economic assumptions underlying his plan — the more they peek behind the wizard's curtain — the more skeptical they seem to become. When Secretary of the Treasury Donald T. Regan went before the Joint Economic Committee last week, he was forced to admit that the administration plan assumed sustained and rapid growth in business investment greater than this nation has known in its entire previous history.

The Washington Post quoted economist Otto Eckstein as saying such investment rates "would require a massive restructuring of the American economy." Irving S. Shapiro, the chairman of DuPont, told the New York Times, "All we've got to rely on is an economic theory." Rudolph G. Penner, a senior economist in the Ford administration and now at the conservative think tank, the American Enterprise Institute, called the Reagan plan's economic assumptions "particularly worrisome." Even a 1 percent shortfall in assumed economic growth could tilt the budget deficit upward by \$10 billion, he said.

What is particularly striking — at least to a layman — is the apparent assumption that the work of "establishing an environment" for this prodigious economic risk-taking and investment at home will not be disturbed by any uncontrolled events outside our borders. So far as one can judge, there is no allowance for another OPEC oil-price jolt, for an eruption in the Persian Gulf, for a Soviet move into Poland, or for a U.S. showdown with Cuba over aid to El Salvador, to mention just four not entirely theoretical possibilities.

When Stockman was asked about these uncontrollable factors on "Face the Nation" last Sunday, he seemed to suggest that the effects could be cushioned if the Federal Reserve Board just kept a firm grip on its monetary policy.

To a non-economist, that sounds an awful lot like whistling your way past the graveyard. But maybe Margaret Thatcher is giving her American cousins lessons this week in how that is done.

Service, but no students

What's in a name? When it comes to the student service fee, a lot. While it's certainly a fee, and it funds many services, the "student" part of the tag is open to some question.

The Finance Committee of Student Government has recommended the student service fee be increased by \$7, from a maximum of \$33.50 to \$40.50 per student per semester. That's an increase of 21 percent.

To illustrate just how much the service fee and its recipient agencies have blossomed in the last few years, the student service fee maximum in 1978-79 was a paltry \$20 per student. If the Finance Committee's recommendations hold, that means the fee will have increased by 103 percent over a four-year period.

In 1978, the Finance Committee surveyed, with a 75 percent degree of accuracy, a group of students. The goal: To determine whether the student body, if guaranteed an increase in the quality and quantity of services provided, would be receptive to

Sidebars

By Dillard Stone

a \$3 (15 percent) increase in the \$20 student service.

By a narrow margin, those surveyed approved.

Whether the services deserved their increases, and whether or not the ensuing increases are appropriate, is an issue to be addressed as modifications in the recommendations are made.

What matters now is that the Finance Committee in 1979 solicited and received student opinion before recommending a service fee increase.

No such concern for student opinion characterizes the 1981 Finance Committee.

From not asking for any student opinions on a proposed fee increase, to only giving

students the opportunity to *observe* the users justify their requests, to closing the allocation hearing (not just to reporters, but to the entire student body), the Finance Committee has acted in a capricious manner prejudicial to the best interests of the students.

Students had no say in urging a fee increase. Students had no opportunity to tell users what they thought of the increases. Students had no opportunity to tell the Finance Committee their feelings on the recommendation.

The committee simply popped up with "We think students should pay \$7 more."

Maybe students are willing to subsidize three more doctors at the health center. Maybe they're willing to subsidize more intramural activity. Maybe they're willing to continue to pay for a deficit-accruing shuttle bus service.

But maybe they're not. Whichever, shouldn't students have a say in setting and allocating the student service fee?

It's your turn

A tribute to an Aggie: Jeff Bogert

Editor:

His long hair, balding on the sides, his quick wit.... You may have known him, he worked at nights in the ZCC, and was active in many activities on campus. From Philosophy Club to Micro-Computers Club, fighting against the hedges around the MSC, he was everywhere. For those of you that were not here: He wanted money spent on hedges to go to other things he felt more important, such as to honor the Vets on campus that had served. He thought that wheelchairs or an emergency loan fund would help more. He, more than the rest of us, could say such things for he served six years in the United States Navy during Vietnam.

