

Slouch

By Jim Earle

Any jobs for sale today?

by Art Buchwald

The five-cent surcharge on gasoline is supposed to be used to repair bridges and roads and provide 360,000 jobs. I imagine the states are starting to hire people to do the work right now. The trouble, as I see it, is how will they select which ones to do the repairs?

They probably won't have any trouble finding qualified people from the construction fields, but does this mean the white-collar unemployed can't have a crack at the jobs? They need the money as badly as the blue-collar worker.

"You'd like to work?"

"Yes sir."

"What did you formerly do?"

"Vice President of an advertising agency."

"Then I don't imagine you know much about bridges."

"That was my specialty — building bridges between the advertiser and the consumer."

"I'm not talking about that kind of bridge. I'm talking about one that spans a body of water."

"I'm sure I can do it. Would you like to hear me sing 'Bridge Over Troubled Waters'?"

"Do you know anything about piling?"

"What advertising man doesn't know something about piling?"

"You may have to climb spans."

"You got the right guy. In the ad business, I was known for my upward mobility."

"You don't seem to have many callouses on your hands."

"That's because I had the 'Flighto' account for the R&F Soap Company. Your hands were always smooth as a baby's skin. Look man, I need this job."

"There are thousands of people lined up for employment. We only want skilled workers who are knowledgeable about bridges."

"I thought Bonzo wanted everyone to go back to work."

"I wish you wouldn't talk that way about the President. If he hadn't signed the gas tax bill you wouldn't be here today applying for work. I'm interested in getting some. I know I'm overqualified, but I'm willing to take anything to get off unemployment."

"Perhaps you ought to try for road work. I understand they're taking on college graduates as laborers. Go and speak to the man at the other counter."

"Hi there. The man in the white shirt told me you were here to repair the state highway bridge."

"Have you ever run a bulldozer?"

"No, but I know what a bulldozer is like."

"May I ask you how many bulldozers you have?"

"Just a B.A. from Dartmouth."

"I'm sorry we're only hiring bulldozers to fill potholes."

"What about spreading tar?"

"What education do you need for that?"

"A master's in engineering."

"You guys are really good at spreading tar to repair your roads."

"Why not? We may never have a pothole like this again."

"So you have nothing to do here?"

"I have one job open, but it's a bit of a breaker. You have to feed a bulldozer with a shovel every time it takes a bite."

"I'll take it. I'm not proud."

"I'm sorry I can't give it to you."

"Why not?"

"We've taken on our quota of unemployed men, and I have to have the position open for a woman."

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"Rather than using your judging system, I had rather have you simply hold your hand up when a point needs to be clarified."

Reaganomics arrives at the White House

by Maxwell Glen and Cody Shearer

Announced resignations by Secretaries Drew Lewis and Richard Schweiker might give the impression that everybody's jumping ship at the White House.

For the most part, however, those who followed Ronald Reagan into the White House and its connected agencies are staying put. Their reasons make for an illuminating commentary on the administration.

Traditionally, mid-term elections have provided political appointees at all levels with an opportunity to move on while the getting is good (with at least two more years of an administration, special interests are always in the market for inside contacts). Vacancies, in turn, give the White House a chance to reward supporters who weren't so lucky the first go-round.

As a rule, adds Joe Laitin, a former press aide to Democrats and Republicans alike and one of Washington's quintessential insiders, Republicans tend to cut short their government service more than Democrats.

Recent departures would seem to confirm the latter truism. Joining a list that includes Alexander Haig, Lyn Nofziger, James Edwards, Richard Allen and Murray Weidenbaum are Lewis, who's headed for Warner Communications' cable television subsidiary; Schweiker, for an insurance company; National Security Council Kremlinologist Richard Pipes, for a new semester at Harvard; and Jay Moorhead, the private sector initiatives coordinator, for the Olympic Organizing Committee.

Meanwhile, at least five others have decided to jump George Bush's ship for good. They include the vice president's personal secretary, deputy general counsel, official photographer and assistants for domestic and legislative affairs. (Peter Teeley, Bush's press secretary, also plans to leave soon on a six-month sabbatical.)

Yet, overall figures make these departures the exception. According to John F. W. Rogers, Reagan's deputy assistant for

administration, only five staff members left the White House during the last four months of 1982. (There are 322 permanent staff positions authorized for the White House, excluding OMB and the vice president's office.) "People are generally staying in their jobs, and they're doing so at the White House," Rogers contended.

The Office of Presidential Personnel, which oversees almost 4,000 political appointments to Cabinet departments and agencies, confirms that the vacancy rate at mid-term is lower than in the past. In fact, Schweiker's selected replacement, former representative Margaret Heckler of Massachusetts, is rather lucky: There don't seem to be enough openings even for those Reagan allies who were defeated in last November's congressional elections.

