

## Slouch By Jim Earle



"This is the last time I'm breaking it down and bringing it upstairs. From now on if anyone wants to steal it, they can have it."

## There's new hope for House Democrats

By CLAY F. RICHARDS  
United Press International

WASHINGTON — If there is a smile on the face of Democrats these days it is because their chances of keeping control of the House in the 1982 elections are improving every day.

It is not President Reagan's current budget and high interest rate problems that are giving Democrats hope. Like most political observers they know the jury is still out on the president's economic program and it is far too early to tell what impact it will have on the 1982 elections.

But vital signs within the current and future House composition are looking much more hopeful for the Democrats than they did a few months ago.

Last month, it appeared that Republicans would gain at least half the 27 seats they needed to take control of the House through the 1981-82 reapportionment process. Some 17 seats moved in reapportionment from Northern and Midwestern industrial states to the Sun Belt.

This pointed to substantial Republican gains in the Sun Belt states. And in early reapportionment plans in states like Indiana, Republicans drew lines that gave them clear advantages.

Almost singlehandedly, Rep. Phil Burton evened the score for the Democrats last week in California. Burton is the master line-drawer in California and by the time he got done, Democrats stood to gain five seats.

Up until Burton did his deed, the GOP was counting on at least one and possibly two more seats in California.

There was also a fear that some of the Southern conservative Democrats — the so

called Boll Weevils who supported Reagan on his tax and budget cuts — would switch parties. In fact, GOP Chairman Richard Richards and House Republican leader Bob Michel had reported some Democrats had made contact with Republican state chairmen back home to open negotiations.

But in a closed Democratic caucus last week, party leaders decided against taking any disciplinary action against the conservative Democrats because they voted with Reagan. The decision seemed to be a signal to the conservatives they are still welcome in the Democratic Party.

No Democrat is happier these days than Rep. Tony Coelho, the Californian who once thought his first chance as chairman of the House Democratic Campaign Committee was going to be a disaster.

While modest by comparison to the Republicans, Coelho said the committee's fund raising is going so well that it will be able to donate the maximum of \$25,000 to each of the 80 Democratic candidates it has targeted.

Included are not only Democratic incumbents in trouble, but Republicans they feel are vulnerable and open seats up for grabs.

"I am predicting today that we will pick up a minimum of 10 seats in the House in 1982," said Coelho in a statement bolder than those he has made recently.

What is important is not just the figures, but that it would give Democrats a "working majority" so Reagan probably could no longer steal off enough Boll Weevils to get his programs through.

"We will not lose control of the House of Representatives," Coelho said.

## Student senator should expect scrutiny, criticism by press

Editor:

This column is in reference to the letter submitted by a senator in the Student Senate (September 15, The Battalion). The senator did not think, in his opinion, that the press should ridicule members of the senate for their legislation.

As a reader, I took the senator's words as being implied to all types of legislation. The senator asked boldly, "Is this the way Aggies want their elected representatives treated?" Instantly my mind put this principle on a larger scale. I was reminded of various tools that President Nixon's hatchetmen, notably Charles Colson, used to thwart any attack on the Nixon Administration. Wouldn't the hatchetmen have loved to put out such a letter that our senator submitted crying out with combinations of patriotic feelings and step-by-step details justifying the Senates' truly ridiculous bills. More on that later.

The Senate needs to understand quite clearly that the press is not going to support all legislation, and glorify to the heavens senatorial actions. The Battalion is the pulse of Texas A&M, serving Aggies with top quality journalism. Unless the Senate passes a bill to control the press, then representatives may expect close scrutiny as journalism serves as role of watchdog on elected officials. Nixon's administration found this the case, and so quickly should the Student Senate.

The senator's defense of the legislation,

## Reader's Forum

(The Pedestrian Protection Bill, the Motorcycle and Moped Parking Spaces Bill, the Bicycle Registration Bill), made no mention whatsoever whether the so-called created problems were of major concern to the Texas A&M population. Apparently no surveys were taken to enlist student opinion, and no mention was made publicly on the bills to inform students until The Battalion article appeared.

