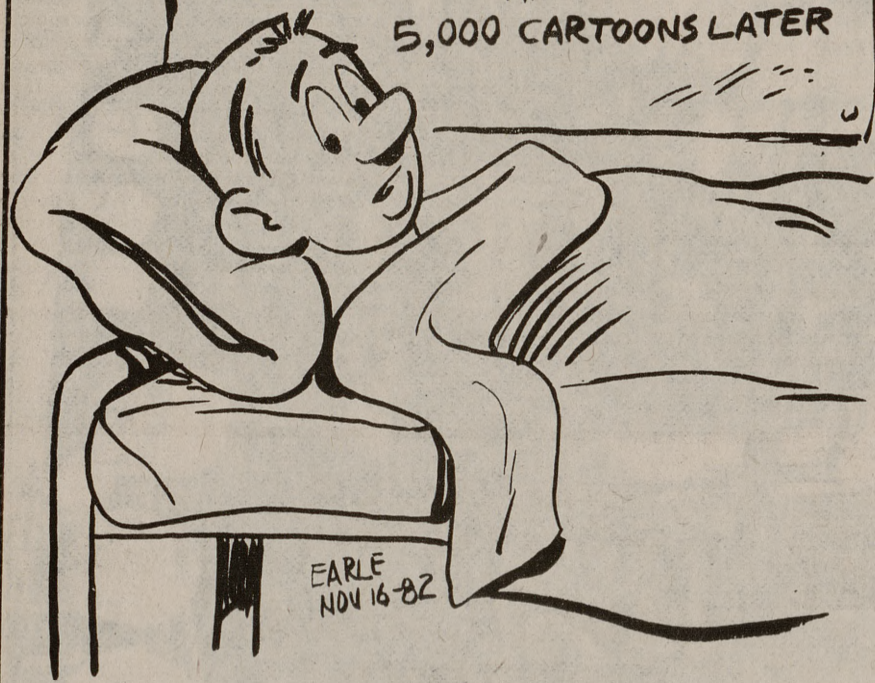


Slouch

By Jim Earle

"HAPPY BIRTHDAY  
SLOUCH  
29 YEARS  
(1953-1982)  
AND  
5,000 CARTOONS LATER



"To celebrate, I'm taking the day off."

But ... seriously, folks

The trouble with humor is that nobody takes it seriously. Now I know that statement sounds funny ... no, not "funny" ... wait a minute, let me start over.

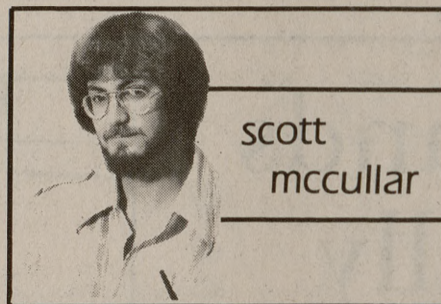
Humor never seems to be taken seriously, or as Rodney Dangerfield might say, "Humor never gets any respect." Red Skelton commands respect, but only because he also plays tragedy in his work. Steve Martin doesn't really get any respect, though.

Maybe that's because it's hard to justify the importance of humor. Oh, we enjoy it — it makes life happier — but we don't exactly consider it vital. It's not really necessary to life or to the work day.

It is a lot of fun though and it does seem to aid us in our relations with other humans. It's a form of relief, like a break or a small vacation.

We're always making excuses for enjoying ourselves because life is work, and work is pretty serious.

Mark Twain, in his autobiography, first informed me that laughter is the ultimate form of crying. It is the state of such extreme empathy for someone else's misery that it causes us to laugh, because tragedy is pushed so far beyond



scott  
mccullar

its normal range that laughter is the only emotion left.

Slapstick humor is a good example of that. A pie in the face or falling off a ladder is only funny when it happens to the other guy and not us. Maybe the line between the two faces of drama, tragedy and comedy is not so finely drawn as we think.

