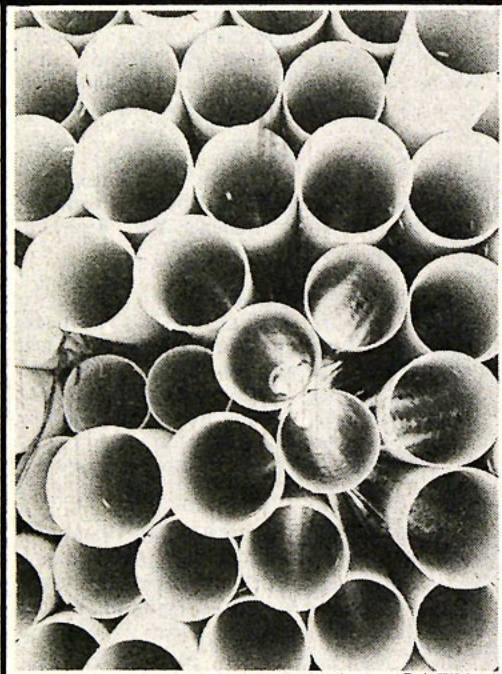


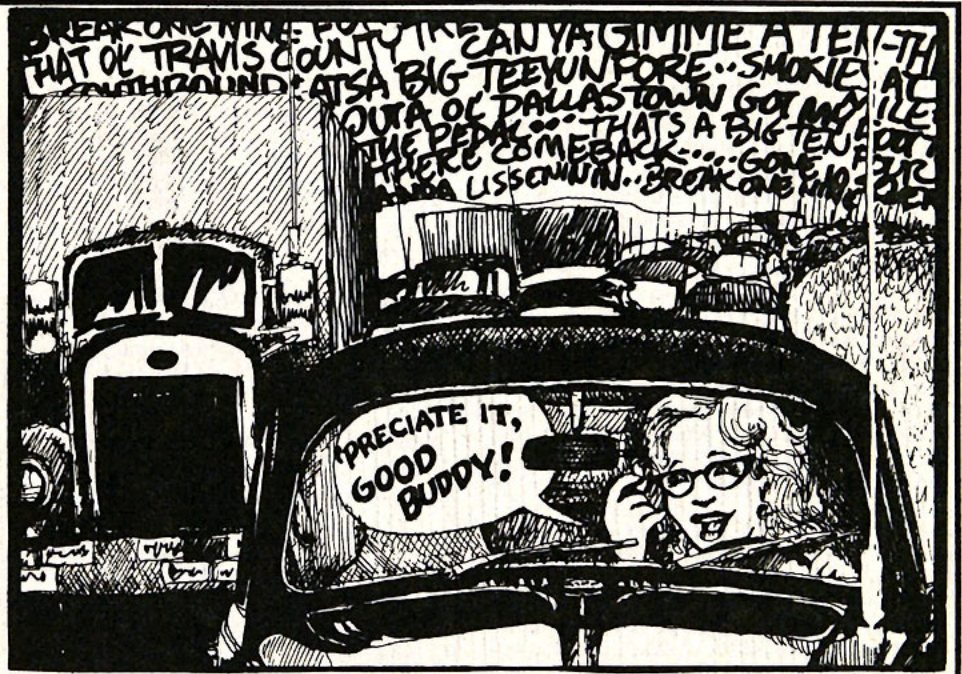
OBSERVER

A Journal of Free Voices
A Window to the South
Feb. 13, 1976

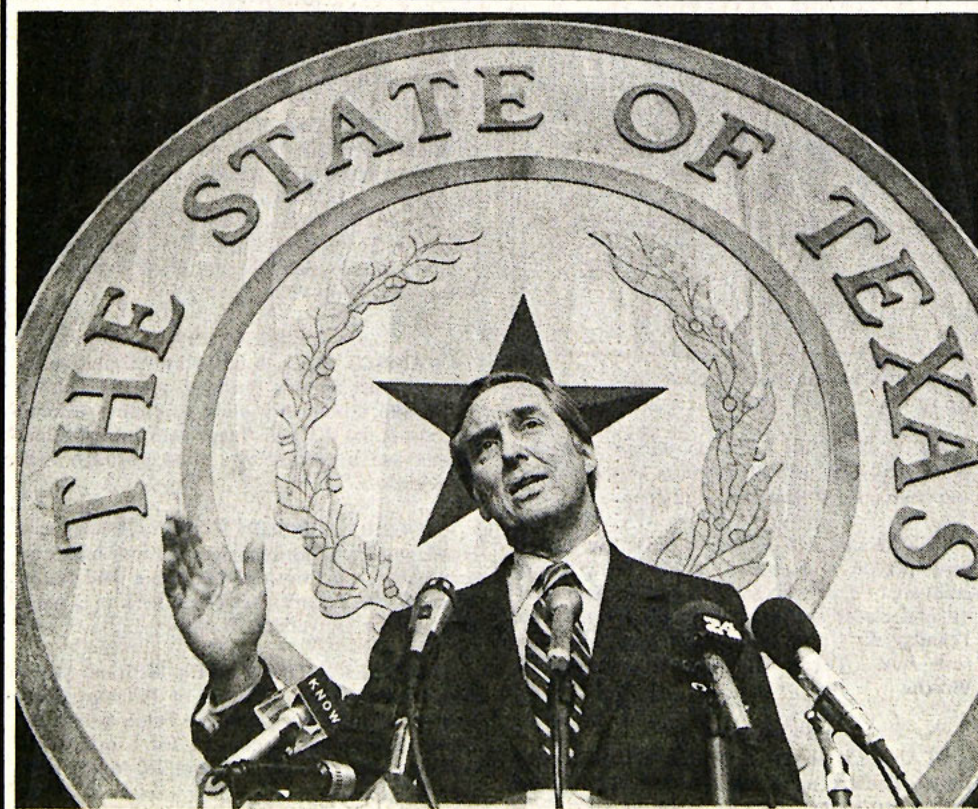
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Bob Wieland



Michael Priest



Mike Smith

Gas pains in
Reeves County

—
*The CB
phenomenon*

—
Bentsen's
chances

The coming fortnight

By Suzanne Shelton

FEBRUARY GRAB BAG

FILM FARE—Folks in El Paso like their movies mixed—arty stuff alongside thrillers, foreign finds, and American oldies—and it takes a non-commercial film series to do the job; UT El Paso's February schedule includes Ingmar Bergman's "Scenes From a Marriage," Feb. 13; Kenneth Anger program, including "Fireworks," "Scorpio Rising," "Kustom Kar Kommandos," Feb. 17; "The Mad Adventures of Rabbi Jacob," Feb. 18; Truffaut's "Day For Night," Feb. 20; Eisenstein's celebration of Bolshevik overthrow of Kerensky government, "Ten Days That Shook the World (October)," Feb. 24; Ken Russell's "Women in Love," Feb. 27; 10 a.m., 2 and 8 p.m., Union Theatre, University of Texas, El Paso.

AND MORE FILM—Houston cinemadness is even more esoteric, with these Rice Media Center films on tap in February: Boris Karloff as a shriveled mummy in Karl Freund's "The Mummy," Feb. 13; "Bride of Frankenstein," Feb. 14; "Phantom of the Opera," Feb. 15; full-length animated film of George Orwell's satiric parable "Animal Farm," Feb. 17; De Sica's "The Bicycle Thief," Feb. 18; New German Cinema director Werner Herzog's "Even Dwarfs Started Small," Feb. 19; B-movie standout Roger Corman's "The Raven," Feb. 20; the grisly "Body Snatcher," Feb. 21; Alain Resnais' "Stavisky," Feb. 22; Eisenstein's "Strike," his first film, Feb. 24; portrait of a Vietnamese village, "Seventeenth Parallel," by Dutch realist Joris Ivens, Feb. 25; post-divorce struggles with Margarethe Von Trotta directed by husband Volker Schlöndorff in "A Free Woman," Feb. 26; Feb. 26; Lina Wertmüller's brilliant "Seduction of Mimi," plus documentary "Hookers," Feb. 27; Canadian award-winning "Dream Life," Feb. 28; and Claude Jutra's "Kamouraska" starring Genevieve Bujold, Feb. 29; 7:30 p.m., Media Center Auditorium, Rice University, Houston.

SOUTHWESTERN ARTIST—Memorial exhibition of works by late Frank Reaugh, who came to Texas at age 15 and stayed to paint Southwestern subjects; through March 6, Academic Center, University of Texas, Austin.

JOHNS & JIMINEX—Retrospective of Jasper Johns prints, Janie C. Lee Gallery; sculpture and drawings by Luis Jimenez, Meredith Long Gallery; recent works by realist artist Ann Hunt, Alfred Lee Gallery; Houston.

AMERICAN ABSTRACTION—Second generation of Abstract Expressionists in exhibition

of American paintings of 1950s; also contemporary drawings and prints by Colombian artists; through March 28, University Art Museum, University of Texas, Austin.

MEXICAN ART—Exhibit of traditional toys of Mexico through Feb. 22, Laguna Gloria Art Museum; retrospective exhibition of more than 50 paintings by Mexican surrealist Leonora Carrington, plus drawings by Jose Luis Cuevas, well-known artist of Mexico, through February, Michener Galleries, University of Texas; Austin.

FEBRUARY 13

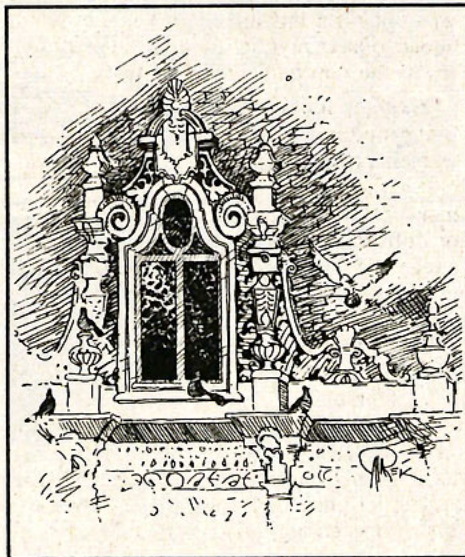
COSBY THE COMIC—Bill Cosby lays it on his music theatre audience, through Feb. 14; Houston Music Theatre, Houston.

FEBRUARY 14

BRAND NEW BALLETS—Valentine program of new dance works, with Greater Houston Civic Ballet performing choreography by Michael Uthoff of Hartford Ballet, plus Margo Marshall's "Secret Signs," Bill Chaison's "Bach et al," and Chris Lidvall's new work; through Feb. 15, Blaffer Aud., Kinkaid School, Houston.

PATRIOTIC POPS—Salute to the Bicentennial, with program of American pops performed by Dallas Symphony Orchestra with Erich Kunzel guest conducting; Music Hall, Fair Park, Dallas.

