

Slouch By Jim Earle



"You're thinking about it in a selfish way. This is the season when you don't ask what the tree can do for you, but what you can do for the tree. This is your chance to share your Christmas spirit with a tree that otherwise might not have a home; that might be alone in the cold during this season of good will. I'll knock two dollars off the price!"

Phil Gramm: Boll Weevil in danger

by Don Phillips

WASHINGTON—Rep. Phil Gramm, D-Texas, must feel a little unloved these days. Gramm is a familiar name to those who keep up with federal budget matters. He is half of the "Gramm-Latta" budget reconciliation bill of 191, which gave President Reagan in one swoop almost everything he asked Congress for in federal spending cuts. Gramm is a "Boll Weevil"—a conservative Democrat who often talks and acts more conservatively than many Republicans. He was one of about 40 Boll Weevils who tipped the scales in this Congress toward Reagan and away from the main-line Democrats. But as the new Congress convenes in January, it will become apparent at the House Democratic caucus that there is a difference between Boll Weevils. Some will be welcomed back to the fold, such as Reps. G. V. Montgomery, D-Miss., and Kent Hance, D-Texas, who worked hard to pass the Reagan program. Just like Gramm. Well, not quite just like Gramm. Phil Gramm is likely to be swatted down, just like the ugly little bug that set up house-keeping in cotton bolls and convinced southern farmers that maybe they should plant peanuts. Gramm almost certainly will lose his seat on the House Budget Committee and maybe even on the House Energy and Commerce Committee. That means he may well become Rep. Phil Gramm, R-Texas—not D-Texas—within a relatively short time. What is the difference between Gramm and the other Boll Weevils? It isn't philosophy. They all generally think alike. It isn't that he was more effective than the others. Montgomery probably did more damage to the Democrats quietly than Gramm did loudly. It isn't that he didn't hew to the party line. Congressional Democrats have stretched the

party tent to hold almost every philosophy, ranging from the segregationist Democrats of the 1950s and 1960s to the more recent liberals who suspect that Jane Fonda is a little conservative. It isn't even that the Democratic leadership is out to get Gramm. House Speaker Thomas O'Neill says he'd just as soon not punish any Democrat for any reason. The "get Gramm" move is coming from grass roots House Democrats, particularly southerners who remained loyal to the leadership despite possible political consequences. And the real reason that Gramm faces discipline is that he publicly enjoyed what he was doing and cooperated a little too closely and openly with the White House and other Republicans. The other Boll Weevils let it be known that they were good Democrats, but could not support their party leadership's position because it would violate their principles and the clear will of their constituents. That always is reason enough for any party to excuse defections. But those who watched the 1981-82 budget battles remember Gramm jumping to his feet, clapping wildly and cheering when his party went down in flames. He also held strategy sessions with the White House and with House Republicans in formulating legislation. And although he denied it, many Democrats still consider him a "spy" because he also sat in on various Democratic meetings where strategy was discussed. Gramm also denies charges that he broke commitments to the Democratic leadership. The charge of failing to keep a promise is regarded as one of the cardinal sins on Capitol Hill. But whatever the truth, rank-and-file Democrats now look on Gramm as a man who shot his own family and then laughed his way through the funeral. They don't like it, and unless someone can convince them differently, they aren't going to take it.

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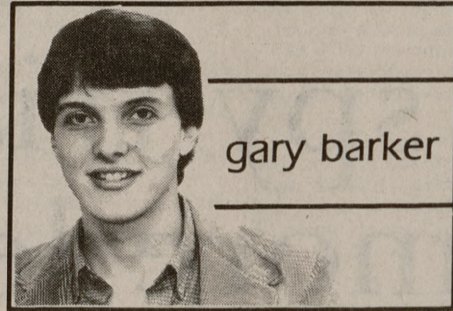
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Lawn art a visual symphony

