

Slouch By Jim Earle



"I've never seen a more insensitive professor! We go through a painful, agonizing weekend where we barely win by one point, and he wants to go ahead with regular class assignments as if nothing happened!"

Negative campaigning polluting East Coast

By DAVID S. BRODER

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. — If the air pollution problem on the East Coast seems a little worse than usual this fall, it may be because of the gubernatorial campaigns going on here in New Jersey and down in Virginia. The "negative advertising" in which too much of the country was surfeited last autumn is back again, as polluting as ever, in this year's only two statehouse contests.

It is futile to rail against the practice. But sometime, somewhere, somebody is going to have to reckon the costs of winning votes in a way that poisons the whole political process.

In New Jersey, two men with rather distinguished careers as legislators are opposing each other for governor. Thomas H. Kean, the Republican, is a former speaker of the assembly, a political moderate with a long family tradition of public service. James J. Florio, the Democrat, is a former state legislator who came to the House of Representatives in 1974 and has built an enviable record as a leader on transportation and environmental issues.

Both men have excellent personal reputations and both would seem to have some positive ideas to offer.

But you listen to their campaign ads, and this is what you hear: From the Florio camp comes the charge that Kean is involved (you won't believe this) in a big-money scheme to launch a dangerous uranium mining venture in northern New Jersey. His tax plan is all for Exxon and Gulf.

From the Kean camp, the reply is that Florio is a hopeless big-spender and the political clone of outgoing Gov. Brendan Byrne (D). (No matter that Florio ran against Byrne in the primary four years ago and trounced Byrne's hand-picked candidate in the primary last June.)

Down in Virginia, the candidates are two personable young conservatives, Lt. Gov. Charles S. Robb (D) and Attorney General Marshall Coleman (R). Both men happen to be ex-Marines, and the camaraderie of the corps might be thought sufficient immunity against mudslinging. Not so.

Robb suggested in a sly commercial that Coleman might be squishy-soft on crime because he had once said the "marijuana is not a serious criminal problem." Rather than demanding proof of the dubious proposition that it is such a problem, Coleman put on his own ad, inquiring whether Robb

had been "smoking something funny." Just to complete this elevated dialogue, Robb replied that he happened to be a non-smoker, quickly adding that, of course, he had nothing against the tobacco industry.

What are voters to make of this nonsense? I think it's very clear what they make of it. It makes them sick. It is a libel on the voters of Virginia and New Jersey to suggest that they are capable of responding only to this kind of drivel.

I think the voters of New Jersey — or any of the other older industrial states — are aware of the drain of manufacturing jobs, of the competitive threats of the low-cost energy centers in the South and West, and of the needs for better education and more efficient delivery of services for the dispossessed in the cities.

Similarly, I think the voters of Virginia — like those in the other growth states — are aware of the strains that new industry is placing on the environment and the public-service agencies, of the balancing act that will be required to preserve the virtues of the state in a period of rapid expansion.

To chatter at these voters about imaginary devils of uranium or marijuana or other nonsense is to insult them — and turn them away from the polls.

Why do candidates do it? They do it preemptively, because they think the other guy will take some cheap shot against them, if they don't get in their own knee to the groin first.

Jow White, the New York ad man handling the Florio campaign, said, "I used to think that negative advertising was something you used only at the very end of a campaign — if ever. But I did radio for a lot of Democratic senators in 1980, and I saw a lot of negative ads, used early, to undermine our guys, and they were very effective. I'm not going to let that happen to Jim (Florio), so we've kept at least one negative ad going all the time."

That may make sense as a tactic, but it's like the merchant who sticks a "fire sale" sign in the window and just keeps it there. Eventually, people figure out that he's selling shoddy goods.

Unless and until the politicians and their hired guns recognize that the unremitting negativism of their ad campaigns despoils the very process in which they are inviting the voters to take part, I think the public is going to be increasingly turned off. And the public will be right.

Warped



Tupperware for the White House

By DICK WEST
United Press International

WASHINGTON — The wife of a president never knows when her husband might bring 220 of his closest friends home for a state dinner. And certainly it is better to have 220 place settings than for some of the guests to have to borrow mess kits or eat off the bare doilies.

So who can blame Mrs. Ronald Reagan for ordering \$209,508 worth of new china for the White House?

After all, as the president pointed out at this latest news conference, china does get broken, even at the executive mansion.

Agreeing that Mrs. Reagan got a "bum rap" on the matter does not, however, preclude our having a national debate on tableware policy.

The next time a first family finds there aren't enough cups, saucers, plates and butter dishes to go around there may not be an "anonymous donor" standing by to pick up the bill for replacements.

The cost of restocking the White House

china cabinet might well fall upon us ordinary taxpayers. It is therefore proper that we have a voice in how the money is spent.

One compromise the president's wife might consider is giving a Tupperware party. I feel certain the firm would make a substantial contribution to the White House pantry in exchange for the exposure its products would receive.

The beauty of such an arrangement is that Tupperware is guaranteed against breakage. State dinners, press receptions, private gatherings, it could survive them all.

Tupperware, unfortunately, does not make table settings as such. It specializes in refrigerator containers for storing leftovers and the like. However, it does offer such table items as coffee mugs, cream and sugar servers and water tumblers. Moreover, a woman who arranges Tupperware home parties in this area assured me the lids of some containers can double as serving dishes.

And talk about cheap! The White House

could buy a Tupperware lid for a fraction of the \$950 a place setting of the new china would cost.

