

opinion

Watt plans July Fourth gala

by Art Buchwald

The Department of Interior is now hard at work planning the July Fourth celebration on the Washington Mall. Secretary of the Interior Watt is involved in every detail of the celebration.

"Mr. Secretary, here are the latest rules we're issuing to assure the Mall party will be a patriotic family affair."

"Read them to me."

"No one with long hair or beards will be permitted to sit on the grass."

"What about the dress code?"

"All males will be expected to wear jackets and ties, and all females must wear skirts and blouses, or dresses with proper necklines. The Park Police will turn the hoses on anyone who is not properly attired."

"That should keep out the rowdy element. Did you check out the hosing with our legal department?"

"Yes, and they have informed me it's your Mall, and your Fourth of July."

"How are you doing on the food rules?"

"We're banning brown bags. People are only permitted to bring picnic hampers, but they will be examined to make sure they don't smuggle in any wine. Any unlicensed food purveyors will be horse-whipped. This also goes for souvenir

people selling Nuclear Freeze Buttons."

"Good. What else have you come up with?"

"We've divided the Mall into smoking and non-smoking sections."

"Is that necessary outdoors?"

"We're limited in the number of narc agents at our disposal, and in this way we can keep a better eye on anyone who tries to light up a joint."

"How are we doing on the entertainment?"

"I spoke to the United States Army bandmaster and he gave me a list of patriotic songs they plan to play."

"Let me see it... They're not serious. Are they really including 'This Land is Your Land'?"

"What's wrong with it?"

"Haven't you ever heard the lyrics? They're against everything this Interior Department stands for. We're trying to sell off the land and open it up to mining and lumbering, and lease the oil rights. If people believe it's their land, they'll take us to court. Throw it out."

"Yes, sir. Anything else you don't like?"

"How did John Philip Sousa's 'Washington Post March' get on this list?"

"I have no idea. Someone in EPA must have goofed. We'll dump it."

"They can't be thinking of playing 'Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band.' That's a Beatles song!"

"We thought kids might like it."

"But the Beatles are hard rock, and I told you I didn't want hard rock on my Fourth of July."

"Then it won't be performed, sir. We'll replace it with 'When I Grow Too Old to Dream.'"

"That's more like it. My wife loves that song."

"Do you want to go over Wayne Newton's numbers?"

"Of course not. Anyone who works in Las Vegas knows what the American people want to hear. What about the fireworks display?"

"Strictly family stuff, sir. There isn't an R-rated rocket in the package."

"One more thing. I don't want any anti-administration demonstrations on the Fourth."

"You have nothing to fear on that score. If anybody holds up a sign, our mounted police will trample them into the ground."

"Well done, Meddler. If the country doesn't have a safe and sane Fourth of July this year, they can't blame it on old Jim Watt."

Slouch By Jim Earle



"This is the last time I'm breaking it down and bringing it upstairs. From now on, if anyone wants to steal it, they can have it."



Letters: Attitude toward freedom

Editor:

This letter is in response to Mr. Kevin Johnson's letter of April 13. Mr. Johnson, your attitude toward "freedom" reeks of immaturity. It should be obvious that the changes you desire cannot be brought about while considering events of 120-plus years ago. Remember, this is 1983, not 1863.

While I have never participated in the factual or fictitious slave trade, obviously I cannot understand completely your point of view. I wish, however, that you would consider the following:

The ideology behind the "slave sale" is solely based upon the purpose of fund-raising. A very long time ago, humans actually were bought and sold, under the norms and morays of the society of this region. How can you assume, therefore, that the "slave sale" is a reenactment of this neo-ancient ritual with the intent to offend a particular segment of our University population?

As I see it, there is only one common thread: the exchange of money (from which, in this case, you may indirectly benefit). The "slaves" who are bought are not subjected to the type of subversion of more than 120 years ago; if they were, I would agree with you wholeheartedly. I would suggest that you forget about that which has since passed, because the only way you will obtain your desires is to look forward.

As for the bigger picture (i.e. TAMU system) you have a point, though it coincides little with the slave sale. The number of minority maids and janitors has nothing to do with minority students or administrators; these are basically people who are working to support themselves and their families. I cannot absolutely guess the reason for the lack of minority

students/faculty/administrators, but perhaps it is due to a similar dilemma (on the part of all parties) that you have expressed: for more than 100 years, this University has not endured many radical changes.

