

# Washington serves as political excuse

by Arnold Sawislak  
United Press International

WASHINGTON — There was a mini-flap in these parts recently when Sen. Ted Stevens, the second-ranking Republican leader, vented his spleen on the national capital. "I detest it," said the Alaskan in one of his milder comments.

Stevens' observations upset a number of locals, but those who know the city's history shrugged it off as yet another politician trying to divert attention from some shortcoming of his own by beating on Washington.

Washington has been a whipping town for more than a century. It probably began when the first bureaucrats arrived in 1801 to set up shop in the new national capital, but in any case the idea of blaming Washington certainly had taken hold by 1814 when the British burned the town.

Local militiamen were accused of cowardice then because they ran away from the Redcoats at Bladensburg outside Washington. That did not quite explain how the British got to the suburbs of the national capital practically uncontested, which was because the professional military geniuses in charge fortified the Potomac River approaches to Washington and forgot about the overland route, which the British used. (The Japanese did the same thing to the British in Singapore in World War II.)

In any case, Washington continued in bad odor (literally) past the middle of the 19th century, getting no money for such civic adornments as a sewer system until the 1870s. The city's historians note that this was the period when many members of Congress from Northern states were down on it because it had a lot of South-

ern sympathizers among its residents. The coin flipped in this century when Southern legislators wallowed in horror stories about the effects of racial integration in Washington. Seldom mentioned was the fact that these same people resisted nearly every effort to improve the situation. More recently, Washington listened to Richard Nixon calling the city "the crime capital," to which reputation he contributed with Watergate.

Which brings us to the senator from Alaska, who put the knock on Washington's air quality, street cleaning and crime. The Washington Post then noted that Stevens has lived in and around the capital for 21 of the last 31 years and suggested no one was holding him captive.

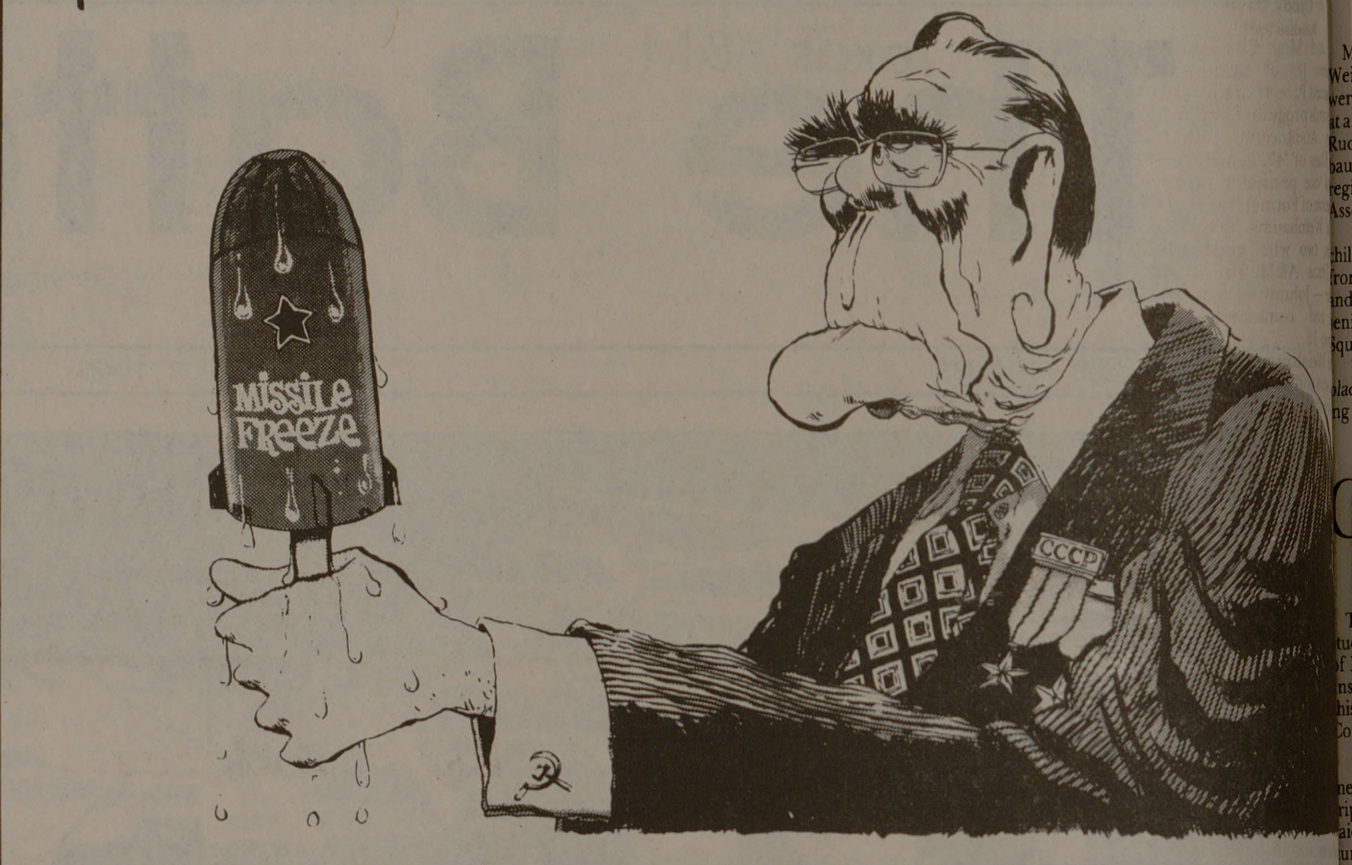
Stevens got the last word, accusing the paper of taking a "cheap shot at a senator from far away who really does not like to be away from home in a city like this."

