

VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

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Slouch By Jim Earle



"I figure that if I missed Friday classes, why not miss Thursday classes too; and after missing that much, why don't I leave for spring break right now?"

Cohen makes no excuse in his book

By IRA R. ALLEN
United Press International

WASHINGTON — There have been some good books written by senators — William Fulbright, Hubert Humphrey, Barry Goldwater, Eugene McCarthy, for example. And students of politics are awaiting this summer's analysis of liberalism by freshman Paul Tsongas.

Then there is William Cohen.

The Maine Republican, who fancies himself a poet and who published a book of verse after he became nationally known for service on the House impeachment committee, has written a day-by-day account of his life in 1979, the first year of his first term.

It was a dull year and he is a dull senator, notable on the national scene lately only for his good looks and for managing Sen. Howard Baker's disastrous loss in a Maine GOP straw poll that kicked off the Tennesseean's short-lived presidential campaign.

In "Roll Call: One Year in the United States Senate" (Simon and Schuster, \$14.95), Cohen deals at excruciating length with how hard it is to manage his time and how often he must travel.

He is constantly wrestling with his conscience — sometimes winning — and recounting self-serving dialogues with colleagues. There is nobody in the Senate he doesn't like and certainly nobody he is willing to offend. Not even a critical interviewer, who was supposed to be flattered by the senator telling a secretary not to let any more calls come through while the interview was going on.

Not just another pretty self-effacer, he. Perhaps the clearest clue to Cohen's personality — he documents his own ambition in "a place filled with overachievers" — is the fact he was a Latin major at Bowdoin College.

The biggest literary fault with the book is Cohen's love affair with similes. They cling to his prose like dandruff on a blue suit. He also tends to quote himself at length, painfully for the reader when the subject turns to his poetry.

The other problem is that Cohen and his experiences are not really very interesting. There is no inside information and no new revelations about life in the Senate.

"I have no interest in gossip," he says. "I prefer philosophy, to take a philosophical look from within the Senate, to allow my eyes to serve as a lens for the reader."

The "gee-whiz" quality of Cohen's published perceptions — his real ones probably will be published upon his retirement — is exemplified by repeated stories about how elevator operators and subway car attendants don't recognize him as a senator in his first weeks on the job, no doubt due to his youthful step and tan corduroy blazers.

One of Cohen's friends is Sen. Donald Riegle, the Michigan Democrat who used to be a Republican. In 1966, Riegle wrote a similar book, "O Congress," a diary of his first year in the House.

Riegle dared tell what really happens and acknowledged he wanted to be president some day. The book damaged Riegle among his peers and gave him a reputation as a "flake" — probably hurting his chances for the presidency some day.

Cohen doesn't make that mistake. He says he has no desire to be president. And he is deferential to everyone in the Senate. The resulting book is as zesty as a vanilla milkshake.

Cohen says writing is his hobby, and since he is one of the Senate's least wealthy men, the book might serve at least as personal and pecuniary therapy. Unlike most books by politicians, this one does not seem to be ghost-written. It should have been.

Letters no better than story

I was not laughing when I read Texas Monthly magazine's January cover article about Aggies. Nor was I laughing at the accompanying photos. And I am not laughing at the letters responding to that article.

Remember the 10 glossy black and whites of cadets yelling, pushing and generally being themselves? Author Al Reinert, a former student himself, described the Aggie lifestyle as experienced by the Corps of Cadets.

The Battalion ran a story about the article and the campus reaction to it.

Some Aggies found humor in the Texas Monthly feature. Some simply enjoyed the publicity.

Other students worried that all of Texas might think all Aggies go around squeezing their privates as demonstrated by the yell leaders in one of those glossy black and whites. There was a definite fear that all of Texas might think all Aggies go around doing a lot of the questionable things that Corps members do.

All Aggies don't. But now, thanks to Reinert, some people think they do. Check the letters in the March issue of Texas Monthly and see for yourself.

There's the Cedar Creek resident who says he never knew why so many people laughed about Aggies until he read the January article.

Coffee breaks

By Jane G. Brust

He says, "Aggies seem to pride themselves on exploiting all the base and crude human traits that civilization has worked so hard to overcome."

