

# opinion

## Breakthroughs in personal computers

by Art Buchwald

My Aunt Pauline knows I own a personal computer. So she came over to the house the other night and said, "I understand with those machines you can break into other computers and tell them to do things."

"It's not that easy, Aunt Pauline," I said. "I know there are a lot of stories in the newspapers that kids have been doing it, and you probably saw 'War Games.' But you have to be awfully lucky with the code word before the other computer will talk to yours. Why do you bring up the subject?"

"I want you to get into the Sears Roebuck computer and tell it I already paid for the slipcovers they keep billing me for every month."

"That's a tall order," I said. "And while you're at it, give me \$50 credit for all the anguish and agony I've suffered trying to straighten it out."

"I'll try," I said. I turned on my machine and dialed into the system. Then I asked her, "What code word do you think they would use for people who don't pay their bills?"

"Try DEADBEAT," she suggested. I typed in DEADBEAT. "Any luck?" she asked.

"No, but I think I broke into the computer at the International Monetary Fund. I better try another code name."

"Wait! As long as you're in the International Monetary Fund why don't you cancel Mexico's foreign debt? I'm going there this winter and it would be nice if they weren't so worried about money."

"I can't just cancel Mexico's debt or the IMF books won't balance. I have to give it to another country."

"So give it to Marcos. He deserves it for what he did to the opposition in Manila."

"Okay. I just put Mexico's debt in the Philippine account. Now Marcos owes the IMF \$120 billion. Let's get back to Sears Roebuck. You have any other code words their charge people might use?"

"Try BLOOD," she suggested.

"That doesn't seem to be it. I just

hooked into the Internal Revenue Service."

"Good. Tell it to give John McEnroe a personal audit. Maybe that will teach him to behave better on the tennis court."

"Anything you say, Aunt Pauline. Now let's feed in the password MONEY. Oh boy, now I've done it. I just broke into the CBS payroll computer."

"No kidding," Aunt Pauline said. "How much does Dan Rather make?"

I typed in the question. "It says \$1,200,000 a year."

She whistled. "Just for reading the news? How much does Diane Sawyer get?"

"The computer has her down for \$500,000."

Aunt Pauline was furious. "She's getting less because she's a woman. Tell the computer to take \$350,000 off Dan's salary and give it to Diane."

"Dan will go up the wall when he gets his next paycheck."

"Tough," she said. "Someone has to strike a blow for equal pay between the sexes on television."

"I've done it. But we still haven't solved your Sears Roebuck problem."

"Try the password SLIPCOVERS just for a long shot."

I did and found myself talking to the U.S. Navy's master computer in the Mediterranean. When I told Aunt Pauline where we were she became very excited. "Let's give Colonel Kaddafi a bloody nose."

"Now look," I said. "Giving Diane Sawyer a raise is one thing. But I'm not about to start a war for the hell of it."

"Your cousin Milton always said your Apple was all talk."

"Look, I don't think we're going to break into the Sears Roebuck computer tonight, and I could get in trouble for this."

"Do me one more favor before you turn off your system. Get into the Social Security computer."

"What for?"

"I want to tell the girls at my bridge game how old Raquel Welch really is."

## Letters: Gay reaction

### On gay exclusion

Editor:

We'd like to applaud M. Weaver for the well-thought out and sympathetic rejoinder made to the misguided student who thought she could be both an Aggie and gay (obviously incompatible).

The pairings of "integrity, pride in one's school, ridicule and talking behind one's back," along with "I know you can't help it — but change it anyway," are literary coups reminiscent of similar history making associations such as "nordic superiority, supremacy and extinction."

We have no reason to believe that it is not written somewhere that the pre-condition of hormonal balance exists, if one is to become an Aggie. We admit to being remiss in spotting and pledging to memory reference to this in the rules and regulations and humbly submit that our ignorance does not negate the existence of such rules.

Research into possible genetic or hormonal causes of homosexuality should be encouraged by all Aggies, for obvious reasons. When such research is perfected, we normal Aggies can keep our niche sacrosanct by screening all incoming freshmen and, as suggested by M. Weaver, send all those with genetic aberrations (the blind, deaf, physically disabled, sensorially impaired), hormonal imbalances or anything else considered abnormal at Texas A&M to t.u. This will help to ensure that t.u.'s reputation will grow as a haven for the diverse, with the resultant loss of homogeneity (characteristic of the conservatism we pride ourselves on at Texas A&M). But, rest assured Aggies, our reputation will remain intact.

Coni Weeker '83  
Marian Paul '84  
Valorie Greer '84

### Find out about gays

Editor:

Q: What do you call two queers on roller skates?

A: Roll-AIDS

Q: What do you call two cancer victims on a skateboard?

A: The average person would probably call that two people out making the most out of life.

Maybe the comparison is a little dramatic but the point is worth contemplating. In speaking for myself, I don't find all jokes in reference to the gay lifestyle bothersome. Some are funny, some aren't.

L. White

After all what is an Aggie joke? Aggies are not offended by some Aggie jokes, they just tend to not laugh at those particular jokes which they may find derogatory or ill-humored. In general, the same holds true for gay people.

Gay people are at least, if not more, as proud of their sexuality as a heterosexual person.

Time is a valuable asset. If one is to expend time proclaiming their narrow-minded opinion of gay people, perhaps they might more constructively use their time discovering what gay people have done for their country.