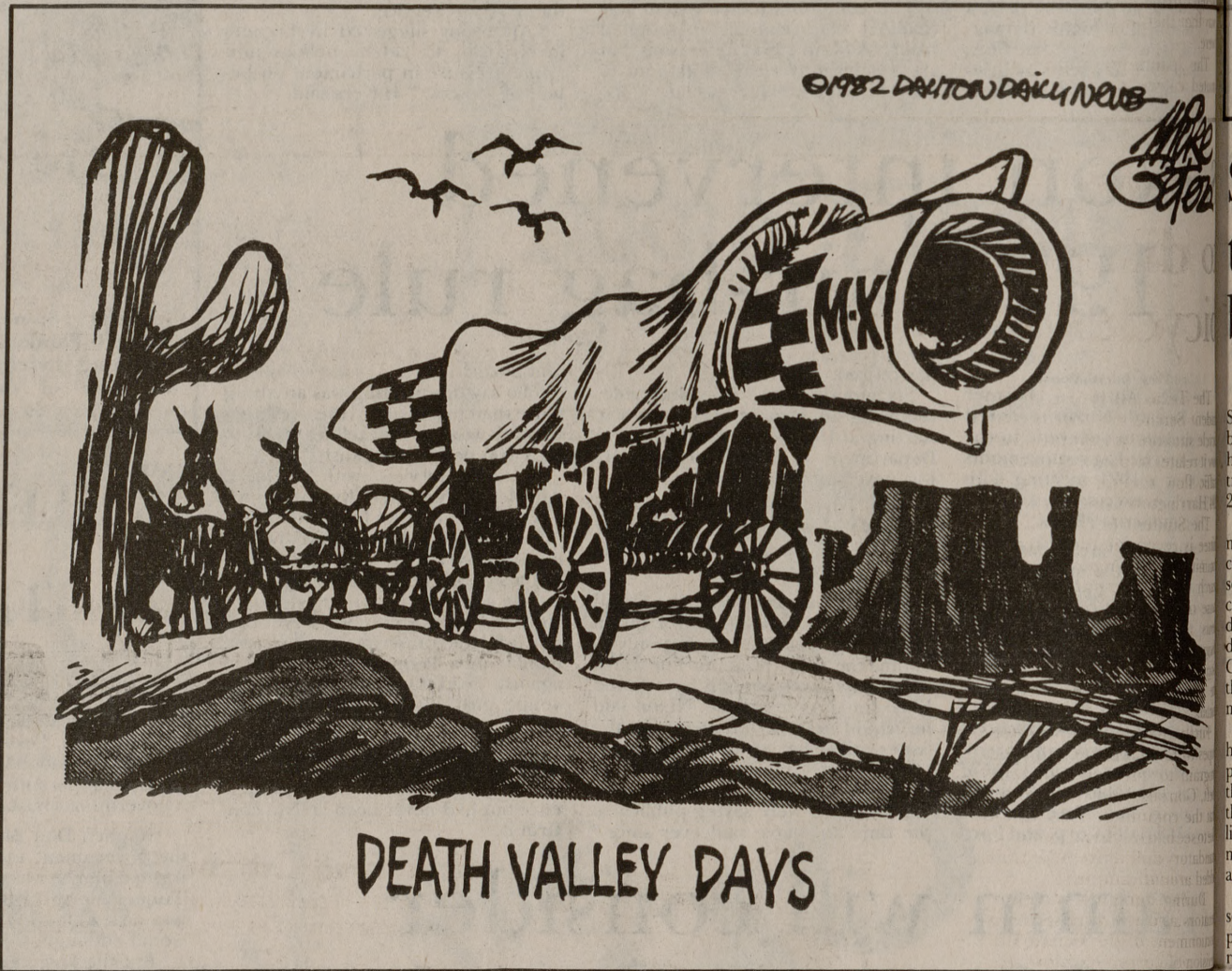
The paper plate artist has struck again. His blue paper plates were left swirling across the lawn in front of the Academic Building like the mark of Zorro—a swish of paper and off the outlaw went. The art this time was titled "Rhapsody in Blue," a visual symphony arranged in a gently sloping "S" shape. The plates were painted with various designs and patterns, some with phrases like "Blue plate special" and others painted with faces. People passing by stopped to read the title. Some walked through the arrangement, scanning the plates. Most laughed and asked, "Is this art?" Is it art? Well, if passersby squinted a little and withheld their skepticism for a few moments, the arrangement might be construed to be a visual symphony as the artist claims. It certainly beats the uneven grass where frisbee throwers usually display their talents. But whether it's art is not the point. What matters is that someone is making the effort to break out of ordinary by getting people to think about something



gary barker

other than finals, graduation and whether they'll have a job when they graduate. Few stop to think about what they'll do when they get home from their job. The paper plate art is art if it makes people think—even it just makes them question what art is and whether it has a place at Texas A&M. This University has very little art, and what little we have is imported from outside. And even the art we get is often met

with close-mindedness and rid the complete opposite of what a university environment should breed. Texas A&M suffers from apathy and laziness. Most students stuck in a holding pattern of apathy that includes football games, bombing Thursday nights at the Chicken. And of those who have some creative thinking, many have a fear of doing something out of the ordinary here. They're afraid it might not be accepted, they might be ridiculed or that it might be called "bad bull." It's a characteristic that many students learned in high school; it's called pressure—the fear of being different. Now the MSC Arts Committee has voted not to display an exhibit which implies is obscene. It probably is. Students need to be able to decide for themselves. It's about time they were confronted with something more controversial which way the outhouse on bombing fall or who the starting quarterback be.



