

*A Journal of Free Voices*

*A Window to the South*

*Oct. 17, 1975*

50¢

## Progressive power in Austin

*Austin*

At first glance, the new Austin city council looks like an affirmative action program gone berserk. There's a 30-year-old Jewish mayor, a black man, a brown man, a blind white male millionaire, and three women. The women are (1) a Catholic doctor of psychology, (2) a wealthy Republican, and (3) a German Quaker immigrant who ran on a "Think Trees" platform.

*(Continued on Page 3)*



Austin Mayor Jeff Friedman

Mike Smith

# The coming fortnight

By Suzanne Shelton

## OCTOBER GRAB BAG

**PLAINVIEW DOIN'S** - Biggest thing to hit Plainview: Rotary Club's first annual Running Water Draw Arts and Crafts Festival, with homecooked eats, paintings, ceramics, crafts, square dancing, and entertainment by the Spirit of America; Oct. 17-19, Hale County Agricultural Center, Plainview.

**YOU NAME IT** - And it might be in UT Art Galleries' multifaceted exhibitions: Arshile Gorky's drawings and paintings, and works by Hugo Weber, Swiss-born sculptor, painter, poet, and lithographer, Oct. 12-Nov. 23, Huntington Gallery; also exhibit of oils, gouaches, watercolors, and pencil drawings by 19th century American master of genre, Francis William Edmonds, Oct. 19-Nov. 16, and Morton May photographs, Oct. 19-Nov. 23, Michener Galleries; University of Texas, Austin.

**INDIAN ART** - Works by Indian artists of the Northwest coast; Oct. 23-Jan. 25, Rice Museum, Rice University, Houston.

**ART UNDER GLASS** - "Larry Bell: Recent Works" includes monumental plate glass environment, and "sculpture-environment" of two concentric semicircular walls, glass cubes, and other outre objects; through Nov. 9, Fort Worth Art Museum, Fort Worth.

**LATIN AMERICAN ART** - "Plural" is a Mexican magazine devoted to art and also name of this exhibition of 71 paintings and sculptures, with additional separate one-man shows of metal sculptures by Colombian artist Edgar Negret and Alejandro Otero of Venezuela exhibited in conjunction with UT fine arts festival of Latin American art; through Nov. 2, Michener Gallery, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas, Austin.

**GHOSTLY ICONS** - Concurrent with Alley Theatre's production of Arthur Kopit's "Indians," Robert Riegel exhibits a score of large paintings depicting famous Indians and titled "Indians: American Icons, Ghosts of the Past"; through Nov. 23, Alley Theatre, Houston.

**THE PICTURE SHOW** - One of meatiest film series around. Rice's weekenders coming up include: Robert Altman's "Images," Oct. 17; Spanish award-winner, "The Hunt," Oct. 18; Godard's "La Chinoise," Oct. 19; Roz Russell in "His Girl Friday," Oct. 24; Olmi's Italian classic, "The Fiances," Oct. 25; the disquieting "Therese Desqueyroux" about a woman locked in her room for keeps, Oct. 26; and an anteater's

nightmare, "Them!" about huge mutant ants spawned by atomic radiation, Oct. 31; Media Center, Rice University, Houston.

**RAVE FOR MY FAVE** - Alltime super American artist Helen Frankenthaler in retrospective; through Nov. 23, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

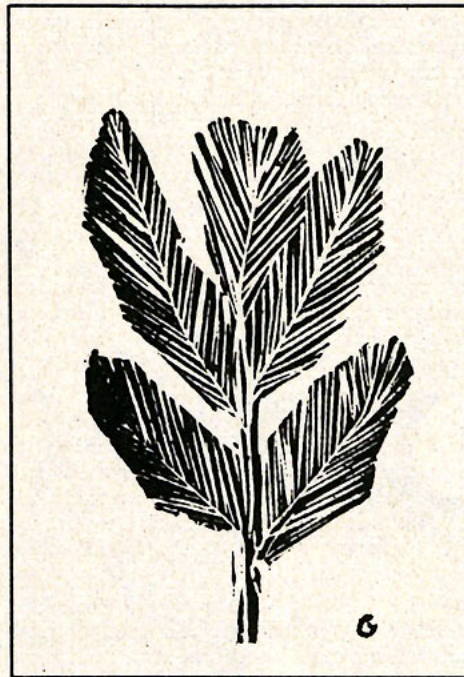
## OCTOBER 17

**HORNE SINGS HANDEL** - Mighty Marilyn Horne sings the "trouser" role of Rinaldo in Handel's opera of same name, a medieval drama set in a fantasy world, making its American professional premiere in Houston Grand Opera production; also Oct. 19, 21, 24, Jones Hall, Houston.

**THESIS PLAY** - Denise Schulz directs Archibald MacLeish's "J.B." to qualify for her master's degree and incidentally provide Austinites with welcome glimpse of a good play; through Oct. 18, 8 p.m., Drama Theatre Room, University of Texas, Austin.

**CHOREOGRAPHY WORKSHOP** - Fernando Schaffenburg and Fort Worth Ballet Association present young Texas choreographers' workshop for a learn-how and see-how; through Oct. 19, Scott Theatre, Fort Worth.

**STRAUSS OPERA** - Walter Ducloux conducts UT Opera Theatre and UT Symphony Orchestra in "Ariadne on Naxos," Richard Strauss' opera; also Oct. 20, 22, 24, 8 p.m., Utopia Theatre, Austin.



## OCTOBER 18

**CHAMBER VOCALISTS** - Western Wind chamber vocal ensemble performs two programs: medieval, Renaissance and American sacred music, Oct. 18; Latin American music including Charles Morrow's "The Birth of the War God," Oct. 19; Music Bldg. Recital Hall, University of Texas, Austin.

**KIDDY SHOWS** - Continuing Texas Theatre's Saturday children's matinees, The Gas Works, band of strolling players, tells story of "Finnerty

Flynn and the Singing City" by Clark Gesner; 2 p.m., New Texas Theatre, Lamar at Hamilton, Houston.

**ANOTHER ART FEST** - But not just any art festival, THE Westheimer Art Festival, with all kinds of goodies by Montrose-type longhairs; through Oct. 19, along Westheimer St., Houston.

**WINTER COMES EARLY** - Concert by Edgar Winter Group; Coliseum, Houston.

## OCTOBER 19

**BLACK MUSIC** - "Put Your Hands Together" is a program on black music and its relationship to religion, with speakers and musical performances by Texans; 7:30 p.m., Texas Culture Room, Methodist Student Center, Austin.

**BALLET RESCHEDULES** - Austin Ballet Theatre moves its October concert to this date, keeping earlier announced program; 7:30 p.m., Armadillo World Headquarters, Austin.

**PRISON RODEO** - Inmates' night out, with Texas Prison Rodeo featuring competitions and entertainment by Johnny Rodriguez; Huntsville.

## OCTOBER 20

**TEMPTING 'TEMPEST'** - Students and teachers are admitted free to "The Tempest"; daily through Oct. 24, 10 a.m., Casa Manana Theatre, Fort Worth.

**SYMPHONY WITH SOUL** - Texas' orchestra with a social conscience, Corpus Christi Symphony not only sells tickets for two bucks, prints its programs bilingually, and plays lots of freebies but performs pretty zippy concerts as well: Mozart, Debussy and Dvorak selections conducted by Cornelius Eberhardt; 8:15 p.m., Del Mar Auditorium, Corpus Christi.

## OCTOBER 21

**FOURNIER ON CELLO** - Pierre Fournier plays sonatas by Locatelli, Beethoven, Bach and Debussy, plus Tchaikovsky's "Variations on a Rococo Theme," accompanied by pianist John Perry; 8 p.m., Hogg Auditorium, University of Texas, Austin.

## OCTOBER 22

**BITS OF THE BARD** - Selected readings from "The Hollow Crown" and "Pleasure and Repentance" by Royal Shakespeare Company in Cultural Entertainment Committee event; 6 and 9:30 p.m., Hogg Auditorium, University of Texas, Austin; also 8:30 p.m. Oct. 25, Music Hall, Houston.

**SHAWN TO SING** - Shawn Phillips rolls into town with John Oates and Daryl Hall in tow; 8 p.m., Music Hall, Houston.

**GUITAR MAN** - Julian Bream's the best on classical guitar; 8:30 p.m., Jones Hall, Houston.

## OCTOBER 23

**WINNING THE WEST** - Wild West show plus vaudeville plus fun-house describes Arthur Kopit's saga of how the West was won, "Indians," starring Alley Theatre cast with Tony Russel as Chief Sitting Bull attempting to maintain his people's cultural identity, Jim Nolan as the bigoted Senator Logan and Dale Helward as Buffalo Bill; through Nov. 23, Alley Theatre, Houston.

**FREEBIE CONCERT** - Music of Shostako-  
(Continued on Page 24)

# Austin...

(Continued from Page 2)

Texas has never before seen a city council like this. Ten years ago, the middle-aged male WASP bastion of the Austin council had been stormed by only one woman, Emma Long, a sprightly independent, on whose solitary shoulders rested the responsibility for representing all of Austin's others—the students, the minorities, and what Sen. Grady Hazlewood called “the queer-minded social misfits.” The Councilmen represented the merchant class, while the most powerful economic lobby at city hall was the real estate industry. Recent Austin mayors have included a restaurateur, a laundry owner, a furniture store proprietor, and a Lincoln-Mercury dealer. The remodeled 1975 council contains nary a merchant, although Lowell Lebermann, the millionaire, and Betty Himmelblau, the Republican, can be counted on to put in a few good words for fiscal responsibility and the importance of industry in Austin.

**T**HE STURDY burghers on the affluent side of town are predicting disaster. The Rev. Harold G. O’Chester of the Allandale Baptist Church (speaking, he emphasizes, as an individual and not as a representative of his religious establishment) complains, “The people in our part of town, the taxpayers, don’t feel that they have hardly any representation on the council. I’m not saying that taxpayers are the only ones who should be represented. But these people who are paying the bills need the voice. The people in the north end of town feel that this council is basically out to get them and everything that has happened so far seems to bear that out,” O’Chester says. “There isn’t a day that goes by that I don’t pray for the city council. It’s a difficult position. I am appalled to see some people on the city council who don’t even have regular jobs, and who are in the position to spend millions and millions in tax dollars.”

Dr. Emma Lou Linn, the psychologist on the council, has a radically different interpretation of what’s happened to Austin politics. “It all goes back to voter rights,” she says. “Allowing everybody to vote was the biggest fear of those who used to be in office. They were afraid that if they let the people vote the people would do them in—and that’s exactly what happened.” Dr. Linn thinks that implementation of the new federal Voting Rights Act will guarantee that the merchants will never again control Austin politics.

The first chink was hammered into the old guard’s armor in 1971 when university students and the black and brown folks in East Austin formed a coalition and elected three councilmen. They chose Jeffrey Friedman, then 26 and just a year out of UT law school; Berl Handcox, a manage-



Council members Hoffman & Trevino

Mike Smith

ment type from Texas Instruments, the first black man ever elected to the Austin council; and Dick Nichols, a real estate man who professed liberal leanings (his student constituency later decided he wasn’t sufficiently liberal).

Electing three council members was not exactly a revolution, but it was enough to alarm the Texas Legislature. Later that year, legislators passed a bill requiring college students who receive at least half of their income from home to vote where their parents reside. But a federal court ruled the law unconstitutional about the same time as the 18-year-old vote came into effect, and the Austin student vote grew to impressive proportions.

In 1973 the students again showed their clout by reelecting Friedman and Handcox and by replacing Nichols with Bob Binder, a former UT student body president and anti-war activist (Binder has since lost some of his revolutionary zeal and moved to California to become a personal injury lawyer). This year the student-minority coalition, bolstered by like-minded people in state government, neighborhood preservation groups, teaching, the arts, the unions, and other nooks and crannies of progressivism, took five of the seven council seats, electing Friedman, the youngest mayor in the city’s history. The students cast 15,000 of the city’s 72,600 total votes.

It is generally conceded that students put the progressives over the top, and that’s some accomplishment in the sober Seventies. A front page article on Austin politics in a recent *Wall Street Journal* noted, “. . . in most cities, young voters have remained apathetic, fragmented, and without political clout, even after the

voting age was lowered to 18 in 1972. While students have helped elect activist candidates to municipal offices in Madison, Wis., and Berkeley, Calif., these have proved the exception rather than the rule.”

Dean Rindy, a new member of the City Planning Commission, thinks students got activated in Austin because they were the first group of middle-class white voters to be seriously affected by Austin’s transportation and housing problems. “Students have always been considered a leftwing influence, but that’s not because of ideology,” Rindy explained. “It’s because they are inner city residents with needs for certain kinds of city services.” They, as much as the citizens of East Austin, need decent mass transit and comfortable, cheap housing.

Student block captains canvassed 32 of the city’s 77 precincts, the precincts with a high proportion of UT residents. They made three separate visits before the election, first to urge people to register, second to promote the progressive slate, and third to remind residents to vote. Meanwhile in East Austin, various minority organizations were working equally hard. BVAP, the Black Voters Against Paternalism, endorsed seven candidates and campaigned for them on the basis of issues rather than personalities. “We had eight to twelve people who worked every night, sometimes all night,” said Linda McGowan, a new black planning commissioner. “We delivered East Austin for Friedman. He pulled all the black boxes by 70 to 80 percent, despite the fact that the average black voter didn’t know that much about him.”

**I**T'S A strange sensation for Austin libs. People who were never before able to pull together a believable campaign for city weicher are feeling the novel responsibility of electing a mayor and council majority as well as a state senator, all four Austin state representatives, and a humanist sheriff. There's a new sense of possibility stirring. "It's like the city is a laboratory and we're all working on changing the structure of government," said Rindy.

