

VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

MONDAY
APRIL 20, 1981

Slouch

By Jim Earle

GOP unity: It comes and goes

By STEVE GERSTEL
United Press International

WASHINGTON — As he has been much of the time since the elections, Senate Republican leader Howard Baker was exuberant.

In a series of votes on the crucial budget resolution, Republicans displayed a "remarkable" unity which blocked the Democrats' efforts to restore funds for a variety of programs.

"I can't remember Republicans, or for that matter Democrats, ever sticking together so long," Baker enthused.

If it soothes assistant Senate Democratic leader Sen. Alan Cranston to say that the Republicans really trampled the poor, the old, the hungry and the sick, fine. Maybe that is the bottom line.

But in purely political terms, the Republicans consistently clobbered the Democrats with a degree of party unity that has become increasingly rare in recent times.

The bellwether vote probably came on an amendment by Sen. John Chafee of Rhode Island, a liberal Republican.

Chafee put together a package of nearly \$1 billion in additions that included education, energy assistance, mass transit, health

and urban development.

The Chafee amendment had a great deal of appeal. A big plus was sponsorship by a Republican.

But the amendment also had the lure of allowing senators to get on the record — at least once — on the side of social and welfare programs.

Although assistant Republican leader Ted Stevens later said "I didn't have to ask anyone not to leave us" on that vote or others, there was considerable concern.

A close vote was considered strong enough a possibility so that Vice President George Bush was dispatched to Capitol Hill in the event of a tie. And this was no ordinary day — this was two days after President Reagan had been shot and, in many ways, Bush was running the day-to-day operations of the government.

But the Republicans — or at least most of them — held.

When the roll call was over, the amendment had been easily defeated 59-40. Forty-two Republicans, or 79 percent, voted against Chafee. Eleven, or 21 percent, supported the amendment.

The Chafee amendment could still have won — if the Democrats could have match-

ed the Republicans' unity. Certainly was a type amendment very much sided with the Democrats.

But Democrats could provide votes (63 percent) while 17 (37 percent) almost all Southerners and Westerners sided with the Republicans.

The display of party unity, on the other hand, during consideration of the budget resolution, bodes well for President Reagan's economic program — if it holds.

Although no one expects total support forever or even very long, the vote showed surprisingly quickly.

When the Senate Budget Committee met to approve the fiscal 1982 budget only days after the end of the floor action, three Republicans joined Democrats to scuttle the resolution 12-8, the first defeat for Reagan's economic program.

The three — Grassley of Iowa, Symington of Idaho and Armstrong of Colorado — considered staunch conservatives who objected to the size of the deficit.

There always has been suspicion that Reagan's problems in Congress would come eventually from the right.

What is surprising is that it came so early after Baker was basking in victory.



"Oops! Sorry, I forgot about your sunburn."

EARLE
APR 17-79

New book shows where we really live

By DAVID S. BRODER

WASHINGTON — I have a book I want to recommend to you today — a marvelous, breezy book that, among other things, will give you a fascinating prism through which to view American politics in the '80s. But first, a disclosure of interest, as the lawyers say, is required.

"The Nine Nations of North America," which is being published next month by Houghton Mifflin Co., was written by a friend and colleague of mine at the Washington Post named Joel Garreau. But I can tell you honestly that, while my connection with the author gave me an advance look at the book, my comments would be no different if I did not know the man.

What Garreau has done is to look again at the map of North America with a fresh and observant eye, and say, "Forget what the maps in the atlas show. Here is where the borders are really drawn."

His "nine nations" jump state and even national lines. Mexamerica includes Mexico and much of the southwestern United States. Ecotopia runs along the Pacific shoreline from northern California through British Columbia to Alaska. The Islands include not just the Caribbean but Miami and southern Florida. Parts of Canada — Prime Minister Trudeau won't like this — are found in six different "nations," one of them called Quebec.

What is most intriguing to me, as an observer of government, is the way in which Garreau's bold recasting of our conventional geography suddenly illuminates puzzling phenomena in our politics.

We did not have to wait for this particular author — a red-bearded goat farmer (another bit of inside information) — to come along in order to learn that regional forces play an important part in American politics. All of our history and election statistics testify to the fact.

But it had not occurred to me until I read his book how many of the seeming anomalies of current politics are a result of contemporary boundaries. As an example, I can do no better than quote Garreau on "the misleading idea" called Colorado.

"Colorado is clearly two different places," he writes. "The eastern half, which is flat, fertile agricultural land, and the western half, which rises dramatically in the suburbs of Denver to become the Rocky

Mountains. "Back when there were few people to speak of in the territory and it didn't make much difference, Colorado was boxed off into a neat, perfect rectangle, and now the idea it represents has been around long enough to become self-perpetuating. People speak and think of Colorado as one identifiable place, despite abundant evidence to the contrary . . .

"That does not, however, make the idea useful. Take the farm protest movement that in the late '70s resulted in thousands of tractors blocking the traffic of downtown Washington, D.C. It was born of frustration . . . that no one cared about the farmers' existence, no one was listening.

"That frustration did not first manifest itself in the heartland of Iowa or Nebraska. The American Agriculture Movement was born in the wheat fields of eastern Colorado.