Humor performs some rather interesting functions though. A lot of controversial subjects first can be approached only through humor. Humor disarms us, literally. It warms us up to a hot topic, breaks the ice and allows us to start the very necessary process of

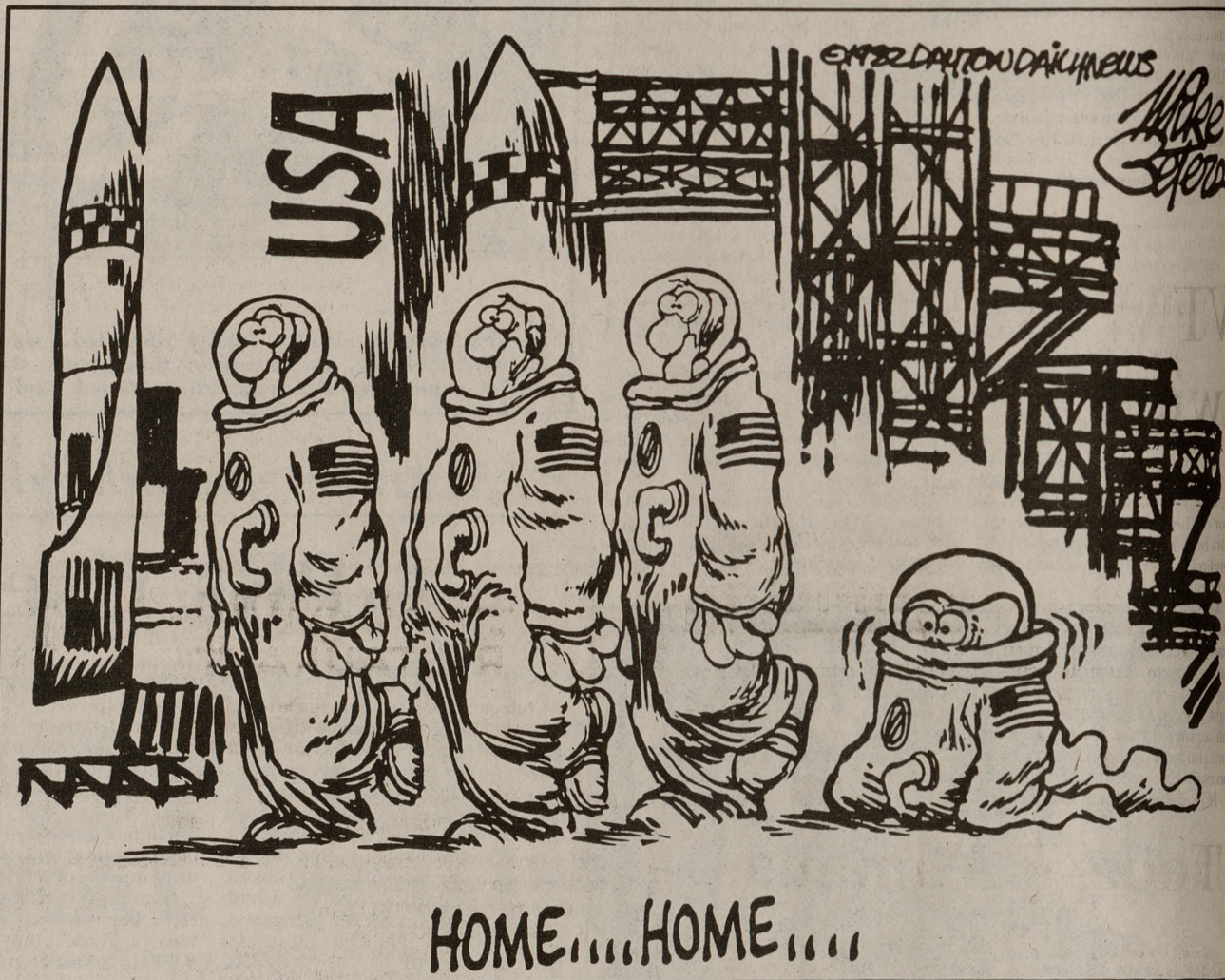
discussion, which leads to understanding.

Humor also attacks. It flattens, deflates pomposity, hacks up sacred cows. It serves truth by exaggerating falsehood to a noticeable level. It makes obvious to the majority thing minority might want kept secret. It even makes fun of subjects not meant to be made fun of. This can include anything from pain and tragedy.

Most religious jokes, in fact, seem attempts to "laugh off" our fears of sin, death, God and all our human failings, in the hope that God will not punish us too harshly. The subject of religion itself is meant to be taken "deathly serious, and that's ironic, because completely unapproachable subjects are ones humor is duty bound to comment on.

As the saying goes: "Trying to figure out what makes humor work is like dissecting a frog. You can figure out what makes it work, but the frog tends to die in the process."

Humor tends to take the serious and importance out of things, including itself, and maybe THAT'S important, seriously.



Viguerie: How to organize the angry

by Arnold Sawislak

WASHINGTON — Richard Viguerie, who discovered how to make the first class letter a mighty instrument of contemporary politics, thinks he has found another simple but effective way to shake up the political landscape.