FOR SMALL FRY—Children's stories, including "Tiddalik the Flood-Maker,"



dramatized by members of New Texas Theatre; 2 p.m., New Texas Theatre, Houston.

FRED, THE BLENDER—Good old Fred Waring is back, with his blend of choral pablum and charisma; Music Hall, Houston.

TEXAS CELLIST—TCU's Select Series features Ralph Kirshbaum, a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Yale who happened to become a cellist and placed in the finals of the International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow; Ed Landreth Aud., Texas Christian University, Ft. Worth.

FEBRUARY 15

STANLEY HALL'S WHIZ KIDS—Austin Ballet Theatre again on the Armadillo stage, with repertory performance featuring Terri Lynn Wright and Byron Johnson, who've just returned

from European auditions with professional contracts; 7:30 p.m., Armadillo World Headquarters, Austin.

MISS DELLA REESE—One of my favorites; an authentic singer who can carry a tune and has soul besides; Della Reese, in concert; Music Hall, Houston.

POETIC POW-WOW—Time for the poets to get together again and cast their pearls; Frieda Werden, James Cody, and Roy Griffin in Laguna Gloria Poetry Reading Series; 2:30 to 5 p.m., Laguna Gloria Art Museum, Austin.

MISHA, THE PIANIST—Not to be confused with the dance world's Mischa, this one's a prizewinning pianist, Misha Dichter, in concert; 3 p.m., Roxy Grove Hall, Baylor University, Waco; then traveling Feb. 21 to UT Solo Artist Series, 8 p.m., Hogg Aud., University of Texas, Austin.

BIG APPLE BRASS—New York Brass Quintet appears in distinguished Houston Friends of Music concert series; Hamman Hall, Rice University, Houston.

FEBRUARY 16

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, GEORGE—This really isn't Washington's birthday, but the feds and 'crats have it their way, which has nothing to do with Ben Vereen's stint opening at Fairmont Hotel, except that he's the hottest thing in show biz since George socked it to that cherry tree; through Feb. 28, Venetian Room, Fairmont Hotel, Dallas.

IT'S EVERYWHERE—If you don't get sick of seeing the musical "1776" then this isn't the Bicentennial year, but the Aggies planned early for their University Variety Series; 8 p.m., Rudder Aud., Texas A&M, College Station.

FEBRUARY 17

MAKE MINE JAZZ—Glen Daum conducts talented UT Jazz Ensemble in concert; 8 p.m. Hogg Auditorium, University of Texas, Austin.

WACO WINDS—Baylor Wind Ensemble, conducted by Dick Floyd, perform free concert; 8:15 p.m., Waco Hall, Baylor University, Waco.

ALL TOGETHER NOW—General recital hosted by Texas A&I Music Dept.; also Feb. 24, 1 p.m., Music Bldg. Recital Hall, Texas A&I University, Kingsville.

FEBRUARY 19

I CANNOT TELL A LIE—The 22nd is really George Washington's birthday, and folks down in Laredo stubbornly cling to their weekend celebration of the real thing, with lots of street hoopla and heaven knows what; through Feb. 22, Laredo.

RAGGING IN DOUBLETIME—Pianists Paul Hersh and David Montgomery try four hands on one piano, performing "Ragtime and Salon Music in the Grand Tradition;" 8 p.m., Waco Hall, Baylor University, Waco.

STEINBERG ONSTAGE—William Steinberg, retired music director of Pittsburgh and Boston Symphonies, takes the baton before the Dallas Symphony Orchestra for a quartet of concerts; also Feb. 21, 27, and 28, Music Hall, Fair Park, Dallas.

(Continued on Page 8)

The Senate is a fallback position

Austin

At this point it looks like Lloyd Bentsen has about as much chance of becoming President as a blindfolded mule at the bottom of a coal mine. But he shouldn't have much trouble being renominated for his post in the U.S. Senate.

The national political pundits and even the Texas press are saying that Bentsen's abysmal showing in the Mississippi caucuses was very bad news for the Texas Senator. *The Austin American-Statesman* concluded, "When you finish fourth behind Sargent Shriver in the Deep South in Democratic precinct caucuses, you're in a heap o' trouble, boy." The editorial added that "those uncommitted delegate slates may start looking better and better to a lot of voters."

The Los Angeles Times called Bentsen the "heavy loser" in Mississippi. The national press, of course, has never placed Bentsen among the Democratic frontrunners. *Newsweek* says that Bentsen "looks more and more like a man aiming for a seat at the bargaining table—and the vice presidential nomination."

In the spate of candidate profiles, Texas' junior senator generally has been described as a pragmatist of considerable administrative ability and intellect who simply has not caught on with the public. It was eminently predictable that Bentsen would not be popular with the press—the man doesn't make for good stories. Traveling journalists, who often stop by the *Observer* to trade political skinnies with the editors, have uniformly carped about the scarcity of Bentsen anecdotes. None of them are able to penetrate his stainless steel exterior. One network reporter lamented that Bentsen's hair doesn't get ruffled and he doesn't even sweat when he plays tennis.

Peter Milius, who did the Bentsen article in *The Washington Post's* series on major candidates, led with a quote from a close friend of the senator. The unnamed friend said, "He reserves his personal life very much. I don't think there's anybody in town who would tell you, 'I sat down with Lloyd Bentsen and had a heart-to-heart talk.' To my knowledge, it doesn't happen."

If Bentsen hangs in the presidential fray, readers can expect many more stories about how there aren't any stories about Lloyd Bentsen—unless Bentsen's P.R. people come to the rescue with fresh-minted anecdotes about the candidate's pet gerbil or passion for slalom skiing or whatever. Today a reticent man has as much difficulty being elected President as would, say, a woman.

With Bentsen's presidential ship becalmed, and probably scuttled, the senator is looking to his lifeboat—a second term in the

Senate. Bentsen has only one Democratic opponent, a conservative economics professor from Texas A&M, Dr. Phil Gramm. It's really too early to tell how well Gramm will do. In Austin, the scuttlebutt is that he won't get too far. As one statewide elected official told the *Observer*, "He's gonna do great in Longview and Tyler and maybe Lufkin, but not so well in the big cities."

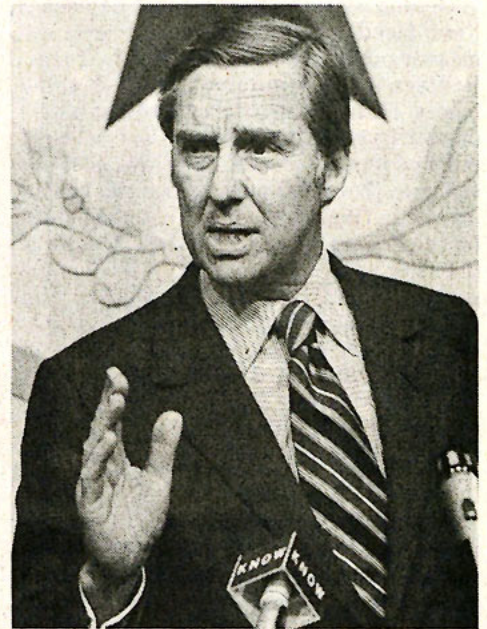
Gramm preaches a Let Free Enterprise Fix It philosophy. He is well to the right of Lloyd Bentsen, whom Paul Wieck of *The New Republic* calls a "progressive capitalist." Gramm says that the way to reduce inflation is to stop deficit spending. He wants to do away with all public works projects, with busing, and with detente. Gramm says that Henry Kissinger is "fawning on enemies while betraying allies." This goes down very well at the rural Chambers of Commerce and the trade association conventions where Gramm is much in demand as a speaker. His potential constituency is probably much the same as Sen. John Tower's, but it's unlikely that Texans would choose to elect two rightwing college professors to the United States Senate.

This year looked like a good year for a strong moderate, or even a liberal, to give Bentsen a run for his money. Bentsen is vulnerable (nobody knows how vulnerable yet) on several fronts. The fact that he, like Lyndon Johnson before him, got the Texas law changed so that he could run for two posts at once rankled some people. In January, Lynn Ashby of *The Houston Post* wrote a scorching column on Bentsen's dual candidacy. It was headlined: "Bentsen doesn't want to be Texas senator."

"We cannot vote for Lloyd Bentsen for senator," Ashby said. "Other and lesser men, from Sam Houston to Lyndon Johnson, found that their first term as a senator was enough to keep them occupied, but such contentment was not to be for Lloyd Bentsen. Pushed and shoved by an absolute to-mado of public demand and pressure, Bentsen has reluctantly agreed to run for the presidency. . . . But the sad saga does not stop here, friends and neighbors, for Lloyd Bentsen, again ever so hesitant, found that the public demanded that he run for not one, but two posts."

Ashby went on to suggest, "Why not let Bentsen run for sheriff, Congress, governor, school board member, and board chairman of Water District 238. This way, when all the ballots are counted, he can simply tick off the jobs he wishes and toss the others back to the assorted runners-up."

Ashby's column is quite popular among *Post* readers, but they seemed especially taken with this one, which is an indication



Mike Smith

Sen. Lloyd Bentsen

that some of the natives are restless about Bentsen's dual candidacy. The column was apparently not well-received in the *Post's* executive offices. Oveta Culp Hobby, editor and chairman of the board, inserted a disclaimer under Ashby's column two days after the Bentsen piece was published. It pointed out that the *Post's* editorial viewpoint appears only on the editorial page.

Phil Gramm is making much ado over the fact that Bentsen has moved a bit to the left in order to court a national constituency. Bentsen's vote in favor of applying the Voting Rights Act to Texas was not appreciated by the courthouse crowd, the governor, the attorney general, or his conservative supporters. The editors at the Austin daily were so incensed that they commanded reporters to mention Bentsen's VRA vote in every article that remotely touched on the subject.

Secretary of State Mark White seemed to think that Bentsen's position was close to treason. A source the *Observer* trusts said that White, who aspires to higher office, thought seriously about running against Bentsen for the Senate job because of his stand on the VRA. Our source said he heard that White went so far as to start raising a campaign kitty and that he abandoned the project only after Bentsen's people complained to Gov. Dolph Briscoe. A second source, this one within Bentsen's campaign

operation, said the story "is not inaccurate enough to be wrong."

White told the *Observer* he has considered running for lots of different offices, that some friends did urge him to run for the Senate this year, but that he never thought seriously about the race. Our second Bentsen source characterized White's response as "bullshit."

Gramm is also contending that Bentsen is "two-faced," offering a more liberal demeanor out of state than he does in Texas. Bentsen has definitely straddled some fences. He negotiated delicate compromises on such issues as the common situs picketing bill and the oil depletion allowance, for example. Bentsen voted against the picketing bill, but he also voted to kill three filibusters that were blocking the bill. The three filibuster votes were enough to lose him the support of H.B. Zachry, the wealthy San Antonio builder. Zachry is now in Gramm's camp. So are a few other conservative fat cats, including Ford Albritton, a former Texas A&M regent; Hayden Head, the Corpus entrepreneur; and John Stemmons, Jr., whose dad had a Dallas freeway named after him.

