

A Journal of Free Voices

A Window to the South

Feb. 14, 1975

50¢

Is Dallas falling apart?

Every couple of years or so, the *Observer* has predicted, with what can only be called disgusting gusto, the imminent collapse of the Dallas Establishment. The Dallas Establishment, perennially unimpressed by our repeated diagnoses of its terminal senility, has carried on and on and on. It finally succumbed on Jan. 17. The death blow was struck by U.S. District Judge Eldon Mahon, who ruled that Dallas' system of electing its city council members

Dallas on an at-large basis is unconstitutional. *Sic transit.*

For almost 40 years, the power structure of Dallas has been close enough to the operating definition of an oligarchy to make any democrat puke. The chief architect of the system was the late R. L. (Uncle Bob) Thornton, Sr. Thornton formalized the Dallas Establishment with the creation of the Dallas Citizens Council (any relation to the racist groups of the same name was only incidental). The

membership comprised the presidents of the largest corporations in Dallas. Its political arm was the Citizens Charter Association.

The CCA picked, financed, worked for, and elected slates of candidates for every public office in Dallas. During the last 30 years, only four or five independent city council candidates have ever beaten members of the CCA slates. The reasons are simple enough. A candidate running at-large in Dallas has to cover 800 square miles and 800,000 people. The city is almost exactly the size of two congressional districts. The CCA spends approximately a quarter of a million dollars on its slates. Any independent city council candidate who would work as hard as two congressional candidates and spend a quarter of a million dollars to get a city job that pays \$50-a-week is (A) determined, and (B) out of his gourd.

THE CCA leaders used to meet in the penthouse of the Mercantile Bank Building or in one of the city's private clubs and there select, in an ever-so-genteel smoke-filled room, the candidates for the year. Any candidate with CCA endorsement scarcely needed to work at all (there were some who didn't), while any aspiring pol who failed to get the CCA nod could forget it. The CCA quite naturally selected candidates not unlike themselves, or even of their number — white, conservative, and business-oriented. Many city positions were "awarded" by the CCA for long and faithful service while others were given to up-and-comers to provide them with credentials. Two terms on the city council and then it was someone else's "turn." The system reached an apotheosis of ridiculousness in the early 60's, when the CCA began parcelling out assignments as to which charitable and cultural endeavors its members were to support. "This year *you* support the symphony orchestra, *you* work on the Heart Fund, and *you* take on the art museum."

(Continued on Page 3)



The coming fortnight

By Suzanne Shelton

FEBRUARY GRAB BAG

DE KOONING DRAWINGS – Rarely exhibited drawings and pastels, plus recent sculptures, by Dutch-born Willem de Kooning, leader of American abstract expressionism; Feb. 21 through April 6, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

REALIST RETROSPECTIVE – Japanese-American artist Yasuo Kuniyoshi featured in retrospective of his line drawings and realist paintings; through March 23, Art Museum, University of Texas, Austin.

POP PRINTS – Exhibition of prints by Jim Dine and Laurence Scholder, through March 1; Laguna Gloria Art Museum, Austin.

SUPEREALISTS – Lois Dodd's surreal-tinged abstract forms, Theophil Groell's monumental nudes, and Samuel Gelber's landscapes; through March 21, Sewall Art Gallery, Rice University, Houston.

WAY OUT WEST – "The Big Country and Early Times: The Old West in Pictures," features art work depicting western scenes and personalities; can't wait to see bronze sculpture titled "It Ain't No Lady's Job"; through March 16, Michener Gallery, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas, Austin.

COASTAL SURVEYOR – James Madison Alden, descendant of John and Priscilla of Mayflower fame, was an official artist on one of earliest Pacific Northwest boundary surveys; retrospective exhibition of his watercolors and drawings depicting Civil War-era Pacific coast; through March 16, Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, Fort Worth.

FEBRUARY 14

A DAY FOR BILLING – Valentine Day-only exhibition-sale of old master, modern master, and contemporary prints by Durer, Rouault, Whistler, others; 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Laguna Gloria Art Museum, Austin.

A NIGHT FOR COOING – With opening of "Teahouse of the August Moon," John Patrick's comedy concerning occupied Okinawa in the forties, guest directed by Dwight Bowes; indefinite run, Zachary Scott Theater, Austin.

AND IN BETWEEN – Try "Pippin," winner of five Tony Awards, bringing a little of old Broadway down San Antonio way; 8:30 p.m., Theatre for Performing Arts, San Antonio.

A LITTLE WOOING – With Alegria Arce, pianist, joining Austin Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Karel Husa in program including Husa's "Music for Prague;" 8 p.m., Municipal Auditorium, Austin.

FEBRUARY 15

WHO'S AFRAID? – Prokofiev's "Peter and the Wolf" performed by Richardson Symphony Orchestra with ballet presentation presented by Dallas Junior Bar Wives; 8 p.m., High School Auditorium, Richardson.

FEBRUARY 16

WEDDING BELLS – "Father Ubridge Wants to Marry" is Frank Gagliano's dramatization of little man who cracks under pressures of contemporary society; through Feb. 22, 8 p.m., Drama Lab Theatre, University of Texas, Austin.



Durer's "A peasant and his wife"

IN CONCERT – University of Houston Symphony Orchestra performance; 8 p.m., Houston Room, University Center, University of Houston, Houston.

FEBRUARY 17

JAZZ SOUND – Program of jazz compositions by Bill Ginn, Mel Winters, Karl Korte, Glen Daum and Robert Skiles, performed by University Jazz Ensemble; 8 p.m., Hogg Auditorium, University of Texas, Austin.

FEBRUARY 18

CHORAL CONSUMPTION – Mimi is back again with Puccini's "La Boheme" and Houston Grand Opera cast joined by brilliant Spanish tenor Jose Carreras as Rodolfo; also Feb. 21-23, Jones Hall, Houston.

FEBRUARY 19

ORGAN MUSIC – The sound of Bach, Vierne, Dupre, Charles Chaynes and Petr Eben on the organ, with Gillian Weir performing in Organ Recital Series; 8 p.m., Music Bldg. Recital Hall, University of Texas, Austin.

GUEST PIANIST – Andre Watts, who debuted in Houston a few years ago, returns with piano performance; Jones Hall, Houston.

FEBRUARY 20

FACULTY RECITAL – Baylor faculty pianist Jane Abbott, in free recital; 8:15 p.m., Roxy Grove Hall, Baylor University, Waco.

BARRINGTON & BRASS – Wayne Barrington directs Texas Brass Choir, and a sassy sound it is; 8 p.m., Music Bldg. Recital Hall, University of Texas, Austin.

FEBRUARY 21

SIMONIZED SUNSHINE – The ever-clever Neil Simon does it again with "Sunshine Boys," which is (you guessed it) a comedy with a nostalgic flavor, performed by Robert Alda and touring company cast; through Feb. 22, Music Hall, Houston; also 8:30 p.m. Feb. 24, Theatre for the Performing Arts, San Antonio.

SOPRANO PLUS PIANO – In Faculty Artist Series, soprano Martha Deatherage joins pianist Gregory Allen in works by Purcell, Schubert, Debussy, Elliott Carter, and Aaron Copland; 8 p.m., Music Bldg. Recital Hall, University of Texas, Austin.

RELIGIO-ROCK – "Godspell, previously staged in October, has been resurrected for Center Stage fans; weekends, Center Stage, Austin.

FEBRUARY 22

HALLELUJAH! – Dallas Symphony Orchestra sails on with new contracts for the musicians, new subscription series schedule, new hope – and, with luck, an audience for concert featuring pianist Van Cliburn; also Feb. 23, Music Hall, Fair Park, Dallas.

FEBRUARY 23

GUEST PIANIST – Baylor School of Music presents pianist Alberto Reyes, in free afternoon concert; 3 p.m. Roxy Grove Hall, Baylor University, Waco.

VIOLIN SOLOIST – Eduard Melkus, violinist, performs works including Heinrich Biber's "Rosary Sonatas;" 8 p.m., Music Bldg. Recital Hall, University of Texas, Austin.

FEBRUARY 25

AND A CELLIST – In Distinguished Artist Series, Ralph Kirshbaum on cello; 8:15 p.m., Roxy Grove Hall, Baylor University, Waco.

ARIAS AND SONGS – Performed by tenor Arturo Sergi with Danielle Martin, pianist, in program of Schubert, Wolf, Beethoven, and series of classical songs based on folk music; 8 p.m., Music Bldg. Recital Hall, University of Texas, Austin.

GUTHRIE ON GUITAR – Richardson Symphony Orchestra concert features classical guitarist Robert Guthrie; 8 p.m., High School Auditorium, Richardson.

FEBRUARY 27

BELLE NAMED BLANCHE – Blanche Du Bois, portrayed by Bettye Fitzpatrick, is Tennessee Williams' fading Southern belle heroine of "Streetcar Named Desire" with Alley Theatre cast and Tony Russel in the Brando role; through March 31, Alley Theatre, Houston.

Dallas. . .

(Continued from Page 1)

The Supreme Court's one-person, one-vote decision made the first cracks in the system. At that time Dallas was represented in the state Senate by one George Parkhouse, who was somewhat close to the Establishment. In those days, Judge Lew Sterrett of the county commissioners court used regularly to breakfast with Dick West, head of the editorial page of *The Dallas Morning News*. After the two of them had conferred, they would call Sen. Parkhouse in Austin and that would take care of whatever problems the county might have with the state. Sometimes they also called former Dallas Rep. Ben (Jumbo) Atwell to take care of the House side, but normally Parkhouse relayed the message.

Parkhouse went into something of a twit after the one-person, one-vote decision came down and personally took charge of drawing the senate redistricting map for Dallas County. In his eagerness to assure the safety of his own seat, he drew all the most conservative areas of the county into one district, unhappily forgetting that in Dallas, many conservatives are also Republicans.

Parkhouse died in office and a Republican named Ike Harris replaced him in a special election. In the meantime, his gerrymandering had created two moderate/liberal districts, subsequently occupied by Mike McKool and Oscar Mauzy.

Discrimination and redistricting suits started popping out like zits on a teenager. In a coalition of the Outs against the Ins, liberals and Republicans made common cause, along with a fair sprinkling of dingalings. The city council suits dragged along for years, handled by a team of four attorneys with current or former connections with the Dallas Legal Services project, and a shifting cast of plaintiffs. David Richards, an attorney now in Austin, didn't win the next big round until 1972, when the courts mandated single member districts for Dallas state representatives. Candidates for the House no longer needed CCA endorsement. I mean, it was nice: it saved a lot of time and expense to have it, but it was no longer absolutely necessary. True, most of the folks in town with big money still backed only CCA candidates, but there are other sources, a few other sources, enough to at least give an independent candidate a chance for a fair fight.

The CCA's equivalent, indeed, alter ego in school board elections is the Dallas Committee for Good Schools. In 1967, a progressive educational group called the League for Educational Advancement in Dallas (LEAD) managed to elect Dr. Emmett Conrad, the first black to sit on the board. LEAD has stuck together fairly well, a coalition of blacks and affluent

north Dallasites who are interested in seeing some progressive changes in the city's educational system. The school board also faced a redistricting suit, brought by the same motley amalgam of Outs, but the board bowed to the inevitable rather than have the thing drag through the courts. The district was reapportioned in 1973.

By then, Dallas had become the only city in Texas with more than nine city council members. In 1968, the CCA had decided that it needed a black on its slate and it chose George Allen. But CCA members also decided they needed another white to balance the new black, and so now there are 11 city council members. In 1969, Wes Wise, a television sportscaster, ran against the second addition, one Henry Stewart. Wise ran a strictly shoelather

“THE CCA thinks of it (being on the city council) as a ribbon cutting job,” said Weber. “You’re supposed to do your two terms and then step aside and, above all, don’t learn too much about how it’s really operated. I think Wes and I have really broken it open. We started just by asking questions. ‘Well, why can’t we have a consumer affairs department?’ or ‘Why shouldn’t we have a ten-cent bus fare for the elderly?’ Now everybody’s doin’ it. I think the CCA generally represented the business community here for 40 years and did it well. But we’re through with our building program for the most part. I think the airport’s a good thing and the new city hall’s a good thing, but now we need more people-oriented programs.”

“People say that Wes doesn’t provide leadership like in the old days. Well, if you

In a coalition of the Outs against the Ins liberals and Republicans made common cause.’

race. He and his wife would campaign in the big buildings downtown: she’d start at the bottom and work up and he’d start at the top and work down. Wise won.

In 1971, he ran for mayor. The Establishment put up Avery Mays to replace Erik Jonsson. Mays, who has a long and distinguished record of public service, had the unfortunate drawback of being a terrible campaigner, rather in the Dolph Briscoe-stick figure school. Although Jonsson had unquestionably been a successful and popular mayor, he had rather overstayed his popularity after seven years, and folks were getting a little tired of the patriarchal, “let Daddy do it, he knows best” kind of city government. The upshot was that Wise, running as “the average man,” won overwhelmingly. According to most observers, Wise is just that — an average man. And that includes being average in brainpower. In 1971, the CCA enjoyed an unusual and bitter split over whether to back or oppose Wise. They wound up neither endorsing him nor fielding a candidate against him.