The new council feels that it has a mandate for change in city policy. What remains to be seen, of course, is whether the changes will be superficial or substantial. One of the major city issues is "controlled growth," as opposed to "unlimited growth." In the past, city policy has been in the hands of businessmen with a direct economic interest in the growth of the city. Past city councils discouraged heavy industry here, but in the Sixties they started courting light industry. The reasoning was that everyone in the city would benefit from the new jobs and new money brought in by industry. Today, Tracor, Texas Instruments, John Roberts, State Farm Insurance, and Motorola all have big facilities here and the Internal Revenue Service has built a major regional office.

The University of Texas regents have yet to put any enrollment limitation on the Austin campus and state government is in an expansionary period, all of which means that Austin is bursting at the seams. According to the US Bureau of the Census, from 1970 to 1973 Austin grew faster than any city in the United States except Tucson, Ariz. If it continues to grow at the current 4.5 percent yearly rate, Austin's 300,000 population will double in 15

years. That no longer seems like an attractive future to most Austin residents.

Fine Victorian mansions have been razed to make way for drive-in banks and parking lots. Ticky-tacky apartments are popping up in the midst of old residential neighborhoods. Austin is beginning to have a skyline, complete with heat-reflecting glass monstrosities. A number of neighborhood associations have been formed in self-defense. They are opposing such things as the MoPac expressway, which somehow got changed in the planning stage from an inner-city boulevard to an inner-city limited-access freeway designed to spill up to 60,000 cars a day onto feeder roads in quiet residential neighborhoods. Association members are fighting the destruction of old buildings, construction along the city's creeks, and other forms of commercial rapine and pillage. The neighborhood groups are becoming an important political factor in the city and new leaders are springing up within them.

The first major policy statement in opposition to Austin's willy-nilly growth came last year from an ambitious goals program called Austin Tomorrow. This was an attempt to get citizens to write a master plan for future development of the city. Approximately 3,000 residents participated (considerably less than the city planners had hoped for, but still an impressive number to get involved in such a project). The resulting goals statement was primarily concerned with the quality of life in Austin. A majority of participants reached the conclusion that the city's growth could not be stopped but that it could be intelligently controlled. Their plan calls for good public transportation and more routes for pedestrians and bicyclists; lots more open space, not just parks

with playground equipment, but greenbelts and wilderness areas as well; more land use controls in order to improve the quality of new developments both inside and outside city limits; prohibition of development in environmentally sensitive areas; better building codes and preservation and improvement of established neighborhoods; improved planning and funding for health and social services; better breaks for the poor and middle class in utility rates and property taxes; stronger pollution controls; upgrading employment and eliminating discrimination.

When the Austin Tomorrow goals were announced last year, the old guard insisted that the program did not really represent the beliefs of the Austin majority but rather those of an active, vocal minority. A couple months ago, however, the conservative *Austin Business Review* released the results of a survey designed to plumb the depths of anti-development sentiment in Austin. Forty-nine percent of those polled said they "usually disagree" with the "political opinions of Austin developers" while only 16 percent "usually agree." Fifty-three percent said they "usually agree" with "environmental groups" as compared to 21 percent who "sometimes agree" and 17 percent who are "usually opposed" to environmentalists. The editor of the *Review* concluded that the evidence of citizen concern with traditional developers' policies is "too overwhelming" for the business community to ignore.

**T**HE NEW council has been in office only three months, but it's already taken some big steps to change city priorities. The council's most important action has been to do away with utility refund

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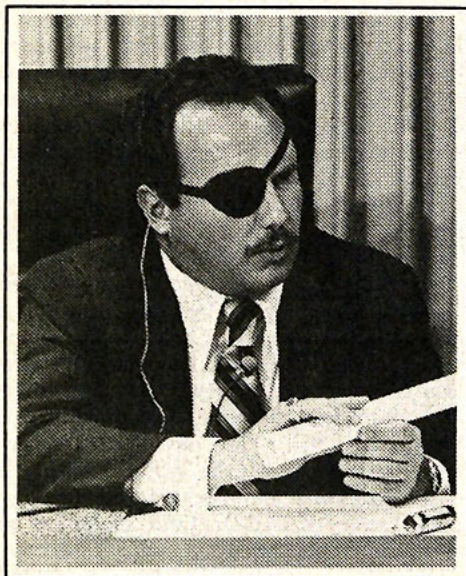
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contracts, the curious practice whereby the city has paid more than \$20 million over the last two decades for developers to install water and sewer lines wherever the developers choose to build new subdivisions. Past councils have simply rubber stamped developers' choices of building sites. But Friedman and the council majority now want to exercise some discretion over where new growth should be encouraged and they don't see any need for the city to subsidize middle- and upper-class housing projects. There was no problem getting a majority to agree to end the refund contracts. The crunch came on whether to go ahead and pay for the 29 projects currently in the works. The city legal department opined that Austin has no binding agreement with the developers of the 29 projects, and Dr. Linn moved not to honor the contracts, but a majority of the council decided that the city has a "moral obligation" to pay for them. Leftwing critics of the council say this vote is an illustration of how the council is moving toward the center after only a short time in office.

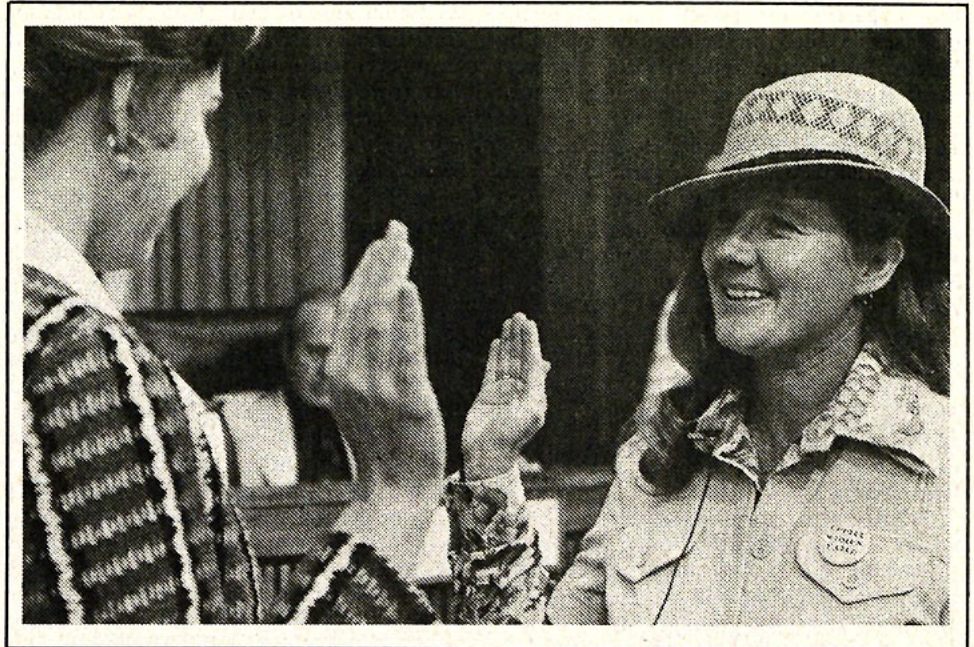
On another front, the council cut way back on the city funding for Chamber of Commerce tourist projects. The state requires that a certain portion of the hotel-motel tax go to developing tourism. But, instead of giving it all to the C of C, as the city has done in the past, the council decided to keep about half of the tax money and spend it on projects like the new city arena and improving Waller Creek,



Mike Smith

**Council member Lebermann**

projects that both tourists and citizens can enjoy. Needless to say, the decision has rankled the Chamber of Commerce. Dr. Linn insists the council's action was not anti-Chamber but rather "anti-special interest. There was no reason why we should single out the Anglo C of C for funding while there's also a Mexican-American Chamber of Commerce and other civic groups. Besides," Linn says, "Austin is



State Rep. Sarah Weddington swears in Dr. Linn (in hat)

Kit Brooking

the state capitol and we're going to have tourism here no matter what."

Wray Weddell, the industry-boosting editor of *The Austin Citizen*, chalked up the council's action on the C of C to "political spite." Weddell's front-page column in the twice-weekly *Citizen* is filled with stirring condemnations of the ruinous policies of the "hyperliberal" council. His invective rose to new heights when the council members decided to raise their salaries from \$95 a week to \$12,000 a year. The action made the Austin council the highest paid municipal governing body in Texas, according to the *Citizen*.

"Council pay hiked; taxes will increase," blared the *American-Statesman*. The headline left the impression that the city's \$49,000 a year increase for council salaries (out of a total budget increase over last year of \$49.7 million) was solely responsible for an eight-cent per \$100 valuation increase in property taxes.

All five of the council majority members campaigned on a promise that they would vote themselves a \$1,000 a month salary because they wanted to work full-time for the council. (Of course, a full-time council, like a full-time Legislature, could result in more government spending, as many opponents to the Texas Constitution fear.) Lebermann, who voted for the salary increase, commented that a full-time salary changes council members from public servants to city employees. In the past, most council people have been sufficiently wealthy to "donate" their time to the city. None of the progressive members of the council is independently wealthy, however, and none could afford to serve for \$95 a week without serious injury to the family budget.

The council has also instituted a strong new equal employment ordinance concerning hiring, firing, and promotion. During

recent budget hearings, they asked each city department and social agency requesting funds to provide information on the total number of women and minorities in the operation and the total number in management positions. In addition to that, when two equally qualified companies are competing to do work for the city, the council has been investigating the companies' hiring records to determine who gets the contract.

City boards and commissions that used to be filled with white men in business suits are now open to all manner of riffraff. The Board of Equalization, which mediates disputes between citizens and the city Tax Department, last year was composed of three white men — a retired banker, a retired contractor, and a retired federal employee. This year there's a black real estate man, a young female lawyer, and a Mexican-American accountant.

There are new priorities in the city budget which reflect the goals of the Austin Tomorrow program and the fact that East Austin has more representation on the council. Social services are in and concrete is out. There's new money to purchase a portion of endangered Barton Creek and funds for neighborhood health clinics and drug and rape counseling programs.

**T**HE POLICE department is in for some changes. As a councilman, Friedman carried on a one-man campaign to get Police Chief Bob Miles to resign. Friedman charged that the chief was insensitive to the needs of the black and brown community. Shortly after Friedman became mayor, Miles quietly announced his retirement. A new chief has yet to be named.

There has also been a major change in

the department's policy on marijuana offenses. Under an agreement made by Mayor Butler, the federal Drug Enforcement Agency had been operating a special task force in Austin. Four DEA men and 26 local narcotics officers (twice as many as any other division of the force) had been busy, busy, busy making arrests for marijuana possession and chalking up impressive statistics in the fight against crime. Simple possession of four ounces or less is now a Class C misdemeanor, but Austin police were hauling in dope smokers by the carload and stacking them up like cordwood in the overcrowded jail. *The Austin Sun* estimated that if the busts continued at the same clip for 12 months, one out of every 100 Austin residents would have been arrested by Christmas.

Friedman mulled the problem for a few weeks, dodging reporters' questions on the subject (he did condescend to call the DEA people "turkeys" at one press conference), and then, smoothly enough, a DEA official announced that the task force would be leaving town immediately, rather than staying on for another year as originally planned. The same day, Friedman and the retiring police chief proclaimed that henceforth in Austin simple marijuana possession would be a ticketed offense.

the Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, are holding an election to see which union will be allowed to collect dues from willing city workers. The controversy is over the fact that the ballot will have only two choices—CWA or AFSCME. Some city employees also want the ballot to have a no-union option, just to make it perfectly clear that certain employees have no intention of affiliating with a union. The whole affair has become very confusing. It's probably the biggest dust-up over an insubstantial issue since the last city council changed Nineteenth Street to Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard (merchants on the west side of town are challenging the name change in court on the basis that it hurts their businesses.)

Oh yes, the council also extended drinking hours from midnight until 2 a.m. The fear of more late night carousing in this honky-tonk town moved the Reverend O'Chester and some of his friends to initiate a referendum on the drinking question. It was a real squeaker, pitting beer-loving UT students against the Baptists of Northwest Austin. The students won by a mere 101 vote margin out of 40,000 votes cast.

(The late-hour question had been a very difficult issue for the previous council,

to flatten the utility rates of the city-owned electric company. Past councils sold electricity like popcorn, offering reduced rates to bulk consumers. The bulk rates are probably on their way out, but there are some people on the left who don't think that's enough. Jeff Jones, one of Emma Lou Linn's appointees to the city Charter Revision Commission, points out that profits from electric bills are the city's main revenue base. "That's the most regressive way the city could raise taxes," Jones said. As an alternative, Jones suggested that the city reduce its profit on electricity and raise money instead by putting a transfer tax on land or stocks and bonds.

Other issues the council is thinking about include a moratorium on development on Lake Austin; making the MoPac expressway back into a boulevard and generally deemphasizing street expansion and highway construction; drawing up financial disclosure and ethics ordinances; and channeling more money into black and *chicano* neighborhoods.

All the new members are working hard. Rindy says the council has spent more time studying city issues than any other council he's ever observed. But he and Linda McGowan and most of the other council-watchers the *Observer* interviewed confirm that the new members, particularly Margaret Hoffman ("Think Trees"), Jimmy Snell (the black insurance man), and John Trevino need some seasoning before they are fully competent to deal with difficult budget and economic issues.

Emma Lou Linn has surfaced as the strongest voice on the left, the council member least likely to cave in under pressure. There is speculation that Linn has reconciled herself to being a one-term council person. She told the *Observer* that she chooses not to think about her political future. "That way I can vote right. I didn't run for the council in order to run again," she explained. "I ran for the council to change things."

