THE TEXAS OBSERVER

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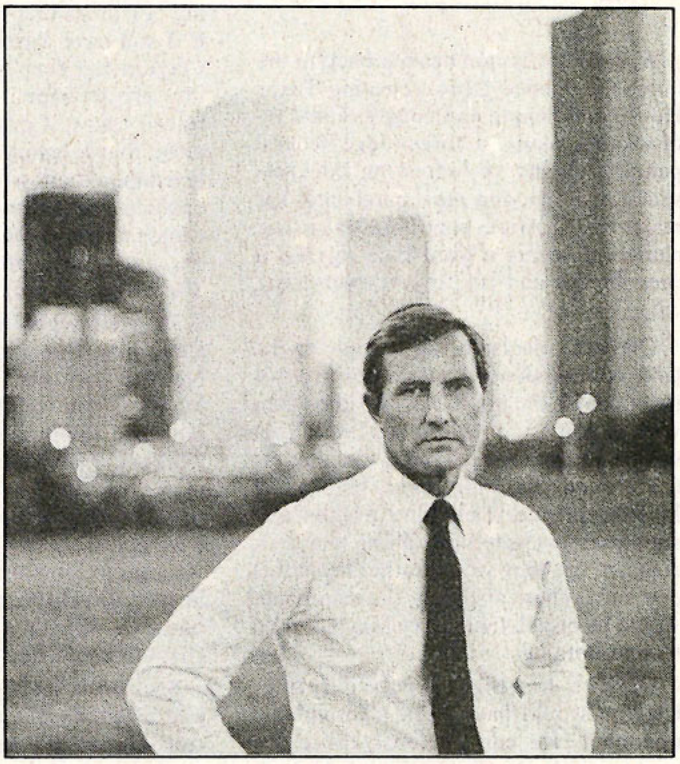
A Strake Check

Looking at The Man Who Wants To Be Your Lt. Governor

By Jo Clifton

Austin



What kind of candidate could beat a wealthy, socially prominent Houston Democrat who's been lieutenant governor for nine years and wants to stay another four? The GOP is betting on a wealthy, socially prominent Houston Republican who has never before run for public office.

Secretary of State George Strake, a business lobbyist points out, is not that well known politically, but people know the Strake family. Business the Strakes have done statewide, as well as a great deal of philanthrophy, he says, has given George Strake Jr. a statewide base. Strake's father discovered the Conroe oil field and started the Strake Oil Company. Strake, now 46, went to Harvard, got an MBA, and came back to Houston to help his father in the oil business. When the elder Strake died in 1969, George Jr. took over the company.

The Houston lobbyist calls George Strake a "fantastic guy, credible. He'll give Hobby a real tight run. Of course that's not the same as beating him." He suggested that for some of the larger lobbying groups, the strategy seems to be to hedge bets. They won't abandon Hobby, but since Strake is emerging as a credible candidate, they'll throw a little money his way (through one PAC contributing to another, for example), just in case. Strake's campaign budget is $3.9 million. Former state Sen. Don Adams, spokesperson for the Hobby campaign, won't say what his candidate's campaign budget is, but "speculates" that it might be around $2 million.

Bill Clements appointed Strake the state's chief elections officer shortly after the governor took office. In office, Strake says he would provide leadership in the Senate for legislation like the governor's crime package, which was approved in 1981. In order to do that, the Republican says, "I would start off by appointing somebody considerably different than (Dallas Sen.) Oscar Mauzy as chairman of the jurisprudence committee."

Not only does anti-crime legislation go before the jurisprudence committee, so do numerous other inmportant bills, such as those banning and limiting access to abortion. Strake, the father of six children, says he is against abortion and that he would not separate those personal feelngs from his role as a public official.

Although he has not offered himself as a candidate previously, Strake has long been a supporter of conservative causes. His involvement with the Republican Party began in the early 1960s, when he went door to door campaigning for Barry Goldwater, says Davis Rankin, Strake's press secretary. In 1966, Strake was a member of Sen. John Tower's finance committee, and ten years later he was a Reagan alternate delegate to the national Republican convention. Such alignment has its rewards.

At a mid-January press conference in Austin, the National Alliance of Senior Citizens, an apparent front group for the far right, announced its endorsement of Strake. Making the announcement was Curt Clinkscales, a member of the board of directors of the National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC). NCPAC has targeted numerous liberal and not-conservative-enough lawmakers across the country for defeat in upcoming elections.

(Continued on Page 12)

Jo Clifton is an Observer *contributing writer. Nina Butts helped her with research for this article.*

Campaign Update

With Billy Clayton headed back to the farm, the Justice Dept. rejecting Texas House and Senate and congressional redistricting plans, a three-judge federal panel probably re-redrawing congressional districts, and most candidates for state-wide office ready to take the plunge, it seems a good time to take a deep breath and try to sort everything out.

Clayton's decision not to run for the land commissioner's office surprised a lot of people but not those who knew him well. A poll he commissioned last fall revealed a high negative rating among voters around the state, even before the LCRA episode. Longtime friends and supporters were telling him he had their support, but they would rather he sit this one out. They also felt the campaign would be brutal, that Garry Mauro would stop at nothing.

Despite his high negative rating, Clayton would have been a formidable opponent. He can obviously raise the money — his campaign chest had already grown to more than $300,000 when he made his announcement this week — and he has overcome large odds before.

He'll be back, no doubt; don't be surprised to see him appointed to the Water Development Board. Meanwhile, the question remains about what he plans to do with his campaign money. He ducked the question at his press conference, saying "I'll cross that bridge when I come to it. I still have a year in office." Legally, Clayton can keep the money and turn it into private capital or he can save it for future races. Common Cause tried to close that loophole last year, proposing legislation that would have required a candidate to return contributions or contribute them to their political party or a charity if they withdrew from the race. The proposal went nowhere.

Just who profits most from Billy Clayton's withdrawal is hard to say. Neither Sen. Pete Snelson nor Garry Mauro is that well known statewide, but both are familiar to Democratic Party workers. Mauro says he will pick up a major portion of the campaign funds from friends he made as a Democratic party official, as former Cong. Robert Krueger's campaign director, and as a lawyer. He also expects to pick up "seconds" — pledges redeemable only if Clayton chose not to run.

Snelson is highly regarded by people interested in education legislation. He calls himself a conservative and will no doubt lay the liberal tag on Mauro, who calls himself a moderate. Snelson, from Midland, is also happy that he won't have to split the West Texas vote with Clayton.

The third prominent Democrat in the race, former Land Commissioner Jerry Sadler — that's right, *the* Jerry Sadler — told Sam Kinch of the *Dallas Morning News* he wished Clayton had stayed in because "I would have liked to have some fun."

Sadler, now 74 and practicing law in Honey Grove, called Snelson "harmless" and Mauro "young." "I don't know if I will have to whip up on either of them," he told Kinch. "And if they want to get on me, they won't be on a virgin, because that's been done before."

Sadler said he had filed by mail for the post he held for ten years before he was defeated in 1970 by Bob Armstrong, and, as we go to press, state Rep. Dan Kubiak of Rockdale has just entered the race.

And now, here at the last moment, another withdrawal. Peyton McKnight, ostensibly the wealthiest Democrat in the race for governor, has decided he doesn't have the money. "Realistically, I have known from the outset that it would require substantial media advertising early in the Democratic Primary campaign to compete for name recognition against opponents who have previously run statewide races," McKnight said. "At this point, it does not appear that my political contributions will meet these early spending demands. I am faced with

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the prospect of immediately borrowing a million dollars in addition to the loans I have already personally made to the campaign." Apparently McKnight had trouble transforming pledges into dig - down - deep - pull - out the money commitments. And he didn't want to risk any more of his own money.

"Reporters keep asking me what's the *real* reason," Kaye Northcott, McKnight's press secretary, said. "The money *is* the real reason. His name recognition is the lowest of the candidates, and he would have to start his media campaign in early February. Apparently the fund-raising wasn't going well enough. You don't have to spend *as* much as Bill Clements but you have to be in the ball park. Bill Clements has set the price."

McKnight won't seek his old state Senate seat.

With one millionaire out, another jumped in just minutes before the filing deadline. Railroad Commissioner Arthur E. "Buddy" Temple, the 39-year-old heir to the Temple-Eastex timber empire, said his decision to enter the race was not tied to McKnight's exit, though he said he had discussed it with McKnight shortly before the senator announced his decision. His decision to run, he said, was based on the lack of enthusiasm the other Democratic candidates are generating.

Only two years into his six-year term on the Railroad Commission, Temple plans to hold office through the campaign. *Observer* readers will remember Buddy Temple from his three terms in in the legislature and run for the Speakership against Billy Clayton.

Armstrong, whose press conference the day after McKnight's announcement quelled a rumor circulating the Capitol that he too would drop out, suggested that Temple's decision to use the Railroad Commission office as a steppingstone might hurt him. He said several McKnight supporters have switched their commitment to him, and several others asked for a few days to think about it. He said he hasn't called Willie Nelson.

Armstrong said he had raised over $200,000 just that morning, the most money he had ever raised in one morning in his career. "People were waiting for it to settle," he said.

Armstrong said he was glad the question about who would run is now settled, that now both the candidates and the voters can turn to the issues. He said he was working on an education program, a water program, and a program dealing with law enforcement.

Another interesting race is shaping up for state treasurer. Amidst reports that he is under investigation by a Travis County grand jury, Warren G. Harding, the incumbent, drew four opponents. Travis County Commissioner Ann Richards, former state Rep. Lane Denton of Waco, and Austin businessman John Cutwright all entered the Democratic primary. Millard K. Neptune, an Austin attorney-engineer, is the only Republican candidate.

Ann Richards' entry forced out Rep. Bill Keese of Somerville who said Richards had a better statewide organization and a better shot at raising the money for the race.

Keese, who immediately endorsed Richards, had some ideas worth considering. Pointing out that in Texas "both the placement of deposits and the awarding of bank charters have appeared to reward political support with financial gain at the people's expense," Keese said he would have set up a point system to determine which banks would get state funds. "Most banks would get some of the funds," he said, "but they would have to commit themselves to helping their community. They would get so many points for investing in low and moderate income areas, so many points for hospitals and community centers, so many points for making student loans."

He would also withhold funds from banks that practice discrimination. Illinois, Keese said, instituted a point system for investment of public monies when Adlai Stevenson III was governor. Texas, on the other hand, is still in the 19th century, Keese pointed out.

The Redistricting Mess

The action by the U.S. Justice Dept. blocking the redistricting plans for the House and Senate under authority of the federal Voting Rights Act made a big mess even messier. Mark White called the decision to veto Texas legislative districts on grounds that they do not protect minority interests a "crass, blatantly political decision." White contended that minority interests in the Legislative Redistricting Board plan are not only represented, but enhanced.

Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby accused the Justice Dept. of reaching "the wildest distortions" on the political impact of the districts on black and Mexican-American voters. He said the action was based on information from Sec. of State David Dean that was "as inaccurate as it was illegal."

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Hobby said it was not surprising that "a Republican Justice Department," using information from a "Republican secretary of state" appointed by "a Republican governor," killed the plan drawn by the LRB.

So now the three-judge panel in Dallas will draw temporary Texas House and Senate boundaries. The panel, composed of Dallas judges Barefoot Sanders and Jerry Buchmeyer and Houston judge Carolyn Randall, also ordered the filing deadline for legislative candidates extended from Feb. 1 to March 19. In addition, the panel ordered the one-year residency requirement for legislative candidates be waived in the districts that will be changed by the court-drawn redistricting plan.

The panel said it intended to modify the LRB plan only in areas of Texas where district lines are disputed. These areas include the three most populous counties in the state — Dallas, Harris, and Bexar. Rural areas would not be redrawn, the judges said, because there was no controversy surrounding the boundaries. The judges also said they would hold hearings March 1 on the proposed modifications of the LRB plan. They said they hope to present a plan in time for a March 19 filing deadline so that the May 1 primaries could be held as scheduled. A court-drawn plan will not have to be re-submitted to the Justice Dept.

Meanwhile, the congressional redistricting plan is still in the hands of a three-judge federal panel in Austin, and,

as we go to press, the Justice Dept. has just rejected the plan because of concerns that Mexican-American voters were being packed into Cong. Kika de la Garza's District 15 in South Texas. The plan will probably be redrawn by a three-judge federal panel meeting in Austin. The panel — Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Sam Johnson and U.S. District Judges William Wayne Justice and Robert Parker — earlier postponed the filing deadline in 16 of the state's 27 congressional districts until Feb. 22.

This mass of confusion obscures what Austin redistricting attorney David Richards calls "the only hard legal issue" involved: "to what extent do you engage in affirmative racial line drawing in the legislative process?" Race, Richards points out, was the primary factor in drawing up several congressional districts, and yet he says he is also sympathetic to Craig Washington's argument. If lines are drawn strictly on racial grounds, Washington, a black, contends, "then you're telling me I'll never be able to run for statewide office."

"If it's framed right," Richards says, "the question may go all the way to the Supreme Court." J.H.

◦ OBSERVATIONS ◦

Reagan's 'Other Purposes'

Austin

President Reagan's first "State of the Union" address should be remembered as one of the most deceitful such speeches in the history of the Republic.

The issue confronting the union is what Reagan is doing, slashing taxes and federal social programs at the same time, while further increasing pressures on the federal revenues by a war-level military buildup.

The immediate problem for Voodoonomics is the fact that a large federal deficit increases demand for money and therefore increases interest rates. In turn higher interest rates foretell a return of inflation to totally unacceptable recent rates.

Reagan's own experts predict a federal deficit of at least $100 billion. Reagan's advisers have been warning him direly: You must raise taxes back up, or we cannot get interest rates down. What Reagan in effect said in his address about this is, to hell with it. By refusing any increases in taxes while proposing to cut "entitlement programs" (that is, human assistance programs) another $67 billion, he was disguising an incredibly cruel and unwise decision in the attractive garment of no tax increases.

On the topic of a deficit, having abandoned his promise of a balanced budget, Reagan actually argued that the projected deficit is of no moment because there are so many variables in the predictive formula. In effect, like Carter before him he says, "Trust me." But like no one before him in this period, he continues blowing up the social works of the last fifty years one after another.

Having airily brushed aside the problems his policies are creating, Reagan sketched out a broad program that he alleges is predicated on the desirability of state and local government. He will transfer aid to dependent children, food stamps, and another 40 or so federal programs to the states while Washington takes over medicaid. This "transfer" program, which sounds so benign, is in fact a poisonous program for the piecemeal abolition of the safety-net programs.

Listening to the communicator, the American people could hardly realize, and no doubt did not, that Reagan was abandoning the "safety net" he has promised to keep in place for the "truly needy." The 1982 State of the Union address should be remembered in history as the "Or Other Purposes" address, for what this hardcore right-wing president proposes now is that the safety-net programs be turned over to the states and the money that will go with them can be spent on them "or other purposes." Those three words are the key to the plan.