In the meantime, certain city council members, presumably still very much under the heel of the CCA, were getting uppity. In 1969, the CCA backed Garry Weber, a stockbroker, variously described as being “a rich populist” and having “mostly muscles in his cranial cavity.” Weber, a moderate Democrat and friend of Ben Barnes, is good-looking, articulate, and half-relishes and is half-embarrassed by his role of rebel-against-the-Establishment.

After Weber had served two terms on the city council, and had made himself mildly obnoxious by advocating such heresies as a Consumer Affairs Department, he was politely informed by the CCA that it was time for him to step down. He wouldn’t step. He went out and ran by his own self, raised \$80,000, used no billboards (he’s a semi-environmentalist and strong for a sign ordinance), and won.

call being able to get everybody behind closed doors and coming out with 11-0 votes on everything leadership, I guess so. But I think there *should* be debate on the council. I think it’s more important that everyone should have his say than unity, unity all the time.”

The old system has its admirers, of course, and one of them, who produced an inordinate number of unanimous votes in his time, is Erik Jonsson. “Big Erik,” a Republican (city politics are, of course, non-partisan), is possibly more quintessentially Establishment than anyone else in Dallas with the exception of John Stemmons, a developer who personifies the CCA. Jonsson generally gets most of the credit of making Texas Instruments a major corporation; he’s connected with Republic National Bank (than which there is no more Establishment in Dallas), and served as Dallas’ mayor from 1964 to 1971.

He puts it this way: “With one or two exceptions, the CCA candidates have all been successful in some kind of business. They are proven decision-makers. And a large part of the job of running this city is a business job, it’s just management. The city budget is now up to a quarter of a billion dollars, and that ain’t hay. If you were in charge of picking a candidate to manage that kind of money, would you pick one who’d never even managed a \$100,000 successfully?”

Now that’s kind of an awkward question, since Wes Wise (of whom Jonsson is reportedly not too fond), can’t even handle \$75,000. Wise’s debts are currently estimated to amount to that much, and his creditors became so adamant that they went and had his 1966 Volkswagen hauled off to auction to help pay the debt. (Actually, his son drives the Volkswagen.) Wise, in addition to his 50 bucks a week,

gets \$22,900 as an executive of the World Trade Center. But Wise lost a bunch of money on a business deal.

The famous Volkswagen incident may yet turn out to be helpful to Wise. While it does not precisely inspire confidence about a man who is managing a quarter of a billion dollars of the taxpayers' money, it does garner him a certain amount of sympathy from debt-ridden Little People. In fact, a bar owner was so moved by Wise's plight (after all, a '66 *Volks*) that he went and bought the car at auction and gave it back to Wise. Gordon McLendon, a Dallas radio millionaire and ultra-conservative, who is not exactly Little People, has organized a "Friends of Wes Wise" committee to help pay off the mayor's debts.

Meanwhile, the CCA has already found a candidate to oppose Wise this spring. His name is John Schoellkopf (if the citizens have to learn to spell it before they vote for him, he's had it); he is gilt-edged Establishment and is supported by a lot of liberals. That's how bad things have fallen apart in Dallas. Libs like Schoellkopf because he keeps saying that Dallas' most serious problems are white flight and the decay of the inner city, i.e., segregation. The Establishment likes him because he's a rich businessman.

WHILE REDISTRICTING was working on the Establishment like a wrecking ball at the legislative, school district and city levels, the county Establishment suffered from simple atrophy. Lew Sterrett headed the county commissioners court for 25 years and was finally defeated last fall. Sterrett had always had a splendid record of fistfights,

shouting matches, and general hot controversy on a wide range of topics. But after a 1967 visit to Detroit, which was having a race riot at the time, the Judge took to fulminating mostly about conspiracies and commie infiltrators and the evils of the anti-poverty program. His rhetoric became increasingly John Birchish, while his temper didn't improve at all. He had worked closely with Dallas mayors, especially Thornton, earlier in his career, but for some reason, possibly just ego, he never got along with Jonsson. For even less explicable reasons, he didn't work well with Wise either. He was narrowly defeated by John Whittington in November, 1974.

The Dallas Morning News had, of course, supported its old friend Sterrett against Whittington and since his defeat has run a couple of editorials lavishly praising his career and suggesting that Parkland Hospital be re-named in his honor. But the *Dallas Times-Herald*, whose editor Felix McKnight had rivalled the *News*' Dick West in unswerving support of the Establishment, had been bought in 1973 by the Los Angeles Times-Mirror Corp. The Times-Mirror brought in Tom Johnson, one of LBJ's bright, young men, to replace McKnight. Johnson has not precisely revolutionized the *Times-Herald*, but it did endorse Whittington over Sterrett. The night he was defeated, the Judge bowed out with a characteristic blast.

He declared that his defeat was "a conspiracy brought on by the *Los Angeles Times*. It wasn't the voters, the voters have always been good to me. It was the news media and Erik Jonsson. You can't fight that. I was fighting crime and I didn't have time to fight the Establishment. They took their money away from me this time, the Establishment. Only one of them stood by

me and that was John Stemmons and for that I will be eternally grateful. I saw this coming. I tried to save Dallas but it was too much. You hear about the Eastern conspiracy. You see something like this and it makes you believe it, doesn't it?"

The Judge is mild as milk these days. He told the *Observer* that he thought "that boy" (Tom Johnson) was coming along just fine and was learning real fast. In fact, the Judge was so mild about absolutely everything that we became positively alarmed. We suspect that his uncharacteristic lack of candor may have had something to do with the fact that three top members of the firm he recently joined sat in on the interview. The Judge now works for the VanCronkhite firm, a political public relations outfit. Before the 1973 elections, VanCronkhite used to run campaigns for the CCA slate. They are expected to handle Wise's mayoral campaign this year. They have also handled, according to one of their officers, "every successful bond election in Dallas for years and years." Right now, they are doing p.r. for Southwestern Bell on its request for a \$23 million rate increase now before the city council.

The day we interviewed the Judge, there was some unpleasant publicity concerning Mayor Pro Tem George Allen, the lone, CCA-backed black on the council, who is also involved in a business partnership with David VanCronkhite. Tecog Services, Inc., is a building maintenance outfit that has some city contracts with firms that stand to benefit from favorable council action in areas such as zoning. Not a very big deal, but it could understandably make the VanCronkhite folks a little nervous.

Speaking of bond elections, it should be noted that if there is any area in which the

THE TEXAS OBSERVER

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Ronnie Dugger, Publisher

A window to the South
A journal of free voices

Vol. LXVII, No. 3 Feb. 14, 1975

Incorporating the State Observer and the East Texas Democrat, which in turn incorporated the Austin Forum-Advocate.

Editorial and Business Offices: The Texas Observer, 600 W. 7th St., Austin, Texas 78701. Telephone 477-0746.

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Published by Texas Observer Publishing Co., biweekly except for a three week interval between issues twice a year, in July and January; 25 issues per year. Entered as second-class matter April 26, 1937, at the Post Office at Austin, Texas, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Second class postage paid at Austin, Texas. Single Copy, 50¢. One year, \$8.00; two years, \$14.00; three years, \$19.00; plus, for Texas addresses, 5% sales tax. Foreign, except APO/FPO. 50¢ additional per year. Airmail, bulk orders, and group rates on request. Microfilmed by Microfilming Corporation of America, 21 Harristown Road, Glen Rock, N.J. 07452.

Change of Address: Please give old and new address, including zip codes, and allow two weeks.

Postmaster: Send form 3579 to Texas Observer, 600 W. 7th St., Austin, Texas 78701.

'Trouble is 35 years of CCA rule have left Dallas with something of a power vacuum now that the monolith has crumbled'

Establishment is apt to retain its clout, that's it. All bond elections for the county, city, and school district must first be approved by the Greater Dallas Planning Council, a citizen group with no official say-so, but with practical veto power. If the Council says yes, the bond election can go. If it says no, no election. The Planning Council members are a CCA honor roll. "They'll never let that power go," grumbled a liberal observer.

The death of the Dallas Establishment should lead to a diffusion of power in the city. One would anticipate something like Houston's power structure, which is sort of a clump of circles of political and economic power — the big law firms, the real estate developers, the banks, the blacks, etc. — which form shifting alliances depending on the issue. The trouble is, over 30 years of CCA rule have left Dallas with something of a power vacuum now that the monolith has crumbled. Weber vaguely mentions "the new groups — the environmentalists, the minorities, women." Dan Weiser, a mathematician who has done extensive work on redistricting maps, believes that there is a younger generation of Dallas businessmen, more open-minded than their elders, who have been squeezed out of participation in city affairs because the older men wouldn't let them do anything really important. Weiser hopes this generation of businessmen will now come to the fore.

The blacks in Dallas have yet to get their act together. Weiser maintains that the blacks are the most politically sophisticated citizens in Dallas simply because they really need city services. For years the CCA had the black vote sewed up through the auspices of the black Ministerial Alliance. According to Weiser, the Alliance would deliver black votes in return for important concessions for the black community — a black high school, a black suburb, etc.

Right now, the leading black pol in Dallas is Dr. Conrad, the school board member and LEAD honcho. Although the CCA would like to adopt Conrad (the CCA has a terrific record of co-opting anyone strong enough to challenge them), he has so much draw at black ballot boxes that he doesn't really need the CCA.

The *chicanos* in Dallas (who are only eight percent of the population compared to the blacks' 30 percent) are angling to get a *chicano* seat out of the city council redistricting. The general supposition is that the Dallas city council will go to an 8-3 plan, meaning that the mayor, the mayor pro tem, and the deputy mayor pro tem will all run city-wide, with the rest of

the councilmen elected from residential districts.

Once upon a time, Dallas had just such a system of city councilmen elected by districts. Alas, during the 1930's, this led to corruption, wardheeling, and other forms of unpleasantness and so the CCA came into being — as a reform group. It should stand as a warning to all reformers. Jonsson, for one, fears a return to the old corruption. "Look at the cities that have the alderman system," he said. "Look at New York, look at Chicago. It's just a matter of time." Jonsson, of course, wielded in his day clout that Mayor Daley would have envied.

Perhaps as a result of 30 years of rule by the CCA oligarchy, or perhaps simply because of its sociological composition (Dallas comprises a remarkably large percentage of middle class, white collar folks since its chief industries, banking and insurance, are paper industries), Dallas is a politically quiescent city. Organized labor has no clout in Dallas. Dan Weiser describes it as "an orderly town, a Dutch town — people here value order." Although many liberals look upon Dallas as the worst city in Texas, Weiser maintains that although it is conservative, it is civilized. "In Houston, the Ku Klux Klan bombs things. No one bombs things here."

Dallas liberals are still at the stage where they won't even call themselves liberals. A liberal meeting is described as "a gathering of like-minded folk." One aspect of the city that has remained constant as it has grown is the city's religious fundamentalism. It features enormous churches, the largest of their denomination each of the Baptist, Presbyterian and Methodist persuasions. The city's social conservatism is even more marked than its political conservatism. Dallas can still work itself into a mighty snit over long hair and dirty movies. But both KERA-TV's "Newsroom" program (see *Obs.*, Sept. 18, 1970, and the changing *Times Herald* are helping to alter the climate of Dallas. The energy and creativity so long suppressed by the CCA's political stranglehold has found outlets in other fields.

Despite its financially ailing symphony orchestra, Dallas still has a remarkably active and diverse cultural scene. There is an almost comic element of formality about the place — many middle-class women still put on hats and gloves before going downtown. And the city's "high society," as chronicled in the incredible prose of the *Morning News'* Jeanne Prejean, sounds like a Woody Allen parody of society rich folks. There is no radical chic in Dallas, unless you count maybe

Stanley Marcus, of department store fame, who is the CCA's house liberal.

It will be interesting to see how the city develops, now that it has political freedom. M.I.


It is necessary to correct a misuse of insurance jargon which resulted in the misapplication of certain data in the article "Blue Cross Blues" (see *Obs.*, Jan. 31). The phrase misused was "premium retention rate." The 1971 Texas Senate Interim Committee on Welfare Reform complained of Blue Cross' retention rate because it felt that the company's charges for administration and risk factor payments were excessive. Its remarks on retention did not address the issue of excess premiums, and the term "retention," properly used, does not refer to the rate at which excess premiums are moved into reserve funds, as the *Observer* implied. The error did not affect the *Observer's* reporting on other criticisms of the level of Medicaid reserves by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and by the 1973 Texas House Interim Committee on Welfare Reform. It was repeated in discussing Ernst & Ernst's audit of the Medicaid program, but the figures quoted are correct and applicable.

The *Observer* also erred in neglecting to inform readers that funds supporting the research for the article were supplied by the Southern Investigative Research Project of the Southern Regional Council, Atlanta, Georgia. The first error is, of course, solely the responsibility of the *Observer* and the article's author, Jackee Cox.

