

Opinion



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MARGULIES
ORIG. HOUSE OF POST

Heckler will fill vital need for Irish linen consultant

People in Washington were skeptical last week when the White House announced Secretary of Health and Human Services Margaret Heckler was being "promoted" from a cabinet post to American ambassador to Ireland.



Art Buchwald

The story circulating for the past month was that the President's chief of staff, Donald Regan, led the "dump Heckler" movement because he was dissatisfied with her performance. The rumors of the secretary's imminent departure were leaked privately and then denied publicly by almost everyone who worked for the president. Just as I was about to be swept up in the hysteria, I was calmed down by a White House aide who vigorously denied that there was any effort by the administration to force Mrs. Heckler out of her job. "This is what really happened," he told me in confidence. "The president has been trying for the better part of a year to find a new ambassador to Ireland. He wanted a person whom he could trust, who had the ability to circu-

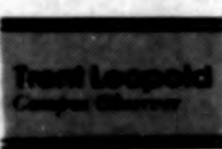
late amongst the ruling classes, but most of all someone who could speak the language. That person would be the president's eyes and ears in the most sensitive diplomatic post in the world." "I didn't realize Ireland was that important," I said. The White House aide looked around the room before he whispered. "Everything that floats down from the North Sea eventually winds up on the beaches of Ireland. It's the perfect place to keep track of Irish exports to the United States. But the most strategic value the Dublin spot has for the United States is that it's the ideal location to monitor the BBC." "I know that being ambassador to the Irish Republic is vital to our foreign policy, but isn't secretary of Health and Human Services a more important position in the administration?" He laughed. "The two don't compare. The secretary of HHS is just a figurehead. She's only responsible for spending \$300 billion. Her role is to see that the health, welfare and Social Security systems don't get fouled up. A child could do it. On the other hand, an ambassador to Dublin has to be in daily contact with the president, and is personally consulted on every decision the White House makes concerning Irish linen."

"If it's such a good job why does it pay \$16,000 less than Secretary of HHS?" "Because it's so much cheaper to live abroad..." "How did the president persuade Mrs. Heckler that he was not getting rid of her?" "He told her the last thing Pat O'Brien said to him before he died was, 'It's always been my dream to have a woman ambassador to Ireland.'" "And Heckler bought it?" "The president reads the line much better than I do. Reagan can be very persuasive when he sets his mind to it. It's my understanding Mrs. Heckler broke into tears when the chief started talking to her about his relatives who were caught up in the potato famine." "What else did he tell her?" "He said, 'Margaret, never forget this. A president has 19 cabinet officers to serve him, but only one ambassador to Ireland.'" I looked at the White House aide. "Then you are telling me no one in the White House had anything to do with bouncing Mrs. Heckler out of her post." "We didn't knock her out of a job. All we did is give her a better one. This administration has never stopped anyone from getting ahead."

Art Buchwald is a columnist for the Los Angeles Times Syndicate.

Aggie restrooms invaded by rude towel dispensers

Public restrooms across our great United States contain a variety of gadgets whose main purpose in life is to dry hands. Some bathrooms have little white gadgets that blow hot air for about a minute, some have gadgets that hold a big white towel that is used by everyone and some have gadgets known as paper towel dispensers. Here in Aggieland, Rock the Good Ag recently has blessed us with a new type of paper towel dispenser in some of our bathrooms. You probably have seen them. My first personal encounter with one of them was about two weeks ago in the



Trent Leopold
Campus Observer

library. And, like with anything new and different, I looked it over and formed an opinion about it. I didn't like it. That may not be fair because the dispensers can't form an opinion about me, but not everything in life is fair. Just ask the people who were on the Achille Lauro cruise liner. The gray dispensers don't have much of a personality besides being big, bulky and rude. They do have a hand crank on the bottom right corner, though. Actually, it's not really a crank. It is more like a puller. Basically it's just deformed, like the rest of the dispenser, but to be as accurate as I can I'm going to refer to it as a crank-puller.

The crank-puller has to be pulled on about three times before enough toweling comes out to serve its purpose. And sometimes it is hard to hold on to the crank-puller since your hands still are wet when you pull on it. I suppose the crank-puller is on the right corner because most people are right handed. This means left-handers have to reach across the dispenser to make more toweling come out, which is kind of inconvenient. Because the dispensers are new, it's unlikely the crank-pullers will break soon. But when they do, (when they're old) it will be impossible to get a paper towel out, and then you'll have to dry your hands on your pants. What about the lock on the dispensers? If, for some reason, the paper gets jammed, you can't just open the dispenser and fix it because it's locked. And when the person who refills the dispenser forgets their key it's back to drying your hands on your pants again. Besides being rude to everyone who uses them, the dispensers recently were especially rude to the girls — uh, women — over in Leggett Hall. The women had to do without their mirrors for a couple of weeks when the dispensers moved into the mirrors' spots in the Leggett bathrooms. Fortunately, someone ran the dispensers off and the mirrors are back. Now someone needs to chase the dispensers out of the rest of the campus restrooms. **Trent Leopold is a senior journalism major and the Senior Staff Writer for The Battalion.**

Mail Call

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length. 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 be signed and must include the address and telephone number of the writer.