My final word: I (like someone with whom you may identify) dream of the day when all people will be able to live together in peace. The longer these views such as yours exist, the farther into the future it will be before this day is realized.

Tette Musgrove '83

Thanks for elections

Editor:

I think it's about time for someone to recognize Les Asel, this year's election commissioner, for all of the work he has done. Considering the number of people running for office in the spring elections, they went rather smoothly, at least the parts that Les had control over. The lack of volunteers, computer problems and weather were all beyond Asel's control.

Les has worked very hard on this year's elections, both fall and spring, and I believe that his efforts should be recognized. I admire Les for tackling this thankless job, and to those Aggies who think they could do a better job next year than Les could, I challenge you to apply for the position of election commissioner, but don't expect a rewarding job. Thanks Les, there really are people who appreciate the job you're doing.

C.J. Johnson '86
Gilbert Gonzalez '85

Good election job

Editor:

Dear Tom King and Russell McCaskill:

A recent article in The Battalion where you were quoted complaining about the recent elections made my blood boil. You blamed Les Asel, the election commissioner, for everything but the rain on the second day of elections.

Well, I watched Les run both the elections of last fall and these most recent elections, and I feel he has done the best job possible. As Les said, no one, with the exception of you two, of course, is perfect, and mistakes are made. Les dedicated a great deal of time and hard work into these elections, and I don't think you have the right to launch such an attack on him.

As for Les' attitude, Mr. King, I think it is outstanding, considering that after all the work he puts into these elections, he is faced with nothing but complaints and a lack of help and support. Everyone and his dog can complain, but few can offer any solutions or help.

Rob Farrell,
Crocker Hall

Correction

In the humor supplement, "The Aggie Rag," included in the March 21 issue of The Battalion, the newspaper used a picture of Merlin from a Texas Renaissance Festival press package. Bill Palmer works as Merlin at the annual festival. The picture was not intended to represent Palmer's opinions in any way. The Battalion regrets the error.

An absurdity that isn't very funny

by Arnold Sawislak
United Press International

WASHINGTON — An associate whose hawk eye never fails to spot a political absurdity points out that there is a movement afoot to appoint a blue ribbon bipartisan commission to find a solution to the Medicare financing crisis.

This idea, of course, arises from the success of the committee that worked out a short-range financing plan for Social Security, and on first glance it might appear to be a reasonable idea.

But it also reflects a situation that can only be described as borderline ridiculous at best and dangerous at worst.

As our colleague put it: "I've got an even better idea. Instead of appointing bipartisan groups to solve these problems one at a time, why don't we set up a system by which the various sections of the country can select a bipartisan group of men and women to solve all our national problems. We wouldn't need a large group; 500 or so ought to do it."

"Of course, we will want to safeguard the interests of the small states, so we can divide the group into two bodies. One could give each state an equal number of votes, say two; the other would give each state a proportional number of votes based on its population. and, of course, both bodies would have to agree by majority vote on any solution offered to solve national problems. I don't have a name for this committee, but just for the time being, we might call it the Congress."

Therein lies the ridiculous aspect of the situation. If we need to choose a special group to work out the really difficult

issues of public policy in this country, what is the function of the group already got?

This is not a new question. Both in 1933 and 1963, when President Roosevelt and Kennedy wanted to act on new programs, they created new agencies to carry them out rather than turn them over to existing government departments, which were said to be too tied up in red tape to do the job. The problem is that many of these "temporary" agencies are still around, even though the problems they were created to solve are long gone.

So, if special committees are going to supplant Congress, which costs us \$1 billion a year, maybe we should abolish it, reallocate the money to the private sector (maybe the company that President Reagan wants to sell the weather bureau to) and use the money to reduce the budget deficit.

In this, a small voice keeps saying, "It ain't funny, McGee." And it is right. The absurdity of the situation has become increasingly evident in recent years that Congress, which is supposed to deal with national problems, is so meshed in its own procedures and so up by special interests that it can't confront, much less find a consensus on many difficult issues.

And that is the potential danger. Congress has become nothing more than a debating society and the basic decision that affect our national life must be made by people with no responsibility to an electorate, a fundamental of our system of self-government has been changed without our consent.

The Battalion

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The Battalion also serves as a laboratory for students in reporting, editing and photographing 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 too long. 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.

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