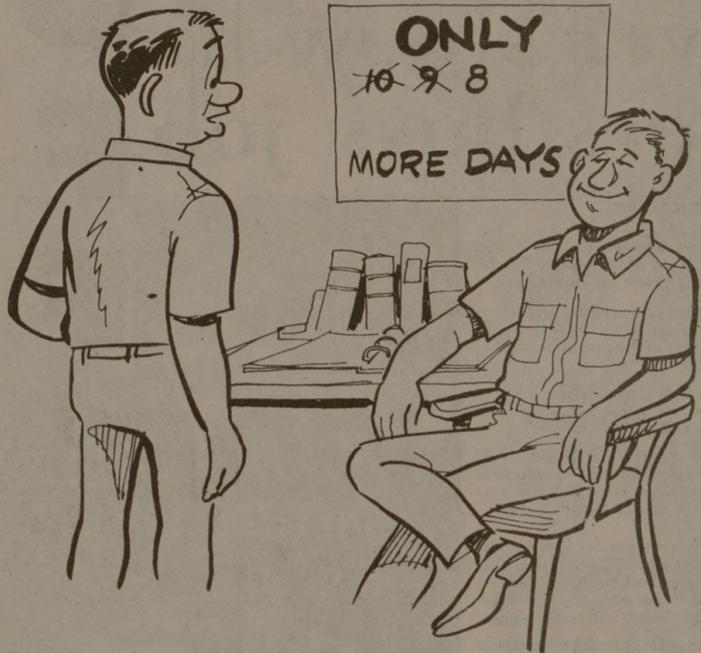


Slouch By Jim Earle



"When I suggested that we decorate our room, I had a little more in mind than that!"

Apathy is everywhere — but nobody really cares

If there were such a thing as an apathy meter, this campus would be registering record-breaking levels of disinterest in school this week.

Everyone came back from Thanksgiving full of turkey and dressing and looking forward to Christmas. But, you can't get too excited about Christmas because finals week looms between you and Saint Nick.

The two weeks before finals seem to serve only as extra time to complain about how much there is to do and how little desire you have to do it.

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away, school started in mid-September and the fall semester ended *after* the Christmas holidays.

Good students opened textbooks during Christmas, not presents. The post-holiday depression and inability to gear-up and accomplish anything in the two weeks before finals could not be overcome. So the University in its wisdom decided to have finals before Christmas.

Angelique Copeland



Now, we go home for the Thanksgiving holiday and come back and have two weeks to waste before finals. There's a point to be made in there somewhere.

For those graduating in December, the feeling is more desperate than apathetic. Seniors only have one week instead of two to finish everything they have put off all semester.

And it's impossible to concentrate on studying with the din of holiday merry-makers reminding you how many shopping days are left till Christmas. As if students have the time or money to shop. Someone should broadcast an hourly countdown of how many study

hours are left until finals. Christmas shopping and decorating just provide one more excuse for not studying.

I'm not really a Scrooge at all. Even if the only holiday before Christmas was Ground Hog's day, I'd probably complain that the crowds around the burrow were distracting and I'd spent all my time preparing for Ground Hog's Day parade. I'm not like that.

The only good thing about the Thanksgiving, pre-finals depression is that it seems to be affecting the professors as well as the students. They're piling on the material that didn't get covered earlier in the semester during giving tests, but at least they're genuinely apathetic about it.

But take heart. In two weeks you'll have forgotten it all — everything at least until your grades come out. At that time your parents will be bragging about you in the holiday spirit.

Besides, while Santa has lots of things about crying and pouting, he never lets you had to have a 4.0.

Reagan's ambassadors anger Foreign Service

By STEVE GERSTEL
United Press International

WASHINGTON — At the present pace, President Reagan is racing toward a dubious record which can only infuriate America's Foreign Service.

More so than any president in the last quarter century or so, Reagan is going outside the Foreign Service to appoint U.S. ambassadors.

Reagan's record, less than a year into his first term, is incomplete. But the signals are there.

The practice of naming noncareer ambassadors, very often to the most coveted posts, long has rankled Foreign Service officers — many of whom spend their lives moving to the top.

One of their best friends in the Senate, along with Sen. Clairborne Pell, D-R.I., is Charles Mathias, the Maryland Republican, who represents many of them living in Washington's bedroom suburbs.

Once again, Mathias has offered legislation under which a president would be limited in naming non-career ambassadors — no more than 15 percent.

Similar legislation, adopted by the Senate, was watered down before it reached the White House and the figure was set at 50 percent — a mark no recent president has exceeded, anyway.

Mathias feels such legislation would "improve the morale of the of the career Foreign Service officers and bring greater professional competence to the conduct of U.S. diplomacy."

In a statement, Mathias said he was not implying the country always has been badly served by non-career ambassadors.

As outstanding examples, he lists

Ellsworth Bunker, John Sherman Cooper, Averell Harriman and Shirley Temple Black.

Mathias certainly should have included Mike Mansfield, the ambassador to Japan.

Mansfield, a student of the Far East, first was named by President Carter and asked to stay on by Reagan. From all accounts, he is the most successful envoy to Japan in recent times.

Despite the occasional noncareer diplomat who makes it as a top-notch ambassador, Mathias feels that "too often political appointees lack the experience and expertise to represent competently America's complex interests abroad.