Letters: Preaching at halftime

Editor:

I am writing to The Battalion to make students and administration aware of an important double standard. A few weeks ago, the Aggie basketball team took on a Christian exhibition team called Athletes in Action. No problem. They beat us in a very close, tense game that went to the final buzzer. No problem. Halftime. That was the problem. Somebody in the administration made a decision to schedule the AIA team, which used halftime to preach their mish-mosh "brand" of Christianity to a captive basketball audience. This is not the fault of AIA. But if I wanted to teach my views to the audience, would I get the mike at the half? Or would a Jewish student?, or Islamic? etc ... You see the point? Unlike politics, we have no "equal time" clause which allows rebuttals or presentations by opposing or divergent groups. Somebody needs to take note. In the future, play Christian groups if it is desired, but keep halftime for basketball activities. The band and Reville provide more than adequate entertainment without forcing their views on anyone. And it was forced. When there are 3,500 people in G. Rollie, there is nowhere to go if you don't want to hear the presentation. The halls were packed! And it really didn't help to leave—it could be heard in the lobby as well. Again, this was not the fault of the AIA basketball team (which is associated with Campus Crusade for Christ) they only took advantage of an unfortunate error by a scheduling administrator. All this was compounded by the lack of prior publicity as to exactly what we paid \$3 to see/hear. Should I feel compelled to listen to messages like theirs, there are dozens of groups on campus and off, as well as t.u. where this can happen for free! It was completely unfair to combine a state university basketball game with Christian proselitizing to unknowing fans. And nearly every person sitting by me was unknowing and was annoyed. At least if they had publicized this com-

pletely, and well in advance, we could have attended the men's gymnastic meet and given them some support they would be happy to have had, and not received a half-time peptalk from a multi-brand Christian team. Let's get this reconciled. What do you say?

Jim Molivelli '81

Imagination

Editor:

The appearance of The Battalion generated wide-ranging responses typical of perceptive and hard-hitting satire. Among all of the laughter and annoyance, delight and disgust evoked by the publication, the most sobering comment I heard was the initial speculation of some that a group from the University of Texas must have been responsible: no student from Texas A&M would have had the courage, the creativity, the wildly wicked imagination to do such a thing. I for one am pleased that that speculation was proven false.

Paul A. Parrish  
Professor of English

Bad bull

Editor:

Directed to the editor of the "Battalion" Where were you raised? In a gutter in Austin? You criticize our "pinheaded students", "third-rate faculty" and "egg-sucking mascot" yet you dare not show your face or name your name? I guess I'd be embarrassed to admit to it myself, more embarrassed than if I attended t.u. Your paper was the epitome of bad bull—worse than "killing someone for stepping on the MSC grass."

Beth Bizzell '86

No joke

Editor:

The recent spoof called The Battalion was no joke! The disguise of "Good Humor" was enough to mask its blatant affront to honor and intelligence of all students of Texas A&M. Its jaded script sought only to demean and demise every distinctive aspect of this University. At the same time it cowardly avoided addressing controversial issues or offering alternatives. Furthermore, if, as its anonymous author implied, the purpose was to offend minds of students, it evidently assumed we could not relate to a message which involved homosexuality, bigotry, race or social diseases. Its "purpose" was inane from the beginning. Students of Texas A&M here of their own free will. If what University stands for seems a little different from the ordinary and not in tune with the world, it is because Aggies want to have an effect on their environment rather than being subjected to it. I hope the authors of The Battalion realize they too have this opportunity and rise above their tainted rhetoric.

Mark A. Stasney

Bonfire thanks

Editor:

I wish to address this letter to those that I worked with on bonfire. Cutting the cut logs for bonfire stacking is something every girl gets an opportunity to do. You all accepted me and allowed me to pull my own weight. Thanks for letting me participate in this tradition. I enjoyed it!

Chris Rogalski