

VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

TUESDAY
JUNE 16, 1981

Slouch

By Jim Earle



"Sir, you may remember that you helped me change my schedule so I could have Mondays and Fridays open at 10 a.m.; this conflicted with my club activities, and we changed it again! Now I've just learned that I must make one more change ... sir? ... sir?"

New students face frustration

Just the other evening I was leisurely enjoying a dinner in the MSC cafeteria. No sooner had I taken a bite into my jalapeno cornbread when I was disturbed by the tears and frustration of a young woman.

She was obviously an incoming freshman because she toted the 1981-82 catalog and a stack of brochures filled with information about Aggieland.

Now I'm not one to eavesdrop, but being seated so closely I couldn't help but hear the conversation with her parents.

The poor girl was insisting she get to the bookstore to reserve her textbooks for the fall. Her insistence reminded me of grade school and how disappointed I was when I didn't get my brand new school supplies in time for the first day of school.

Her father kept telling her it wasn't necessary to reserve her books now. Back and forth they argued, her voice becoming noticeably shrill, his voice quiet, but obviously restraining his temper.

They continued until she stormed out of the cafeteria with a tear-stained face. My heart went out to this bewildered couple and their frustrated daughter.

I wanted to say, "Excuse me, but your daughter is going to be a freshman. Right? Don't let her angry words upset you. She's just affected by the 'Help-I'm-terrified-

Staff Notebook

by Kathy O'Connell

about-going-to-college' syndrome."

I also wanted to offer some advice to the girl and tell her that she really didn't have to reserve her textbooks. In fact, even though it may save time later, there's no guarantee that a professor won't change his mind about a particular text.

She'd be playing it safe to wait for the first class day when her prof says exactly what textbooks to buy. Besides, I'm inclined to think the bookstore is just trying to secure the freshmen's business.

Wouldn't it be great if there was a brochure that would inform new students about the ins and outs of avoiding frustration.

How to miss long lines should be first on

the list. The best way to avoid this problem is to make sure all your parking tickets are paid before trying to pre-register.

I heard of one girl (a freshman) who accumulated over \$200 in parking tickets. Anyone who does that deserves a stand in line.

But then standing in lines may not be bad after all. For instance, while I was waiting to pay a fee, the girl in front of me had to pay a \$2 charge for a stolen P.E. towel. The girl behind me had to shuck out \$10 for buying an intramural basketball game.

And another guy wrote a check for \$100 being overpaid on his BEOG. Imagine having to pay back Uncle Sam, who should be helping you!

Also, it would be helpful if the freshman know that when there's several large overhead an umbrella would certainly come in handy.

More importantly, the new arrivals need to feel welcome. They need to know college life isn't so scary after all. One main reason I came to Texas A&M because of the friendly, helpful attitude of the students.

If we can do anything to welcome freshmen, it's to give a sincere "Hello" and any other assistance they need.

Congress' budget job a shaky experiment

By DAVID S. BRODER

WASHINGTON — In ordinary usage, reconciliation means kiss-and-make-up. As it is currently being used in Congress, it's more like spit-and-fight. Stage two in the 1981 battle of the budget, called reconciliation, has important implications not just for federal programs and the people who pay for and benefit from them but also for the future of Congress as an institution.

In the jargon of Capitol Hill, reconciliation refers to the process by which the committees of the House and Senate are forced to trim programs under their jurisdiction to meet the budget targets requested by President Reagan and approved by Congress this spring. Earlier, Congress agreed to cut \$35 billion from the 1982 budget and told each committee how much of the reduction it would have to absorb. Now, the committees are coming back — reluctantly and in some cases recalcitrantly — to show what they have done and to see if their handiwork is ratified or rejected by their colleagues.

The process now being tested on Capitol Hill is almost unprecedented. Allen Schick, a long-time student of Congress and the budget, last month wrote in an essay for the American Enterprise Institute that he knew "of no measure in the long history of Congress within the scope of this year's reconciliation (bill). The process is truly unprecedented in the range of legislative issues it encompasses ... If reconciliation takes root on Capitol Hill, Congress might become a very different institution than it has been for many years.

Among the changes ticked off by Schick were these:

— a shift from distributive politics, where Congress pushes up spending as it "seeks to satisfy certain interests without disadvantaging others," to redistributive politics, "where Congress cannot avoid an explicit consideration of who shall lose by virtue of reconciliation."

— The "fiscalization" of legislative debate, in which policy considerations are subordinated to concerns about costs as members "are repeatedly bombarded with information on the budgetary consequences of their actions."

— The compression of legislative activity, with the reconciliation process short-circuiting policy debates in legislative committees and also preempting the detailed

scrutiny of agency operations by the appropriations committees. "Because of this compression," Schick said, "reconciliation risks becoming an overloaded process."