Fifty states with fifty different fiscal situations and fifty legislatures are to be told, Here, here's a wad of dough, and here are these social welfare programs. Now spend the dough for the programs *or for anything else you want to to spend it for.* This is maintaining the safety net? In a pig's eye it is. At the minimum, Reagan *does not care at all* whether the social services for the poor are continued or not. The hidden truth is he wants them abolished and this is a guilefully-crafted program to abolish them to the extent he can politically.

The outcry that will be heard in the land now, states complaining they will be bankrupted by the extra tax burden of the transferred programs, will be merely the preliminary clamor. It is the basic meaning of the transfer scheme that the safety-net programs will be abandoned or made more niggardly, depending on what state you are talking about.

Texas is as good an example as any. Gov. William Clements, applauding Reagan's transfer plan "in concept," asserts that Texas can administer all these programs better than Washington. Clements says, in effect, trust the care of the poor to me. Yet in the same hour (on "The Governor's Report" distributed on PBS stations in Texas courtesy of three corporations) he upholds Texas being 49th among the states in the level of payments to families with dependent children. This wretched record, Clements says, is really OK because Texas has a low cost of living and low unemployment.

What, questioning reporters asked, does being 49th in AFDC have to do with that? With the bullish, intimidating glibness that is his trademark, Clements said, "Well, if people are employed, you don't have big (welfare) payments. Just that simple." Just that simple!

"Are you suggesting," asked Bruce Hight of the *Austin American-Statesman,* "that if the payments are too high people don't have an incentive to go out to work?" "I *am* suggesting it," Clements replied. *This* is the model custodian of the safety-net programs whom Reagan proposes we trust.

Concerning the contention that by transferring such programs to the states, "you wind up abolishing these programs," Clements said, "I think that's nonsense. We're not gonna abolish these programs." We're gonna enhance them, improve them, make them high-quality and cost-effective, he said. "I believe at the state level," he said, "we will much more discipline these programs."

There can be no adequate response to what Reagan is doing to the country other than political work for his defeat. Those like Clements who support Reagan must be made to pay the price at the polls. Defeatism because these reactionary militarists have the big money is the one sin, despair, which Albert Camus long ago told us we are not permitted.

In Texas this means that the first requirement of being a conscientious humanist this year is pitching in personally to beat Clements, the Republican congressmen from Texas, and the Boll Weevil Democrats who are if anything worse than the Republicans because they're turncoats, too.

Defeat them with whom? That is the

(Continued on Page 24)

Gonzalez: An *Observer* Interview

'The People Have Been Hurt'

Austin

Cong. Henry B. Gonzalez was in Austin recently to deliver the keynote address to a farmworkers' conference. Afterward, he was interviewed by Observer *reporter Ruperto Garcia. Following is a shortened version of that interview.*

Do these conferences do any good?

Yes.

Your answer sounds very positive in light of the fact of what's happening to minorities and the poor right now. You don't have any reservations in saying that all of this is going to do some good?

You mean the conference?

Well, the conference and you coming down here.

You know, what else can you do? If you don't do this then what you're doing is succumbing to the very thing that the people that have been against these programs have wanted all along. The people who are against community development, public housing — they're in the saddle now like they never have been before. So, it isn't a question of what you can do here to oust them right now; they're in, they won the election. You have some people here that I'm sure come from Phil Gramm's district, or they come from Kent Hance's district. Well, these are the guys who authored, and they won by four votes, they only won that key budgetary issue by four votes in the House. If you don't have this, they feel they're right. They won't have that little voice in their district that can make a difference and they know it. Any politician knows it. I don't care whether he's conservative or liberal or whatever. If there's anything he's gonna respect, he's gonna respect the capacity of that citizen to vote "whoa."

Yes, but most of what we heard here today was almost total cynicism. Most of the farmworkers who were here today were saying, "okay, fine, we're going to testify at another farmworkers' conference and we're gonna be here, we'll do it again, but. . . ."

I don't blame them. Talk, on the other hand. Look, in these camps we visited, a worker would say, "now, how are we gonna get help? We've been promised

Photo by Alan Pogue

this and the other." And they themselves would answer the question: "Well, we just didn't know anybody even knew, but my goodness, you're from the Congress." Just that fact alone was enough to revive something there that was flickering.

How did you see Stockman's Atlantic Monthly *article? Did you see that as an intentional confession by one of Reagan's men?*

No, he's just a cynical, cold-blooded cynic.

Stockman?

Yeah. That's all he is. I, naturally, knew Stockman. In fact, I've dealt with him. I knew him well, 'cause he was in the House of Representatives a couple of terms. And he, by any standards, was an ideologue. He was a fanatic. He'd get that look in his eye [HBG grimaces, jerks his head back and forth, humming "um um um," like a robot], what he's done is very simple. He has just used the power that this president gives him to carry out what he didn't succeed in doing when he was a member of the House. But he's cynical. In his interview, he talks about how he used Phil Gramm, how Phil Gramm was carrying to him as a spy the inner workings of the Democratic membership of the Ways and Means Committee. Well, that to me is revealing. And he admits that he did it cold-bloodedly, calculatingly. And that also he didn't think that the so-called economic recovery plan was going to work.

What was startling about it was that the people who should have known better — leaders of Congress, honest members of the administration, and the press above all — this is why I say what we've had in the United States has been a giant economic Guyana, like the Jonestown suicide [he laughs at the absurdity of it].

You have a Reverend Jones in the person of Reagan saying, "Hey, look, take this potion for your salvation." Then you have all these people rushing madly, without examining, and dying, committing suicide. Because we're committing economic suicide.

I was the first one to get Stockman into a non-budget committee hearing. I couldn't believe it when he revealed that he had a complete ignorance of the fiscal and the budgetary facts of such a program as FHA. I asked, "Why do you want to kill the FHA? This is a program that has worked for forty years and housed America." He said, "Oh, we're not killing it." What happened is that they got their computers, and they point their computers at these items and they see, $31 billion. That's got to come down. What he didn't stop to realize was that the $31 billion was over a thirty-year period. And most, if not all, of that would have been paid back in where the tax dollar wasn't actually expended. He was asking to reduce the budgetary authorization from $31 billion to 17. Well, when you do that, you're killing it, because you're talking about building in over a spread of thirty years. You're talking about the last remaining program that enabled anyone to have a thirty-year, long-term mortgage. He said, "Well, that wasn't our intention." Whether it's your intention or not — that's what you're doing. The press didn't pick that up.

Look, I come to *you*, you're a congressman. I say, "We've got to cut the budget by $42 billion in the social programs." Then I say, "However, our state

of defense is terrible. We're vulnerable. Why those Russians are re-arming so fast, that, my God, the next thing you know, they may be marching down here on Pennsylvania Avenue. So, we're gonna have to increase the defense budget by $46 million.

And you say, "wait a while. You said you had to cut the budget in order to balance it. You cut one side, social services, by $42 billion, but you increase the other by $46 billion. That means you still have an outlay that's out of balance."

I say, "Oh, that's because the tax program has to come into place." And then I tell you vaguely what that is: "We're gonna cut taxes, so that factories can produce and put people to work and then, that'll make up for this budget, because we'll get more revenue. [Further], it isn't enough to cut the proposed budget, you have to cut what you have now . . . what was committed to you when you were a congressman last year." Some of that money is going to the cities where they've already made commitments.

You still don't see how this is gonna work. How can you, because you're reducing, in three years, $150 billion of the tax responsibilities from the richest corporations and people in this country. And you're only reducing about $300 from those that earn over $50,000 and about $50 from those that earn $30,000. You're reducing revenues to the government. In the meanwhile, you're increasing defense spending. How are you going to balance the budget?

Their replay is: "You don't have any faith. You're against the free enterprise system." Because with that money they're gonna save from the tax reductions, those corporations are gonna plow into productive ends, where they're gonna produce goods, give employment, and hire people — stimulate the economy.

Well, in my case, I got hold of Jack Kemp. He's the one that has that Kemp-Roth, that's the tax program. And I know Jack. He's no economist. Never was. He's an ex-football player from the Buffalo Bills. He said, "It's just like [the] Jack Kennedy [tax plan]." When you talk about Kennedy, you're talking about something I know. That was the first thing that hit me the first year when I was sworn in in '62. Kennedy had a tie-in, he had a tax accelerated write-off, but it was conditioned on that factory retooling or forming an inventory would occur, which meant more production. Where do you have that in this bill?

Is that an assumption in this bill?

Yes. That's all. There's no tie-in. So what's happening. All these guys got their money. Where do they put it? They put it in their tax havens, they plow it back into acquisition of these other. . . .

Mergers?

Why, hell, yeah. Did the automobile companies put it back and produce more cars? No, in fact they raised the unemployment level from 175,000 to almost a quarter of a million automobile workers. So it isn't working.

I've asked the home builders. Remember, you have over a million and a half construction workers unemployed — 90 percent in the home building industry. They say, there's no way now. This is what they told me the week before last. Even if we were to be turning it around right now, the nature of construction is such that [they] wouldn't even be able to get started in April. The year is gone; '81 is gone. So what does that mean? It means that the odds are against unemployment going down. In fact, now the rate of unemployment is higher, percentage wise, than it was in 1941, before the war: 9 percent.

I couldn't vote for the President's "economic recovery" program. And [they were] asking me to vote for it because that way, when he falls on his face, the president will be blamed, and the Democrats will take over. But you forget one thing, that the people that elected us and put us into office are the ones that are getting hurt in the meantime. If they can't answer these questions, and they haven't, then I can't answer my constituent when he looks me in the eye and says, "How come I can't get a five percent loan anymore to borrow money to send my little girl to college?" Because that's inflationary! But knocking off $150 billion from the biggest, richest corpora-

Farmworkers Ask, 'What's the Use?'

Though some at the Farmworker Conference in Austin Jan. 21 and 22 cried foul and spoke about the Texas farmworker's lack of formal education, it was obvious that on some issues farmworkers have educated themselves. No longer will they believe empty promises on paper. No longer will they listen with humbled heads, hats in hand, to others who say a plan must be made to help them. Theirs was a fused, double-barreled solution to their problems: collective bargaining, better wages.

The conference on the UT-Austin campus, sponsored by the Farmworker Policy Impact Project and funded by Texas Rural Legal Aid, was marked by cynicism and strong statements. The conference, according to an FPIP publication, was designed to focus on the "eight major issue areas affecting farmworkers," and after that a final plan, a draft of which was presented at the conference, would be issued.

But after most of the presentations, usually by Chicano scholars or directors of federally funded programs to help the farmworkers, two questions kept being raised, always directed at the sponsors of the conference: "What are you going to do with this plan once you've finished it? And how is it going to help the farmworker?"

They were fair questions, but the sponsors really had no answers. We will, said the conference heads, leave that up to you; you will work it at the local level.

The Texas farmworker has always known that. After perhaps 15 years of testifying before conferences and public hearings on the plight of the worker, the farmworkers who were there, some 15 out of a total attendance of perhaps 150, seemed tired of the answer. And so, throughout the two days they were there, they would continually get up, re-ask the same questions and attempt to redirect the issues.

The health of the farmworker, they said, will improve when he earns a decent enough wage so that he can afford medical care. Nutrition, they added, will follow suit. Housing, they reiterated, will improve when the farmworker can get collective bargaining by which he can make his own arrangements and demands. Employment, they said, will be improved when both farmer and farmworker can understand what to expect from each other because of contracts. The education of farmworker children, they said, will improve when parents make enough money so that their children no longer have to help them in the fields.

Otherwise cynicism prevailed. "To talk of individual items on a list, like the improvement of health, or housing or nutrition," said one farmworker, "is like telling a child at Christmas to make a list, then look at it, then give him anything you want. That is the case with all this listing of recommendations when what we really need from those really concerned with the worker in the fields is to support us all in the fight for collective bargaining — all else will follow." R. G.

tions [he laughs, showing disgust] is not inflationary? Charging the highest interest rates in the history of any country, expecially ours, is not inflationary?

But now you say, "Well, that sounds simple. Fight it." And yet, look what's happened. You've had them going along. And I don't know what's the difference between that and Guyana. It is an irrational action, contrary to the overall good. But now it's too late; the people have been hurt. This notion that people who either don't know or don't care for people have — and that is, that all these programs are for the never-do-well, for the sponger, the person that won't work. Well, I know, and you know, that that just isn't true. Sure you have exceptions; you have them in everything. Hell, you have congressmen who cheat; you have businessmen who cheat; and you have poor people who cheat. But that's not what we're talking about. We're talking about actual, crying, basic imperative needs of Americans, that any government that is self-respected and is meeting the minimum requirement of why governments exist has to do something about. And this notion now loose that it can be done voluntarily — even businessmen are saying, "That's bull. There's no way we can make up for the gap, in, say, educational programs or comprehensive employment programs."

You've got men now in power that have never, never been anything but, for a lack of a better word, are fascists. They're friendly fascists; they're likable guys. [He laughs] So what? All of them were if you get the norm on that side. I'm sure that some of the social friends Hitler had thought that he was a pretty nice guy. □

Those Cotton Balls Got Rotten; So Did the Economy

By Joe Holley

Lorenzo

Lorenzo, population 1394, has that tentative look of most small South Plains farming communities, as if civilization's century-old foothold is still little deeper than a March tumbleweed blown against a barbed-wire fence. Set down on the table-flat farmland stretching in every direction, the small frame or stucco houses, the one- and two-story brick buildings on the wide main street seem lonely, exposed to elements summer and winter that are frequently inhospitable. Still, people like Lorenzo, its modern, well run schools, the small-town friendliness. These days, however, Lorenzo people are worried.

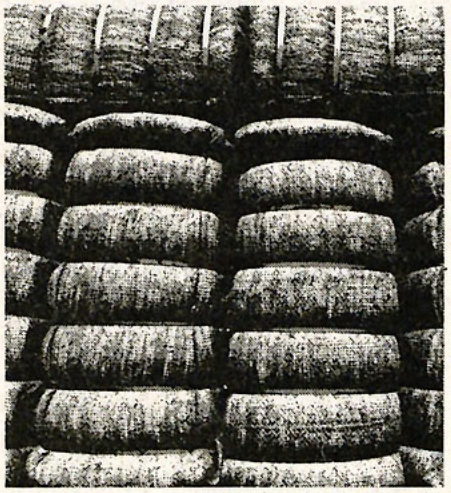


Photo by John Spragens, Jr.

Bobby Marlar is one of them. In the six years he's managed the Lorenzo Grain Co-op, his accounts receivable for December, January, and February usually run between $100,000 and $130,000. This winter they're running between $225,000 and $300,000.

"Accounts receivable are just eatin' us alive," Marlar says. "I feel like I'm on a raft goin' down a damn river. If I get off, I'll drown. Around the next bend, it may smooth out, but then again it may not. I may go over the falls."