My first question was just whose opinion was it that motorbikes were unsafe and unsightly on our campus? How is a parked motorbike creating dangerously hazardous conditions? Regarding overcrowdedness of bicycles, does the senator suggest that students are riding more than one to campus? If so, how? Maybe one per class. Is that it senator? Wake up and notice the student population and the size of Texas A&M. In my opinion, as well as several of my peers, bicycles pose no drastic problem. Rather they are the least of our concern.

Needless to say, the proposed legislation would simply complicate matters for both

students and University Police, who have additional tasks possibly resulting about the cost? Who foots the increased costs? The students, of course, the more fees and more fines.

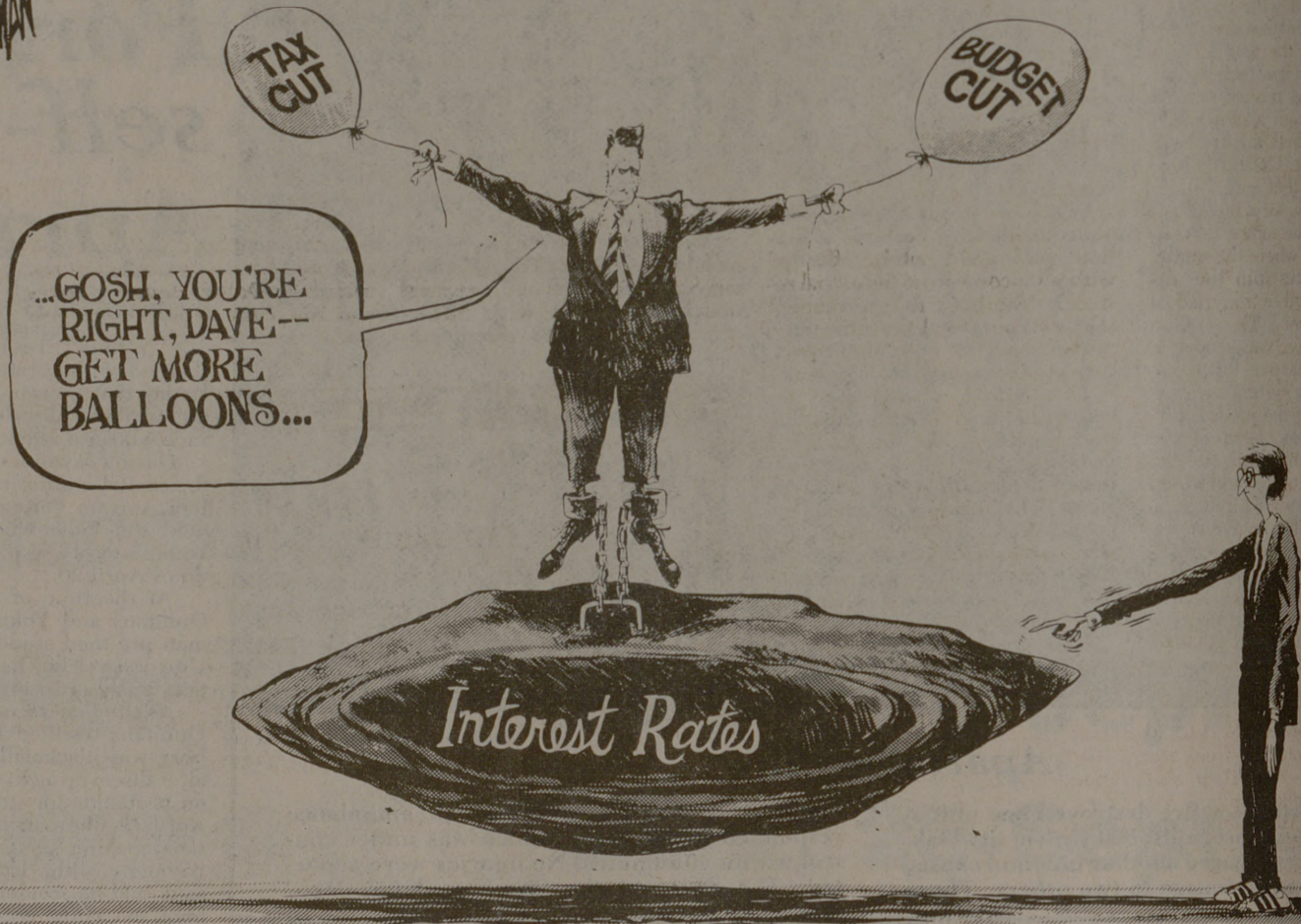
My opinion of the Student Senate is the organization does not represent students adequately by trying to pass without student input on the legislation its effects on student life. Apparently goal of the Student Senate is to be say, we did this, this, and that to help dents where in reality what is actually pening is they are passing more form regulation at student expense. Take a senator, at the philosophy of our President who suggests a limited government. Take this on at our college government. Become effective through critical assessment of real problems facing Texas A&M utilizing student faculty, and administrative opinion for basis of legislation. This way and only way, I believe the Senate assures proper respect from all Aggies and press.

