

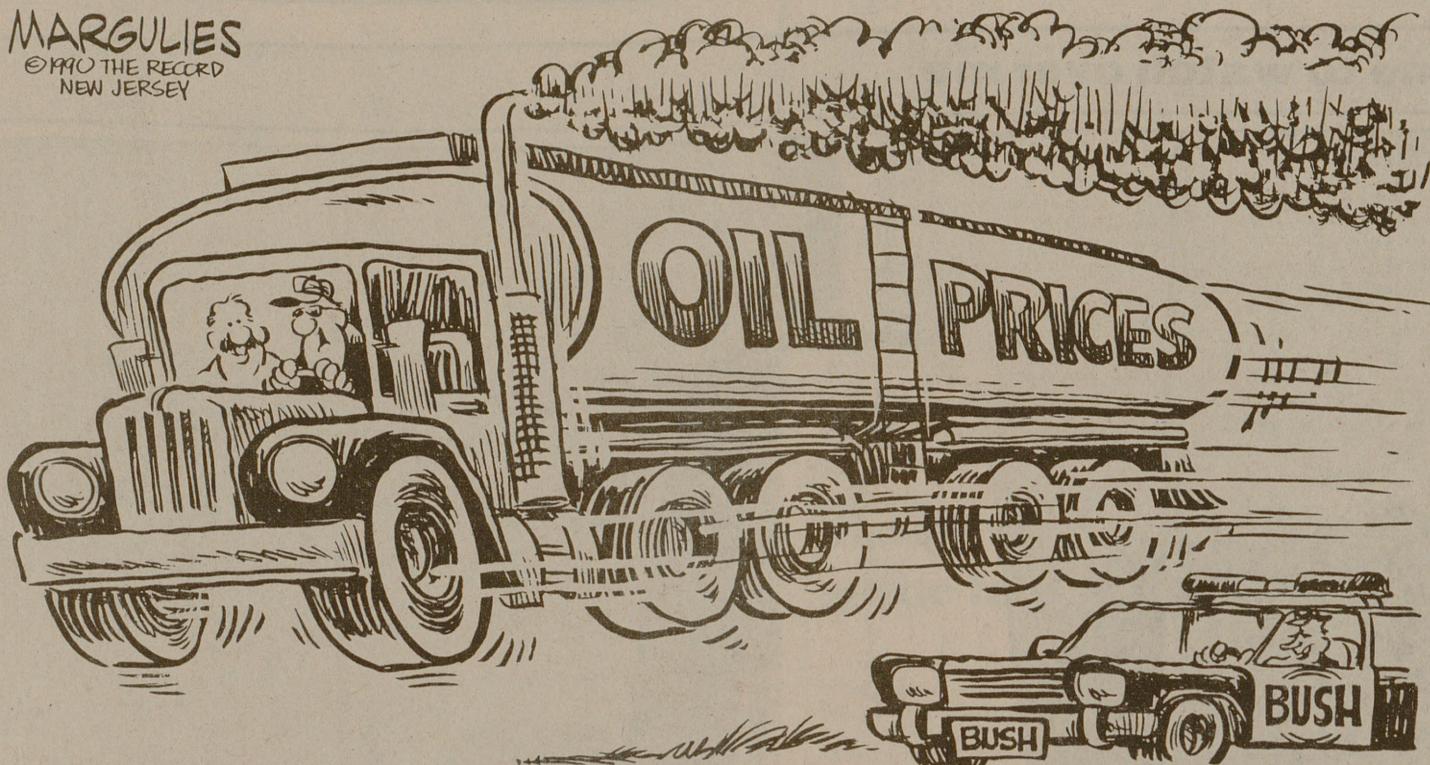
The Battalion

OPINION.

Thursday, October 25, 1990

Opinion Page Editor Ellen Hobbs 845-3317

MARGULIES
© 1990 THE RECORD
NEW JERSEY



"He let me off with a warning, and said to be careful about exceeding the greed limit..."

Shut the government down

Don't skip this column. The deficit increase now being negotiated in Washington means your future tax bill will go up by over 1,000 dollars. Just divide the almost 300 billion figure for this year by the population of the country. We already owe over \$15,000 apiece, and there's no end in sight. Most of us are disgusted and weary of watching the ongoing political gridlock.

Well, I have a suggestion, and it's in Mr. Bush's power to implement, as

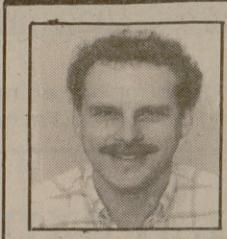
Stop taking money for Social Security out of my check to send to my grandparents. I'll be glad to write them a check every month myself.

soon as the next stopgap spending measure is on his desk: Shut the damn thing down. Veto. Just say no to big bad government.

Of course, the federal government will not be shut down; too many bureaucrats, paper-pushers, lawyers and lobbyists (not to mention Congresscritters) depend on it for their daily bread. But the average American could do just fine without the behemoth in Washington. Let's see how we could break our addiction.