Up the street from the grain co-op in this community 20 miles east of Lubbock is Hurst Farm Supply. Red Hurst is the local John Deere dealer. "I have a lucrative business," he says, "but these people just can't pay me. I've got to shut 'em off."

Hurst says he's carrying more than $200,000 in accounts receivable over what he normally carries. Most of the bills were due the first of January, but John Deere usually gives customers thirty days to either pay or make other arrangements. John Deere also repossesses, if necessary, but Hurst has to pick the equipment up. So far this year he hasn't had to, but he's afraid he may have to haul in a tractor or a planter or a shredder this month.

"I haven't denied my farmers the stuff it took to harvest their crops with," he says. "If they can't pay, I *will* deny them the stuff to start another crop."

For some farmers around Lorenzo, and throughout the South Plains, there won't be another crop. Because of interest rates, inflation, and a high-production year, low prices for agricultural products are squeezing them out of business. Cong. Kent Hance of Lubbock predicts between 500 and 600 foreclosures and liquidations in North and West Texas alone.

It's a particularly hard time for South Plains cotton farmers, who annually raise 3 to 3½ million bales of the 5 million bales of cotton raised in the U.S. After a devastating drought in 1980, the 1981 crop was one of the most productive ever. These days storage yards from Sweetwater to the Lubbock area are filled with row after row of bales in bright yellow wrappers. But high productivity pushed prices down to almost half the 1980 price of 80 cents per pound. Farmers borrowed money at high interest rates to plant the crop and used it to pay production costs — energy, irrigation, pest control, labor, machinery, land payments. While these costs continued to rise, the market price for cotton fell to late-1940's levels. Loan money this season won't be available because the borrowers have nothing to offer in return, except the hope the farm economy will somehow improve.

Mel Cherry, in his mid-60's, has farmed around Lorenzo most of his life. Known as something of a radical in these parts, he is a thoughtful, articulate man with opinions on a variety of subjects. "It's just plain hell," he says, sitting at a big table with fellow cotton farmers at the Lorenzo Co-op Gin. "The basic problem is supply and price, the same thing that's been going on for fifty years. We know that 55 cents a pound for cotton won't finance more than 60 percent of the cost of production. Banks and the Farmers Home Administration, without some changes, just won't loan the money. Without money, you just don't farm."

Farmers are accustomed to ups and downs in the economy, and, of course, farmers are known for their grumbling. When a loan year hits, they gripe about it, cut their expenses, and live off savings or borrowed money. This year, they insist, things are worse — mainly because it's their third bad year in a row. And South Plains cotton farmers aren't the only ones in a bind. According to the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, farm income declined from $32.7 billion in 1979 to about $20 billion in 1980 and 1981. Farm income for this year is expected to drop $1 billion to $3 billion from the depressed levels of the previous two years.

Mel Cherry and his fellow cotton growers think they know at least a partial solution — controlling production. They would like to see a USDA-mandated set-aside program, where a farmer leaves some of his acreage fallow. A voluntary program won't work, they believe, because cotton farmers throughout the South and Southwest can't seem to act concertedly.

"We've heard there's the possibility of a 15 percent national set-aside," says Benny Poulson, a Lorenzo cotton farmer since 1969. "We feel that would be a token set-aside; it wouldn't be enough. We need at least 25 percent because we're that much oversupplied on all basic commodities. We think 25 percent would bring prices up to 70 percent of parity."

Cong. Charles Stenholm, himself a cotton farmer from Stamford and a member of the House Agriculture Committee, told Crosby County farmers last month that an orderly marketing plan is the only immediate solution to pushing up low prices and easing production costs. Stenholm offered a so-called 20-10-20 plan.

The plan would urge farmers to store the first 20 percent of their available cotton supply in the government loan program for up to 18 months. Farmers during the first three months of the program wouldn't sell more than 10 percent of their available supply — including what they may have in storage — for less than a predetermined price goal. Another 10 percent would be marketed during the next three months when and if the market moved 10 percent above the original price objective. Then 20 percent more would be sold during the last nine months of the period along with an additional 20 percent at any time prices topped the goal by 10 percent.

Farmers like Poulson and Cherry think the plan might work, if it goes into effect quickly — within the next thirty days — and if it has some teeth in it. Banks, for instance, may be asked not to refinance farmers who will not participate. Stenholm will meet with banking representatives in Abilene on Feb. 12.

"There are a thousand reasons why it won't work and one reason that it will," the congressman told the Crosby County gathering. "It's the only short-term plan that has a chance in the next thirty days. I don't know how farmers have the guts to complain about prices when they are selling at these low levels."

Stenholm tried to get a set-aside program into the 1981 farm bill, but the idea was rejected by the Reagan administration because of a philosophical opposition to the management of supplies. Kent Hance calls the 1981 bill — which cut subsidies, loan programs, and price supports — the farm liquidation act. Hance, one of the original "boll weevils," predicts the bill will come back to haunt the President and the Republicans who passed it.

"The problem is solvable," Benny Poulson says. "Like I told a fellow the other day, I'm not discouraged. I'm just mad because this just doesn't have to happen. We've got too good a country, too good a system of government for it to be this way."

Poulson is 40. Tall and easy-going, a man who speaks slowly and deliberately, he grew up around Lorenzo, got his degree at North Texas State, then taught in the Dallas public schools for six years. He and his wife Cynthia came back to Lorenzo in 1969. The Poulsons and their three children work 1800 acres — 1300 in cotton, the rest alfalfa, wheat, or lying fallow.

"Farming is uncertain at best," Poulson says, "but there are things we can do that will allow us to make sound financial decisions. Now there are too many maybes. I know I'm not going to get rich farming, but I like a rural environment. I want to raise my kids on a farm, send them to a small school. I want them to know something about the work ethic, about how things grow. I don't want them to grow up thinking food is something you get off a shelf."

Farmers don't want a hand-out, Poulson says. Instead they want a hand. As he puts it, "We want to make it in the free market with supply management. We want to sell at a fair price and we want to get this debt off our shoulders so that we don't owe the government. We can make it then." □

New Mexicans Say 'Let's Annex El Paso'

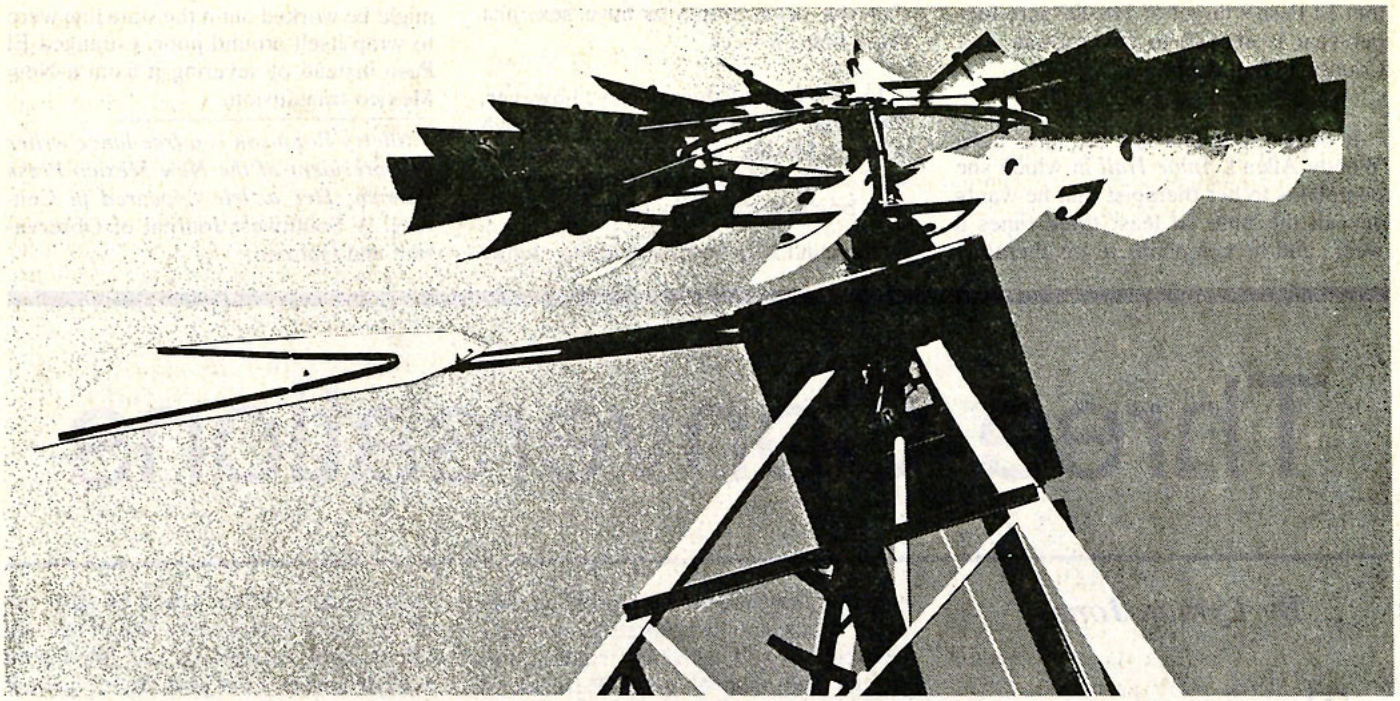
Testimony before a three-judge federal panel in Las Cruces, New Mexico, on whether El Paso should be allowed to take water from New Mexico ended last week, but it may take months, perhaps years, before a decision is reached. The anticipated appeal process will likely end up on the doorstep of the U.S. Supreme Court. El Paso contends that a 1953 New Mexico statute that bans the exporting of groundwater from the state violates the commerce clause of the U.S. Constitution, which limits control of interstate commerce to Congress. New Mexico says the state's control of water and its body of law affecting water rights effectively removes groundwater from consideration as an article of commerce. Sherry Robinson's article, which first appeared in Century, *a journal published in Albuquerque, offers a New Mexican point of view.*

By Sherry Robinson

Albuquerque, N.M.

When easterners move to the West, they're frequently amazed to learn that platoons of attorneys make their livings at something called water law. Our situation is not unlike that of the Middle East, where wars have been waged over water. Next to adultery, water here has led to more shootings, feuds, and litigation than any other source of conflict.

It is to be expected, then, that lots of New Mexicans are studying the El Paso water suit through rifle scopes and lawbooks, for El Paso has taken the singularly audacious and strident posture that it can challenge New Mexico water law,



Phil Vinson

reputed to be the best in the West, in order to quench its future thirst by importing hundreds of thousands of gallons of New Mexico water.

As the battle has heated up, there has been considerable tub-thumping about states' rights, along with angry words about Texans stealing our water. But all the parties to the fracas are overlooking an obvious solution: Why doesn't New Mexico annex El Paso?

On the surface, this would be no less outrageous than the El Paso water suit, but given El Paso's historical, cultural, social and economic ties to New Mexico, it would be a fitting move and would settle everybody's problems equitably.

It's been observed before that El Paso is more a part of New Mexico than it is of Texas. A friend of El Paso says, "I will admit to being an El Pasoan. I will not admit to being a Texan."

El Paso, situated on the Mexican border 800 to 1,000 miles from the Texas capital and financial centers, is like the last outpost of the Roman Empire — all but forgotten except at tax time.

El Paso's ties have always been to the north. It was in a ford near the site of present-day El Paso that Juan de Oñate claimed for Spain "New Mexico and . . . its kingdoms and provinces" in 1598 before he headed north to conquer the Pueblo Indians and establish the first Spanish outpost in what is now the United States.

Three hundred years ago, Governor Otermin and his settlers fell back to the presidio at El Paso after he lost the Province of New Mexico during the Pueblo Revolt. In 1692, General Don Diego de Vargas rested in El Paso on his way to retake New Mexico for Spain.

El Paso also served as a stage and pony express stop between Sante Fe and San Antonio, and eventually evolved into a thriving trade center. El Paso continues to be a cotton, cattle, and copper marketing center for southern New Mexico and today provides 85 percent of the services for people in the Mesilla Valley.

The largest American city on the Mexican border, El Paso is and will be the gateway for expanded trade with Mexico, a prospect that southern New Mexico businessmen have looked forward to for years.

And, because of its proximity to White Sands Missile Range, El Paso is home for hundreds of White Sands workers who must pay a New Mexico income tax but are not allowed to vote in New Mexico.

Those are just a few of the ties that bind, and also some of the reasons why El Paso officials feel they are entitled to some New Mexico water — besides the fact that it's there.

It was even suggested, on both sides, that El Paso should have attempted to negotiate for water rather than mount a legal offensive, since the city certainly has friends on this side of the border. But New Mexico law specifically forbids exporting water across state lines, and there the matter stands. Ironically, even if both sides had been able to reach an agreement in round table discussions, State Engineer Steve Reynolds would have said no dice because of the dangerous precedent it would have set.

Not only are the painstakingly constructed and zealously guarded New Mexico water laws at stake; resolution of the problem could, at worst, undermine the whole of western water law.

It is here that New Mexicans and Texans differ. New Mexico water laws and policy, long a model for the rest of the nation, are grounded on the Pueblo and Spanish traditions of community dams and ditches and on the practice of prior appropriation. Water has been parceled out judiciously for hundreds of years. Our water laws, themselves, have been little altered since they were first codified in 1907.

Texas water laws, such as they are, allow people to drill as many wells as they want on their property, and it is for this reason that the Texas portion of the Ogallala Aquifer is drying up more rapidly than other portions of the 225,000-square-mile underground reservoir. It is also the reason why El Paso has limited alternatives for gaining water inside Texas state lines. The nearest available water in Texas is 150 miles away and dwindling. The city could condemn the water rights of its area farmers or pay a high price for desalinization of its remaining water. El Paso residents are already conserving water and paying water bills on an inverse schedule that levies higher rates on larger users. El Paso is currently building a $33 million plant to recycle sewage effluent to provide 10 million gallons of water a year when completed in 1985. Further use of Rio Grande water is limited by existing compacts.

El Paso officials have stated repeatedly that they don't believe their suit in federal court will hurt New Mexico and that there's plenty of water to go around. El Paso would use only 30 percent of the 55 million acre-feet of water in the 100-mile-long Mesilla Bolson and other underground sources in 100 years' time. New Mexico water experts argue

that El Paso's target of 246,000 acre-feet per year is enough to cover Doña Ana County 36 feet deep.

It begins to sound like the lines from Woody Allen's *Annie Hall* in which she complains to her therapist that he wants sex all the time, at least three times a week, and he complains to his therapist that she never wants to have sex, just three times a week.

In this part of the country, however, there may be no such thing as "enough water." Mesilla Valley farmers see the wolf at the door, and Las Cruces sees its own bright future evaporating.

One can't help speculating how things might be worked out if the state line were to wrap itself around poor, estranged El Paso instead of severing it from a New Mexico transfusion.