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A case

The 64th Legislature is more likely than any session in memory to pass a utility regulation bill. The well-publicized stink over Southwestern Bell has a lot to do with the push for a utilities commission, but so does general public outrage over utility rates — see Max Woodfin's story below.

Opponents of regulation insist that setting up a statewide commission is no guarantee that rates will come down. Obviously, the type of regulation adopted

will have a great deal to do with the effect regulation has on rates. Dr. Jack Hopper, a consulting economist for the Texas Senate Subcommittee on Consumer Affairs and the Legislative Ad Hoc Group on Utility Regulation, here presents the arguments for believing that a commission could reduce utility rates. Dr. Hopper himself says that he is not promising rate decreases as soon as a bill is passed: he is pointing out areas where a commission could affect the cost of utility service.

By Jack Hopper

Austin

Texas consumers could pay millions of dollars less for utility services if their rates were regulated by a statewide commission. Utility rates in Texas have been proven to be excessive. They are excessive because rates and profits are not effectively regulated in this state. Monopoly suppliers set their own rates in rural areas and in

many towns; city councils do an inadequate job in many other jurisdictions. A state commission could reduce rates by attacking three abuses in the rate-setting process: 1) excessive rate increases and profits; 2) passing through of unnecessary costs; and 3) the "cost-plus" mentality in company operation. Each of these factors is considered below.

By Max Woodfin

Fort Worth

Remember the good old days when folks in South Texas were upset about natural gas costing 50 cents per thousand cubic feet? And San Antonio was planning rotating brown-outs because suppliers discovered they could make more money selling gas on the open market than they could by honoring existing contracts? (see *Obs.*, July 13, 1973 and subsequent issues). Well, bring back the good old days, say folks served by Texas rural electric cooperatives.

We may have a good old consumer revolt on our hands.

Don Blevins, who lives on an RFD route outside Keller, in Tarrant County, opened his January bill to find all sorts of figures on it. The two that hit his eye the hardest were \$54.83 for electric service and \$31.29 for "fuel adjustment." "The \$54, that's OK," said Blevins, "because I figure I used that much power last month. But that fuel adjustment, well, that's something else."

THAT SOMETHING else called fuel adjustment is rising natural gas prices

Woodfin is a reporter for the Fort Worth Press and a frequent contributor to the Observer.

being passed along to customers of Brazos Electric Power Cooperative of Waco. Brazos serves 115,000 meters through 19 local cooperatives in Central and North Texas. In 1973, 50 cents was an outrageous price. Brazos is now paying \$1.69.

"We buy gas at the best price we can find," Brazos Manager John Etheredge told the *Fort Worth Press*. "Some of it is under old contracts, but some of it is what we find on the open market and it has gone as high as \$1.70 in the last month. Of course we blend the gas, but more than half of what we buy is at the open market price."

The Brazos System, according to Etheredge, is a non-profit cooperative. Increases are passed along to consumers, who are also shareholders of their local coops. Real fine consumer oriented system, until it gets a bit more complicated than the Brazos public relations explanation. It seems that the highest prices Brazos pays, those hefty \$1.70 figures, almost double the next highest price, go to Brazos Fuel Company, a totally owned subsidiary of Brazos Electric Cooperative.

"That ain't the way it is, what you're thinking," said Etheredge before anyone said a single word about what he was thinking. "It doesn't affect the price one bit."

Brazos originally refused to reveal the

I Most companies have received two or three rate increases since 1969. Utility companies commonly ask for two or three times as much as they actually need in rate increases to protect themselves against being forced to reduce their requests. A survey of mayors conducted by the Legislative Ad Hoc Group on utility regulation last fall showed that, in most cities, companies are seldom required to make such reductions. More than half the city councils covered by the survey simply granted the full amount of requests, without analyzing the requests or bargaining. In the winter of 1973, for example, the 245 cities in North Central Texas that are served by the Texas Power and Light Co. (TP&L) accepted, without review or question, the 10 percent increase that the company requested. The request has been shown to be unjustified: TP&L was earning 25 percent more for its stockholders in 1973 than average electric companies in the rest of the United States.

Getting 'adjusted'

names of its suppliers. Not only to reporters, but to customers, stockholders, as well. "Our attorneys have advised us not to give that information." That information just happens to be a matter of public record, filed every month with the Federal Power Commission. The FPC only regulates gas that crosses the state line, but it also keeps tabs on intrastate companies just to check on the flow of gas and the amount of electricity produced.

In May, 1974, when prices began to rise at a rate higher than normal inflation, the obviously coincidental name of Brazos Fuel began appearing on the monthly reports filed by Brazos Electric. "We knew prices were going up and we needed some expertise on natural gas, so we set up Brazos Fuel to do all of our buying for us. They don't affect the prices at all." Brazos Fuel Co. is registered with the Texas secretary of state as a profit-making entity. Company officials continue to refuse to discuss matters of corporate structure.

What Brazos Electric also will not say, and what it doesn't have to file with the FPC, is where its suppliers buy their gas. Brazos folks will say, or rather they did slip and say, that some of their gas comes from one of the biggest suppliers in the state, which brings up names like Coastal States and Lone Star. So far, no one will confirm the names of any of the producers.

Whoever produces the gas that Brazos buys isn't going to get any medals for

for regulation

In 1973, Central Power and Light Co. (CP&L) asked the city of Corpus Christi to approve a 6 percent increase in annual revenues. The city, after careful review and evaluation, granted a 2 percent increase. CP&L refused to accept the offer, put the 6 percent increase into effect, and began protracted litigation to prevent the city from enforcing its rate-setting authority. After more than a year of fruitless and expensive legal sparring, the city gave up and let the company do as it pleased. In 1972, before the request was entered, the company had actually earned 20 percent more for its stockholders than the average electric company in other states.

Last summer, Southwestern Public Service Co. was granted an 11 percent increase, without review, by the dozens of city councils in the Panhandle towns where the company operates. At the same time, the company's president was bragging in New York that earnings before the increase were high and had been rising. Southwestern's stockholders were earning nearly

40 percent more than the national average before the increase was granted.

During 1974, Entex Corp. (formerly United Gas Co., which serves East and Central Texas) put into effect several increases in gas prices totaling about 15 percent. Only a few city councils asked questions. In 1973, the company's stockholders earned 65 percent more than those of the average gas distribution company in the other 49 states.

Southwestern Bell provides unregulated long-distance service to all Texas, and local service to 85 percent of the state. According to internal memos which have come to light in the Ashley-Gravitt case, and have been identified as genuine by the company, Bell has been misleading city councils for 30 years about its operating results, gaining excessive rates and earnings. Southwestern Bell has consistently been more profitable than the other Bell companies, and Texas has been one of the most profitable states for Bell.

Research in utility rates and utility

company earnings in Texas show that both could be reduced by some 10 to 25 percent without impairing service.*

2 Since utility monopolies in Texas operate with little or no public review, they have developed expensive habits that a state commission could disallow. For example, most monopolies need only a minimum of advertising to encourage or explain the use of their services. Certainly their expenses in promoting energy consumption should be reduced, and much of their other advertising is designed to improve the image of what is, after all, the only phone or light or gas company in town. In 1973, Southern

*See G. B. Reschenthaler, *Some Aspects of the Economic Performances of Private Electric Utility Companies in Texas* (doctoral dissertation, UT-Austin, 1969); and Ken Manning and Mike Morrison, *Regulation of Telephone and Electric Utilities in Texas* (Texas Public Interest Research Group, Austin, 1972).

to power costs

inflation fighting. In September, 1973, Brazos paid Southwestern Gas Pipeline 27.5 cents for natural gas delivered to its plants in Weatherford and Palo Pinto. By September, 1974, prices ranged from a low of 49 cents per thousand cubic feet to a high of almost 91 cents. By November, 1974, the low price was just over 50 cents, the high price was \$1.69, paid to Brazos Fuel.

BUT TO Don Blevins and thousand of other Texas customers served by rural cooperatives under the Brazos system, it's not so much a complaint that someone is making profits, it's just that someone is taking an awful lot of money all of a sudden. It hurts more to look at electric bills for neighbors across the street and see that people served by Dallas Power and Light, Texas Electric, or other subsidiaries of Texas Utilities are paying more than they did last year, but nothing close to a 60 percent "fuel adjustment." Someone is being taken for a long ride.

Folks aren't taking these bills sitting down. They are Texans, after all. Trouble is, the outrageous price jumps sort of snuck up on everybody. "We're circulating petitions and trying phone campaigns," said a Hood County man served by Johnson County Electric Coop. "The trouble is, we may be broke before we have

a chance to do much of anything. You look at that \$50 fuel bill and you do a little figuring and it comes up to \$600 more for lights every year. How many people do you know who can afford that?"

Brazos is a bit red-faced about its lack of planning. "Some companies, and the cooperatives are included, just got caught," Regional Engineer Donald Martin of the Federal Power Commission said. "They didn't plan far enough ahead, or didn't have the volume to plan for long-range contracts, and they're paying for it now."

Larger companies, such as Texas Utilities and Lone Star, signed long term contracts and have been able to keep their price for gas under 30 cents per thousand cubic feet. They also have their own fields and their own pipelines. You get the feeling they're laughing at the smaller cooperatives behind their oak doors.

Customers of the Brazos System were more than a little bit upset when they found out that the gas they pay \$1.70 for in state crosses the state line and can't cost more than 50 cents. The FPC regulates interstate natural gas and sets the ceiling at half a dollar. Now that President Ford wants to deregulate all natural gas prices, the utilities are predicting the prices may go out of sight.

The "experts" that customers of the Brazos system have consulted tell them there are two solutions to the situation. The permanent solution is alternative

sources of energy — fire the electrical generators with lignite, sunshine or, Texas Utilities is quick to advise, nuclear power. The Brazos system is, of course, nowhere close to being able to convert to any form of energy other than natural gas or the more expensive fuel oil. Nuclear power? Texas Utilities can be seen laughing again: the high cost of natural gas is giving them another excuse to push their nuclear reactors.

And as for pushing for a utilities commission, there's no more frustrating place in the state to bring up the idea than Tarrant County, where 14,000 of Brazos's customers are clustered. State Senators Bill Meier and Betty Andujar, both of whose campaign funds were sweetened by donations from utilities executives, shrug off the idea, and killed its recommendation on the Senate Subcommittee for Consumer Affairs. Andujar wants to know why "people want to pick on utilities," and Meier wants the state to provide experts to localities instead of establishing a commission. Both say a commission would be too expensive.

State Rep. Doyle Willis has been urging Brazos customers to put pressure on Brazos by calling and writing the company as well as state officeholders. He calls Meier's and Andujar's statements about utilities regulation "asinine." □

HELP PLAN A MASSIVE RESPONSE TO THE RACIST OFFENSIVE IN BOSTON

Attend the National Student Conference Against Racism
February 14-16, Boston University, Boston, Mass.



On December 13-14, 1974 thousands of people from all over the country came to demonstrate in a teach-in and freedom march against racism. We came to say NO to the escalating racist offensive against school desegregation; to say NO to the racist mob violence against Black students and to expose the real aims — the racist aims — behind the so-called antibusing movement.

All over the country, the racists are trying to stop the Black freedom movement from making further gains, and to roll back many of the gains that have already been won by the civil rights movement.

But the racists can be stopped, and the Boston freedom march and teach-in can be the turning point. Just as Montgomery and Little Rock initiated the civil rights movement that put an end to Jim Crow in the South, our stand in Boston can initiate a new surge of freedom all over the country. And just as students helped lead the way in the civil rights movement, we can help lead the way today.

A mass response is required to counter the racist offensive. Students can be instrumental in mobilizing this response, just as we played a major role in organizing the freedom march and teach-in in Boston.

To discuss the next steps to take, we are calling for a national student conference to take place on the weekend of February 14, at Boston University in Boston, Massachusetts.

Come to the conference. Bring your friends. Bring your ideas. Together we can organize and mobilize, and we can win.

Sponsors include:

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Gertrude Barnstone, former Houston School Board member
Rob Harper, Political Affairs Chairman of Harvard-Radcliffe
TSU Student Government Association Executive Committee
Ron Waters, State Representative

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OR

HELP SEND SOMEONE TO THE BOSTON CONFERENCE

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Houston, Tx. 77004 (713) 749-1369

I want to go on the bus to the Conference. Send me more information.

Enclosed is \$_____ to help pay for the bus to Boston. (FUNDS URGENTLY NEEDED!)

Put me on your mailing list.

Name _____ Address _____ Phone _____

Union Gas Co. spent nearly \$500,000 to expand the sale of natural gas in Austin. TP&L spent \$500,000 in 1973, and \$800,000 the year before. Texas Electric Service Co. (TESCO) spent nearly \$1 million in 1973, Southwestern Bell \$4,200,000. Total utility advertising in 1973 came to \$11 million.

The contributions and donations that utility companies make are charged to expenses. In 1973, Southwestern Bell contributed \$980,000 to civic and charitable organizations in Texas. Dallas Power and Light Co. (DP&L) donated \$500,000; TESCO gave some \$400,000. Such donations improve the image, and the political clout, of companies and their executives. Texas utility companies made more than \$3.5 million in contributions in 1973. Of the \$14.5 million spent on advertising and good works, approximately 70 percent was charged to ratepayers. Ratepayers also foot the bill for club dues in country clubs, athletic clubs, and other businessmen's organizations. Southwestern Bell subscribers paid \$96,473 for membership fees and dues in 1973.