In a January campaign finance report, Gramm said he had raised almost \$89,000 and had spent close to \$39,000 in his campaign to date. Bentsen is rolling in dough, including the largest chunk of federal matching funds given to any candidate so far. But the Federal Election Commission has ruled that in Bentsen's peculiar case, he will be limited to spending \$641,000 in both the Texas presidential and senatorial primaries.

Gramm has asked the Election Commission to block Bentsen from using any matching funds in Texas. He says that billboards, bumper stickers, and TV commercials pro-



Dr. Phil Gramm

moting Bentsen's campaign for president will just naturally "spill over" and give him an advantage in the Senate race. But Bentsen argues that the \$641,000 limit actually discriminates against him rather than his opponent.

Texas liberals, somewhat wistfully, looked for a candidate to run for the Senate against Bentsen, but the liberal money was already sewed up by the various progressive presidential candidates. The names most frequently mentioned were Ronnie Dugger, the *Observer's* publisher; humorist John Henry Faulk; former State Sen. Joe Bernal; and Houston Comptroller Leonel Castillo. All of them declined to run.

With Bentsen looking like a shoo-in for the Senate and with liberals disagreeing on the best strategy for the presidential primary, a lot of progressives are deciding that this is a

good year to be pragmatic. A lot of legislators are going with Bentsen. Sen. Babe Schwartz headed Bentsen's effort to get a delegate slate together for the primary race in Schwartz' senatorial district. Other state senators who showed enough interest to attend Bentsen organizational meeting in Austin include Kent Hance of Lubbock, Ray Farabee of Wichita Falls, Oscar Mauzy of Dallas, Raul Longoria of Edinburg, Bob Gammage of Houston, and Roy Harrington of Port Arthur.

House members helping Bentsen range from Eddie Bernice Johnson, a black representative who co-chaired his petition efforts in Dallas, to George Presfon of Paris, a white shoe conservative who has been stumping for Bentsen out of state.

Liberal honcha Billie Carr, the strategist behind the uncommitted slates, said that Bentsen is cutting deals with every black and every union member he can get his hands on. Carr thinks this is making some conservatives mad enough to turn to Gramm. Carr said, "If Bentsen keeps all his commitments to our people, he's not gonna have any conservative support left. He's ignoring the conservatives."

The steel workers are with Bentsen and so, it appears, are the buildings and trade people, despite Bentsen's vote against the common situs bill. The rest of the Texas AFL-CIO is waiting for the national organization to make the presidential endorsement. The state group will make a decision on the senatorial race at its COPE convention in March. Meanwhile, the word from AFL-CIO state headquarters is: Get to the national Democratic convention any way you can—with Bentsen or uncommitted or Harris, with anybody, that is, except Wallace.

A lot of people are just trying to keep a low profile. Black Rep. Anthony Hall of Houston

THE TEXAS OBSERVER

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Ronnie Dugger, Publisher

A window to the South
A journal of free voices

Vol. LXVIII No 3 Feb. 13, 1976

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

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



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Published by Texas Observer Publishing Co., biweekly except for a three week interval between issues twice a year, in July and January; 25 issues per year. Entered as second-class matter April 26, 1937, at the Post Office at Austin, Texas, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Second class postage paid at Austin, Texas. Single copy (current or back issue) 53¢ prepaid. One year, \$10; two years, \$18; three years, \$25. (These rates include 5% sales tax). Foreign, except APO/FPO, \$1 additional per year. Airmail, bulk orders, and group rates on request. Microfilmed by Microfilming Corporation of America, 21 Harristown Road, Glen Rock, N.J. 07452.

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

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

says he hasn't exactly "come out" for Bentsen, but when somebody asks him, he answers that he'll vote for the senator. "I don't have any violent objection to his service for the last six years," he said. Bob Armstrong, the land commissioner, is listed

on some campaign stationery as supporting Bentsen for reelection to the Senate. He got an angry letter from a liberal friend asking him how he could support a "half Democrat" like Bentsen. "Halfheartedly," Armstrong replied. K.N.

The primary

Austin

As for the presidential primary, three Democrats and two Republicans qualified to run in every district in the state. Lloyd Bentsen, George Wallace, and Jimmy Carter will run slates in each of the state's 31 senatorial districts. Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan will have their delegates competing in all 24 congressional districts. (The Republican Party chose to hold their primary in congressional districts, while the Democrats decided on the smaller senatorial districts.)

Fred Harris qualified in 14 districts, Sargent Shriver in six, and someone named Ellen McCormack, the leader of an anti-abortion campaign, qualified in five. Billie Carr's uncommitted delegates will run in 18 senatorial districts.

The liberals, as usual, agreed to disagree on candidates and strategy. There was a lot of talk about how liberal slates should not compete within a district. The way the primary works, the top three vote getters (four in a few senatorial districts) win with a plurality. It's possible that the top three delegate candidates could come from various slates, but in most cases one slate will win all of a district's delegates.

Harris and Shriver have an unofficial agreement not to compete, and that agreement held in all districts except Houston District 11. (The Harris people also filed in Fort Worth District 12, which was supposed to be Shriver turf. But Ann McAfee, head of the Harris organization in Texas, said the filing was a last-minute snafu and that Harris will remove his delegates there. The Harris slate

in Fort Worth was not included in the *Observer's* count of 14 district slates.)

There are eight other districts where Harris and uncommitted or Shriver and uncommitted will be on the ballot. At Billie Carr's statewide strategy meetings last year, there was some talk—now it looks like wishful thinking—that somewhere down the line, near the May primary date, the libs in a district with two liberal slates would be able to perceive which was the strongest slate and the weaker slate would bow out. Right now it looks more likely that the uncommitteds will battle it out with Shriver or Harris in many districts.

And then there's former Georgia Gov. Jimmy Carter, who qualified in all the districts. Carter's Texas organization is a weird coalition of students, liberals, moderates, and Baptists. As a lay preacher in the Baptist Church, Carter is well known in many parts of the state. Church people were instrumental in getting his petitions signed. McAfee, the Harris organizer, says that Carter is "trying to be all things to all people." It is as yet too early to tell what kind of a pitch he will make to Texas voters: Sometimes he sounds like a liberal and sometimes he sounds like George Wallace's brother-in-law. Carter could take votes from Lloyd Bentsen or Fred Harris or from both of them.

About all we know for sure now is the cast of players for Texas' first presidential primary. Lloyd Bentsen looks like he'll take the leading role (the part was written for him, after all). But there are going to be some very interesting sub-plots. K.N.

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'PRECIATE IT,

On Texas highways

The subculture of Citizens Band radio (CB), which is itself an offshoot of the trucker subculture from whence it spread to the shitkicker subculture, is gradually seeping to the surface of the state's consciousness. CB is now so big that the Authorities Are Concerned, novelty tunes about the phenomenon are heard on the country-western radio stations, and the freaks are starting to crash the scene. In what may be a repeat of the fantastic cultural cross-pollination between freaks and shitkickers that produced progressive country music, one now hears CBers with handles (CB identification names) such as The East Texas Roach Clip, Armadillo Rose, and Bogart (to bogart a joint is to hold it the way Bogey did his cigarettes, instead of passing it).

But for the most part, CB is shitkicker civil disobedience. CB is not, as *Newsweek* seems to think, a trucker's medium. It has grown beyond that, and now it belongs to the necks. The impetus for the amazing growth of CB was the imposition of the 55 m.p.h. speed limit in December, 1973. Drivin' down the highway real fast in your pick-'em-up truck throwin' Pearl or Star cans out the window is a time-honored part of shitkicker culture: a right, dammit. Kickers, like their wealthy opposite numbers in the oil industry, have never thought much of gumint interference.

Texas CB dealers have no idea how many of the things are around—all they know is that CB is spreading fast. According to one dealer, it took the Federal Communications Commission 15 years to process the first one million applications for CB licenses, five months for the second million and three months for the third million. The FCC licenses cost \$4 for five years and some older CBers don't bother to renew. There is a 90-day waiting period and the FCC is reportedly swamped and hiring additional help. The radios themselves cost between \$150 to \$160 a unit and \$20 to \$25 for installation. Their range in towns is five to six miles and on the highway ten to 12 miles.

CBers can and do argue that CB promotes highway safety. It is not a totally insane argument. The thing is excellent for keeping sleepy drivers awake and it does focus attention on driving, road conditions, and staying alert for sight of smokies.

CBers occasionally use their radios to help law enforcement, reporting weavers or super-speeders, and warning one another of road hazards and accidents ahead. They are good about reporting stranded motorists who need help. And it is still enough of a neck tool so that when a long-haired friend of ours, who was driving back from Dallas feeling cool, found a pick-'em-up with a CB antenna sitting on his hmmm-hmmm, he slowed down, put out his joint and took off his beret fast. But it must be said that those who claim that CB is chiefly used to help "the laws" are full of bull. About four-fifths of all CB conversation concerns evading the laws, a.k.a., smokies, bears, local yokels, county mounties, black-and-whites, smokies in plain white (blue, black, or green) wrappers, etc. The main idea is not to git caught speedin'.

CB is also splendid entertainment. It's the ol' *vox populi*, unadulterated. The genius of the people, without pretension. DeToqueville would have loved it. CBers are themselves so down-on-the-ground, not to mention being downright coon-ass, that it is silly to rhapsodize about them; as though *The New York Times* had sent some high-brow music critic to review Willie Nelson. But CB does display the peculiar American genius for cooperation—individualism, friendliness, and disrespect for authority. CB is getting together to outwit the Man. As we have pointed out before, Texas is just like the rest of America, only more so. Pardon our chauvinism, but a quick sampling of CB in four nearby states leads us to conclude that Texas CB is spicier, saucier, more full of juice and spunk than that heard elsewhere. (Colorado CB is, comparatively, downright dull.)

In the first place, CB here is a splendid cacophony of Texas accents. Lord, listen to the East Texas drawls; marvel at the West Texas twangs; wonder at the flat, raspy tones of the Panhandle. Through all of them one finds that raunchy Texian humor—a combination of pungent expression and artistically mangled grammar. Anybody who would leave the -g on an -ing suffix had best not go on Texas CB until he gits the problem corrected. Black and *chicano* accents are relatively rare, but in East Texas, Cajun accents are surprisingly frequent.

One starts conversation with CBers going in the opposite direction (after sight-

ing a CB antenna flashing past) by saying, "Break one-nine," meaning that you are breaking into the conversation on Channel 19, the main CB channel. If 19 has too many folks on it already, as usually happens in large cities, you and your callee can agree to switch to another channel.