Sherry Robinson is a free-lance writer and president of the New Mexico Press Women. Her article appeared in Century: A Southwest Journal of Observation and Opinion.

Three Conversations

By Lyman Jones

Austin

There is a lot of ground and much blue water between northern Poland, the Mexican Territory of Quintana Roo, and the East Austin *barrio*. That is why, in part, this is a first-person piece. It will report on conversations in each of the three places, talks stretching across almost exactly 38 years. The first was in the winter of 1945 with an anti-Nazi, anti-Soviet Polish baker, the second a few years back with a self-exiled Chilean turtle fisherman on a beach near what is now Cancun, and the third a couple of weeks ago with an American Indian at El Centro Chicano on Austin's East First Street.

The Pole's name was Roman Polanski, the Chilean's papers said he was Hernan Cantu, and the Indian's name is Philip Deere. They were, when I talked with them, about the same age, fifty years, give or take a couple. And they are for me, despite the time and space separating them, brothers.

There is a novelist's trick for introducing a flashback episode by reference to a smell: a decaying rose sets off watching great-grandmother's funeral. My personal flashbacks are almost always triggered by terrain or climate: this hill, that desert, a stream, a wind's direction, the heat or the cold.

It was cold at El Centro Chicano the morning I met Philip Deere and it was bitter cold in 1945 when I met Polanski (and I had been thinking much of him lately) — and there was a certain physical resemblance, Polanski being one of those Slavs as dark as a Muskogee Creek, Deere's ancestry. Some Austin *barrio* groups had set up a press conference, almost totally ignored by Austin's newspapers and television stations (although one channel gave Deere about one minute in which his voice could be heard faintly under that of a news reader telling viewers what the Indian was saying).

Deere was in Austin to ask for food and clothing — especially for a group of Lakota Sioux seeking the return of their ancestral lands in the Black Hills of South Dakota, and for hungry Dine Navajos at Big Mountain, Arizona.

"Such lands are ours by treaties between nations," Deere told me; "we will never stop fighting to get them back."

That's about what I heard in 1945 from Polanski, when he found me hiding, an escapee from a German prisoner of war camp in a ruined building in a village near Bydgoscz (a center of Lech Walesa's Solidarity until the recent martial law decree in Poland).

Polanski had walked up behind me (it was a fifth escape try and I figured I was on the way back to Oflag 64 again) and said, in English:

"Are you an American soldier?"

I said I was, explained my escapee status, and then he said:

"When will your army and the British and the French get here? We must have a free Poland."

To my to-this-day shame, I assured him that Poland would be free again — and soon. I told him I knew this because, listening to a clandestine radio back at the POW camp, I had heard of a meeting at Yalta where even Stalin had agreed to free elections in Poland as soon as Germany had been beaten.

Polanski, at risk to his own life and those of his wife and three children, took me to his home, fed me a hot tripe soup — a kind of Polish *menudo* — and hid me for two days. When I left, he gave me shoes, warm socks, and a loaf of his own bread, split lengthwise and filled with pork drippings. Four days later, I made it into the Red Army's lines — and was free.

Poland — and Polanski — did not get freedom, the Yalta agreement turning out to be exactly worth as much as the one made by the United States government at Fort Laramie, Wyoming, with, among others, the Lakota Sioux. Stalin's puppets were installed in Poland only a little bit sooner than the U.S. grabbed the Black Hills. The Fort Laramie treaty was made in 1868. George Custer and his Seventh Cavalry troopers died June 25, 1876.

Deere damned the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and its "brainwashed" Indians, exactly as Polanski damned for me in 1945 his own pre-World War II fascist government, its during-the-war German and Soviet occupiers, and Poles who had collaborated with either or both.

"I lived in the United States for 18 years," Polanski told me; "I tell my children I know the Americans will help us get our country back."

I feel certain that, had I told Deere of Polanski, he would have grinned at me, coldly. He, too, had contempt for those who, in his dissident's view, had joined the "oppressor." He called two Indians whom I had met and asked him about, elected chiefs Peter MacDonald of the Navajos and Wendell Chino of the Mescalero Apaches, sold-out, "white man's BIA Indians."

"People like that . . ." he said, "how can we expect any of our rights to be given back to us?" And he said: "Go read some more history."

(Just for the hell of it, later, I did, looking up the number of engagements between the U.S. Army and Indians be-

Lyman Jones is a long-time Observer *contributing editor.*

tween the end of the Civil War and the last recorded skirmish at Leech Lake, Minnesota, in 1898. The number is 943, including many large-scale encounters. Most resulted from broken treaties, most broken by the U.S.)

What links Polanski and Deere and my friend, the turtle fisherman of Isla Mujeres, is a denominator Deere described like this:

". . . our human rights were given to us by the Creator, and not by man. We want only to live by these human rights."

Again, that's about what Polanski told me 38 years ago, and it is about what Cantu said that warm afternoon on his turtle boat — and it's not unlike some phrases drafted by Thomas Jefferson. Cantu, a refugee from the Allende overturn in his own country, the one that CIA spooks called "de-stabilization," had escaped from torture in a Chilean prison for having upheld a free government. That torture included, he told me with remembered pain, the administration of strong electrical shocks to his genitals. He was all but castrated by the process and he was entirely impotent.

Cantu had been, in Chile, an optometrist, and something of a dreamy intellectual (his own description). When he was arrested, police seized from his library some writings by that dangerous *Norteamericano,* Henry David Thoreau. He quoted for me a passage I have toted around as baggage ever since. Thoreau was talking about what amounted to the theft of half of Mexico by the United States:

"How does it become a man to behave toward this American government today? I answer that it cannot be without disgrace to be associated with it. I cannot for an instant recognize that political organization as my government."

I think Polanski is now dead, along with his dreams. Cantu is peddling turtle flesh in Hispaniola, and probably will never make it back to Chile. Deere? He adds up the sad arithmetic of his peoples' history, and he knows an uphill scuffle when he sees one. But he goes on preaching, literally that, not only in the U.S., but abroad — at Third World meetings in Africa and Europe — usually as a representative of the American Indian Movement.

I confess that, having met a few Indian leaders in New Mexico and Arizona, I approached Deere's press conference with a very large grain of salt. I have seen about as many red Elmer Gantrys as white ones, relatively speaking. I had to swallow the salt.

"Are you a violent man?" I asked him.

He fixed his eyes on mine long enough to give emphasis to a slow, low-voiced reply:

"I think there probably will have to be violence."

And then he handed me a copy of a speech he had made at an international conference. A couple of excerpts:

"Today, all over our country, historians and anthropology people have dug up the earth to find the history of the Western Hemisphere. But they have not found any jail houses. They have not found any prisons. They have not found insane asylums."

"In the Western Hemisphere, when our value system changed, another value system came. . . . That value system, of money, has separated us from the natural way of life. That value system we find to be destructive. And your families aren't doing too well, either." This, to a mostly white audience.

Another thread ties together, for me, Polanski's loss of his country, Cantu's loss of both country and manhood, and Deere's quixotic journey. My own country was partly responsible for what happened in Poland when the Soviet government shredded the Yalta agreements. My own government almost singlehandedly destroyed the Allende government. As for Indians — Deere said it: "Go read some more history."

But before I do that, I believe I'm going to go watch Barton Creek water moseying through the escarpment and read some lines of Stephen Crane's to the squirrels:

'Think as I think,' said a man,
'Or you are abominably wicked; you are a toad.'
And after I had thought of it,
I said, 'I will, then, be a toad.'

I am going to do this because I cannot forget three brief conversations, in Poland, in Mexico, in East Austin.

And then, once, now and future toad, I am going to act on an imperative necessity to holler "fire" in this crowded theater — because the damned thing is on fire. □

A Walk on the Supply Side

Reaganomics a 'Riverboat Gamble'

By Alfred J. Watkins

Austin

Many Washington observers now conclude that Reagan's supply-side advisors are either arithmetic incompetents or economic dunces. And at first glance, the critics would appear to be correct.

Al Watkins is an Observer *contributing editor and an assistant professor of Government at UT-Austin. This article is the first of a four-part series on Reaganomics entitled "A Walk on the Supply Side."*

Instead of the low interest rates and inflation-free prosperity Reagan promised, the economy is plunging into a recession that many economists predict will be the worst since the 1929 crash. Government deficits would disappear by 1984, said Reagan. Now according to even the most optimistic projections, they are expected to soar above the $100 billion mark in each of the next few years and recent Congressional Budget Office analyses suggest they will be closer to the $200 to $250 billion range. Even David Stockman, the wizard of OMB, seems to have had second thoughts about the wisdom of his boss' economic program. He was sent to the Reagan woodshed after telling *Atlantic Monthly* that the President's tax package was a "trojan horse" and confessing, "none of us really understand what's going on."

Unfortunately, this disillusionment with Reaganomics — comforting as it may be to progressives and some anti-Reagan businessmen — may be premature. Reaganomics is definitely not "Keynes in drag" as Wall Street investment banker Felix Rohatyn disparagingly described it in testimony before the House Ways and Means Committee last

March. Nor is Reagan about to tolerate the sort of deficits that would make the most devout liberal blush with shame. Instead, Reagan seems to be using the tax cuts and ensuing government deficits to stampede Congress into dismantling the politically popular safety net programs.

Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker seems to have grasped this point when he described Reagan's tax package as a "riverboat gamble." Baker was referring to Reagan's belief that Congress would never make deep spending cuts as long as sufficient revenue was available to fund existing programs. So instead of waiting for Congress to cut spending first to make room for future tax cuts, Reagan is betting that depriving the treasury of revenue will leave Congress with no choice but to shred the safety net.

In a September 12 interview with the *National Journal,* Stockman confirmed this strategy. Substantial parts of the Great Society "will have to be heaved overboard," he declared. "We have got to shrink the non-interest, non-defense, non-social security part of the government by 30 percent in real terms over the next three years."

The tax cut he acknowledged is the key element in the Reagan plan. In addition to major revisions in the business tax code which, for all practical purposes eliminates the corporate income tax, Reagan cut personal income tax rates 25 percent over 33 months. More importantly, he accepted a Senate floor amendment, subsequently adopted by the House, which indexes personal tax rates. This provision, scheduled to take effect in 1985, is designed to offset the "bracket creep" which pushes taxpayers into higher tax brackets and allows revenue to grow more rapidly than inflation. Current estimates put the cumulative revenue loss from the tax bill at $750 billion — more money than the government received in all of 1981. With revenues projected to grow more slowly than defense spending, Stockman explains, Congress will be forced to pare social programs.

"I would suggest we're in a new arena; the tax bill passed by Congress last summer will finally bring truth-in-government to policy decisions," Stockman said. "Congress can no longer tax through inflation and bracket creep. . . . The illusion of large future revenues to cover the expenditure side of the budget is gone, and that changes the basic nature of the fiscal equation.

"The [deficit] problem can now only be solved in three ways: by increasing or imposing taxes, which we are opposed to; by underfunding defense which we think would be dangerous; or by recognizing that the federal government has a tendency to take on commitments that it can't afford and that are not compatible with restoring economic enterprise to the economy. These commitments will have to be scaled back or terminated in some substantial way. And we think that the third course is the policy that we must pursue."

This strategy should come as no surprise to panic-stricken congressmen now trying frantically to stanch government's red ink. Reagan and his lieutenants gave Congress ample warning of the administration's intentions. But the Democrats in Congress, trapped by their own tax-cutting fever, were too busy offering tax breaks to the oil industry and other business interests to pay much attention. And the Republicans, with Reagan's approval, continued to devise counter offers that kept increasing the revenue loss.

Had members of either party been listening, they would have heard Reagan tell the nation on July 27, "If the tax cut goes to you, the American people, in the third year, that money returned to you won't be available to the Congress to spend. And that in my view is what this whole controversy comes down to." Or if they preferred, they could have heeded the warning of Senate Budget Committee Chairman Peter V. Domenici who told his colleagues that while revenue losses were tolerable in the early years, the deficit would mushroom in 1984, when many of the most costly tax provisions would be phased in. "I want the senators to know that in order to have a balanced budget in fiscal year 1984 and beyond, we are going to be forced to make major and painful budget reductions beyond those being made this year," he said. "We could easily face the necessity of reducing spending by over $80 billion during the next two years."

It now appears that Domenici was too optimistic. In testimony before the Senate Budget Committee on September 16, Federal Reserve Board Chairman Paul Volcker declared, "It is evident that given the size of the tax reduction, the spending cuts so far — large as they may be in historical perspective — have been only a downpayment on those needed to bring expenditures into alignment with the receipt side of the budget." Eight days later, in a nationally televised address, Reagan called for 12 percent across-the-board cuts in all discretionary, non-defense spending — including many entitlement or safety net programs — and increases in various user fees and excise taxes. This was expected to reduce the red ink by $80 billion. But this second round of cuts would not be the last, Reagan warned. "Holding down spending must be a continuing battle for several years to come."

With Reagan about to unveil a 1983 budget filled with so many additional spending cuts it will make his 1982 budget appear "ultra liberal" by comparison, the President seems to have backed Congress into a corner. But it is still not clear whether his gamble will pay off. Congress of course can refuse to approve any additional cuts, but only if they are willing to override an almost certain presidential veto and take the blame for the largest peace-time deficits in history. Barring that, they must choose between angering the voters with tax increases to fund entitlement programs — which Reagan has vowed to resist, or acquiescing to further spending cuts. Reagan is betting that his tax cut victory and elections which are less than a year away, will raise the odds they choose the latter option. □

Looking at George Strake . . . from page 1

Theresa McKenna, information director for the National Council of Senior Citizens, says Clinkscales' alliance is not part of the large coalition of groups which, for example, participated in the White House Conference on Aging. According to McKenna, "The first time anybody had heard about (the alliance) was four years ago," when the group surfaced in various congressional campaigns. "In all these places some congressman would win a 'golden age award.' In all these cases, the local people didn't know" any members of the group. To top it off, the legislators receiving the awards had very low scores with McKenna's group, which rates members of Congress for votes affecting the elderly. McKenna says Clinkscales was found to be running the organization out of a tailor's shop in Georgetown. In Austin, Clinkscales claimed his group had 500,000 members nationwide and 30,000 in Texas. McKenna said the

former figure is "a joke," adding that the group frequently uses the figure 30,000 when asked how many members it has in one state.

(The group may be growing at present, however. It has started offering insurance to supplement Medicare. Elderly persons desiring the insurance are required to pay a one dollar membership fee to the alliance before they become eligible for the insurance.)

Angry Eddie Chiles has signed up with the Strake campaign too. He is serving as deputy finance chairman. Campaign manager is Jerry Lindsley of Houston. Lindsley was successful in his last position as manager for Republican Jack Fields, who defeated Democrat Bob Eckhardt. Strake's Dallas finance chairman is Jere Thompson, president of the Southland Corp. (7-11 stores). Thompson was finance chairman for John Connally's presidential campaign.