Utility company spending on political influence before the Legislature and city councils is mostly hidden from public view. Unreported amounts are paid to "local representatives" who maintain public relations and a continuing "presence" for local administrations. TP&L admits that it paid \$10,000 to seven city attorneys in a dozen towns served by the company. It recovered the cost of creating this conflict of interest from its ratepayers. Questionable "public services" are also available: TP&L, for instance, operates an agricultural program that duplicates the Federal Agricultural Extension Service.

During late 1974, TP&L, TESCO, and DP&L conducted a concerted campaign to have city councils petition the Texas Municipal League in opposition to changes in the regulatory system. More than 100 councils obediently forwarded their petitions, most of them supplied by the electric company's local lobbyist. The campaign had high direct expenses, and probably even higher indirect costs.

Numerous utility company employees spend their time in Austin during each legislative session: they provide support for the expensive professional lobbyists. Elaborate security departments (like Southwestern Bell's, which has been accused of spending its time abetting wiretapping) are another "service" paid for by utility rates. With few exceptions, Texas cities do not require reporting procedures or independently-verified accounting that touches any of these expensive habits.

3 Competitive pressure, which might serve to keep down the costs of running utility companies, does not exist. In other states, regulation replaces competition as a means of encouraging efficiency. An effective commission in Texas would monitor the cost of

monopoly operations.

Texas utility companies seldom purchase their fuels and equipment by arms-length bargaining. They usually buy from sister subsidiaries of holding companies, which charge unregulated and uncontrolled prices. Southwestern Bell buys all its supplies from Western Electric, at prices set by their common parent, AT&T. DP&L, TP&L, and TESCO buy fuel and other services from sister companies of the Texas Utilities Co. Nearly all gas companies buy gas from their own subsidiaries. A state-wide commission could regulate these incestuous arrangements.

Many other operating practices could be changed to reduce costs. For example, Texas companies have never taken advantage of an Internal Revenue Service option to liberalize income tax payments. They have failed to reduce and "flow through" their income taxes. As a result, the amount that Texans pay to cover their utility companies' taxes is greater than the amount actually paid by the companies.

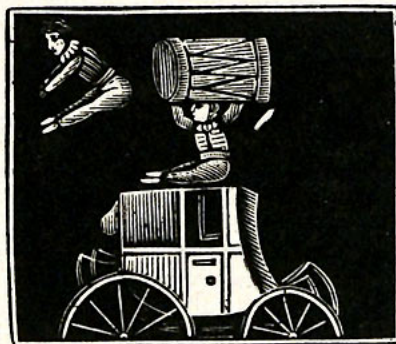
The excess funds go into a reserve tax account, to be used as tax-free capital.

Consumers could also benefit from changes in utilities' capital structures. Many Texas companies operate with more equity — capital supplied by stockholders — than debt, and penalize customers by requiring higher earnings to pay for this more expensive form of capital. (The cost of debt capital is only one-half to two-thirds as much as that of equity capital.) Nationwide, companies obtain 30 to 35 percent of their capital from stockholder equity. Texas companies' equity represents 40 to 45 percent of their capital.

A strong, consumer-oriented state utility commission could attack high rates in all three of these areas. No one can promise that a commission would actually order rate decreases, but regulation could at least reduce inefficiency and unnecessary costs — starting with the first rate-increase request a commission heard. □

It's moving, it's moving!

- The Legislature went through its first spurt of activity and produced a \$93 million emergency raise for state employees. Governor Briscoe signed it a full day before the end of the month (so that the raises will be included in February pay checks), and everybody went home reasonably happy. The only problem is that the employees with higher salaries get more emergency dollars than employees who make less. The four-part formula for figuring the raises provides that a worker



making \$600 a month, for example, will get an extra \$78 a month, while one making \$1,935 or more a month will get a monthly boost of \$174. (The percentage raises for "classified" employees — the majority of workers — are 13 percent for those making under \$10,512 a year, 9 percent for those making more.) The increased salaries will be in effect until

Political Intelligence

September, when the general appropriations bill will take effect.

It was the kind of action the Legislature handles best — no major policy decisions, just necessary adjustments. The major irritants in the process came from a group of House members, who were determined to see the raises weighted toward the lower end of the salary scale, and from the governor, who wanted the total price tag held to less than \$93 million. The partisans of lower-paid employees came closest with an amendment that would have provided an across-the-board \$100 raise for everybody: that idea got 55 votes. Briscoe got his way when the full House agreed to prune the bill sent out by the House Appropriations Committee, which provided \$110 million dollars worth of raises. The governor insisted after the fact that he had never really threatened to veto the more expensive version, but there was no doubt that Briscoe's jawboning was the cause of the reduction.

- In a recent issue of *Viewpoint*, the publication of the Austin Association

of Teachers, AAT President Betty Medlock let Governor Briscoe have it. Discussing teachers' need for higher incomes in her personal column, Medlock wrote, "In Texas we are handicapped by a 'sit-on-his-hands' governor who 'keeps the faith' only with big business interests by holding down state spending (at our expense), while forcing locals to raise taxes to meet growing needs."

Two views

Oh, the difference perspective makes. We ran, by chance, into two different members of the House recently and got two wildly different impressions of what's going on there. The first representative was one of the Daniel insiders, last session and is clearly an outsider this time around. He claimed to be taking it easy so far, enjoying his exclusion from those late-night strategy sessions and especially relishing, as he put it, the freedom to issue a press release without worrying about whether it will embarrass the speaker. He's filing his bills, doing his committee work, but generally not trying to be one of "Texas' young leaders" (said scornfully), since trying wouldn't do him any good this session anyway.

Still, he claims to be worried that the House seems to be slow getting started, and claims to foresee a lot of trouble for progressives at the end of the session, when time will be tight and the bills blessed by the speaker will be sailing through. It could be changed a lot, he said, by the coming-unstuck of the coalition that got Billy Clayton elected, that strange alliance of conservatives and libs. Mostly, says our anonymous outsider, he sits around and waits for the coming-unstuck part.

Our second encounter was with a member of the alliance, Rep. Chris Miller of Fort Worth. She was decidedly optimistic. Maybe it seems that the House is slow starting, but "things are moving in the depths." For one thing, Clayton's committee assignments distributed power evenly among his diverse



troops, Miller said. Even more encouraging, there is a healthy chance that the coalition will work, and that good legislation will be the result. The reason (as Miller sees it): the different constituencies of the speaker's people, both the leftish urban folks and the rightish rural ones, all want the same things this session. Most of all, she says, they want utilities relief and a better school system. And, she predicted, those common desires will make for a unifying, and progressive, pressure on the House.

What worries Miller is the possibility that unnamed outsiders will actually try to scuttle good legislation for the sake of speakership grudges.

Erwin may lobby

Frank Erwin may be on his way to becoming a lobbyist for the UT System. Former governor and new regents' chairman Allan Shivers met with the Travis County delegation recently to tell them the system was interested in keeping Erwin's services as a successful winner of legislative hearts and minds. That produced a flurry of reactions from the delegation, from pleasant surprise that Shivers would bother to inform the members, to Rep. Wilhemina Delco's opinion that there's nothing the legislators can do about it, to Sen. Lloyd Doggett's expression of opposition to the idea. Doggett had previously promised to invoke "senatorial courtesy" as a means of fighting a reappointment of Erwin to the board of regents.

Austin *American-Statesman* reporter Steve Wisch broke the story of the prospective hiring the morning Shivers met with the delegation. Wisch quoted an anonymous "veteran observer of UT politics and a present UT official" as predicting that Erwin would get a salary in the neighborhood of \$50,000 a year. Shivers has since denied that Erwin will be paid that handsomely, referring to the job opening as a "dollar-a-year" position.

U.S. Sen. John Tower has been appointed to the Senate committee which will investigate reports of widespread domestic political surveillance by the CIA and FBI. Tower will be the ranking Republican on the committee, and it has been reported that his interest in accepting the appointment lies in keeping

U.S. Sen. Howard Baker of Tennessee out of the vice-chairman's position. Tower says he is especially concerned that the investigation not become a "witch-hunt" and that confidential information does not leak from the committee.

Tower has expressed reluctance to take the appointment, pleading greater concern for legislation affecting energy and economic policy. As ranking Republican of the standing Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee, Tower is faced this session with the problem of dealing with a new chairman, liberal U.S. Sen. William Proxmire (D-Wisc.). Under the old regime of fellow arch-conservative U.S. Sen. John Sparkman of Alabama, Tower might have been less hesitant about leaving the committee's work in Democratic hands.

One-way tickets

Remember the bumperstickers that said "America: Love it or Leave it"? U.S. Rep. Jim Collins, the right-wing Republican from Dallas, apparently remembers them quite well. He has introduced legislation that would permit any citizen over 21 to apply to the Secretary of State for free transportation to the foreign country of his or her choice. Applicants would forfeit the right to re-enter the U.S. for 60 years. It's not that Collins really wants to spend money on the ingrates. He's hoping to prevent hijackings by providing "potential hijackers" a pre-paid ticket out of the country.

The *Corsicana Daily Sun* has beaten the rest of the state to what may be the last Baylor football joke of the 1974-75 season. The Jan. 8 *Sun* reported that Baylor coach Grant Teaff had been successful in appealing a speeding ticket to county court. The local district attorney himself requested that the charge be dismissed, on account of the speed limit signs for the westbound lane of the pertinent highway are rusted, obscured by other signs, and "barely visible in the daytime." The d.a. also said any other appeals from tickets received in the area would get the same treatment. And he made it clear that Teaff was not getting preferential treatment; it's just that the coach could afford to hire a lawyer, and the lawyer could have "torn us up in court." The *Sun* printed a couple of photographs of speed limit signs alongside its story, and the signs did in fact appear to be rusted, obscured, and otherwise barely visible.

That was fine until the Jan. 9 *Sun* hit the stands, containing the intelligence that Teaff was headed east, not west, when he was ticketed. This new light on the case was provided by the local police chief. The *Sun's* reporter provided a photo of an extremely readable speed limit sign posted next to the eastbound lane, and the news that both the d.a. and the county judge are graduates of Baylor.

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Stripmining 1975

By Edward Fritz

Austin

Texas' burgeoning lignite-stripmining industry will almost certainly come under state control soon. The questions are: what kind of regulation, and how soon? The first will be answered by a battle between strippers and environmentalists over whether authority should go to the energy-industry-dominated Railroad Commission or to the land commissioner. The second answer will be influenced by Congress.

Within a year, Congress will probably present states with a simple choice, requiring them to regulate stripmining or to stand by and watch the federal government do the regulating. The 94th Congress had hardly opened when U.S. Rep. Morris Udall (D-Ariz.) filed HR 25, 26, 27, and 28, a fairly strong bill like the Jackson-Udall bill of last session. (That bill was passed, but pocket-vetoed by President Ford in December.) A majority of the House Interior Committee joined as co-sponsors of the bill, including the two Texans on the committee, Bob Eckhardt and Alan Steelman.

The co-sponsors and other members predict flatly that the bill will roar out of committee and pass the House within a few months. Senator Henry Jackson (D-Wash.) has filed the same bill in the Senate, with the same prediction. If Ford exercises his veto again, there is a good chance that this more rambunctious Congress will override him.

THE FEDERAL bill would require Texas and other states to pass state regulatory legislation within a prescribed period (like eighteen months). The threatened federal regulation, in case of default by the state, is the last thing that large strippers — like Texas Utilities, Inc. — want to see. So there's a sense around the Legislature that if the 64th doesn't pass a bill, the 65th will.

That is the reason there is a serious move toward regulation now. Sen. Lloyd Doggett of Austin has filed S. B. 66, a strict bill placing supervision of stripmine reclamation under the supervision of the land commissioner. Sen. Max Sherman of Amarillo, chairman of the Natural Resources Committee that bottled up Sen. Ron Clower's bill in 1973, has filed S. B. 55. Sherman's bill would impose most of the same restrictions contained in the Doggett bill, but would give enforcement power to the Railroad Commission.

Fritz is chairman of the Texas Committee on Natural Resources.

Environmentalists consider the RRC less likely to enforce the law stringently. Sherman says he personally prefers the land commissioner, but is following the wishes of the Interim Surface Mining Operations Study Committee, which he chaired. Last month, the study committee recommended vaguely that stripmining be regulated, but failed to agree on any specific regulations, merely attaching to its report a copy of the bill which Sherman has filed.

Both Senate bills apply to virtually all minerals that are stripmined, including uranium. All the bills — in Congress and in the Legislature — would authorize some agency to require permits and to tell strippers, within prescribed limits, what steps they must take to reclaim the land. The bills also contain provisions requiring specific permission of a surface owner before mineral lessees can strip his topsoil, and all would require performance bonds.

