

A Journal of Free Voices

A Window to the South

Sept. 7, 1973

Polling for Doggett

By Alan Sager

Austin

When Lloyd Doggett asked me in late May what I thought his chances were of winning the state Senate seat soon to be vacated by Charles Herring, I told him, "Lloyd, you have two chances: slim and none." It seemed to me that, although a liberal might have a good shot at the seat, he would need to be well-known in the district to defeat Republican Maurice Angly and the expected candidacy of Rep. Don Cavness. Most of us assumed that Rep. Larry Bales would make the race, and splitting the liberal vote, already diminished by summer vacations, would simply assure the election of a Republican or a conservative.

I left Austin on vacation thinking that Lloyd would not announce. But on returning in the first week of June, I found that Larry Bales had been forced by personal finances not to make the race and that Lloyd Doggett was the only progressive candidate in the race. I still doubted that Doggett would win, but my associates and I felt that we should help Lloyd however we could, so we offered to conduct his polling operation. Lloyd agreed, and with the managerial help of John and Karen Dietz on the Doggett campaign staff, PRA conducted a series of polls.

OUR FIRST POLL was taken in early June to establish name-recognition of the candidates. The poll confirmed our

Dr. Sager is an Assistant Professor of Government at the University of Texas at Austin and a consultant for Political Research Associates, a newly-formed political polling and consulting firm. PRA did the polling for Lloyd Doggett's campaign. "They're so damn good," said one Austin Democratic pro after the Doggett victory, "you just sit there and listen to 'em hum."

intuitive pessimism: fewer than one-third of the voters knew Lloyd Doggett's name, compared with well over 90 percent knowing Cavness and Angly. Moreover, of those who knew Lloyd, 70 percent were unsure whether he would make a good senator. Of the people who knew Cavness, 2 out of 3 felt he would make a good



moderate candidate. If he could do that, I felt he had a good chance to make the runoff.

This first poll showed Angly and Cavness tied with 28 percent of the vote each, 5.7 percent for Doggett, 3.4 percent for Dave Shanks, a witty "Truman Democrat" in the midst of LBJ country. The remaining 36 percent were undecided. My partners and I thought these results were grim. The Doggett campaign leaders, however, seemed unconcerned. They knew it was an uphill battle, and the large number of undecided people who obviously knew both Cavness and Angly were a source of encouragement to them. But to us there was further discouraging data in the poll: Doggett's supporters seemed less motivated than the other candidates' and thus seemed least likely to turn out and vote. Furthermore, when we asked our sample, "Who are you least likely to vote for?" Doggett was the clear leader.

There were valid questions about the accuracy of this first poll. Our sample had been drawn randomly from the telephone book, and we had no technique for determining its adequacy. To me, as a sometime professor of political statistics, the poll failed to meet conventional academic criteria for validity. Despite that, a few demographic questions, such as sex, race, student status and party identification, suggested that the sample was indeed sufficiently random and the results fairly reliable. For example, over the whole series of Doggett polls, we found percentage of people identifying themselves as Republicans consistently between 12 and 14 percent.

The polls during this first election period were not particularly sophisticated. We asked few questions and our analysis was uncomplicated. These pre-runoff polls were used mainly to measure the extent to which the campaign was reaching potential liberal and moderate Doggett voters.

The next few polls recorded a dramatic

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rise in Doggett's support. During the latter part of June, we found a serious erosion of Cavness' support and some slippage among Angly's. Two consecutive samples showed that Doggett had risen to close to 20 percent, Cavness had fallen to 15 percent and Angly had slipped to around 23 percent. By this point, nearly 40 percent were undecided. It was now clear that our initial assessment of Doggett's chances were much too pessimistic. He had put together a formidable campaign organization which, with the help of experienced precinct workers and an effective media campaign by the firm of Gurasich, Spence, Darilek & McClure, was having a telling effect.