"Ambassadorial posts as often granted in exchange for political support or campaign contributions," he said. "Our national security is too important to be subordinated to the patronage requirements of partisan politics."

In fairness, Mathias should have pointed out that some posts, notably the Court of St. James in London, demand a great deal of personal wealth to handle in correct fashion.

Career ministers, for the most part, do not have that kind of money. Political contributors do.

So far, Reagan has named 81 ambassadors, of which 36 — 44 percent — have come from outside the Foreign Service. Only John Kennedy, who chose non-career ambassadors 42 percent of the time, ranks close.

Figures provided by Mathias indicate the percentage of noncareer ambassadors has declined. Eisenhower and Nixon, who picked the most in recent times, chose 32 percent.

tation are those of the editor or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M University administrators or faculty members, or of the Board of Regents.

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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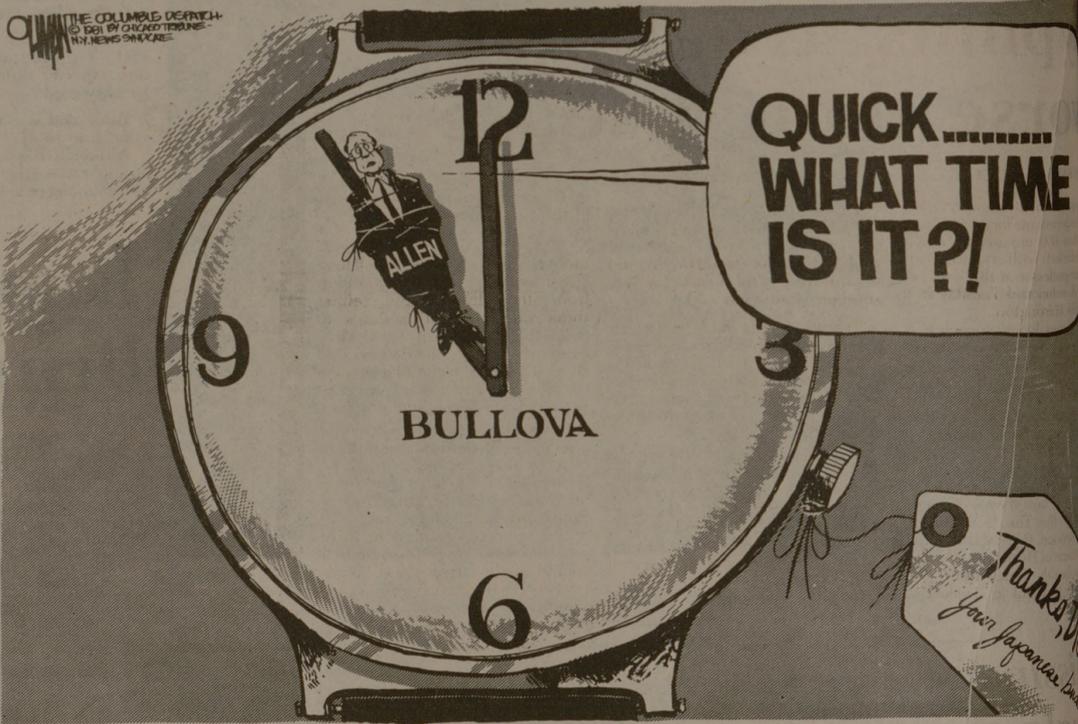
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And no partridges, please, either in or out of pear trees

By DICK WEST
United Press International

WASHINGTON — If you look back over your shoulder, you can see that another Christmas shopping season is gaining on us.

Filled with good cheer, or whatever, you naturally want to be as helpful as possible to relatives and friends who might have your name on their gift list.

One way to make shopping easier for them is to compose and circulate a "Christmas don't list."

The counterpart of a "want list," a "don't list" contains an inventory of items you don't want anyone to give you for Christmas. By browsing through a few Yuletide gift catalogs, I have already managed to compile a formidable array.

— Don't give me a cotton-polyester

T-shirt imprinted to resemble a tuxedo jacket, complete with ruffled shirtfront, cummerbund and boutonniere. I seldom dress for dinner.

— Don't give me a "life-size, soft-sculpture roommate" that can sit up by itself in a chair and is washable enough to put in the shower. My neighbors are too nosy as it is.

— Don't give me a "talking alarm clock" that says things like, "It's now 6:15, please hurry!" If there is one thing I can't abide, it's recorded nagging.

— Don't give me a fifth of 1040 motor oil in a wine bottle with a label that reads, "Persian Gulf '59." My car doesn't need vintage foreign oil. It runs very well on the cheap, domestic variety you can buy in gallon jugs.

— Don't give me, at \$79.50 each, a matching set of weather instruments,

including thermometer, hygrometer and barometer in black aluminum casings. I like surprises of the type provided by U.S. Weather Service casts.

— Don't give me a \$22,698 diamond-capped, solid gold pen that couldn't afford the ink for a red pen.

— Don't give me a \$330 "remote control car starter" that lets you start your car before you get within range of your auto has been rigged with wires attached to the ignition wires. If my car is in, it takes the element of a dynamite blast to get it started in cold weather.

— Don't give me a \$149 portable shower. My dog insists on taking a shower.

— Don't give me a "complete size disco dance floor" that is "teed "creep resistant."

the small society

by Brickm



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