As recently as two years ago Lowell Lebermann was generally considered to be Mayor Butler's political heir. He chose not to challenge Friedman, however, and now that he's in the minority he seems to have lost interest in the council. Himmelblau is more energetic. The day the *Observer* visited the mayor, she popped into his office to confer about something. The day the *Observer* visited Dr. Linn, she put in an appearance there too.

It is as yet unclear whether the council majority will be able to work consistently as a team. They were not elected as a slate. They simply received support from the same areas. And they are an independent, contrary lot. Of the five, only Friedman has any previous council experience. He'll have quite a time cajoling them into a working majority. Still, for a bunch of neophytes, they've done quite a bit already. Nothing earthshaking, but enough to start Wray Weddell beating the drums for a recall effort. Yes, the next two years in Austin should be some chivaree. K.N.



Council members Snell & Himmelblau

Mike Smith

Surprisingly enough, there has not been much criticism of Friedman's lenient marijuana policy. What *does* have the right-wingers up in arms is the council's decision to let city employees affiliate with a union. Texas, of course, prohibits the closed shop and city employees are not allowed to strike or bargain collectively; so joining a union is not such a big deal. (It's the *thought* that counts.) Two unions, the Communications Workers of America and

which teeter-tottered pro and con and finally came down against later drinking hours. Last year Mayor Butler voted to close down the bars at midnight, but since then he has been awarded the Coors franchise for the Austin area, leading many people to speculate that Butler probably has changed his tune on this particular issue. Indeed, his wife donated \$500 to the 2 a.m. proponents.)

Friedman and a number of the other council members campaigned on a promise

# Friedman—the center moved left

Austin

Depending on whom you're talking to, Jeff Friedman, Austin's new mayor, is (A) an aging "dirty nothin'" (Frank Erwin's vintage appellation for campus protestors), (B) a mustachioed flunky of the banking class, or (C) the new progressive center of Austin politics. The mere fact that Friedman has successfully negotiated three city council elections speaks for the third interpretation. Being in the center of Austin's new progressive arena is not the most comfortable political position in the world. From all directions, from *The Austin Citizen* on the right and *The Rag* on the left, Friedman's performance is scrutinized and found lacking. His honor somewhat resembles a young lion who's been thrown to the Christians.

Friedman, 30, is a big, powerful man, until recently the star pitcher on the Aardvarks city softball team. He sports a dark, bushy moustache, and when he puts on his black cowboy hat he looks more like a Mexican desperado than a mayor. A few weeks ago he introduced Kinky Friedman (no relation) and the Texas Jewboys on the stage of Armadillo World Headquarters. In his hat, floral cowboy shirt, and boots, he looked so much like a typical Armadillo emcee that he had to make about five references to the city council before most of the audience grokked that this dude was indeed the mayor.

Linda McGowan, a new member of the Planning Commission, describes Friedman as "ambitious, stubborn, sharp, and really cocky." Back in grade school, Friedman was probably the fat kid with the big mouth who opened it just once too often. He has a swift and ready, if not too sharply honed wit and a quick temper to go along with it. He and former Mayor Roy Butler carried on a year-long battle of the press conferences that did neither of them any good. There's still some sniping between the two. In a recent interview in *The Austin Sun*, Butler commented, "I noticed Mr. Friedman has seen fit to say a thing or two that wasn't particularly complimentary about my administration. . . . To me it shows a lack of class, but that's still his privilege."

It's probably very hard for Butler, a suave businessman who is close to John Connally both personally and philosophically, to accept the fact that Austin's electorate could turn in two short years from Butler's urbane conservatism to Friedman's youthful pragmatism. (Butler chose not to run again.)

**F**RIEDMAN is certainly not your typical Texas mayor. He's young, a Jew, and an outlander as well. He was born

in Forest Hills, N.Y., the son of a retail clothing merchant. Friedman didn't get to Texas until 1967, when he enrolled at the UT law school. He didn't go in for the Connally-Butler vein of campus politics (student body offices, Curtain Club, service organizations, etc.). Instead he got involved in community-related projects. He ran a criminal law program in which law students accompanied uniformed policemen on their nightly cruises (the mayor proudly maintains that he's carried the cop vote ever since). He got to know something about the students' gripes when he created the first student legal aid program at the University of Texas.

The idea of becoming a politician — in Austin — dawned on Friedman only slowly. "I've always been interested in the way people's lives are affected by politics," he explained. "It wasn't until I started working with the anti-war movement that I became interested in politics as a politician." He served as a marshal at various demonstrations. Then, in 1970, the city council denied students a parade permit after Cambodia and the Kent State killings. The march was scheduled anyway. City police and Department of Public Safety riot squads geared up in tear gas masks and formed a physical barricade between town and gown. "That got me interested in running for city council," Friedman said. He filed a quickie federal lawsuit to force the city to grant a parade permit and a judge ruled in the demonstrators' favor just minutes before 20,000 Austinites, by no means all of them students, were to launch a march on downtown sidewalks. It turned out to be the biggest, gentlest anti-war demonstration in Austin's history. The next morning the front page of the *Austin American-Statesman* carried a photo of a happy marcher shaking hands with an amiable policeman in riot gear. It was one of the earliest victories for Austin's new politics.

"I had intended to go into practice on the West Coast or New York," Friedman explained. "I had some offers from good law firms. I was a big city kid and I thought that would be a pretty good thing, but I was plagued by the belief that Austin was a super place to live; so I opened up an office here." He represented a few street vendors before the city council, but most of his early legal work was criminal, a whole lot of drug cases.

When he first announced for the council in 1971, Friedman remembers, "There was some reaction to my being a newcomer — a student, a non-taxpayer, hippie, young. . . . There was some undercurrent of anti-Semitism." He was lucky to have Wick Fowler for an opponent, a right-wing

humorist whose primary vocation was packaging and touting his own special Two-Alarm chili seasoning. The chili king talked incessantly about marijuana, welfare malingerers, and obscenities in the local underground paper. Friedman ignored him and ran a moderate campaign, talking about upgrading the police department, finding new approaches to community affairs, and doing away with utility refund contracts for developers. He beat Fowler in a runoff by about 5,000 votes.

In 1973, when Friedman ran for a second term on the council, Bob Gray, his conservative opponent, tried to brand him as "the voice of the radical element in Austin." "These people," Gray advertised, "move in and out of town causing unrest and discord and living off the city at the same time. They are for nude bathing, legalized drugs, and abolishing the Texas Rangers." The radical tag didn't stick, and Gray, who happened to be Mayor Butler's friend and nextdoor neighbor, went down in flames.

This year Friedman beat yet another weak conservative candidate. With three elections under his belt, he has moved well beyond his original student constituency, although some student precincts still give him upwards to 95 percent of their vote. Friedman has considerable support among the middle class. His ability to woo moderates and even some conservatives assures his future as a successful pol, but predictably enough, it creates distrust among his left-wing supporters.

No sooner had Friedman been elected than some of his original allies began to grouse. *The Rag*, Austin's underground paper, started calling him a sell-out in 1971 and it hasn't let up to this day. *The Daily Texan*, the UT paper, took out after Friedman in 1973 when he sat on his hands for a time and then decided to support a bond proposal to finance a nuclear power plant. The proponents of "going nuclear" won the bond referendum by a narrow squeak and it will be some time before anti-growth people and environmentalists get over that one. The *Texan* at the time condemned Friedman for "desperately attempting to secure moderate support" for his '75 campaign.

**M**OST EVERYONE describes Friedman as ambitious. He is generally assumed to aspire to Rep. Jake Pickle's congressional seat. And there are many Friedman watchers who say condescendingly that although his basic instincts are liberal, he'll do whatever it takes to get

elected. Dean Rindy, a new member of the Planning Commission, counters that it's ridiculous to criticize Friedman "for being what he is — a practicing politician. The left cannibalizes its own," Rindy says. "Friedman has never campaigned as a radical. He isn't a radical. He's the new center." Most of the mayor's liberal and radical supporters seem to accept Rindy's conclusion, although many of them continue to pressure him to move to the left.

Ed Wendler, the more liberal of the locally-famous Wendler brothers (Ken is Travis County Democratic chairman), says he has been disappointed by Friedman's performance as mayor. "I'll support him next time," Wendler says, "but I'll be fussin' every step of the way. I don't want to just walk off on him. I think that's probably the consensus of the people I've worked with. And Friedman is clever enough probably to know he's got us in this spot."

Mike Cox, a veteran city hall reporter for the Austin daily, faults Friedman for "a certain amount of arrogance — especially

to the press. I voted for Friedman and most of the news people I know did," Cox says. "But ask him a serious question and he comes back with a joke. At least Butler could be counted on to answer a question or say 'no comment.' And Butler answered phone calls promptly."

Jeff Nightbyrd, editor of *The Austin Sun*, thinks that Friedman seriously compromised himself in raising money to pay his campaign debts. The race for mayor cost Friedman \$63,000, much of it in borrowed money. Since the election, he has accepted contributions to diminish that debt from builders and general contractors, the traditional council money men. "The reality of electoral politics is that the guy has to deal with his campaign debts," Nightbyrd said. "Friedman has to become more moderate on economic issues." On other fronts, however, Nightbyrd has high hopes for the new mayor: "I think that on the cultural issues which don't threaten the banking class, he can be quite progressive. That means a reasonable stand on marijuana, improving things like jail conditions, allowing skinny dipping, and tolerance and

encouragement of black, *chicano*, and longhair cultural activities."

It seems a cinch that Friedman won't be a kamikaze liberal. In his office in city hall, there's a framed quotation from Teddy Roosevelt which sums up the new mayor's pragmatic activism: "It's not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled; or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; who, at the best knows the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at the least fails while doing greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who knew neither victory nor defeat."

So far, most of Friedman's personal victories have been victories for Austin's progressive movement as well. Even if the new mayor turns out to be more moderate than his left-wing supporters anticipated, well, as Ed Wendler concludes, "I don't ever want to lose sight of the fact that his worst is so much better than anything we've ever had before." K.N.

## Sit-com city

A reporter that spends much time around the new Austin council can get the feeling she's somehow gotten trapped in an overly-ambitious ethnic television comedy. One recent council day, during the luncheon break, Friedman, Snell, Trevino, Linn, Snell's female aide, and a *Observer* editor all squeezed into the city-leased Lincoln Town Car and tore out to the airport to give the key to the city to Vicki Carr, a singer. Ms. Carr is a *chicana*, much committed to providing scholarships for needy Mexican-Americans. Trevino was the councilman in charge of actually reading the welcoming proclamation and presenting the key to Carr, and he was as excited as a kid about to meet his first football star.

Being the mayor and all, Friedman got to drive, which he did with gusto and more than one reference to having learned all he knew at the knee of a New York cab driver. Snell, being of the Negro persuasion, countered with an offer to put on a cap and do the chauffeuring. "Lemme drive, Boss Man," he said.

Friedman, having none of that, kept to the wheel. As we swooped around the airport parking lot, a uniformed policeman pointed toward a truck, which led us to the airport tarmac. The Town Car's red lights were blinking and we made an impressive entrance onto the field. "Makes you feel as important as shit, don't it?" the mayor commented gleefully.

Carr got off the plane carrying a pillow ("my security blanket," she explained), which made it a little difficult for her to receive the rose and the key and the proclamation. She handed her pillow to one of the AquaFest commodores (who regularly pipe VIPs aboard the city, complete with a red carpet and a tape-recorded nautical ditty), took the roses, kissed Trevino and assorted children, and made a gracious escape to the baggage area.

Then it was on to Symphony Square for lunch with the *grand dames* of Austin's cultural scene. "Can't we go to

Greasy Joe's instead?" lamented Snell. "Don't quote me on that." The luncheon was light and greaseless, but pleasant. The symphony women and conductor Akira Endo didn't waste a second getting down to a tough-minded spiel on the importance of city funding for the arts.

On the way back to City Hall, Dr. Linn and Snell's aide speculated about Endo's origins and whether it is the Chinese or the Japanese who are reputed to be such great lovers. "It's the *chicano*," Trevino insisted. "No, the black," Snell said. Friedman, thank God, missed his cue to put in a good word for the Jew.

What the reporter realizes with new clarity is that Americans do indeed talk like refugees from the ethnic sit-coms. Of course, the Austin council members don't know one another very well yet, and they were just making what passes for jocular conversation in liberal circles. This new willingness to bring up differences is refreshing for a time . . . until it begins to sound as dull and limiting as the good ol' boyisms that are the standard repertoire of conservative legislators.

So maybe it's just style, and then again maybe it's something deeper. Meg Greenfield took out after the ethnic TV shows in a recent *Newsweek* column. Greenfield sees the shows as somehow linked to "the increasing tendency of government, political parties, and an array of private institutions to deal formally and officially with individuals on the basis of their ethnic background." She asks, "Do we really want government and the various institutions that have some power over our affairs to believe that we *should* be rewarded or penalized or otherwise dealt with on the basis of whether we were born Lassiters or Vitales or Jeffersons or Morgensterns?"

If our politicians think informally in terms of racial cliches, mightn't that attitude slip over into public policy? It's something to consider. K.N.

# Houston upsy-daisy

- They're playing musical political chairs down in Houston town these days. It started when word got out that U.S. Rep Bob Casey was going to be appointed to the Federal Maritime Commission. At last word, he still didn't have the job for sure, but he reportedly wanted it and President Ford, going along with the tradition of appointing a Democrat to the Democratic seat on the commission, was prepared to appoint him.

If Casey leaves his congressional seat vacant, Sen. Bob Gammage is all ready to leap in after it. On the other hand, so is Sen. Chet Brooks, reportedly teetering on the border line of announcing.