Touching. But it did not address the original issue, which was a tax deduction of \$75 for each day of session for every member of Congress. This tax break provided members of Congress with deductions of \$19,000 in the tax return due last week.

Some people thought that might be a bit much for people who are paid more than \$60,000 a year plus good benefits and perquisites, but they didn't have a chance to say so until after it became law.

It may be a cheap shot to point it out, but Congress slipped the deduction into an unrelated bill during the pre-Christmas adjournment rush and popped it through to passage with practically no debate. It was during an effort to repeal that bit of legislative legerdemain that Stevens found it relevant to attack Washington.

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# Reagan fumbling federal cost issue

by David S. Broder

WASHINGTON — The cynics are being proved right about one thing, at least. The federalism initiative which President Reagan made the centerpiece of his State of the Union address seems to be going nowhere.

Negotiations between the White House and the governors over a proposed swap, in which the states would take over food stamps and welfare while the federal government took all of Medicaid, have reached an impasse. Work on the other half of the Reagan proposal — plans for a turnback of dozens of federal programs and the tax sources to support them — is far behind schedule. Congressional action in 1982, which always looked chancy, now is unlikely.

As the magazine published by the National Conference of State Legislatures notes, the states may do well to hold the authority they now have. There are a number of major bills pending in Congress — some with administration support — which would extend federal legislative and regulatory authority and preempt state initiatives in these fields.

All of this may seem of no great matter in a time of severe recession and threats to peace. But it strikes me as regrettable that this President, like all his predecessors back to and including Richard, is losing the opportunity he might have had to sort out the jumble of responsibilities that have accumulated in Washington and transfer some of them to states and localities.

The recognition of that lost opportu-

ity lends a bittersweet quality to two reports that crossed the desk last week. One, published by the National Governors Association, cites examples of programs that are under way in many states to spur technological innovation and productivity growth. That effort has been encouraged by conferences held the last two years, under NGA auspices, by a task force headed by two of the brightest of the retiring governors, Michigan's William G. Milliken (R) and California's Edmund G. (Jerry) Brown Jr. (D).

From Georgia's Advanced Technology Entrepreneur Center to Arizona's Center for Engineering Excellence, Brown's survey found at least 88 separate initiatives under way with state leadership. Many involve public-private partnerships.

This is the kind of creativity the Reagan initiative was designed to capture and to spur in a wide variety of domestic program areas.

The second survey, published in State Government quarterly, confirmed my subjective view that there is more and more qualified leadership to tap at the state level. The survey of the background and training of state agency heads was reported by professors F. Ted Hebert of the University of Oklahoma and Deil S. Wright of the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. It clearly demonstrates the growing professionalism of state government.

—The agency heads in 1978 were substantially younger, better educated and

more professionally qualified than their predecessors in a series of surveys going back to 1964.

