

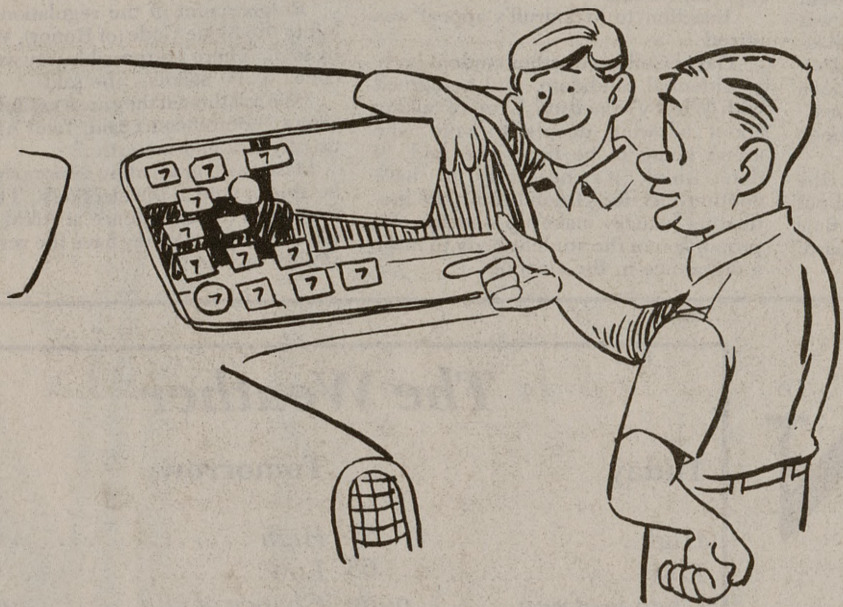
VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

THURSDAY
APRIL 2, 1981

Slouch

By Jim Earle



"Now that's what I call seniority!"

Foul-ups characterize election

To some candidates and voters in the spring election circus, those handling the spring election are the clowns.

In a confounding and inexplicable display of oversight, election officials have first deprived some students of their voting rights; then they have tried to justify this foul-up by citing non-existent provisions in the student body constitution and election guide.

The rigmarole began when the Election Commission failed to adequately abide by Section (5100) of the 1981 General Election Regulations. That provision says, "The Election Commission shall submit to The Battalion a sample ballot at least three (3) class days prior to the opening day of voting."

The Battalion got a ballot six days prior to the election. That ballot was marked "Official Ballot."

A different sample ballot — also marked "Official Ballot" — was received late Monday night, not even one day before the election.

That was Broken Rule #1. Student body president candidate Matt Woodruff has every right to contest the election and its results, since graduating seniors nominally weren't allowed to vote. "Nominally," because some graduating seniors did vote, while others were denied that right.

Sidebar

By Dillard Stone

Woodruff has the case won either way: In the one instance, the voting prohibition arbitrarily discriminated against some seniors, while it arbitrarily did not discriminate against others.

In the other case, he's absolutely supported by election regulations and the constitution.

The former lists in Section (3400) only two qualifications for students to vote: current enrollment at Texas A&M, and a valid Texas A&M I.D. card.

The latter says the student body president will be "elected at-large by a majority vote of the Student Body during the Spring Semester."

No one can point out a constitutional roadblock which could prohibit graduating seniors from voting. We at The Battalion can't find one either — probably because one doesn't exist.

If election officials want to add a rule

prohibiting graduating seniors from voting, they should do that. But until that rule exists, they are bound by the legality of their current rules, and shouldn't play Mickey Mouse word games to interpret some students out of voting rights. The rules should be clear enough; when officials have to split hairs on something as simple as voter qualification, it's time to revise and rewrite.

And even if such a rule did exist, the student body president assumes office 14 days after validation of the election results, and since graduating seniors are students at that time, they are in fact part of his constituency. Therefore, they do have the right to vote in his selection. Remember, they do have I.D. cards; they are enrolled.

True enough, neither document specifically that graduating seniors vote. But they also don't say specifically that Corps juniors can vote, or liberal graduate students, or any other special category for that matter. And, graduating seniors have been allowed to vote in spring elections.

All this is Broken Rule #2. As I write this, I don't know the J-board decision on the validity of the results, regardless of what happens though, the spring election should point one thing out: The circus needs a ringmaster.

Protecting president next to impossible

By HELEN THOMAS
United Press International

WASHINGTON — The violence of American society has once more touched the highest reaches of power. And once more there is the realization that it is almost impossible to protect a president from a would-be assassin.

The attempt on the life of President Reagan probably will not deter him, his aides say, from venturing forth again into public. Exposure to people is necessary for a politician and few doubt that Reagan will choose to become isolated in the White House.

As the days go on, there will be soul searching. Could anything have been done that was not done to keep harm from befalling the president?

But there are very few lawmakers who are willing, despite the record of the past, to support anti-gun legislation. The lobby is too strong on Capitol Hill, and some honestly do not believe it would be effective.

"I've been giving it some thought," Sen. Paul Laxalt, R-Nev., told reporters, but he did not indicate in what direction. Other congressional leaders came to the White House the day after the shooting and said there should not be haste in considering such matters.