- Now if Brooks vacates his Senate seat, that would set up a race some folk have been anticipating for a long time — Rep. Craig Washington v. Rep. Anthony Hall. That would pit two of the brightest, if not the brightest black pols in the state against one another.

- If Gammage leaves his Senate seat vacant, Rep. Gene Jones will go for it and Rep. Woody Denson is reportedly considering going for it. Denson is said to have been making some calls for support, to the confusion of some callees, who think they are getting calls from Bentsen.

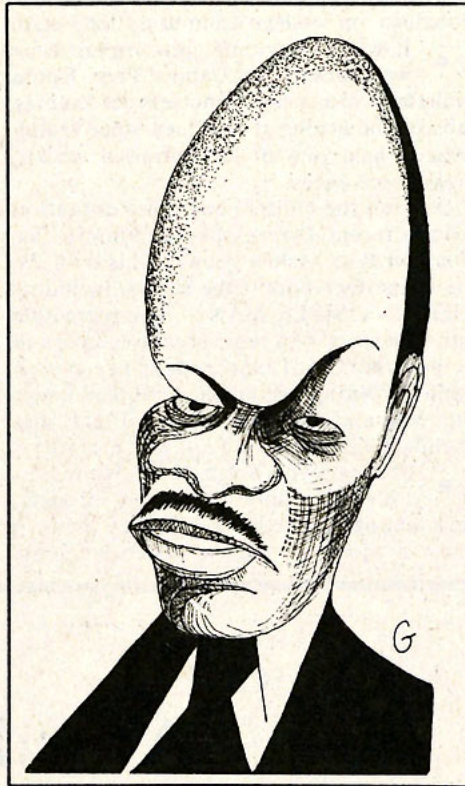
- There is also a scramble going on in Washington for Casey's seat on the appropriations committee. All kinds of people are in the running, but if the seat stays in the Texas delegation (which is not at all certain) it will reportedly go to Richard White of El Paso. That should help White's electoral prospects — he faces an almost certain challenge next year. Jack Hightower is rumored to be considering challenging the seniority system by trying for Casey's appropriations seat.

## Alas, Caldwell

- Rep. Neil Caldwell of Alvin is retiring after 12 years in the House to try for a judgeship in his home district. That is very bad news indeed for those left to cope with the Lege without Caldwell's redeeming wit. What a good, sensible, honest, diligent, effective, funny man Neil Caldwell is. He started in the House, he once recalled, as a fire-breathing liberal, held to be a comsymp by most of colleagues. He learned, perhaps better than any other liberal still in the House, how to compromise without bending his principles. His wry wit has prevented several fistfights and possibly a few murders. If he does one last cartoon of the House, it should be of everyone in it in a deep funk at the thought of losing him.

- What no one in Houston can figure out is why Judge Andrew Jefferson,

## Political Intelligence



Judge Jefferson

the much-admired, first black state judge resigned. Jefferson's enigmatic resignation statement, with its reference to "the beat of a different drummer," seems to give the lie to theory that Jefferson simply wants more money. But what political office could he have in mind? Filing date for mayor is already past: A senate seat? A congressional seat? Did Jefferson's decision to resign have anything to do with all those Houston police wiretap cases he was handling? One school of thought holds that he will run for D.A.

- George Allen, the black mayor *pro tem* of Dallas has submitted his resignation in what was reportedly to be a fairly complex political maneuver. The idea was to have Allen appointed to a vacant justice of the peace job and that would in turn allow him to run for county commissioner.

- Former State Sen. Mike McKool and State Rep. Jim Mattox, both liberals from Dallas, are intent on running for GOP Rep. Alan Steelman's Congressional seat next year. Steelman is expected to make a bid for the U.S. Senate against Lloyd Bentsen.

## Extraordinary folks

- Populists of the Month: Herbert and Nelson Bunker Hunt. After the multi-millionaire sons of the late H.L. Hunt were acquitted on wiretapping charges in Lubbock in late September, Bunker Hunt said, "My heart goes out to the poor people, or ordinary folks, who cannot afford to defend themselves against such charges and must plead guilty or *nolo contendere*. If we had been ordinary folks, we couldn't have afforded to defend ourselves."

Thanks, Herb. Thanks, Bunk.

- The *Houston Chronicle* says that Preston Smith, Texas' governor during the Sharpstown scandal, is thinking about running for Ben Ramsey's Railroad Commission seat.

- Sen. Lloyd Bentsen has named Joe Kilgore of Austin as chairman of his Senate reelection effort. Walter Mischer, a Houston developer, is treasurer.

- During the first eight months of this year, Bentsen, a millionaire, spent \$763,000 in his Presidential campaign. That made him the third biggest spender, behind George Wallace (\$1.8 million) and Scoop Jackson (\$1.2 million). Mo Udall spent \$227,521 and Fred Harris a piddling \$67,000.

- Sixteen major oil companies, taken together, have 72 percent of our domestic crude oil production, 75 percent of our refining capacity, and 70 percent of retail gasoline sales, and at least four U.S. senators want to see that power spread around. Sens. Philip Hart (D-Mich.), Gaylord Nelson (D-Wis.), Gary Hart (D-Colo.), and James Abourezk (D-S.D.) say that when the bill dealing with deregulation of natural gas reaches the Senate floor, they will offer an amendment to break up the major oil companies.

- Sen. John Tower's bill to exempt revenue-producing sports from new federal regs on college athletics was blasted as "blatant discrimination" against women by Donna Lopiano, director of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women at the University of Texas.

Federal law requires colleges to spend proportionally equal amounts on men's and women's sports. Tower maintains that revenue-producing sports, especially football and baseball, need to be exempted from the regs because they provide money for other collegiate sports. Lopiano says that the idea that football supports other poorer sports is a "myth." She told a Senate education subcommittee that when the cost of all football overhead is taken

## THE TEXAS OBSERVER

"The always impious Texas Observer... We recommend it." — I. F. Stone's Bi-Weekly, May 31, 1971

"... the Progressive and the Texas Observer, both of them knowledgeable, superbly written, and leavened by a wit of which conservatives seem incapable." — George Frazier, The Boston Globe, Dec. 15, 1973

"Oddly, the impact of some of its biggest stories comes on the rebound: They are picked up and commented on nationally before the state's daily press recognizes them." — Lew Powell, Chicago Journalism Review, April, 1974

"One of the best publications in the country remains the Texas Observer." — Pete Hamill, The New York Post, Dec. 18, 1969

"The Observer is the conscience of the political community in Texas." — Andrew Kopkind, The New Republic, Nov. 20, 1965

"I think the Observer ranks with The Progressive as one of the two most useful papers in the United States." — John Kenneth Galbraith, Sept. 16, 1970

"The Observer keeps coming out with serious and thorough news of this critically important state which people inside and out can't get elsewhere." — Nicholas von Hoffman, The Washington Post, Sept. 10, 1971

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into consideration — including salaries, scholarships, maintenance, and the band — the \$1.6 million in revenues "solely produced by UT football is also solely spent on that same program."

Lopiano also pointed out that at UT \$2.4 million is budgeted this year for the men's seven sports as compared to \$128,000 for the women's seven sports. "The Tower bill would only serve to lock us into the present unhealthy and potentially self-serving system of athletic professionalism on college campuses," she said.

It was 53 days and counting last time we checked the Capitol Press Room bulletin board, where reporters are keeping tabs on how long it has been since Dolph Briscoe held one of his promised weekly press conferences.

Also on the bulletin board is a quotation from a recent Lynn Ashby column in *The Houston Post*. Ashby drew up his own TV log of perfect boob tube shows, including "THE INVISIBLE MAN — The incredible but true story of a rancher who is sworn in as governor of Texas and is never seen again." "Wrong," someone scribbled under the column, "he was seen in the House chamber doing laps at 5:30 this morning."

Secretary of State Mark White has added a couple of flaks to his staff, thus adding fuel to rumors that he plans to make a move for higher office ere long.

Mark Miller (\$1,244 a month) and Aura Nell Ranzau (\$1,164 a month) are now working for White: both were formerly with George Christian's public relations firm which specializes in handling political candidates. White says his two new hirelings are not doing p.r. work for him, but are researching the new constitution.

It was in the *San Antonio Express* so it must be true. It seems that Morris and Lisa Jaffe had a party recently in honor of Robert and Ruth Montgomery, who have just moved to San Antonio. Ms. Montgomery is an authority on psychic phenomena: she used to write a syndicated column and is the author of several books on spiritualism.

According to the *Express*, "If guests weren't discussing the books, they were most often talking about the decor of the house, which Lisa has had redone in the past year. And about the new cabana at the back of the large pool, which repeats the white stucco and Mediterranean style architecture of the three-story house. The party marked the 'debut' of the cabana with its sunken bar and stained glass window picturing highlights of Jaffee's career." ... St. Morris on the road to San Antonio, St. Morris pausing to help a publican, St. Morris and the moneylenders.

## An editorial

Well, we beg to differ with *The Dallas Morning News* again. The occasion this time is the walk-out W. J. Estelle, director of the Texas Department of Corrections, pulled at the CURE meeting on Sept. 29. CURE, a prison reform group, was holding a day-long meeting on criminal justice reform in Huntsville at the Walker County Courthouse. Estelle was the star invited speaker; he commenced by announcing that he could only stay for half an hour, and would not take any questions — he had to take his family to church.

Many members of CURE are relatives of men and women in state prisons. They had given up church for the day themselves and most of them had driven long distances in order to attend the meeting. They asked Estelle if he would dispense with his speech and answer questions instead during the little time he had with them. He launched into his speech. Five minutes later, according to the videotape of the incident, he was interrupted by a question from the floor about the Carrasco tragedy. With that, he left.

In the undelivered portion of Estelle's text was the statement, "I have neither the inclination nor the energy to run from pillar to post to placate and satisfy every

vested interest ranging from the far left to the extreme right." If Estelle really feels that put upon by people asking questions about the way his shop is run, maybe he should get out. He can't spend much time between pillar and post — we can't think of any organizations besides the ACLU and now CURE who bother much with what's happening to prisoners (though the Lege will investigate after something like the Carrasco disaster and the Jaycees do some fine people-to-people work.) Nobody is asking Estelle to placate or satisfy the far left or the extreme right, but CURE is hardly the Symbionese Liberation Army. Its director is a soft-spoken, ex-priest from the deep South named Charlie Sullivan, whose manners are notable for their gentleness. What group would have a greater right to ask some questions about the system than tax-payers whose own relatives are incarcerated?

The DMN's assertion that CURE members wanted "to talk not listen" is off-base: they wanted to ask questions. Does one question make a man a "verbal punching bag for irate citizens"? When a "public servant" turns into an arrogant bureaucrat who won't even condescend to answer questions about how the taxpayers' money is being spent, to hell with him.

# Iowa infighting: Perot v. Murchison

By Jackee Cox

Austin

Computer magnate H. Ross Perot has once again managed to attract unfavorable attention from Congressional investigators, this time over contract negotiations for the Medicare data processing business of Iowa Blue Shield.

Sharing the hot seat is Social Security Administration (SSA) Commissioner James Cardwell, who may have been guilty of bureaucratic favoritism toward Perot's data processing firm.

The ruckus shapes up as a corporate battle for about \$9 million worth of Iowa business over the next three years. The aggrieved competitor for the federal subcontract business is a firm called Optimum Systems, Inc., property of Dallas Cowboys owner and oil magnate Clint Murchison.

David Jung, director of Corporate Development for Optimum Systems, charged that an after-the-fact change in the evaluation criteria used by the Social Security Administration put Perot's firm ahead in the bidding process, and that Perot's victory violated the recommendations of lower level SSA officials. Optimum Systems' bitterness over the business loss was heightened because Iowa Blue Shield had chosen the OSI program over Perot's.

The usual practice of the SSA has been to accept the data subcontracting firm favored by the Blue Shield plan responsible for Medicare operations. That policy worked to Perot's advantage in Ohio, West Virginia, and California, even though he was not the low bidder for those jobs.

But in Iowa, the SSA disregarded line management preferences and handed down a mandate ordering Blue Shield to negotiate with Perot. That order went out early in September.

It backfired.

ON SEPT. 18, Thomas Tierney, director of SSA's Bureau of Health Insurance, sent a telegram reversing the prior order "because of expressions of Congressional concern and requests for further evaluation."

According to reports from James Risser of the *Des Moines Register*, Tierney was not responsible for the order favoring Perot's firm. Risser says Tierney recommended approval of Blue Shield's request to be allowed to contract with OSI, but was overruled by Cardwell.

Tierney was "in meetings" and not available to discuss the matter with this reporter. His deputy, Mildred Tyssowski, dismissed questions about inside bureaucratic conflict on the matter, and suggested that the Congressional inquiries were a form of political retribution motivated by those whose business interests had been harmed.

However, Tyssowski acknowledged that Sens. Abraham Ribicoff (D-Conn.) and Herman Talmadge (D-Ga.) are looking for "bureaucratic biases in the Social Security Administration procurements processes." She also acknowledged that other Congressional inquiries had been received on the matter, but said she didn't know who had made them.

Perot-watching has become a favored sport primarily because of the size of his tax-funded empire. From 1969 through 1974, his Electronic Data Systems Federal had about a 90 percent corner on all subcontracts for Medicare data processing. The names on his territorial monopoly map included Kansas, Pennsylvania, California, Iowa, Indiana, West Virginia, Ohio, Massachusetts, New York, Minnesota, Arkansas, and Puerto Rico.