The idea is to organize the angry. Viguerie, who has made a fortune helping conservatives raise funds with direct mail fund appeals, has decided to spearhead what he calls "the New Populist Coalition."

He launched this effort in his magazine, Conservative Digest, with a two-page manifesto calling on conservatives to take up the cause of "millions of Americans who feel that neither liberals nor conservatives, Democrats or Republicans, really care about their concerns."

Viguerie declares that "about 90 percent of our problems are caused by 1 percent of our citizens," and names his targets: big business and television executives, bankers, leaders of the National Council of Churches and the Catholic Conference of Bishops, union officials, federal employees, judges, lawyers, psychologists and media people — all of whom he identifies as "elitists" who have been "imposing their values on us."

Viguerie also provides a 10-point program that includes replacing the progressive income tax with a single rate tax with few or no deductions and exemptions, reconfirming of federal judges every 10 years, making it easier to fire incompetent or corrupt bureaucrats, stopping illegal immigration, giving tax cre-

dit for private school tuition, compensating crime victims, developing federal lands in the West, giving the president "item veto" power, ending unfair foreign competition and ending special privileges for members of Congress.

In some regards, Viguerie's platform doesn't fit his enemies list. There are judges, lawyers and shrinks who espouse crime victim compensation, bankers and businessmen who back the flat tax, federal employees who yearn for civil service reform and, certainly, churchmen who support tuition tax credits.

What that illustrates is that any effort to attach labels, good or bad, on large groups of people, is bound to collide with the fact that in this country, businessmen, bishops, television bigwigs, lawyers and union bosses do not always think or act alike.

It appears that what Viguerie wants to do is gather everyone's specific resentments under one tent and start a political party.

This is not a new idea (check U.S. history for the "Know Nothing" Party of the mid-19th century and the Populists of the 1890s), although the scope of Viguerie's proposal is so broad that his tent might split at the seams trying to shelter all those outraged folks.

He might also find that some of the very people he wants to unite in one party will shortly begin to fight among themselves, and maybe not even agree to follow Viguerie.

But even if Viguerie doesn't end up as the Moses of the New Populists, he might have found something else of value: more paying customers for his magazine.

Letters: Meaning of bonfire symbols

Editor:

This is directed to Larry J. Renolds and all those who misinterpret some of the symbols of bonfire or even bonfire itself. To those of you who feel that the wood used for bonfire is wasted, I ask, "Do you know where the wood comes from?"

As for the flag, Mr. Renolds, why haven't you taken the time to stop and ask one of the Redpots why it is on the stack? After all, since the centerpole has arrived, at least one Redpot (or junior Redpot) has been on Duncan Field at all times.

I would like to invite anyone, who has any question about bonfire, to come out to Duncan Field and ask any Redpot or Yellowpot. I am sure that any misinterpretation of any symbol will be cleared up immediately.

selfish Texas voters.

However, with the White House and Senate still in the hands of the good guys, it appears serious attempts at "altering the course" can be thwarted for at least another couple of years. If it was only left up to the Aggie voters ...

Mark Stubbs '82

Convention thanks

Editor:

Last weekend, the National Honorary Mechanical Engineering Fraternity, Pi Tau Sigma, held its 62nd National Convention here on our campus. The event

was a tremendous success, with attendance by 63 chapters and about 130 delegates. It was the largest convention in at least 12 years. Delegates were housed mostly in the MSC Hotel and all meals and meals were in the Rudder/MSCPlex.

On behalf of the Texas A&M Sigma Delta Chapter, which organized and hosted the Convention, I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank the campus offices that gave us so much assistance in preparing for this event. Special mention goes to the scheduling office and the MSC Main Desk for always doing what we wanted done, no matter how short the notice.

Saleem Karimjee  
Convention Director

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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The Aggie vote

Editor:

Once again it is refreshing to see Texas A&M assert itself as the hotbed of western liberalism. Tuesday's mid-term elections served to remind one and all that Aggies continually put duty and humanity above all other factors while making election day choices. Evidence of this could be seen in victory after victory for the GOP in Aggie dominated precincts.

It was an awfully disappointing day, I suppose, for the College Republicans as they watched Goliath slay David (Governor Bill Clements), the man who some questionable source dubbed "Dollar Bill." It seems the GOP, synonymous with many egalitarian principles, was dealt a crippling blow by unknowingly

Berry's World by Jim Berry



"Ya know, I guess THIS is what I really LOVE about being an auditor!"