

## Slocum and team deserve respect, support from Ags

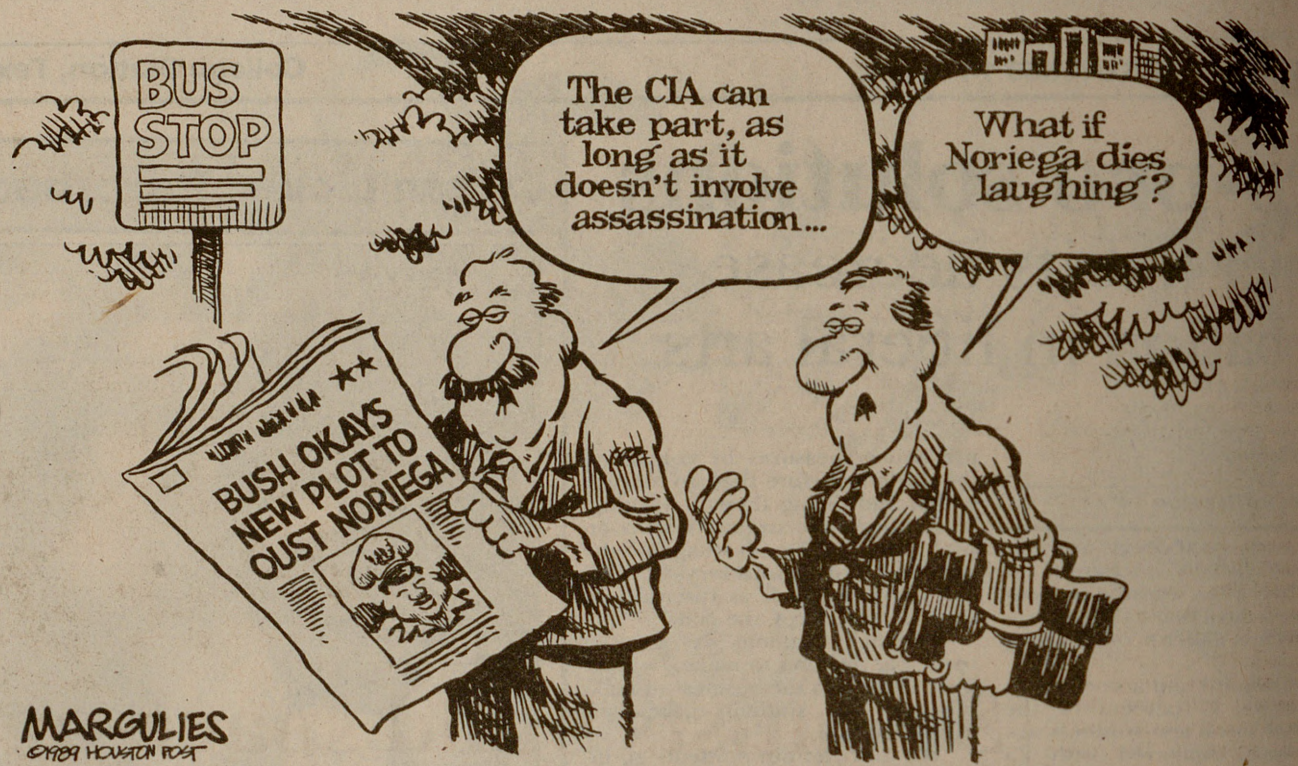
Despite the disappointing loss to Arkansas on Friday, R.C. Slocum and his team have done an outstanding job this year.

The credibility and respect that any team brings to a school it represents is more important than winning. Under Jackie Sherrill, Texas A&M was the butt of jokes and an object of scorn because of the continuous pall of illegality that hung over the football team. The constant presence of NCAA investigations brought A&M ever closer to the death penalty.

Slocum has apparently eliminated all traces of the sleaze factor, and has managed to field a competitive team that has shown class both in losing and in winning as shown against SMU and TCU.

Slocum needs only one more victory to tie the all-time NCA record for most wins by a rookie head coach. He came within one point of becoming the only coach in history to lead his team to the Cotton Bowl in his first year. Slocum and the Aggies have shown they can compete with the best on honest terms, and they deserve our full respect and support.

The Battalion Editorial Board



MARGULIES  
©1989 HOUSTON POST

## Quayle needs to save his image before it's too late

To a golfer, a mulligan is a second chance, an invitation to hit a bad shot over again and pretend the first one never happened. Golfing with Republican governors, Vice President Dan Quayle said he didn't want one because "mulligans are for Democrats."