His control over that empire was the subject of a critical investigation completed by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare during 1974. Expressing concern at the anti-competitive situation which prevailed in the Medicare business, the investigating committee's report reprinted the following complaint from a losing competitor against Perot:

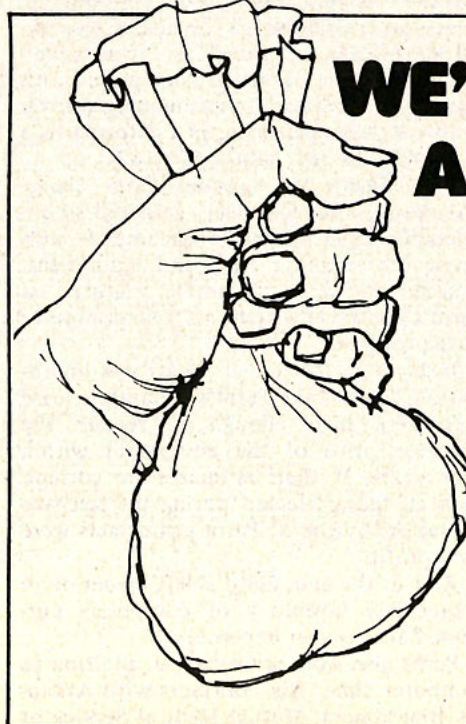
"Our history suggests that we have spent many thousands of dollars trying to compete in the Medicare data processing market through competitive bidding. Our success in achieving any significant awards has been minimal. Analysis of this 'competitive bidding' suggests that cost could not win an award, good service could not win an award, and knowledge of Medicare processing could not win. Investigations by the General Accounting Office and the legislative branch of the government did not reverse this trend."

THE GENERAL Accounting Office investigations of contract awards proceedings focused on Perot's contract with Nationwide Insurance in Ohio and West Virginia. The GAO found that bid specifications on the job were changed after competing bids were submitted, and that only Perot's firm could meet the revised specifications.

Furthermore, Perot's Electronic Data Systems Federal (EDSF) was not the low bidder for the job. Nevertheless, he won the award with the proviso that his overall costs were not to exceed national average costs per claim for processing during calendar year 1974. At the end of fiscal '74, the national average costs were \$2.60 per claim, and Nationwide's costs were \$2.97 per claim. Certain parties embittered by Perot's manipulations are now predict-


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ing with some satisfaction that the government will present EDSF with a sizeable bill for cost overruns.

Charges of bureaucratic tampering with bid specifications for Nationwide in 1972 are reminiscent of similar charges which brought HEW to court in the spring of this year. Optimum Systems filed suit over proceedings in California, charging that they were "infected with favoritism"

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toward Perot's firm.

Finlay Lewis of the *Minneapolis Tribune* reports that OSI exhibits to the court attempted to show that entire sections of the technical job specifications for processing California Blue Shield claims were lifted verbatim from manuals prepared by Perot's firms.

The OSI suit further challenged the integrity of the bureaucratic decision-making process for the California contract on the grounds that OSI's bid was about \$1 million per year lower than Perot's. The suit was dismissed when the court held that there was no proof of fraud or bad faith on the part of the government, and Perot got the contract.

**W**HATEVER factors contributed to Perot's ability to walk off time and again with Medicare contracts, it is certain that his operations have been profitable. Unofficial Social Security estimates indicate that his administrative charges to the program through the spring of 1974 exceeded \$140 million.

In 1971 and '72, Perot took considerable heat during investigations by the U.S. House Subcommittee on Government Operations, chaired by Rep. L. H. Fountain of North Carolina. The principal argument in the Fountain committee hearings was whether charges for Perot's work fell within the rather amorphous boundaries of "reasonable." The content of the arguments was highly technical and generally inconclusive. In the end, the one thing was clear: the government had no established base for defining "reasonable," and Perot got out unscathed.

Data compiled in staff papers for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare demonstrate the considerable variety in charges which the Social Security Administration approved as "reasonable" for Perot's firm. Over the same periods, his base level prices for processing ranged from a low of \$.66 per claim in California to a high of \$1.20 per claim in Puerto Rico.

In addition to revenues from claims processing, Perot also garnered considerable extra Medicare income as purveyor of computer time and equipment. Among the more favorable features of Perot's contracts was the six year computer lease provision.

Insiders at the Social Security Administration figure that Perot's computer lease fees were high enough to recoup the purchase price of the equipment within four years. If their estimates are correct, then all fees collected during the last two operational years of Perot's contracts were pure profit.

And in the end, Perot is left owner of an appreciable inventory of computers purchased at taxpayer expense.

Perot also sold equipment in addition to computer time. His contracts with Arkansas Blue Shield, Mutual Medical Service of

Indiana, Iowa Medical Service, Massachusetts Blue Shield, Minnesota Medical Service, and United Medical Service of New York all made EDSF the supplier of computer lines and terminals, magnetic tapes, cards, disc packs, data cells, microfilm services, and all forms and supplies used in the processing operations.

The contracts stipulated that the price for such items was "not to exceed the fair market price." Given Perot's purchasing volume, SSA officials assume that he acquired the supplies for considerably less than the "fair market" rates which he charged the government.

There are a host of federal auditors around who would love to know just how much pure profit Perot has made on Medicare. Access to that knowledge is blocked by a legal ploy, Perot's dual corporate structure.

Perot operates two corporate entities, Electronic Data Systems, and Electronic Data Systems Federal, the latter being a wholly-owned subsidiary of the former. The Medicare contracts were with Electronic Data Systems Federal, which purchased goods and services from the parent corporation.

Although federal auditors could scrutinize the books of EDSF, they could not look behind them to the costs recorded on the books of EDS. Without such access, they could never determine with certainty whether Perot's charges were or were not "reasonable."

Bitterness against Perot has been heightened by his political activities. A joint study by the *Minneapolis Tribune* and the National Information Center on Political Finance found Perot's political contributions totaled \$91,400 in the 1974 campaign year. Of that total, \$56,000 went to incumbent members of the Senate Finance and House Ways and Means committees. Those committees have jurisdiction over the Medicare data processing business.

The 1974 HEW study on Perot's monopoly noted that competition against EDSF was inhibited by "its well publicized active posture in presenting its views to Congress and the Executive Branch." The price of Perot's politicking, of course, is paid by the taxpayers who foot the bill for escalating Medicare administrative costs.

Texas Blue Cross-Blue Shield, which was the first Medicare contractor to get on the Perot bandwagon, has now decided to jump off. They have decided to make their data processing operations in-house. Data released by the Social Security Administration indicate that the move will save the taxpayers about \$1.5 million in fiscal year 1977.

*Funds supporting the research for this article were supplied in part by the Southern Investigative Research Project of the Southern Regional Council, Atlanta, Ga. Responsibility for the content rests solely with the author.*

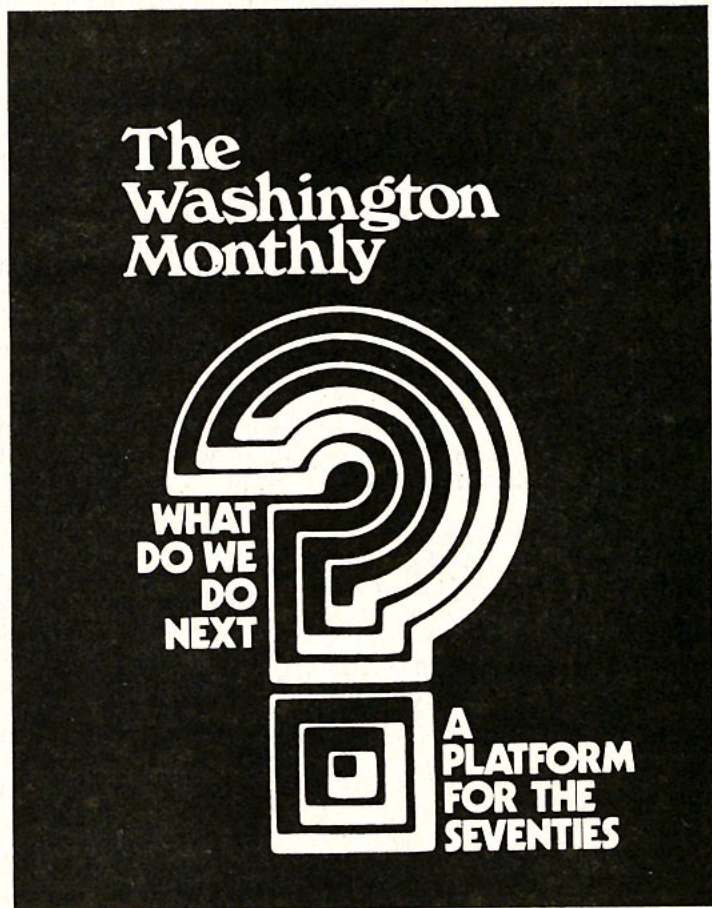
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# UT budget blues

By Ken McHam

"Clobbered is the term. . . . 'They've almost completely wiped us out. These budget cuts have set us back 10 to 15 years and I don't know if we'll ever recover.'"

-A University Professor

"I've put all the blame on the Legislature. . . . No extra money was provided for the mandated salary increases, so we had to cut the budget somewhere. Please give us something in the pot the next time you tell us to do something."

-President Lorene Rogers

"Yes, the money is there. Both for the mandatory and discretionary salary increases. There's no doubt in my mind that the money is there."

-Thomas Keel, Director  
Legislative Budget Board

"It looks like Rogers is playing a shell game with us—telling us it's the Legislature's fault as an excuse to cut out programs they are not interested in. For a while I thought the university had hit its lows with Erwin, but I believe they've hit bottom this time."

-State Sen. Lloyd Doggett

Austin

The one window to what's going on behind the new white walls at the University of Texas is the budget: its 1,100 pages represent life or death for everything

funded by the university. Lorene Rogers takes credit for the 1974-1975 budget. It is two months old and so far has received attention only for the punitive faculty salary cuts it contained. But the larger impact of the budget may be shattering to the university: it is a hatchet job on the academic community. The budget, and Rogers' dealings with those who have drawn attention to its provisions, are the most controversial developments of Rogers' year-long tenure as president *ad interim*.

Here is an overview of what has happened:

-Black Studies, Mexican-American Studies, and Latin American Studies were severely cut. Research and program money was completely eliminated from their budgets.

-Crippling cuts were made to almost every organized research facility on campus, many of which have brought national recognition to the university.

-Control of research money has been placed in fewer and higher hands by greatly increased funding of the University Research Institute (URI). Money transferred into URI is one and a half times greater than all the money cut from organized research and ethnic studies.

-Rogers has claimed to the Black Caucus of the Legislature and to Travis County legislators that the budget cuts were necessitated by the Legislature's error in the appropriations bill—a claim contradicted by the facts of the bill and by Rogers' own budget.

-Rogers has claimed that the reduced research and program funds are accessible through the URI. This is contradicted by new and old URI policy and Rogers' own admission when pressed on the matter.

-Well above average increases in funding to departments such as Home Economics, Naval ROTC, Personnel, Business Manager—and the creation of a new "Office of the Budget."

On Aug. 1, one week after the university budget was approved by the regents, Dr. John Warfield wrote members of the legislative black caucus to protest the elimina-

tion of program development funds for the African and Afro-American Studies and Research Center, which he directs.

"The program development budget (\$23,000) was the only means we had to develop any research and programs," Warfield wrote. "These funds are essential to any function of the Center. In the past such funds have been designated for research, lecturers, Bicentennial efforts, library acquisitions, the African literature journal, and to promote the hiring of black faculty. Without such funds we are literally an office of faculty and secretaries and the department will not offer any inducement to affirmative action."

Also cut in the new budget were program development funds for the Mexican-American Studies, Latin American Studies, and other departments in the Division of General and Comparative Studies. Three months earlier, Regents' Chairman Allan Shivers had rejected attempts of the House Higher Education and Appropriations committees to fund line-item increases for program development in the minority studies centers.

Rep. Gonzalo Barrientos of Austin asked Shivers at the April 14 appropriations hearing whether he supported the following Education Committee increases: ". . . \$150,000 in 1976 and '77 for an office of minority affairs; an increase of \$48,000 in 1976 and \$99,000 in 1977 for additional faculty incentives for Mexican-American and Afro-American Studies; and an increase of \$40,000 each year for program and curriculum development for (the) study centers. Do you support these increases?"

Shivers hedged for several minutes, but Barrientos pressed for an answer from the former governor: "I don't think it's an increase. We interpret it as a decrease, actually. We are doing that kind of work now with the available fund and with certain other funds. Uh, Mr. Colvin told me at lunch today that he thought that the figures in that bill were a decrease from what we're now spending on the entire program."

Shivers' statements convinced a majority of the Appropriations Committee that minority programs were well-funded. By a close vote, the committee removed those items from the appropriations bill.

When the legislators learned these programs were eliminated from the budget, they conferred with Lorene Rogers and were even more surprised to hear her rationale: "It's the Legislature's fault," she said. In three separate meetings with Reps. Senfronia Thompson and Mickey Leland of Houston and Wilhelmina Delco and Sen. Lloyd Doggett of Austin, Rogers repeated the explanation that budget cutbacks were necessary because "the Legislature did not provide enough money for the mandated staff salary increase."

Legislative Budget Board officials adamantly disagree. Director Thomas Keel

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explained that the LBB "went into each university and determined the percentage of salary as a part of the total expenditure. You can do it fairly accurately." Not only was the staff money provided, Keel said, but money for the discretionary faculty salary increase was put into the appropriations bill.

Confronted with this evidence in a meeting with Delco and Doggett, President Rogers said, "All I know is what my and the System's budget officers tell me." These officers are University Vice-president for Business Affairs James Colvin (who spoke to Shivers at lunch) and University System Budget Director Frank Graydon.

When Colvin was asked to explain, he changed the story twice. "They factored in the mandated increases all right, but if you will look over in the education section it says you *may* give increases on people earning over \$10,500, and I don't think they did on that."

When Colvin was told the LBB *did* put in the discretionary increase for faculty, he backed off again. "Well, one place I know they didn't was on organized research," Colvin said.