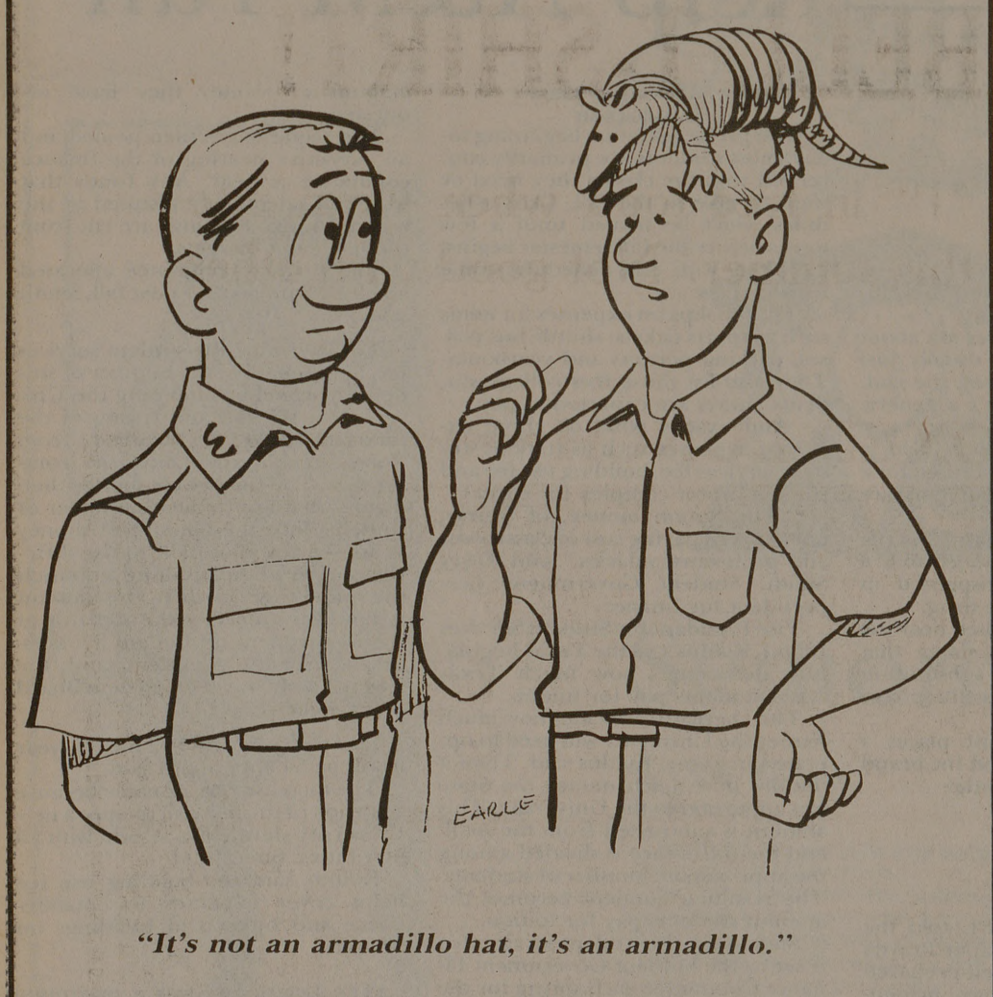
To take a few of the 1964 and comparisons, the proportion of heads with less than a college degree dropped from 34 to 11 percent, with graduate degrees rose from 11 percent to 58 percent.

—The tradition of career progression at the state level. About the agency heads began work in state government before they were 30, and most half reached the top of their agencies before they were 50, most often by a line promotion within their own agency or from another agency in the state.

The numbers of women and minorities among them, while still small, are growing. This does not guarantee their loyalty or sensitivity, of course. As Hebert and Wright say, "no absolute answer is given" to the question of whether states (are) ready to assume greater responsibility... But it is certain that the arguments of an earlier day about the transfer of functions to the state government — arguments that stressed the representativeness and professional character of federal administration — may eventually be undercut by the under way in the states.

My own, less cautious judgment of the public is ahead of the political question. Voters understand especially at tax time) the costs of overburdening the federal bureaucracy. Some of the issue will be grasped, not furnished. President, to his political benefit.

# Slouch By Jim Earle



**The Battalion**

USPS 045 360

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The Battalion is published daily during Texas A&M's fall and spring semesters, except for holiday and examination periods. Mail subscriptions are \$16.75 per semester, \$33.25 per school year and \$35 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.

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# Letters: Symphony review lacking

**Editor:**

The "review" of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra's performance which appeared in Wednesday's Battalion was more a synopsis of the program notes and the audience's reaction than a critical analysis of the performance. Whether the FWSO received a standing ovation from some concertgoers and "lengthy applause" from still more is a trivial point. The OPAS-event audiences will clap for almost anything (as Miss Zimmerman noted), never mind that it's not the end of the 7th movement, where *i* less than *N* = number of movements in a particular piece of music.

Can the Aggie OPAS audiences be persuaded to hold their eager applause until after the end of a musical work? If they get lost in a multimovement piece (assuming that they have read the program), they can always wait until the conductor turns around to receive their applause, or until the pianist stands to commence their enthusiastic clapping. Perhaps OPAS could include a "guide to decorum" in their season ticket mailing, since a sizable proportion of the audience lacks either the sophistication or the sensitivity to realize that they perform a great disservice, both to the artist(s) and to the rest of the listeners with their clappy behavior.

As for the performance on stage, I was disappointed. Maestro Giordano failed to maintain control of the orchestra; focus, tempo, texture, impact and subtlety all suffered. Some members of the brass section were particularly remiss, coming in late and off-pitch in the Brahms.

The FWSO did perform the task of

bringing serious music to this technical institute; for that, I applaud them.

Rodney J. Simmons  
Doctoral Candidate

# Chicks stolen

**Editor:**

This letter may not seem very important to most people but I am deeply disturbed by the thievery that goes on at Texas A&M. I realize that leaving a bike or backpack alone for any length is a temptation for some people but what I had stolen is not of the same kind of value.

I am an Animal Science student taking Animal Nutrition 304 which entails a

three-week experiment with chickens. The experiment is over each week and I must arrange for the removal of the chicks. I thought honesty was a characteristic of all Aggies but apparently wrong. I had made arrangements for the chicks to be well taken care of. And more, they were my responsibility.

These chicks are invaluable to me because I fed and cared for them for weeks, including weekends. I had attached to them and I have been told what I was told was my opinion of whomever stole my chicks, they are distinguishable — each chick has a set of lines on his right foot. If you were kind enough to return them I would be very grateful. My phone number is 3402 after 5 p.m. No questions asked.

# the small society

by Brickman



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