

Slouch

By Jim Earle



"Making an A on your first exam is good, but it's not all good. Keep in mind that you want to leave room to show improvement, so your instructor will feel that he brought you along during the course. See what I mean?"

Reagan advocates military pay freeze

by Maxwell Glen and Cody Shearer

Ronald Reagan had an opportunity to take the long view of defense expenditures last week, but instead donned lenses ground for shortsightedness. Rather than cut a weapons system or two in his effort to reduce deficits, Reagan took the easy way out and proposed a military pay freeze.

Most observers agree that the pay freeze alone would not damage American military readiness in the short run. Military salaries have become competitive with their civilian counterparts in recent years. Since 1980, in fact, Congress has approved three consecutive annual pay hikes — 11 percent, 14 percent and 4 percent — and was expected to do so again this year.

Meanwhile, the recession has made future pay increases less essential to military recruitment. "Given the fact that more people are trying to get in the armed forces than can be accommodated, (the pay freeze) would not prevent armed forces from meeting recruitment or retention goals," said Martin Anderson, architect of the All-Volunteer Force and former Reagan domestic policy chief.

But Anderson conceded that the pay freeze will have an impact, particularly on those currently in the lower ranks. Many military personnel rated between E-1 and E-4 (from recruit to corporal in the Army, for example) are already living at subsistence levels. To get by, those with families regularly take second jobs — if they can find them.

In fact, almost 5 percent of the active Army's 900,000 personnel worldwide received relief last year, a rise of more than 40 percent from 1981 levels. Army records also show that 20 percent of the Army's active-duty soldiers could use financial assistance for rent, food, utility bills and required travel.

According to Col. Donald C. Rubottom of the Army's Emergency Relief

Program, most of the \$15 million distributed in 1982 took the form of interest-free loans; only 10 percent were outright grants. "It's the constant travel and transitional nature of military life that takes its toll," said Rubottom.

Soldiers, like everyone else, might be expected to undergo hard times during a recession. Reagan's proposed 7.6 percent pay hike this year for military personnel, in fact, seems like a natural place to make economies in times of 4 percent inflation.

But if the economy picks up, Reagan will have to keep military salaries competitive. By then, his reluctance to cut the big-ticket items in 1983 will have gotten the best of him — and us. The B-1, the Trident and several aircraft carriers will be well under construction and will offer little room for reduction.

Rhetorically, at least, Ohio senator John Glenn sounds a lot like Ronald Reagan. In a speech to delegates at California's annual state Democratic convention, Glenn played on the "let's make America great again" theme expounded exhaustively by Reagan in 1980. Glenn has also rejected advice from aides that he criticize the military in the way that President Dwight D. Eisenhower did near the end of his second term.

Arkansas' senior senator, Dale Bumpers, chided California Democrats last weekend for parroting President Reagan's contention that government is the problem — not the solution.

"It was a concerned and sensitive government," recalled Bumpers, "that brought REA to rural America, and thereby allowed my father to sell electrical appliances and save his business; that brought our small hometown water and sewer systems and paved streets; that stopped employers from working 12-year-old children like me nine hours a day in 110-degree heat for 10 cents an hour."

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Questions or comments concerning any editorial matter should be directed to the editor.

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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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Washington leaks decisions

by Art Buchwald

This is what is known as the leaky season in Washington. I'm not talking about the weather, I'm talking about all the leaks in the government to the press.

The President has been so angered by leaks in his administration that he was quoted in a leak from one of his people as saying, "I'm up to my keister with these leaks."

The Washington leak is not only a way of government officials communicating with the press and the public, but it is also used by government servants as a method of communicating with each other.

Let me give you an example. I received a call from a Treasury official last week who said, "You don't know where you got it, but the President plans to ask for some very high tax raises for '85 if we ever hope to get the budget under control."

"Why are you telling me?" "I want the President to know about it."

"Why don't you tell him?"

"I'd rather he read it in The Washington Post than break it to him. I have my job to think of."

I printed the story, attributing it to a

very high source in the Treasury.

Sure enough, I got a call from someone in the White House who said, "Can I talk to you off the record?"

"That's what I'm paid for," I told him. "The Treasury is all wet about tax increases in 1985. The President has no intention of asking for them."

"Why doesn't the President tell Treasury himself?"

"He's not speaking to the Treasury Department because they're always bringing him bad news. If our denial is printed as a leak about the President being against taxes in '85?"

"From the White House."

"Well, the person here who gave you that story is all wet. The President hasn't made up his mind about taxes for '85 and he's keeping his options open. But if you quote me I'll deny it."