— The concentration of legislative power in the House and Senate budget committees, which would use their control of the reconciliation process to police the work of every other committee.

— An enhancement of the influence of a budget-cutting president, who is able to use the reconciliation process to focus public attention and political pressure on Congress to meet his fiscal goals.

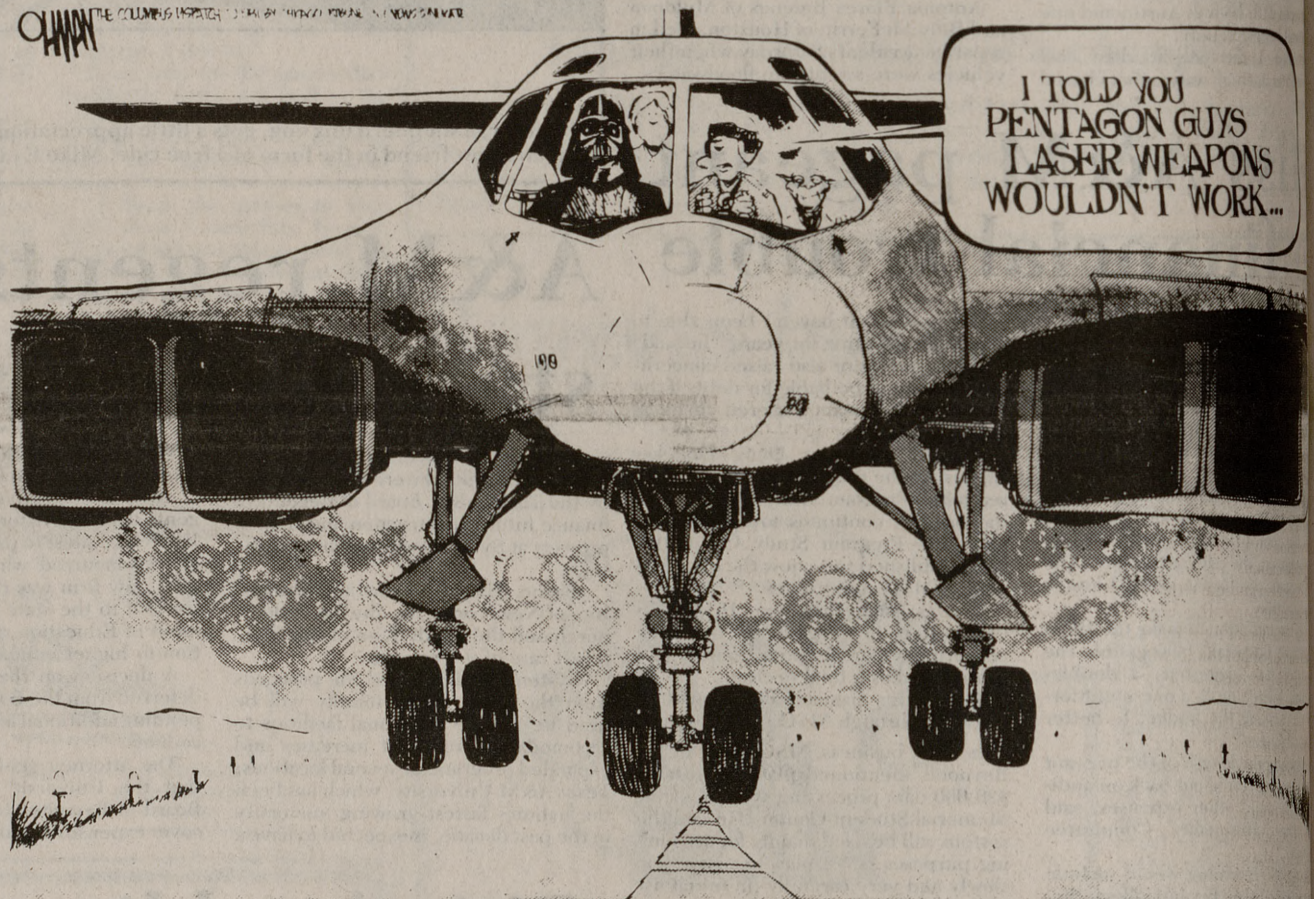
Those are not all the consequences, but they are enough to make it clear why the reconciliation process is bound to be controversial. Schick says — and Rep. Richard Bolling (D-Mo.), the House sponsor of the seven-year-old Congressional Budget Act, agrees — that the act never contemplated what Bolling calls this kind of "straitjacket" procedure.