Apart from the generally conservative tone, Strake, so far, has given the press little to write about his candidacy. He has attacked Hobby for not cutting state spending and proudly proclaims that, as secretary of state, he returned about three million dollars to the state treasury.

David Dean, Strake's successor to that office, may well be wishing that Strake hadn't been so generous in his returns. The big news from the secretary of state's office lately has been the $900,000 shortage of funds for next spring's primary elections (*TO* 1/15/82). Dean has suggested that the parties take contributions to run their primaries. Should that money not come in, and there seems little chance that Exxon will want to finance a state primary, Dean and the county chairs will face a difficult task this spring. Democratic spectators take Strake to task for not asking that the extra money be appropriated when the maximum pay for election workers was raised last session. Strake says he warned the author of the pay-raise bill there would not be enough money if salaries were raised.

The author, Rep. Doyle Willis of Fort Worth, reportedly told Strake "Oh, you'll find the money somewhere." Strake said he had intended to write to local election officials explaining that the pay increase could not be implemented because the legislation did not provide the funds for it. Whether local party chairs will have enough money to pay for voting machines and election workers this spring remains to be seen. David Dean will have to be extremely careful in allocating resources if he intends to avoid the problems Strake encountered before the spring primaries two years ago.

For example, Strake's election division, which was in charge of allocating funds for voting machine rental, had planned on giving Harris County Democrats funds for about 1,000 machines for the county's approximately 194,000 Democratic voters. At the same time, Strake had allocated enough money for Harris County's 29,000 Republican voters to have about 900 machines. After county Democratic chair Anne Greene accused Strake of playing partisan politics with his office, elections division personnel compromised at 1,400 machines for Democrats.

Joyce Peters, Bexar County Democratic chair, also charges Strake's office with "real partisan manipulation." In Peters' view, he hired a lot of gung ho young Republicans who believed that the Democrats had been contriving to beat the Republicans, through the secretary of state's office, for years. The result, Peters said, was unequal treatment of Democratic and Republican party officials. "If you were a Democrat," calling Strake's office for advice, "you were put on hold. There were no straight answers," she said.

Bob Slagle, state Democratic party chairman, was so offended by Strake's pro-Republican activities that he got the State Democratic Executive Committee to pass a resolution asking that the secretary of state be made an elective office.

Common Cause, the citizens lobby, also clashed with Strake in his role as overseer of campaign reporting and officeholder ethics. Jim Marston, an Austin attorney who serves on Common Cause's board of directors, cited three major problems in the election division

under Strake: laziness, hostility towards state ethics laws, and "just straight partisanship."

"Time after time, the secretary of state's personnel created loopholes in ethics laws which simply were not there when you read the law," Marston says. For example, H.B. 1903, the 1981 amendments to campaign reporting and disclosure laws, required that political action committees reveal the names of their contributors. "Without any authorization in the law, the secretary of state's office issued a memo stating that all current PACs would be exempt from that requirement — that they would be grandfathered. After Common Cause yelled and screamed about that, the secretary of state backed down and reversed the ruling," Marston says.

Laws like H.B. 1903 cannot go into effect, of course, until the U.S. Justice Department has looked them over to make sure that they do not adversely affect the Voting Rights Act. It is the secretary of state's responsibility to send all such legislation to the federal government for review. H.B. 1903 was approved by both the House and Senate in May, 1981, and signed by Gov. Clements on June 18. It was scheduled to take effect on Sept. 1. However, it was not mailed to the Justice Department until Aug. 20, 1981.

Strake noted in his letter to the federal attorneys that expedited consideration would be helpful, "inasmuch as this Act is to take effect prior to the expiration of the 60-day period allowed by law for Justice Department review." He did not note that it took a complaint from Common Cause to get the submission in the mail at all.

A third clash between Common Cause and Strake employees occurred when one of Strake's deputies ruled that Texans for a Conservative Congress did not have to file as a lobby group. Even though the conservatives were raising money to finance lobbying, Jim Ciciconi, than an attorney for the office, ruled that the group did not need to register because it was soliciting other persons to do the lobbying, rather than doing direct lobbying. Oscar Mauzy labeled Texans for a Conservative Congress as "a front group for the Republican party," and Marston claims that the group actually was lobbying legislators. After Mauzy and Common Cause threatened to file suit, the group did write a letter revealing names of contributors, Marston said. However, the letter is not on file with the clerk who handles lobby registration in the secretary of state's office and she denied any knowledge of the letter when asked.

Another questionable ruling, discovered by *Dallas Times Herald* reporter Virginia Ellis, allowed Ross Perot's War on Drugs to make gifts to legislators without reporting them. According to Richard Salwen, lobbyist for the group, the $100 Steuben glass eagles given to friends of the anti-drug crusade were "rewards," not gifts. As such, the secre-

Photo by Phil Vinson

The Social Cause Calendar

Notices on upcoming events must reach the *Observer* at least three weeks in advance.

LULAC FESTIVITIES

LULAC Week will be celebrated throughout the nation on **Feb. 14-20** with various councils holding different functions. Contact the Corpus Christi office, 512-882-8284.

LIBERTARIAN FORUM

The Travis County Libertarian Alliance will sponsor a community forum on war taxes and the military budget on **Feb. 18**, 1712 S. Congress, Austin, 7 p.m.

DEBATE ON RELIGION AND POLITICS

John Duncan, Exec. Dir. of the Texas Civil Liberties Union, and Cal Thomas, V-Pres. and national spokesperson for the Moral Majority, will debate on the separation of church and state on **Feb. 18**, Texas Tech University Center Theatre, Lubbock, 8:15 p.m. The debate is sponsored by the Ideas and Issues Committee of the Univ. Center Program.

TRIBUTE TO BLACK WOMEN ARTISTS

The Black Arts Alliance and Women and Their Work are co-sponsoring a Tribute to Black Women Artists, a multi-arts performance, on **Feb. 21**, Paramount Theater, Austin, 6 p.m., $5 admission.

WATER PROTECTION SEMINAR

A short course on water law, sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Colorado State University, will be held **Feb. 25-26** in Dallas. The course will cover the basic principles involved in the regulation and management of surface waters; call Helen White at 303-491-6222 for more information.

UNITED FARM WORKERS CONVENTION

The Texas convention of the United Farm Workers, AFL-CIO, will be held **Feb. 28** at SPJA High School in San Juan. Call 512-787-2233 for more information.

PEACE CONFERENCE

An ecumenical conference, entitled "Pax: Our Choice," focusing on public policies and moral choices related to nuclear arms, will be held **March 7-9** at St. Paul's United Methodist Church, 508 N. Center, San Antonio. Speakers include Rev. William Sloane Coffin, Riverside Church, New York; Bishop Leroy T. Matthiesen, Amarillo; Dr. Robert J. Lifton, Yale Medical School; Dr. Lloyd Dumas, UT Dallas; Bishop Ernest Dixon, United Methodist Church, San Antonio; Rabbi Samuel Stahl, San Antonio; Rev. Bill Lyttle, San Antonio. Registration fee is $5; contact Dr. Bill Harris, 512-432-7875.

Progressive Organizations

The *Observer* has built up lists of the political organizations we regard as progressive, their meeting evenings where that is applicable, and a phone number for each, in Texas cities. The editor invites communications recommending organizations for inclusion, by city.

AUSTIN

ACORN, 8 nghbrhood groups, 442-8321; **Amn. Friends Service Cmte.**, 474-2399; **Amnesty Intl.**, Group 107, Cindy Torrance, Bx. 4951, Aus. 78765; **Anti-Hunger Coalition of Tx. (ACT)**, 474-9221; **Austinites for Public Transportation**, 3rd Tue., 441-2651; **Aus. Lambda**, every Mon., 478-8653; **Lesbian-Gay Pol. Caucus**, 4th Tue., **& Lesbian-Gay Demos. of Tx.**, 478-8653; **Aus. Nghbrhood, Ccl.**, 4th Wed., 442-8411; **Aus. Nghbrhood Fund**, 3rd Mon., 451-2347; **Aus. Tenants' Ccl.**, 474-1961; **Aus. Women's Political Caucus**, 1st & 3rd Tues., 472-3606; **Black Aus. Demos., 478-6576; Brotherhood of Viet. Vets.**, every Sun., 443-4830;

Central Aus. Demos., 3rd Wed., 477-6487; **Central Tx. ACLU**, 477-4335; **Central Tx. Lignite Watch, Travis Co.**, 479-0678; **Citizens' Coalition for an Economical Energy Policy**, 474-4738; **Cmte. in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES)**, 477-4728; **Demo. Socialist Organizing Cmte.**, 2nd Wed., 453-2556; **Ecology Action**, 478-1645; **El Centro Chicano**, 477-7769 or 476-3747; **Grandparents for Nuclear Disarmament Action**, 453-1727; **Gray Panthers**, 4th Thu., 345-1869; **IMPACT**, 472-3903; **LULAC**, 2nd Wed., 451-3219; **Max's Pot** (appropriate technology), 1st Sat., 928-4786; **Mxn.-Amn. Demos.**, 1st Mon., 444-7688 or 472-9211; **New Amn. Movement**, every other Sun., 454-2888 or 478-2096; **NOW**, 2nd & last Wed., 472-3775;

tary of state ruled, they did not have to be reported.

That particular ruling caused some hard feelings but brought no legal challenges. Not so for a couple of Strake's opinions. A House subcommittee charged with overseeing elections activities asked Atty. Gen. Mark White to overrule Strake on two occasions — which he did. Most controversial was Strake's ruling that persons who voted in the Democratic primary could sign petitions for Republican-turned-independent presidential candidate John Anderson, but prohibiting Republcan primary voters from doing the same.

The same subcommittee recommended continued "close scrutiny" of the secretary of state's office "to ascertain if legislative intent is being carried out in each promulgation" of election rules.

On Jan. 27, 1981, Common Cause filed complaints with the secretary of state against 18 candidates for failing to file one or more statements of contributions and expenditures required by state law. All of the complaints related to the Nov. 1980 general election. Under the law, Strake's office was required to notify the candidates of the complaints and request a written response. Then, both the complaint and the response had to be sent to the attorney general and the local district attorney for possible prosecution. A random search of those files shows elections division personnel sending notification to the candidates and officeholders in February. However, notice was not sent to the attorney general or local prosecutors until late September.

According to Marston, any tardiness in attending to such matters was blamed on lack of personnel. However, Marston and others familiar with the office noted that Strake's employees always had time to notify an office holder that someone has looked at his or her file — even when no complaint has been filed.

In addition, Marston says, the office apparently lost a number of filings, a matter which was embarrassing and annoying to several candidates. Milton Kosa, current director of elections, inadvertently admitted to such losses when he testified before a December meeting of the House elections committee. "We now have everything completely under a controlled system . . . no more of this looking for files and having people come in and pull the file copy and then we can't locate [it when] we're supposed to answer public inquiries," Kosa said.

A number of Democrats have expressed relief that Dean has taken over the secretary of state's office. Although disagreement between Republicans and Democrats is still anticipated, they expect to work with Dean, rather than fight with him. As for the former secretary of state, San Antonio's Joyce Peters said, "I hope Mr. Strake never gets to be sheriff where he has a gun and a badge. Some people just do not have the temperament for public office." □

Nurses' Environmental Health Watch, 454-3932; **Northeast Aus. Demos.**, 2nd Tue., 836-3533; **Phogg Foundation**, Box 13549, Aus.; **Save Barton Creek**, every Tue., 472-4104; **Sierra Club**, 1st Tue., 478-1264; **Socialist Party of Tx.**, 2nd Tue., 452-3722; **South Aus. Demos.**, 447-4091; **Tx. Abortion Rights Action League (TARAL)**, 478-0094; **Tx. Citizens Party**, 451-3864; **Tx. Consumer Assn.**, 477-1882; **Tx. Mobilization for Survival**, Sun., wkly., 474-5877; **Travis Audubon Scty.**, 3rd Thu., 447-7155 or 477-6282; **Travis Cty. Demo. Women**, every Fri., 453-3243; **Travis Cty. YD's**, 453-3796; **Univ. Mobilization for Survival**, wkly., 476-4503; **UT YD's**, 452-8516; **West Aus. Demos.**, 2nd Thu., 454-1291; **Zilker Park Posse**, 472-1053.

SAN ANTONIO

Demos. for Action, Research & Education (DARE), rsch. volunteers needed, 4th Wed., 674-0351; **Fellowship of Reconciliation ACLU**, 224-6791; **Amnesty Int'l.**, U.S. Group 127, Julia Powell, 828-4141; **Women's Political Caucus**, 2nd Tues., 655-3724; **Civil Rights Litigation Center**, 224-1061; **Citizens Concerned About Nuclear Power**, 1st & 3rd Weds., 655-0543; **Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS)**, 2nd Th., 222-2367; **Demos for Action, Research & Education (DARE)**, rsch. volunteers needed, 4th Wed., 674-0351; **Latin-American Assistance**, alternate Sats., 732-0960; **Mxn.-Amn. Demos.**, 3rd Mon., Walter Martinez, 227-1341; **NAACP**, 4th Fri., 224-7636; **Organizations United for East Side Development**, last Tue., 824-4422; **People for Peace**, 2nd Th., 822-3089; **Physicians for Social Responsibility**, 1st Mon., Dr. Martin Batiere, 691-0375; **Poor People's Coalition for Human Services**, 923-3037; **Residents Organized for Better and Beautiful Environmental Development (ROBBED)**, 3rd Tue., 226-3973; **S. A. Demo. League**, 1st Thu., 344-1497; **S. A. Gay Alliance**, last Wed., Metropolitan Commnty. Church, 102 S. Pine; **San Antonians for Freedom of Choice**, 733-3248; **Sierra Club**, 3rd Tue., 341-5990; **United Citizens Project Planning and Operating Corp.** (federal funding), 3rd Mon., 224-4278.