TAMU lost one of its most outgoing students Tuesday, Feb. 24. Perhaps he didn't say "Howdy," and didn't attend all the football games. He helped many of you with programs while he worked tearing paper over in the ZCC. He'd loan you money even if he had to forego something like paying rent.... Maybe his jokes weren't always funny, but he was always there when someone needed a hand.

On March 10, he will be honored by a Silver Taps. On behalf of the Department of Philosophy, the Philosophy Club and myself: Jeff O. Bogert, sir, we salute you.

Jay Clements '81

Come on, Town Hall

Editor:

On Wednesday, Feb. 26, MSC Town Hall announced for the first time in The Battalion that Jimmy Buffet and the Coral Reefers Band would be presented in concert on March 7. When I went to purchase tickets in Rudder, I noticed that no announcement of the Buffet concert was posted.

When I asked about the Buffet concert, I was told that tickets had gone on sale the previous Monday and that the only seats left were general admission and a few reserved seats high up on the west side of G. Rollie White.

I have since visited the Town Hall cubicle in the Student Programs Office several times in search of an explanation for this somewhat curious advertising technique, but so far I have been unable to find anyone to answer my inquiries.

Therefore, I take this opportunity to ask publicly why Town Hall delayed announcing ticket sales in The Battalion until after the more desirable seats were sold, and why there is still no posted announcement of ticket sales in the Rudder ticket office window? Also, is this the type of "advertising" Town Hall intends to use in promoting future attractions?

Terry L. Vanderburg

Greeks: A plus

Editor:

From the time of my birth I have been brought up to believe the "Aggie Fraternity" was a state of mind followed through by brotherhood not by preconceived notions of one fellow "brother." What "brother" Aggie does not realize is that A&M is growing which is making it harder for people from small over-protected towns to get out and meet people. If it was not for the Fraternity of Phi Gamma Delta I would still be following my big sister around by her heels. My brother FIJIs have helped me break out of the once unbreakable shell and for this reason I am more than proud to tell everyone of them "brother."

Speaking for one FIJI, maybe not all, am totally against the acceptance of fraternities and sororities. It was not my intention to come to this school and totally destroy what my family still enjoys today, "Aggie brotherhood." So Mr. Witzel, call your "watchdogs" away from me and my brothers if you do not want to be the eventual one to take the credit for destroying what we ALL hold so dear.

I am really curious as to what you are here for. You slandered the Greeks for partying, you made fools of the pre-med by taking time out to study to insure a successful future, and ridiculed the Student Government for "hanging around" because of the simple fact they have the ambition to one day make good leaders for "their" school and country. In my eyes there is no much reason left for you being up at school.

It seems to me you will one day be blue-collared, K-mart shopping laborer. With all my heart, I pray your uneducated boss does not fit in, talks funny, and just does not know how to have a good time.

Tom Lester

Silver Crapper morbid

Editor:

The night of Wednesday, Feb. 25, a "Silver Crapper" was held in the area of Keathley, Fowler and Hughes, and continued past the Haas and McFadden sidewalk. Pall-bearers in black suits with dead boutonnières on them carried a black casket, in which lay the Broken Hearted. They walked solemnly through the quads and across the sidewalk, then headed towards McFadden and Haas, singing funeral hymns and telling the onlookers to "Step aside, have a little respect."

Perhaps some found this amusing. We, however, found it morbid, disgusting and in very bad taste. We realize it was probably done in fun, and without much thought. But for us, the sight of someone lying in a casket with his hands folded over his chest, with eight or so pall-bearers is not amusing; it brings back painful emotions and upsetting and unpleasant memories. We feel a funeral is nothing to make light of or imitate.

We hope more forethought and discretion will be used for future Silver Crappers. Come on guys, we like the underwear and ties.

Nancy Kelly, '83
Terri Blomquist

By Scott McCullar

Warped



THE BATTALION
MEMBER U.S.P.S. 045 360

The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Communications. Questions or comments concerning any editorial matter should be directed to the editor.

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Letters to the Editor should not exceed 350 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, but will 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.

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