

## opinion/editorial

### Ex-presidents talk out-of-turn on Mideast peace

Returning from Anwar Sadat's funeral, former presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter showed their political savvy in mid-flight.

As soon as the tape recorders were on and the photographers were ready, the two former leaders of the Western world bravely told reporters that the Palestine Liberation Organization will have to be included in peace talks in the Middle East.

It is amazing how easily former presidents can sound like statesmen after leaving the Oval Office. But straight talk offers few rewards for the seasoned politician, so after attaining the nation's highest office, most presidents fall back into what George Orwell might have called presidentspeak; the art of making the 6 o'clock newscasts for no reason.

But some of these men, given a pension, Secret Service agents for life and briefings on world events, suddenly become modern day Diogenes searching without the benefit of a

lantern for truth, justice and the American way.

And if it wasn't bad enough that Tweedledee Ford and Tweedledum Carter were offering their views on U.S. policies, former president Richard Nixon returned to Washington to make the trip to Cairo for the funeral and then went on to Saudi Arabia and three other Arab countries.

But when Ford and Carter said the PLO must be involved they skirted the fundamental problem of seeking a Middle East peace.

Columnist William F. Buckley pointed out last week that the simple reason the PLO did not kill Sadat is that some other group beat them to it.

How then are we supposed to involve such a group in formulating a lasting peace in the Middle East? Most likely we are not.

President Ronald Reagan said the PLO would become involved only after the PLO recognizes Israel's right to exist. Prime Minister

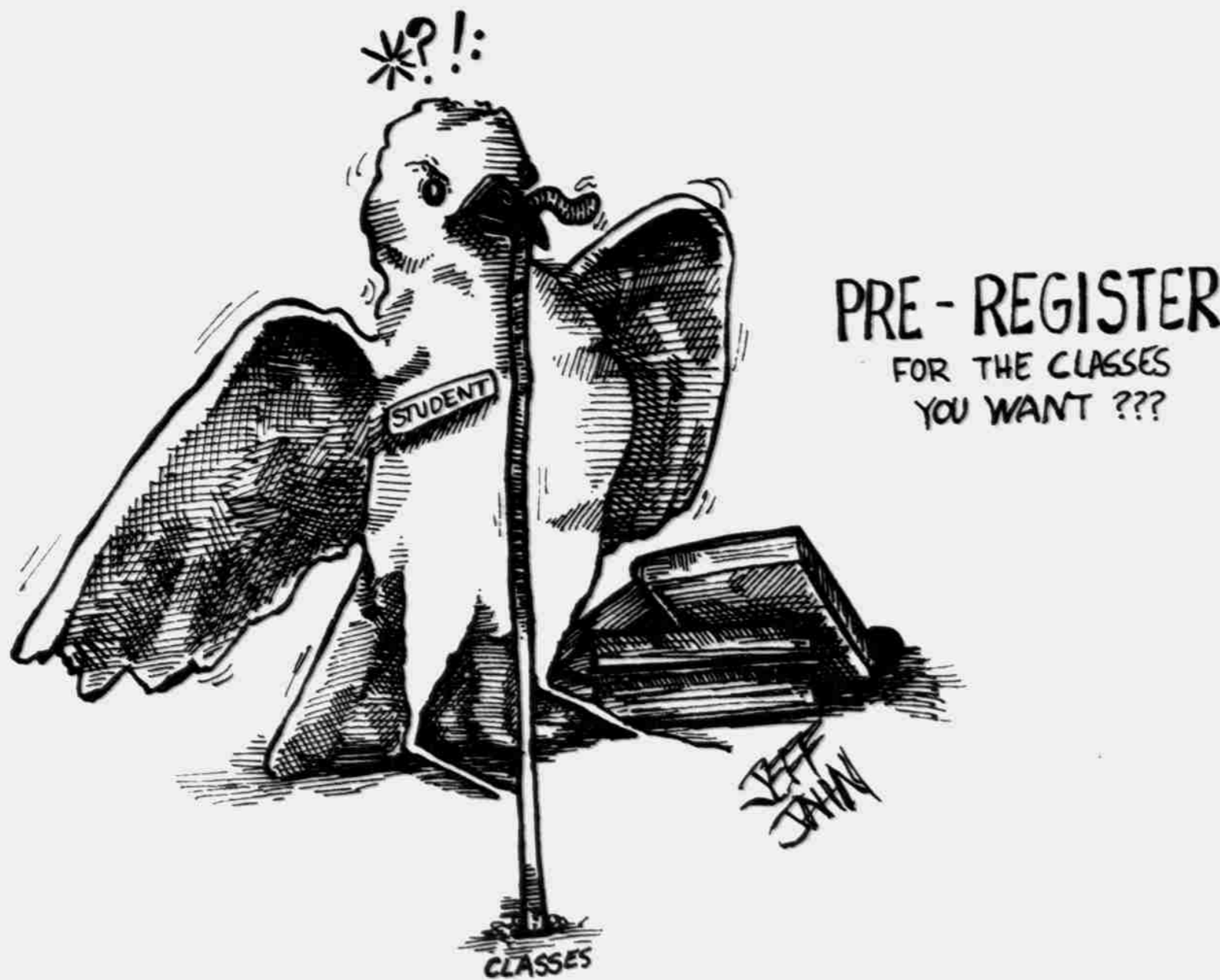
Menachem Begin again denounced the PLO and said negotiations with them are out of the question.

