

## Slouch By Jim Earle



"Why is it always my roommate who is the Christmas freak?"

## Preserve symbol by working on stack

Editor:

For three years, I have heard nothing but attacks on Bonfire. Let me ask this: do any of the critics *work* on Bonfire? If not, and I doubt many of them have, how can they possibly understand the facts of Bonfire, let alone the feelings it evokes after long hours of work.

Yes, I work on it. Last year I put in my class hours on the stack, a fact that I am extremely proud of and intend to repeat, while maintaining a 3.2 GPR and 15 hours. (While I'm at it, I challenge all the other non-regs to do the same. We need the help.)

Yes, the wood in Bonfire is wasted. Without Bonfire the wood would be wasted anyway. TMPA strip mines the area we

acre site (Granada) has provided almost all the wood for two years and there is some left besides the cedar and pecan which we were not allowed to cut.

The death of Wylie Jopling was an immense tragedy, as is the death of any Aggie, or any fellow human at all. I did not know Wylie, but I know several of his friends and none felt that he would have wanted Bonfire to suffer because of his death. The accident itself was only remotely connected to Bonfire. There are tractor accidents every day; this one just happened on the way to cut for Bonfire. Should we ban tractors? There are risks in everything. Bonfire has had a truly remarkable safety record for the type of work that it is, two very unrelated deaths in its long history.

I can understand why watching a huge pile of wood burn does not leave one with a great sense of camaraderie, satisfaction, or school spirit; it doesn't do all that much for me either. Satisfaction is gained by working on it.

I have met many people, some of whom I now call friends, while working on Bonfire. Spending six hours in the cold rain, in the middle of the night, running little wires around big logs, with total strangers doing the same thing, is camaraderie. Seeing thousands of people unknowingly appreciate your work gives a feeling of quiet pride. Building Bonfire for no other reason than school pride, helping your fellow Ag, and meeting a lot of good people is the true Aggie Spirit.

If you have never worked on Bonfire, do not criticize it, for the real meaning of Bonfire is known only to those who give of themselves in its construction. If you have worked and do not like it, let those of us who wish to preserve a symbol, and it cannot be argued that Bonfire is not such a symbol to the public, of A&M's spirit and traditions, to do so at your own "expense."

Charles Barr '83

## Alfonse and Gaston in Washington

By JERELYN EDDINGS

United Press International

WASHINGTON — In a spirit of politeness reminiscent of a comedy routine, the White House and Congress stood in the doorway of a budget decision for weeks waiting for someone to step in first.

The refusal of either side to move brought work on a budget-balancing program to a screeching halt.

It was in the true spirit of the old Alfonse-Gaston comedy team, whose politeness in the doorway — "After you, Alfonse." "No, after you, Gaston." — kept either from going anywhere.

President Reagan has proposed a three-year package of \$115 billion in budget cuts and tax increases designed to balance the federal budget by 1984. But it ran into such opposition from Republicans as well as Democrats that GOP leaders went scurrying to work out something that could pass Congress.

Senate Republican leaders came up with an alternative package, but it included even bigger budget cuts and such large and controversial tax increases — coming on the heels of Reagan's heralded tax cut — the leaders decided they needed the president's nod to win over reticent colleagues.

Reagan, meanwhile, was silent for weeks. He had spent his entire presidential campaign railing against high government

taxes. How could he turn around and support raising them?

Treasury Secretary Donald Regan argued against it.

But budget director David Stockman took the position that another campaign pledge would be jeopardized — the balanced budget — unless spending is cut drastically or the government gets new revenues from somewhere now that personal and business taxes have been slashed.

The GOP was in a position of either advocating unpopular tax increases in an election year or admitting to the public that it — just like the previous Democratic administration — could not figure out how to reach that cherished goal of a balanced budget.

Democrats realized the Republicans were in a spot and they turned up the heat with calls for White House guidance on what it wanted next.

"The White House is clearly going to have to play a role. I am not prepared to move until I know where the White House stands," said Rep. Leon Panetta (D-Calif.), a leading Democrat on the House Budget Committee.

Administration officials, who worked with congressional Republicans privately, said it would be unusual and "inappropriate" for them to tell Congress what to do at this stage.

They noted they had already revised

their budget figures once — in September — and indicated the next step should be taken on Capitol Hill.

But Republicans pleaded for White House guidance, and their pleas could only be viewed as sincere — if not desperate.

Pushed by Democrats to spell out the GOP position, Rep. Delbert Latta of Ohio, the senior Republican on the House Budget Committee, said: "Until the administration passes the word to me, I'm not in a position to take a position."