Veteran members of the congressional money committees are divided on its wisdom. Rep. Sidney Yates (D-Ill.) says it "distorts congressional intent." Rep. Lindy Boggs (D-La.) argues that by denying the lawmakers "maneuverability," it defeats the original purpose of the budget-reform act, which was to "give Congress back the power of the purse" that presidents had gradually usurped by their actions.

But Rep. Ralph Regula (R-Ohio) says that it is only by adopting and enforcing its own budget decisions that Congress can "hope to gain parity" with the executive branch in spending decisions. And Rep. Joseph J. McDade (R-Pa.) says that while the lack of latitude for correcting the spending decisions later in the session is "worrisome, because we're legislators, not oracles," the forced comparison of high- and low-priority programs is "certainly an exercise that we have to go through."

What all of them realize is that reconciliation is a historic change in Congress' way of doing business — and a shaky experiment.

Privately, even some of Reagan's own budget-cutters express doubts that Congress will repeat this process another year. But for now, as Ralph Regula says, "there is not other game in town." The stakes — political, social and institutional — are impossible to exaggerate.



Economy's yard gets growth formula

By DICK WEST

United Press International

WASHINGTON — There are times when the current tax debate sounds something like a lawn care manual.

President Reagan, as we know, says a 5-10-10 formula would make the economy grow best. He recommends three tax cut applications — 5 percent the first year and 10 percent the next two years.

While this is a switch from his earlier endorsement of the 10-10-10 formula, many congressional Democrats insist the mixture still is too rich.

Both sides seem to agree it wouldn't do much good to fertilize with tax cuts as long as the economy is overgrown with federal programs. So the present plan is to spray the economy with a powerful fundkiller. The theory is that thinning out federal programs will give more desirable private projects room to take root and sprout.

Anyway, the conventional wisdom is that fall is the best time to apply a tax cut — particularly in an election year.

The experts say spring applications may cause the economy to grow too rapidly,

allowing inflation to spread and weakening the root structure.

They say an economy that is shot through with inflation has less chance of surviving longer summer periods of stock market slumps and dollar shrinkage.

There likewise is a danger that interest rates will spring up too high, preventing the seeds of economic recovery from germinating.

But in the fall, the right tax cut formula will promote healthy growth and put the economy in better shape to withstand such winter shocks as the Christmas shopping season.

The warnings we hear most often are that the 10-10-10 and 5-10-10 mixtures would mainly enrich the upper end of the economy, leaving barren spots in the middle

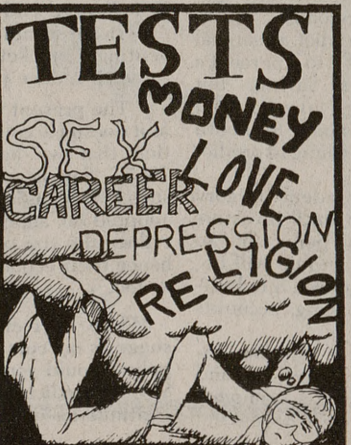
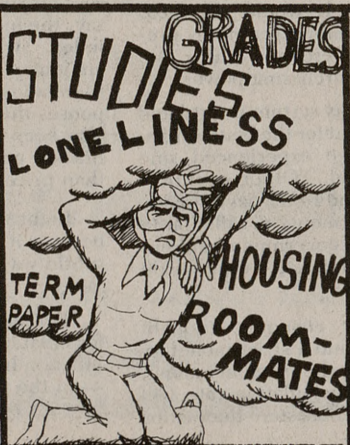
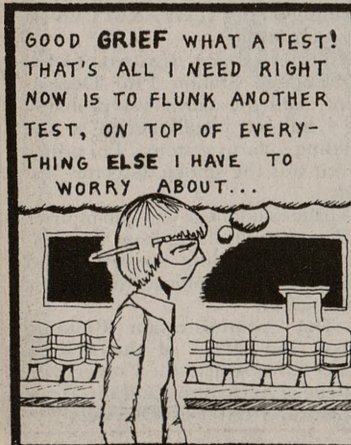
and practically starving the lower end. Democrats contend the alternative formulas they have proposed would be conducive to level growth.

If there were a greening of take-home pay, that would be a pretty good indication the formula would benefit the middle of the economy.

But if a thick mat of inflation choked income gains and prevented them from maturing into savings accounts, that would be evidence the complaints about the administration formula were well taken.

I personally feel more experimentation should be done before Congress and administration finally settle on a tax formula. I would like to see various formulas tested on small patches of taxpayers before being applied to the economy as a whole.

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.

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The Battalion is published Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday during Texas A&M's summer semester. Subscriptions are \$16.75 per semester, \$33.25 per year and \$35 per full year. Advertising rates furnished upon request.

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