That really makes me proud.

Then there's the Lubbock resident who suggests someone tell the yell leaders their privates are six inches up from where they're squeezing in the photo.

"Aggies must really be stupid," he says.

Of course. This University attracts some of the brightest high school graduates — including over 200 National Merit Scholars last fall — and Aggies must really be stupid?

And there's the Fort Worth resident who says he understands Reinert's portrayal of Texas A&M as lived by the Corps. He says he once heard that Corps freshmen are told that even though they are "miserable worms," they are each worth ten civilian students.

Swell.

If anyone out there is spreading that gladdening, I'd like to address you personally

with my deep-rooted sentiments regarding miserable worms.

And I'd like to address Mr. Reinert some of the same.

Thank goodness for the Houston student who wrote to tell Texas Monthly Reinert's coverage was a misrepresentation — to say the least.

It's true, Texas A&M is recognized one of the most prestigious, most positive schools in the country. Approximately 11,412 of the students currently enrolled women and 20,031 are men. Only 1,443 the current total enrollment of 31,443 the Corps. That leaves 29,473 of us who do not wear uniforms and answer to our classmates.

It's too bad one of my all-time favorite publications lowered itself to misrepresent — and debase — my all-time favorite university. And it's too bad Mr. Reinert misled the public.

It's a shame a lot of people had a narrow-minded perception of Texas A&M even before Reinert's article appeared.

Here's hoping somehow, some day a record will be set straight once and for all. Perhaps at one time all Aggies did believe Reinert described — at one time this all-male military school.

But times change. Whatever Texas A&M might have been in years past, it certainly is not today — and that's all the better for Texas A&M.

Yell leader replies to complaints

By MARK OUTLAW

Throughout the year, a few articles have popped up in The Battalion concerning the actions of the yell leaders. I have dismissed most of them as ignorant opinions by people who don't understand what is going on. But I think it is time to express my thoughts on some of these opinions because they do nothing but pass blame from one group to another.

Mr. Ray, obviously you have never had the chance to be a yell leader, so you are not aware of the spontaneous situations and pressures that occur at Aggie games. Our main purpose as yell leaders is to generate spirit and enthusiasm from the Twelfth Man, and to do it with the integrity and character. What's good for the goose is not always good for the gander, and that is why people have mixed reactions when we follow a course of action that we believe is best for the fans and the game.

Sure, Aggies have a different way of doing things to show support for their teams, but I consider this an asset rather than a liability. Our support is a step ahead of all other schools because of the spirit that is raised and the integrity and respect that is shown. To show such immature acts as booing and ice throwing is a deviation from the Aggie norm, and is not a fault of the yell leaders but the misunderstanding and ignorance of an Aggie minority that do not understand the basic philosophies of Aggie spirit. The yell leaders have done nothing different from years past in control of a crowd, with the exceptions of possibly being more verbal in our pleadings for silence in situations where silence is called for, and doing more yells in trying to keep control of a situation. We only realize that the crowd is changing when they no longer respect the silence called for by the yell leaders and when the yell leaders are cursed out for trying to receive silence when there should be some.

Reader's Forum

Mr. Priddy, you ask what is wrong with a little booing and ice throwing? Sure it's spirit — but it is negative spirit, spirit that does nothing but increase the frustrations of the crowd, the game, and the players (I point out Vernon Smith's disdain for a cup that was thrown out onto the court during the game). We're supposed to have class, Mr. Priddy. This means showing respect for the opposing team and referees as well as our own team. We take care of a bad call when there is one, but a running battle with the refs does nothing but irritate them and give them a negative attitude towards the game. True, Mr. Priddy, times are changing, but why should the Twelfth Man change to where they fall into line with every other school — schools that have no control over their actions — and thus do not know what it means to reflect favorably upon their school?

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I completely miss your point about use of yells during time outs. What are you supposed to do — stand there? We're supposed to do the best we can to perpetuate the Twelfth Man, whether it be by the use of yells or keeping everybody yelling as loud as possible without doing a yell.

