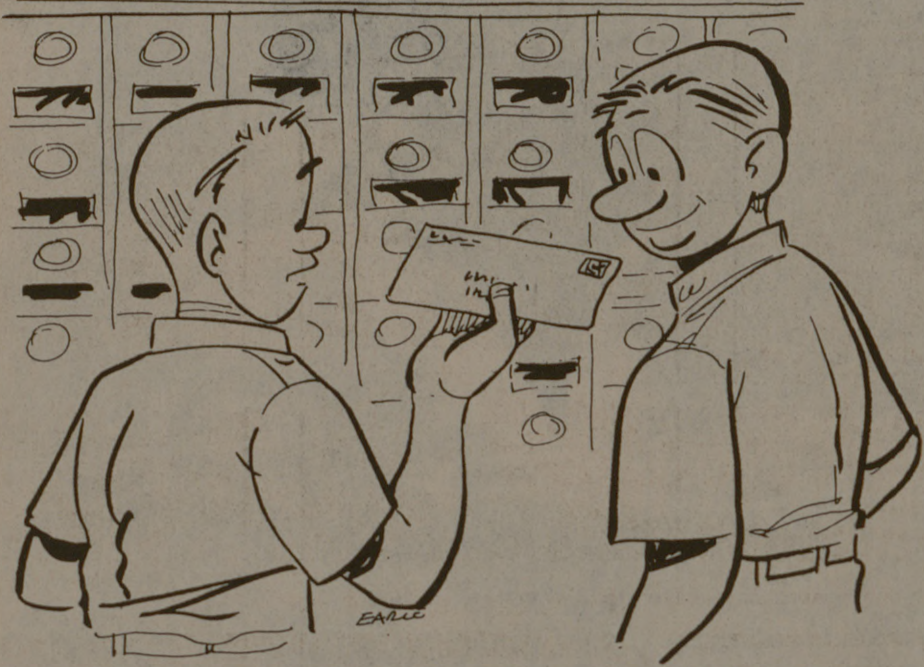


Slouch By Jim Earle



"My letter home came back saying it was undeliverable, and no forwarding address. Probably just a post office mistake, but then maybe"

Book discusses actions of political committees

By ARNOLD SAWISLAK
United Press International

WASHINGTON — A California professor has written a book praising political action committees, which will be greeted by some in this town like a defense of diphtheria.

In "A Nation of Associations," Dr. Alfred Balitzer of Claremont College wrote that PACs, as the business, labor and issue-oriented groups that raise campaign funds for favored candidates are called, are the Congressional Church or the Democratic Party.

This conclusion collides with that of most Democratic and some Republican officeholders, who contend that the explosive growth of PACs threatens to immobilize American politics in a snarl of single interest issues. They say the purpose of these groups is to buy government.

Balitzer's book argues that PACs will not endanger but enhance the political system.

He quotes at length from James Madison in the Federalist Papers and says, "... the more political committees that are generated, the greater the multiplicity of interests that will be promoted and thus, the more individuals that will find a home in the political system."

Balitzer says many of the major social and political reforms of the last two centuries in the United States began as single interest movements.

His point is that if it was legitimate for the abolitionists to campaign against proslavery lawmakers 125 years ago, it is no less so for the Moral Majority and the ProLife move-

ment today to form political action committees and seek election of candidates friendly to their goals.

It is a good debating point, as is his reply to people whose causes are being impaled: They should organize their own committees and do battle on the field of ideas. However, in the case of PACs, there are some other points to examine.

First, even Balitzer concedes that the main function of PACs today is to raise money for election campaigns. PACs today are not trying to persuade the opposition or "educate" the public; they simply are trying raise and spend dollars to help elect candidates who will vote their way on the issues they care about.

Just as the public may ask whether the individual who makes huge campaign contributions is trying to "buy" a public official who will do his bidding, it would seem just as proper to ask whether similar amounts of money from groups interested in specific issues have a similar goal.

Why don't these groups use their money to publicize their arguments rather than to support candidates who already agree with them?

There is no doubt that any group that wants to support candidates for public office has every right to do so. But for Professor Balitzer to clothe all such activities in the soft glow of republican righteousness and democratic pluralism may betray a level of naivete surprising even from the most sheltered academic.

Needed: first-rate justice system

1982 is on its way, and although folks here may not know it, it's decision time in Brazos County, Texas, U.S.A.

The decision: are Brazos County taxpayers willing to settle for a second-rate criminal justice system or will they demand the finest brand of justice money can buy? In recent months, jurors have indicated they prefer the latter by returning stiffer sentences for individuals convicted of crimes. Crooks in Brazos County are no longer going to get off easy, the jurors say.