Changes in policy toward organized research may be the key to understanding some budgetary deceptions. The budgets of almost all campus research centers have been seriously cut back, including those for engineering and technological research. The cuts average about 10 percent even after salary increases and they were not made for lack of money, although that is the official line.

A policy change has been made: all Available Fund money which previously supplemented the research center budgets—and more—has been transferred to the University Research Institute. Some faculty feel this "prepares the ground" for the elimination of research centers and is a move to consolidate power. Said one professor, "It's a move to put greater control of funds into the hands of a smaller number of individuals in the administration."

The University Research Institute is a central faculty research administration, managed by the Graduate School and apparently controlled by 22 faculty members on three review committees. URI grants salary support to individual professors on research leave. It funds sabbaticals the Legislature has failed to budget, as well as summer research leaves and under-\$500 grants for short term projects.

Rogers claims URI funds are available for research programs cut by her budget, but neither old nor newly revised URI criteria support that claim. Rogers admitted this week that URI rules were brought to her attention. URI money is available primarily for faculty salaries. Staff salaries and maintenance and operation expenses are rarely granted by URI, and only in "modest" amounts for "pilot

projects" or "short term" projects. Lecturers, symposia, conferences simply are not funded by URI.

URI funding was more than doubled in the budget, jumping from \$330,000 to \$800,000—an increase of \$470,000, which is more than all the other research cuts put together. The amount cut from all of organized research and general and comparative studies programs totals \$332,720—that's \$137,280 less than the increase to URI.

Another interesting contrast to URI's funding is the Division of Extension, which was cut \$120,000 and has been supplemented by increasing the university's fees for extension courses. Or the Measurement and Evaluation Center, cut \$143,000; test fees have been substantially raised there.

The latest effort to hide the URI shift, whether by craft or rote, came in a Sept. 26 letter to Representative Thompson from H. Eldon Sutton, associate dean of the Graduate School and administrator of URI.

"When it became necessary to reduce the funds available for organized research this year, President Rogers recommended that there be an increase in funds available to the University Research Institute," Sutton wrote. "This increase is of course smaller than the decrease in the budgets of organized research units."


Other indications support faculty fears of the elimination of research centers. Rogers has said she plans to appoint a committee to "look into the centers and establish criteria for establishment of new centers." She also "had talked to people about appointing a committee" to study the viability of the Division of General and Comparative Studies (which houses Black and Mexican American Studies, American, Asian, Middle Eastern Studies, Latin American Studies, and Plan II). But Rogers says she was advised not to appoint that committee. Regardless of "committee action," the budget manipulations seem to point the direction that reorganization, if it occurs, is likely to take. □

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# Water hustlers

*Shepherd*

The Water Hustlers are taking their road show down the length of the Trinity River again this fall, in the same old guise of "public hearings" with the same old theme, "The Trinity River Master Plan."

If, as *The Austin American-Statesman* reported in June, the Texas Water Development Board and its offspring the Trinity River Authority feel environmentalists are putting a crimp in their "more orderly social regime," they didn't have that problem at the sparsely (150) attended Livingston hearing. The two-hour hearing was as totalitarian as anything you would ever want to witness. Not one word of opposition to the master plan was uttered. No one spoke on behalf of the river.

After, in the past, running smack up against those who wish a natural, unobstructed river, the TRA has honed its song and dance so that it gets the very best publicity while raising the fewest eyebrows. The local weekly newspapers print TRA publicity releases as straight news stories. We will now be treated to a round of stories about the success and public participation of the hearings.

It was good of Paul Cauthan, Trinity County banker, Livingston Reservoir land exploiter, and one of the original and probably the most powerful TRA board member, to put in an appearance in Livingston. Had he not showed up, there would have been no semblance of the water hustlers' real power.

Guy Jackson III, an Anahuac attorney and friend of the Chambers County monied rice interests, was well chosen to chair the hearings. He is a classic, humorous, good ol' boy. He left no doubt he was in charge. "I will chair this meeting," he said, completely unnecessarily, in his tough-sounding opening remarks. His most telling statement of the evening was an outburst, near the end "of testifying," when in response to one witness, he blurted out, "It's the idiotic EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) again."

After the audience was given almost an hour of pure TRA propaganda, provided by Jackson and the short-haired, spiffily-dressed flock of young TRA staff employees, the testimony began.

And if the first 14 of the 15 "testifiers" were not orchestrated, it didn't make any difference. Mayors, ex-mayors, judges, ex-judges, land developers, politicians, and businessmen stepped up to reiterate the "various aspects" of the master plan. They placed such gems on the record as "Lake Livingston is the greatest industry which could ever be placed here," "the integrity of the TRA is beyond reproach," "Lake Livingston is the epitome of conservation," and "incomprehensible industrialization."

Fortunately, a couple of facts came to light, however accidentally, in the hearing, which should be reported. It is well known that since the master plan was voted down in 1973 by the voters in the watershed, the TRA has turned to a piece-meal strategy. It became quite obvious from the Livingston hearing that the TRA is pushing two projects — the completion of the salt water barrier at Wallisville, which has been temporarily stopped by a district court restraining order, and the construction of an enormous reservoir at Tennessee Colony in central East Texas, which would inundate almost 100,000 acres of some of the state's richest farming land.

The other fact revealed is that, contrary to TRA publicity releases, as one mayor of a small town on the Livingston Reservoir said, "there is tremendous violation of the pollution laws all around the lake." The seriousness of the pollution, mostly from sewage, was mentioned by several "testifiers."

It should also be reported that the organizers of the hearing told everyone who attended, "You must register." But they didn't attempt to enforce this edict.

—DON GARDNER

# THE SOVES' REVENGE

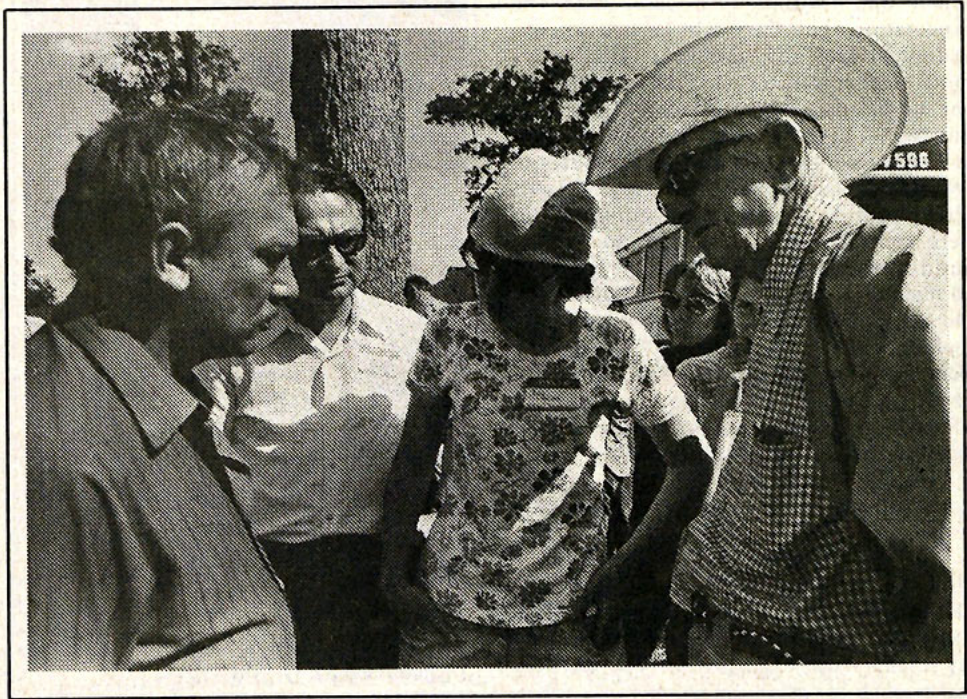
As faithful readers will recall, a year ago, Observer co-editor Molly Ivins got culturally exchanged to the Soviet Union along with 11 other American journalists for a one-month journey. The Observer has just survived a return visit by a delegation of 12 Soviet journalists, who spent three days in Texas as our guests. Those of you who read Ivins' account of her trip to the Soviet Union may be interested in this report on some of the things we learned through the reverse exchange. All the hoary questions about objectivity and subjectivity surfaced anew as we learned what it is like to be the judge rather than the judge. —Ed.

Austin, Madisonville

Let me say first that the visit of the Soviet journalists here was, from our point of view, a pleasure, indeed a delight. It was wonderful to have the opportunity to repay in some small measure the hospitality I received there. On top of that, the delegation of Soviet journalists was composed of good folks. Some were outgoing and hilarious, others were sober and earnest, but there wasn't a clod in the bunch. I hate to start out sounding like an Academy Award acceptance speech, but there are so many other people who contributed so much to helping make the visit a success, it would be absurd not to mention them. In no particular order, great credit is due to Liz Faulk, J. R. Parten, Joe Pinelli, Randy Parten, John Henry Faulk, Agriculture Commissioner John White, Harry Middleton of the LBJ Library, Kaye Northcott, John Ferguson, Speaker Billy Clayton, Jeff Nightbyrd of the *Austin Sun*, Rod Lewis (who drove the bus), Mike Tolleson of Armadillo World Headquarters, Ann Richards, assorted members of the university faculty, the Balcones Fault Band, Peavine Jeffries of North Zulch, and many, many others. God only knows what the Soviets made of it all, but we did make a good faith effort to show them Texas as we know it.

The visit started off briskly with the unwelcome intelligence from the Americans travelling with the Soviet delegation that most members of the delegation had read my article about the Soviet Union (see *Obs.*, Nov. 1, 1974), and were royally pissed off, as in, seriously angry. Further word was that they had been waiting for three weeks, since the beginning of their tour of this country, to tackle me about the contents of that article. So there we were, first rat out of the trap, at International Incident City. Had I gone and single-handedly ruined detente with my big mouth?

Thank God for the Texas Legislature. I always knew it would turn out to be good



Tad Hershorn

From left: Lev Korneshov, interpreter Tat'yana Maylar, and J. R. Parten

for something. We took the Soves from the Austin airport to their hotel and from thence directly to the state capitol for a meeting with members of the capitol press corps. Various members of the corps spoke about what they do and how they do it. Best licks of the day were by Sam Kinch, Jr., of *The Dallas Morning News*, who spoke about investigative reporting. Kinch, having been forewarned (by me) that it is most difficult to translate "investigative reporting" into Russian, commenced by explaining while he is sure there are never any such problems in the USSR, we here in the United States are sometimes troubled by dishonest government officials. I distinctly saw some Soviet smiles.

In any case, that first afternoon at the capitol I put in my two cents about the Lege, speaking in my customary style. I told them about the Ten Top Dumb and the Pieces of Furniture. By the time I got through, I think most of them had at least an inkling that my critical reportage on their country was, if not pallid, at least not unusual compared to the reportage I regularly inflict on my own country. But that by no means solved the matter of their resentment over my article. At dinner that night at a Mexican restaurant, Lev Korneshov, leader of the delegation and editor-in-chief of *Komsomol'skaya Pravda*, the national youth publication, tackled me head-on. I should explain that Korneshov was the only member of the visiting delegation I had met while I was in the Soviet Union. Our delegation had visited Korneshov's paper one morning in Moscow when he acted as our chief host. He struck me then,

as did afresh in Austin, as very heavy (heads up, translators: if this article is going overseas like the last one, let's be sure we have the contemporary meaning of "heavy"; not the dictionary meaning. The *Observer* retains some hope that Korneshov will respond to our original article). Korneshov looks *exactly* like a younger, blond Walter Cronkite. When Andy Yemma of UPI told him this, his question was, "Is this Walter Cronkite O.K.?" When informed that Cronkite was the most trusted man in America, Korneshov responded most graciously. He began at dinner that night by informing me when he had met me in Moscow, I had struck him as "aggressive" (interpreter's word), but that it was pleasant to meet me in Texas, where I seemed hospitable. I swear I cannot recall opening my mouth that morning we spent at *K-Pravda*. Misunderstanding One (or maybe it wasn't: that's another level of misunderstanding): I took "aggressive" to mean "hostile/belligerent." I am seldom less than mouthy, but I don't recall coming on "aggressive" while in the Sove U. Two members of our delegation with whom I sharply disagreed, Lofton (John, the very conservative columnist) and Ryskind (Allan, editor of the ultra-conservative *Human Events*), were more than aggressive enough for all of us put together. I thought myself, while in the USSR, to be the soul of milk-maidishness, but there, you see, the giftie is so seldom gi'e us (translators will please consult Robert Burns, Scots poet).

One thing I have learned about practicing journalism is that one is almost never

called on the things one expects to be called on. It's always the words and phrases one has stuck in without a second thought that cause the furor: the sentences over which one lavishes such care, with the expectation that there will be hell to pay, seldom attract any comment. It's always some sleeper remark that touches nerves one never suspected existed. So it was in this case. There I was, guilty of all manner of impertinent generalizations about the Soviet peoples: I had said they showed little sense of humor, were not friendly, were generally inefficient, appeared to be untidy, that Moscow was mostly ugly, and all manner of other tacky stuff. But Korneshov and Slav-va (approximate phonetic spelling: we think he was Vyacheslov Nedoshivin, an editor of *Smena*, the youth paper of Leningrad, but we are not sure) wanted to know right off why I had insulted the history of their people.

"Huh?" I said, ever the ready international diplomat, prepared with a fetching comeback.