It is a sad commentary when our former presidents can only make bold and rational decisions after they leave office. By that time, their power is gone and they are regulated to being spokesmen for their respective political parties, which won't do one iota for settling world problems.

Ford and Carter's simplistic ideas should irritate anyone who voted for or against them. The time for them to make lasting decisions has passed. Yet, there they sit being chummy for the photographers while ignoring the realities of the situation they discuss.

President Reagan should use his presidency to the fullest of his abilities, as Ford and Carter did not. That will require more than balanced budgets, reduced social programs and horse-back riding.

It will require vision. Something the Reagan administration is shortsighted on.



### Fix of forty winks needed by addicts

With worries, aggravations and threats multiplying on every side, it's little wonder that more and more Americans are turning to a popular mind-altering hallucinogen as a temporary deliverance from their daily cares.

arthur hoppe

Known to the medical profession as "sleep," it has become the favorite escape not only of hard-rock musicians and thrill-crazed teenagers, but housewives, respectable businessmen and even many of our highest national leaders.

"Unlike the milder drugs such as alcohol and marijuana which merely distort reality," reports Dr. Homer T. Pettibone of Ipana University, "sleep produces total oblivion accompanied by wild hallucinations which the addict may or may not recall on regaining consciousness."

Not surprisingly, sleepers have created their own subculture with their own slang, such as "turning in," "hitting the hay" or "(have a) good night."

On coming down off a sleep, they often have a compulsion to talk about their trip in a rambling, incoherent fashion: "I was in this purple canoe with a giant parakeet or something and . . ." — babblings to which even their fellow addicts resolutely refuse to listen.

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### 'At the fights' with budget plans

Sugar Ray Leonard and Thomas Hearns were both such excellent fighters that it was impossible to predict who would win when they met. But Leonard solved Hearns' style first, took command, and was beating Hearns so badly by the end that the fight had to be stopped before the "Hit Man" got hurt.

Joseph Sobran

There is a pattern in boxing, as in politics. The loser always thinks the fight shouldn't have been stopped. He's always sure he will win the rematch. He doesn't see that the victor won because of strategic superiority, or that this gives the winner of the first fight a decisive edge the second time around. And the rematch usually doesn't last as long as the first fight.

Before the first budget fight, to mix metaphors a little, Tip O'Neill dropped by the White House to inform Ronald Reagan that he was "in the big leagues now." He must blush to remember that!

Or does he? Tip and the Democrats now seem jauntily sure that they can win the rematch. All the "experts" are telling them they can. Lots of special interests are howling about the budget cuts. To listen to it all, you'd think Reagan was on the ropes before he even got into the ring.

A *Newsweek* poll finds Reagan slipping to a 51 percent approval rating. But the Yankelovich poll for *Time* finds Reagan still racking up 70 percent to 80 percent positive ratings in categories ranging from the economy to foreign policy. (*Time*, interestingly, tries to minimize the significance of its own poll.)

Which survey is right? These things are very fluid. Lots of people are confused, or mutable, or disposed to say whatever they think the pollsters expect to hear. Many of them, of course, are simply waiting to see how Reagan's program performs.

There are other things to consider. Reagan is personally popular: he doesn't grate on the sensibilities as the last four presidents have. He is likely to get the benefit of the doubt. We have been trying liberalism since 1964, when Lyndon Johnson announced the "Great Society." The public wants to try an alternative for a little longer than six months.

In the short run — on the budget battle itself — Reagan may lose a few rounds. The liberal establishment, including the media, are serving notice that they aren't about to roll over and play dead. The *Washington Post's* crack reporter, David Broder, has recently written that Republican "moderates" — actually liberals, or those who play ball with the liberal establishment — will have "a key role to play" in the budget war.

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