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Editor's note: The Student Senate should conduct surveys and meet with students in an effort to determine student views on campus problems and propose legislation.

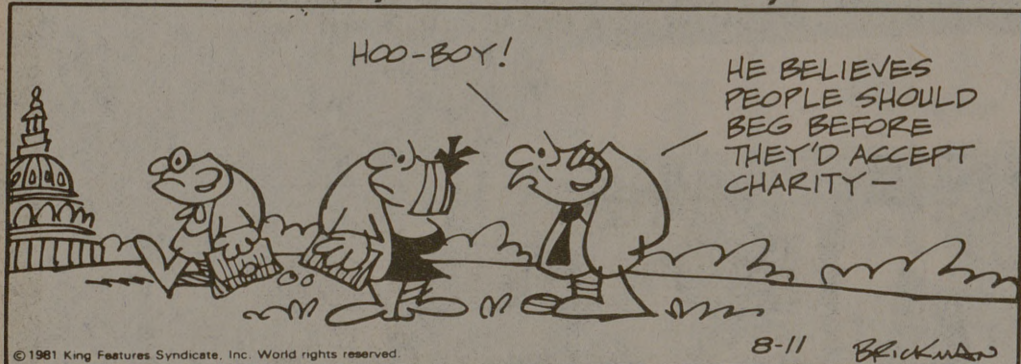
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## the small society

by Brickman



## National debt: A red letter day for red ink

By DICK WEST  
United Press International

WASHINGTON — Sometime in the next 12 months, in a dramatic and historic moment, the U.S. national debt is expected to reach the magic trillion dollar mark.

We can all be proud of our contributions to this monumental achievement. Few countries on Earth, or the entire galaxy for that matter, have been rich enough to run up 13-digit indebtedness.

Too bad it couldn't have happened in 1976 when we were celebrating the Bicentennial. Then we could have really done it up right, with fireworks and church bells ringing across the land. But that was not to be.

Nevertheless, so glorious a milestone must not be allowed to pass without ceremony. Some appropriate salute clearly is in order and now is the time to start planning for it. Meanwhile, let us pause to reflect upon how we got where we are, debt-wise,

and examine where we might be heading. But first, let's heave a sign of relief that we are not the British.

If we used the British cardinal numbering system, it probably would take another three or four years for us to pile up a \$1 trillion national debt.

The British trillion has 18 zeros as opposed to the mere 12 we use. Written out, a British trillion looks like this: 1,000,000,000,000,000,000. Our trillion, by contrast, is a relatively puny 1,000,000,000,000.

Putting it another way, a British trillion is a billion billion, whereas ours is only a thousand billion. Now for what might lie ahead.

By logical progression, once the national debt reaches the trillion level it will move on up in 17 three-zero increments past the quadrillion and quintillion marks to the vigintillion rung.

A vigintillion, by the way, has 63 zeros.

Written out, it looks like 1,000,000,000,000 ... well, 63 is too long to put in this small space, but trust a vigintillion is a lot.

If need be, however, we could switch to the British system, which goes the way up to 600 zeros.

It is difficult to predict when any of these marks might be reached. About all I can say is that we are moving right along. It took America almost until World War II to run up a billion dollar debt. Since then growth has been spectacular.

War and debt rise historically have gone hand in hand. It was federal assumption of the states' Revolutionary War obligations that brought us our first national debt in the 1790s.

If there is another major war soon, could have an octillion debt almost before you know it. World peace, on the other hand, would retard the climb. Try to be patient.

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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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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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## Warped

