

opinion

Editorial: Great schools are not made with bells

carl stegall

Last week Ford D. Albritton, Class of '43, announced that he and his wife were giving Texas A&M a gift of a carillon — a 130-foot bell tower.

The proposed site for the tower — between the YMCA Building and the Coke Building where there now is a circular flower bed — has not yet been approved by the planning and building committee.

When Albritton presented the University with the gift at a recent Board of

Regents meeting, he stated that most of the great universities in the United States have one distinctive feature — a carillon.

Great universities do not achieve their reputations because of bell towers. True, the tower may enhance the campus surroundings, but reputations are built on the quality of students and research, not the beauty of the campus.

Albritton also added at the regents meeting that the tower would be a constant reminder that Texas A&M is continuing to strive for excellence.

Students and research, not a bell tower,

should be the constant reminder that Texas A&M is continuing to strive for excellence. But for such a reminder to exist, the resources to achieve excellence must exist.

Albritton was indeed generous with his offer of building the carillon; however, the money could be put to better use by providing academic necessities. Library books, lab equipment, research funds and endowed scholarships all are needed.

With quality resources, Texas A&M can be great — even without a bell tower.

Legislators value their weekends

by Robert Shepard
United Press International

WASHINGTON — In most ways the U.S. Senate is an eminently unique body, but it does share a few characteristics with less prominent groups, including the TGIF syndrome (Thank God It's Friday).

Like office workers, store clerks, construction workers, doctors and business executives, senators are prone to view Friday afternoon as a time to wind down from the week's labors and, if at all possible, make an early departure for home.

Senate Republican leader Howard Baker was reminded of that fact one recent Friday afternoon when the Senate was stumbling its way through consideration of the State Department authorization bill. As is usual when he is off the floor attending to other business, Baker was keeping one ear tuned to a small speaker in his office where he is able to follow the floor debate and catch any unexpected problems that might require his attention.

At the time, Sen. James McClure, R-Idaho, was speaking for an amendment concerning the Soviet Union's compliance with arms control agreements. During a pause Senate Democratic leader Robert Byrd rose to offer an amendment that would put the Senate on record as calling for the firing of Interior Secretary James Watt, thereby threatening to open a whole new debate when several senators had already left for the day.

A few moments later, Baker arrived on the floor, saying it "suddenly dawned" on him that the Senate was no longer talking about the State Department bill, "and that perhaps I should come to the floor and find out what is going on."

"I think what is going on is Friday afternoon, and I think that what I have said so many times has proven true once more — there is not a man or a woman alive who can make the Senate do something it does not want to do," Baker said.

"I think what I heard on the squawk box in my office was the Senate saying we adjourned, and wondered how long it

will take Baker to find out," he said round of laughter.

"I do not like to say this, but I do think there is any way we are going to finish this bill today," he continued.

Looking to the bill's Democratic-Republican floor managers Baker said, "I do not see any energetic shaking of the head to the contrary."

Baker then proceeded to untangle that began to develop when he offered his amendment to McClure's amendment. In short order he was to clear the way for the Senate to the consideration of the State Department authorization bill until the following week and enable all senators to begin their weekend.

Perhaps more than average citizens, members of Congress value their weekends because they often must fly back to their home states or districts to deal with matters there or to campaign for re-election. So Friday afternoon Monday morning sessions that complicate airline connections are clearly out of favor.

The House, it should be noted, has similar aversion to working Friday afternoons. And Mondays in both chambers rarely see any significant bills that require the attendance of all members.

Weekends clearly are important members of Congress and one of the most chilling threats Baker or House Speaker Thomas O'Neill can make their respective chambers is that of a business session on Saturday. The time alone usually is enough to whip the members into line and allow business to be completed before the weekend.

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That is a fact of congressional life that the leaders, such as Baker, live with.



No joy in the New York Yacht Club lately

by Art Buchwald

I was invited to the New York Yacht Club for lunch the other day by Wellington Spinnaker III.

Since I hadn't been there before, I didn't know what to expect. The lobby was all decorated in black crepe and grown men were sitting in overstuffed chairs, wiping tears from their eyes.

"They seem to be taking the America's Cup loss pretty hard," I said.

"Wouldn't you if you had lost something that was in the family for 132 years?" Wellington said bitterly.

"It's just a little old cup. Why doesn't the club order a new one from Tiffany's to put in the glass case?" I said.

"You apparently don't appreciate the significance of the Australian victory. It means America no longer rules the waves."

"It could have been worse. The Russians could have won it. At least Australia is a stalwart ally."

"Not in this club, she isn't," said Wellington. "The New York Yacht Club members may forget, but they never forgive."

"Oh, for heaven's sakes," I told him. "It was just another sailboat race. I'm not much of a sailor but I figure as long as you have a good wind at your back and a case of beer, it doesn't matter who crosses the line first."

"Would you keep your voice down?" Wellington muttered. "Many of our members are armed."