"Why don't you tell the guy who leaked it to me that he's giving out bum information?"

"I can't because he's against tax hikes for '85 and he's using the press to influence the President to reject them."

"And you're using us to get the President to go along with some tax hikes?"

"Maybe. I want Treasury to push for new taxes so I can get the President's feet

out of concrete."

"Why don't you just call up the Treasury and tell them that?"

"It carries much more authority as a news leak to you. I'll get it in on Sunday," I told him.

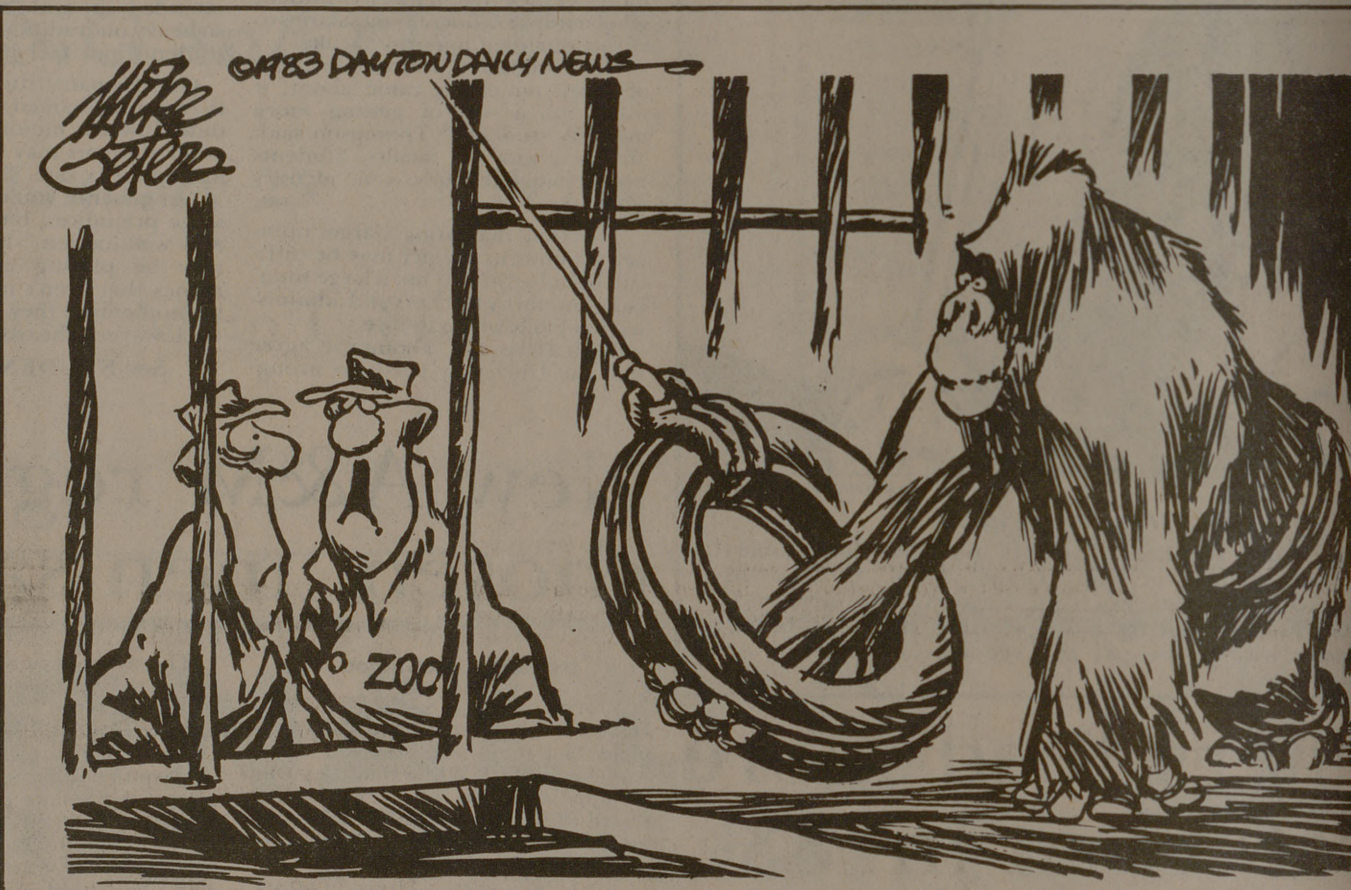
Sunday morning I got a call from my Treasury leaker. "You conflicting leaks last week in the White House about taxes for Secretary wants to know what you believe."

