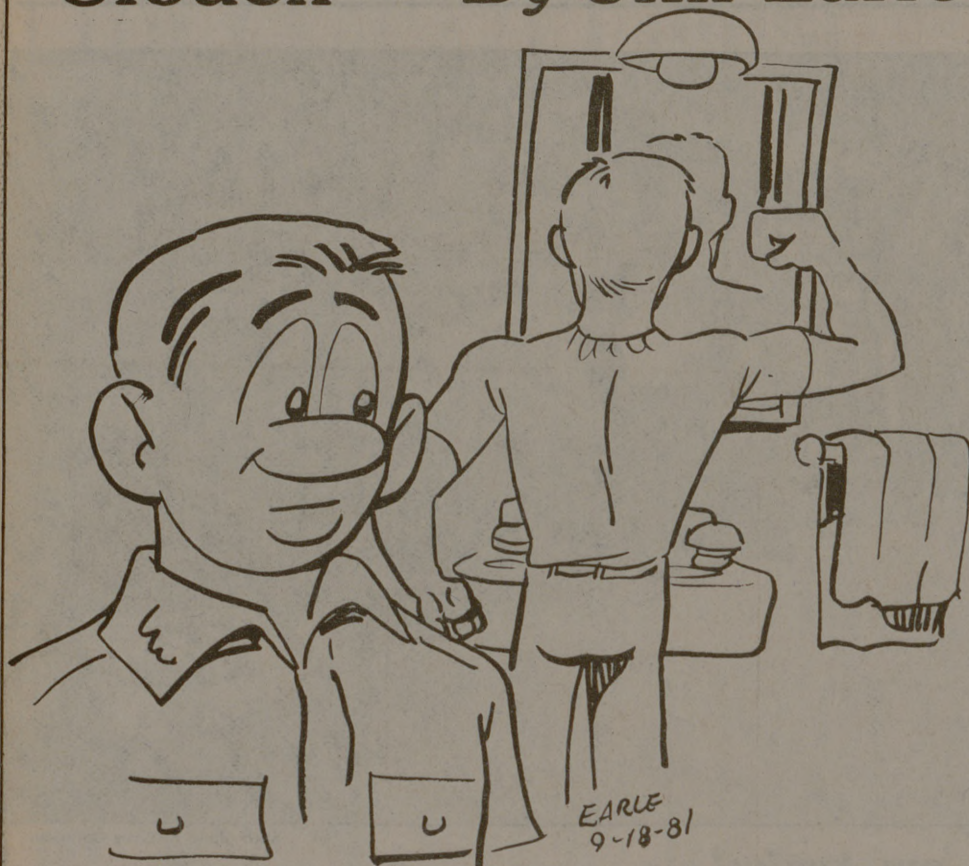


VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION

Slouch By Jim Earle



"I would like to take on Leonard for about \$7,000,000."

Impoundment proposal should serve as warning

By DAVID S. BRODER

WASHINGTON — There was an instructive little drama played out last week when the Republican leaders of Congress propounded the notion that the answer to the latest budget crunch might be to give President Reagan limited power to impound appropriated funds. The idea died faster than talk of the Cubs' second-half pennant drive. It stayed around just long enough to remind everyone that no matter how much he may have won on Capitol Hill in his first eight months as President, it is utter nonsense to call Ronald Reagan "the king of Congress."

Congress, these days, does not recognize outside monarchs.

It does not recognize them, because there is a clear institutional memory of how profoundly Congress was embarrassed by its last capitulation to such a claim of sovereignty. It came only eight years ago — in the presidency of Richard Nixon — and impoundment was the crux of the issue.

Nixon impounded — that is, he refused to spend — more than \$8.7 billion of money Congress had appropriated, thus effectively vetoing the legislative action without the bother or political risk of an actual veto. There were cries of outrage, court suits and a general uproar from the Democratic majorities on Capitol Hill. But the issue was resolved only the following year, when Congress, as part of the law creating its own new budget process, made such impoundments illegal.