"Break one-nine for that northbound maroon-over-silver Chevy. Yew got your ears on?" If that maroon-over-silver Chevy has his ears on, he replies, "Hey there, breaker, you got that maroon-over-silver Chevy. Come on." "How's it look back over your shoulder, good buddy?" (Have you seen any cops behind you?) Good buddy is a generic term including all CBers. Some CBers are chary with their "good buddies," applying the endearment only to those with whom they have traveled in convoy, but it is usually used in impartial and democratic fashion.

Good buddy replies, "Yew got a clear shot [there are no cops] alla way back to that ol' Amarillo town."

Another peculiarity of CB is that all agglomerations of human habitation, from villages to major metropolitan areas, are given the prefix "that ol'" and the suffix "town," as in "that ol' Dallas town" and "that ol' Dimebox town."

Grasshopper and Charlie Brown chatted in the dark at 6 a.m. in mid-January in East Texas. Charlie Brown had seen an 18-wheeler pulled over by the two-five-five. A big truck is an 18-wheeler: a car is a four-wheeler: a pick-up is always a pick-'em-up truck. Two-five-five refers to highway marker 255. If a good buddy asks you for your 10-20 and you haven't seen a mile marker lately, you ask him to wait a short-short until another one comes up.

In the dawn near Dallas, Sidewinder and Preacher Man, both headed in the same direction, gloomily discussed recent talk about regulating CBs. The Texas Department of Public Safety has recently had some of its patrol cars monitoring CB in random areas in an effort to determine whether CBers use their medium more to help the law or to evade it—something any honest CBER could have told them before they started the spot check program. Sidewinder, in the lead, put his hammer down. Preacher Man then put his pedal to the metal (also, balls to the wall). They then constituted a convoy, with Sidewinder runnin' front door (keepin' lookout for smokies ahead) and Preacher Man runnin'

GOOD BUDDY

back door (keepin' lookout for any smokies sneakin' up from behind). Any CBer between Sidewinder and Preacher Man would be in the rockin' chair—a no-sweat situation, as long as you don't run over your front door. Hours and hours of 10-10 indicates that while most CBers do speed, they rarely speed over the old limit—most do "double 35" and will report anyone doing over 80. Well, maybe 85.

Jack Leg, Little Bill and Dancing Man were runnin' a convoy south of that ol' Lubbock town. Jack Leg 'lowed as how the double nickel (55 m.p.h.) was a fraud in terms of its purported intention to conserve fuel (he didn't say it like that: we cleaned up his act). "These DPS helicopters the state sends out to catch us speeders—do you know how much fuel they waste stoppin' people from wastin' fuel?"

A rather epic convoy developed en route to that ol' Amarillo town. Stainless was runnin' front door, followed by Dancing Bear, the Cookie Monster, Spelunker, the Ol' Peapicker, Miracle Man, the Long Tall Cowboy and Blue Rock runnin' back door. Stainless, clearly a *macho* individual, set the pace at double 40's or better, and damn near run over a couple of smokies. The convoy lasted almost 200 miles and the remainder of the troops were somewhat startled when Stainless, that peerless, studhoss front door, finally went 10-7 and turned out to be a Tastee Bread truck.

There are legends about hookers who use CB, but conversation of a suggestive nature is rarely heard. In ol' Dalhart town there was one positively arousing exchange between the Oklahoma Chore Boy and a sexy-voiced female by the handle of Snookums, whose "tay-un fore" had to be heard to be believed. When Snookums finally gave the Chore Boy her phone number, every male on one-nine in the area must have written it down.

CB handles are an art form in themselves. As a general rule, the shorter and less esoteric, the better. The handles tend to run to *machismo*: in Texas almost a third of them involve the word cowboy. Foxy Lady and Shady Lady are popular with women. There is one Texas woman, who reportedly has a whole lot of miles on her and three marriages behind her, who goes by the handle The Cherry Pie. The only good Colorado handle we heard was The Rocky Mountain Oyster.

Land Commissioner Bob Armstrong goes

by Land Rover. Comptroller Bob Bullock says he's just 10-10: he has a CB in his new black pick-'em-up, but hasn't gotten his license yet. Secretary of State Mark White was an enthusiastic CBer ("it's the voice of the people," he said), until his got ripped off in Dallas. CBs are one of the hottest items on the thief market these days. There are reportedly thieves who hang around big city parking lots just waiting for antennas to show up. Governor Briscoe's press secretary Bob Hardesty says the governor is not be found—on CB. Bob Cargill, Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby's press man, replied "Negatron" when asked if Hobby was a CBer. Cargill goes by Green Homet and said, "W.P.H. messes with some other kind of radio." It's about this little ol' KPRC station Hobby owns down in that ol' Houston town. A spokesperson for Atty. Gen. John Hill answered, "Negatory. He's just one of those dumb lawyers who plays tennis."

Rep. John Wilson of LaGrange is a fan of "redneck radio" and recently said, beaming, "That's a *big* 10-4" in response to a compliment about his work on the utilities regulation bill at a recent political do. Donald Lee, a crippled college student in San Antonio, has a CB on his electric wheel chair and goes by Mr. Ironside. This reporter's handle is Zenger's Old Lady, in honor of John Peter. Our artist's brother is One Spread Eagle. John Henry Faulk, the Texas humorist, is Ol' HeeHaw, in recognition of the television show on which he now appears. Ol' HeeHaw has considerable difficulty sorting out his 10-4's, 10-20's and whathaveyous. In frustration, he is given to announcing, "this is HeeHaw, 10-17 and a half, southbound and going down."

Peavine Jeffries, the noted Texas car-

penter, philosopher, and leading citizen of North Zulch, has gotten into some spicy one-nine conversations concerning his tiny bladder problem. CB regulations supposedly forbid the use of any strong language on the air, but according to some sources, Jeffries is responsible for the following message heard not long ago in Madisonville:

Put your foot on the floor
You got a back door
This is the Whore from Baltimore
I'm the wife of Sam Bass
Keep your foot on the gas
And we'll keep the smokies off your ass.

CBers are poets, fond of putting all manner of messages into rhyme. Jerry Brock, a lawyer for the Office of the Consumer Credit Commissioner, reports hearing,

Brush your teeth
Comb your hair
Because smokey's takin' pictures out there.

Meaning that smokey has set up a radar trap. This is also described as, "A bear set up shop by 287, he's takin' pictures and writin' coupons." (Handing out tickets.)

Such information is more than a good 10-4, and will move a breaker to intone, "Preciate it, good buddy." A northbounder may tell a southbounder that there is a bear northbound on the highway, "but he's flip-floppin'," meaning that the cop is crossing the median and nabbing southbound speeders as well. This may move a breaker to that ultimate tribute, "Definitely 'preciate it, good buddy."

CBers bid farewell to one another with certain ritual forms. One may wish a drop-out from a convoy a safe journey or more

February 13, 1976

7

Gonna do it like Sonny Pruitt

10-4—message received and understood. "That's a good 10-4" means the information is especially welcome.

10-7—take a break, go off the road.

10-20—your location.

10-36—the time.

10-10 an' listenin' in. Also, on the side—you will be listening to further conversation, but have nothing more to add yourself.

I'm down—signing off, as in, "I'm southbound and down."

Come on—go ahead and talk.

Brought it on—a coon-ass version of "bring it on," meaning "move up, the coast is clear."

Do you copy?—did you 10-4?

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likely a good day. Or a good day today and a better day tomorrow. If religiously inclined, one may invoke God's blessing on a good buddy going 10-7.

CBers get involved in non-road discussions only if they're out in thin company where chit-chat won't be blocking up 19. One night Spelunker told HeeHaw it was the birthday of a famous person. "I wish him a happy birthday," said HeeHaw, who may have been sampling Peapicker's peppermint vodka. "I wish everyone a happy birthday whose birthday it is today."

"It's one of your favorite people," said Spelunker. "In fact, it's your very most favorite ex-President, Richard M. Nixon."

"Mercy. Mercy. Mercy," said a breaker. "Make that 'Happy Birthday' inoperative," said HeeHaw.

"Expletive deleted," said another breaker.

"I wonder what he's doing at San Clemente tonight," sang another breaker.

Perhaps it's too good to last. Sooner or later Eric Sevareid will discover CB and announce that it is the quintessence of the American spirit and the apotheosis of the American flavor. Sevareid, like DeToqueville, has too much class to be deterred by vulgarity. Then *MS*. magazine will riposte

that CB is a disgusting display of the student mentality, all that *machismo*, all that male chauvinism, all those bank clerks and gas pump jockeys and 115-pound cedar choppers driving around with handles like, "Big'un," "The Most Man," and "the Ol' Super Jock." Graduate students will start writing their theses about CB—psychology majors, linguistics majors, even poli sci students keen on forms of rebellion. The laws will finally get so hot about people doing double 35 instead of double nickels, they'll start lobbying for regulation. They haven't had anything to get in a twit about since pot was two-to-life. Even more depressing, the serious environmentalists will point out that we really can't afford to have people driving around at double 35—may be fun for the folks, but *somebody* has to save the planet. Then George Wallace will exploit the issue and announce that when CBs are outlawed, only outlaws will have CBs. And the shit-kickers will get more defensive than ever and think that everybody is picking on them, because being appreciated by Sevareid comes to the same thing. And no one will make up funny poems any more at 2 a.m. outside Del Rio about bears and greaseburgers. Anomie will win again. Maybe.

Or maybe Sevareid will start dropping his final -g's.
M.I.

Fortnight . . .

(Continued from Page 2)

FEBRUARY 21

ABT ON TOUR—Austin Ballet Theatre continues its bicentennial tour with stopover in Schulenberg; through Feb. 22, Schulenberg.

ETHNIC DANCERS—San Antonio Ballet hosts Matteo Ethno American Dance Company in three-day residency; through Feb. 23, San Antonio.

CHIMNEY SWEEP—Gas Works theatre troupe tells the story of "Cinderella" in a children's matinee; 2 p.m., New Texas Theatre, Houston.

FEBRUARY 22

ROCK CONCERT—Deep Purple and Nazareth, performing in tandem; 8 p.m., Coliseum, Houston.

AVANT-GARDE SOUND—For the more experimental, the New Music Ensemble performs works by George Crumb and Mario Davidovsky, with Glen Daum directing; 8 p.m., Music Bldg. Recital Hall, University of Texas, Austin.

FEBRUARY 23

INNOCENCE IN HIGH C—Vienna Choir Boys turn falsetto into a fine art; 8:30 p.m., Paramount Theatre for the Performing Arts, Austin; also Feb. 26, Jones Hall, Houston.