There was speculation that Reagan himself would not change his mind on the subject of gun control. He believes a better deterrent to the misuse of firearms would be longer mandatory sentences for a person convicted of committing a crime with a gun.

With the millions of guns extant in the country, the subject may become moot.

But the subject of keeping a president, or the nation's political leaders from harm's way, is a subject of concern.

Senate Republican leader Howard Baker told reporters this is a "free and rambunctious society" where the people feel free to vilify their leaders. He cannot foresee the end of that kind of hostility or of Reagan retreating behind the big black fences at the

White House.

Reagan obviously was conscious of the potential for harm in the presidency. He had been briefed on Secret Service procedures and the constant presence of his protectors was reminder enough.

He once told Vice President George Bush's wife "if the awful, awful thing happens" he wants Bush to "know everything."

The exposure of the nation's leaders and the publicizing of their appearances add to the risks. But they would not have it any other way, apparently.

There are bound to be some recommendations for improving security in the days ahead. Reagan may be asked to wear a bullet-proof vest when he knows he will be in public.

He also will probably be more surrounded by flying wedges of agents in his public appearances. He may also be asked to avoid open events where the audience cannot be checked.

One of the two attempts on the life of President Gerald Ford also occurred when he was leaving a hotel.

The Secret Service is now conducting an inquiry and White House aides expect more recommendations to follow. For the agency, the problem is that the president has the last say in the matter and it is he who will determine where he goes.

Reagan's ordeal may win him a sympathy vote, help his popularity, and may even help him push his economic recovery program, some of his aides believe. Such was the case following the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

Johnson said "let us continue" and he was able to get through many of the Kennedy "new frontier" measures while Congress was still stunned by the national tragedy of Kennedy's death.

Still, it won't be that easy for Reagan. Byrd has already served notice that while the Democrats do not plan to "obstruct" the economic package, they plan to consider it "on its merits."