That's fine for now, but in about another year jurors may rarely have their say in court if something is not done soon to ease the burden of the county's two district courts. Presently, the courts are plagued by rapidly increasing backlogs of cases, and the future promises no relief.

For as prosecutors are forced to contend with almost 200 cases more each year, as they were in 1981, most likely fewer and fewer cases will ever reach the trial stage. Instead, an increasing number of them will be pleaded out.

Brazos County District Attorney Travis Bryan III has expressed his personal distaste for plea bargaining, calling it a second-rate brand of justice. When deals are cut, criminals usually receive lighter penalties than a jury probably would have returned, he says. In fact, he has made an experimental move to do away with plea bargaining.

But still, he admits, something has to give. The county's district attorney and his

Marcy Boyce



four assistants can handle only so many cases before they are forced by the Speedy Trial Act to begin plea bargaining to dispose of some of the cases more quickly.

Taxpayers need not settle for such second-rate criminal justice, however, there is an alternative — to push for the creation of another district court and demand top-grade justice for the county.

Another court would mean at least one, maybe two, additional prosecutors and another judge for the county. Such additional manpower at the courthouse would tremendously ease the demands being made on present prosecutors and judges and thus expedite the disposal of cases.

And for the taxpayers who are concerned about their security and their families', the estimated \$170,000 yearly expense of operating another district court would be nominal, especially when construction

costs will not be a factor. The \$10-million courthouse expansion project, now on the way, will have space for three additional courtrooms.

But time is crucial. Floundering in decision only will prolong a resolution of the problem. And the courts' backlogs will continue to increase 50 to 100 cases per year.

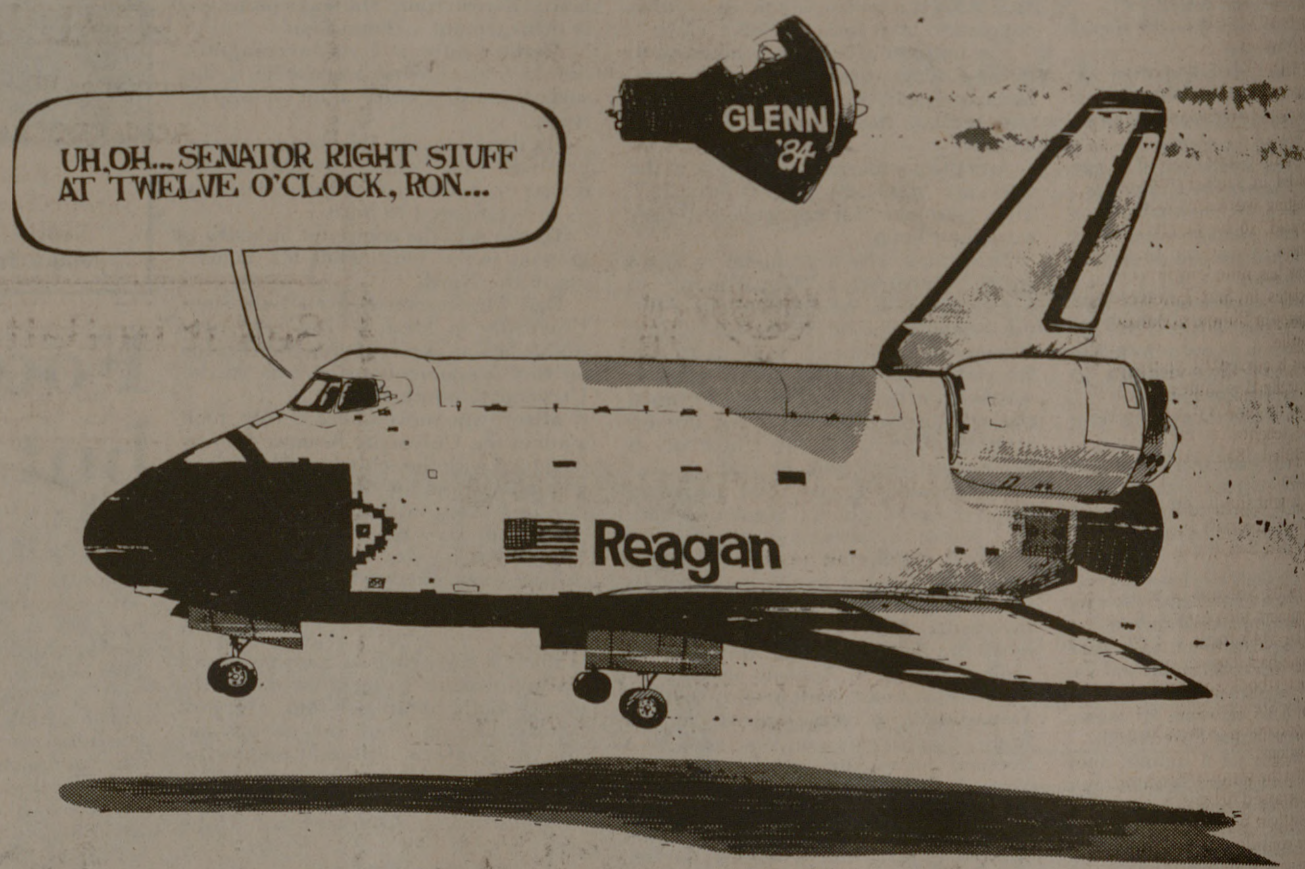
Only state legislators can create another district court, but it is highly unlikely they will do so here unless Brazos County first made a case for itself during the legislative session in 1983.