Either of the Senate bills might pass in the upper house, especially if Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby pitches in. The House will be a different story. Rep. Buddy Temple of Diboll, whose district in the Pineywoods sits over millions of tons of strippable lignite, has announced that he is filing a bill similar to Doggett's. But if Speaker Billy Clayton refers the bill to any of the three most likely committees, it could die a lingering death. None of the committees is loaded with conservationists. On the new House Environmental Affairs Committee, for example, only four members out of thirteen are environmentally-conscious, and one of the four (Fred Agnich, the Dallas Republican) has himself been engaged in mining. The other two panels (Energy Resources and Natural Resources) are no more encouraging. Clayton's committee appointments could have already doomed regulation for this session.

TWO DEVELOPMENTS could change this outlook. Stripminers themselves may push for passage of state legislation, since the Legislature may not be as industry-oriented next session as it is this year. And it is possibly, though unlikely, that the public will demand strong legislation from the 64th. Environmentalists note with pleasure that *The Corpus Christi Caller-Times* has informed its readers of the devastation caused by surface mining of uranium in Karnes County.

The only way to stop such damage altogether is by banning stripmining, forcing Texas utility companies to get their coal from deep mines. The nation has enough deep coal to last three hundred years at present consumption rates — ten times as much as lies in strippable reserves.

Deep mining does not cause as much damage to timber and agriculture. The power companies say that stripmining costs less, but that's because they fail to compute the social cost of "boom and bust" around the fields, with loss of topsoil thrown in. And by the time the companies pay for all the fertilizing, cultivating, and seeding necessary to keep their reclaimed strips vegetated, they will probably have paid as much as if they had deep-mined in the first place. Texas Utilities repeatedly refused to itemize its reclamation figures for anyone, thus making statistical proof impossible. The company claims it does not separate reclamation costs from operating expenses.

An environmentalist coalition called STATES (Save Texas Agriculture, Timber, and Ecosystem from Stripmining) is urging the Legislature to at least pass stiff regulatory legislation. Fifteen different organizations are working with STATES, including the Sierra Club, the League of Women Voters, the Texas Committee on Natural Resources, the Farmers' Union, Environmental Action of Texas, the Environmental Coalition of North Central Texas, and the Student Government of the University of Texas. STATES is working especially to see that the Land Commissioner, and not the Railroad Commission, is designated as the enforcer of regulation. Mary Bresler, STATES coordinator, points out that the Railroad Commission is a servant of the energy industry, and not of the public, and that there is no point in setting up regulatory machinery that allows an industry to do as it pleases. There the main issue is drawn. □

February 14, 1975

11

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Democratic National Committeewoman **BILLIE CARR REPORTS...**

On the Texas Democrats

Texas Democrats will hold an important meeting in Corpus Christi on Saturday, March 8. Dr. Jeff Bishop, Guy Watts, SDEC member from Senate District 20, and Katie Elliott will be hosting this meeting.

We will have a major speaker, workshops and make important organizational plans for the next two years. In the next edition of the *Observer* the time, place and agenda will be given.

In the meantime, mark your calendar now and plan to be in Corpus on March 8.

What is the Texas Democrats?

In 1973 after the '72 campaign "fallout" about 200 progressives and liberals from around the state gathered in Houston. We knew that in this big state, progressives and liberals needed a communication network.

For this purpose, the Texas Democrats was formed, as a loose-knit organization at the state level. We put all *emphasis* on the local level.

To make it easier, we divided Texas into 9 regions. Each region has a person to assist and communicate with the county and/or senatorial district clubs in their regions. Each statewide meeting is held in a different region to make travel more evenly distributed; last year meetings were held in Houston, Austin, Arlington and San Antonio.

The TDs has only one officer, a secretary-treasurer who works with regional co-ordinators, sets up state meetings and serves as called upon by members. Dan Dutko, from San Angelo, served us well in this position. He had to resign in October, 1974 and at a meeting in San Antonio, Ed Cogburn, Houston's SDEC member from District 13, was elected.

The state dues start as low as fifty cents a person. Once more, the reason for this was to that local clubs could have dues and keep the money in the local area. After all, that's where the money is needed for local organization.

The TDs deserves a lot of credit for our success at the conventions and for the election of some of our new SDEC members.

TDs Needed More Than Ever

While we have much to be proud of for the work done last year, we must now firm up the organization, and get ready for 1976.

Our goal is to have a progressive-liberal organization in every county and/or senatorial district in Texas.

Let me touch on some of the matters we must deal with right away.

The Texas Affirmative Action plan and the rules for delegate selection for 1976 will be adopted soon. (The SDEC will hold public hearings starting February 10. Call the State Democratic Party office at 512-478-8746 for details.)

According to the National Charter, Texas will elect three additional members to the Democratic National Committee at the SDEC meeting on Saturday, March 15, in Austin. It is required that two of the three be women. Many of us feel that a labor person, a black and a *chicano* should be elected. You should talk to your SDEC members about how you feel.

The legislative session will be considering many election code changes. The Bentsen-Briscoe forces are pushing a Presidential Primary for 1976. God knows what kind of a primary they have in mind. They may try to force us into a winner take all primary, or a primary which would result in the handpicking of delegates by presidential candidates at all convention levels.

You can be sure that the progressive-liberals, minorities, women and young people could once more be on the outside - if we don't work together, communicate with each other and organize. The only political clout we can have is by strengthening each other so that our collective voices will be heard. With an organization like the TDs we could insure having input into all local, state and national matters. We could also make sure that jobs like voter registration, affirmative action and getting out the vote were really being done. We should know by now that we can't wait on the State Party.

We also need to start talking about a candidate to nominate for President who we could support.

The TDs can pull us together. keep us

informed and can serve as a cutting edge to work with black, women, *chicano* caucuses. All of these groups are a *part* of the organization but we recognize the need to have these important caucuses. In Kansas City, the progressive-liberals did the initial organization, set up communications and helped negotiate; then the separate caucuses of women and minorities really made things happen. It can work in Texas like it did in Kansas City.

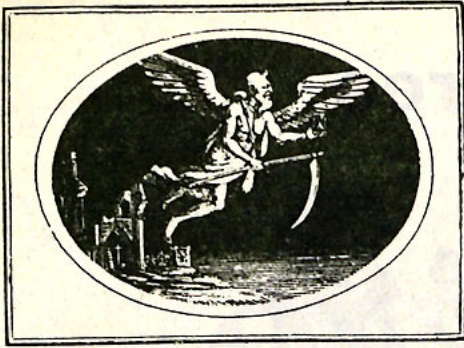
One word about "unity": when the regulars and some moderates talk about unity, BEWARE - it usually means take what they give us, token places, token recognition, until they can co-opt us or just get rid of us.

The Collection Plate

I hate to talk about money. I'm really more interested in urging you to organize your county, senatorial district, precinct clubs. However, organization needs communication and, unfortunately, everything takes money. If you can help, send a check to the Texas Democrats, c/o 2418 Travis #3, Houston, Texas, 77006. Thanks.

My next newsletter will report on the DNC meeting in D.C. on March 20th as well as on the state party. Peace.

Billie



The hunger conference

By Juergen
Duenbostel

San Antonio

"One hundred people dead in airplane crash": that is a catastrophe making front-page headlines in the newspapers. "Five million people dying slowly from starvation": that is a statistic. Hunger may take more lives in the next few years than World War II did. But, unlike a war, hunger does not excite news editors.

A group of Texas citizens has decided not to stay passive while the world food crisis becomes more severe every day. A conference in San Antonio on Jan. 18 drew 75 participants from all over the state. Mary Emeny and Rita Neureuter of the American Friends Service Committee organized the meeting to stimulate the foundation of local groups to work full-time.

THE PANEL of speakers at the conference reflected the variety of factors that influence food production and distribution. The speakers themselves pointed out that people with very different backgrounds can contribute their skills to solving the food crisis. There was a representative from the U.S. Department of Agriculture; a nutritionist from the San Antonio Medical School; a representative from the Catholic Relief Service and one from the Protestant relief organization, CROP; a law professor from UT-Austin; and the head of a San Antonio relief center.

Frank Gibson of the USDA Food Stamp Office admitted that the present food stamp system has its inequities, and urged people at the conference to lobby for improvements. But he emphasized that food stamps can be used to improve the diets of recipients. "Most people don't know the nutritional values of the different kinds of food, and they get much less protein and nutrients for their stamps than they could," Gibson said. He encouraged conference participants to set up local educational groups to advise recipients on how to buy nutrition with their stamps. Sister Eleanor Ann of Incarnate Word College, a nutritionist, demonstrated several recipes that replace animal protein with vegetable protein. Vegetable-rich diets can provide balanced nutrition while conserving agricultural resources and reducing food cost.

It is true, as nutritionists point out, that it takes four to seven calories in plant products to produce one calorie of meat, milk, and eggs, and that more and more of America's vegetable production goes to producing meat and poultry. But a reduction in meat output does not automatically free plant protein for domestic consumption and export. Any cattleman will tell you that cutting down meat consumption means a loss in total food production. Profits and market conditions, social customs and traditions play a major part in determining the amount of food which is produced and distributed. Dr. Robert Bard, a visiting professor at the UT-Austin Law School, stressed these complexities of the food problem. Even the perception of the problem is a factor in its solution, he said: "Most people don't feel like they're rich, and many are reluctant to help because they think the needy countries could do more for themselves than they do now." Any long-term solution to the worldwide food crisis would involve a change in the value system of wealthy nations, he said.

Such changes require time, and several million people may pay with their lives for the indifference of the past. And yet scarce resources must be directed into relief that is more than short-term. A food ration may mean several months of life to a starving person. Help that enables the same person to produce his or her own food is help for a lifetime. Paul Russell of CROP told the conference how his group tries to balance the two needs: CROP spends 80 percent of its funds on tools for self-help, reserving 20 percent for crisis relief. Yet in recent years there have been no less than 30 crisis situations a year.

GOVERNMENTAL AID programs are complicated by politics. In 1974, almost half of U.S. Food for Peace assistance went to the Thieu and Lon Nol regimes in Southeast Asia while there was mass starvation in Bangladesh and the Sahel Zone of Africa. Almost all of this aid was shipped under Title I conditions,

which meant it was delivered government-to-government for sale on the open market. The most needy cannot afford to buy the food. The governments earn revenue for continuing their wars. The needier nations get neither enough food nor enough revenue.

Charles Graham of the Catholic Relief Service touched on these and other political facts about food and development aid. He pointed out that present famines have been predicted for years, and that governmental response is still inadequate. He presented a litany of statistics on the magnitude of that inadequacy. In 1974, 13 nations spent a higher share of their GNP's for foreign aid than did the United States. The U.S. and Canada control a proportion of the world's exportable food that is higher than the proportion of exportable oil controlled by the OPEC nations. A small percentage of the world's expenditures on arms would pay for the world's food. U.S. citizens spend \$7 million a day on cigarettes, \$18 billion a year on liquor, \$9 billion a year on cosmetics, and \$4 billion a year on dog grooming.

While most people can act only indirectly to help solve the world food crisis, there is work to be done in their own communities. While the elimination of hunger in America requires efforts of many kinds, relief for immediate food crises can be undertaken on an *ad hoc* basis. Carlos Martha, head of San Antonio's Neighborhood House Relief Center, pointed out that governmental efforts have the rather obvious handicap of being closed on weekends. He urged conference participants to organize full-time food pantries and soup kitchens. He also cautioned them to gather information about existing programs to avoid duplication of efforts.

Mary Emeny has agreed to serve as a clearinghouse for the exchange of information among local groups set up by participants in the conference. The address is Foodshare, Box 583, Castroville, Tex. 78009. One local group has been started already, in Austin; it will be coordinated by David Paredes of the Catholic Student Center. The Austin group wants to set up a food pantry or soup kitchen, create a speakers bureau, monitor information on food, and respond to governmental policy decisions. As an immediate task, the group is organizing a letter campaign to protest higher food stamp prices. A second group will apparently be set up in Houston soon.

In Figure 4 for Richard Vogel's article, "Prison reform in social perspective" (see *Obs.*, Jan. 31), data illustrated was for the years 1949, 1960, and 1970. The final date was erroneously given as 1969.

Freedom is for Free

In a continuing celebration of our 20th anniversary, we offer another sliver from the Observer's past, this one an exercise in bemused tolerance by a long-time contributing editor. —Ed.

By Georgia Earnest Klipple

April 18, 1963
Corpus Christi

They, six hundred and fifty of them, converged onto the Discoll Hotel Grand Ballroom like Birnam Wood come to Dunsinane — towering Mount Everests of flowered hats, broad, luxury liners of flowered hats, thin George Washington obelisks of flowered hats. They and their hats were weaving at varying angles and speeds, depending on individual command of four-inch needle heels.

They were Delta Kappa Gamma *en masse*, the Coastal Bend Toastmistress Club, the University of Corpus Christi Women's Club, Desk and Derrick, Byliners, Women in Construction, Industrial Management Club Auxiliary, Theater Guild, Aransas Pass Women's Club, Corpus Christi Bank and Trust Co., Doyle McCain Plumbing, and others. It was the ninth annual 4-C's (Commerce plus Culture Makes a Great Corpus Christi) Luncheon sponsored by the Women's Committee of the Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce and the Gulf Coast Chapter of Texas Manufacturers Association in observance of Texas Industrial Week.