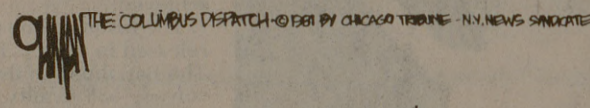
The main advantage, though, would be insurance against embarrassment.

Can you imagine how chagrined the first White House guest to break a new plate?

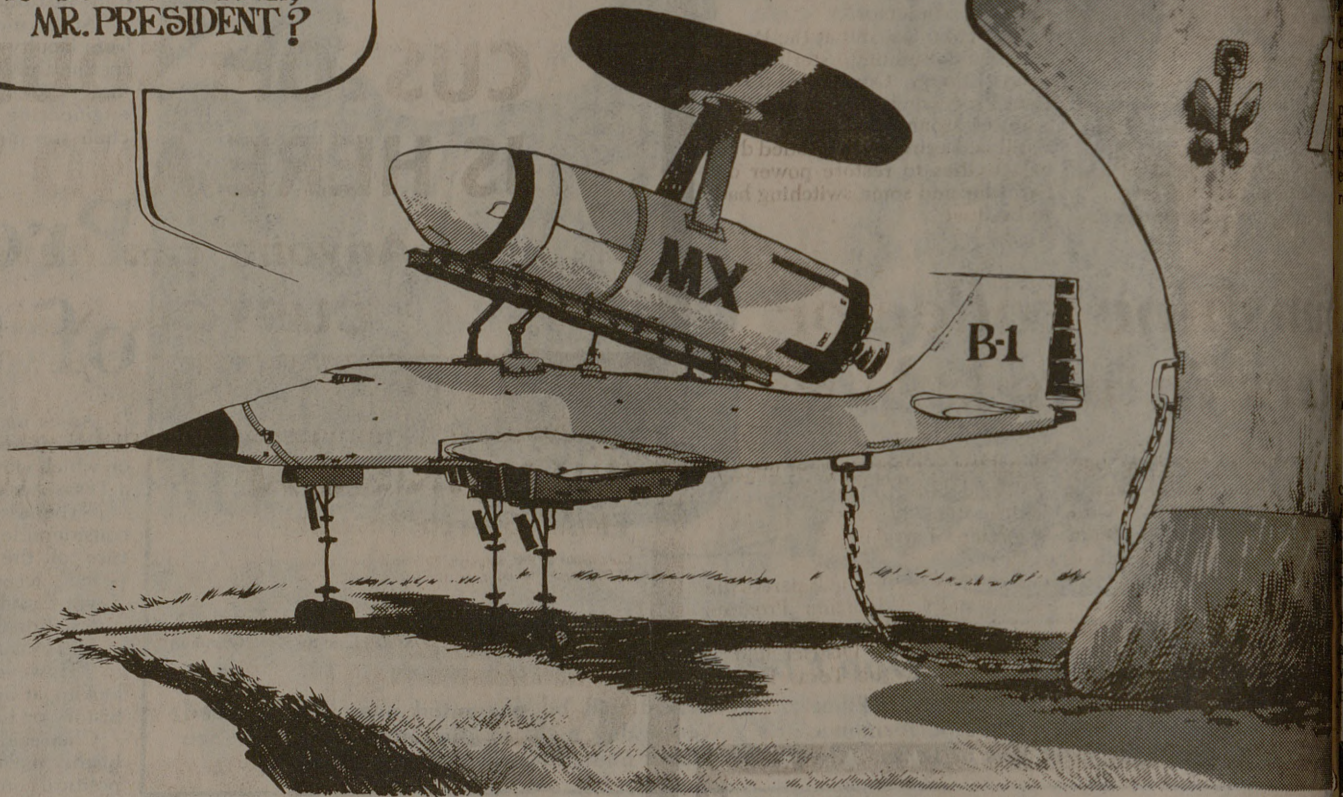
I don't care how hard the host and hostess tried to pretend nothing had happened, an accident like that could have the makings of a diplomatic contretemps.

Would the plate-breaker return home country feeling kindly disposed toward the United States? Or would he be so seared in his brain that he would enroll in a course in remedial passing and harbor dark thoughts about America's name was mentioned?

Don't ask. With Tupperware, by contrast, House dinner guests could even play bee with the serving dishes without mortification.



...DO YOU THINK THIS IS ALL GONNA FLY, MR. PRESIDENT?



It's your turn

Students suffer from overcrowding

Editor:

This is an open letter to the Board of Regents:

I am writing this letter, hoping to get it completed before another power blackout occurs.

Over the past decade, this school has experienced uncontrolled, phenomenal growth. Years ago, this great school should have limited enrollment so that inconveniences would be lessened. Alas, the Regent's desire to accumulate more research money by increasing student enrollment has serious side effects. Power goes off often (6 times in the past year); leaking faucets abound. Some classrooms (like my Math 405 class) don't have enough good chairs for students because many are broken and haven't been fixed since school started. This school has many friendly people, but I don't want this school to become another Michigan (ie 65,000 students).

Unfortunately, we, the students, are the ones who will suffer. The Board of Regents seems insensitive to the student body, and

would prefer catering to the rich "old Ags." Remember, we are all Aggies.

Richard Leonardon
Aston Hall

If the name fits ...

Editor:

After reading Dan Garcia's letter that

appeared in The Battalion on Friday, I know why the University of Houston earned the name "Cougar High." Ags. I'm glad that we have enough class and integrity that we do not need to write petty letters opposing school's newspaper and have eat our words later. That good old Ag Spirit brings us above such acts of immaturity and sportsmanship. Keep up the good work Army!

Carol Finley

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.

LETTERS POLICY

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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