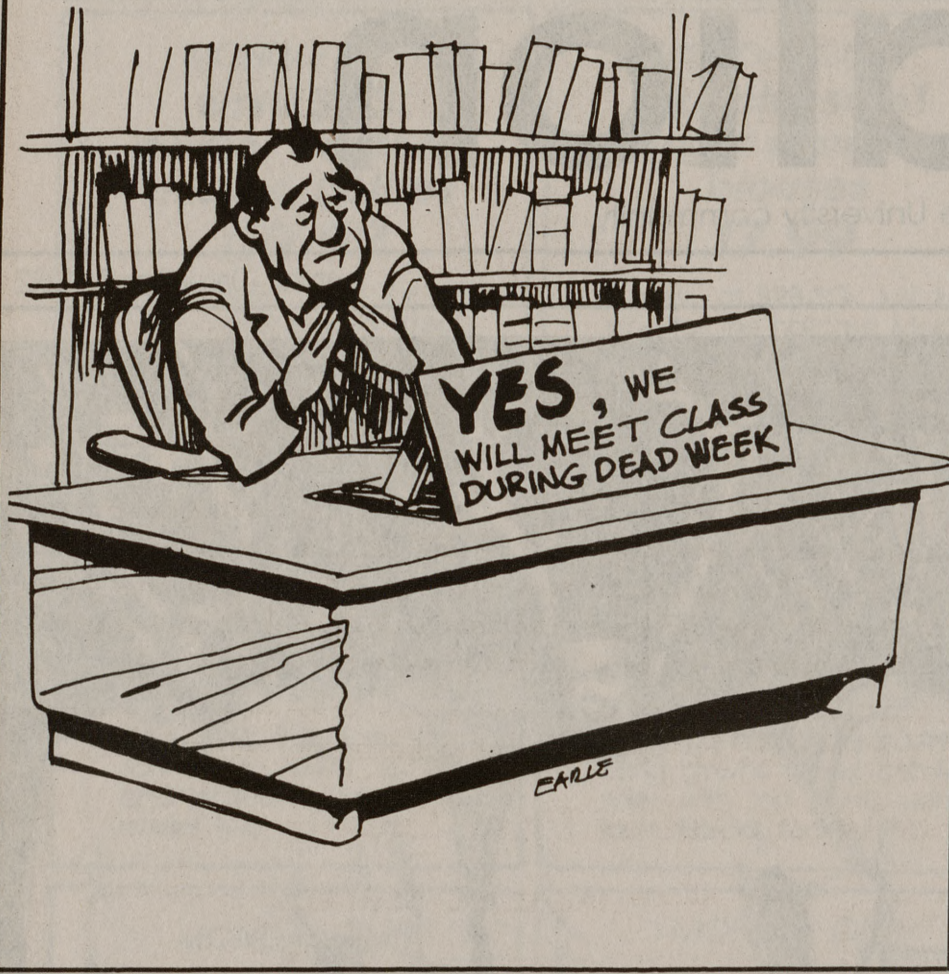


Slouch By Jim Earle



Reagan takes on the lame ducks

by Norman Sandler

WASHINGTON — President Reagan left town in the midst of the lame-duck session of Congress he requested, expressing confidence that "there is a desire on everyone's part to get the job done in a spirit of cooperation."

In the realities of Washington politics, however, Reagan left town only after setting the stage for several major confrontations that could well continue beyond the three-week duration of the current session into the next Congress.

The president minimized the dangers just 90 minutes before leaving for South America by abandoning a proposal to accelerate the 10 percent tax cut set for next July, which sent deficit-conscious congressional leaders reeling.

Last week, his staff sought to defuse another potential powder keg by announcing Reagan had vetoed a proposed tax on unemployment benefits that had attracted the wrath of Democrats and labor leaders.

But problems remain on the horizon for Reagan in his relations with a holdover Congress that is not expected to finish all the work now before it and a new Congress that appears to be less inclined to support him.

Among the items that Reagan lumped into a catch-all bag of requests he laid at Congress' doorstep before leaving for five days of presidential talks and ceremonial welcomes in Latin America was funding for the MX missile.

With the exception of the accelerated tax cut, no subject could be more ripe for controversy.

Reagan outlined his \$26 billion plan for basing the 10warhead MX missile — to be the most powerful and accurate in the U.S. arsenal — in a nationwide address the evening before his recent week-long holiday in California.

It took one day for the proposal to come under sharp attack on Capitol Hill, even with

Congress in recess.

The funding request now before Congress would not immediately place the MX in new underground silos in Wyoming, but would keep the program on schedule.

However, Reagan's speech two weeks ago not only reignited a longstanding debate over the MX itself, but kindled a new review of his overall arms buildup, his budget priorities and his approach to disarmament.

As Congress considers money for the MX, the discussion is likely to bring all of these issues together on a collision course, which could keep the defense debate fueled well into next year.

In a similar vein, Reagan must await the judgment of the new Congress on an economic program shaped by a politicians who had not yet heard the message sent by the voters in the Nov. 2 elections.

Reagan, in recent public appearances, has stood firm in pressing for approval of his defense budget and retention of tax policies that the public has looked on with some skepticism, but which he insists will work if given time.

The question is: How much longer will Congress wait?

Republican leaders predict Congress will trim the pace of defense spending proposed by Reagan, ignoring his argument that the key to lower deficits lies in cutting outlays for social programs, not the military.

