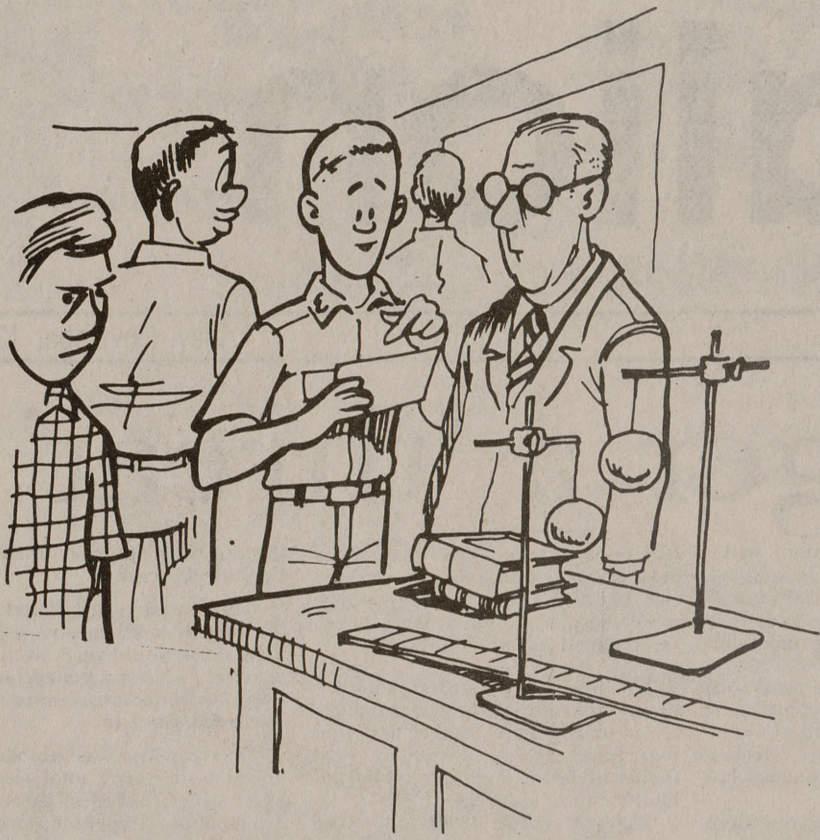


Slouch By Jim Earle



"I've been expecting you to get out the volleyball everyday which makes me wonder if this is physics and not physical education!"

Republican senators weather midterms

by Steve Gerstel
United Press International

WASHINGTON — Senate Republicans, despite a series of scares around the country, weathered the midterm elections well. But 1984 could well bring them graver problems. After all the votes were counted, Republicans maintained control of the Senate by the same margin that now exists, 54-46. That is not an overwhelming majority but GOP leader Howard Baker makes it more than workable.

Yet, the Republicans can take little comfort in the results that showed most of the Democratic incumbents winning by big margins, most of the Republicans by narrow numbers. Although some of the Republican holdovers seemed hellbent on performing the political equivalent of hari-kari, only Sen. Harrison Schmitt of New Mexico went all the way — ending a totally unspectacular career in the Senate.

But too many other Republicans, using every bit of the GOP's huge war chest, had to spend a long and agonizing night before finding out whether they were going to increase the already too high unemployment statistics.

The failure of President Reagan's economic policies hurt the Republicans members of the Senate and the one factor that may have saved the GOP from losing control was the Democrats had to defend 20 seats, the Republicans only 13.

That numerical luxury, which also played a major role in the Republicans' big 1980 gains, will not exist for the Republicans two years from now. They will have to defend 19 seats and the Democrats 14.

And incumbency, as the midterm elections proved, is maybe the biggest single asset a candidate has.

Under what conditions those candidates will run is impossible to forecast. The economy, if Reagan's plans ever bear fruit, could

be in good shape, making it much easier for GOP senators.

And there will be a coattail effect, no matter who the Republican and Democratic presidential candidates are.

