

A pictorial history of 1983 fiscal budget

by Dick West

United Press International
WASHINGTON — By now you might be thinking that President Reagan's fiscal 1983 budget has been analyzed every way possible.

If so, you underestimate the range of the analysts.

There remains one small void I shall endeavor to fill posthaste. Here, then, is a review of the budget's artistic qualities:

Basically, there are two ways of contemplating a budget.

One way is to study the numbers and try to make sense of the arithmetical projections.

Or, if multi-placed digits make your eyes glaze over and your head swim, you can skip the ciphers and simply look at the pictures.

Stern realities compel us to conclude that nobody really understands all those figures. Even David Stockman, the statistical-minded budget director, conceded as much in a magazine interview last year.

Visual aids, therefore, are highly important in putting a budget message across. It is in the field of graphics that the 1983 compilation shows perhaps the most room for improvement.

As in the past, budget artists leaned heavily on three types of graphs to illustrate the situations we are up against. I think of them as "mountain range," "skyline" and "pie" art.

A "mountain range" graph divides the economy into topographical layers, or strata, reminiscent of the geology of the Mesozoic period and Earth's crust during the Silurian era.

The top line traces the peaks and valleys as they currently exist. It is not symbolism that inspires confidence in the economy.

Indeed, the impression I get is that Death Valley lies just beyond the next peak.

A "skyline" graph depicts an economic condition by means of little skyscrapers that rise to various heights, much as the office buildings in midtown Manhattan.

Anytime I encountered a skyline in the budget, my thoughts flew immediately to the need for urban renewal.

The familiar "pie" graph, for its part, is a circle divided into proportionate segments, much as your old Aunt Mossy used to slice her peach pastries after Sunday dinner.

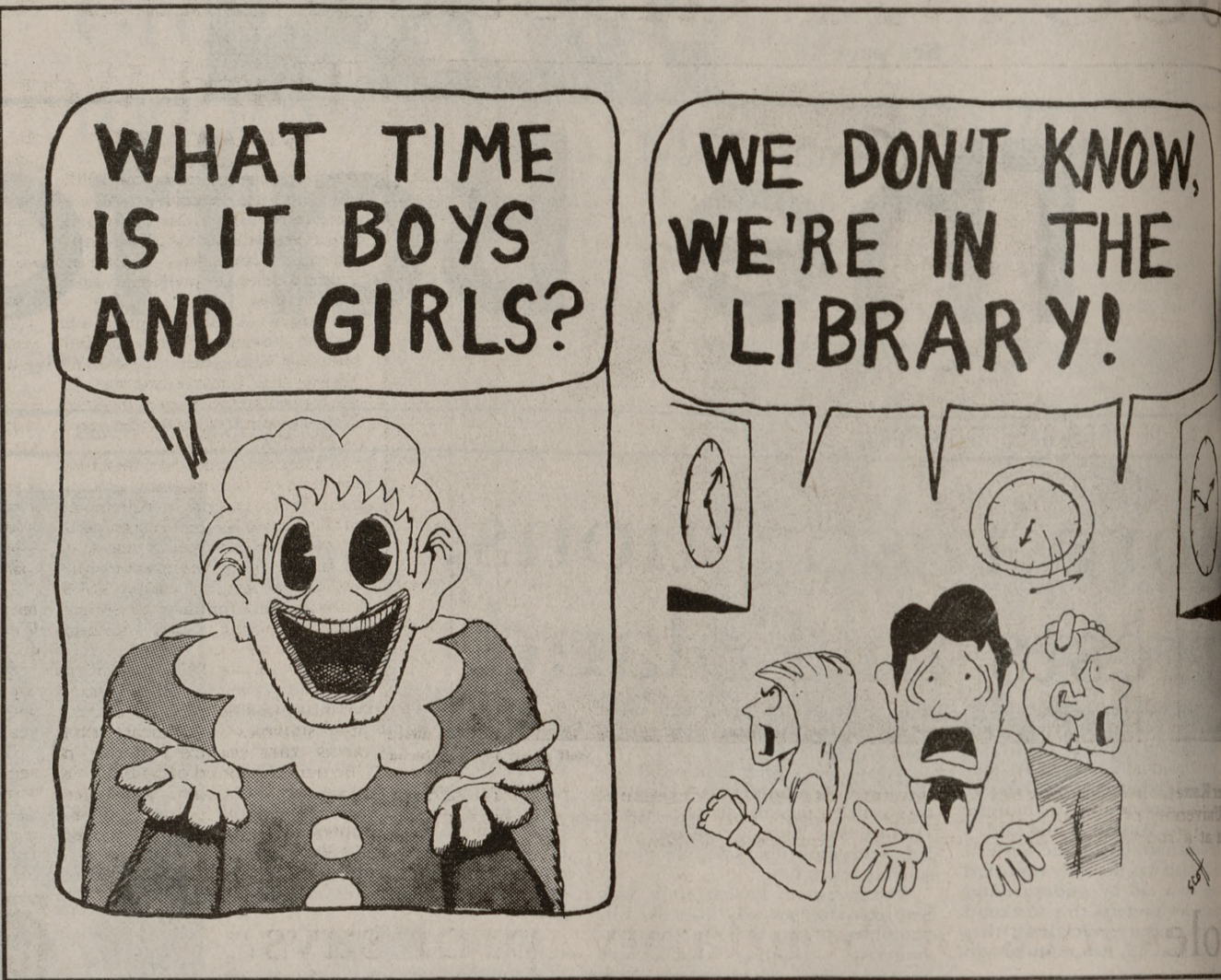
That type of illustration is likewise conducive to dubiety and qualms.