Maybe this would open your eyes. Why waste your time making fun of people? It just doesn't make sense. According to sound economic theory, one cannot be made worse off by increasing his or her choices or possibilities. Are not people who are gay merely optimizing on their alternatives?

Why should it matter to you if your professor or neighbor or landlord prefers someone of the same or opposite sex?

I wouldn't think that gay people would make society less democratic, cultured, knowledgeable, technologically advanced or productive. Being gay does not make those who are not gay worse off. Gay people still pay property taxes to finance the education of children of heterosexual parents.

Gay political activists do less to increase aggregate taxation than do the vast majority of other political coalitions. They do not ask for college funding or food stamps because of their minority status. Gay people do less to increase the overall level of process in the economy than does the United Steel Workers, National Education Association, or the United Auto Workers. What costs does a person's being gay impose upon those who are not?

I do not ask for nor do I desire sympathy in any form, only the equality that I am entitled to as a U.S. citizen. Every individual will face ridicule about something at one point in their life; but aren't self-criticism and self-doubt hard enough to deal with? Because other groups on campus are harassed, does this warrant "equal time" criticism? I don't see any benefit to it, only costs in terms of wasted time and other nonproductive factors. Why not the welcome novelty, diversity, and a melting pot of ideas and actions among our population? Gayness is no new concept or fad. It existed before the time of our forefathers, and it was not something that made us a "loser" society then.



## Democratic party may benefit from Jackson presidential bid

by Clay F. Richards

United Press International

WASHINGTON — For nearly three and a half hours last Thursday Jesse Jackson and his supporters kept more than 2,500 supporters enthralled as the black civil rights leader announced he was running for president.

"Run, Jesse, run," echoed and re-echoed throughout the Washington Convention Center in what was as much a revival meeting as a political rally.

The enthusiasm of the largely black audience surpassed any that Walter Mondale, John Glenn or any of the other Democratic candidates has been able to stir up in this campaign.

It was the same response Jackson sparked across the nation this summer as he used his voter registration drive as a means of exploring whether he would run for president.

Jackson pledged he will take his message not just to the black ghettos of the North or to poor blacks in the rural South, but to Indian reservations, barrios

in the Southwest, senior citizens' homes and everywhere else there are poor and forgotten Americans.

It is too early to tell how successful Jackson will be in winning votes and delegates. The polls now show him at 5 percent or 6 percent and most of that comes from the black community.

But make no mistake, Jackson is a serious candidate. He is in this race to prove that a black running for president is the most natural thing in the world. And by doing so, he will continue to change the attitudes the public has about blacks running for office at all levels — a process started by the growing number of black mayors like Tom Bradley in Los Angeles and Andy Young in Atlanta.

Jackson's campaign will have a major impact on the Democratic Party and the other candidates as well.

There are suggestions he will take a vote that would otherwise go to front-runner Walter Mondale, and thus the more moderate Democratic contender, John Glenn, will benefit.

But there is another school of thought that Jackson won't take many votes from anyone, because his support will come from those who never took part in the political process.

The numbers Jackson uses for his campaign would like to add to the two dozen key states in each case to more votes than Ronald Reagan's margin of victory in those states.

Those eligible voters — if they signed up and do vote — represent a number bigger than the margin of a dozen Republican senators.

So even if he doesn't win any votes or end up with many delegates, Jackson's candidacy could have a found effect on the American political scene.

He could well tip the political balance in this nation and the results would be Democratic Senate and a Democratic House — in the White House.

But that would leave the Democratic Party with an awful big debt to Jesse Jackson.

## Is it red-shirting or dunce-capping?

by Dick West

United Press International

WASHINGTON — There has been a great deal of hoopla this fall about red-shirting athletes.

In the event you aren't familiar with the term, be advised that red-shirting in its purest form involves stretching out a student's academic career to promote his athletic career.

Typically, a student of promise on the playing fields is red-shirted, or held out of athletic competition, for one year.

That gives him an extra season in which to sharpen his skills and mature physically for the greater glory of Alma Mater.

The next year, he may advance a class academically but he still has all of his athletic eligibility remaining.

In college, nobody pays much attention to the practice. However, some educators are frowning on red-shirting at the high school and junior high levels.

In the long ago, when I was attending public schools, red-shirting even in the elementary grades was quite common. Only back then we called it flunking out.

Some players on my high school football team had red-shirted themselves as early as the second grade.

By the time they finally made it to high school, they were a couple of years bigger and stronger than they would have been otherwise. No question about it — athletically, they had something of an advantage over their more studious peers.

Even educational reformers, I gather, are against promoting students until they have mastered the curriculum at their current levels. But nitwit red-shirting could put athletic programs on a collision course with efforts to improve academic standards.

Poor scholarship, as indicated by a high rate of failures in a given grade, reflects adversely on the teacher as well as the student. Any teacher with a high percentage of red-shirts in the classroom might have a tough time qualifying for

merit pay accorded faculty members of outstanding ability.

My advice to educators who are concerned about the academic ramifications is to try red-shirting teachers.

Teachers known for their ability to impart knowledge could be provided with red shirts, which would serve as a warning that marginal students might inadvertently be crammed with enough

learning to make passing grades.

Potential athletes interested in school an extra year could then be in the classes of second rate teachers who would leave their heads more cluttered with erudition.

But I don't know whether the National Education Association would support such a program.

### The Battalion

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