Empty the Pentagon. Let all of the paper-pushers go to work for their favorite defense contractor now, instead of waiting until they retire. The space created will make one hell of a homeless shelter for the entire Washington D.C. area. And the homeless can then be trained to operate fancy computers so they can get jobs.

Let the soldiers be paid properly. Our forces overseas are not defending you or me, our lives, or our property. They are defending Saudi Arabia, Europe (why?), Japan (why?), South Korea, and the interests of large and wealthy multinational corporations. They are actually mercenaries, and should be paid as such. Let Exxon, Texaco, Standard Oil, Mobil, etc. pay for the buildup in the Persian Gulf. Let Japan pay for our soldiers there. Let the coffee and fruit conglomerates



Jeff
Farmer
Columnist

pay for our oppression of Central America. If the folks who want our youngsters stationed there won't pay, then let them come home. Put up or shut up.

Soldiers at home. As for soldiers based in the United States, most bases are kept open to satisfy the people in the district. If local businesses want them there, let the local chamber of commerce pay for the bases. I have a feeling many of them would quickly close.

Air Traffic. The federal

People in this country no longer have a sense that we are governing ourselves; on the contrary, we feel screwed. The only power we have left is that of the ballot box; but this power is in grave danger due to voter apathy.

government has been wasting the taxes paid on every airline ticket for years. Let the taxes go directly to controllers. Hire more and give those now working a nice raise. Better yet, get rid of the tax and let the airlines pay the FAA for landing slots.

Social Security. Stop taking money out of my check to send to my grandparents. I'll be glad to write them a check every month myself.

Welfare. Similar approach. Much of the money goes to pay the bureaucrats, not to the needy. Just send me the name of the local person who needs it, and I'll be glad to send my monthly income tax deduction directly to them.

Taxes. Those who can't stand the thought of having their money go to poor folk can send their tax dollars to

keep a local military base open. Perhaps we should keep 3 or 4 nuclear warheads operative, just in case we need a deterrent.

Department of Interior. Those forest rangers work pretty hard. We can send some of the PAC money that goes to environmental lobbying in Washington to them so they can keep the woods nice.

You get the idea.

My propositions are stated humorously, but the point is serious. Common sense, responsibility, and accountability have left the federal government long ago. People in this country no longer have a sense that we are governing ourselves; on the contrary, we feel screwed. The only power we have left is that of the ballot box; but this power is in grave danger due to voter apathy.

Voting is the solution, but whom to vote for? Some people vote against incumbents by voting for the challenger from the other major party; but both political parties are guilty in the present mess. I've heard it said that people elect a Democrat to represent them in Congress to get money spent in their district; they then elect a Republican president to protect them from other people's Democratic congressmen (who want to spend tax dollars in their own districts). This rings true. Kicking one party out to put the other in just perpetuates the game.

Instead, people who wish to make a real difference should vote for someone who represents real change. The Libertarian Party is fielding candidates for most statewide offices and many local offices this November. Libertarians stand for maximum individual liberty and minimum government. They're not anarchists, and they're not crazy. They simply want to see the government accountable to the people for what it does. I don't think that's too much to ask.

If you are sick of business as usual, vote Libertarian in November. Don't stay at home, and don't just vote for the "other" party. Remember: The only wasted vote is a vote you don't really believe in.

Jeff Farmer is a graduate student in mathematics.

The Battalion

(USPS 045 360)

Member of
Texas Press Association
Southwest Journalism Conference

The Battalion Editorial Board

Cindy McMillian,
Editor

Timm Doolen, Managing Editor
Ellen Hobbs, Opinion Page Editor

Holly Becka, City Editor

Kathy Cox,

Kristin North,

News Editors

Nadja Sabawala,

Sports Editor

Eric Roalson, Art Director

Lisa Ann Robertson,

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 is published Monday through Friday during Texas A&M regular semesters, except for holiday and examination periods. Newsroom: 845-3313.

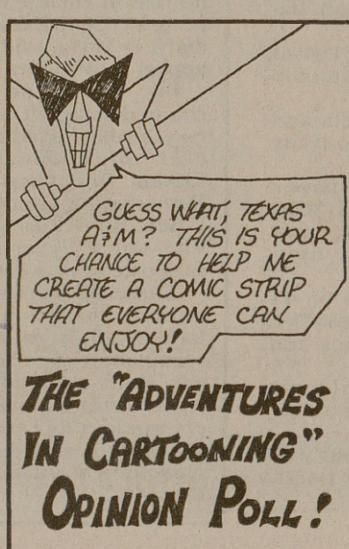
Mail subscriptions are \$20 per semester, \$40 per school year and \$50 per full year. 845-2611. Advertising rates furnished on request: 845-2696.

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.

Adventures In Cartooning



QUESTION #1:

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THIS STRIP FEATURE:

- (A) MORE SEX.
- (B) LOTS MORE SEX,
- (C) SEX, SEX, SEX.
- (D) TONS O' SEX.