Cartoonists cause bonfire brouhaha

EDITOR: When are The Battalion cartoonists going to show some support for bonfire? Last year, Scott McCullar ran a heart-rending cartoon depicting Smokey the Bear with a tear in his eye as bonfire burned. The impression given is that Aggies went into a national park, killed all the trees and kicked Bambi out onto the street. I don't suppose Scott bothered to research the fact that we were cutting on land scheduled to be strip mined. This year's "Waldo" cartoon depicts two bonfire injuries. Thanks a lot, Kevin Thomas, what a refreshingly optimistic way to publicize bonfire. Never mind the fact that the bonfire coordinators stress safety as the most important factor to a successful bonfire. Everyone is needed to make this year's bonfire the best ever. Perhaps if Kevin and Scott went out to cut they would have a more enlightened approach to their work. **Kim Tibbetts '87**
Moses Hall

Ideas for stopping mad mopeders

EDITOR: Dr. Baum's complaint about motorcycles and mopeds on campus walkways deserves better than Robert E. Wiatt's glib response. I, too, have been nearly struck by motorcycles operated illegally on sidewalks, and I, too, have received little satisfaction that anything is being done to prevent a serious accident. The situation is out of control, especially in view of the burgeoning fleet of mopeds that seem to multiply like fruit flies. Wiatt's imagery of "Starsky and Hutch" tactics is humorous, but it suggests to me that he should watch less television and put more effort into catching offenders. It is ludicrous to argue that nothing can be done because, in Wiatt's words, "... the majority merely speed up, zip around the officer and roar off." Granted, it's easier to write parking tickets, but perhaps a little ingenuity usefully could be applied to catch the marauding mopeds. Several ideas, offered without expressed or implied warranty, come immediately to mind. Why not use ticket revenues to equip several officers with blue-and-white mopeds of their own, complete with scaled-down flashing lights, sirens and radio antennas? A few more mopeds would hardly be noticeable at first, but imagine the surprise when an unsuspecting offender, zooming past the library to make it to class on time, suddenly sees the long arm of the law in his rear-view mirror. Why, it would strike terror into the hearts of all motorized two-wheelers when news of the arrest broke in the next day's Batt! Of course, the effectiveness of the moped patrols will diminish rapidly as offenders' awareness of their activity increases, so some reserve tactics are to keep the opposition guessing. One could, for example, equip trees near certain strategic intersections with circular nets triggered to drop when a moped passes underneath. Better yet, a plainclothes officer could be stationed nearby, perhaps nonchalantly checking the sprinklers, ready to spring into action and by radio command release the net at the critical moment. The possibilities are almost endless, and the challenges and countermoves could occupy minds for years. Probably even additional jobs could be justified, using words like "antimopedimentia" to describe essential functions. There are other delicious opportunities, such as trompe d'oeil paintings designed to entice offenders into the lair of the law or, heaven forbid, into a wall. But I'll leave such possibilities in the able hands of the University Police.

so as not to blow their cover. In the meantime, carry a big stick. **David A. Brooks**
Department of Oceanography

Spikers snubbed

EDITOR: I am writing this letter on behalf of the Texas A&M volleyball team concerning their treatment in regards to their practice facilities. I would like to begin by asking you a question: what color is the ceiling in G. Rollie White Coliseum? I know, most people do not look at ceilings or care what they look like. The Texas A&M volleyball team has been "kicked out" of the gym so that the ceiling may undergo an "Aggie face-lift." I realize that being an Aggie carries with it a certain pride and tradition and this attitude is reflected in the physical appearance of the A&M campus. I firmly believe this image needs to be upheld, but why couldn't they have decided to perform this cosmetic surgery during a time that the gym would not be needed by any particular sport? The volleyball team has been fortunate enough to have use of a P.E. gym during its lunchtime break; however, they are still being deprived of an hour and a half of practice time they would normally use. Practice time to any team is valuable; after all, "Practice makes perfect." When you consider the fact that the A&M volleyball team has been practicing for over a month and at the present are into their season, this practice time becomes even more important. My point is I know that A&M and its students support athletics and that same Aggie pride and tradition thrive on a winning spirit. What would Jackie Sherrill say if he was told he could not practice on Kyle Field this week because the lines needed to be re-painted? **Genye Allen**

Sodomy law unfair

EDITOR: The Texas sodomy statute (21.06) cannot benefit society in any way. It certainly will not slow or stop the spread of AIDS. Even the judges who ruled in favor of 21.06 knew this, as they did not mention AIDS as a reason for their decision. The statute is unfair, because it allows heterosexuals to perform the same acts that are illegal for gays. The statute is not enforceable. It only affects private, consensual acts. Therefore, it will not stop people from having sex. All it does is provide a legal basis for harassment and discrimination. The statute is an attempt to stifle the gay rights movement. But consider how much worse the AIDS problem could be now if gay organizations had not been there to alert the straight world chose to ignore AIDS. Think about it. **Kevin McLeod Bailey '87**

The easy way out

EDITOR: K.W. Brown's argument (that raising the drinking age saves lives) is valid. In fact, I bet we could cut highway fatalities in half if we would raise the drinking age to 90. The simple truth is that a separate legal age is discriminatory. It is a convenient reaction to a problem. There is no excuse for drunken driving. Getting behind the wheel drunk is like pointing a loaded gun at a person. A death due to DWI is murder. Why don't we all treat it that way instead of using 18-21 year olds as scapegoats to a problem of all ages? I look forward to the day the lawmakers, the judges and the executive branch treat drunks as drunks and 18 year olds as legal citizens. **Jim Mueller**

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