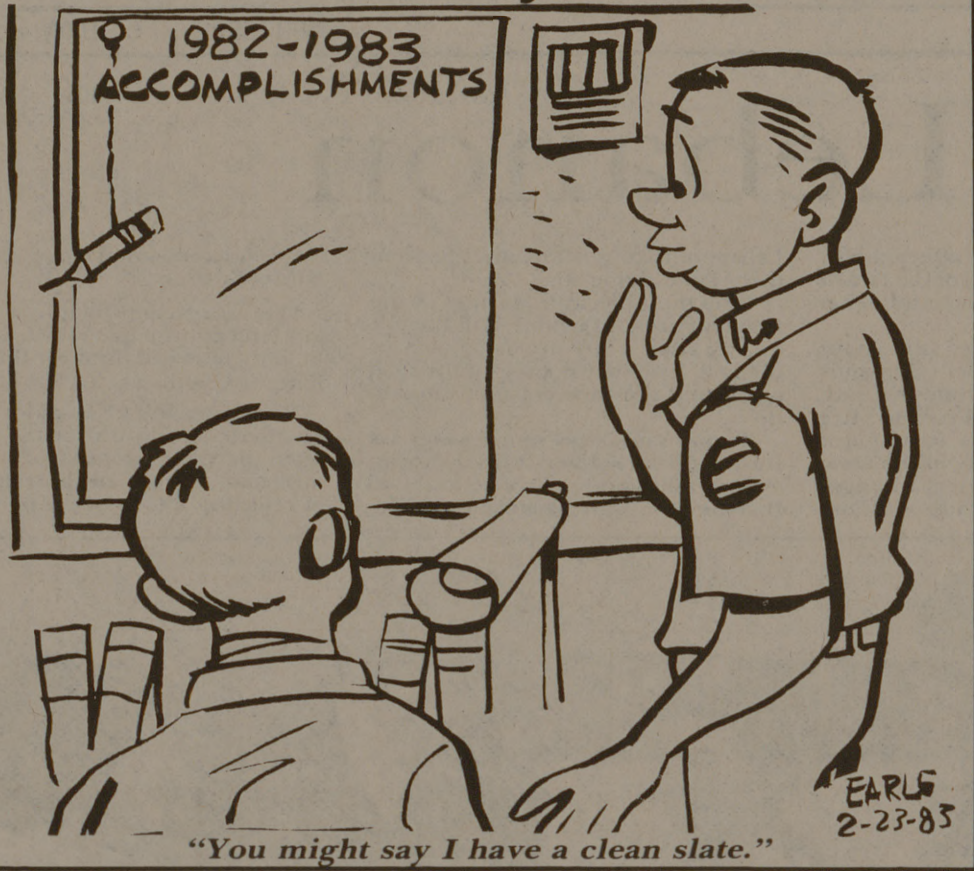


Slouch By Jim Earle



Sweet smell of EPA: get it cleaned up

by Art Buchwald

I walked past the Environmental Protection Agency in Washington the other day with another newspaperman, and we were both nearly overcome by the stench coming from the building.

"What do you make of that smell?" I asked my friend.

"I don't know. It could be PCB or dioxin or some other industrial waste. It does have a familiar odor."

"I can't believe they'd be using the EPA building to store toxic waste," I said. "They may be incompetent, but they're not stupid."

"Let's go in," my friend said. "There could be a story here."

We went into the building and told the guard that we'd like to talk to someone about the EPA hazardous waste program. He handed me a pass and two gas masks.

When we went to the office he directed us to, we found a woman stuffing material into a paper shredder.

"What are you doing?" I asked her.

"I'm shredding material that the congressional committee has subpoenaed in regard to our superfund cleanup program."

"Isn't that dangerous?" my friend asked her.

"This stuff is poison and we have to get rid of it," she said.

"What's poisonous about it?" I wanted to know.

"It could compromise all the deals we've made with companies who are guilty of dumping toxic material. If these papers got into the wrong hands, many top people in the EPA could get sick."

"But isn't it against the law to shred paper that has to do with toxic waste?" I asked.