The main point of my letter is this: the yell leaders have done nothing different in the past (except do more yells because people are too lazy to wildcat or understand the purpose of it) than the crowd (not the Twelfth Man) has done. Change can be both good and bad. In this case, I feel it is bad because it deviated away from the way Aggies have been for so many years. I don't blame the fact that the opportunity of gaining a basic knowledge of the Aggie conditions is not made available anymore. At least the message does not get across to people. People have to work at becoming Aggie, it isn't something that just happens.

Mr. Ray, I have absolutely no respect for a person that shows his ignorance on a subject because he fails to look at both sides of a situation. Your letter is nothing but a list of lies and misconceptions, and you can see that the true meaning of your letter is nothing but an endorsement for your support in the upcoming yell elections. Whenever you write a letter now on, I suggest you consider the about which you are writing on.

Mark Outlaw is a senior and head yell leader

It's your turn

Let's turn G. Rollie White into a 'pit'

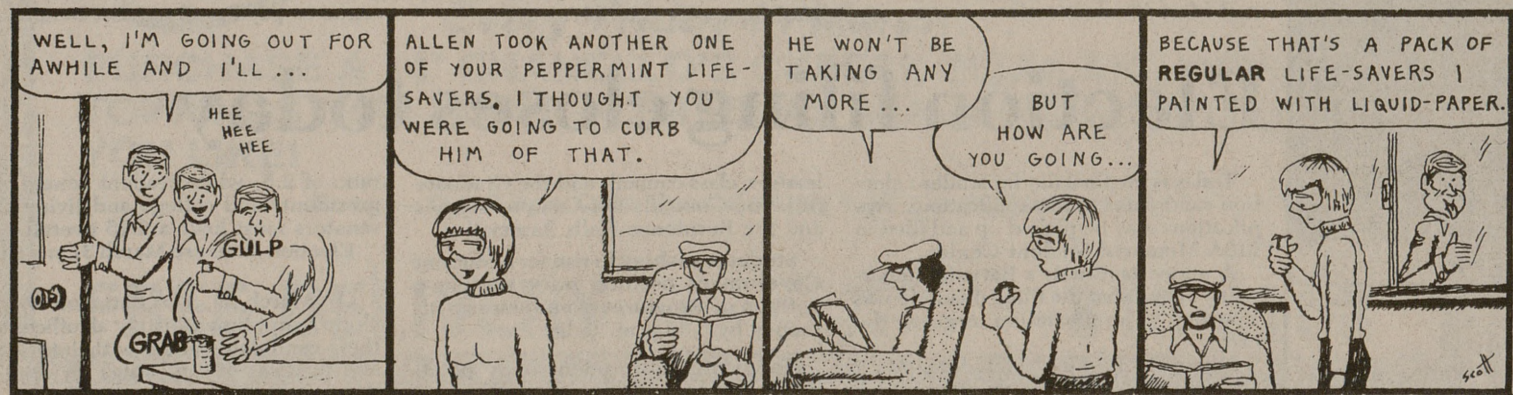
Editor: In response to Richard Oliver's column in the Batt concerning the poor conduct of the Aggie fans during the game Monday night, I think it's only fair to let the real fans voice their opinions. Do the fans wish to win the sportsmanship award year after year, or do we want the conference championship — and beyond? Take Arkansas. Year after year opposing teams dread playing in Barnhill Arena. The fans are loud, boisterous, and very, very intimidating, both to the opposing teams and the referees. Rarely do you

see a controversial call going against Arkansas. Barnhill Arena is one of the top ten "pits" in the country. And their 78-6 home record over the last six years proves it. But take Aggie land. We have the best behaved fans in the conference and seemingly some of the nation's best basketball goes to waste.

I propose we turn G. Rollie White into an intimidating "pit" much like Arkansas' Barnhill Arena. With an intimidating arena, we would be unbeatable. C'mon Aggs. ROWDY!

Dean Wolpe

Warped



By Scott McCullar

THE BATTALION

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The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography within the Department of Communications.

Questions or comments concerning any editorial should be directed to the editor.

LETTERS POLICY

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 350 words in length, and are subject to being cut if they are longer. 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 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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