DALLAS

ACLU, 651-7897; **ACORN**, 823-4580; **Amn. Friends Service Cmte.**, 321-8643; **American Indian Center**, 826-8856; **Amnesty Intl.**, U.S. Group 205, 361-4690; **Armadillo Coalition**, 1st Wed., 349-1970; **AMIGOS**, 339-9461; **Audubon Society**, 341-2534; **Bois d'Arc Patriots**, 827-2632; **Bread for the World**, Dist. 3, Joe Haag, 741-1991x298 & 495-1494; **Brotherhood of Viet Vet.**, 224-9750; **Brown Berets**, 337-4135; **Citizens' Assn. for Sound Energy (CASE)**, 946-9446; **Citizens for Comm. Health**, 1st Fri., 363-2979; **Clean Air Coalition**, 387-2785; **Comanche Peak Life Force**, Wed. wkly, 337-5885; **Cmte. in Solidarity with the People in El Salvador (CISPES)**, 375-3715; **Dallas Gay Alliance**, 2nd Mon., 528-4233; **E. Dal. Nghbrhood Assn.**, 3rd Mon., 827-1181;

Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), 1-370-3805; **Frederick Douglass Voting Council**, every Fri., 426-1867; **Gray Panthers of Dallas-Fort Worth**, 2nd Sat., 227-8332; **Love Field Cit. Action Cmte.**, 526-8481; **Low Income Housing Security Cmte.**, 748-5861; **Nghborhood Info. & Action Service**, 827-2632; **Neighbors United for Quality Ed.**, 823-6713; **North Texas Abortion Rights Action League (TARAL)**, 742-8188; **NOW** (Dallas Cty.), 1st Mon., 742-6918; **NOW** (North Dal.,) 3rd Tue., 690-8971; **No. Lake Col. Solar Club**, 659-5254; **Progressive Voters League**, 372-8168; **Sierra Club**, 2nd Wed., 369-5543;

Save Open Space (SOS) 1st Mon., 750-9736; **S. Central Civic League**, 375-5038; **S.E. Dal. Nghbrhood Club**, every 4th Sat., 421-7931; **Sound Transportation & Rapid Transit (START)**, 321-6960; **Txns. for Handgun Control**, 528-3985; **Tx. Cmte. on Natural Resources**, 352-8370; **Tx. Tenants Union**, 823-2733; **Dallas UN Assn. (DUNA)**, 526-1853; **Urban Affairs Center** (Bishop Col.), 372-6801; **War Resisters League**, 337-5885; **W. Dal. Nghbrhood Group**, 3rd Wed., 631-1586.

FORT WORTH

ACLU, 534-6883; **ACORN**, (11 nghbrhd. groups), 924-1401, board meets mthly; **Armadillo Coalition**, 927-0808; **Bread for the World**, 924-1440 (Dist. 12), 923-4290 (Dist. 6); **Citizens for Fair Utility Regulation**, 478-6372; **Coalition of Labor Union Women**, 469-1202. **Dist. 10 Demos.**, 2nd Sat., 535-7803; **First Friday**, 1st Fri., 927-0808; **F.W. Tenants' Ccl.**, 923-5071; **IMPACT**, (telephone chain, works largely through progressive Protestant churches), 923-4506, meets on call; **Mental Health Assn.**, 2nd & 4th Tue., 335-5405; **NOW**, 3rd Th., 336-3943; **Precinct Workers Cl.**, 3rd Th., 429-2706; **Senatorial Dist. 12 Demos.**, 2nd Sat. or 2nd Wed., 457-1560; **Sierra Club**, 3rd Wed., 923-9718; **Students Against the Draft** (UTA), 261-1935; **Tarrant Cty. Demo Women's Club**, 2nd Sat., 451-8133, 927-5169; **Tx. Coalition of Black Demos** (F. W. chap.), 1st Tues., 534-7737; **Women's Political Caucus**, 1st Wed., 336-8700.

HOUSTON

ACLU, 524-5925; **ACORN**, 523-6989; **Amns. for Demo. Action**, 522-9544; **Amnesty Intl.**, Group 23, 868-0707; **Brotherhood of Viet. Vet.**, 728-4857; **Citizens' Anti-Nuclear Info. Team (CAN IT)**, 522-3343; **Concilio de Organizaciones Chicanos**, P.O. Box 9, Houston 77001; **Demo. Socialist Organizine Cmte.**, 921-6906; **Ecumenical Peaceforce of Houston**, 10723 Inwood Dr., 77042; **Gay Political Caucus**, 1st and 3rd Weds., 521-1000; **Harris Cty. Concerned Women**, 674-6798; **Harris Cty. Demos.**, quarterly, 528-2057; **Houston Area Women's Center**, 528-6798; **Lesbian and Gay Demos. of Texas**, 521-1000; **Mxn.-Amn. Demos.**, 6944 Navigation, Houston 77011; **Mockingbird Alliance**, 747-1837; **NAACP**, 1018 Clebourne, Houston 77001; **PASO**, 6716 Fairfield, Houston 77023; **Senate Dist. 15 Demo. Coalition**, 862-8431; **Tx. Abortion Rights Action League (TARAL)**, 520-0850; **Tx. Coalition of Black Demos.**, 674-0968; **Tx. Demos.**, 667-6194; **Toxic Substances Task Force**, 1st Tue. & 3rd Wed., 228-0037; **UofH YD's**, 749-7347; **Westside Demos.**, 464-2536.

AROUND TEXAS

Alta Loma: Brotherhood of Viet. Vet., 925-6405. **Amarillo:** ACLU, 373-7200; Panhandle Environmental Awareness Cmte., 376-8903; Northwest Tx. Clergy and Laity Concerned, 2nd Tue., 373-8668. **Bastrop:** Central Tx. Lignite Watch, Bastrop Co., 321-5250. **Beaumont:** ACLU, 898-0743; Amnesty Int'l, group 221, Karen Dweyer, 420 Longmeadow, Beaumont 77707. Brotherhood of Viet Vets, 727-4873. **Brownsville:** ACLU, 541-4874. **Bryan:** ACLU, Box 4523, 77805; Brazos Society for Alternatives to Nuclear Energy, 822-1882. **College Station:** Texas Environmental Coalition (TEC), Ken Kramer, Box D, 77841. **Corpus Christi:** American GI Forum, 241-8647; Coastal Bend Chapter Sierra Club, 3rd Tues., 883-0586; Gulf Coast Conservation Assoc., 991-9690; League of Women Voters, 852-6443; LULAC, 882-8284; NAACP, 883-2931; NOW, 883-4469; Org. for the Preservation of an Unblemished Shoreline (OPUS), 881-6308; Women's Pol. Caucus, 854-1080. **Denton:** ACLU, 387-5126. **El Paso:** ACLU, 545-2990; Amnesty Int'l, Group 189, 584-4869. **Lubbock:** ACLU, 765-8393. **Nat'l Lawyers Guild**, 799-2714; **NOW**, 793-0582; **South Plains Alternative Resources Coalition**, 762-8950. **Midland:** Brotherhood of Viet. Vets., 684-3768. **Nacogdoches:** Pineywoods Coalition, 218 W. Austin St., Nacogdoches. **San Juan:** ACLU, 787-8171. **Seabrook:** Galveston Bay Conservation & Preservation Assoc., 471-3119. **Temple:** Brotherhood of Viet Vets, 773-7987. **Waco:** ACLU, 755-3611.

Anti-Consumer Texans

Congress turned increasingly anti-consumer in the past session, with members who received the largest amounts of campaign contributions from business groups voting more of a pro-business line, Ralph Nader's congressional lobbyists said recently. Two Texans, Sen. John Tower and Republican Cong. Tom Loeffler, were among those with the lowest pro-consumer scores in the survey by *Congress Watch*. Ratings for individual members were based on 30 votes in the House and 40 in the Senate during 1981. The votes involved a range of consumer-related issues affecting such areas as the environment, energy, tax reform, government reorganization, and health.

Riley Rakes It In

Rep. Ken Riley of Corpus Christi amassed about $18,300 in political contributions while the legislature was in session last year, a practice the legislature has since prohibited. The law now prohibits lawmakers from accepting campaign contributions 30 days prior to the start of a legislative session through the day it adjourns. The law went into effect Sept. 1. Riley, a first term Republican, drew the criticism of at least one lobby group last March by sponsoring a political fund-raiser in Austin in the middle of the session.

Watt Clarifies Remarks

Late last year that true believer who heads the Dept. of Interior made a speech to a group of California farmers in which he said, "I never use the words Republicans and Democrats. It's liberals and Americans."

Timothy Donohoe, a lobbyist for the Dallas-based Enserch Corp., which owns Lone Star Gas Co., read a report of Sec. Watt's remarks and fired off a letter to the secretary on private stationery with an office address asking Watt to "kindly furnish further clarification of your remarks," adding that he is "an American and a liberal. And the Washington lobbyist for a $3 billion energy concern."

Instead of responding to Donohoe, Stanley Hulett, assistant secretary for congressional and legislative affairs, searched out Donohoe's employer and then sent a copy of the letter and one of his own to Donohoe's boss at Enserch Corp. Donohoe was fired.

Nice folks we're dealing with here.

Cong. Charles Wilson, on whose staff Donohoe worked for seven years, says he would like to see a congressional investigation, but he doesn't blame Enserch. "I would say that in circumstances like this I don't fault the company," he said, "because a major energy company can be intimidated by the Interior Dept."

Gib Grabs Some, Too

Rep. Gib Lewis has raised nearly $100,000 in his bid to be the next House speaker, outdistancing Carlyle Smith, the Grand Pairie Democrat, by more than 15 to 1. Reports filed with the Sec. of State's office show that Lewis has spent about $86,000; Smith reported spending $2,379.

Lewis' largest single contributor was Fort Worth oilman Perry Bass, who is also chairman of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission. Bass gave Lewis two contributions totaling $10,000. Other contributors include Eddie Chiles ($1,000), nightclub owner Billy Bob Barnett ($1,000), and former Fort Worth Mayor Woodie Woods ($100.)

Austin Says No

Austin voters soundly defeated a proposed city ordinance legalizing housing discrimination against homosexuals by a 63 percent to 37 percent margin. Now the battle shifts back to the City Council where council member Roger Duncan plans to move immediately on an amendment to the Fair Housing Ordinance that would make it illegal to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation.

Ethics Panel

Texas' state ethics panel is about ready to go to work. Rep. Stan Schlueter's Public Servant Standards of Conduct Advisory Committee will hold a public hearing Feb. 26. After six months of hearings and several more of subcommittee and staff work, the ethics committee will make a report in November telling the 1983 legislature what should be done about state government ethics. Much of the committee's information will come from public hearings. The Feb. 26 hearing will consider conflicts of interest, including nepotism and business dealings of public servants, along with public employee restrictions such as prohibitions on political activity.

Water Still On

Although voters overwhelmingly rejected the proposed Texas Water Trust Fund last November, the Texas Water Development Board is making plans to spend $40 million for water projects. House Bill 8, a law passed by the 1981 Legislature to put the water trust fund into effect, appropriated $40 million to the Texas Water Development Board for start-up activities. At its meeting last week, the Board considered "draft rules" proposed by general counsel Reg Arnold to use the $40 million as a "Water Loan Assistance Fund." Under the proposed rules, the $40 million would be used to invest in board-sanctioned water development projects of local governments in Texas (more on this later).

Demos Tinker With Rules

For the fourth time in twelve years, Democratic party leaders are tinkering with the nominating rules for presidential candidates. This latest "reform" commission, which met in Washington in early January, was called the Hunt Commission after its chairman, North Carolina Gov. James Hunt.

The 69 commission members recommended the following rule changes for consideration by the full Democratic National Committee in March:

- Shortening the public delegate-selection "season" from 20 to 15 weeks by moving the Iowa caucuses to Feb. 27 and the New Hampshire primary election to Mar. 6;

• Getting professional politicians back into presidential politics by mandating that 15 percent of all delegates should be "uncommitted" elected officials selected by members of Congress and state Democratic committees;

• Ruling that state parties could rewrite their rules to produce a greater likelihood of "winner-take-all" primaries instead of the proportional-representation elections of recent years;

• Eliminating the 1980 rule that bound delegates to vote for the candidate to which each was originally pledged.

The DNC will probably ratify all or most of the changes. The idea is to prevent future nominations of what columnist Richard Reeves calls "little-known outsider candidates — in other words, to lock the barn door after George McGovern and Jimmy Carter have escaped."

The Commission did nothing to reduce the number of primaries, the length or cost of the campaign or the influence of the news media.

Comptroller Capers

The comptroller's race got started on a predictably nasty note. Bob Bullock filed a formal complaint charging Sen. Mike Richards, R-Houston, may have violated election laws by soliciting contributions before naming a campaign treasurer. Bullock drew attention to a note at the end of a Richards memo which says, "After reading, please destroy and preferably do not discuss." Sec. of State David Dean and Harris County officials say they'll look into it.

Richards calls Bullock "a very sick man."

Marshall Has Think-Tank

Former Labor Secretary Ray Marshall has formed a new organization to push moderate-to-liberal alternatives to conservative policies currently winning favor in Washington. Marshall's group, the National Policy Exchange, will be headquartered in Washington. Members of the group include James Tobin, a Nobel Prize-winning economist from Yale; Sen. Edward Kennedy; former Vice President Walter Mondale; former Sen. Gaylord Nelson; and AFL-CIO chief Lane Kirkland. Robert Strauss is one of the contributors; Vernon Jordan, formerly head of the Urban League and now a partner in Strauss' law firm, is on the board of directors. □

THE STOCKMAN PAPERS

Reagan's policy makers knew that their plan was wrong, or at least inadequate to its promised effects, but the President went ahead and conveyed the opposite impression to the American public. With the cool sincerity of an experienced television actor, Reagan appeared on network TV to rally the nation in support of the Gramm-Latta resolution, promising a new era of fiscal control and balanced budgets, when Stockman knew they still had not found the solution.

This excerpt encompasses the only real gap in the *Atlantic Monthly's* stunning revelation of duplicity and cynicism in the making of Reagan Administration economic policy. The gap is that readers never learn whether Ronald Reagan was a knowing participant in his top staff's deception of Congress and the American people, or merely a doddering pitchman sent out to sell a package whose contents he knew nothing about. In a sense, it makes little difference. William Greider's masterly *Atlantic* article tells us that intellectual rot infests the Administration virtually to its highest level. Still, the American people need to know whether the man at the very top was a co-conspirator or merely a dupe. That would help them decide whether to be angry at Ronald Reagan, or at themselves for electing him.

It's being said in Washington and elsewhere that people knew all along that supply-side economics would never work — that they didn't need David Stockman's indiscretion to tell them that the combination of big tax cuts and big defense increases could lead only to big budget deficits, high interest rates, and recession. That much was clear back in the 1980 primaries, when George Bush unforgettably called the Kemp-Roth plan (espoused by candidate Reagan) "voodoo economics." It was clear later in the campaign when John Anderson said it all could work only "with mirrors." It was clear when Walter Heller, James Tobin, Charles Schultze, John Kenneth Galbraith, and other Democratic economists pointed out (sometimes in this magazine) that Reaganomics — with its tax cuts and tight money policies working against each other — was like two locomotives pulling in opposite directions, or like a driver jamming on the accelerator and the brake at the same time. So we "knew" — just as we knew that the Vietnam War was a mistake and a tragedy well before the Pentagon papers were published. What the Stockman papers tell us is that Mr. Reagan's own budget director knew as well — knew practically from the minute he took his solemn oath of office that Reaganomics was an empty promise. What the *Atlantic's* article teaches us is that the country was treated to a kind of economic Gulf of Tonkin incident, and that Congress was bulldozed into signing a blank check equivalent to the Tonkin resolution.