One could have a field day speculating about the political import of this inertia. Aside from Lewis and other opportunists, many of those who've already left have done so for ideological reasons (libertarian Martin Anderson, the former domestic policy adviser, and former Treasury under secretary Norman Ture, a committed monetarist, are two examples). What remains could be the makings of a more pragmatic staff committed to the long haul.

Meanwhile, George Bush's staff defections may reflect internal doubts that the veep will get the GOP's presidential nomination whether Reagan runs or not. The vice president's decision to replace several highly-regarded defectors with less-stellar loyalists could mean that Bush is satisfied with the way things are.

For the moment, however, low staff turnover may indicate an internal pessimism about private-sector opportunities. "The jobs aren't very good out there right now," said one senior administration official sardonically. Added Doug Bandow, the former Martin Anderson aide who now edits Inquiry magazine, even special presidential assistants who would prefer the outside fear that the private sector wouldn't reward them with comparable salary or status.



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Letters: Lobbying, not 'buying'

Editor:

In reference to your editorial today, I feel you have left the impression all bills passed by the Legislature have been "bought and paid for" by special interest groups otherwise known as the Lobby.

It is true these special interest groups do play a role in influencing legislation. However, this influence should not be interpreted as "buying a legislator." As a former aide to a State Representative, I dealt with these groups daily. They ranged from experts on very technical issues to concerned citizens fighting for a cause. Each was as important as the other. Many were people giving their time to help preserve the future — yours and mine — whether it be disposal of nuclear waste or the curriculum taught in our public schools.

For instance, the Senior Citizen Lobby was very active in advising and testifying in behalf of a badly needed Statewide Crime Victims Law. With their help it passed. Parents Against Drug Abuse fought to toughen Texas Drug Laws — they passed. These are only two out of many which come to mind. Special interest groups such as these do not always receive the public recognition they deserve.

This is not to say all special interest groups favor good legislation. This is why it is important to vote — for we too are a special interest group. Equally important as voting is letting the legislature know how we feel about issues. Before a member can represent his or her district they must first hear from them.

Main Drive at the east entrance of campus. For those of us who ride bicycles to campus, the parking "lot" on either side of Main Drive makes for a very, very dangerous situation. Not only is it dangerous, but it's ugly and degrades Texas A&M's high standards.

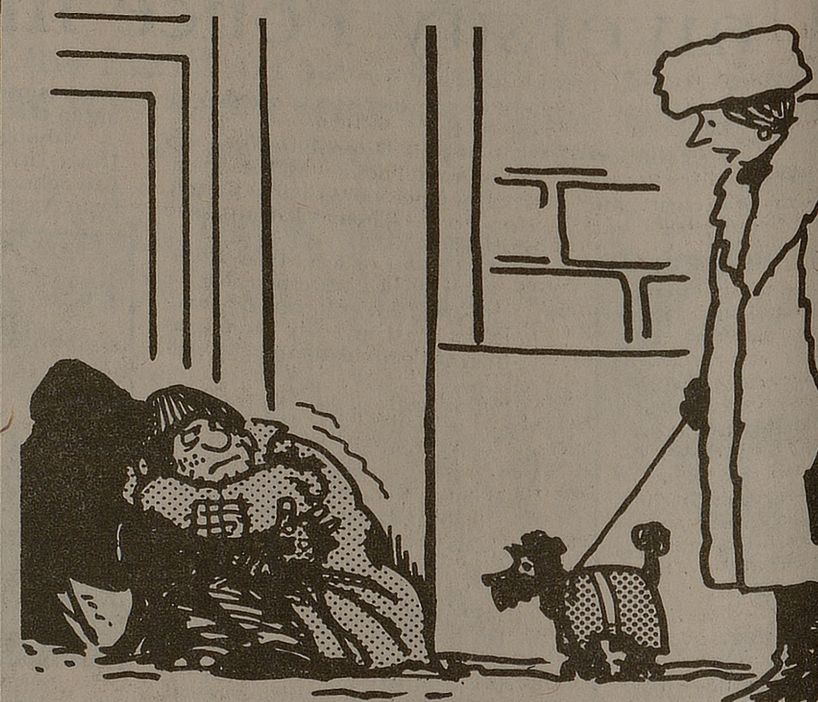
I really don't think that the few cars

that can be parked there will ruin much of a dent in the parking lot at the University. So whoever is in charge of parking, please, let's use some common sense and eliminate a potential wreck.

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Berry's World



"Oh, dear! I suppose you'll be another vote for the Democrats in '84!"

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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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