It was the beginning of a profound process of reasserting the prerogatives of the legislative branch, a saga which is skillfully recorded and analyzed in a new book by The Brookings Institution's James L. Sundquist, "The Decline and Resurgence of Congress."

Listening to House Republican Leader Bob Michel argue last week for a restoration of limited impoundment power to Reagan, I had the impression that the canny Illinoisan

knew perfectly well that it was too soon for such a counter-revolution. Michel indicated that Reagan is given to exclaiming with some frequency that he wishes he had the item-veto power as President he enjoyed when he was governor of California.

Michel and his Senate counterpart, Howard H. Baker, Jr., have apparently explained to the President a number of times that the U.S. Constitution is not so generous to executives as is the California feeling that Michel was floating the impoundment notion as a way of showing Reagan how unrealistic his dream really is.

Be that as it may, the cold shoulder the idea received from both Democrats and Republicans on Capitol Hill showed Congress is not quite the submissive creature that some had depicted in the wake of Reagan's earlier budget and tax victories.

The problem — as Sundquist points out in the conclusion of his book — is that an assertive Congress is not at all the same thing as a Congress ready or able to provide leadership of its own. "A resurgent Congress," he writes, "is, by definition, one that has turned away from its old dependence on the executive." But Congress has not, in the eight years since it rebelled against Nixon's dictatorship, systematically addressed the conditions that would allow it to fill that leadership gap, either on its own or in tandem with the President.

The crucial questions still remain on Congress' own agenda: policy integration vs. jurisdictional fragmentation; party loyalty vs. individual autonomy; national perspective vs. parochial representation.

That the Republican leaders even considered suggesting a retreat from the impoundment victory of 1974 should be a warning sign to conscientious members of Congress. It is a signal for them to go about the work of strengthening their own institution, lest the next crisis be the one where the call for strong leadership does become an excuse for a new assertion of executive domination.

No lighting up in the lifeboats

By DICK WEST

WASHINGTON — Say you are a two-pack-a-day smoker, a habit that costs you about 10 bucks a week.

By giving up cigarettes right now, you could in a little more than two years save enough money to pay for a ticket on the Royal Caribbean Lines' first seven-day cruise with separate accommodations for non-smokers.

Unfortunately, the sailing date is just four months ago. But don't let a little thing like missing the boat discourage you.

If there is a similar voyage in January 1984 — and who is to say there won't be? — your savings by that time would just about equal the "special cruise rate of \$1,193 per person for an outside cabin on main deck, based on double occupancy."

Moreover, having been 28 months without a cigarette, you would be in a better frame of mind to enjoy the trip.

Anyone going on the cruise a mere four

months after quitting smoking likely would still be suffering withdrawal symptoms. But after two years, an ex-smoker would be off the weed long enough to be over the jitters.

After that long, smoke from another person's cigarette would be more annoying than tempting. Which is the proper attitude for the non-smoking section.

As the press release announcing the cruise makes clear, a certain amount of testiness on the part of non-smokers will be part of the fun.

Arrangements for the "special accommodations and rates for non-smoking passengers" were made by the Nonsmokers Travel Club of Bethesda, Md., in cooperation with ASH (Action for Smoking and Health). Here is what ASH has to say about it:

"Travelers with a special sensitivity to cigarette smoke, or those who simply prefer to breathe air unpolluted by tobacco fumes, have long been able to find protection in the no-smoking sections of trains, planes and buses, but usually could count on little pro-