There are no mulligans in national politics, where Quayle might find one handy now and then. In that arena, any errant move is marked indelibly on the scorecard. That means no mistakes go unpenalized, especially for a political figure whose confidence and performance ratings are persistently low, as Quayle's are.

That pressure doesn't let up; one associate sees the stress on Quayle as the vice president strives to boost his standing, knowing that any slipup or misspoken word will be magnified into another dent in the image.

Walter Mears  
Associated Press

Gov. Carroll A. Campbell Jr. of South Carolina introducing him at a casual reception, said the vice president "will make a very fine place in history." Republican National Chairman Lee Atwater tossed into his remarks to the governors the observation that Quayle "is doing a very fine job and could not have more confidence and support from the president."

After all, Quayle has solid backing where it really counts. President Bush has said flatly that Quayle will be his 1992 running mate. That gives the vice president seven years to do his job and enhance his standing.

In the changeable world of politics, that is a very long time — half again as long as Quayle's entire political career to date.

Even though the adverse polls clearly sting, Quayle is up to a joke about his political standing.

"A year and one week ago, President George Bush rode to victory on my coattails," he told the governors.

He spoke of his wife's interest in disaster relief efforts:

"Marilyn has a lot of experience in disaster preparedness; she's lived with me for 17 years."

But the banter isn't always easy in the face of public opinion surveys indicating that a majority of Americans do not think Quayle qualified to succeed to the presidency, which is a vice president's one crucial role, and that nearly

half think he should be replaced on the 1992 Republican ticket.

President Bush has said that will not happen, making the commitment publicly. "He's doing a very good job, an outstanding job ... exactly what I want him to do," Bush said in an interview with the *Dallas Morning News* early this month.

The vice president says unfavorable polls will not affect the way he does his job.

"I'm not going to do anything differently no matter what the polls say," Quayle said in an interview with a group of reporters. "I'm going to work as I believe a vice president should work, that is, first and foremost, with complete loyalty to the president, for the advancement of his agenda, in his interest, and that's what I'm doing."

That job description does not include a more aggressive effort to strengthen his own standing and improve his own image. Quayle and allies have maintained that his image problem stems largely from memories of the Democratic attack on him during the 1988 campaign, but it has been over a year now and the number aren't any better.

As a result, some Quayle advisers want him to raise his television profile, appearing more frequently on the news and question-and-answer programs. That means the voters will be seeing more of Quayle. They'll know him better; his challenge is to convince them like him better.

Walter R. Mears, vice president and columnist for *The Associated Press*, has reported on Washington and national politics for more than 25 years.

## Politicians don't deserve rewards for jobs done poorly

Some politicians have long been champions at lying, cheating, dirty-dealing and underhandedness, but Congress has elevated those practices to new heights with this latest pay-raise fiasco.

In case you didn't hear the details, listen to this:

The U.S. House of Representatives voted 252-174 to pass a pay-raise bill, which, true to form, was sneakily disguised as ethics legislation. The bill increases salaries in the House, for federal judges and for top executive-branch officials by 35-40 percent. A 7.9 percent "cost-of-living" hike goes into effect by January. A 25 percent raise will be given on Jan. 1, 1991, on top of whatever cost-of-living increase is given to rank-and-file civil servants at that time (probably around 3 percent). So House members have voted to increase their own salaries from \$89,500 to about \$125,000.

Now, consider that the old salary of \$89,500 already puts House members in the top one percent of the population in terms of salary, and tell me how these poor pitiful politicians so desperately need the extra money.

Of course, the politicians who voted for this bill are quick to point out that its "real purpose" was to provide much-needed ethics reform for the House. In addition to raising salaries, the bill phases out the amount of income the elected officials can accept from outside sources; starting in 1991, representatives can no longer accept speaking fees, honoraria and all the other thinly disguised attempts by political interest groups at buying political influence. This reform is long overdue, but the House deserves no pat on the back for finally getting around to



Scot Walker  
Editor

doing it. After all, they had to bribe themselves with a payraise just to convince themselves of the need for ethics reform. Quiet magnanimous, eh? As Ohio Rep. James Traficant put it, "We come with ethics reform and we sneak in a pay raise."

But for all the hypocrisy and dirty-dealing displayed by the House, the Senate managed to do them one better. The Senators also voted themselves a pay raise, but they didn't touch the rules governing how much money a senator can receive from outside sources. That means Texas Senators Phil Gramm and Lloyd Benson can pull in, in addition to their \$100,000 official salary, an additional \$27,000 in speaking fees and honoraria. The percentage of their official compensation that can be earned from outside income is scheduled to gradually diminish, but the schedule is so gradual that Senate aids have derided the schedule in the news media as "Honoraria 2000."