The ladies had spent the morning decorating the tables of their own clubs to win a prize. Now they were having their own creative competition. The tables didn't have a chance under the hats.

"Look, there are two just alike!"

"Where? Where?"

"At this first table and — no, over there, don't look now — three tables over."

"How they must be suffering."

"I'll bet they'll never wear those hats again."

The loudspeaker groaned and sputtered. "Ladies, will you please find your seats," bawled a male voice. "Ladies, will you please find your seats?"

"I've found mine," tittered a woman.

"Ladies, will you please come in from the lobby and find your seats," the man pleaded. He tried a new tack. "Come on, girls."

At last the girls were seated facing each other.

(*Good heavens, Susie McCue looks ten years older than I do, I know.*)

Their faces, accented by Revlon brows and Maybelline lashes, were faded under the hats.

"One thing for sure, they all DO, and their hairdressers and everybody else knows it."

"I wish I could get that shade on mine — what was that mixture?"

"Cherry and sable brown?"

"Mr. David said there wasn't enough gray in mine to get those rich, red highlights."

Salad forks clinked against bowls of avocado drowned in Thousand Island. Calories disappeared by the millions. Halfway through the salad, the mistress of ceremonies asked for silence. She wanted someone to return thanks. One woman started to put down her cracker, thought the better of it, and took another bite instead. Thanks were hastily returned.

Negro waiters served coffee.

"I don't want coffee. Can I have Sanka?" asked a woman. "I



never drink coffee any more since I went to the Country Club," she explained to a neighbor. "I told the waiter out there that I couldn't drink coffee. He said, 'Do you want me to get you some Sanka?' and ever since then I always ask for Sanka."

The man was at the microphone again. "Now you ladies are full enough, we can get along with the program. Don't bother to applaud. You can't clap your hands and eat pie at the same time." Clinking of metal on pottery became somewhat muted. . . . "Anything is liable to happen anytime. Here are two beautiful pair of silk stockings from Lichtenstein's for Mrs. John Doe." The names were pulled from a barrel.

One hundred door prizes were given, ranging from a six-inch model of a bus to a lifesize fishing car; a road map, a bucket of housepaint, a satin evening stole, an electric mixer, artificial flowers, a silver tray, a gold tray, a gallon of oysters, a bottle of cologne, a gallon of shrimp, a jar of soap, a marble-topped table, a \$26 pair of shoes, ten mirrors, a dozen road map atlases. They were donated by local businesses. A dairy company gave a gallon of milk, a gallon of buttermilk, a pound of butter, a carton of eggs, and a container of cottage cheese, all to the same woman.

A little 75-year-old lady won a free night's lodging for herself and a partner at the Sea Ranch. A school teacher drew a \$25 savings bond. Two dozen women and one man (a representative of the Chamber of Commerce) got beer coolers from the Pearl Beer Company. Everybody got a standard packet of loot: a bag of potato chips, a Coca Cola, cigaret lighter, a box of pancake mix, and two passes to a figure control salon. Screams of appreciation and applause punctuated the announcements of the witnesses.

The guest speaker was Lum of Lum and Abner. (Last year it was Ronald Reagan, brought in by Central Power & Light.) Lum was born, said the introducer, as Chester Lauck, in a small town in Arkansas. He had worked in the local bank. He had gone to Hollywood. After a 25-year run of the Lum and Abner comedy team, he had been hired by the Continental Oil Company of Houston to tour the country speaking to just such groups as this one. Now he is executive assistant of his company.

Lum, slim, handsome in that distinguished older-man fashion,

with greying temples, and nattily dressed in a dark suit, acknowledged the introduction in faultless grammar. "That wonderful introduction sounded like a eulogy. I thought for a moment there that I should have done the decent thing and died." Laughter.

He lapsed into the vernacular of Lum and Abner: "Abner and I tended our Jot 'em Down Store without no help from the government." Then back to his oil company executive delivery: "This does not mean that I am against the administration — necessarily." Laughter.

"But anybody who can sit in a rocking chair and con the American public into walking fifty miles a day—" his words were drowned out in laughter and applause.

Lum did not play favorites, though. He told about the association for the preservation of outhouses in Arkansas. "We call it the Birch John Society," he said. Considerable laughter.

The bulk of his talk concerned big government and how it was ruining free enterprise. He said he prefers to call capitalism free enterprise. Our pioneer forefathers didn't worry about social security. Private enterprise leads to a strong, solvent nation of free men. A turn to the government for help means regulation and control and loss of freedom, he said.

It was three o'clock. The luncheon had started at twelve noon. Lum said, "Now it's L*S*M*F*T time — Let's Stand, My Fanny's Tired."

Laughter.

"Ladies, we have come to a fork in the road," Lum said. "Are we going to take the muddy, crooked path to the left with the signs that say, 'Utopia Straight Ahead'? Or are we going to take the broad, straight, smooth highway to the right?"

Up jumped the ladies, wildly cheering, to give Lum a standing ovation of several minutes.

"Ladies," Lum said in conclusion, "you didn't pay me to come here. The Continental Oil Company paid my expenses. And you got exactly what you paid for."

Sheriff Beats Man Secured to Oak Tree

Feb. 21, 1959
Marshall

There is a thicket of red oak, pin oak, and sweetgum down in Cypress Creek bottom in the country outside Marshall, near Hall's Quail Farm. A morning last November Raymond Ford, chief deputy sheriff of Harrison County, took a Negro man and a white man into the bottom and handcuffed them to trees. The white man says, "Mine was a oak, and his was a sweetgum."

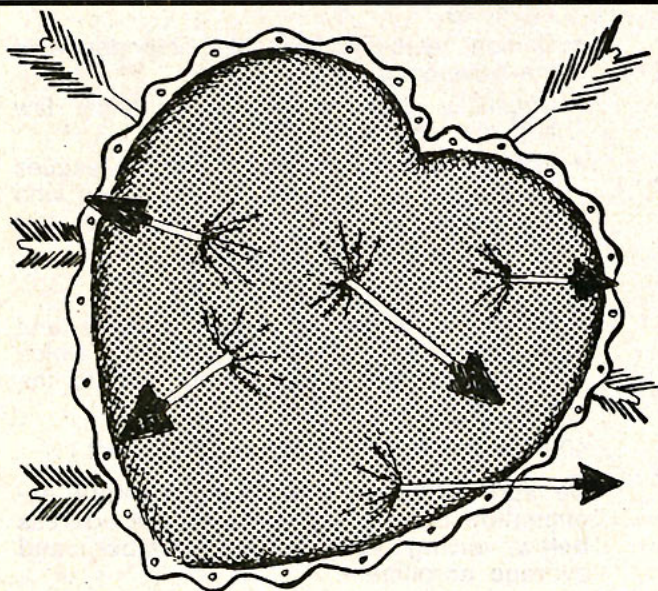
The Negro, Y. D. Bolton, a 28-year old farm servant in nearby Harrelton, said under oath that the chief deputy sheriff beat him with a stick until he confessed they stole a power saw.

The white man, Clarence Petty, a 33-year-old country boy who fixes cars and sets out bank hooks for catfish in the ponds and creeks around this country, said under oath Ford beat him with "an ellum club" about 200 licks for a period of two hours. He did not confess . . .

This Wednesday afternoon in Marshall, a jury of Ford's lifetime friends, including one woman who works in the tax collector's office with him now, declared him not guilty on a charge of aggravated assault on the white man. No case was made against him about the Negro.

February 14, 1975

15



RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY

Nobody writes about it.

Everyone today talks about relationships and sexuality. About how the two are involved. It seems the traditional mores governing female-male relationships are undergoing constant redefinition. Divorce. Open marriage. Living together. People everywhere are struggling to find meaning for themselves and their partners.

It's funny, though.

In Austin everybody talks about relationships and sexuality but nobody writes about it. But that's changed. Now.

Before January the two-month-old Austin SUN had merely been the place to find tough-minded coverage of city news and the Austin cultural scene. In the current issue the SUN expands its concerns to issues of human, personal importance. Like single persons expressing a need to relate to several different partners. Married couples writing about monogamous relationships. People like yourself are trying to find their answer to those and other questions in this and later issues.

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A report to our friends

Austin

The *Observer* is somewhat embattled at present by inflation and the costs of defending a libel suit. This is a time when we need our friends.

Costs are up again for the *Observer* as for everyone, especially printing and the rent, but inflation has cut into our income, also, as subscribers themselves squeezed by inflation have skipped renewing. Circulation is down 15% in the last two years. Belt-tightening at the already belt-tight *Observer* has meant a decrease in the outlay for salaries, and now, looking on into 1975, we see that to keep sound financially we have to increase the subscription rate from \$8.40 to \$10 a year, including the sales tax. Raising the subscription rate is the last thing any of us around here ever wants to do. We do it now only because we must.

By acting now, subscribers who wish to renew at the \$8.40 rate may do so, regardless of when their present subscription expires. (The last four digits of the top line of your address label show the month and year your subscription expires.) You may, if you wish, renew at the lower rates for two years (\$14.70) or three years (\$19.95). But as of Feb. 15, it's ten dollars a year (\$9.52 plus the sales tax).

Our defense in the libel suit brought against the *Observer* by Brother Lester Roloff, the Corpus Christi evangelist, is proceeding satisfactorily, but is costly. After consulting with many good and friendly lawyers, we concluded that the key to security in the case was a good Corpus Christi attorney, and with excellent assistance we selected Dudley Foy, Jr. The costs of the defense are estimated to be in the range of \$30,000. Since the *Observer* spends its income on producing the best journal we can, the lawsuit costs have to be raised outside the regular budget, so we have created the Texas Observer Legal Defense Fund, and with invaluable help from Bernard Rapoport of Waco and others, we have begun soliciting contributions. As of Jan. 31 we have raised about a third of the sum we guess to be needed, and we are much encouraged by the moral and material support we are getting. Contributions to the fund can be mailed to the *Observer* at 600 West 7th St., Austin 78701.

Last year at the *Observer* there was no room in the budget to adjust the already modest salaries to keep pace with inflation. Nevertheless, the editors continued to expand the editorial space given over to editorial matter, which has increased 32% since 1968, and which we plan to increase further in 1975. One way we expect to be able to fund this is by opening up the *Observer* to more advertising.

The *Observer* always has hoped for, and

Observations

to some extent has actively sought, advertising from book publishers, political groups and organizations, entertainment and cultural events, and other enterprises we assumed a substantial number of our readers would be interested in. Beyond these categories, though, we have not really been interested. The striking success of the advertising push conducted by Cliff Olofson and Keith Stanford for the 20th Anniversary edition has caused us to think all this over. The *Observer* is very well established, and we have concluded that there is no reason why we should not engage in a more aggressive and systematic search for advertising. Each page of advertising can fund the printing of three more editorial pages. Substantial advertising income can let us pay our people and our contributors more nearly what they're worth, fund a better paper, and later perhaps build a surplus for one-time needs that might come along. We have been having some practical conversations with friends who know about advertising, and (to use the Texas way of saying), we are looking to have more of them. Keith Stanford will be communicating with local, state, and national advertisers. We are also considering a program that would let local advertisers circulate their *Observer* ads only in the *Observers* distributed in their areas, at reduced ad rates, under some circumstances.

If our new attitude and activity in advertising works out, the ad income will help absorb the steadily rising costs of printing, paper, and postage and, we hope, will let us avoid passing on the full burden of these rises to our subscribers.

Times are tough, dear readers, old friends, but we hope you will stay with us at \$10 a year — and get some friend of yours to join us. We are going for 25.

Our mailing list

We have never let politicians use the *Observer's* mailing list, nor have we sold that list. Now, with considerable reluctance, we have decided, in order to obtain new subscribers, to exchange our subscriber list with periodicals and organizations with which we feel a consanguinity of interests or purposes. Each proposed such exchange will be discussed by the entire *Observer* group, and the objection of a single person will be sufficient to veto it. Precautions will be

taken to insure that the subscriber list will be used only according to the terms of the exchange agreement and will not be used for politicians' purposes. Any subscriber who objects to having his or her name exchanged can prevent it by dropping us a note now or later and telling us not to do it. Our computerized mailing system lets us honor such instructions very easily and without error. (It would help if you could enclose a recent mailing label, but this is not necessary.)

Hunger (cont.)

About 75 people from different parts of the state (Fort Worth, Dallas, Amarillo, Houston, Austin) met in San Antonio Jan. 18 to talk over what plain citizens can do, if

February 14, 1975

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anything, to help fight the world famine. Mary Emeny and Rita Neureuther of Castroville, who organized the meeting, were satisfied that they had done something worth doing. They were a little surprised that even the people who came needed so much consciousness-raising about world famine, and they were a bit let down that there was so much said and so little done (see story this issue to find out what was said). They will be sending a newsletter to the participants, sort of throwing the ball to them. What shall we do? It's up to you. That sort of thing.