"Absolutely not. These papers are being shredded under executive privilege."

"Aren't you afraid of being held in contempt of Congress?"

"I'm only doing my job. If you want to talk to anyone about the legal aspects, speak to Mr. Sniff, in the next office."

Mr. Sniff was very nervous when we walked in. "I'm not allowed to talk to the press unless I have two witnesses with

me." He called in two other lawyers, and turned on his tape recorder. "Now, what do you want to know?"

"Why are you shredding papers about your toxic waste program?"

"We don't want them to get into the wrong hands. We have several cases pending against companies that have been dumping chemicals, and we prefer their lawyers didn't see the evidence."

"But if you shred the papers, how can you use them in court?"

"We don't intend to go to court. We prefer to settle with them so they won't have to stand trial."

"If they violated the law, shouldn't they be brought to justice?"

"What would that accomplish? Our job is to get companies to clean up their acid pits. If we took a hard line, they'd only get mad at us and dump more waste."

My friend said, "What about the people who have been driven out of their homes by dioxin and PCB and those who are being poisoned by the water around the dumps?"

"We've done a study on that problem." "Can we see it?"

"No, it's confidential. If we publish the results we might be revealing trade secrets of the companies who did the dumping."

A secretary came in and said, "Mr. Drum of Titanic Chemical is on the phone."

The lawyer picked up his phone. "Drum, we just got a report from the whistle blower in our Pittsburgh office that your company is dumping uranium waste under the high school football stadium. Are you aware that's a no-no? ... Oh, you were? Well, be a good fellow and stop it. Thanks a lot. What Congress doesn't know won't hurt them." He hung up and turned to us.

"Now, if you'll excuse me, we've got a lot of work to do here."

I left with my newspaper pal. We handed in our passes and gas masks to the guard.

Suddenly, my friend said, "I know what this stench smells like."

"What?" I asked him.

"Watergate. It stinks like Watergate."

I inhaled and said, "I think you're right."

Trend to visual rock 'n' roll

by Maxwell Glen and Cody Shearer

WASHINGTON — Mick Jagger and his Rolling Stones have probably been doing the usual at a theater near you recently in their latest concert film, "Let's Spend the Night Together."

The film's title is no accidental come-on. As the Stones surely know, their profession's future rests on video. Cable hook-ups and Betamaxes have become the new wave in pop music and are slowly merging the two biggest chunks of American culture.

We bring up this subject because of a visual barrage of rock and celluloid that's intensified over the last 18 months. Videotapes of rock performers seem to be rolling everywhere — particularly on television. Rock groups and singers, who once avoided publicity to the point of reclusion, are now as visible as Gary Coleman and, unfortunately, as childishly theatrical.

A video-rock sampler: Billy Joel dresses in work clothes and hard hat and strums his guitar to the background of his latest hit, "Allentown." To the dub of "Love's Been a Little Bit Hard on Me," directors run country-rock singer Juice Newton through a sadistic routine that eventually puts her in a body cast. The Go-Go's, those pixie-faced idols of millions, are transformed into clay figures and transported into space. Wheee!

Why are they doing it? That's easy: to sell records. Anyone who's taken the temperature of the recording industry re-

cently knows that rock stars and their backers are hard-up for business. More than older standbys of nationwide tours and fan clubs, videotapes are the newest way to lure a mass market.

Produced at a cost of anywhere from \$15,000 to \$150,000, tapes are distributed to record stores, night clubs and television systems — free of charge. Of course, of these outlets, cable TV provides the biggest splash. A number of cable firms (Home Box Office, for example) offer regularly-scheduled programs built around industry-produced video tapes.

One in particular, however, Warner Amex's "MTV" (that means Music TV), seems to be setting the standard. Around the clock, seven days per week, the New York-based service broadcasts at least 250 different tapes, of groups ranging from Fleetwood Mac to Squeeze.

For MTV's 9.5 million viewers, who on the average are about 23 years old, nonstop rock is a dream come true. For depressed record companies, it's a life saver — at least temporarily. Since August 1981, according to a Billboard magazine survey last fall, there's been a 15-20 percent boost in sales of albums by acts featured on MTV.

