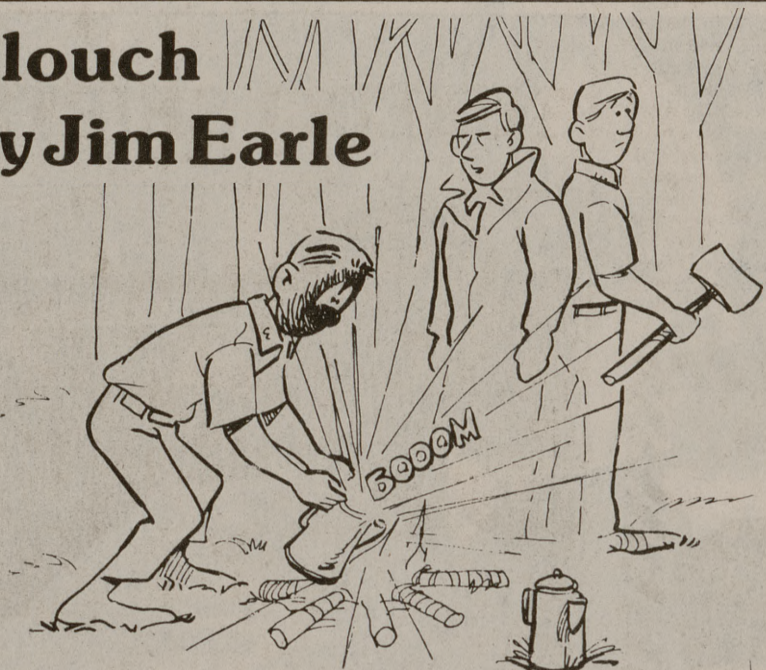


VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

MONDAY
MARCH 23, 1981

Slouch By Jim Earle



"We probably ought to put the kerosene in something besides a coffee pot, but I guess it doesn't matter now."

Feeling education's pincers

Maybe there's a method in the madness. That the cost of everything — including education — is spiraling upward at a double-digit rate should surprise no one.

The surprise comes when "double-digit" is translated first into figures like "20 percent," then into a phrase such as "a \$109 per semester increase."

Tuesday, the Texas A&M System Board of Regents will consider a slate of fee increases for the fall semester.

The biggest jump is represented in a 20 percent increase in dormitory room rates, effective with the fall semester. The cheapest rooms, in un-air conditioned men's dorms, will go up from \$219 per semester to \$263; the most expensive, the Commons halls, will increase from \$546 to \$655 per semester.

Reasons? Increased energy and labor costs make much of the increase necessary.

Sidebar

By Dillard Stone

The other huge slice of the pie is taken up by the need to pay off construction bonds sold to finance the two new modular dorms.

At first glance a 20 percent increase may seem pretty exorbitant. But at second glance it's easily justified — to some extent — by the 14.3 percent legislature-mandated pay raises and an anticipated 20 percent rise in next year's utility costs.

At third glance — OUCH! Texas A&M

students are going to get gouged next year. It's almost a sure bet the Legislature will increase tuition by 50 percent, to \$8,000 an hour — and there's no guarantee that tuition won't rise by 100 percent, to \$16,000 an hour.

Board rates are going up about 9 percent (food costs are going up, too). The state service fee will probably rise by about 10 percent (remember those services that are all of us use, but which we all pay for?). The upcoming one-year increase in the cost of going to school next year will probably be higher than it ever has before, especially the on-campus student.

It appears as if we may have found an answer to the limiting-enrollment question. Make going to school so expensive that a limited number can afford it.

Maybe that's the method; will the mess end? I doubt it.

Direct approach for Standard Oil

By DAVID S. BRODER

WASHINGTON — A friend of mine who owns stock in the Standard Oil Company of Indiana found a letter from the company in her mail the other day. When she opened it, she extracted not a dividend check or a proxy form but a letter from the chairman of the board, John E. Swearingen, which she passed on to me. Addressed "to our stockholders," it was admirably direct:

"President Reagan has proposed to the Congress a comprehensive economic program involving substantial reductions in the federal budget coupled with tax cut proposals that are together designed to restore vitality to the nation's economy and to arrest inflation.