In early January, Mr. Greider writes, the Office of Management and Budget's computer model of the U.S. economy was instructed by Mr. Stockman and his staff to estimate the impact of Mr. Reagan's proposed tax cuts. The results, Mr. Stockman confided to Mr. Greider, were "absolutely shocking." The Reagan program would produce the highest peacetime deficits in history — $82 billion in fiscal 1982 and $116 billion in 1984. Mr. Stockman told Mr. Greider that if those figures were made public, the financial markets would panic, interest rates would go sky-high, and inflationary psychology would soar. What did Mr. Stockman do? Why, he reprogrammed the computer to produce the forecasts he needed to sell Reaganomics. One could say that at this early point he was deceiving himself as well as Congress and the country in hopes that somehow Reaganomics would work magic and make the rigged computer projections come true. If Mr. Stockman back then was an innocent believer, however, he wasn't one for long.

What Mr. Stockman witnessed, and then became a party to (reluctantly, he told Mr. Greider, always reluctantly) and finally an apologist for, was the conversion of an unrealistic (but idealistic) theory into an instrument benefiting the classic forces of greed in American society. In the 1980 campaign, Ronald Reagan promised that his tax cuts would unleash such productive energy that few if any federal programs would have to be done away with — only two percent of the whole, he said, all of it consisting of waste, fraud, and abuse. Once elected, though, Mr. Stockman and Mr. Reagan set out to slash $40 billon in domestic programs. "Zero out" was Mr. Stockman's phrase for what would happen to minimum Social Security benefits, CETA job training, and other social programs. In the Phoenix program in Vietnam, the equivalent phrase was "terminate with extreme prejudice."

To his credit, Mr. Stockman originally wanted to pare away subsidies for the fat and rich along with programs benefiting the weak and poor. He was for a cutback in Ex-Im Bank subsidies for IBM and Lockheed, for a "mansion cap" limiting mortgage interest deductions on palaces, for elimination of oil depletion allowances, for cutting tax subsidies on industrial development bonds. But to the Reagan Administration, sharing austerity is pointless when the poor can be made to bear it all. Mr. Stockman wanted to target what he called "weak claims"; the Administration ended up training its sights on "weak clients"

instead. Mr. Stockman shed a tear or two when he lost, but he always dried his eyes in time to take another swipe at food stamps and orphans' benefits.

It was not Mr. Stockman's idea to cut taxes by $750 billion over the next five years, but he understood the budget impact that such revenue losses would have. He also understood — in the most damaging phrase in the Greider article — that the across-the-board tax rate cuts were merely a "Trojan horse" to benefit the rich. Did the budget director resign on principle over such deception? Quite the contrary, he went on working 16 hours a day for the Reagan program, and he wants to keep on doing so. He is the author of the new lists of budget cuts — and poor people are first in line again. He also advocated "revenue enhancement" measures to ease the budget deficits, but as usual he lost out in intra-Administration battles to truer believers who think that even increases in alcohol taxes are somehow an infringement on sacred property rights.

Democrats and repentant Republicans have every right to seize upon the Stockman papers in righteous indignation, demanding to know in detail what the Administration knew about the effects of its economic program and when it knew it. But exposing the seamy truth about Administration deception will not necessarily produce wiser economic policy or even help the Administration's opponents politically. There is still no comprehensive Democratic alternative to Reaganomics that candidates can take to the public in 1982 in hopes of winning support.

Many Democrats, unfortunately, are tempted reflexively to undo whatever Mr. Reagan has done — to increase taxes he decreased, to restore budget cuts he imposed, to kill weapons systems he revived. A defense program that consists (in Mr. Stockman's pungent phrase) of "just a bunch of numbers on a piece of paper" is obviously a prime candidate for scrutiny (though in cutting the defense budget, as in cutting the social services budget, the scalpel is a better tool than the meat-ax). And for the Democrats to advocate — as Walter Mondale has, among others — that individual tax cuts be postponed is to risk having the Democratic Party tagged as the party of high taxes.

Democrats think they are showing fiscal responsibility by favoring tax increases to narrow Reagan's budget deficits. But they can be responsible and also smart. Instead of eliminating individual tax cuts, the Democrats ought to urge spreading benefits and sacrifices truly "across the board," rather than merely reserving the former for the rich and the latter for everyone else. The Democrats ought to seize upon David Stockman's suppressed "Chapter II" set of economic reforms — $20 billion of loophole closing and increased user fees — and move to undo the most indefensible 1980 corporate tax cuts and subsidies.

And, most important, the Democrats should be clear about why budget deficits are important. It's not their absolute size or even their percentage of the gross national product that counts, but their effect on the capital market. There is a finite pool of saved money available each year for borrowing. Given tight money, the bigger the government's deficit the less money there is for private borrowing to modernize and expand the nation's industrial plant and improve productivity, competitiveness, and job creation. There is a need to hold down deficits, but there is also a need — and an opportunity unappreciated by most Democrats — to increase the size of the savings pool. Republican trickle-down economics (whether riding in a supply-side Trojan horse or flying its open tattered colors) seeks to increase the savings pool by lavishing tax breaks on the rich, on the theory that only they have the intelligence and discipline to invest rather than spend.

The opportunity for Democrats is to give citizens of all economic classes an incentive to save. One option is to do away with limits on Keogh and IRA accounts, allowing people to put as much money away as they can, to be taxed only when it is withdrawn for spending. Another option is to augment or partially replace the progressive income tax with a progressive consumption tax: the more one saved of what one earned, the less tax one would pay; and the more one spent, the higher one's taxes. An additional savings incentive would be elimination of consumer interest deductions and a cap on mortgage interest deductions. The point of such Democratic proposals would be to democratize America's most urgent economic business — restoring our productivity and our ability to provide modern jobs for our workers. The Democratic Party also should encourage devices for expanded profit- and power-sharing by American workers in their industries, to give them a stake in the success of the enterprises for which they work.

Where Ronald Reagan's political economics goes fundamentally wrong is in assuming that only the wealthy can make wise decisions, that only they should be entrusted with the power to decide how the resources of American society ought to be invested, and that making them wealthier still will automatically serve the general good. In these assumptions, ideological faith and pecuniary interest converge with each other, but not necessarily with the evidence of experience. It's clear that huge corporations, for example, don't necessarily take risks and expand production when their diet is fattened; some merely ooze out to merge expensively with others of their kind. American corporate managers have become accustomed to winning promotion and bonuses by maximizing short-term profits, not by inventing long-term growth strategies. Providing businessmen with greater tax breaks won't make them more productive.

Ronald Reagan's Administration has made a huge political blunder by not admitting its economic failings to the American people, and by getting caught at it. The magical aura that surrounded supply-side economics has been erased for good, but this does not necessarily mean that the Democratic Party automatically will profit. To do so, and to undo the injustices Mr. Reagan has wrought, the Democrats need a better economic program. And the best Democratic program always has been one that is democratic.

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Horseman, Hang On

Myth in Texas Letters

By Craig Edward Clifford

Annapolis, Maryland

AS a displaced Texas living in Maryland and an unemployed Ph.D. in philosophy, I was lucky enough to meet a displaced Irishman who dared to challenge my Lone Star credentials. After five years in Buffalo, New York, and a couple in Annapolis, I had become downright obnoxious about being a Texan — having, for example, repeatedly threatened the lives of unsuspecting Yankees who suggested that a Texas accent sounds stupid, or that all Southern accents are the same, or that Northeastern universities are superior to Southern ones — so I thought myself well beyond reproach on that score.

At a picnic given by the English Department in which my wife teaches, I had almost given up on hearing about anything other than the mechanics of publishing articles and securing research grants when I noticed someone who didn't seem to fit. He noticed my wife and me about the same time, so a conversation was inevitable. He was stocky and tan, sort of an outdoors Norman Mailer at forty, and when we asked what he did, he said that he kept the grounds. He asked about us, and he seemed particularly interested to hear that my wife taught poetry. He wanted to know which poets. My wife, like myself, figured that a grounds keeper probably wouldn't have heard of any poets that she might name, so she said that she taught the epic tradition.

"Do you do any Yeets?" he asked.

"You mean Yeats?"

"Yeah."

Next thing you know he was asking her about half a dozen books on Yeats and expounding on the remarkable growth that is evident on Yeat's work right up to his death.

"Sounds like you've spent some time with Yeats."

"I guess about fifteen years." He took another swig of his beer, rocked back on his heels, and came out with the following barrage in the purest Irish brogue:

Under bare Ben Bulben's head
In Drumcliff churchyard Yeats is laid.
An ancestor was rector there
Long years ago, a church stands near,
By the road an ancient cross.
No marble, no conventional phrase;
On limestone quarried near the spot
By his command these words are cut:

Cast a cold eye
On life, on death.
Horseman, pass by!

My wife and I looked at each other as if to say, I guess "Yeets" was a joke. Our poetry-steeped gardener, it seems, had come over from Ireland in his early teens with his father, himself a renowned Irish short-story writer.

There was, however, a second surprise. Somewhere in the midst of drinking ourselves into the woodwork and exalting the virtues of Yeats, we mentioned we were from Texas. When our drunken poetic gardener heard that, he immediately listed off the top of his head at least a dozen books on Texas or by Texans that I had never heard of — "How can you call yourself a Texan if you heavn't read . . .?" I insisted that I *was* one, so I didn't need to read about them; but that was as untrue to my philosophical experience as it was to the soil that nurtured me for the first twenty years of my life.

Emotionally I had already recognized the power of that soil. Although most expatriates don't get the severe kind of homesickness until they reach forty or fifty, at the ripe young age of twenty-nine I was already to the point where just the sound of Bill Moyers' accent was enough to drive me to drink.

But these inarticulate yearnings needed articulation. In a sense, I was already looking for a way back to Texas. I had spent ten years studying Martin Heidegger, a 20th-century philosopher whose thought is so thoroughly rooted in the dark hills of the *Schwarzwald* of Southern Germany that those who study him are forced either to ape his way of speaking or to return to their own *Heimat* for strength and inspiration. I had spent years reading Heidegger's reflections on the significance of place, on "dwelling poetically," on the way in which man "is as having been," on the way in which understanding what I have been is the only way to understand what I can and cannot be; but I had never fully applied these reflections to myself. The fact of the matter is, I didn't have a way to do that, not until a poetry-crazed Irishman — who, it turned out, had spent ten years in New Mexico studying the role of the Irish in the Southwest — force-fed me Walter Prescott Webb, John Graves, and Larry McMurtry.

BUT THEN AGAIN, perhaps I'm getting carried away. Is it anything more than pure romanticism to think that someone who grew up on the outskirts of Houston in the second half of the 20th century, someone who has spent more time studying Greek philosophy and German poetry than punching cattle, could learn who he is by reading how Captain McNelly crossed the Rio Grande with thirty Texas Rangers in 1875 against all orders of the U.S. authorities? Isn't it a mite far-fetched to think that any of the rapidly increasing numbers of urban Texans could learn something about themselves by reading McMurtry's tales of the dying breaths of the old-time Texas ranchers?

After all, McMurtry himself abandoned the rural themes of his earlier novels long ago, and he has repeatedly insisted that Texas writers should turn to the cities, most recently in a *Texas Observer* piece condemning the continuing infatuation of Texans with the cowboy myth.[1] Texans now are city people — the death of the cowboy has been sufficiently lamented and the new fodder for Texas literature should come from Dallas and Houston, not Archer County. In fact, McMurtry assures us, the ol' home on the range was not all that it's been cracked up to be anyway. In earlier essays and now once more, he criticizes the Big Three — Bedichek, Webb, and Dobie — for their tendency to romanticize the frontier life.[2] His accounts, he leads us to believe, will stay closer to the realities of Texas life, even when reality is not so pleasant, even when, God forbid, he should find himself forced to criticize Texas.[3] To romanticize, then, means to falsify — that is, to let the

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[1] "Ever a Bridgeroom: Reflections on the Failure of Texas Literature," *Texas Observer* (October 23, 1981).

[2] "Southwestern Literature?" in *In a Narrow Grave: Essays on Texas* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968).

[3] "The Teas Moon, and Elsewhere" (*Atlantic Monthly*, 1975).

myths get the upper hand on the reality. A. C. Greene echoes this sentiment: "The myth won't let Texas inspect itself with reality. It is impossible to write a novel about Texas using only so-called ordinary people. A 'Texas' character must be included."[4] And Wallace Stegner extends this dictum to the new breed of Western writers in general: "The real people of the West are infrequently cowboys and never myths. . . . They confront the real problems of real life in a real region. . . ."[5] Myth here means falsehood.

And yet, whether it was romanticism or not, whether or not I entered the realm of myth, when I read how McNelly told a U.S. Calvary officer that he didn't object to his men sitting down with him because he wouldn't fight alongside anyone he didn't believe his equal, I knew a little better than I did before why I'm the way I am. The fact of the matter is, I do identify myself as a Texan, even if I don't know how to explain what that is. The fact of the matter is, after reading about Captain McNelly I was in a lot better position to say what a Texan is than I was before. Even if I am an urbanite, I know why a Texas urbanite is different from a New York one. And not just in reading about McNelly — but also about the Texas Rangers who got out of hand in Reynosa in 1846, or about the Texans who insisted on driving all of the Reserve Indians out of the state in 1859, or even about Hud Bannon.

The plain fact of the matter is, being a Texan is itself a mythic reality. It is not merely that I grew up within the bounds of the appropriate three rivers, but rather, having grown up there, I *am* a certain way. In order to say what it is that appeals to me about some of the contemporary Texas writers, and, for that matter, about the old ones too, I have to take issue with the bifurcation of myth and reality with which McMurtry, Greene, Stegner, and company defend themselves — for two reasons, one philosophical and one geographical. I wouldn't propose to quibble with McMurtry's recent pronouncements on the merits and shortcomings of this or that Texas author. Concerning the books I know, I agree with quite a bit of what he has to say — so long as I keep a steady supply of salt on hand. Instead, I propose to disagree about some of the fundamentals.

IF THE ENTITY we call "Texas" involves the interaction of places and peoples, it is not so easy to discard all the falsehood: when it comes to man, throwing out the myth has something of the character of throwing the baby out with the bath water. Human reality includes the way in which people understand themselves and their history, and that understanding, to a large extent, involves myth. Yes, I *am* a certain way because I grew up with the idea that Texans are supposed to be a certain way, but there is no such thing as the pure person stripped of the various ideas of what he should be.

Mythos in Greek means, quite simply, "story." The history of a people includes the tradition of *mythoi* in which that people passes down its history. Reality includes myth, even the myths which patently falsify historical events. Even if Billy the Kid was a ruthless, cold-blooded murderer, the legend of Billy the Kid is nonetheless part of the West, along with the countless *mythoi* which immortalize Western heroes of old who well deserve the honor.