This year has but 16 days remaining. 1983 will soon be here. So now is the time for tax payers to come forth and in voices let their elected officials know their concern about the future of the county's district courts.

Contact the county commissioners; they will be ultimately responsible for seeing that the courts are financed. More importantly, state Rep. Bill Price, D-28th District, said enlisting the Commissioners Court's support would be a key factor in Brazos County's case for another court. Without it, the county would be handicapped, he said.

With a 61-percent population increase from 1970 to 1980, Brazos County is growing out all over. And if precautions are not taken immediately to handle the overflow in the courts, individuals best looked upon as busting free, virtually un-

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It's your turn

Puckett review distorts music facts

Editor:

I am surprised that the editors would condescend to print such tripe as that written by Daniel Puckett, who appears to be a pseudo music reviewer. In his article of December 10, "Go-Gos bring back '60s" he expresses biased opinions and distorted facts that totally destroy any credibility a reader might have accorded his article. He says, "... and I found hippies revolting and most of that decade's music abominable ..."

First of all, I don't believe anyone cares to hear Mr. Puckett's views on hippies in a music review. Secondly, as to the "abominable" music released in the '60s... well, maybe he's right, with groups like the Moody Blues, Grateful Dead, Kinks, Byrds, Rolling Stones, Who, Bob Dylan, Beatles ...

Another of Mr. Puckett's dubiously documented facts is stated previously, "They (LPs from the '60s) all had one or two good songs and the rest of the tracks were total dreck." Taking the Beatles as the epitome of popular music in the '60s, maybe Mr. Puckett would care to point out the "one or two good songs" on some of the following albums so we mortals could finally have the definitive word as to what is "dreck." "Rubber Soul," "Revolver," "Sgt. Pepper," "Magical Mystery Tour," "Yellow Submarine," "Abbey Road," "Let It Be" ...

Susan Bos Keathley Hall

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

Elves give out candy

Editor:

Studying for finals is extremely mind boggling — especially in a library filled with wall-to-wall students. The four people who passed out candy canes Monday night with cheerful greetings of "Merry Christmas and Good Luck on Finals" really lightened up the atmosphere. These "elves" spread both the Aggie and Christmas spirit. Thanks a bunch and Merry Christmas to y'all too!

Barbara Berryman
Angela Dodd
Spence Hall

Basketball fans needed

Editor:

Last Thursday I was one of the few people who went to the basketball game to see Texas A&M play Sam Houston. The Ags won 81-53 to extend their record to 2-0. I got to the game just before the tip-off so I expected to get bad seats, but to my surprise, half of the Coliseum was empty. The students who were there sat next to the band and tried to raise hell but there wasn't

enough noise to drown out the Aggie fans. That's not like Aggies. Texas definitely has a chance to win the conference this year, but they can't do it without fan support. Everyone knows that the can change the momentum of a game team in a matter of seconds. The fan's major role in the outcome of any game especially basketball, because the Ags are usually pretty close and at any time other team out. I'm giving my support to urge other Ags to do the same so Steve Metcalf can have another successful season.

Chris We

Remember: drive safely

Editor:

This is just a friendly note to remind you to please drive home safely for the next few days this week.

Too many people have been killed on highway during the holiday season due to excessive speeding. Please Ags, don't come another statistic. Drive carefully and enjoy a safe holiday season.

Mark L

the small society

by Brickman



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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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