Ideas that emerged from sessions of small groups in the San Antonio experiment fell into two categories, world famine and hunger in the United States. On the first subject, participants suggested money and gifts to private organizations, including the church organizations that provide emergency aid. Re-routing tax dollars into these private organizations was suggested. American-based international airlines or the U.S. Air Force might be encouraged to provide free transportation for food relief programs. And if the U.S. government will not participate at the federal level in a world food bank, non-governmental organizations might administer the U.S. part of it.

On U.S. hunger, the suggestions included co-ops and co-op stores for food stamp

recipients, more use of vacant lands within cities for community gardens, nutritional education, approaching store managers about offering whole grains in bulk and about hiring staff nutritionists, and help in filling out food stamp forms from community centers and churches. One speaker said food is a public utility and should be dealt with as such.

Individuals at the meeting committed to do these things themselves: Fast one meal or one day a week and send the money saved to an international relief agency (one participant has \$260 saved by fasting a day a week for this purpose); put a few cents in a jar each meal and sending this to a relief agency; eat less meat; try to replace junk food with nutritious food in a college's vending machines; work toward "a local food pantry"; telegraph the president to increase food sent to famine areas; refuse to pay that portion of tax that is used for war and re-route that same amount to hunger, educational, and medical aid organizations; get involved in local committees; get more informed; work through churches and schools to educate people about the situation.

Mary, who found the mood in the peace movement always rather defeatist, found the people at the San Antonio meeting much more optimistic that famine and hunger can be solved. "A lot of people," Rita said, "are starting to think."

Observer subscriber Susan Hopson of

Houston believes that the average American has a humanitarian spirit, and if cutting beef consumption 10% could be made practical, the people would cooperate. "I would like to kick little Annie Armstrong in the ass for saying we couldn't increase our grain commitment [to fight famine] this year because 'The American housewife is having a tough enough time meeting her own budget,'" Ms. Hopson writes. Just think, she says, of the unity a national program of personal sacrifices to help the world would create — "both Southern Baptists and Jewish liberals would support it."

But another subscriber, Catherine George of Dallas, writes, "I feel the same way as the unnamed man who will continue to feed his dog while people starve. For one thing, I have complete control over his breeding so that he remains only one." Ms. George, having concluded that helping hungry people abroad encourages them to behave irresponsibly, writes that "our world is headed for extreme agony and each nation will, and probably should, act in its own interests."

Ms. George's letter puts me in mind of something Anton Chekhov wrote during a famine in Russia in the last century. Chekhov did not think the well-fed should lecture the starving.

Cong. Charles Wilson, Lufkin, poses a somewhat different, although similar, issue. As he explains in his letter to the editor this issue, he successfully reduced U.S. development aid to India by one-third because the government of India is developing nuclear weapons. We should of course oppose nuclear proliferation, but it ill becomes one of the world's two nuclear giants to be *righteous* about it. Wilson punishes people who are starving to death for the actions of their government. By this logic, we should cut federal aid to the poor in Mississippi because we don't like the government there. One of the worst elements of our foreign policy is our use of ostensibly humanitarian aid for power politics. What we are learning from the melancholy atmosphere of our times is our unity as a species, our inescapable moral involvement with each other, one to one.

Kansas City

The Texas delegation to the Democrats' miniconvention last December was about 60-40 conservative, and in the rough correlations with national attitudes in the Democratic Party, so was the miniconvention, itself.

Certain 1972 fair-play McGovern reforms were written into the Democrats' new national charter, and in this sense, reformers have claimed victory. A judicial council is established to approve state plans for delegate selection and to rule on challenges to these plans. The unit rule is abolished. Delegations to party conventions are to "fairly reflect the

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A Personal History

William A. Owens

Roy Bedichek, J. Frank Dobie, and Walter Prescott Webb all taught at the University of Texas, lived only a few blocks apart, and saw each other almost every day. The true cement of their friendship, however, was the correspondence that makes up much of this book. They wrote not to exchange information, but to communicate ideas, to nail down the generalities of conversation, and, above all, to challenge, encourage, and stimulate one another.

William A. Owens, who knew all three personally, has tied their letters together with his own observations and with transcripts of tape interviews with the men. The result is a unique book, a combination of biography and personal history that portrays not only the three friends, but the land they loved as well. **\$3.95**

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division of preferences expressed by those who participate in the Presidential nominating process." And "affirmative action programs" shall "encourage full participation by all Democrats, with particular concern for minority groups, native Americans, women, and youth."

But the significant attempt to make mid-term, issues-oriented miniconventions permanent was twice defeated at Kansas City. The miniconvention was pre-structured by the majority of the Democratic National Committee, following the lead of Chairman Robert Strauss, to prevent the delegates from having much to do with the writing of the charter and to prohibit them from discussing the urgent issues of these times. The one policy resolution that was permitted, on economic matters, was written in secret by a control committee, and the miniconvention was prohibited from amending it. In my opinion, formed in the framework of what should be expected of a national session of the Democratic Party in the midst of a world-wide famine, the reformers lost this convention.

In the absence of Governor Briscoe, Agriculture Commissioner John White was accepted as the Texas delegation chairman, and he was fair to all concerned. On the one hand, he carried the dubious compromise adopted on proportional representation, a compromise which eliminated language specifically guaranteeing proportionality at every level of the convention process. (He gave assurances that the new language guaranteed the objective without specifying it, and some sharp students of the matter agreed with him.) On the other hand, White at one point told Strauss that he should give up his opposition to compromise on the issue of affirmative action. Blacks, chicanos, and women had threatened to bolt if language that made it almost impossible to win a delegation challenge was not struck. White told Strauss not more than 15 members of the Texas delegation would stand with the challenged language. Some of the reform delegates from Texas were preparing to join the bolt, and Strauss caved.

But the miniconvention's accomplishment amounts to a limited reform of delegate selection procedures whose efficacy depends on what certain words mean and who interprets them. The compromise language about affirmative action cannot take effect until 1978. As Colin Carl, a member of the Texas Democratic Executive Committee from Austin, has been advising his fellow Democrats by mail, nothing at Kansas City changed the rules for the 1976 nomination. (These rules make it necessary for the state party to adopt and make public an affirmative action plan for submission to the Democrats' national compliance review commission by March 15, and a delegate

selection plan must be submitted by July 1.) In my opinion (as I more fully set out in an article in the February issue of the *Progressive*), conservatives controlling the national Democratic Party machinery turned the miniconvention delegates into sheep, and there will have to be a struggle in 1976 between these conservatives and



Chmn. Robert Strauss

the progressives who are trying to nominate an exciting candidate.

Candidates

Lloyd Bentsen's free-liquor reception attracted thousands of people in Kansas City, but neither he nor any of the other candidates there took hold. Progressives do not yet have a candidate for whom there is enthusiasm. (Mo Udall of Arizona excites no one I know, nor me.) Fred Harris is trying to get going with a ringingly populist campaign that is really interesting, but a short year away from the 1976 contest, the progressives are floundering while moneyed candidates like Bentsen, Jackson, and Wallace lock up more and more of the uncommitted Democrats.

Frank Kelly, an official at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions in California, (who writes that he liked my nomination of Bob Eckhardt of Houston for President) is pursuing his idea of forming a National Council of Citizens to search for possible Presidents, and meanwhile he is doing a series of one-hour programs on a Los Angeles educational TV station on who might be the right candidates.

Bob Cochran of Bethesda, Md., writes "to take nonviolent exception to the harebrained idea you recently expressed" on Eckhardt for President. "Are you," he asks me, "out of your mind? The trend of the 1970's is to conserve national resources, not waste them. The presidency of this country has sagged away until it is one of the great dead end jobs of history. So you up and suggest that a peerless legislative leader throw all that over and take to signing proclamations, mumbling through softball press conferences, meeting with the Chinese to warn them about the Russians, meeting with the Russians to warn them about the Chinese... To casually waste a good man, no matter how worthy your goal, is wicked nonsense."

I asked Eckhardt if he'd be a candidate. He smiled and said no. But that's my point: if he was drafted, like nearly any other public person he would have to say OK.

Utilities

For twenty years this journal and every statewide progressive candidate have advocated that we have a state public utilities commission to protect Texas consumers from gouging increases by natural monopolies (which is what utilities are). The refusal of every Legislature in those two decades to create such a commission is one of many available demonstrations that the corporations continue to rule Texas.

On January 30, Southwestern Bell, which is now undergoing suspicious scrutiny by some Texas cities because of its present difficulties about political money, announced that it was raising Texas intra-state telephone rates \$45 million. Interstate rates are federally regulated; city rates are locally regulated; Texas intrastate rates are unregulated. Atty. Gen. John Hill sought to stave off the intra-state increase, but Bell had dramatized the need for a state rates commission on exactly the same day on which fifty members of the Texas House of Representatives introduced a carefully-drawn bill to create just that commission. Members of the proposed agency could not be employees or former employees of utility companies and could not go to work for utility companies for five years after leaving the agency. Rates would be set on the basis of actual investment, instead of on replacement cost.

There can be no doubt that inflation, utility rate-gouging, and Bell's difficulties have created maximum public pressure for this reform. If it doesn't pass this session, it never will without a fundamental shift in Texas politics.

R.D.

Rep. Wilson writes

After 14 years I finally feel compelled to pen you a letter. Ronnie Dugger has become so antagonized over an amendment I offered in the Foreign Affairs Committee to reduce development aid to India by \$25 million that he has apparently alienated a certain segment of the liberal community in Austin toward me even more than they already were. I could have let that pass and hoped it would wear off, but it has now come to my attention that he is reporting his outrage to some of my contributors. This makes the matter eminently more serious, and I hope you can find room for a reply.

I did reduce aid assistance to India from \$75 million to \$50 million as a token protest against a nation, where hundreds of thousands are starving, developing and detonating a nuclear device. I also believe them to be exporting nuclear technology (Argentina, maybe Venezuela), thereby adding to nuclear proliferation in the third world.

The money was to be used for such things as village electrification, rural roads, farm implements, spare parts, etc. I used the word "token" earlier because that is the way both governments describe the \$75 million in relation to India's desperate economic problems.

I have in every case supported food programs for India and will continue to do so on an escalated basis because the situation there is becoming very, very serious. It is important to realize that our direct food assistance is a totally and completely different program from the aid program to which my amendment was offered. I also point out that when U.S. Rep. H.R. Gross (R-Iowa) offered his amendment on the floor to totally abolish the aid program in India, I voted against it, but it is significant that he got a great many votes and had he had some vigorous assistance from the Democratic side his position would have probably prevailed.

The argument can go on and on, and no doubt will, since neither Ronnie nor I is given to graciously confessing that we may have been wrong. However, I simply wanted to make the point, and I believe I did, that nations that require vast amounts of assistance from countries with their own problems, such as the United States, in order to feed their masses, should not divert its funds for nuclear proliferation.

U.S. Rep. Charles Wilson, House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515.

'Demagoguery'

Campaigning for governor of Texas, Ramsey Muniz said the *La Raza Unida* Party had room for all Texans and that his platform was almost identical to that of

Dialogue

Ms. Farenthold. He said so evidently to offset the bad impression many liberals had formed as a result of the undemocratic, unethical, Erwin-type tactics used by national and state RUP leaders in their 1972 national convention in El Paso and in their exercise of power in Zavala County. Mr. Muniz has now shown another side of himself.

Interviewed by a correspondent of the highly respected Mexico City newspaper *Excelsior* on election night, Mr. Muniz said, "In ten years we doubled (sic) our population and in the next twenty we're going to triple it. The gringos know that's our power. We're going to win over them by numbers, and there's no way they can stop us, and for that reason they all but make us accept family planning programs. Those programs should be called *chicano* control programs... They tell us our problems with poverty result from too many children - but I say our problem isn't our children but our employers who don't pay us justly" (*Excelsior*, Nov. 6, p. 22A).

While the injustices pointed out by Mr. Muniz are real enough, his descent into demagoguery will scarcely help solve them. To mine the sense of injustice among some of the most downtrodden of Americans with racist and illiberal rhetoric is in fact self-defeating. Mr. Muniz's statements unfortunately typify an attitude growing among many Texans both in and out of government, in both the *La Raza* and Democratic parties: namely that since the Spanish-speaking were "here first (sic)" and since racism persists, the only solution is to breed and illegal themselves into the numerical majority necessary to effect a cultural victory over English-speaking Texans.