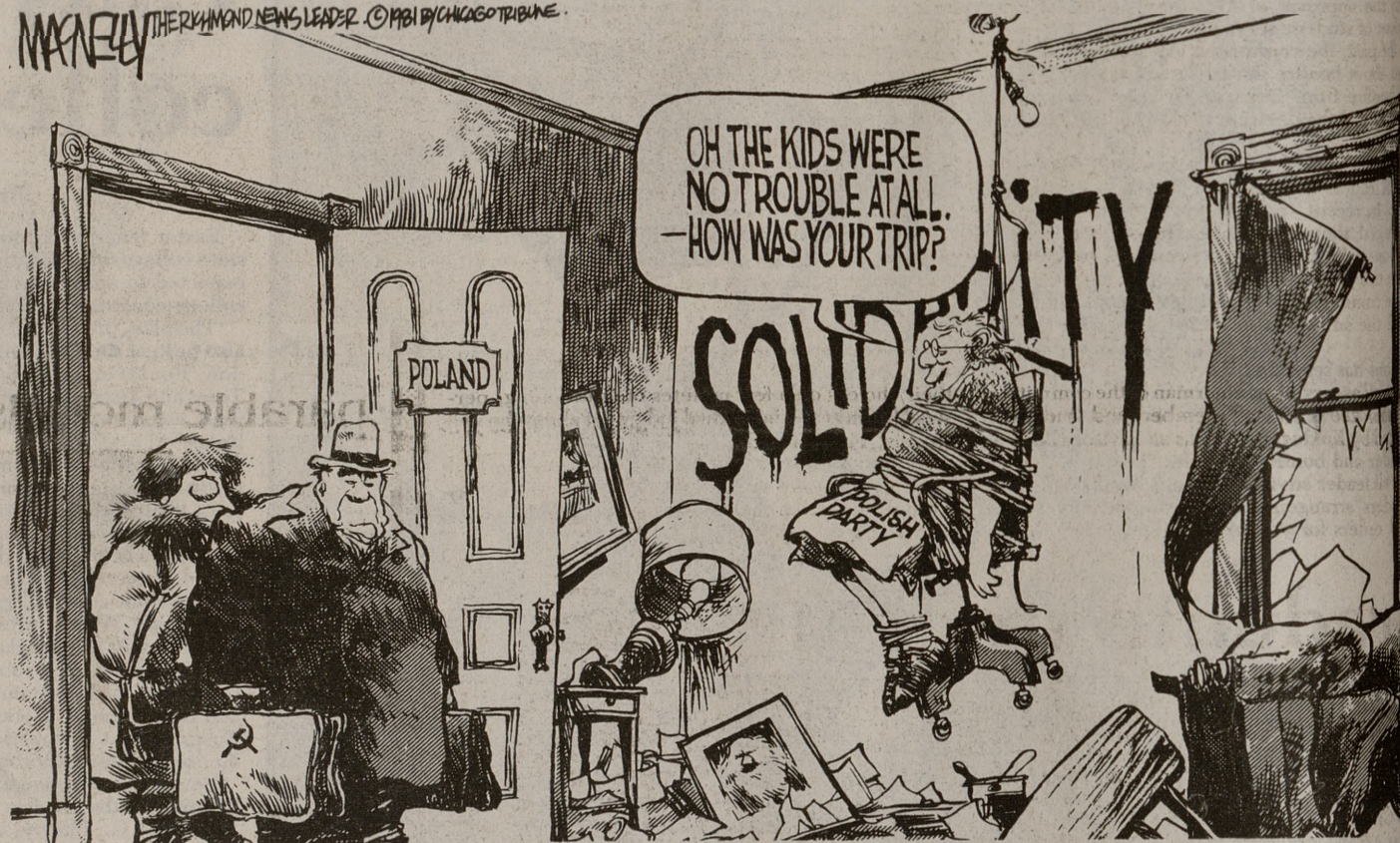
the small society

by Brickman



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3-27 BRICKMAN



It's your turn

Disregard for human life is tragic

Editor:

Monday's unsuccessful attempt at taking our president's life will have far reaching repercussions that must be dealt with by the American people. Although we are transplanted residents (of Canadian origin) the assassination attempt deeply hurts us and makes us question the direction of this great nation. Are we going to one day live in a nation where every person must fear for his well-being? Or will the American judicial system be revised to deter potential offenders and keep past criminals from repeating crimes? It is a tragedy that such incidents have come to epitomize our society as one in which human life has so little value.

Our initial reactions of anger and outrage quickly changed to inner regret that one man's action could so easily tarnish our nation's worldwide image. Such a loss of respect for human life is intolerable in a land where human rights abound. Perhaps we should adopt the policy of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" in our dealings with criminals. Action must be taken soon or the American society as we know it will degenerate to a state of inherent fear where every person's right to a

peaceful existence will be jeopardized.

David Pettipas '82
Mike Pettipas '84

Witch-hunting

Editor:

Saturday, March 28, marked the second anniversary of the accident at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant.

According to UPI, Barry Commoner, Bella Abzug and hundreds of coal miners led thousands of protesters on a march into Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The miners and environmentalists chanted "Coal Power! Coal Power!" and carried placards which read "Keep TMI shut down."

I couldn't help but be amused when these self-proclaimed environmentalists supported the combustion of coal as the answer to America's current "energy shortage." It seems contradictory to label oneself an environmentalist and advocate the

hazards of coal (acid rain, airborne pollutants) over the benefits of clean, cheap nuclear power.

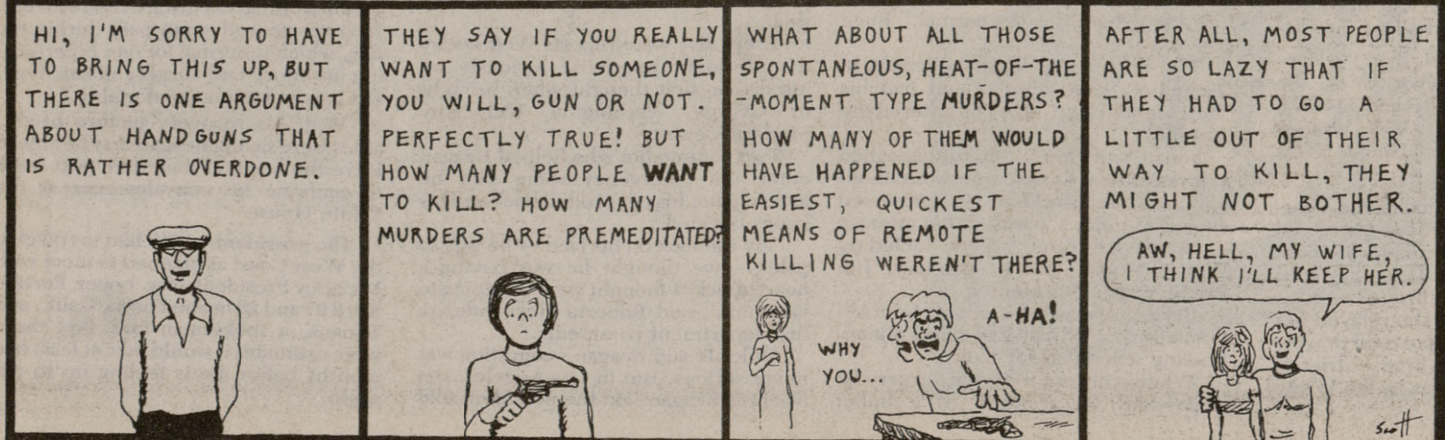
I quote an advertisement which Mobile Oil corporation placed in The Dallas Morning News on Sunday, March 22. "There's a problem all right, but it's psychological, not nuclear. That's the opinion of psychiatrist Robert L. Dupont, who nails "nuclear phobia" as the main culprit. And Dr. Arthur M. Buech, last year's winner of the American Institute of Chiropractors Gold Medal Award, sees a parallel between today's nuclear phobia and the 17th century fear of witches."

Nuclear power is an opportunity America can't afford to pass up. If we continue development of nuclear power, America can look forward to a prosperous future independent of all foreign energy sources.

Murray Moore

Warped

By Scott McCullar



THE BATTALION
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