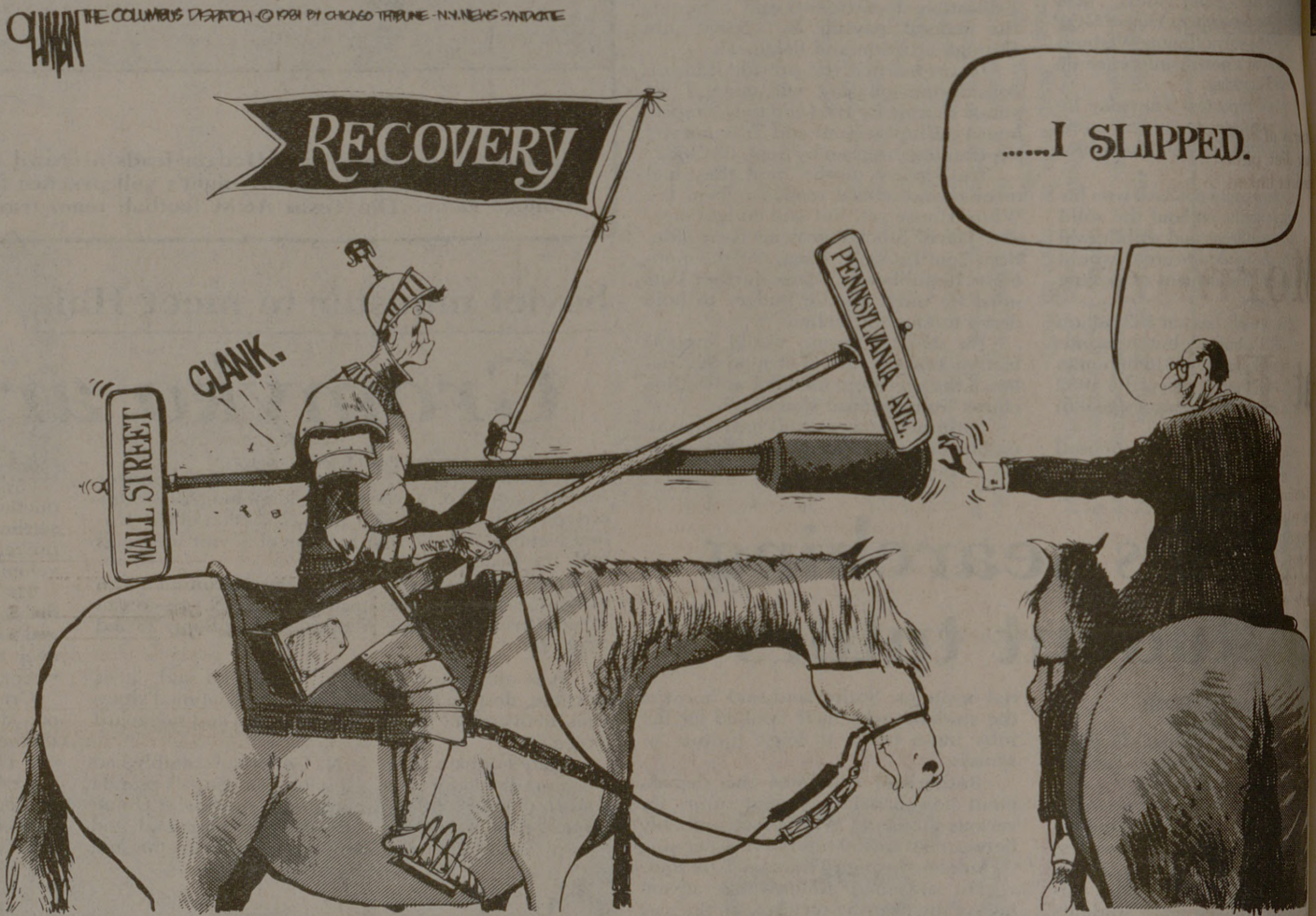
tection while trying to enjoy the most surely and luxurious form of transportation: the cruise ship."

Then it goes on to express hope that "cruise lines will finally realize that the majority of their passengers who are non-smokers want, and will begin to expect, some protection they now enjoy in smaller and less expensive forms of transportation."