"I'm sorry. I didn't know the America's Cup meant so much to the club. Tell me, why didn't the Liberty use her motor when she saw she was going to lose the final race?"

"The Liberty doesn't have a motor, stupid," Wellington whispered in a harsh voice.

"Well, that's rather dumb, isn't it? How did they expect to beat the Aussies without a motor?"

"Look, would you do me a favor and shut up if you don't know what you're

"Oh, for heaven's sakes," I told him. "It was just another sailboat race. I'm not much of a sailor but I figure as long as you have a good wind at your back and a case of beer, it doesn't matter who crosses the line first."

talking about?" Wellington said.

"I may not know much about sailing," I said. "But I do know that if you put a shroud over your keel when you're in port, you always have a better chance of winning a race. Why didn't you people

put a shroud over your keel?"

"Because we had nothing to hide. They double-crossed us by having a winged keel, but they didn't want us to see it. I never trusted the Aussies since Pearl Harbor," Wellington huffed.

"They say the koala bear is really a dirty little animal," I said, hoping to cheer him up.

Suddenly an old man in an overstuffed chair got up, took a silver-plated pistol out of his pocket and shouted, "I have nothing to live for any more!"

Two of the younger members grabbed him. "Easy Josiah, we still haven't heard from the protest committee."

Josiah sat back in his chair and sobbed, "We had them three to one. They stole our wind."

"I guess you people aren't too happy about the ballast decision either," I said.

Wellington said, "This club will never be the same again. We'll be fighting

amongst ourselves for the rest of our lives."

"It must be a terrible thing to witness," I told him. "But there is always next time, and I'm sure you people will come up with a better keel by then."

"But in the meantime the Aussies stole our cup," Wellington said.

A member came up. "Did you hear about Tippy Vanderslip?" he said to Wellington.

"What happened?"

"He went up to the Bronx Zoo with a shotgun and tried to bag a kangaroo."

"Poor Tippy. The last time I talked to him he wanted me to go with him and throw a brick through the plate glass window of Qantas Airlines," Wellington said.

The waiter came over to take the order.

"How's the flounder?" I asked Wellington.

He didn't laugh.

Current presidential candidates plagued by 'terminal dullness'

by Arnold Sawislak
United Press International

WASHINGTON — It is probably safe to say that none of the current crop of 1984 presidential hopefuls has caught the fancy of the public.

With the campaign year hard upon us, a charisma gap seems to be developing as expressed in a comment heard with increasing frequency, to wit: "What a bunch of turkeys."

Former Vice President Walter Mondale, we are told, is exceeded only in terminal dullness by Sen. John Glenn; Sen. Alan Cranston looks and sounds like a man who needs a solid meal; President Reagan is developing wattles and repeats himself a lot; Sens. Gary Hart and Ernest Hollings have fine heads of hair but no one can recall their faces; and who the heck are former Gov. Reubin Askew and Vice President George Bush?

There is one theory that this ennui, first noted in 1976, represents a subconscious wish to reinvent John F. Kennedy, a candidate through whom the middle aged can recapture fading youth and vigor and the young can feel involved in the affairs of state.

Certainly neither Jimmy Carter nor

Jerry Ford were able to project that kind of feeling and the only folks who got carried away in 1980 by Reagan were people whose salad days coincided with the celluloid collar and the automobile rumble seat.

The problem, of course, is image. Bob Newhart, long before he became a shrink and an innkeeper, used to do a comedy routine in which he played the part of a public relations type giving advice to a political figure of the past.

It went something like this: "Abe, I've told you over and over, the beard has got to go. And, listen Abe, wear the shawl I sent you. It gives you that homey touch."

It is easy to imagine the same kind of thing with some of the current presidential aspirants. For example, here might be Glenn's "creative consultant" calling the senator:

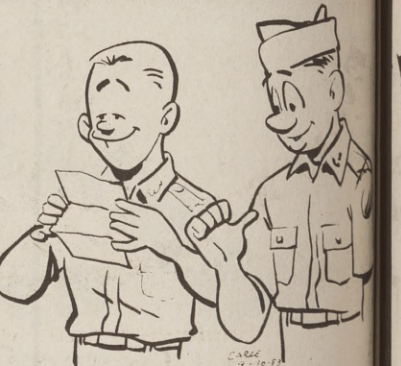
"John, we've been brainstorming over here and have a couple of things to run up the flagpole. Now, didn't they send a monkey into space before you made your flight? How about if we rent an ape and dress him up in a cute space suit and helmet?"

Or this call to the Oval Office: "Mr. President, we've got the solution to the gender gap. The polls show it's the young women you are having trouble

with, and that's the same group that got facial hair. So, we thought something in the way of a neat mustache — look what it did for Errol Flynn."

Slouch

by Jim Earls



"I can see that she's in love with you and thinks that you're special in what she's written but why did she address it to 'Box Holder'?"

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