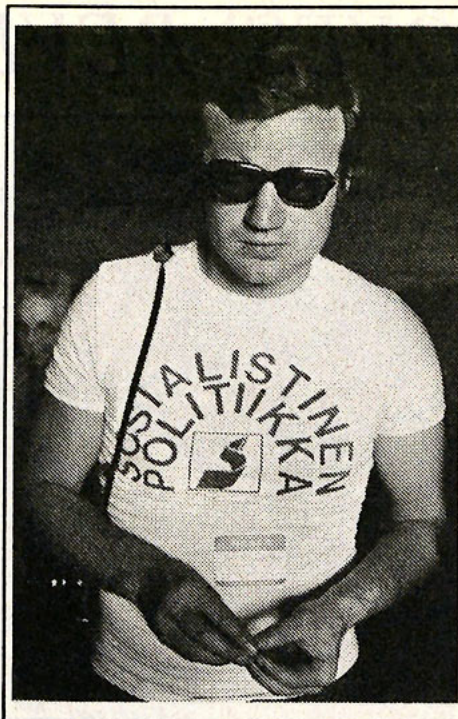
"In your article about our country," came the translated response, "you said that we have had a lousy history. How could you say that? By what right do you say that? What expertise do you have to make such a great insult to the entire history of our people?"

O good grief. I tried to explain.

Right after that sentence about "lousy history," there is reference to invasions.

18

*The Texas Observer*



Tad Hershorn  
Lev Pauzen, an official with the Committee of Soviet Youth Organizations

Invasions from the east, invasions from the west: great suffering for the Russian people. Also reference to suffering under autocratic rulers before the revolution, Ivan the Terrible being a particularly

notable example of an autocrat who caused great suffering. There was also great suffering during famines, great suffering during floods, great suffering during the civil war (we had one ourselves; we know how terrible this can be), great suffering during the revolution itself, and the almost unimaginable suffering of the Soviet peoples during World War II. To say a lousy history is to say a history during which the people of Russia and the USSR have suffered a very great deal, therefore to say out of sympathy for them that this is a lousy history.

But lousy means bad, no?

Lousy means bad, yes.

Then you have paid a serious insult to the history of our people and you do not have the right to say such a thing.

Not even if it was meant in sympathy?

We do not accept that it was meant in sympathy.

A fourth party points out that I also insult the history of my own country with some frequency. Korneshov replies that this is irrelevant: I may insult my own country, that is my affair (besides, which, my own country probably deserves being insulted, he implies or I infer) but I do not have the right to insult his country. I do not inquire whether *he* has the right to insult his country. I've already got enough trouble with being "aggressive." I am left in a familiar funk. How did I get into this conversation? I don't insult the history of my own country or of anyone else's. Who



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talked me into this "insult" business? Up rhetoric creek again.

I contemplate new categories: second-degree insult; insult without malice; insult without intent; is truth a defense against insult? Personally, I still think the Soves have had a lousy history.

I suspect that what was really going on was that the Soves were too polite to ask me about the things in my article that had really offended them.

Korneshov informed me at dinner that I had been in error when I had earlier announced to the capitol press corps that the Soviets were tired because they had stayed up all the previous night in Las Vegas. They were not tired, Korneshov explained, because they were so interested in everything they saw in America that they didn't get tired. This was not rhetoric, but graciousness. In fact, they were exhausted. But a few hardy souls were still up for a visit to Armadillo World Headquarters. Heaven only knows what they made of it — I have a hard time explaining the place to editors of *The New York Times*. We told them it was "a nightclub not for wealthy people." The cultural chasm between a Soviet and a honky-tonk may be unbridgeable.

The next day was the high point of their visit. We loaded them onto a bus and carted them down to Major J. R. Parten's ranch near Madisonville. When we left Austin, the Soviets were mostly seated in the front of the bus and the guests from Austin were mostly in the rear. But by the time we arrived, vast amounts of cultural exchange were going on all up and down the bus. Dave Richards, the labor lawyer, was overheard explaining to Andrey, who may or may not have been getting it all, about the intricacies of labor law. Sam Whitten, the librarian, was carrying on about Carnegie to Volodya, while Terrell Maverick Webb chatted about Texas history with Galina, the lone female in the delegation. ("I don't know any Texas history, honey," Webb had protested earlier when I asked her to prepare a talk on it, "I just married it.") Another clump of folks were hot into juvenile delinquency, while Tolleson was trying to make a capitalist out of Lev Puzin by setting up a T-shirt exchange.

Explaining the ranch presented a new set of problems. The place looks like a movie set: it's so ridiculously like what a non-Texan's idea of ranch is like that it's sort of embarrassing. I rather felt as though we might be guilty of conning our guests into thinking that all ranches are like this one. But when one of them said to me, "The people from Austin seem to be very proud of this ranch" (implying that it was something special), I felt impelled to inform him that Parten's ranch is a piker compared to the King or Briscoe's spread. How do you accurately convey to people who have no standards by which to judge that, yes, this is a big ranch, but not a very big ranch — well, mostly I suspect that the whole scene was just so fantastic to them that there was

no way to get into any perspective.

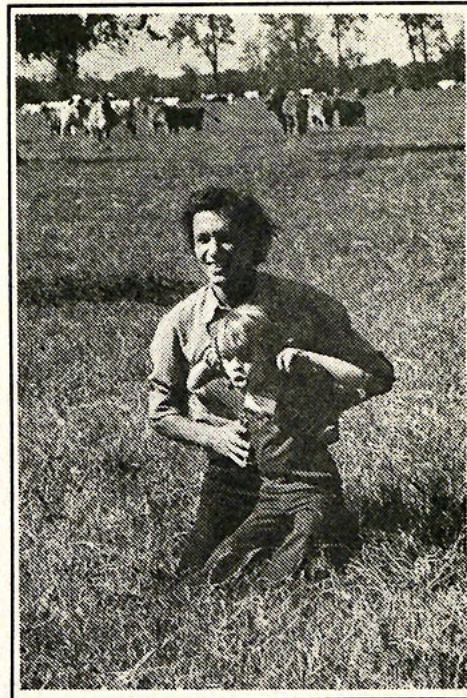
Major Parten himself, although closely rivalled by a couple of his horses, was probably the biggest hit of the day. First of all, the Soves, I think, had to rearrange some of their preconceptions to take in a Texas oilman who is also a liberal. I hope we made it clear enough to them (we tried several times) that Parten is a rare human being, and not your average Texas oilman. He is such an outstanding person that they were still asking questions about him right up to the time their plane left.

To my mind, the best exchange of the day was between Parten and Korneshov. I had complained, in the now-infamous article I wrote, about the failure of Soviets to give any credit to America for the help we gave the Soviet people during World War II. It happens that Parten served on the oil tanker board (he was appointed by Roosevelt) during that war, and so has personal knowledge of the events. He closed his modest account of a particularly difficult oil shipment in the winter of 1942 by stating that he has always believed it played a role in the defense of Moscow. Certainly the words of Major Parten, who actually had a leading role in those events, were far more persuasive to the Soviets than anything I had written.

I absolutely refuse to get into again the question of whether Soviets in general have a good sense of humor. I've gotten into enough trouble already. But they did have a little difficulty with John Henry Faulk at first. They had been forewarned about Faulk, but what is a Soviet to make of a guy who was accused of being commie, wasn't a commie, but had his career ruined anyway.

I haven't the faintest idea what the "correct" Party line on folks like Faulk is, but he can be trusted to dicombobulate any effort to put a political label on him. Right off the bat, when he was going to take a boatload of Soves over to the other side of the lake for a swim, Faulk announced, "An" while I have you all over there in the water, sweethearts, I am gonna baptize you and bring you to Jesus, yes I am." The translators translated, the Soves look stunned, and the Americans started trying to explain. "Satire, you know, joke . . . ha, ha?"

Later in the evening Faulk commenced to imitate a fictional Southern congressman (if one can imitate a fictional person), who says a number of outrageous things. "He was really in the Congress, John Henry was, and he said this?" inquired the astonished Soves. I hope they believed us when we told them he was only kidding. Only one of the three boatloads that went fishing had any luck, however, the Soves in the boat captained by Joe Pinelli ceremoniously presented him with a medal (actually, a Yuri Gagarin pin) after he fell overboard. They really got off on the horses and the barrel-riding display by a local rodeo queen. (She is very pretty and they liked her almost as much as they liked



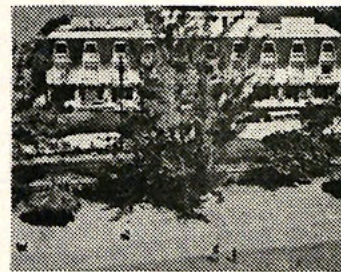
Andre Tolkunov & Dylan Howze

the horses.) The sunset over the lake was as spectacular as though we had arranged it by special order and the Texas stars were as incredible and as they're supposed to be.

The Americans started singing some country-western songs, and much to our

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delight, the Soviets took to responding in song. By the time we got on the bus for the trip back to Austin, the pattern was established: first we would sing for awhile, then they would sing, then us, then them. We came up with this terrific plan to hijack the bus and go to Mexico: if Lewis, the driver, weren't such a level-headed fellow we could even now be the center of an international incident somewhere around Guadalajara.

On our last day in Austin, we went first to visit the LBJ Library. I am not a fan of Lyndon's Liberry, but it is impressive in its way. There was a tiny incident there that showed, I think, that tact is not always the better part of diplomacy. In the display on foreign policy during the Johnson years, there is a large photograph of a Soviet tank in Czechoslovakia during the invasion with a desperate-looking Czech in the background about to heave a small rock at it. The panel underneath the photo simply explains that the invasion occurred on the very eve of a summit meeting between Johnson and Brezhnev and that the summit was cancelled because of it. Our guide tactfully tried to move the Soves past that particular part of the display, and when the Soves, curious because they recognized one of their tanks, asked about the photo, he gave an evasive reply. That really stirred their curiosity: several of them went back later and got the Soviet translator to read the caption for them, and took careful notes on it. I forebode that they think we were trying to hide anti-Soviet propaganda from them. It's better to let it all hang out.

As we all know, cover-ups only make things worse.

Speaking of which, I was depressed to learn that in the year since I visited the USSR, the Soviets still haven't been told anything about Watergate. As far as they're concerned, Nixon was the first American president to really want detente and therefore he is a good guy. So when they hear an American bad-mouthing Nixon, they tend to think it's because that American is against detente.

Harry Middleton, director of the Library, had arranged an elegant luncheon for the Soves, featuring some heavyweights in Soviet-American relations from the university faculty. The discussion was brisk and getting much brisker just when we had to leave. We brought the delegation to the *Observer* office to meet journalists who have started their own newspapers, something I believe one is not permitted to do in the Soviet Union. They were fascinated by Jeffry Nightbyrd of the *Austin Sun*, a

radical who discussed his politics with them. Nightbyrd, a former SDS organizer and anti-war activist, handles rhetoric like a champ. When they asked him what he thought of the Texas Rangers, he said they were "the private army of the ruling elite circles." He really startled them by explaining that he is not communist because he is not a Marxist, that he considers Marcuse out of date and that he identified closely with the PRG and the NLF. I may be overstating the case, but I got the feeling the Soves reacted to Nightbyrd as though he were old home week — at last, someone who spoke their rhetoric;

It may not be a good idea to have Soviet visitors speak only with American leftists. (I'm sure the State Department wouldn't think so.) Obviously, they did meet other flavors of Americans during their tour — I am sure my Republican friend Mort Allin saw to that. It is only because of my own political outlook that they got an overdose of Texas liberals while they were here. We kept trying to tell them that we weren't "normal" Texans. American libs do have a tendency to go on and on about this country's problems. I watched several of them, after giving lengthy diagnoses, turn to a Sove and ask, with trusting innocence, "And what are the problems in your country?" Only to be told, in effect, "There aren't any." It's at times like that one wonders if they shouldn't have been turned over to the members of American Legion Post 408 in Edinburg (whose new bicentennial matchbook cover reads "Fight Communism with Americansim" — in red letters, no less.) The guys from the Alfredo Cantu Gonzalez Post would doubtless have assured the Soves that we don't have any problems either. (cept for pesky, commie-oriented libs). And I think the Soves wouldn't have believed a word of it. They're suspicious enough about whether we're levelling with them when we do level with them.

After the Soves departed, I had occasion to talk to a journalist from Mali who spent six years studying in Moscow. He said the first thing he was taught at J school there was, "the purpose of journalism is to advance the interests of the party." I've always figured that the purpose is to spread information. I see no reason to play the Soves' journalistic game. If they want to take the information they acquired here and use it to advance the interests of the party, so be it. That's no reason not to give them information. It's like letting them define the terms of an argument, so that a sympathetic comment is defined as an insult, and rather than debating about whether it was a sympathetic comment or an insult, you wind up debating about whether you have the right to insult them.

Sure, you can take information and use it for your own purposes, choose it, select it, and present it carefully, but information itself remains a neutral quantity, and the more of it there is around, the better off we all are.

M.I.

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By Pat Conway

Austin

All the fuss over Comptroller Bob Bullock's political information cards could have been avoided had Bullock admitted he plans to go into the bubble gum business when he leaves public office.

Political activism on high school and college campuses and television bringing political figures into the living room in competition with "Star Trek" and "Archie" have made youngsters more politically aware. Because of Little League Baseball and Pop Warner Football, kids are too wrapped up in their own athletic careers to have the same hero worship for sports stars they did in the olden days. This situation does not exist in politics. Whoever heard of Little League Politics? (Everyone who answers "the Texas Legislature" will get a free package of Bullock's Bubble, when it becomes available.)

