

On the first day after Mr. Carter's July appeal to mobilize against the energy critics, Congress used the time to argue about the dress code requiring coats and ties on the House floor.

I suppose that since Congress was going to be part of the battle, the type of uniforms they wore was going to be important. However, considering the temperatures of the citizens waiting in the gas lines and being stuck a buck-twenty a gallon after they got to the pumps, I was going to suggest that the worthless adopt break-away jerseys like football players use.

From the way those folks out in California were scowling into the TV cameras, ties and coats didn't seem to be the issue. I for one would have hated to conduct a streetside interview on the subject. Those hombres out there have always been prone to expressing themselves with Saturday night specials and homemade fire bombs.

Our governor responded to the President's request to turn up the thermostats immediately. Even though he is the first Republican to head Texas since the Civil War, he fell right in and warmed up the state's office buildings. About 95 percent of the state government are Democrats. I don't know this for sure, but I think he was more than willing to put a little extra heat on his opponents.

In August, our Congressman visited Mertzson. He's an energetic young man who once worked for President Ford. The kind of fellow that has a good way about him. Answers direct questions with direct answers. Far above the general run of spellbinders that come into power.

My neighbor, Goat Whiskers the Younger, sat right down on the front row at the meeting. Things hadn't any more than got started than Whiskers outs with a tape recorder and places it in the chair next to him.

Believe it or not, they didn't throw Whiskers out the door. I figured that after all that trouble Mr. Nixon had from tapes, the only sound that'd ever be heard again made by a politician on a tape recorder was going to be from something like one grunting

from having his head caught in a head catcher, or maybe groaning from being squeezed too tight in a squeeze chute.

I was so impressed by the man's courage that I started coughing and scraping my chair a lot so it'd make the recording sound authentic. I was disappointed that I hadn't brought along my camera. It was a real honor to be in the room with an old boy that wasn't afraid of a tape recorder in the hands of Young Whiskers.

After that meeting, I've been taking long walks. Maybe the drouths and floods and grass fires have broken down my judgment. It's a bad sign to find yourself trusting a guy after he's been in office for a year. Perhaps I was wrong about the Governor too. He may want to save energy and not just roast his enemies.

Every time I walked by the Community Center, I'd worry. Who knows? Whiskers may have wanted that tape for some on his daughter's school work. Just because I thought he was pulling a cheap stunt to save on a lie detector's test doesn't mean a thing.

The time has arrived for all cynics to retire. The dollar's weakening and pumps going dry are everyone's pain. I think I'd be better off if I threw in with the team.