FESTIVAL OF PLAYS—Aggie Players Bicentennial Festival of Plays features four works by Barrie Stavis: "Lamp at Midnight," "The Man Who Never Died," "Coat of Many Colors," and "Harper's Ferry," dealing with men who shaped the destiny of the Western

world; through Feb. 28, Texas A&M Theater, College Station.

WOLF-WHISTLE ROUNDUP—South Texas Wolf Hunters Association Dog Show features lots of those ferocious wolf-baiters and some dogs besides; through Feb. 26, Karnes City.

FEBRUARY 24

MELLERDRAMMER—Take Austin's super-talented director Stephen Wyman, team him with drama dept. star Steve Barton and choreographer Barbara Barker and you've got a fullblooded melodrama, none of that lily-livered stuff, in "Under the Gaslight"; through March 6, Drama Theatre Room, University of Texas, Austin.

TEACHER SOUNDS OFF—Free faculty concert of chamber music; through Feb. 25, 8:15 p.m., Roxy Grove Hall, Baylor University, Waco.

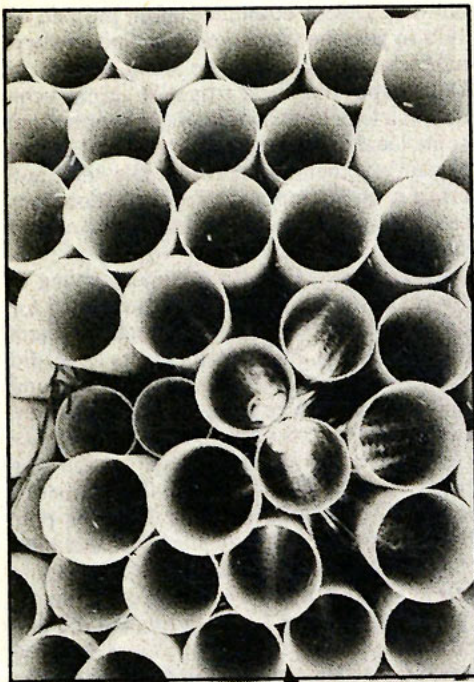
BAROQUE MUSIC—An "Evening of Baroque," performed by Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra in its chamber series; Orchestra Hall, Fort Worth.

FEBRUARY 25

MOOOOOVE OVER—And make room for Houston Livestock Show, the state's biggie, to be followed by the annual rodeo; through March 7, Astrodome, Houston.

ALBEE'S 'ALICE'—Edward Albee's eerie "Tiny Alice," a play about the richest woman in the world who considers leaving a bundle to the Catholic Church, with Alley cast; through March 11, Arena Stage, Alley Theatre, Houston.

JAPANESE MUSICIANS—Tokyo String Quartet appears in U of H concert series; 8 p.m., Univ. Center Houston Room, University of Houston, Houston.



Bob Wieland

Gas pipes

The perils of no regulation

Reeves County

If you get a chance to go through Reeves County, out El Paso way, any time soon, take a close look. It's good farming country around Pecos there—they raise wheat, barley, oats, cotton, sunflowers, feed grain, and all kinds of vegetables. But it won't be that way long. That's good, rich, productive land, but it's going to change. The farmers are selling out. The country will go back to grazing land.

The United States Congress is now debating de-regulation of the interstate price of natural gas. There are some solid arguments in favor of de-regulation, and even some liberals seem to favor it. But before the politicians vote for de-regulation, they might want to take a look at what's happening in Reeves County. The company that supplies gas to the farmers of Reeves County is not regulated by anybody—not the Federal Power Commission or the Texas Railroad Commission or the Public Utilities Commission. As of Dec. 31, 1975, the company was no longer bound by its old ten-year contract to the farmers of Reeves County. The company promptly multiplied the price of gas five times. According to figures used by the farmers, the com-

pany is making better than 200 percent profit on every cubic foot sold in Reeves County. It is driving the farmers out of business and refuses to discuss the possibility of negotiating a lower price. The Delhi Gas Pipeline Corp. has not only quintupled the price of gas, it has also instituted a deposit system—it is charging farmers approximately \$2,000 for every 200 horsepower, gas-powered well engine. "It is the most villainous, obdurate posture," said George McAlmon, an El Paso attorney and candidate for Congress. "Those farmers are just helpless. It's like watching a hurricane approach: they know it's going to blow away their lives."

Making the natural gas industry "competitive" is all very well in theory, but if it's going to start competing to see who can beat 200 percent profits, with deposits for gravy on the side, someone ought to take a closer look at de-regulation.

This all started, a happy reminder of the larceny of yesteryear, with Billie Sol Estes. Estes blew into Reeves County back around 1953 and convinced the farmers, who were using electricity or diesel fuel to power their irrigation well pumps, that gas would be a better deal for them. He started the Pecos Growers Gas Co. and talked the farmers into giving him, not selling him, easements to lay a 12-inch pipeline. He also got gas-buying contracts out of the farmers before the pipe was even laid.

Billie Sol always was a caution on his financing. He went up to Chicago and borrowed \$7 million so he could lay the pipe and then he went bust. The system has apparently been through four or five owners since then, always a paying proposition. The farmers used enough natural gas to pay for the pipe system and the system was extended on to Marfa and Alpine without the farmers getting easement payments. The Texas Oil and Gas Co. bought the system in 1966 and Texas Oil and Gas has this wholly-owned subsidiary named Delhi Gas Pipeline Corp., which is an intrastate carrier.

Texas Oil and Gas Co. operates mostly in Texas and Oklahoma, but always intrastate—they sell it where they get it and the FPC doesn't come into it no way. Nor does the Railroad Commission. Delhi doesn't sell gas to municipalities. Under Article 60-50, sections four and five, of Texas law, a carrier of natural gas that transfers gas for supplying fuel to pump irrigation water is not regulated—said carrier can set any price it wants. Under Delhi's old contracts, it was obligated to furnish gas at 40 cents per thousand cubic feet. With three months left to run on the contract, Delhi notified the farmers that come Jan. 1, 1976, the price would be \$1.85 per thousand, no if's, and's or but's.

"They said we could go to other sources of energy if we didn't like that," said farmer L.G. Worsham, "but we didn't have no other source to go to. Had we a knowed it three or four years ago, we might have got El Paso Natural to come in, but we signed with Delhi and had to buy

from 'em and then they come up with that kind a price." Some of the farmers may be able to convert their pumps to propane, butane, diesel fuel, or electricity, but for most, putting the capital into that kind of conversion would be killing. "We could survive 90 cent gas and we expected to pay a little more, but this..." said Worsham.

A further problem for the farmers is that they just flat can't get bank financing with gas at \$1.85. In 1975, Worsham used \$40,000 worth of gas. "If I was to use the same amount in 1976, it would cost me \$200,000 an' I just never made any a that kind a money." A lot of farmers have already given up—there was a big farm equipment sale a few weeks ago. But those who already had winter wheat in signed for \$1.85 plus the deposits. A clause in the new contract stipulates that either party can cancel the contract on ten days notice. Banks aren't much interested in farmers who can be left without water on 10 days notice. And even that contract only runs 10 months: a farmer would have to have winter wheat in '76 in order to get financing in the spring of '77.

The farmers formed a committee and got some lawyers, Jim Sloan of Austin and Roddy Harrison of Pecos. There was a hearing in November. Sloan and Harrison tried to use a Texas Supreme Court decision from last year which gave injunctive relief to customers, gave the courts the right to grant injunctions against companies that were making excessive and unreasonable charges. Unfortunately, that decision applied to utilities and Delhi is not a utility. But the lawyers did get a subpoena, a court order to go into Delhi's contracts and cost factors. The figure that came out of Delhi's books was a total blended cost of 59 cents per thousand. This is not wellhead cost—Delhi's wellhead costs range from 14 cents to \$1.00, according to Harrison; the 59 cents includes labor, management, amortization, the whole schmear. If it costs you 59 cents and you can sell it for \$1.85, you must be an unregulated gas company.

Sen. Adlai Stevenson of Illinois, who is presumably not a lackey of the petroleum industry, recently proposed in the Congressional hearings that de-regulation be staved off, but that the FPC be empowered to raise the price for interstate to \$1.35. If it costs you 59 cents and the government regulators are ready to let you sell it for \$1.35, there must be some stupid politicians in Washington. However, according to a spokesman for Delhi, the company had been losing money on its Reeves County contracts for three or four years.

(Many farmers never even paid 40 cents per thousand. Under the old contract, if you paid your bill by the first of the month, you got two cents off and if you kept it up all year, at the end of the year you got another four cents off. So the farmers were paying 34

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Now the Delhi Corp. quite naturally has quite a different story. Bob Young, general counsel for Texas Oil & Gas, told the *Observer* the company's contracts with the Reeves County farmers prior to Dec. 31, 1975, had an average price of 31 cents per mcf (the first of several discrepancies between the company's figures and the farmers' figures) and that in the last three or four years the contracts had resulted in an economic loss for Delhi. (One trusts not a serious loss: according to Texas Oil & Gas Company's annual report for 1975, net income was up by 55 percent.)

"As is common knowledge," said Young, "the price of natural gas at the wellhead has risen from about 25 cents per mcf in 1971 to \$1.90 per mcf at the wellhead at the current time." Young said Delhi is paying as much as \$1.90 for contracts today and he doesn't know where the farmers got the \$1.00 top figure. But another attorney for the farmers, Jim Sloan of Austin, says he doesn't know where Delhi got the \$1.90 figure. "They may be paying \$1.90 for some gas and it's up to \$2.25 in some areas where there's a real shortage, but I doubt they're buying any \$2.25 gas out there."

In fact, Delhi has a customer in a high shortage area, to wit, the Lower Colorado River Authority, which is passing along most of its gas from Delhi to Austin and San Antonio. Delhi has three contracts for back-up gas with the LCRA which go under fairly complicated formulas. But the upshot is that LCRA, in the heart of the old shortage area (a big hand for LoVaca), is paying Delhi from \$1.90 to \$2.00 per mcf. That's not Delhi's cost, mind, that's what it's charging in a shortage area.

Young said the 59 cents blended cost cited by the farmers was correct "at that time, I don't know what it is now. But we don't sell our gas out of a pool. Delhi, like most gas companies, has wellhead gas dedicated to it at various prices, and this is obligated to be delivered to certain customers under long term contracts. We have obligations under long term contracts to Texas Western Municipal Gas Corp., Southwest Texas Municipal Gas Corp., and to Southern Union Gas Co. When you add up the requirements of those three customers, they equal our undedicated gas resources." But Young was apparently not saying that these three major customers ate up all of Delhi's 59-cent gas. In fact, he's not sure what those customers are being charged, as their contracts stipulate they will be charged the average cost of gas plus a fee for Delhi's gathering and delivery services.

Young made it clear that Delhi would be just as happy to see all the farmers get off the line, new contracts or no. "They are only a miniscule portion of our business there," he said. "We are selling to industrial and municipal clients. It's a very small volume of gas that goes to the farmers, we have got other customers that make it a paying line."