But even this far ahead, it is virtually certain that the premier Senate race is going to be in North Carolina, matching Republican Sen. Jesse Helms, the New Right zealot, against the moderate and highly popular Gov. James Hunt.

Helms epitomizes the New Right and the race is certain to be a clear-cut referendum on his agenda, which has a strong following in North Carolina and other parts of the South. He is also the acknowledged master fundraiser and does not stint on spending it on his elections.

But Helms' attempt to buy the elections for four of his fellow-travelers in congressional races in the midterm elections turned out to be a disaster. They lost.

Hunt, on the other hand, is a Southern progressive — not a Kennedy liberal but at odds with Helms on virtually every major issue.

Two of the most interesting races — should they seek another term — would be those of Sens. Strom Thurmond, the South Carolina Republican, and Sen. Jennings Randolph, the West Virginia Democrat. They are both already in their 80s.

Sen. John Stennis' easy victory in Mississippi at age 81 must have been heartening to Randolph and Thurmond. Like Stennis, they do not look or act as old as they are.

Thurmond, a legend in South Carolina, can probably have another term for the asking. But there is a question whether Randolph could or would withstand a primary challenge from Gov. Jay Rockefeller.

The Republican leadership has to run — Baker, assistant leader Ted Stevens, policy chairman John Tower of Texas.

Natural gas price up for winter

by Art Buchwald

The price of natural gas will go up between 20 to 40 percent this winter for the consumer. There is a very good reason for this. But for the life of me I couldn't find out what it was.

I first went to my local gas company, and talked to a very friendly man who anticipated the question.

"It's not our fault," he said. "We just buy the gas from the wholesaler and have to pay whatever he wants to charge us. If he raises his price we have to pass it on to the customer. If you want to know why the price has gone up, talk to the people who sell us the gas." He gave me a free book titled "Cooking With Gas" and showed me to the door.

I went to see a vice president of a wholesale gas company in Houston. "How come the price of gas is going up by 20 to 40 percent this winter?"

"I'm glad you asked that question. We buy our gas from producers; and now with deregulation they can charge us any price they want to, so we have to pass their costs on to the local gas companies we supply. We don't enjoy raising our

prices because everyone thinks we're making a lot of money, which we're not."

"There seem to be an awful lot of Mercedes Benzes out in the parking lot."

"They belong to the people in the gas pipeline end of the business. Perhaps you ought to talk to them."

"Where do I find them?"

"I believe they're somewhere on this floor. Wait a minute, I'll call my brother Fred. I think he's in charge of our pipeline division. Or perhaps my brother George is. In any case they both drive Mercedes."

George was out buying a new Lear jet for his son's birthday, so I got to talk to Fred.

"You can't blame the pipeline people for this winter's big increase," Fred told me. "All we do is ship the stuff for a modest fee which we base on the cost of gas. If the tariff goes up then the shipping costs have to go up, too. It takes a lot of energy to get gas from Texas to Virginia, and somebody has to foot the bill. If you want to know who is jacking up the price, go out and talk to the producers at the wells. They're the guys who know

what is going on in the natural gas market."

I borrowed Fred's Mercedes and drove out to the Casa del Bunkum and Gas Corral.

Bunkum invited me for a horse ride. There were wells everywhere, 50,000 acre spread.

"You seem to have a lot of gas," I said. "Too damn much gas," he said. "It makes the whole ranch stink."