The comptroller intends to fill the void created by kids' participation in sports. Youngsters need heroes, and they need trading cards about their heroes to barter and collect. That's the simple, unvarnished reason Bullock is spending upwards of \$4,000 a month to gather the needed information. He is concerned about the youth of Texas — no matter the cost. Some day the youth of Texas will give Bullock a resounding, "Huzzah," and carry him through the Capitol on their shoulders. Had the shallow critics sought to inquire, Bullock would have made available to them the information he plans to have on the Bullock's Bubble trading cards. Some examples:

**JOHN CONNALLY** — Well known switch hitter. Making a strong comeback after almost being sent to the Pen League. Plays center and right field as needed. Has his eye on top managerial post.

**BEN BARNES** — Has been benched for

several sessions since a girl made it into the big leagues. Showed outstanding promise as a rookie, but latter suffered at bat because of timing. Was uninvolved victim of famous "Black Stocks" scandal.

**BEN RAMSEY** — Bats right and leans farther right. Has been with the Majors longer than Connie Mack. Several rookies are after his place in the lineup.

**DOLPH BRISCOE** — Once tried to buy the league. Had better luck on his second attempt to get out of the minors. Would be excellent designated hitter if anyone could find him.

**FRANK ERWIN** — A tough man with the bat. Proved an excellent slugger in collegiate circles. Sometimes erratic while trying to make it all the way to home plate.

**JOHN HILL** — Gives the team bench strength. Predicted his "perfect game" against the Bell Phonies. Bats both right and left.

**BILL HOBBY** — Tried to popularize the game with the English. Once got caught stealing home. Has future in league if he improves timing.

You can see how innocent the entire Bullock card file is. Why, it's America's grand political pastime, all for the sake of bubble gum and the kids. But as any kid can tell you, sometimes you get bubble gum stuck to your face.

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# Another TV season

By Steve Barthelme

## A review

*Austin* I parked the Lancia, sniftered a light brandy, pushed the collected works off the bedside table, and watched this season's new TV shows. I perceived which new shows would be renewed and which would not. I mentioned some stuff from my higher life, to prove I had one. We are ready to go.

We start with the successes because they are less interesting than the failures. Among the successes, we proceed from least to most interesting. An orientation paragraph.

THE LEAST interesting of the less interesting must be *The Invisible Man*. David McCallum stars. The series runs (in kid time) against *Barbary Coast*, another new one, and *Rhoda* and *Phyllis*, old and new half hours. *The Invisible Man's* imminent success is largely due to the fact that children prefer technology to history. Also the fact that *Barbary Coast* is a lousy show. Because they lack imagination, adults will watch *Rhoda* and then swap wives, abuse children, mix margaritas, play backgammon, or look out the window for half an hour.

*Joe Forrester* stars Lloyd Bridges as a neighborhood cop. It follows *Police Story*. Two *Police Stories* in a row. A scheduling trick akin to slipstreaming which produces success, in many cases. With that and Lloyd Bridges' peculiar charisma, how can they go wrong?

*Starsky and Hutch* is a "happy news" show in cop drag. It is real bad, but renewable.

Jack Palance plays the lead in *Bronk*. The mayor's cop. Can a generation which learned everything it knows from Jack Palance (shoot at Alan Ladd) turn its back on *Bronk*? Possible. The episode I saw could have used some work. Palance is right for successful, maybe even good, television, but something else is required, a kind of imaginative energy that is evident in all good TV. *Kojak*, *Baretta*, *Rockford Files*, *Name of the Game*, *The Avengers* all have had it.

Some years back Robert Wagner played the thief in *It Takes a Thief*, a very good and very successful series. This year he plays essentially the same role in *Switch* wherein reformed con-man (Wagner) and ex-cop (Eddie Albert) collaborate as private investigators. Eddie Albert is present mostly to make Wagner look good. I guess. *Switch* will do poorly in the ratings, but will be moved in midwinter to a more advantageous time slot, where it

will be renewed. "We feel the show has potential," a CBS man will say.

*Medical Story* uses the "anthology" format — different stars each week. Medicine and practioners come in for a rough time. A slick production, in which doctors and such look bad, and young idealists point it out. Unnecessary operations and economic considerations. Much is borrowed from Paddy Chayevsky's *The Hospital*, a 1971 film. George Peppard also borrows, but his series will be dealt with in the failures section. *Medical Story* will be renewed. Even though the series is cliched, backward (young idealists are not what we want — they too easily turn into brown shirts), and opportunistic, it is nice to see the medical profession trashed. Maybe they will stop whispering.

So much for success. Many new shows cry out to be cancelled. Among the least interesting of these are *Three For the Road*, *The Family Holvak*, *Welcome Back Kotter*, *Joe and Sons*, *Big Eddie*, *Mobile One*, *Swiss Family Robinson*, *Doc*, and *Barbary Coast*. Of these, you can save one. Any one, I do not care. Watching sit-coms or family programming, or any show without stylized sex and violence calls for a kind of despair (or satisfaction) which I don't enjoy.

Other failures inspire more interest. A new fourth *Sunday Mystery Movie* called *McCoy* stars Tony Curtis as con-man, imposter, investigator, etc. While it might be better than watching *Columbo* snare another snob, *McCoy* has no future because it is in the every fourth week format and because Tony Curtis is not made for TV.

Anne Meara stars as a lawyer in *Kate McShane*. Anne Meara is all right, but the show is not. If the copywriters who do her dictaphone ads could be retained to write *Kate McShane*, it might have a chance. They won't be. As it stands, the series is a kind of *Ladies' Home Journal* of television. Competent, but late and slow. Cancelled.

*Fay* is a new sit-com starring Lee Grant as a divorced woman getting out into the world. It has already been cancelled. The great American public was not sympathetic to Lee Grant wasting her not inconsiderable talents.

Howard Cosell was interesting in 1963 on radio, broadcasting heavyweight boxing. As he rises in the celebrity game, many of us are left wondering. *Saturday Night Live with Howard Cosell* will be cancelled quickly. Cosell's career is easily explained in terms of our journalist surplus. Don't

take my word for it. Bill's Law states that when half the stories in your national magazines are about journalists, you have too many journalists.

*Doctor's Hospital* stars George Peppard. Banacek goes to Bellevue. Again the dirty black hearts of doctors are reviewed. But this series has its wires crossed. The soft writing and soft acting appeal to people who like doctors, that is, who are soft in the head. The meanness in *Doctor's Hospital* violates its basic appeal. That and George Peppard ought to be enough to kill it.

I FORGOT *Phyllis*. It was easy. *Phyllis* was spun off from the *Mary Tyler Moore Show*, and stars Cloris Leachman. Fresh from the cover of *Newsweek*. Scheduled between *Rhoda* and *All in the Family*, it will be cancelled anyway, because it is not funny and because Cloris Leachman (the truth with the bark) is not someone one wants to look at for half an hour. *Phyllis* started the season as the highest rated new show, so this must be wishful thinking.

Mel Brooks' *When Things Were Rotten* tries to make fun of the Robin Hood legend. Fun is not made. Something is made, but it is not fun. It is tiresome. It is slapstick, and not very good slapstick. When Howard Cosell goes to Las Vegas, Mel Brooks will go with him. They may be joined there by Cloris Leachman and Peter Falk. "Now when I was on the cover of *Newsweek*," they will all say.

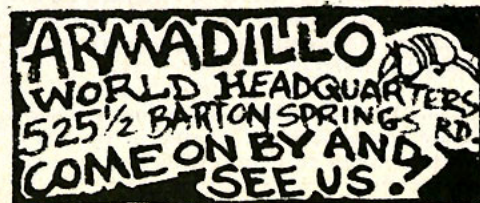
*Beacon Hill* has a single virtue, which is that it is different. The difference will carry you through a single episode. Your second and following episodes have a sort of Pavlovian effect — hearing the opening music, you tend to slump to the floor.

*Beacon Hill* is a dressed up soap opera,

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set in the 1920's, heavily publicized, poorly done, through which small bits of talent show. The light comes from the actors. In the British series from which this show was taken, there was a unifying idea — the idle and ineffectual rich served by the competent poor. In this version, there is no such idea (the rich are competent), so that a great number of marginally interesting people show up and disappear. It is all done with a British sense of humor, which means that all the jokes are a sixteenth of an inch long. Not right for the colonies.

On top of these problems, *Beacon Hill* is pretentious. If it gets any more pretentious, you'll have to watch it through a straw. Its pretensions are all to moral worth, not the sort which win sympathy. *Beacon Hill* will not persuade the great American public to buy an adequate number of blenders. I applaud them (us). This is a funny little country where what is popular is assumed to be gross and vile, and the cultured and the educated run around trying to find things most people don't like.

One thing has been left out — improvement. TV could be heavily improved if there were eleven networks instead of three and a quarter. More is more. Having displayed my proletarian spirit and suggested an improvement, I got into the Lancia and drove off into the night. Hiyo Silver.

## Fortnight ...

(Continued from Page 2)

vich, Strauss, and Puccini performed by concert bands of Del Mar College and Texas A&I University at Corpus Christi; 8:15 p.m., Del Mar Auditorium, Corpus Christi.

**GET A HAIRCUT** — Texas Opera Theatre opens its season with "The Barber of Seville," Rossini's comic opera performed in English; 8 p.m., Kinkaid School, Houston.

**ENCORE, GUITAR** — Another classical guitarist, this the Cuban artist Juan Mercadal performing Spanish and Latin American works; 8 p.m., Hogg Auditorium, University of Texas, Austin.

### OCTOBER 24

**CROONING A TUNE** — The Captain and Tennille will croon "Love Will Keep Us Together" and other myths, in concert; 8 p.m., Music Hall, Houston.

**MODERN DANCE** — Texas' major modern dance company, Dance Theater of the Southwest, welcomes guest artist Kelly Holt (an Erick

Hawkins-ex of the "body beautiful syndrome") in concert featuring artistic director Sandi Combest and company; through Oct. 25, University Theatre, North Texas State University, Denton.

### OCTOBER 25

**STUDENT SYMPHONY** — University of Houston Symphony Orchestra, in concert; 8 p.m., University Center, University of Houston, Houston.

**KIDDY LIT** — Stories for children, with legends and songs from America, South America, and other parts of the world, performed by company of professional actors, musicians, mimes, and acrobats; 2 p.m., New Texas Theatre, Houston.

**RAGGING TIME** — Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra jumps on bandwagon with concert chronicling "The Ragtime Years"; 8:15 p.m., Convention Center Theatre, Fort Worth.

### OCTOBER 26

**RODEO WARBLERS** — Texas Prison Rodeo features entertainers Dolly Parton and June Terry in country concert, between all the riding and roping and I don't know what-all; Huntsville.

**MEXICAN PIANIST** — Continuing University of Texas' "Latin America and the Arts" fine arts festival, pianist Luz Maria Puente of Mexico performs works by classical and Latin American composers; 8 p.m., Music Bldg., University of Texas, Austin.

### OCTOBER 27

**SYMPHONY CHORALE** — Hilda Harres, mezzo-soprano, joins Women of the Houston Symphony Chorale, Singing Boys of Houston and Lawrence Foster wielding the baton; through Oct. 28, 8:30 p.m., Jones Hall, Houston.

**COLONIAL CHURCH MUSIC** — University Collegium Musicum, directed by Homer Rudolf, in early church music concert; 8 p.m., Music Bldg. Recital Hall, University of Texas, Austin.

### OCTOBER 28

**BRITISH BOFFO** — Blood, Sweat, and Tears, the biggies at the boxoffice, perform their jazzrock in CEC concert; 8 p.m., Municipal Auditorium, Austin; also 8 p.m. Oct. 30, Music Hall, Houston.

**SOFTER SOUND** — For those who prefer stirring quartets by Ravel and Mexican composers Chavez and Galindo, a cheaper concert across town; 8 p.m., Music Bldg. Recital Hall, University of Texas, Austin.

### OCTOBER 29

**TRIO ON PIANO** — Selections from music by Tchaikovsky and Martin in concert by Del Mar Piano Trio; 8:15 p.m., Del Mar College, Corpus Christi.

**SOUND & FURY** — UT Wind and Percussion Ensembles perform Latin American music, with

George Frock, soloist, and Thomas Lee conducting; 8 p.m., Hogg Auditorium, University of Texas, Austin.

### OCTOBER 30

**ANOTHER GUITAR** — Continuing its series of stellar guitar concerts, Society for Performing Arts brings Michael Lorimer onstage; 8:30 p.m., Jones Hall, Houston.

## Dialogue

### Don't gimme rewrite

I hope Ronnie Dugger or someone else is preparing an article on the Orwellian rewriting of history that prominent Texas newspapers are doing in the Lorene Rogers controversy. People who read these papers ten years from now will probably not even realize that the faculty of the University of Texas voted overwhelmingly at a general faculty meeting to call for Rogers' resignation.

*The Austin American-Statesman* (afternoon edition) of Wednesday, Sept. 17, the day after the meeting, didn't even write a separate story on this dramatic faculty action, but reported it with a single sentence buried in another story.

*The Dallas Morning News*, in a "News Interpretive" by Richard Morehead printed in the Sunday, Sept. 21, edition, "interpreted" the facts to make it seem that most of the faculty supported Rogers. Here is a sample paragraph:

"The lady took the campus ruckus serenely, first addressing the faculty before a majority of 700 attending the meeting voted to request her resignation. About 1,000 faculty members stayed away from the meeting."

This sounds like a quorum wasn't even present for the faculty meeting, while actually a count was taken at the meeting to make sure it was. In addition, other sources (such as Brenda Bell in her "analysis" in the *American-Statesman* Sept. 21) have indicated this was the largest general faculty meeting ever of the UT faculty.

This kind of misleading reporting then gives Regent Shivers the basis for going on television and stating that most of the faculty either supports Rogers or doesn't care (as he did Friday, Sept. 19, on KTBC's Newscene).

Perhaps some checking with the officers of the general faculty about whether a quorum was present at the meeting and how the attendance compared with past general faculty meetings would help put some of these questionable news reports into perspective.

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