"It's hard to say. Both leaks are two of the highest sources on the President's staff."

"Well, how is the Secretary to set U.S. monetary policy if there are so contradictory?"

"Don't get mad at me. I just leaks as they come in. You people figure out which ones to believe, which ones are red herrings. I can do just so much to communicate for you people. Isn't that another way of finding out what the government is planning to do besides to the press?"

"I wish there were. But if we had a policy through regular channels one in Washington would act



WE WERE LUCKY TO GET HIM... HE HAD A FOOTBALL SCHOLARSHIP UNTIL THE NCAA RAISED ITS ACADEMIC STANDARDS.

Letters: Minority report questioned

Editor:

Upon reading today's Houston Chronicle, I felt compelled to comment on some of the statements contained in a Chronicle article.

The article dealt with Texas A&M's plans to increase minority enrollment. Let me state from the beginning that I indeed favor such action, and I am not taking a stand on that issue.

First of all, maybe I missed something, but as far as I can remember, I haven't seen any whites with blackened faces and feathers on their bodies running through cafeterias, nor have I heard of any such activity, and I have been here for three of the most "recent years" in history.

Secondly, although I believe it is a good idea, some ACLU lawyer will come along and sue the University for discrimination or reverse-discrimination for asking housing applicants if they mind rooming with minority students. Also, is the housing application going to ask minority students if they mind rooming with minority students?

Further, the question of minority faculty members, particularly those of "Asian origin," has apparently been around for some time. I clearly remember last year a questionnaire being circulated by a certain mother's club dealing with the, as they called it, "problem" of Oriental faculty members. That questionnaire was harshly worded against such faculty members. Obviously, the administration's viewpoint differs with at least one mother's club and probably some others as well.

Lastly, the Chronicle quotes the report of President Vandiver's committee as saying that the flying of the Confederate battle flag at the annual construction of Aggie Bonfire is treason. Come on, really

now, treason? That is going a bit far.

I may not agree with the ideology of slavery, but I am proud of my heritage, which includes being from Texas, formerly a Confederate state. Flying the Confederate flag does not, in my eyes, advocate racism. Many historians feel that slavery was not the direct cause of the Civil War, but merely a contributing factor.

Back to the wording of the report for a moment. Webster defines treason as, "betrayal of one's country to an enemy to betray anything to." So, if the report does indeed use that word, it is in my view, way out of line.

The article quotes Nolen Mears as saying that flying the Confederate flag is just Southern heritage. I believe he is right. And as Southern heritage, the flag ought to be allowed to fly. If flying such a flag is "treasonous," how is it that flying the Mexican flag (one of the six flags over Texas that occasionally flies over the Quad) is not? Or more specifically, why isn't the flying of the Confederate "Stars and Bars" (the Confederate national flag, not the battle flag) in the same display also "treasonous?" After all, the Mexicans fought to gain control of our state and the Confederate States fought only for recognition.

Kurt L. Miller  
Dorm 9

Student says vote Gramm

Editor:

On Saturday, Feb. 12, the electorate of the Texas 6th Congressional District will make a choice between Phil Gramm and a host of Democrats.

I believe Phil Gramm deserves our

support now more than ever. As a Democrat, he went to Washington and worked hard to represent his constituents. He worked to reduce government waste, to curb government spending, and to reduce taxes. It is obvious that Gramm did his job all too well in the eyes of his fellow Democrats. The democratic leadership (Tip O'Neill, Wright, Ted Kennedy) is trying to punish him for performing his job well.

We elected Mr. Gramm to Congress three times. We knew where he stood on the issues, we liked the job he was doing, and we want him to keep up the good work. He has proven himself to be a man of his word, a fighter, and an honest man. If more congressmen would follow his example the troubles of this nation has today would not exist. Gramm's party affiliation did not get in his way of doing a good job as a Republican. I feel he will continue to fight for us in Washington D.C.

Who is our representative in Congress? Phil Gramm or Tip O'Neill? I do not want a political puppet of the liberal leadership but rather a political powerhouse. Let's send a message to O'Neill and friends to quit playing political games with the nation's future. Tisane politics must become history. The nation's economic ills are to be solved.

By the way, Tip, is there anything wrong with being an American rather than a Democrat or Republican? Moreover, Tip, keep your nose out of Texas politics and quit bothering our congressman, Mr. Phil Gramm. Vote Gramm on Feb. 12, 1983.