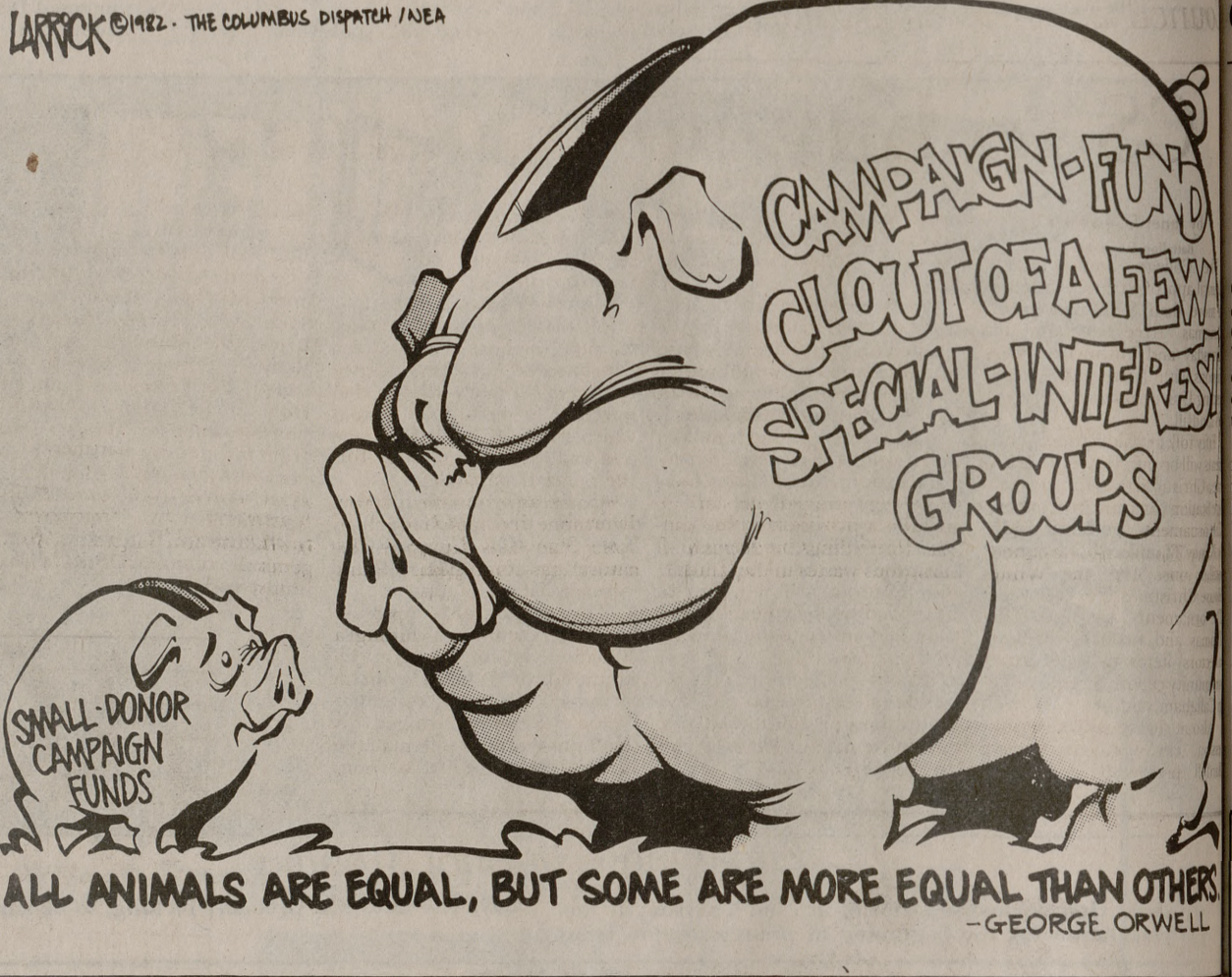
"How come, if you have so much gas, price is going up this winter? I think you'd have to sell it cheaper."

"That's true if you want to sell it. But nobody's going to sell old gas. He can get a much better price on new gas. Someday Washington will phase all gas regulations and then I might have my old gas. But for the moment I'm staying in the ground until I can make a fair profit on it."

"Then in your opinion it is not the producers, but government regulations that are driving up the price this winter?"

"Damn right. We barely can feed families on what we're getting for our stuff now."

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Letters: Forums do not force views

Editor:

In relation to the recent media coverage of the events of this week concerning the Christian Update Forum, I am compelled to attempt to clear up any misunderstanding and at the very least state the purpose of the Forum.