To talk of such a strategy is to divert attention from the basic political issues of finding a viable solution to racism, of unionization, of better education, of higher wages, of better public health programs, of industrial safety, and of political power built on reform coalitions. Since it is truly preposterous to think that all Texas could be taken over and remade a la PRI by such amateur dictators as José Angel Gutiérrez, the fulminations of such corrupt demagogues as he is are sure to accomplish one end only: to split the reformist English-speaking Texans from the Spanish-speaking poor and to assure continued control by such reactionaries as Briscoe and Connally. (Incidentally, the director of the statewide bilingual program has been known on

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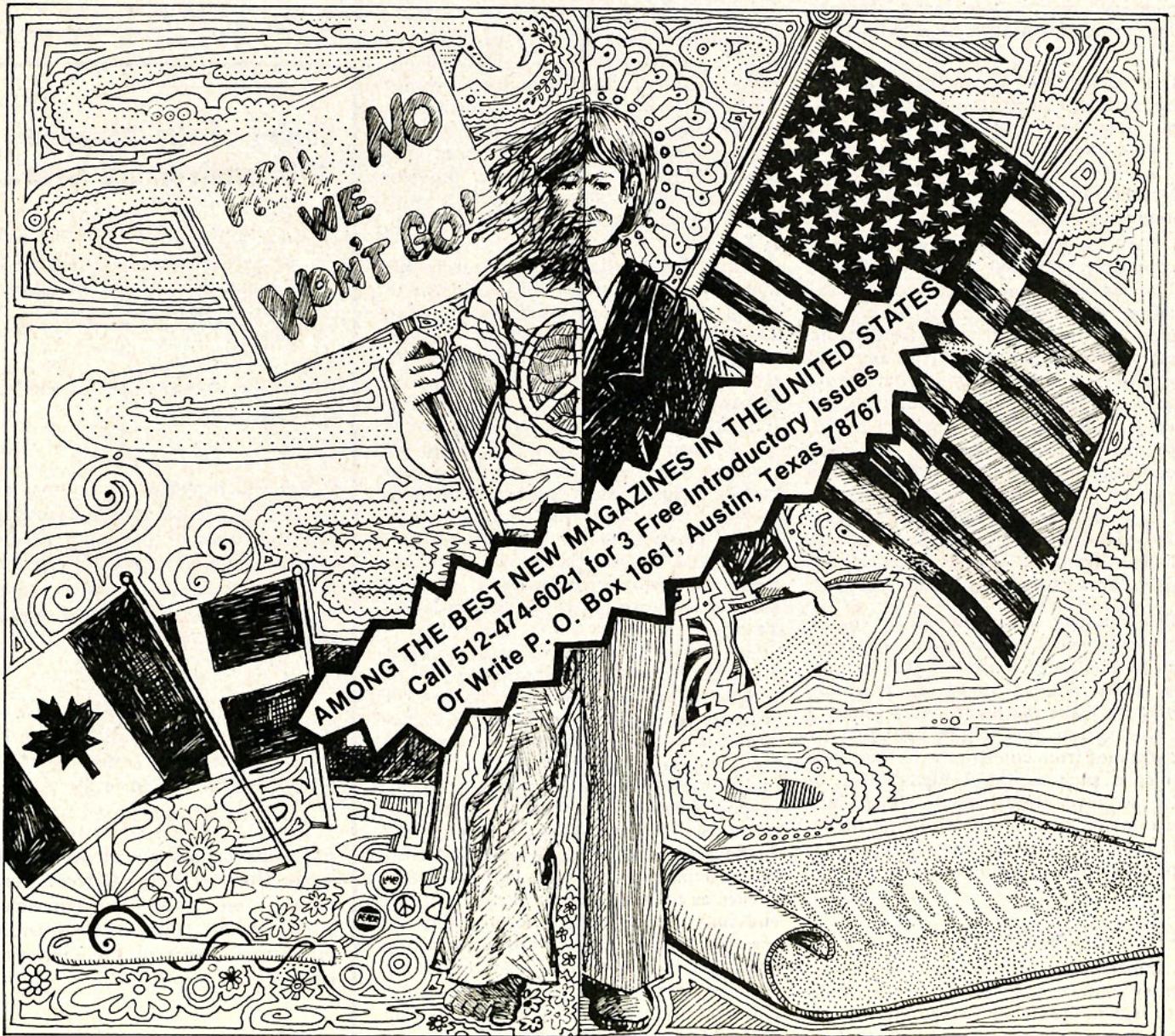
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occasion to predict that in the lifetime of the young, Texas will become "once more" an almost exclusively Spanish-speaking area with a Latin culture.)

Progressive Texans should study carefully the arguments that a color blind family planning program (i.e. one urging the Spanish-speaking to follow the lead of the non-Spanish-speaking) is a racist plot to dilute *chicano* power. Poverty is by no means caused by large families, but neither will it be rapidly eliminated without smaller families. Economic equity (i.e., fairer distribution of the goodies) is the main problem, but only conservative Marxists claim it to be the only problem in poverty cultures.

I would suggest that the entire leadership of *Raza Unida* has now been shown to be long on rhetoric, short on smarts, politically stupid and on balance a regressive force in Texas politics certainly not worthy of financial or political support from progressives, liberals, and radicals of any language or race.

Clyde James, Jr., 1908 14th St., Lubbock, Tex. 79401.

Holley great

Could you publish more articles in the style of the first half of Doug Holley's piece on the National Guard (see *Obs.*, Jan. 31)? I spend a great deal of time in Britain and I particularly miss the fun of reading British journalism, especially the Sunday papers. I'm sure The University of Texas at Austin produces fine and earnest newsmen, but their collective style is unfun; in fact, dull and jerky. Journalistic parody, sophistication, and wit would be most welcome in your paper.

What a treat it would be to read an analysis of Texas government by a Muggeridge, Milligan, or Coren (of *Punch*).

John M. Pace, 4524 Lorraine Ave., Dallas, Tex. 75205.

On Roloff's side

So much fun! Three cheers! I am on Roloff's side. You could have done so much to defend this cause, and what it stands for — separation of church and state.

As usual, I will read, with anticipation, every line of the *Observer* in the future to see who comes out on top. I'm betting the Christians have it.

Alma C. Faulkner, Texas Manufacturers Association, P.O. Box 52428, Houston, Tex. 77052.

Mrs. Randolph

Liberals my age know what the battle was like 20 years ago. Liberals like myself know what chance the movement had 20 years ago without Mrs. R. D. Randolph. And liberals like myself know the *Observer*

would have had no chance either without her.

On the *Observer's* 20th Anniversary there should have been a paean of praise to this great lady's courage and generosity, and to her devotion and steadfastness. Well, friends, it wasn't in the anniversary issue but it was in my heart — and I hope in the hearts of many others.

Shirley Jay, 10306 Cliffwood Dr., Houston, Tex. 77035.

No one at the Observer is unconscious of the debt we owe to the late Mrs. Randolph. Our efforts to commission an article on her for the 20th Anniversary issue were unsuccessful. The second copy of the issue to be printed (the first going to Ronnie Dugger) was dedicated to Mrs. Randolph and placed in the keeping of former U.S. Sen. Ralph Yarborough. — Ed.

Hooray, ugh

Your anniversary conglomeration is salubrious. It will be used time and time again to whittle away the naivete imposed for most of their lives on those who come to this fountain to taste of, ugh, journalism education. . . .

Robert L. Mann, Acting Chairman, SMU Division of Journalism, Dallas, Tex. 75275.

Brilliant

I foolishly let my subscription lapse in September, then I read your 20th Anniversary issue. Brilliant! Please renew my subscription. . . .

Daniel P. Garrigan, 5737 McCommas #220, Dallas, Tex. 75206.

Incorrigible

Kudos, bouquets, and a new rake for the muck for your 20th Anniversary issue. I started reading the *Observer* three and a half years ago and wished I had begun earlier. Being an incorrigible Texan myself, I very much enjoyed the articles about what makes even liberal Texans brag about Texas. I also enjoyed the old articles from back issues. They give me some perspective about many parts of my own history to which I have been blind. . . .

J. Peter Jordan, 3179 Cedar Brook Dr., Decatur, Ga. 30033.

Congrats

Just a note to congratulate you on your anniversary edition. We enjoyed it immensely and have framed the Lone Star Beer ad. We will celebrate the 80th anniversary of *El Independiente* next year (editorial year) and we confidently expect you will send us a stuffed armadillo of the best type for the occasion.

Our New Mexico Undevelopment Commission will once again be sponsoring legislation offering to trade Little Texas

(all of southeast New Mexico east of the Pecos and south of I-40) for El Paso and Hudspeth Counties. We need a similar movement in Texas in order to get the legislatures of the two states to agree on a proposal to Congress to redraw the boundary.

The logic is simple: Little Texas is culturally and politically part of West Texas. Nearly all of our political problem cases come from there (except for San Juan County, which is culturally part of Mormon Utah). On the other hand El Paso was originally part of New Mexico and continues to be oriented toward this state. A special act of Congress was required to

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allow El Paso to operate on New Mexico time. Culturally and politically, most Texans, especially the kind you get in your Legislature, certainly don't want to have anything to do with El Paso and all those strange brown people. We're sure you'll see the logic of this and help out.

Mark Acuff, Editor in Chief, *Independent Newspapers*, P.O. Box 429, Albuquerque, N.M. 87103.

We see the logic, but we'll make you a better offer. We keep El Paso and Hudspeth, but give you the Texas Legislature. You keep Little Texas, but give us a couple of Coors distributorships and a player to be named later. — Ed.

One request

Enclosed herewith is a check to renew my subscription to one of the finest political tabloids in the world... It is reassuring to know that folks like Larry McMurtry, Dave Hickey, and Larry L. King have traveled east to educate our countrypersons about the "hub of the universe" — Austin. I heartily concur with Hickey's analysis of the New York City "country slicker." The more caca one has on their boots, the more the Yorkers like it.

Upon closing, I must make one small request. Please send Doug Sahm to D.C. with a Texas Care package which includes Pearl beer, enchiladas, and some beautiful Texas sunshine.

Charles Cervantes, Esq., 530 Tenth St., S. E., Washington, D. C. 20003.

Two suggestions

... Y'all really do have something on the ball, even if you're sometimes smug and some of your stuff smells a little like cant. I say *sometimes*, and a *little* like cant, and even those venial sins are forgivable on account of being a liberal in Texas is too hard to do without keeping a small supply of peacock (discount for the moment whether peahens are equal) feathers to wave around for the better health of the psyche. But enough rambling; I have two points to make:

1. Your subscription renewal sales pitch appears to appeal to the conscience, the subtlest hard-sell I ever saw... The *Observer* is a voice in a wilderness where the silence sometimes is deafening; in this state, we need all the racket we can get. In other words, your effort deserves support. (With this in mind, maybe you should buy

an hour a week on XEG and find somebody who can holler pretty good.)

2. You folks is really a little too urban. If the rednecks boil over in Austin, Dallas, Houston, or San Antonio, or if the textile workers strike in El Paso, you're sure to get it, or at least hear of it and consider it. Now notice San Angelo, the point of origin of this letter, is in the fabled 21st Congressional District, often referred to by you as a sprawling, weird, desolate area that wouldn't elect anything but a neo-Nazi to any office. By and large, that's true, but there is ferment going on, especially in the large population centers. A story you had one time described a liberal effort in a small town as a matter of "getting on the phone to call the other liberal in your county and..." etc. But in some of these places, depending on the social atmosphere and size, there may be dozens or hundreds of such people — hard for them to get anything going, to be sure, and most of them are very young — but now and then something happens. And through most of West Texas, *anglos* and *chicanos*, and some of the more outgoing blacks, are in fairly close ideological and social rapport, so a purely ethnic approach would be a false perspective. What I mean is, when I have a headache, I'm prone to call the *Observer* "The Austin Observer." You need stringers.

Don Bolding, 2528 W. Twohig, San Angelo, Tex. 76901.

Even in Pa.

... The *TO* has got to be one of the best little magazines around and you all really outdid yourselves on the 20th Anniversary issue! Congratulations on page after page of delicious and savory reading...

The *TO* is a ray of hope in what seems to be an ever-darkening world. I've passed it around here, too, and even some native Pennsylvanians like it, which just goes to show that there are good people everywhere.

Lowell A. Anderson, 704 S. Brandywine St., West Chester, Pa. 19380.

In Colchester, too

It takes a long time for the *Observer* to reach me in England, and longer for me to find the time to read it, but when I do I am always impressed and interested anew. As a professional Americanist on this side of the water who doesn't get to your side nearly as often as he would like, I find the *Observer* indispensable for keeping me in

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touch with what's going on in the real America (i.e., the America that gets filtered out by more conventional reporting) and I only wish there were more journals like it — say, one for every state. I have just been going through the October and December issues, and they have pleased me so much that I felt I owed you a bouquet. Here it is...

Hugh Brogan, Dept. of History, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, England.

What did he do?

The letter from Mr. Robert Floyd of TMTA in your Jan. 31 issue caused me to go back and read Bill Helmer's original story in the Jan. 17 issue. For that I am grateful to Mr. Floyd. Otherwise I would have missed a great story which was hilarious while at the same time being tragic in its implications.

I'm sure you will be inundated by letters from millions of readers sharing similar experiences. so I'll forego that pleasure.

Back to Mr. Floyd: I'm really not too interested in the "image" of the truck industry — my real concern is what did he do about the two truckers in Helmer's original story? I'm assuming he got a copy of the letter complete with license numbers, ICC registration, etc. If not, I hope that Mr. Helmer will send him one at once, and then I'd still like to know what happens, if anything.

Bob Cooper, Box 203, SMU, Dallas, Tex. 75275.