The character of a people is always inextricably bound up with the stories of that people. In the end, Texas itself is a mythic entity and it wouldn't be anything if it weren't. Whether there are observable characteristics to Texans which distinguish them from Cajuns and Okies and New Mexicans is largely irrelevant: without the continuing reality of its history, Texas would be nothing — and that history is full of myths and itself survives though the making and remaking of myth, through the telling of that history.

That's just it — the remaking of myth. The implication is not that we should all go on believing that Billy the Kid is someone worthy of emulation. We should damn well know that he wasn't, although we should also try to understand what it means that time and again we mythologize such figures in the way we do. The need for the outlaw hero, even if that hero is often used for despicable purposes, bespeaks a deep-seated cultural reality. So how does one go about remaking a myth?

If I may turn to something one of my teachers once said about an eminent storyteller of ancient times, perhaps I can make the point clear. The standard interpretation of the use of myth by Plato has it that Plato carried the world out of the realm of primitive *mythos* into the realm of civilized *logos*, with *mythos* understood as myth in the modern sense and *logos* as reason. As it were, this is the myth of Plato's treatment of myth. My teacher suggested, and after many years of work I find the suggestion well borne out, that the more truthful account would be that Plato moved from one level of myth through reason to a higher level of myth — from *mythos* through *logos* back to *mythos*. Plato's dialogues themselves are mythic in character, not discursive, but they are myths which grew out of a deeply insightful and reflective mind. Plato worked with a tradition of poetic myth and attempted to deepen the myths, *to make the myths more truthful*. One myth among others is the modern myth of the bare fact: that myth is a bad one. The key is to get the

[4] "The State Dobie Left Us In: Myth and Reality of Texas Letters," *Lone Star Review* (April 5, 1981).

[5] *The Sound of Mountain Water* (New York: Dutton, 1980), p. 31.

myth right, not to do away with it. The key is to tell the story as well as you can, not to throw out the story and hope that reality will be left over.

Some of the contemporary Texas writers are attempting to put forward better myths than the Big Three did, and they might well have done it. Some contemporary writers are attempting to tell the story of Texas better than Hollywood did, and, with some notable Hollywood exceptions, they may well have done it. But they too are telling the story. Even the historian who attempts to recount history as it really happened has to tell the story, for you don't get the history without the story. *Historia,* the Greek word from which we get both "history" and "story," means *inquiry:* history in the sense of telling the story of the past is really an inquiry. Even when we try to describe the purely physical characteristics of a geographical region — for example, Stegner's point about the shortage of water in the West — we can't just give the facts, the so-called reality, as they are or it is. The reality as it is can be given in a book, in a poem, in a song, but only to the extent that it has been spoken of, written about, or sung — and in that case, the speaker, writer, or singer has chosen to tell the story, describe the region, in a particular way. There is no such thing as telling the story or describing the region in *no* particular way.

Stegner, to stick to my example, would like to balance the idea of open possibility which has been the meaning of the West for several hundred years with the idea of *limitation* or *deprivation,* and he's right. What he does, however, is to deepen the mythic dimension in which the West is understood, by itself and by the rest of the world. It is a fact of nature, to be sure, that there is less rain west of the 100th meridian. Stegner is making the experience of this deprivation part of the mythic reality that exists at the intersection of Western geography and human understanding, contriving, and caretaking.[6] Part of the experience of the West is the paradox of plenitude and deprivation.

One basis of the bad myth is that Easterners looked upon the West as the land of endless opportunity because they intended only to rape the land for all it was worth, not to live on it. (The present tense, including the mention of a few members of the Reagan cabinet, would be just as appropriate here.) But Westerners themselves, that is, people who went west, propagated this bad myth as well. Stegner is trying to offer a better one. In this sense, the West takes on a greater symbolic character for mankind in general, in that it is part of the reality of the West to appear boundless in its resources, even though it is severely limited in one essential one, water, and just as limited as anywhere else in many others.

We have learned, or we should have learned, that the open spaces of the West only gave us a false impression that we could plunder and pollute without noticeable consequence. The vast expanses of the Texas plains, the awesome spectacle of the Rockies, could offer us an experience of the smallness of the trials and tribulations of mechanized man, rather than the illusion of limitless opportunity for human manipulation and consumption — nature as a symbol of the inexhaustible meaning of being, rather than the inexhaustible availability of raw materials for so-called human purposes. If we learn this, and tell it, the myths which make up part of the reality of the West will deepen. And, with regard to this particular issue, the story of the West is the story of America — as it were, of Western civilization as a whole.

I SAID I HAD TWO REASONS to take issue with the bifurcation of myth and reality. To sum up the philosophical one: any entity which includes the involvement of man includes a mythic aspect in its reality. That would be as true of New York City, or Omaha, or England, or Germany, or what have you, as it would of Texas. But I've also verged on my second reason, which I originally labelled geographical. After my Irish friend had put me through a crash course in Texas writers, I spent a few weeks in Texas dancing the two-step and doing all of those things that Texans are supposed to do. When I got back to Maryland, I wrote a piece and hurriedly sent copies to several of my friends living in various parts of the world. I expected a friend who grew up on a farm in Oklahoma and now teaches philosophy at a university in the Midwest to fare better with the cowboy lore than some of my friends from more foreign parts. It turns out that he identified with the tension between the power of place and the denial of place which the life of the intellect tends to create, but not so much with the cowboy lore. In fact, even though the tension he experiences stems in part from the conflict between the superficial complexities of the academic shuffle and the simplicity of dirt farming in Oklahoma, it is less a matter of place for him. "There is something so magical, so mythical,

[6]It is worth noting here that Stegner is writing in the tradition of Webb's 1931 *The Great Plains* and John Wesley Powell's 1878 Report on the Lands of the Arid Region of the United States. If you don't have the patience for *The Great Plains,* look at Webb's "The American West: Perpetual Image" (*Harper's,* May 1957).

about uttering 'Texas,' " he wrote to me. " 'Oklahoma' doesn't have this mythical richness."

Every place has a mythical character — the spirt of place, to borrow Lawrence Durrell's favorite expression, is alive and well beyond the boundaries of Texas, to be sure. Since leaving Texas, I've lived in Buffalo, New York, in Heidelberg, West Germany, and in Annapolis, Maryland: if all of the prejudice I experienced against a Texas drawl in Buffalo (along with all of my prejudice against Yankee ways in general) and all of the predilection for deck shoes and against cowboy boots in Annapolis (along with my total inability to act as if I'm from an aristocratic family that was living in Annapolis when Thomas Jefferson used to sail his catamaran on the Chesapeake Bay) and that funny way of talking they have over there in Germany aren't evidence enough, then I don't know what would be. Every place has its myth and its magic, but, if you will, Texas has a little more than its share. Everybody else acknowledges that it does, so why don't we just grin and bear it? That accounts both for its greatness and its greatest screw-ups.

And Texas is more mythical in character because of its rich history. I don't want to produce an elaborate encomium on Texas history — the point is, spirits inhabit any place and there are a hell of a lot of them in Texas, good and bad, like it or not. If you want to know what it means to be a Texan, and why Texans are the way they are, then you have to find out about all of those spirits who rise up out of those blood- and beer-soaked plains, whether our writers give them voice or not: all of the ones we learn about in school, Houston, Travis, and company; along with the ones we don't hear too much about in school, like Captain McNelly, Big Foot Wallace, and Chief Bowles of the Cherokees; and even the ones we don't hear anything about in school, like Martha Sherman. It's because of all of that and all of them that the word "Texas" means what it does, and that it is possible for it to mean something it shouldn't.

In other words, to answer McMurtry's recent charge, whether contemporary Texas writers choose urban or rural settings, they must take account of the overpowering presence of the rural tradition in Texas culture. It is precisely this tradition, it is the inexhaustibility of the cowboy myth, which distinguishes Texas from other places and gives it the special character that it has.

Does McMurtry really want Texas writers to go whole-hog cosmopolitan? I've spent over a decade among the cosmopolitans my own self, I've even wandered the streets of McMurtry's beloved Georgetown — and it strikes me that McMurtry himself has fled the specter of cowboy idolatry only to run amuck in another form of romanticization — cosmopolitanism. If McMurtry has encountered more than his share of cowboy romanticizers, I've had more experience with Texas intellectuals and pseudo-intellectuals who would rather be mugged and raped on the streets of New York than be caught reading a book about rural Texas.

Certainly, Texas writers need to go to school to the world masters (forgive me if I don't kowtow to the French), and not just to the Big Three of Texas letters — but they do need to go to school to the frontier tradition of Texas one way or another, for that past, not unlike the past of Faulkner's Mississippi, is neither dead nor past. No one can simply become a cowboy of the 19th century, but it's the past which forms the web of possibility out of which we fashion our futures, whether knowingly or not. Texas writers should help us become the best which our tradition offers, not just tell us what we happen to be now. In all fairness, I should point out here that Stegner — in spite of his tendency to speak in terms of a strict dichotomy between myth and reality — does not share McMurtry's myopic vision of the novelist's relation to history. He challenges the western writer, not to choose between past and present, but to connect them.[7]

Fact of the matter is, Texas can never really be urban, for our urban centers are infused with the rural myths, with the very anti-urbanism which McMurtry wishes to purge from Texas letters: Houston will never be urban the way a Northeastern city is. In fact, it is my impression, after a good spell among the big cities of the Northeast and a few too many experiences with the attempts of Texas cities to become fully urban, that it is 20th-century urban life which has exhausted itself, and that American writers are rightfully attempting to reestablish a sense of the soil and the land, albeit a new one infused with the experience of urbanization and all of the lessons we've learned about the romanticization of urban life.

Great writers are never really writing about present fact: ironically, precisely because they deal in human possiblity, their province — and, as Willie Morris calls it, their burden — is memory. The Great Texas Novel — accepting for the purposes of argument that it hasn't been written — will take on the mythic tradition of Texas in a way that shows us the profound dimension of the human spirit which that tradition continues to represent for Texans and non-Texans alike. The way for Texans to address the universal themes of the human spirit is indeed to learn from the masters, to take their own art seriously, to eschew good-old-boyism and back-patting among the Lone Star philistines, and — now that all that's said and done — to face their own tradition squarely and thoughtfully.

I can't help but think of the hours and hours I spent discussing *High Noon* with a professor of slavic languages at the University of Heidelberg in Germany. And I can't help but think of the old lady living at the bottom of the hill in Todtnauberg where Heidegger had written his greatest works. She had never heard of Pennsylvania or Baltimore, where my companions were from, but she lit up like a Christmas tree when she heard the word "Texas." "Cowboys and Indians, nicht?"

As I walked towards Heidegger's hut, I was thinking about how rooted in those hills Heidegger's thought was and how unrooted in my plains mine was. The point is, the myth continues to pull at a powerful strand in the human psyche and not just at the pocketbooks of faddish, nostalgic Texas urbanites. Dime novels and bad Hollywood movies, mechanical bulls and quick-selling C&W novels — these are perversions, to be sure, but they are perversions *of* something, and it is that something that we should be after.

The question is not whether the subject has been exhausted, but whether it has been dealt with with the kind of insight and artistry that will do justice to the power which this myth continues to have, despite the best efforts of Mr. McMurtry at flogging a thriving horse. If all of the Texas novels are so damn bad, then it's clear that the subject has not been exhausted. What I would like to see is not another *Horseman, Pass By* or *Leaving Cheyenne* — which McMurtry assures us he has no intention of writing

[7] See "History, Myth, and the Western Writer," *The Sound of Mountain Water* (New York: Dutton, 1980), pp. 200-201.

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— but an older, wiser, better educated, more worldly, more skillful Larry McMurtry graduated from these first-rate accounts of the remnants of the frontier spirit to a great novel on the same themes. He's as capable as anyone of doing for the Texas frontier tradition what Faulkner did for the South.

I SPEND AS MUCH TIME AS THE NEXT liberated Texan telling Yankees that such and such a view about Texas is totally wrong, but, in the end, it is not wrong that others and we ourselves should expect certain things of Texas just because they're Texans. No one is just a person and Texans especially. That doesn't mean we have to be anything anyone wants us to be: it means that we reject all of the counterfeit myths which have been forced upon us and which we have forced upon ourselves; but, on the other hand, it also means that if the shoe fits our history and the spirit of our history, then we had better figure out how to get our foot into it.

Living up to the right idea of being a Texan is perhaps more of an issue for Texans living north of the Red River, but the fight to determine what the right idea is — which is a never-ending struggle — is one which deserves the utmost dedication from anyone who calls himself a Texan, and especially from those who haven't left. As McMurtry rightfully notes, of late Texans have cooperated quite gleefully in a good many schemes to push off ungenuine, superficial Texas myths on an unsuspecting world solely for the sake of some of that worthless green stuff. In light of the current epidemic of Texas fever, it seems particularly urgent that Texans ask themselves what it is they are supposed to be and what it is that those who want to be like Texans are supposed to imitate.

If we spent a little more time reading some of our better writers and a lot more time asking ourselves who we are, we would still wear boots and Stetsons and drink Lone Star, but maybe we'd think twice about letting John Travolta cross the state line, or about putting out $12.95 for a string of five hundred one-liners pretending to be a novel by Dan Jenkins, or about accepting the Dallas Cowboy cheerleaders as models of Texas womanhood, to choose a few convenient examples. We wouldn't abandon the symbols of the frontier tradition, but we would demand a deeper, more reflective rendition of those symbols than the czars of Madison Avenue are willing to give us.

MY IRISH FRIEND who gave me a way to raise some of these questions has since left Annapolis to go back to New Mexico. After stumbling around through a bit of everything for his first forty years, he says he's going to spend the rest of his life trying to save the West.

"That's an honorable thing to do, isn't it?" he asked the last time I saw him.

"It sure as hell is," I said, "but leave me a little to save when I get there."

He should be writing this, I suppose; but I'm sitting in Annapolis, Maryland, reading Frederick Law Olmstead's 1857 *A Journey Through Texas,* which for some reason, I know not why, was sent to me by a Santa Fe bookstore — and I'm thinking a lot about how I want to be in Texas when I die, and how I'll die if I'm not there soon. □

Dugger on Reagan . . . from page 4

question at hand. In districts where the rotgut reactionary congressmen cannot be defeated, Clements can be concentrated on.

Defeat them with what? That is the question for the next two years. The national Democrats are leaderless. Pussilanimity is the order of the day. Demoralized, the Democrats have not yet regrouped. But there is a great need among the people for a new progressive leader now. If he or she does not appear, we will turn to Edward Kennedy again because that will be the only alternative sufficient to the emergency.

This Reagan presidency is the end of the era that began with the New Deal. After this, we begin a new era. What will it be? That is the question of the 1980's. We cannot turn to the past, and we cannot turn now to the gears-stripped Democratic Party for answers. A party that abandons proportional representation in its convention process is not the place to debate and decide fundamental things, other than as a political vehicle at election time. Fundamental things, we must figure out by ourselves, in our own minds and movements, and bring, then, to the political process, the new answers.

R.D.