"The management of Standard Oil Company (Indiana) wholeheartedly endorses the President's program, and I am writing to urge our stockholders to express their support for it.

"While the President's party controls the United States Senate, the Democratic party is in the majority in the House of Representatives. Some Congressmen have stated their opposition to the President's program and have been quoted in the press as saying that it will not pass.

Then Swearingen talked about the "failures of past programs" and the resulting damage to the economy, concluding that "the package President Reagan has proposed must be enacted, in its entirety, in order to reverse these trends and restore confidence in our economy and in our country.

"This may not happen," he warned, "unless the members of the House and Senate are reminded that Mr. Reagan's program represents the will of the people. I urge you, therefore, to write promptly to your Representatives and to your Senators to express your support for his proposals. The future of our nation is at stake."

That sort of direct and dramatic pleading is rather unusual in a letter to stockholders. I do not recall an oil company president being quite so sure that the election represented "the will of the people" when the President was Jimmy Carter and the program involved a windfall profits tax. But the courts have upheld the use of corporate funds for the expression of opinions on referenda and legislative issues, and as a bit of a First Amendment fan myself, I have no desire to restrain Swearingen's freedom of expression.

But if one has any sense of American history, one has to believe that both the corporations and the President whose program they are so enthusiastically promoting

are on somewhat shaky ground.

Ronald Reagan came to the White House probably less beholden to big business than any other Republican President in this century. Big businessmen came rather late to his cause, and only after their original heart-throb, John B. Connally, had demonstrated he had less appeal in the polling-places than in the boardrooms. As a consequence, big business probably contributed less to Reagan's campaign than to any previous GOP nominee. And the votes that put Reagan in office obviously were not cast, for the most part, by the John Swearingens of this country.

But Reagan's budget and tax plans and his efforts to reduce government regulation of business have been embraced so passionately by corporate America that there is an almost automatic suspicion that the Reagan program may have been designed with big business in mind.

One has to wonder how helpful that will be to Reagan in the long run. Americans have learned to view skeptically the promises of big government, but that does not mean they are prepared automatically to accept political instruction from big business.

There is also a bit of a risk for business in this arrangement. Reagan's supply-side economics is a theory of uncertain validity. If its promise of abundance proves empty, and produces only higher unemployment, deficits and inflation, then the adverse reaction could engulf not just Reagan and the Republicans but the business institutions which asserted that "the future of our nation" requires that the program be enacted "in its entirety."

But it may be that Swearingen is simply trying to revive the tradition of public persuasion that has been part of Standard Oil's history since the days when that fabled public relations man, Ivy Lee, undertook to improve the image of its Rockefeller founders.

In the biography of the Rockefellers by Peter Collier and David Horowitz, Lee — the ex-newspaperman who, among other things, suggested that John D. dramatize his philanthropies by handing out dimes — is quoted as telling a group of executives: "Crowds are led by symbols and phrases. Success in dealing with crowds... rests upon the art of getting believed in. We know that Henry the Eighth by his obsequious deference to the forms of the law was able to get the people to believe in him so completely that he was able to do almost anything with them."

Perhaps the latter-day Standard Oil executives believe the same thing.

McNelly
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It's your turn

Sharing the grief at Taps ceremony

Editor:

For the first time I went to Silver Taps, it was for a young 28-year-old philosophy major who has been riding his bicycle at night and was struck and killed by a motorcyclist. I arrived at the Academic Building at 10 p.m.; all lights in the area were out except a few from Academic. Students began shuffling in about the same time I did. I stood by a woman who I learned was the mother of the young man. She asked me if I knew her son. I answered no, I did not. Other than the shuffling of feet, silence was in the air, being pierced only by an occasional dove fluttering out of the trees and the call of a flock of geese flying north. I was also impacted by the effect of the silhouetted, barren, yet sap-filled tree branches that reached up into the black of night. Then chimes rang out with renditions of "Nearer My God To Thee," "Onward Christian Soldiers," and two other hymns. Faintly I heard the cadence of a marching group, soft commands, then a resounding thump as footsteps hit the sidewalk in unison. Another. And another. I counted them, expecting them to stop at 28, the age of the young man, but they continued for at least 26 more steps. Then soft commands: "Halt," "Order Arms," "Left Face," "Open