Hear! Hear! The ultimate, I suppose, would be a cruise with smokers not allowed on board. Any passenger seen the pier with a cigarette in his mouth would have the gangplank yanked out from under him.

Smokers, of course, can always get together and organize their own cruise. Perhaps the tobacco companies will do things along by embellishing cigarette packs with coupons that can be traded for cruise tickets. Could be a good point.

The Caribbean may not seem as exciting once did but it sure makes a fine alternative.



It's your turn

Vandalism really 'hits' home

Editor:

This past Wednesday night at midnight as I was busily doing my homework in Davis-Gary Hall, I was rudely interrupted by a projectile thrown through my window. It turned out to be a rock with about 20 firecrackers attached to it. I managed to throw some of them back out the window, but before I could remove all of them they flared up and started a small fire in my shag carpet. I quickly put out the fire but not before it had permanently charred a section of my carpet. It was fortunate that I was in my room at the time or else the damage could have been much greater.

I informed University Police about the incident. They filed a criminal mischief complaint and told me that I was not the only person victimized that night. Several individuals had their car antennas broken off or the air let out of their tires during the night.

The incident angers me and weakens my faith in the human condition. It is bad enough that University property is the target of senseless vandalism (the defacement

of the A&A building) but it really hits home when my personal property is destroyed. The only benefit of such action is the satisfaction of the pyromaniacal inclinations of the low-life that instigate such actions.

Zack Heckmann '82

Serenade appreciated

Editor:

On behalf of all the Keathley Kissers, we would like to extend a warm thank you and a

thousand kisses to the super-nerd guy Law Hall who came to serenade us on Tuesday night. For ya'll to take time out of your evening to come over (and rescue us from the book monster) with young guitars, jo, violin and golden throats just goes to show that those men of Law have got it.

The Keathley Kissers

Editor's note: This letter was accompanied by 60 signatures.

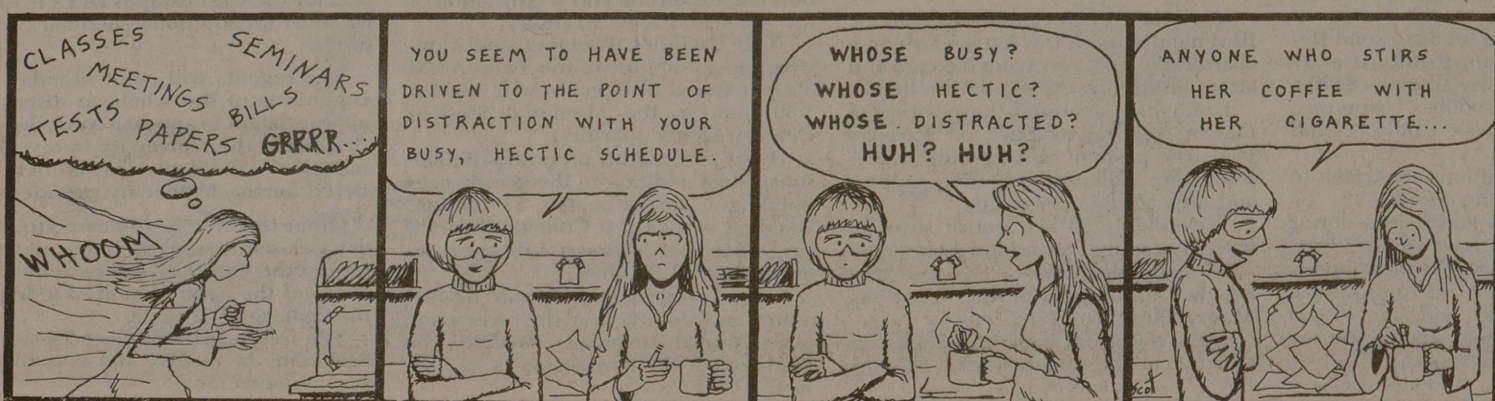
the small society

by Brickman



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 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 300 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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