

Opinion

The Battalion

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A dead issue?

Amid increasing evidence of petition forgeries, the Texas GOP announced Monday it was forgoing efforts to verify contested signatures. The GOP will now allow all six candidates to keep any delegates they win in the March 8 primary.

The party officials would do well to take their cue from candidate Pete du Pont, who pulled his name from the ballot when the forged signatures of Democrats and dead people appeared on his petitions. In Sunday's *Houston Post*, du Pont was quoted as saying, "I refuse to benefit in any way from those tainted petitions." But the Republicans' decision to abandon their investigation has changed du Pont's tune as well; he now wants his name back on the ballot.

The issue here is more than whether du Pont — or any candidate or his staff — allowed forged signatures to be placed on a petition. Such an action is a perversion of democracy that we associate with news reports from Marcos' Philippines, not those from our America. The party should do all it can to uncover the wrongdoing rather than whitewash it. The Texas GOP's willingness to forgive and forget only serves to further discredit a party already reeling from the discovery that some of its supporters may never have existed at all.

— The Battalion Editorial Board

Unsafe at any speed

I've been holding up pretty well during all the recent problems with air safety. I've been dutifully getting into airplanes and entrusting my life to people I don't know, just like I really believe it when I'm told, "Hey, you're a lot safer up here than anywhere else."



Lewis Grizzard

Not everybody has done as well as me. I read recently of an Eastern Airlines flight attendant crew asking the pilot to de-ice the wings before their flight took off.

The pilot refused. The flight attendant said, "Good luck, and you can serve the coffee yourself," and got off the plane. Smart.

But what happened the other day at Pensacola airport has just about taken away all the progress I've made over the past years overcoming my fear of flying.

What happened in Pensacola was an Eastern airplane landed and broke in half. I mean, one half of the plane came almost totally unattached to the other half of the plane.

Nobody was seriously injured, but now that I know there is a possibility an airplane can break in half while landing, I'm looking around for my Greyhound timetable again.

Can you imagine what the pilot told them back in flight headquarters?

"Had a little trouble down in Pensacola, Chief."

cola, Chief."

"Yeah. What happened?"

"The plane broke in half."

"Did what?"

"Well, it sort of came apart at the hinges, but we got the ground crew out there now trying to glue it back together."

You don't hear that much about buses breaking in half, or trains, or even cars. As much trouble as they had with Corvairs, I don't remember an instant where one of them broke in half.

There has been a great deal of discussion lately over what part of the plane is the safest. Most feel the back because, as the smart money says, "There never was a plane that backed into a mountain."

All I know is, if I do ever fly again, I'm not sitting in the middle. I don't want half the plane on its way to LaGuardia while the half I'm in is dropping down on Baltimore.

One other thing that was strange about the Eastern mishap: the officials covered the lettering that identified who owned the plane before they would allow photographers to take pictures of it.

They thought that would get them off the hook?

Eastern used to be the official airline of Disney World.

When that connection was broken off — if you will — did Eastern take Goofy with them to run the airline?

Somebody get Ralph Nader on the phone. "Unsafe at Any Speed" is in definite need of a sequel.
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Mail Call

No ballroom atmosphere here

EDITOR:

This letter is in response to Robert Martin and Lynn Foster's letter which appeared in the January 18 issue of *The Battalion* concerning the presence of the Aggie Band at basketball games. First of all, the intent of the Fightin' Texas Aggie Band at the games is to keep the crowd emotional and the intensity of fan support at its highest.