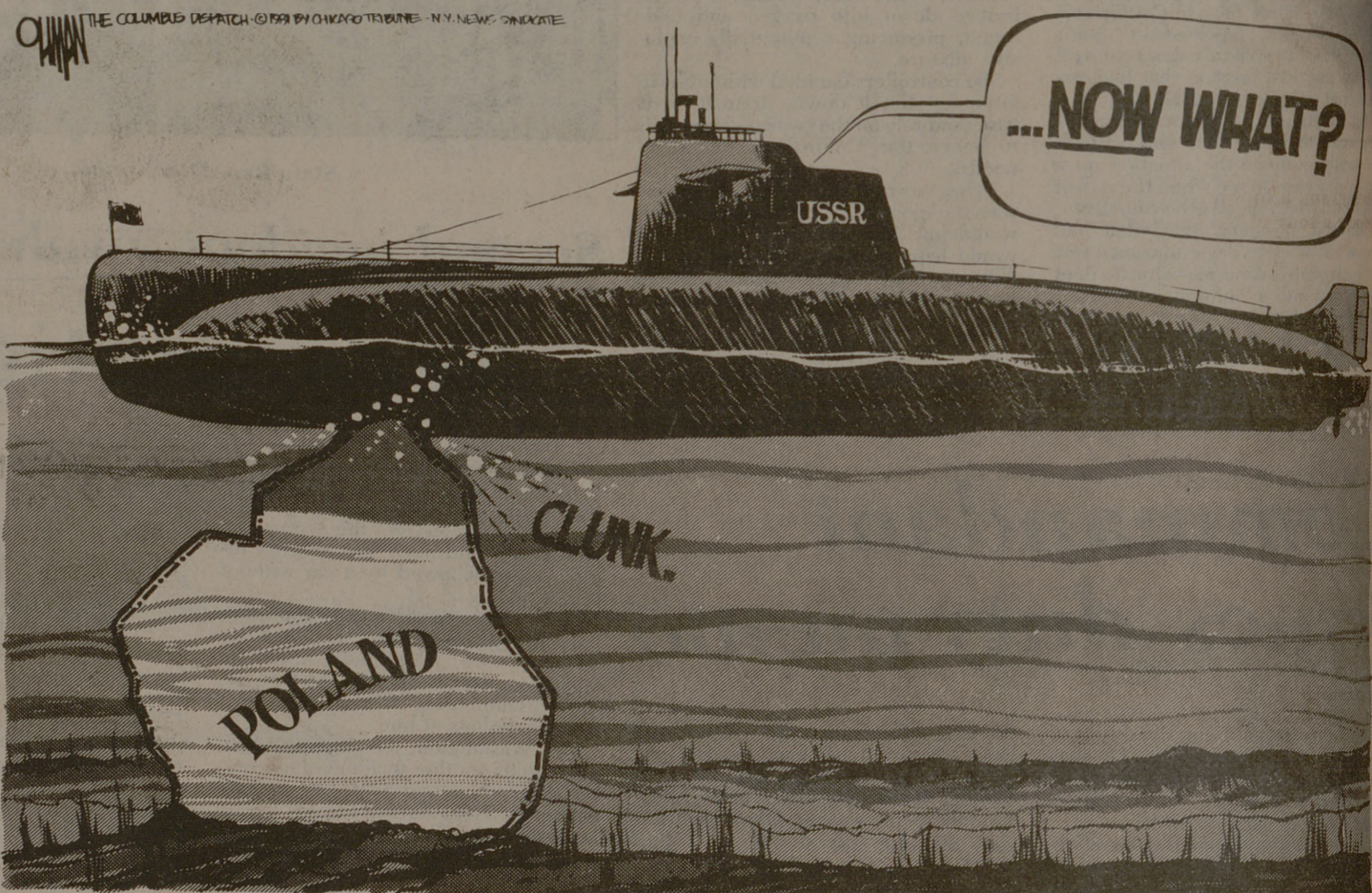
Besides, Republican congressmen argued the House was still controlled by Democrats. They said it was the Democrats' job to put forth a proposal and not wait for the administration.

In the Senate, which is controlled by Republicans, Budget Committee Chairman Pete Domenici (R-N.M.) seemed ready to move on the package he developed. But after talks with key administration officials, and after getting the word from Republicans that they were not anxious to be out front on this, Domenici put his plans on hold.

He, too, said it would be good to hear from Reagan.