Through the Christian Update Forum, lecturers, who are reputable scholars with recognized academic credentials in their fields, sought to offer material worthy of academic consideration and presented a viewpoint relevant to the class in which he or she was speaking. This viewpoint was one that was biblically oriented, but did not stray from the stated topic and attempt to proselytize students. It is a privilege to be invited into a classroom and one that to the best of my knowledge was not abused.

The response to these lectures by the students and faculty who had the opportunity to hear them was overwhelmingly positive. The response on the other campuses thus far has been 62 percent positive, 34 percent neutral, and 4 percent negative. Texas A&M students' response has been even more positive. By these figures alone, the Forum appears to be a contribution to the academic process of the many who had an opportunity to hear the lectures.

In reference to the issue of separation of church and state, I present to you the key issues as defined by the U.S. Court system:

1. Maintaining religious neutrality — This first issue involves the protection of a truly neutral base. One extreme would produce a state religion; the other extreme produces educational institutions that have to explain everything from atheistic or naturalistic premises. The key issue then is: Does the supernatural presupposition have a place in public educational institutions? The Supreme Court has affirmed "yes." (Zorach v. Clauson, 343, U.S. Supreme Court; Engel v. Vitale, 468, U.S. Supreme Court)
2. Sponsorship v. Accommodation — The second premise is the sponsorship

issue. A public institution can "accommodate" ideas which it cannot sponsor, in the interests of higher education (Marxism in Economics, assassinations in Political Science, polygamy in sociology, etc.). Certainly anything that has played a vital part in the history of Western Civilization as Christianity should be given consideration.

The Comment cards, handed out after each lecture, serve a many-fold purpose. First it is a yardstick by which we can monitor the effectiveness of the lecturer. They also are a means by which the student can request an outline of the featured topic and/or request to be involved in a discussion group. This discussion group is not a means of proselytizing the students or persuading them in any way but is an opportunity to discuss further the issues brought forth in the lectures. With all due respect to the beliefs of others, being from an evangelical foundation, these beliefs are introduced further in hope of showing their relevancy to each individual's life. These comment cards and subsequent discussion groups were entirely optional and certainly no name was put down on any mailing lists.

I hope I have cleared up any misunderstanding and even more, I sincerely hope, we as Christians will come forth and stress the need for fair consideration of Biblical principles alongside those being taught.

Lance Bryant '83
Forum Coordinator
Christian Update Forum

Freedoms being stifled

Editor:

As a student here at Texas A&M, I have become increasingly aware of some injustices that seem to have attained public attention here on our campus. Of

course, I'm referring to the overwhelming response achieved by The Christian Update Forum this week.

My concern is that a credible, scientific approach to various subjects in light of valid Christian perspectives is being stifled. More importantly, it is being stifled in the name of freedom and liberties. Throughout the year, students are faced with perspectives totally contradictory to their own. In other words, as students are compelled daily to attend classes in which professors put forth theories concerning whatever their opinion might be. However, as soon as the views are labeled as "Christian" or "biblical" suddenly they cross from the realm of unbiased classic theory to counter-propaganda. Personally, I am excited as a Christian to sit in class and hear viewpoints which are totally contrary to my beliefs presented. Dear Sonnenfeld, will the A.C.L.U. represent me?

I feel MY rights to free speech have been violated. Reports of coercion seem to be a false alarm. In contacting the students in charge of tabulating results for the Forum, I discovered some interesting facts. No class turned in 100 percent response cards passed out, evidence some students didn't feel helplessly forced to comply. Of those cards turned in, favorable responses ran well above 70 percent. Certainly our classrooms are not composed of 70 percent Christians; therefore, students of other beliefs must be responding favorably. Only those students who requested outlines of the lecture will have anything mailed to them. Again, unwilling students will not "force fed" biblical teachings!

The students on this campus are intelligent and capable to listen to what they hear and evaluate it according to their own beliefs. However, evidently certain people in positions of control feel that we must "worry" about these freedoms of us. As for me, my freedom has been fringed upon this week.

Bob Bander

The Battalion

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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.

Letters Policy

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 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, or phone (713) 845-2611.

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