In his formal statement, Young said, "Gas

deliveries were continued after the end of 1975 to give the farmers time to find an alternate energy source. The management of Delhi hopes that these irrigation farmers can obtain a long term source of gas supply from some local distribution company and to that extent is expending considerable time and effort in an attempt to sell its irrigation lines to someone who would be willing and able to supply this market."

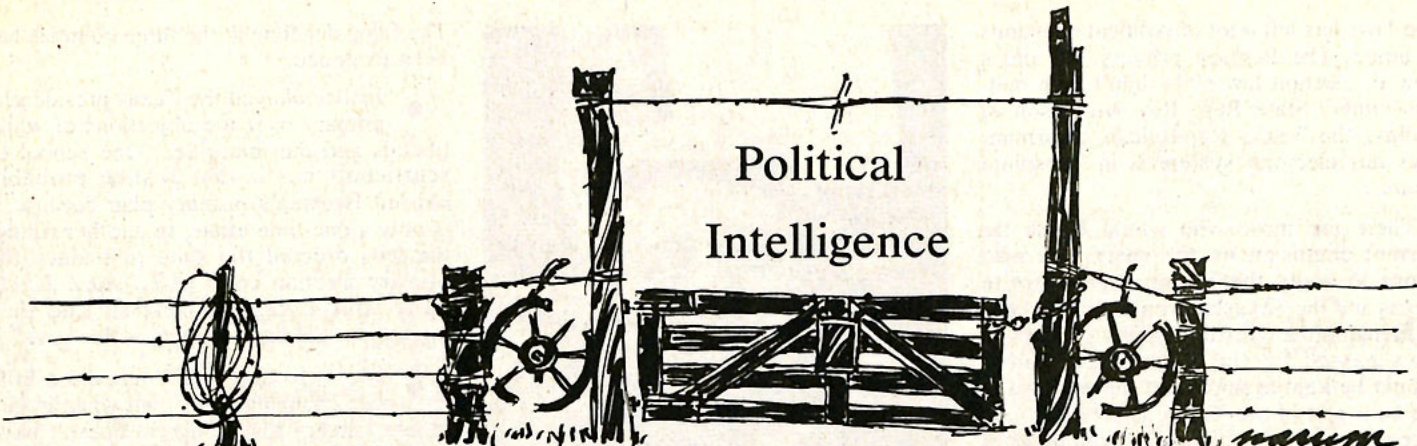
Sloan said, "Of course they're trying to get rid of the farmers. The farmers paid for the system out there, it was built for them and by them and now Delhi wants to get rid of them because there's a gas shortage and they can make more money with big customers. But I think the farmers have some equity rights in that gas system. That system was built under the specific statute that applies to supplying gas to farmers for irrigation purposes. And the company has been operating it under that statute all these years, escaping any regulation and all kinds of state taxes. Now the company is trying to steal the distribution system. Those farmers granted easements for limited purposes—for the purposes of irrigation and the country granted limited easements or permits for the same purpose."

Actually, it would be rather difficult for Delhi to steal the distribution system since the company happens to own the distribution system, but it will be interesting to see if Sloan's theory about the farmers having equity in the system proves to be correct.

Bo Worsham is 62 years old. "I wouldn't mind for me. I could quit. I'm too old to learn anything else, but I just hate it on account of my kids. I've laid my two boys off here, one 40 and the other 35. It's pretty sad to see the farms fold up, see the people startin' quittin'. But they knew they couldn't pay. They never made any a that kind a money. I had a good thing here. But they can destroy that."

Another Reeves County farmer who didn't want his name used, said, "I'm 64 years old. I have a son, has three kids and a new house. I just wish I hadn't talked him into comin' back here. This is hurtin' the community so bad. We were buildin' a hospital an' everything. We floated a lot of bonds, \$3.5 million, to pay for that hospital. I guess this'll put us all on relief. People already pullin' out. Won't nothin' grow in this country without water. You got to have irrigation. I come here in 1947. Everything I've worked a lifetime for . . . but I wouldn't sign that new contract. They don't even tell you about the deposits until after you've signed. I . . . well I just . . . why do they have to make a dollar and a half on that gas?" M.I.





Political Intelligence

• There's been great feuding and fusing in the Texas congressional delegation up in D.C. When Rep. Bob Casey of Houston resigned to become a member of the Federal Maritime Commission, he left open a "Texas seat" on the House Appropriations Committee, which newspapers invariably refer to as "the powerful House Appropriations Committee." By long tradition, the seat should have gone to the most senior member of the delegation interested in the job, to wit, in this case, Richard White of El Paso. (A tradition established in 1939 when some upstart named Lyndon Johnson lost a seat on the same powerful Appropriations Committee to Albert Thomas because Thomas had three months' seniority on Johnson).

White, 52, has been in the house 10 years and could use the clout the Appropriations seat would have given him as he is facing a serious challenge in this spring's primary (see next item). But Charlie Wilson of Lufkin, 42, who has been in the House only two years, also wants the seat. Wilson has spent the last two months lobbying members of the Democratic Steering and Policy Committee, which makes the actual committee assignments.

The Texas delegation endorsed White unanimously after a bitter closed meeting during which there was name-calling, shouting, and other good stuff. Reps. Bob Poage of Waco and Henry Gonzales of San Antonio were reportedly particularly infuriated by Wilson's announcement that he intended to try for the Steering Committee's nomination no matter who the Texas delegation endorsed. Seniority is a sacred principle to many senior House members.

But the Steering Committee has a distinctly liberal majority and Wilson, a moderate, is distinctly more liberal than White. On Jan. 29, the Steering Committee chose Wilson over White and White decided not to fight the committee's selection.

• George McAlmon of El Paso is given a fair chance of defeating incumbent White in this spring's primary. McAlmon, a lawyer and businessman, has helped El Paso's *chicano* community with a number of projects. He is a former county party chairman and is noted for his singularly sweet

disposition. Charlie Holmes, who was formerly Ralph Yarborough's press secretary and former administrative assistant to Bob Eckhardt, is McAlmon's campaign coordinator.

White has been a hawk in foreign policy and votes with the military.

'Baloney'

• Mayor Jason Luby of Corpus Christi has managed the political equivalent of hitting himself in the face with a cream pie. Luby has been talking about running for Congress against Rep. John Young of Corpus, even though the city manager said Luby couldn't run and be mayor at the same time. But on Jan. 26, Luby announced that he'd had a change of heart because (aawww) he wanted to help nice old John Young qualify for full retirement benefits. Luby told the press he'd found out that Young needed two more years in Congress to be eligible for retirement benefits. "Anybody who has 18 years in service ought to have two more," said the tenderhearted mayor.

The next day John Young said Luby's statement was "inaccurate and insincere" and "baloney." Young will complete his 20th year in Congress this year and his five years in the military give him 25 years of accredited retirement time in Congress. "I knew nothing of Luby's plan to withdraw from the congressional race until the Chamber of Commerce dinner at which time he told me and others that he had only gotten into the race to keep two Nueces County state representatives from announcing for Congress," Young said. "Whatever Luby's real reasons, however, if he thinks he can parlay a compound failure as mayor into a public promotion, I welcome him to try. I don't think there's any place in South Texas for Luby's brand of baloney, and I am confident I will retire him in a lot less than two years. My advice to Luby is to quit all this big talk about running for Congress, pay his filing fee and let's get on with the campaign."

• Charlie Wilson thinks the *Observer's* been pickin' on a cripple. In our last issue we printed a Capitol Hill News Service item about Wilson's less than stellar attendance record in Congress. Approx-

mately half the piece was lopped off from the bottom because of space limitations. This included an explanation by someone in Wilson's office that his absences were in part due to the fact that the congressman spent 22 days in the hospital last spring with a chronic back problem. Wilson says his attendance started slipping after he went into the hospital. Still, when a congressman misses every single session of the Veterans' Affairs Committee and 80 percent of the votes taken in the House International Relations Committee, there's more to it than a bad back.

• Texas Republican Sen. John Tower split with the majority of the Senate intelligence committee in opposing the creation of a new intelligence oversight committee. Tower is said to be skeptical of the possibility of establishing a "leak proof" special intelligence committee. He wants oversight of the Central Intelligence Agency to be left in the custody of the House and Senate armed services committees, which, as *The Washington Post* said recently, have watched over the CIA "for more than a quarter of a century in a spirit of clubby toleration."

And on a related front, Tower says he's not sure that the American public should be kept informed of our foreign involvements. *The Houston Post* reported Jan. 19 that Tower said in Houston that this country's activities in Angola "should not have been publicized... The average person is not sophisticated enough in foreign affairs to deal intelligently with it." *The Post* continued: "Tower said it is a 'bad mistake' to reveal covert intelligence activities of the U.S. intelligence community, suggesting more than once that the American people need not know about everything this nation is involved in abroad."

According to Hoyle . . .

• What with the way the rules of the game keep changing, this is an especially confusing year for office seekers. The fact that the Justice Department now must give prior approval to all Texas elec-

tion laws has left a lot of political questions in limbo. The Bentsen primary bill and a slew of election law suits didn't help matters either. State Rep. Ray Hutchison of Dallas, the Texas Republican chairman, says our electoral system is in "absolute chaos."

There are those who would blame the current confusion on the nasty feds who chose to apply the Voting Rights Act to Texas and the Texas malcontents who keep challenging the constitutionality of election laws passed by the Legislature. But it should be kept in mind that the purpose of the suits and of the Voting Rights Act is to give all the state's citizens an even break at the polls. If Texas, for example, had passed redistricting plans for Tarrant, Nueces, and Jefferson counties that paid less attention to protecting incumbents and more attention to giving a reasonable share of the electoral power to minorities, the plans would probably be in effect today.

As it is, the Justice Department rejected the single-member redistricting schemes for Jefferson, Tarrant, and Nueces. This should come as no surprise to anyone, since they were branded as unconstitutional during the debate on the House floor and in court. The decision on Nueces, however, could have been handled a good deal better by Justice. The attorneys passed the Nueces plan one week and then a few days later they reversed themselves and decided the plan was unfair to Mexican-Americans after all. Secretary of



Bob Wieland

Hutchison: 'Absolute chaos'

State Mark White insists that the reversal was the result of political pressure.

● Hutchison has asked the governor to call a special redistricting session. He says that this time around legislators might pass constitutional single member districts. Why so? asked a reporter. "For one thing," Hutchison answered, "the Legislature is beginning to look kind of foolish."

The filing deadline in the three counties has been extended.

● Justice okayed the Texas presidential primary over the objections of white liberals and the minorities. One school of scuttlebutt has it that Justice probably okayed Bentsen's primary plan because it is only a one-time affair. In another ruling, the feds ordered the state to finance the primary election costs of *La Raza Unida* party. But a *Raza* spokesman said they might not field any candidates this year.