What it does, essentially, is whet a congressman's appetite for a larger piece of the pie. And there goes fiscal erosion out the window.

Clearly, OBM is in need of some new budgetary symbols. One type of graph it might want to consider could be patterned after an astronomer's charting of the firmament.

Over there amidst the nebulae would be the deficit projections. Proposed outlays for education and energy would be represented by "black holes." And shooting comet-like across the chart is the Pentagon budget.

Such a graph would give budgeteers the advantage of precedence. Astronomers don't know what they are doing either.



'Kermit people' newest controversy

Editor:

In response to the young ladies who expressed belief in the omnipotence of Kermit kind, let me say that I disagree with both your sentiments and your supporting argument.

You seem to feel that if a person is tromped by clubfoot Kermit it's his fault for not relinquishing right-of-way simply because they're Kermit and outnumber him. I say you are wrong.

Nowhere in my copy of the student handbook does it say that the Corps has right-of-way, or even right-of-anything. They are merely fellow Aggies who dress differently, and, as such, have no more right to use the campus sidewalks than any other student or group of students. What they did was just plain rudeness!

As for your supporting argument — no, I wouldn't stand in the path of an oncoming train. The railroad company has purchased the right-of-way. They own the tracks and I would be trespassing. Ergo, I would move. The Kermit people, however, have not paid for the privilege; hence I would loathe to grant it simply because I was outnumbered. We all have our pride, you know.

Finally, I hope that if the engineer of your train saw my car stalled on the tracks, he would stop before somebody got hurt.

V.M. Nicoli
Graduate Physics T.A.

Editor:

This is to the unfortunate so-called Aggie who was too stubborn to move out of the way of the Freshman Drill Team. Well Robert L. King, these men of the Freshman Drill Team are nothing else but Aggie Honor. In past history they have won numerous Texas State Championships and National Championships. Incidentally, there are no more National Championships because our Freshman Drill Team kept winning all of them. Your accusations of a lack of honor are quite unwarranted. Our Freshman Drill Team has brought more honor to this University than you ever will my friend. They don't win without hard work and a lot of practice. The Freshman Drill Team practices two hours Monday thru Friday, eight hours on Saturday and six hours on Sunday. They have brought nothing but honor and integrity to this glorious University. Next time, you may exercise a little common sense and consider that it is far easier for one person to move than a tight formation of men carrying ten pound rifles.

E. West Anderson '83

Editor:

In reply to Ms. McCracken's letter about the Kermit people:

Since you are a senior, I would think you would be able to read a sarcastic letter and be able to understand the real meaning of it. But I guess that's much to ask of you so I'll explain.

Mr. King didn't mind being around by the CTs, nor did he mind being "gently nudged" as he was past. He's fully aware of the intricacies of the order drill. What he questioned was outfit's C.O. yelling obscenities at him.

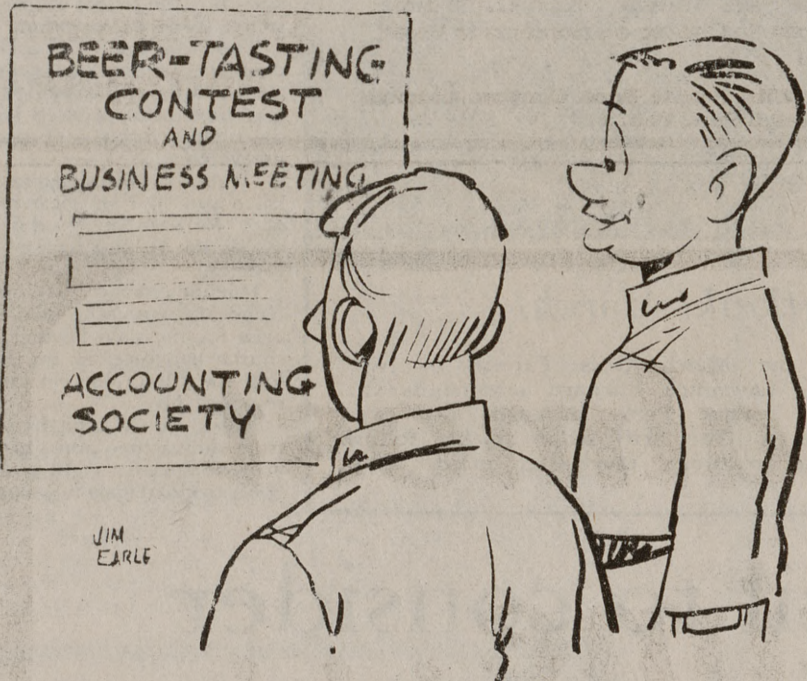
I wouldn't care if the C.O. was Col. Sherill or Dr. Vandiver, he didn't have any right to yell obscenities at another Aggie. Actions by such a "mature" leader only hurt the image of the Corps. I would have been upset by the language the C.O. used also.