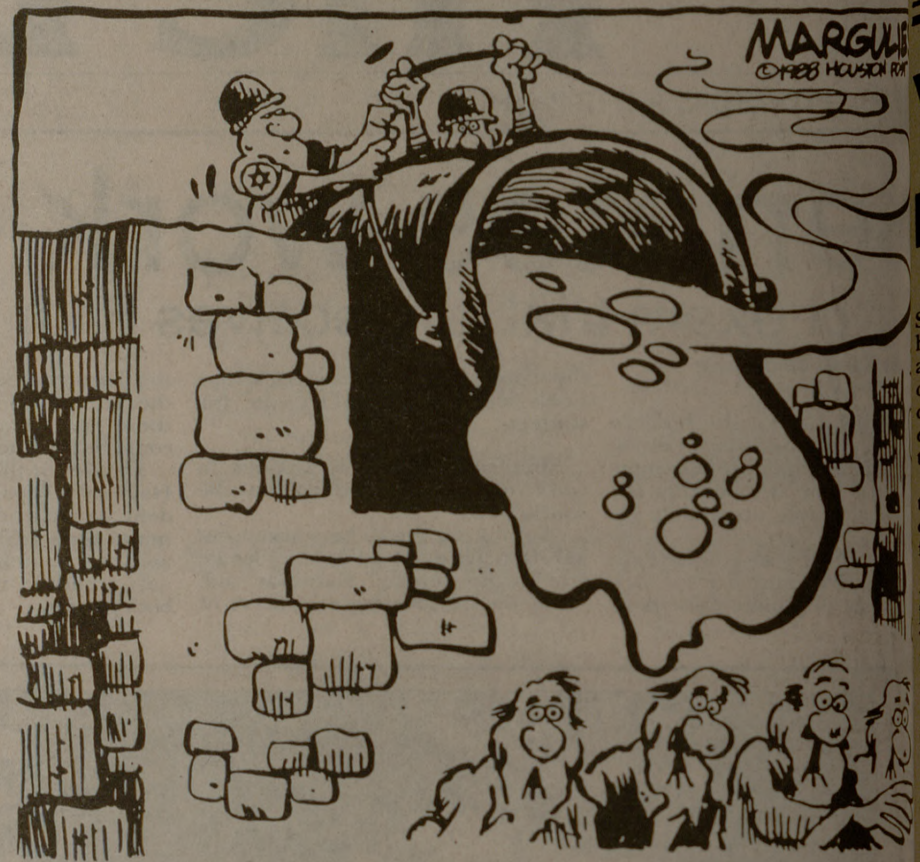
Second, one needs to realize that the Aggie Band does not go to the games just to entertain the masses. It does not play with the intent of recreating a ballroom atmosphere for an evening of social gab and chit-chat while the fans watch a group of sweaty young men run up and down a wooden floor throwing an orange ball at each other.

Third, if they're so concerned about the band taking up "too many of the good seats," maybe they should think that perhaps there is a reason why the band sits where it does. Did Martin and Foster bother to ask a bandsman or one of the directors?

Fourth, although I must admit that perhaps the Aggie Band may be loud, this is an Aggie basketball game, not a t.u. tea party. Anyway, the band only sends half its members to the games. If it's a quiet sporting event you're looking for, attend a fishing tournament or join a quiet game at an elementary school.

Perry A. Lister II '90

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 classification, address and telephone number of the writer.



Balancing the federal budget with OOPS and the 10-year plan

Washington, D.C. — President Ronald Reagan:

"Well, you see the federal budget is like one big pie . . . no, wait a second, the federal budget is like a big red apple . . . no, that's not right. Umm, I'd prefer not to comment on this right now."

John MacDougall

Lewiston, Idaho — Larry S., auto mechanic:

"The problem with Reagan's pie is that everyone wants a piece of it."

Squaw Valley, New Mexico — Jeanne P., housewife:

"Who needs to balance a checkbook when you own the bank?"

Hallettsville, Texas — Steve H., farmer:

"I got more important things to think about than balancing his budget, like fixin' my John Deere."

Obviously, more than one American is confused about or just doesn't care about balancing the federal budget. During the president's tenure in office, budget deficits have soared to record heights. Presidential contenders such as Gov. Bruce Babbitt are beginning to talk openly about raising taxes to make up for revenue shortfalls. But before these power brokers shoot themselves in the feet, I recommend they take to heart (no pun intended) my formula for curing this nation's ills.