Whether video can spawn a lasting turnaround is unclear. For its part, MTV has its eye on another 5 million subscribers by year's end, but such projections are hard to verify. At 29.3 million subscribers, the nation's cable systems have already linked 35 percent of America's

television-owning households that have undergone a slump. Meanwhile, Michael Greene, who runs the Music Channel in Atlanta, the production and broadcasting interests of interested parties on the sidelines.

But for now, the most important effect of the rock video explosion is its effect on the direction of music. Traditionally, company policies and big-city tastes have dictated what's available to the rest of the country. Distance and local radio broadcasts were other factors; Cody, who seemed five years behind the New York or Los Angeles markets in embracing particularly its music.

While New York's downtown and FM programmers will obviously continue to be leading taste arbiters, suburban base could mean more influence for a traditionally less sophisticated audience. If they can put the cash together and producers go along — new acts and singers will be able to bypass the interests of big-city types and become national success stories. The Cats, a punk band that once could get a nod from American disc jockeys, credit MTV for their newfound popularity.

Obviously, the videoization of rock will only make for more success. Groups will have to come up with a compliment melody. That's the most dramatic development in the business since the greatest act of all, and Co., came along more than 30 years ago.



HE'S FROM THE EPA ... HE SAYS HE GIVES A HOOT AND HE WANTS TO SQUEAL ON ANNE GORSUCH...

Letters: Theater program praised

Editor:

The Battalion of Feb. 15 carried an article concerning the OPAS co-sponsorship of the "Run for the Arts." While we agree with promoting an awareness of the arts at A&M and realize The Battalion has consistently supported us, the article contained a quotation to which I and several other Theatre Arts majors took offense.

The quotation read as follows: "Since Texas A&M, OPAS is one of the few ways people can get a taste of the arts, which we think is important."

While it is true that A&M does not have a school of fine arts, our theater arts section does an outstanding job of filling in that gap. This year the theater arts section is producing six major shows; this is an enormous undertaking considering there are only 40 theater arts majors at this University.

The quality of the program is excellent and is a tribute to the faculty members. In addition to this, two of the student designers for our show ("Getting Out") placed first at the regional festival in the categories of scene design and lighting design, winning over numerous graduate student designers that had entered. Also, at the University Resident Theater Association preliminary auditions in Austin, three A&M theater arts majors were advanced to the finals in acting, scene design and stage management. It is considered rare for even one student from a University to advance to the finals.

We strive in our productions to bring

variety and excellence in theater to A&M. We, the students, feel that we deserve some just recognition of our efforts.

Doug Golenski '85

Editor's Note: This letter was accompanied by 36 other signatures.

Big Event thanks

Editor:

A letter to Joe Nussbaum and the Student Services Committee:

The members of Chi Omega Fraternity sincerely congratulate you for your exceptional organization and execution of the Big Event. We were proud to play a part in an activity that served as a unifying agent between the students of Texas A&M and the communities of Bryan/College Station. It was refreshing to see so many Aggies band together to work toward a common goal. We look forward to participating in our new Aggie tradition in the years to come.

**Amanda Pike '86
Angela Dodd '85**

Lost necklace

Editor:

Hey Ags! I lost a blue and gold add-a-bead necklace between the Evans Library and the parking lot behind the Olin E. Teague Building on Sunday, Feb. 6 at

about 7:30 p.m.

If you or someone else found that necklace, please call at 764-9111 or 764-9109. It is of sentimental value and a cash reward given.

P.S. Laurie, I hope you find it!

Andrea

Ring lost

Editor:

Help!

I lost a man's silver and tungsten last Wednesday, Feb. 16, possibly at Halbouty Geosciences Building. If one found it, please contact me at 0224. It has sentimental value to you.

Mark Schmitt

Lost wallet

Editor:

I lost a wallet Saturday night at the Theater. It contained my ID card, driver's license and other personal items. If you have found it, please call me at 5288.

Thanks.

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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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