● The U.S. Supreme Court did a little rule changing of its own when it said in late January that Congress doesn't have the right to put a spending ceiling on campaigns. The court stipulated, however, that federal law can set limits on the spending of any presidential candidate who accepts federal campaign subsidies. Since President Ford, Ronald Reagan, and nine Democratic candidates have all taken federal matching funds, they will all be held to the \$10.9 million ceiling imposed by the Congress in 1974.

The court upheld the federal law which prohibits individuals from donating more than \$1,000 to a candidate and more than \$25,000 for all elections per year. Political organizations and committees are limited to \$5,000 per candidate per election.

But the S.C. left one loophole in the campaign spending law big enough to fly a Concorde through. The justices held that individuals or groups can spend as much as they please on behalf of a candidate as long as they do so independently of the candidate's committee. In other words, you can

'Any office of honor, trust, or profit'

Austin

The Senate trial of O. P. Carrillo was mostly an embarrassment and a bore from beginning to end.

The senators were resentful about being called in to judge the case and spent much of their time complaining. Every time the three-week trial ran into another week, fresh mutterings of mutiny were heard. "Why didn't they let the Judicial Qualifications Commission handle this?" "How much longer?" "How much more?"

Except for a handful of senators who kept saying, "They haven't shown me anything solid against him yet," the outcome was a foregone conclusion. (Most of the holdouts seemed to be lawyers, which shows why lawyers are never allowed on juries.) Some senators were more frequently absent than others: Bill Meier of Euless was out a lot, as was Bob Gammage of Houston, who resigned from the Senate to run for Congress just before the closing arguments. It must have been disconcerting for Carrillo to see the members of his jury acting like Cheshire cats.

The defense was almost painful to listen to. Arthur Mitchell, Carrillo's attorney, tried for all he was worth, but there wasn't much he could do. Most of the people who knew anything about Carrillo's activities took the Fifth Amendment and the rest were most unhelpful to Carrillo's case. Basically, Carrillo said the prosecution witnesses were "liars," that it was all a plot by John Hill, and that he was the one who had stood up to the Parr machine. Since he was part of the Parr machine until it started to fall apart, that didn't cut much ice. Terry Doyle, attorney for the House prosecutors, closed by saying, "I don't want O.P.

Carrillo to be my district judge. I don't think the people of Texas want O.P. Carrillo to be their district judge and I don't think you want O.P. Carrillo to be district judge. Heaven help us if you do."

The senators took 30 minutes to convict Carrillo on an official misconduct accusation of charging Duval County governments rent on equipment that did not exist or was not used. The vote was 23-5. The Senate voted first on whether Carrillo was guilty of conspiring to have Duval County pay for his groceries; the vote on that was 16-12, less than the two-thirds majority needed to convict. Since conviction on one count was enough to remove Carrillo from office, the Senate dismissed the other eight articles brought by the House.

They went on to vote 22-5 to bar Carrillo from ever holding public office in Texas again, which was the chief, if not the sole reason, for removing Carrillo by the impeachment process—only the Senate could bar him for good. Other South Texas political figures who have suffered assorted convictions and removals from office have come back to haunt the area. George Parr, for example, got a presidential pardon.

At trial's end, Mitchell said he was advising Carrillo "not to step down [from the bench], not short of a judgment by the highest court in the land."

The trial cost around \$160,000, and by the time the Judicial Qualifications Commission gets through, the whole bill for getting rid of Carrillo, who is already facing a prison sentence on tax evasion charges, may come to \$250,000. M.I.

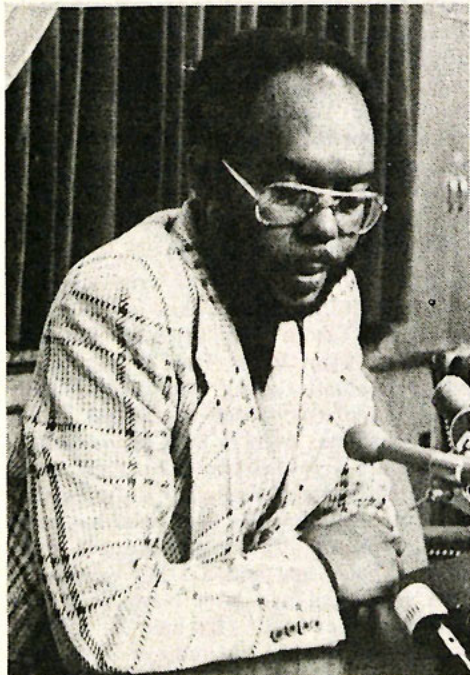
only give \$1,000 directly to a candidate, but if you should wish to go off on your own and, unbeknownst to the fellow, buy him \$70,000 worth of television advertising, that's quite all right.

Tote that snorkel

● U.S. Rep. Tiger Teague, who is chairman of the House Space and Technology Committee, says his 1973 trip to Rockwell International's resort in the Bahamas was strictly business, "a weekend of work." Teague is one in a growing list of Congressmen and Pentagon officials who accepted trips and vacations from defense contractors.

● Bob Dorsey, the former chairman of the Gulf Oil Corp. who was fired by his board of directors after revelations about Gulf's illegal political contributions, is moving to Austin. Dorsey, a UT grad, was named a distinguished alumnus of the university in 1968. "I have worked with the engineering department over the years and I will continue to help in any way I can," Dorsey said. Putting Dorsey on the faculty would be in the same great UT tradition that gave us Walt Rostow teaching government. How about Chuck Colson for head of the theology school?

● State Rep. Paul Ragsdale of Dallas has filed discrimination complaints with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission against 31 state agencies. That's virtually all the biggies, including the Texas Employment Commission, the Ag Department, the attorney general's office, the General Land Office, Texas



Bob Wietland

Ragsdale: Many complaints

Education Agency, the governor's office, Highway, Mental Health/Mental Retardation, Welfare, Railroad Commission, Water Quality Board, and lots, lots more. The comptroller's office, where Bob Bullock is

carrying out a vigorous hunt for minority employees, was spared.

Ragsdale has already scored with a complaint against the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. The EEOC has ordered the department to improve its hiring record on minorities and women.

● Rep. Ben Bynum of Amarillo got Maced by a young woman in his Austin apartment building in mid-January. The young woman said Bynum forced his way into her apartment saying he wanted to talk. The chairman of the House Insurance Committee said he was just trying to get the young woman to settle down because she'd been "raising a bunch of cain" in the hallways. No charges were filed.

● Chalk up another first for Big D. *The Dallas Times Herald* reports that in 1975 the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals reversed 44 Dallas County convictions, twice as many reversals as Harris County, the runner-up with 21 reversals. The Dallas DA's office is well known, you could say notorious, for improper summations to the jury. "Dallas County consistently has a problem with jury arguments," Jack Onion, presiding judge of the Court of Criminal Appeals, told reporter Saralee Tiede. "They [the prosecutors] go out of the bounds of propriety so frequently that it's undoubtedly no accident. It's well known throughout the state that it's not inadvertent."

● Twenty-four of the 41 officers in the Dallas Vice Control Division have been given the old heave-ho. This includes every officer in the division with more than one year's experience (except the division director). The officers are being transferred to other departments in an effort to clean up the narcotics section, which has been the focus of a number of juicy scandals in the past year (see "Bad apples," *Obs.*, Jan. 30). The police chief says some officers may be indicted.

The Dallas narcotics scandal follows a similar Houston cop shop scandal and reorganization by about a year. Questionable acts by various Department of Public Safety narcotics officers came to light in both Houston and Dallas, but, to date, the DPS administration has apparently made no broad-based effort to reform its narcotics section.

Life, liberty, & lucre

● We don't recollect reading anything like this in the state constitution: Gov. Dolph Briscoe says, "The function of government is to provide a climate that encourages economic growth and industry, but it is not the function of government to solve all existing problems in society."

● The aquifer beat the shopping mall by almost a four to one margin in San Antonio (see *Obs.*, Jan. 16). Even residents of the precinct where the 129-acre mall was to be built voted against the mall. At issue was a referendum on an ordinance au-

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thorizing the building of the mall over the recharge zone of the Edwards aquifer, which supplies San Antonio with pure, untreated drinking water. A total of 56,983 votes were cast, 21 percent of the registered voters in the city. It was the largest turnout ever in San Antonio for a special election.

After the referendum, the SA city council, which originally approved commercial zoning for the land on which the mall was to be built, got slapped with a \$4.5 million damage suit by the mall developers. The suit also asks a state court to rule on whether a zoning permit can be voided by a referendum. If the court says that the referendum was legal, then the plaintiffs want the city to pay them the \$4.5 million.

Now San Antonio environmentalists are taking up a new cudgel, the impending sale of \$60 million in city bonds, \$10 million of which will go to finance the city's share of a nuclear power plant at Bay City. A group called the Solar Energy Coalition of Texas has launched a petition drive calling for a referendum on the bond issue because of the nuclear funds. It's fairly unusual for such citizens' initiatives to be used to influence public policy in Texas, although they've been used with some effect in recent years in Colorado and California.

A Houston jury deadlocked 6-6 in the robbery trial of former black activist Lee Otis Johnson in mid-January in Houston and the judge declared a mistrial. The state will try Johnson again, probably in May. Johnson is already serving a 17-year sentence for a 1974 burglary and faces other charges of burglary, robbery, and assault with intent to murder. Johnson, who

was THE "black militant" in Houston in the late Sixties, was given 30 years in 1968 for giving away a joint, which became a cause celebre. He served five years of that sentence before he was freed.

A Dart to KTVV TV (Channel 36) in Austin for blatant commercialism in its weekly "Business Review" show. The Jan. 24 guest was George Coffee, the new manager of Lowell Lebermann Lincoln-Mercury. (Lebermann, a city council member, recently bought the Lincoln-Mercury dealership from former Austin Mayor Roy Butler, who traded it in on a Coors distributorship.)

Program moderator Jim Batson asked Coffee: "Will the change in ownership mean any changes in the quality of service offered at Lowell Lebermann Lincoln-Mercury?"

"No it certainly won't," Coffee replied. "We intend to continue to offer the same high quality service as in the past."

"What is the typical customer at Lowell Lebermann Lincoln-Mercury looking for in the way of an automobile today?" And so it went.

Mike Smith, a local reporter, asked Batson about the show. Batson told him it is logged by KTVV as public service programming. How are the guests selected? "One of my salesmen usually recommends a client to be on the program," Batson said.

Batson offered to do a session on Smith's paper and told Smith he'd like to sell him some TV time.