And beyond fiscal policy, it remains to be seen whether Congress has the patience to accept a \$5.5 billion program of road and highway repairs — funded by a 5-cent gasoline tax increase — as Reagan's sole response to unemployment that is at a 42-year high.

White House aides hope that the shortness of the lame-duck session will keep controversy to a minimum. What they may not yet have done is look beyond to determine how the unfinished agenda of the current session might make for rocky relations between Reagan and the 98th Congress.

All things considered ...

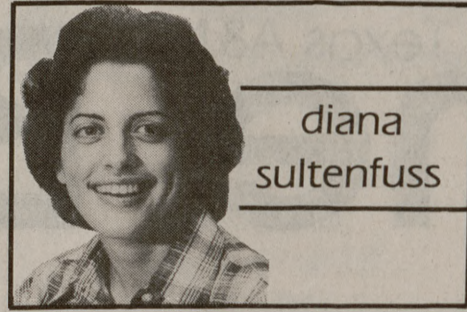
Criticism is the highlight of the editorial page. Lately, Jackie Sherrill and art that appears on campus laws have been the targets of the criticism.

But there are nice things to be said, too. Some things actually do go right at Texas A&M University. Every day, many jobs are completed without problems.

For example, 3,500 to 4,000 books are checked out of the library each day. More than 1 million books were checked out last year. How's that for an answer to whether Johnny can read?

And Johnny can study in new buildings. Twenty-nine major projects valued at \$68 million are under construction in the Texas A&M System. And 15 of these, valued at \$56 million, are at Texas A&M.

To top all of this, some of this construction will be finished ahead of schedule. Renovation of the Animal Science Pavilion will be finished three months ahead of schedule and the University



diana sultenfuss

Press Building will be completed four months ahead of schedule.

More than 700,000 kilowatt hours of electricity give Johnny lights to read each day, and about 18,000 tons of air conditioning refrigeration are produced to keep Johnny cool.

Some jobs are fulfilled daily with few problems. Every day, the University is

provided with more than 8 million gallons of drinkable water. All of these gallons go through millions of feet of pipe without leaking.

More than 10 million square feet of classroom and office space are available every day.

Food services provides nearly 10 million meals a day in all campus dining halls. And 5,344 Coke breaks are taken every day by various folks on campus.

And when the day is through, more than 9,000 students have used the campus and 2 intra-campus buses. Other modes of transport also are used, including 23,000 bicycles that drive through the park on campus each day. All these modes are used by 36,108 students and 2,000 faculty members.

With everything that happens every day, the potential is great for accidents. The best part is that they don't occur.



YOU HEARD ME, DAN, I'VE GOT AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH A MAN WHO CLAIMS TO HAVE RECEIVED THE FIRST ARTIFICIAL HEART...

Lost in new Capitol Hill office

by Dick West

WASHINGTON — Stopwatch, maps and compass at the ready, I set out to become the first human being to make it on foot from the new Hart Office Building on the Senate side of Capitol Hill to the Rayburn Building in the House office complex.

Outdoors, the distance is nine city blocks, as the lame duck flies. If, however, a pioneer pedestrian is seeking a new indoor passage, as I was, there are many obstacles. But first, a little philosophizing, if you please.

When the plastic sheathing that shielded winter construction workers on the Hart Building was removed last spring, Sen. Patrick Moynihan, D-N.Y., introduced a resolution to put it back.

He said the Senate's newest white marble edifice, "whose banality is exceeded only by its expense," looked better covered with plastic.

Well, I may not know much about architecture, but I do know what I like about Senate resolutions. And I must respectfully disagree that the Hart Building is distinguished by its mediocrity and commonplaceness.

Banality, fully as much as beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. To my untrained eye, the Hart Building is every bit as undistinguished as its five contemporaries on Capitol Hill.

My only regret is that senatorial authorities saw fit to sort of sneak the building open, like a thief in the night. I would have appreciated a full-blown dedication ceremony, such as was accorded the official opening of the Senate's branchline underground railroad in 1960.

On that joyous occasion, the Rev. Frederick Brown Harris, Senate chaplain, recited the Pledge of Allegiance and blessed the subway cars as "swift chariots of democracy."

Surely that was more auspicious language than Moynihan's epithet.

Anyway, I departed from the extreme northeast corner of the Hart Building and arrived, some 20 minutes, two elevators, three escalators, four bunions and innumerable ramps, stairs and corridors later, at the extreme southwest corner of the Rayburn Office Building.

The latter structure, incidentally, is designated as ROB to distinguish it from COB (Cannon Office Building) and LOB (Longworth Office Building). However, anyone who can tell a lob from a cob probably is in a heap of trouble anyway.

Much of the going was underground and tricky. I wouldn't recommend that a

greenhorn attempt the indoor passage without a native guide.

The route is particularly confusing at the end of the Senate subway, where painters were transforming depressing lemon-colored walls into depressing rose-colored walls.

Unless one watches one's step at this point, one is likely to wind up in the Senate soup kitchen.

Maybe this explains what happened to

Judge Crater.

You perhaps have read about adventures of souls making cross-country hikes, etc., to promote some charity. Why not try philanthropic motivation, under the conquest of the Hart Building?

I can only answer in the mystical adventures everywhere will undergo cause in 1960 it wasn't there.

Berry's World



"My husband and I want to get a divorce so we can both use the new 1040 EZ income tax form."

The Battalion

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