H

QUESTION #2:

SHOULD FUTURE STORY-LINES INVOLVE MORE:

- (A) BABES, BEER AND BELCHING.
- (B) BROADS, BOOZE AND BURPING.
- (C) BIG-BUSTED WOMEN, ALCOHOLIC LIBATIONS, AND OBSCENE BODILY NOISES.

QUESTION #3:

SHOULD THIS STRIP BE MORE LIKE:

- (A) "THE SIMPSONS"
- (B) THAT ANIMATED T.V. SHOW ON FOX.
- (C) THE CARTOON SHOW FEATURING BART SIMPSON.
- (D) "THE FAMILY CIRCUS."



by Don Atkinson Jr.

2.S

Thursday

Stop war in Middle East before battles get started

*Got in a little hometown jam
So they put a rifle in my hand,
Sent me off to a foreign land
To go and kill the yellow man
Born in the U.S.A. ...
— Bruce Springsteen
"Born in the U.S.A."*

*Sam lost his arm in some border town,
His fingers are mixed with someone's crop...
Half his friends are stuffed in black body bags,
With their names printed at the top...*

*— Lou Reed
"Xmas in February"*

The war in Vietnam was a grotesque exchange. America would export her teenage boys, mostly poor and undereducated, to some unnamed jungle, and then she would import the same boys, dead, mutilated and insane.

America's children were eaten alive by those jungles, just like these Arabian sands may devour "our boys." With the Vietnam War, President Johnson tripped the country over the Gulf of Tonkin, and America fell into the abyss of war without a Congressional declaration of war.

Twenty-six years and thousands of dead soldiers later, George Bush is rolling the American warwagon into a war without Congressional approval or a Congressional declaration of war.

Bush and his itchy-fingered State Department have basically told Congress, "Leave us alone! We're trying to have a war!" As most Americans should know, Congress is the only branch of government that is allowed to declare war.

Unfortunately, the executive branch has grown so greatly in power that the Bush Administration says that it might "consult" Congress upon entering war, but would not seek Congressional approval. What? James Madison must be flipping in his grave.

Such executive sovereignty is blatantly unconstitutional. President Bush has incinerated the checks and balances and the rest of the Constitution (*That's what I call burning the flag!*).

If the country goes into war without a Congressional declaration, the people of America should take George Bush to court. But at this rate, the power of the judicial branch will also soon be subordinate to the whims of the executive branch.

The executive branch has been usurping power from the other branches for decades. Obvious examples are the escalation of the conflict in Vietnam into a war without a Congressional declaration of war and the selling of arms to Iran by Ollie North and Co. But what about covert executive actions that are not put on the front page of newspapers weeks at a time?

A few words from the top American executive officials can cause mass destruction and death. In August of 1975, then-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger told the Indonesian government that the United States would not mind if Indonesia invaded East Timor. On Dec. 6 of that year, President Ford

and Secretary Kissinger visited the Indonesian capital. The next day, Indonesia invaded East Timor.

Over the next year, 100,000 Timorese were killed as Kissinger continued shipping arms to the Indonesian army. Grotesque actions such as this one taken by Ford and Kissinger makes one wonder what the President and his crew could be doing without Congressional approval or public awareness.

But, this time, presidential and executive usurpation of Congressional power is occurring right under our noses. My questions are: 1) What are we, the people, going to do about it? 2) What can be done? and 3) Does America care?

1) I don't know what we will do about it. There are only about half a million American parents who could possibly have a child in the Saudi Arabian desert right now. Most Americans don't care much about what happens to other Americans that they don't know, as long as nothing bad happens to them.

It's been a week since Secretary Baker said that Bush would not seek Congressional approval when America goes to war, and I haven't heard of any protests yet. Not much will happen until war breaks out.

2) The people can't do much. We can't pressure our Congresspeople to vote against war because Bush has decided that Congress will not have any power when it comes to declaring or not declaring war.

We can protest. We can revolt. We can impeach George Bush. Those are the options the people have if they happen to disagree with going to war.

3) Once again, America has thrown its young men with lower incomes into a position to be shot at. Who cares? Relatives, friends, others. Does that make any difference?

Perhaps the real question is: Does King George and his upper class corporate constituency care about 250,000 predominantly poor young men who happen to be disproportionately black- and brown-skinned?

Frighteningly, it seems, once again, that the people that are pushing the country toward war do not have any relatives or friends or selves in the armed services. The least politically organized group, the poor, are the ones who have joined the army to get a job, who joined the reserves or the navy to pay for college, who wanted to receive an education in the armed services. Who cares? I hope the powerful care.

America revolted over 200 years ago to wrest her freedom from King George's tyranny. Must she do it again? Be all you can be: Join the army of protesters that refuses to let our Constitution be reduced to scrap paper in the rush to go to war.

Irwin Tang is a junior political science major.