Having studied enough economics to know that an unbalanced budget can lead to an unbalanced economy, I have devised a plan to cure the budget problem and alleviate the burden of having federal deficits dirty the hands of our next president. Conventional methods of balancing the budget, keeping inflation down and stabilizing unemployment

at a reasonable rate have proven ineffective, even under the guidance of Chicagoan economics.

Euphemization

The only way to stifle this unwanted baby called the federal deficit, passed down from administration to administration like a dirty diaper, is to implement what I call bureaucratic euphemization; give it a new name, a clean fresh bib, a peck on the cheek and a whole new department to play in called the Office of Optimizational Projectional Studies (OOPS).

OOPS would supervise budget remanagement and cost overruns through its exclusive power to rename, reclassify and semanticize. For example, the national debt would be relabeled the Remunerative Elastic Liability (REL), a much more ambiguous and confusing term.

A bureaucratic reshuffling is necessary for the budgetary sequence to complete itself. First, the Department of Commerce, responsible for compiling data on the inflation rate, gross national product and unemployment rate, would be incorporated into OOPS, where the number-crunching statisticians and data compilers would be put to a more productive use drawing deceptive graphs, complete with big red arrows pointing downward. No doubt, with their help, the REL could be substantially reduced, maybe even eliminated with the bold stroke of a pen.

The Treasury Department, as well as the Federal Reserve, would also come under the wings of OOPS that would manage the printing of money at the president's discretion. As that shrewd housewife from New Mexico philosophized, there would be no need to keep track of the amount of money printed.

OOPS: The Ten-year Plan

Well, right about now you may be thinking, "is this guy off his rocker? Doesn't he know that eventually all this

will catch up with the president?" Naturally, I have taken this into account and have come up with what I call Ten-year Plans.

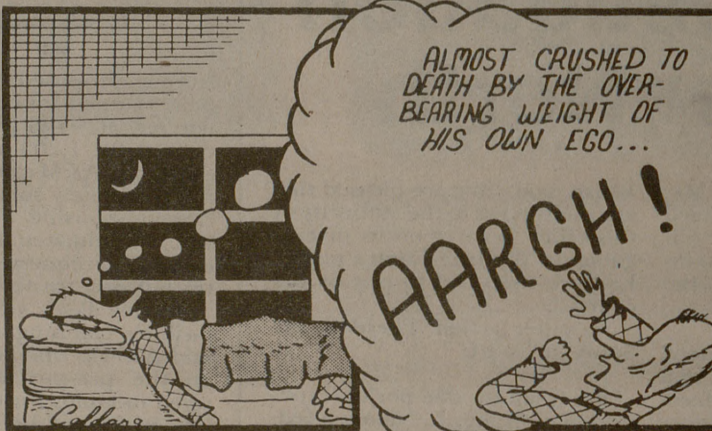
You see, I figure that by its tenth of implementation, OOPS will be on the verge of total collapse because of economic instability and political disaster. Because of this, I propose an addendum to the War Powers Act, authorizing OOPS to wage wars in case of economic crisis. About every 10 years, OOPS engage the United States in a somewhat remote part of the world. One from Franklin Roosevelt to Kenneth Galbraith knows that war is super for stimulating the economy. A year would be a terrific time to get ball rolling in Nicaragua by botching the peace talks and sending in the rines. Who knows, if things really off, we could bring General Westland's Vietnam statisticians out of the woodwork to fabricate casualty and other statistics.

We can overcome distrust and Vietnam skepticism about proposed campaigns by engaging the aid of venerable Mother Teresa as spokesperson for OOPS. As a token of our respect, OOPS will aid the Indian government in its goal of population control by letting our most efficient statisticians and experts. With the right statistics spreadsheets, we could turn the population crisis into a "minor human aggrandizement."

Through my program of euphemization and public deception, the possibility exists for the government to virtually eliminate those nagging problems balancing the budget, keeping employment high and inflation low. The fact is that "ignorance is bliss" and government is to function smoothly must fool most of the people most of the time. If government gives into temptation to uncover the facts, the dominoes will fall.

John MacDougall is a graduate student and a columnist for The Battalion.

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BLOOM COUNTY