I have the utmost respect for the Corps, seeing as I've had three brothers who were all in the Corps and are now officers in the U.S. military. But the actions of a few reckless individuals of lower most non-reg's opinions of the Corps.

CTs, I really wish you all would stop killing yourselves. We're all really proud of you.

Bill Tillotson
Hart Hall

Slouch By Jim Earle



"I think that they have stumbled onto a way of picking up attendance."

Letter: Hood's appointment to Senate 'shocking'

Editor:

Upon reading the February 11 issue of The Battalion, we learned that Cadet Greg Hood had been appointed to the student senate. We are shocked by this action, particularly in light of the fact that no discussion of his appointment was made at any time during the meeting. We do not understand how a student may be suspended for disciplinary reasons one semester and then be allowed to return the next to accept a position in Student Government. In our opinion, Mr. Hood should consider himself lucky to be back at Texas A&M at all. The student senate should feel certain that plenty of outside ridicule will result from their action, and justly so.

Apparently the student senate is doing their best to reaffirm every Aggie joke ever told. Our pride in Texas A&M University runs to the bone and actions such as these lower the reputation of this institution in the eyes of all.

Our suggestion is this: If the action taken by the student senate truly represents the feelings of the student body as it should, let's erect a statue of Cadet Hood and his saber in the south end of Kyle Field for generations of Aggies to come.

Gig 'em.
Billy Lemmons '83
James Turcotte '83

Shorts make their point

Editor:

This is in response to Mr. Pfeiffer who

is having a personal crisis because he was denied the pleasure of viewing the posterior side of the woman in the "For Your Eyes Only" poster.

We regret denying you that excitement. We were not trying to make a social statement. It was merely a PR stunt and apparently it worked. Thanks to you it is drawing more attention than it probably deserves.

By the way, the originals will be shown. Can't wait?
Thank you for your concern.

Tricia Paulas '83
Aggie Cinema PR

Propaganda campaign

Editor:

A letter in the February 2 Battalion from the Organization of Arab Students may signal the start of a propaganda campaign whose theme is stated in the letter: "Even America's oldest friends in the Arab world are beginning to seriously doubt whether the U.S. government can ever cast off the yoke of Zionist control on its foreign policy." Such statements are insulting to Americans as the American ambassador to the United Nations constantly has to point out. The charge of Zionist control is a myth promulgated to express the real complaint of Arab governments: That Arab economic power controls U.N. votes but not the foreign policy of the U.S. government. All international oriented organizations, including the International Student Association at Texas A&M University, are im-

peded in their proper functioning because of militant Arab tactics.

The Texas A&M University community must be concerned that students who are activists for militant Arab propaganda respect the rights of others not to be harassed in their enjoyment of cultural affairs and discussions.

Dr. Emanuel Parzen
College Station

Comparisons unfair

Editor:

Yesterday in The Battalion I read a letter written by a Mr. Murray Moore who responded to a pro-abortion letter. I respect his position on abortion, but the comparisons he made in his letter were unfair and ridiculous. Having an abortion is in no way comparable to murdering "one's aged parents," as he put it. I believe the issue of abortion should be left up to each individual, to decide whether in her conscience it is a moral act. After all, Mr. Moore will never have to worry about being pregnant from a rapist, nor what to do if he was endangering his health by having a child.

However, I agree with Kala Jo Philo; the government has no place in deciding what is moral and what is not. If this occurred, every four years America's morality would change. If Mr. Moore is an ultra-conservative now, I would have hated to hear his political views under Jimmy Carter.

Julie Adams '85
Leggett Hall

Down with sexism

Editor:

Thumbs down to Jim Earle's sexist

cartoon in the Wednesday, February 10 edition of The Battalion.

Wendy Schaffner
Department of Geology

The Battalion

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The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography 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, and the address and phone number of the writer.

Columns and guest editorials are also welcome, but 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, or phone (713) 845-2611.

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