"That's not much of a surprise. If any farmer was likely to be mad as hell, it would be he who sent his taxes to Denver, despite that capital's obvious interest in loosening its agrarian ties. Denver's great pride today is its shedding of the label 'cowtown.' As Denver flourishes (it's been called the nesting place of the forty-story crane), it clearly cares less and less about wheat. Denver sees its future in the oil, coal, gas, uranium, copper, molybdenum, and snow to its mountainous, winter-scoured west. Denver is the capital of, and the staging area for the assault on, the Empty Quarter — the most mineral-rich of the Nine Nations. The irrigated farm country to its east is rightfully part of a completely different nation — the Breadbasket."

That kind of flash of insight — and flashy writing — occurs all through the book. Texas, it turns out, is a battleground being fought over by the leaders of three nations, Dixie, the Breadbasket and Mexamerica. New England — the only place where Garreau finds conventional political boundaries meaningful — is also a place whose culture and politics are shaped by the fact that "the progeny of the oppressed (factory and sweatshop workers) are identifying with the economic and ecological ideas of the progeny of the oppressors."

The temptation to go on quoting is almost irresistible. Let me just say this: "Nine Nations" is a book to read if you want to find out where you really live.

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It's your turn

Iranian captor-students irresponsible

Editor:

In regards to Mr. Mostafavi's letter on April 14, we would like to make a few comments on behalf of the so-called childish irresponsible students of the "Highway 6 mentality."

1. We don't believe that Mr. Queen was invited as an expert on Iranian affairs, but as an ex-hostage. He was to relate his experiences while giving pertinent background information.

2. We acknowledge his feelings towards Iran, but how would you feel after being held hostage, or should we say P.O.W.? You referred to some students as giving a childish and hostile reaction. How do you compare hisses to kidnapping an entire embassy? Was that not "childish"? We love our country and were shocked at this act of aggression. It will take a long time to recover mentally from this terrorism.

3. Next he commented on this being an institute of higher learning. We recall the captors in Iran were also students. Old Glory was burned and our president called a devil by Khomeini. This is not a way to make friends with America. In regards to Highway 6, Mr. Mostafavi, it does indeed run both ways (hint).

Mark Stubbs '82
Martin Mueller '84

Apologies due

Editor:

There are times in life when we are placed in most unpleasant situations. The worst of these involve matters of life and death. At 9:30 last Thursday night, as I pulled on to University heading west from South College, I nearly struck a young woman walking across the street. To whom ever she was, I apologize and wish I would say this in person.

In circumstances as this, can a finger be pointed at a party; identifying them as the guilty party? I was not speeding or racing, nor would anyone cross a street without looking first. When she looked, I may have not yet turned on to University. I could not see her for a car ahead of me in the next lane. Every good story, not that this one is,

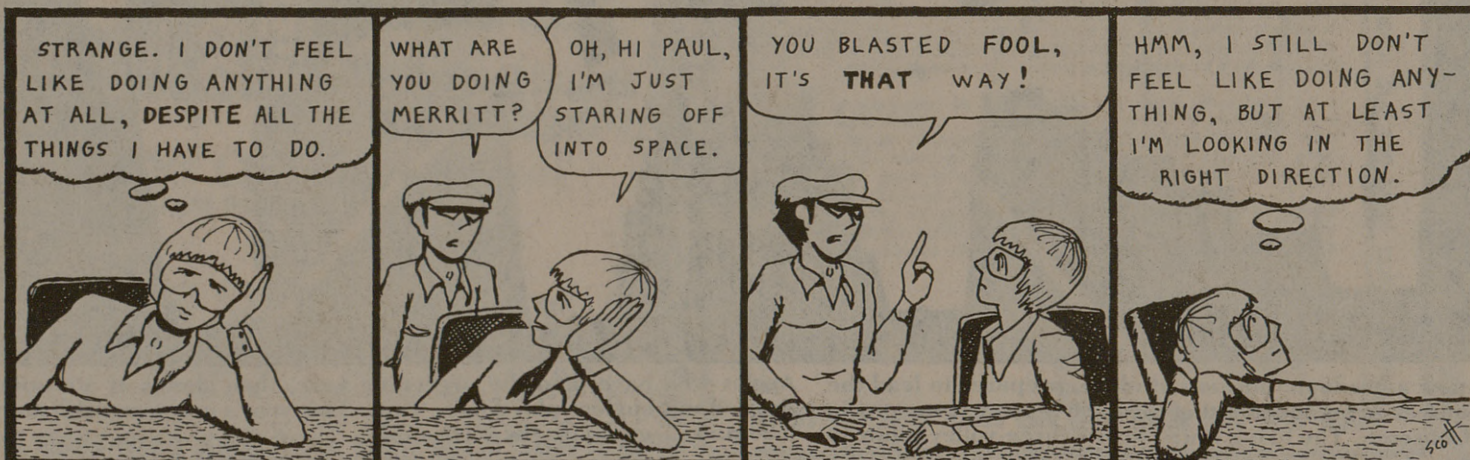
has an antagonist. Ours occurs at the light. This many angrily told me to, "Wait it." The bottom line(s) to this, in addition my apologies is a comment to those who are too slow to think, are quick to judge. We placed in an accident situation we can take time to judge who is at fault, but don't think of a way out, by God's grace, in order to avoid a tragic event.

With the congestion on University so late at night the motorist and pedestrian alike must share the burden of keeping a neighborhood a safe one. To the motorist, the adage, wear light colored clothing at night and do not take for granted your "safe" time on the streets. Always be alert to the world around you. Silver Taps a sorrowful reminder how life can be so unexpectedly cut short.

Tom Johnson

Warped

By Scott McCullar



THE BATTALION

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