Ranks," "March" along with several others. Then "First Platoon, Ready, Aim, Fire." The night air was shattered with a volley of rifle fire; doves again fluttered into the air. Then, "Second Platoon, Ready, Aim, Fire"; another volley of fire, and another and another. The mother wept silently. Then Silver Taps by a group of buglers playing in unison. Once, twice. At that moment a student behind me fainted, hitting the sidewalk with a quiet thud. A final Silver Taps. With a hush the crowd dispersed at which point I reached over to touch the mother. She had come from Dallas for the ceremony, would spend the night alone in College Station in her anguish. But she was not alone at Silver Taps. At least 500 students and staff joined her.

John Shirk

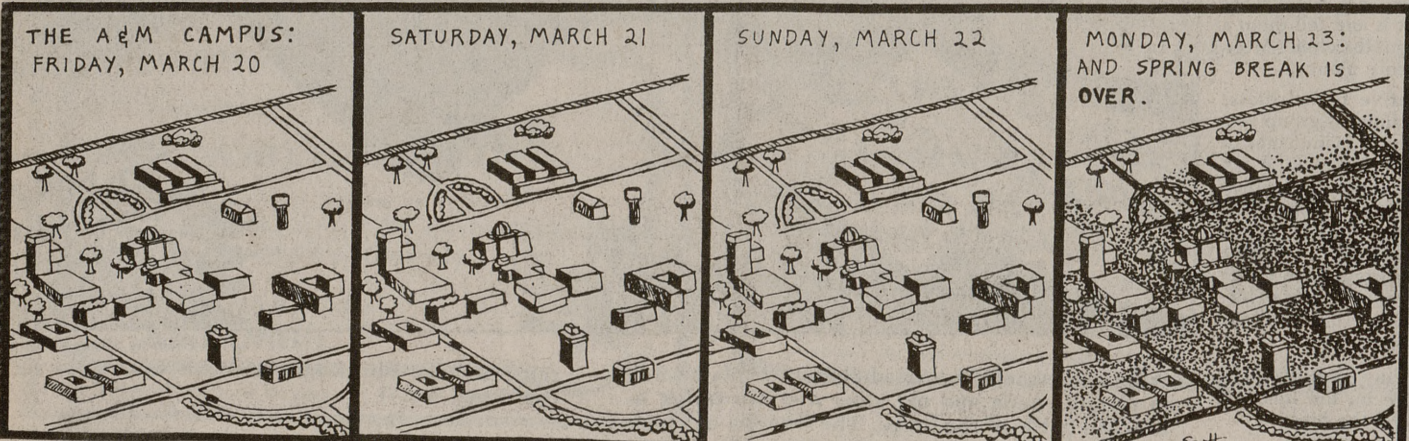
Warped is DUSTED

Editor:
In defense of "Warped," we, the mem-

bers of the Dr. UL Society of Theology (DUST), would like to point out that although Scott McCullar's humor is somewhat (exclusively) unusual, the themes are not necessarily so obscure as to be unpalatable or incompatible with the essence of The Battalion. Recently, McCullar's ever-present illustrations have become the objects of ridicule by certain segments of the A&M student body and subsequent Battalion readership. Dr. UL respectfully suggests that those persons who have voiced criticism either develop a viable, interesting alternative or cease to read the columns. Dr. UL would like to point out, logically, one is currently forcing these critics to read the feature to which they so vehemently object. Furthermore, our Society makes it point to read McCullar's inspiration daily.

The Dr. UL Society of Theology (DUST)
M.D. Edwards '81
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Warped



By Scott McCullar

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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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