What is most disgusting about the actions of both the House and the Senate is the way they went about giving themselves this pay hike. Remember back to earlier this year when Congress proposed to give itself a 51 percent pay hike. The public, with good reason,

went screaming nuts. Consumer activists and radio talk-show hosts helped lead the fight against the raise, and Congress had no choice but to kill its own proposal.

Congressional leaders were mindful of the overwhelming public opposition to any congressional pay hikes (*USA Today* said 72 percent of Americans opposed the increase) so they took care to grease this pig really well to ease its slide through the system this time around. No public hearings took place on the issue. There was no decent interval of time between announcement of the proposal and its passage for the public to digest the idea. And worst of all, the vote came at the very tail end of the session, allowing lawmakers to slink out of town and let the furor die down before the next session.

All other issues aside, a pay raise usually indicates that an employee is doing some kind of good work that deserves a reward. Can Congress lay honest claim to such kudos? Hardly. Here's what the 101st Congress has managed to do in the first half of its term:

- Place a federal ban on flag burning.
- Boost the minimum wage.
- Approve yet-another "War on Drugs." This is the fifth in five administrations, and is already proving to be just as ineffective as its predecessors.
- Bail out the savings and loan industry. But can you guess who gets to

foot this bill? Hint: It ain't the people who caused all the problems in the first place, and it ain't the people (like Congressmen) who make enough money to afford more taxes. Once again, John Q. Public gets reamed.

- Place a lid on federal payments to doctors.
- And, last but by no means least: Approve their own pay increase.

And here are just a few of the issues that Congress didn't address this time around:

- Child care.
- Clean air.
- Housing for the homeless.
- Oil-spill liability.
- Rights for the disabled.
- The federal budget deficit. Although they did squeak through a last-minute appropriations bill, nearly all of its \$14.7 billion in deficit reductions come from fancy accounting gimmicks that in reality don't decrease the deficit a bit.
- The explosion of democracy among the Eastern Bloc nations. Congress did decide to offer foreign aid to Poland and Hungary to encourage and support continued economic reform, but managed to come up with only a paltry \$846 million, billions less than we give to countries who have much less need for our help, like Israel.

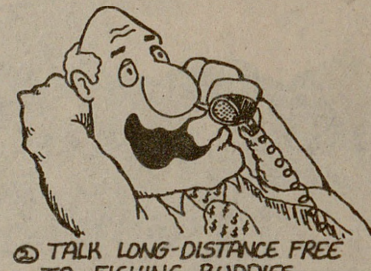
California representative Robert Matsui said it well: "We didn't do a damned thing this year."

What they did do well this year was mostly illegal or immoral. The House members, including the Speaker, have been driven to resign. A third was convicted on criminal charges. Four are under investigation by the House ethics committee. Over in the Senate, a special investigator has been hired to look into suspicious dealings of six senators. Not really a good year, I'd say. Certainly nothing there that makes them think they deserve a raise for a well done.

Here in Texas, we just voted down a much-more-defensible raise for our state legislators. It's not too late to convince the politicians that a federal pay raise was a bad move too. Write Gramm (703 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510) or Benson (370 Russell Building, Washington, D.C. 20510). Call Joe Barton (his College Station office phone number is 846-1818) and tell him you'll remember the "Yes" vote when he comes up for election, and urge him to work to have the raise rescinded. Speak up and be heard. Don't let your elected officials get away with such an obvious attempt at manipulating the system and the public.

Scot Walker is a junior journalism major and editor of *The Battalion*.

### A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A POLITICIAN



6 HAVE FREE LUNCH WITH A SPECIAL-INTEREST GROUP.

### The Battalion

(USPS 045 360)

Member of Texas Press Association Southwest Journalism Conference

#### The Battalion Editorial Board

- Scot O. Walker, Editor
- Wade See, Managing Editor
- Juliette Rizzo, Opinion Page Editor
- Fiona Soltes, City Editor
- Ellen Hobbs, Chuck Squatriglia, News Editors
- Tom Kehoe, Sports Editor
- Jay Janner, Art Director
- Dean Sueltenfuss, Lifestyles Editor

#### Editorial Policy

The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting newspaper operated as a community service to Texas A&M and Bryan-College Station.

Opinions expressed in *The Battalion* are those of the editorial board or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty or the Board of Regents.

The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Journalism.

The Battalion is published Monday through Friday during Texas A&M regular semesters, except for holiday and examination periods.

Mail subscriptions are \$17.44 per semester, \$34.62 per school year and \$36.44 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.

Our address: The Battalion, 230 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-1111. Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Battalion*, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77843-4111.