The Alfonse-Gaston act closed in Washington Friday when the president told Republican leaders that he was sticking with his plan. He was prepared to risk an unbalanced budget rather than raise taxes.

It was, after all, just a goal, he said.



## Reagan hailed as communicator

By DICK WEST

United Press International

WASHINGTON — As he demonstrated again at a news conference this week, President Reagan's best subject is communication.

Just as Abraham Lincoln became known as "The Great Emancipator" and William Jennings Bryan is remembered as "The Great Commoner," Reagan is being hailed as "The Great Communicator."

Last summer, White House aides credited the president's communications with Congress with passage of his economic program. That perhaps was overstating the case a bit.

As Speaker Tip O'Neill pointed out, voting for a three-year tax cut is not one of the more agonizing duties a congressman performs.

Nevertheless, there is no disputing that Reagan's communications with the striking air controllers came across loud and clear. "White House to Control Tower. Over and out."

In communication jargon, this meant: "The strike is over and you guys are out of a job."

More recently, Reagan was given high marks for his communications with senators about the sale of AWACS to Saudi Arabia. And now the presidential powers are being tested again — this time with respect to proposals that he "enhance revenues" to balance the budget.

For an indication of whether Reagan will once more prevail, let us try to imagine how well he might do on the rabbit test.

Remember the famous "swimming rabbit" incident during the Carter administration? In hindsight, we can see it was perhaps the turning point in Jimmy Carter's political career.

After what was described as "a fairly robust-looking" amphibious rabbit attacked Carter's fishing boat in Georgia in the spring of 1979, the White House refused to release photographs taken of the assault.

That bit of stonewalling created suspicion that the White House was trying to cover something up. From then on, Carter's political fortunes went downhill.

With a better communicator in the White House, the results might have been different. Here is how some other presidents might have handled the incident.

Lyndon Johnson would have been dropping his pants to show photographers the scar where the bunny bit him.

Richard Nixon would have ordered the Air Force to drop 90,000 tons of bombs on the fishing hole on the chance of hitting the rabbit.

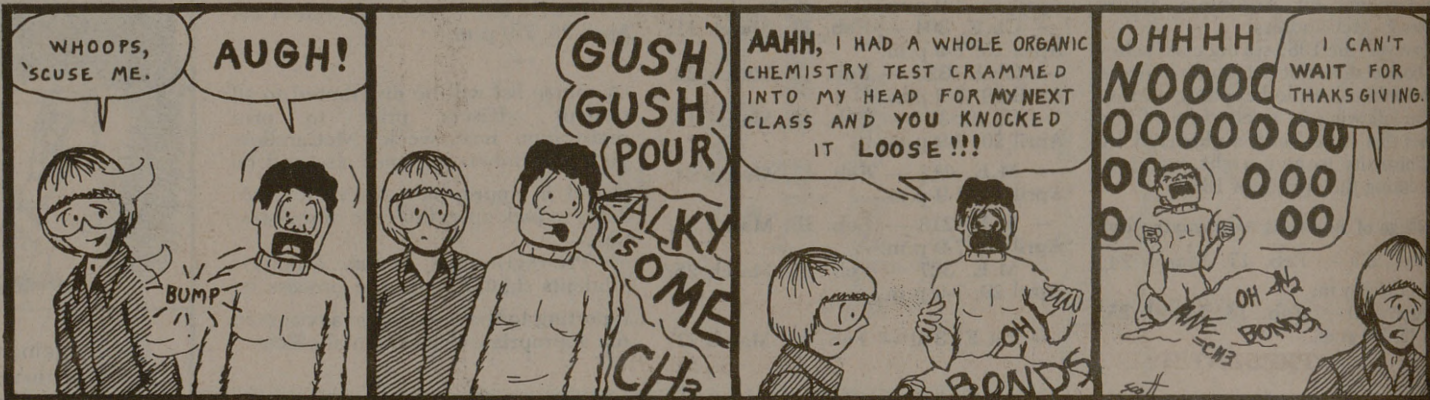
If Jack Kennedy had been in the White House, the rabbit would have changed into the type of bunny one sees in *Playboy*.

Jerry Ford, on the other hand, would have swung at the rabbit with his fishing rod and hit his head on the bottom of the boat.

I have every confidence that Reagan would pass the test with flying colors. Skilled communicator that he is, he would simply adjust his news conference format.

Instead of pulling the names of reporters out of a hat to determine the order of questioning, Reagan would pull out a rabbit.

## Warped



By Scott McCullar

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