The U.S. early-warning system in the Sinai desert, part of Herr Kissinger's arrangement to keep the Israelis and the Egyptians from jumping one another, is being built by Texans. The H.B. Zachry Co. in San Antonio will be doing the \$10 million worth of construction on towers and power plants for the complex while E-Systems Corp. of Dallas got a \$16.5 million dollar contract to build the monitor system.

We weren't going to write anything about Big Bird. This is a serious Journal of Free Voices, after all. But then this geek from Eagle Pass was actually hospitalized after a Big Bird attack (superficial scratches on both shoulders) and it made headlines even in the *Corpus Caller*, so who are we to hold out? Our brethren in Establishment journalism, Valley-style, have reported that Big Bird (who has been flying around attacking Valleyans ever since a hairy ape and a UFO were seen near Harlingen just after New Year's) is (A) six feet tall (B) has a 15-foot wingspread and (C) has red eyes. We have read at least several hundred inches of newspaper copy in assorted serious Texas newspapers about Big Bird and have decided that it is time to come clean.

We happen to know the truth about Big Bird. (A) Big Bird is not six feet tall: she is six feet one (B) Her wingspan is only seven feet, which happens to be the total

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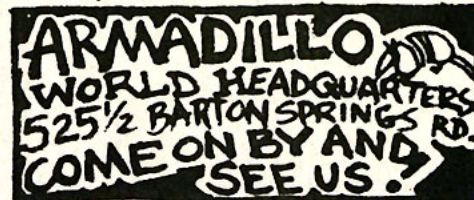
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number of bills introduced by the entire Valley delegation to the Legislature last session and the entire delegation didn't get as much coverage as Big Bird has (C) Her eyes were red only one time and that was because she'd been up the entire night before reading a Georgette Heyer novel.

Big Bird does not attack people: she is

only looking for affection. She is the personal pet of Janey Briscoe, who taught her how to say, "Polly wants a cracker." And the next time anyone from Sigma Delta Chi or the Texas Press Association wants to know why the *Observer* holds such a low opinion of Texas journalism, we are going to have Big Bird do-do on his head.



An editorial

Sissy Farenthold is leaving these shores as of March 1 to take the presidency of Wells College, a small but highly regarded women's college in upstate New York. The *Houston Chronicle* did a "farewell interview" with her (the *Chronicle* called Wells a "girls' school") and ran it in the women's section. It took Sissy Farenthold a long, long time to be taken seriously enough as a politician in this state to get put in the news sections. So now it ends, as it began for her, in the women's pages.

The occasion of Farenthold's departure seems to call for some portentous salute from us—*ave atque vale* or *morituri te salutamus* or some such. But Dugger isn't here and it's hard to be portentous without him. Aw, well, hell, Sissy, at least come by for a farewell brew at Scholz's before you go. Of course you'll be back—we've got George

parttime and the kids as hostages. But it won't be the same as having you here getting pained afresh at every new outrage.

This isn't even a political obit: we count on you to do what you've always done—keep on. Keep on trying to change things and fix things and make things better.

Thank you, Sissy. Thank you for every day you spent campaigning and every night you spent drawing up amendments to the appropriations bill and all the other horrors you tried to fix. Thank you for standing up to Gus Mutscher and Lyndon Johnson and John Connally and all the rest, and for those two campaigns when you tried to fight a marshmallow named Briscoe.

If you don't come back and see us often, we'll have you declared an honorary Kilgore Rangerette.

I led no lives?

Dallas

I received a letter recently from Clarence Kelley, *el jefe de* FBI. He replied to my Freedom of Information-Privacy Acts request with a message devastating to my journalistic ego.

I mean, here I sit, a Russian-speaking, Soviet *Life*-reading, balalaika-strumming, ex-anti-war-marching, ex-secret-clearance-holding, ex-disgruntled Viet vet turned deserter from four Texas newspapers, turned bum living on Master Charge. And what has it all gotten me?

Not an FBI file, says The Director.

And "no information to indicate you have been the subject of an investigation by the FBI." Not even a manila folder with a couple of clips in it from *The Texas Observer*. Not even the article in which I razed Herbert "Three Lives" Philbrick for frothing at campus commies. Not even the poem in which I knocked John Wayne.

We're talking about status here. And, evidently I don't have any. Jack Anderson has gumshoes. So do some of the boys at the *Times*, the *Post* and some of those other effete, Eastern, liberal, snob publications. Without an FBI shadow these days, you just can't feel successful and—and-relevant as a reporter.

No file at all.

Surely I can't be *that* unimportant. I mean, while Watergate crashed, I scooped the world with news that nothing was happening in the Texas carrot industry. You read it first in *The Dallas Morning News*.

Not having an FBI file could create some severe career problems. Suppose I go east in search of fame, fortune, and the expatriate's Holy Grail? What if some big editor calls Clarence, and Clarence tells them I'm nothing but a three-bit punk who knows how to type? What then, if the editor scowls and says: "No file, no job. Next!"

I've paid enough taxes to at least *rent* one for a while. But hark, how stupid of me! I read it in a magazine just the other day, for at least the dozenth time. He who queries the FBI to see if he has a file, gets one created if he doesn't have one. You fibbed to me, Mr. Kelley.

I'm leaving soon for that tryout in the journalistic pro leagues. And when the editor of the *New York Big Time* squints at my application and calls up the feds for a job recommendation, some junior clerk will open the thick "Du" drawer, pull out a folder and say, "Yes, here it is. But it's empty. Mr. Dunn's stuff must be over at the CIA right now." —Si Dunn

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'Specious logic'

Deck Yoes Jr.'s intellectual subjectivity concerning the Bell System's electronic switching system ("Ma Bell's Latest Brainchild," Jan. 30) is as misguided as his specious logic (horrid word).

For a few misgiving moments, I thought of the execrable Mr. Yoes was striving for intellectual humor by illustrating how the Bell System seeks to achieve total reliability. Yet, quick as a gunslinger, he ridicules such effort as being wasteful, and pre-judges the Bell System's motive for designing super-reliable systems as an attempt to inflate its plant investment for rate purposes. Poor Yoes. Poor logic (horrid word).

While perhaps an experienced computer programmer and a whiz at computer logic, it's obvious Yoes' logic (horrid word) does not excel when it comes to economics. No business—particularly not the Bell System, which must go to the money-tight market year after year to borrow billions of high-interest dollars—would purposely design, manufacture, or install a \$10 million piece of gear during these difficult economic times when, say, a \$5 million or a \$3 million jobbie would do.

Fact is, the Bell System's highly-sophisticated electronic switching system (ESS) is one of the telephone industry's most dynamic developments to lower operating costs (thus hold down telephone rates when everything else including electricity is skyrocketing).

Somehow, this logic (horrid word) eludes Yoes. Instead, his sophistry compares the size of an ESS machine to the smaller-sized IBM computer. Such logic (horrid word) is like comparing an avocado with an orange and saying the orange should cost more. IBM computers are one thing. ESS computers are another—they must function in an extremely complicated nationwide switched network capable of ten million billion separate operations. While certain IBM computers can operate at higher speeds, IBM is indeed envious of the ESS in what it can do programming-wise.

Yoes also trips up on his economic logic (horrid word) when he claims Western Electric's price tag to Bell companies is far higher than that of other competing manufacturers. Fact is, Western's prices are 20

Dialogue

to 40 per cent less than other manufacturers due to economies of scale that naturally comes from high volume.

And finally, Yoes steps on his own toes when trying to pooh-poo Ma Bell's concern over open-field competition in a highly-regulated industry. What's at stake is Yoes' own home phone bill. While unfettered competition may lower phone bills for businesses, the opposite effect will result for residential service. Yep, the "little guys" like me and Yoes will have to pay more.

That, of course, is another story—but one which, when studied carefully, is so logical (horrid word) that even intellectual folks like Yoes might understand Ma Bell's position.

Edwin S. Hughes, 105 Castleoaks Drive, San Antonio, Tex. 78213.

The writer offered a footnote to his letter explaining that he is the area public relations manager for Southwestern Bell in San Antonio and he spent a tour of duty at Bell Laboratories where the ESS was designed and developed. Hughes is also a long-time subscriber to the Observer. —Ed.

Texas Farmworkers

According to *The Corpus Christi Caller* of Jan. 16, 1976, more than 150 farmworkers have walked out of citrus groves throughout the Rio Grande Valley. The farmworkers, members of the Texas Farmworkers Union (TFWU), are protesting low wages and unsafe working conditions. Wages are an average of 14¢ per sack which, at 4 sacks per hour, is about 56¢ per hour. Workers in these fields lack clean drinking water, safe transportation vehicles, and sanitary facilities.

This campaign for better work conditions in the citrus fields is a continuation of the effort begun last May during the melon season. (*Obs.*, June 20, 1975, Aug. 22, 1975). Antonio Orendain, who led the

melon strike, incorporated and began a separate union for Texas farmworkers in August. The TFWU hopes that, in addition to bringing an immediate change in the wages and conditions of Texas farmworkers, the state Legislature will enact a farm labor law allowing collective bargaining.

Texas farmworkers should not be denied their right to decent wages and working conditions. They desperately need food and money to continue this effort. Please send donations to the Texas Strike Fund, Box 876, San Juan, Tex. 78589. In addition, a benefit will be held in Austin on Feb. 13 from 7:00-11:30 pm in the UT Alumni Center. Your help will be greatly appreciated.

Paula Waddle, 3106 Dancy, Austin, Tex. 78722.

Yea, Briscoe

There have been several articles in *The Texas Observer* recently concerning the inaccessibility of the governor of Texas to the press...

It seems to me to be the responsibility of the press to cover the activities of the governor and be there when he is making speeches and be available if news breaks concerning him or his actions. Certainly the press is an absolute necessity in our fast-moving, ever-changing world today. However, I don't think it is the governor's responsibility to call in every day and advise the press of where he is going and what he is going to do, etc. I doubt that the press is advised when the president of General Telephone Company of the Southwest is going on a business trip or when he is taking a vacation. So why should the governor of the State of Texas have to report to the press every time he wants to take a trip?

... Personally, as a taxpayer of this state, I would like to say thanks to Dolph Briscoe for taking time away from his busy life to serve our great state as its executive officer. He is a great man, and we are fortunate to have him as our governor.

Bill Sims, 915 Live Oak, San Angelo, Tex. 76901.

Silly style

Why are there lately so many of those curtailed words in your journal? *Leges* for legislation or legislator, *Soves* for Soviet Russians, *guv* for governor, *deseg* for desegregation, etc.

Is it to save ink and paper? Are those long words too hard for you? Do you want to tell your readers: "We don't give ourselves airs, see. We're just simple fellows. We're with the people." Do the "people" speak like that in Texas? Or is it just the latest fad?

Well I wish you would move on to the next fad. I think it is silly, cheap, bad style, absolutely *infra dig!*

H. D. Vos, Osler Library, McGill University, Montreal, Canada.