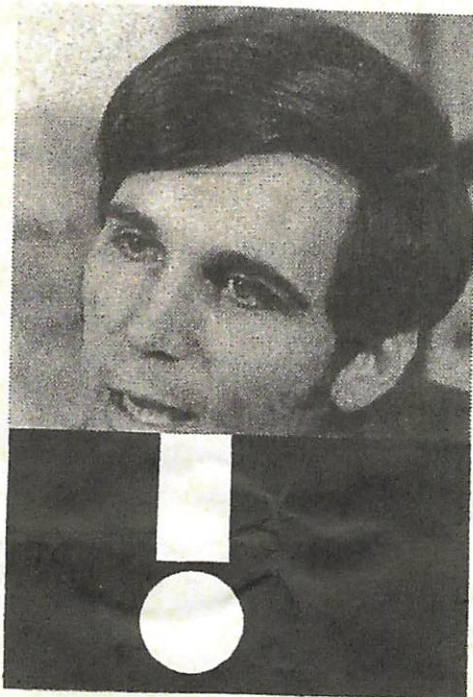
AROUND THE FIRST of July, we began polling on issues. We found that constitutional revision, an issue frequently used by Angly, was the least important to voters among the ten analyzed. The issue which most concerned the voters of Travis County was the energy crisis. We were disappointed to find little concern for legislative ethics, at least in the abstract (ethics seemed to be an issue which had to be tied to a particular personality). Homeowners and even many renters were very concerned about unplanned growth which threatened their neighborhoods. (It would appear that the issue of land-use planning cleaves across the entire political spectrum, with comprehensive planning being favored by Republicans and Democrats, conservatives and liberals alike).

With concern over issues not unfavorable, the task for the Doggett campaign was to wean Angly's traditional moderate and liberal support. Grumbings were heard around Austin that many liberals would not support Lloyd because he could not win and because many felt that Maurice Angly had been an effective legislator. Angly's effectiveness, however, had to be primarily limited to his opposition to Gus Mutscher and membership in the Dirty 30. He had virtually no record of legislative achievement. (Later polls showed the public wanted more than effective opposition).

By the time of the last pre-runoff poll, 5 days before the July 17 election, I was almost convinced that Doggett could win without a runoff. The polls now suggested that Angly's supporters were not highly motivated, that Doggett's were very highly motivated, and that Cavness' long slide to oblivion continued. Angly's motivational problems were consistent with the well-known fact that Republicans have a history of low participation in Central Texas politics.

This final poll showed Doggett with nearly 30 percent of the vote, Angly down

to around 21 percent, and Cavness at about 18 percent. Allocation of the undecideds by standard procedures gave Doggett 41 percent. Because it is difficult to poll minority groups and students by telephone, these tend to be underrepresented in the results. Since Lloyd expected high support among these groups, we thought our prediction might be somewhat low. We estimated Cavness would receive about 25 percent and Angly about 28 percent of the final vote. Angly continued to show significant strength among Democrats, however, and there was some thought that this might wither during



the final days of the campaign. Had this occurred, Lloyd might have found himself in the runoff with Don Cavness.

It was clear from a limited poll of Hays County, which is also in the 14th District, that the election would be decided in Travis County. Basically, Hays County was evenly split, with Doggett perhaps leading slightly, but with all three leaders falling between 30 and 35 percent of the voters.

In the July 17th election, the poll which really counted, Doggett got 43 percent of the vote to lead into the runoff against Angly's 26 percent. Cavness missed the runoff by around 1,000 votes.

My initial reaction to Doggett's 43 percent was that he had tracked Sissy Farenthold almost exactly, precinct by precinct in Travis County. This was ominous since, despite her lead into her runoff, she had lost the county to Dolph Briscoe by 7,000 votes. The Doggett percentages were so close to Farenthold's on a box-by-box basis that one might surmise that exactly the same people voted for each.

A poll taken one week after the July 17 election reinforced our concern. A Doggett victory on August 14 would require that he

carry one-third of the Cavness vote in Travis County and a majority of the overall vote in the other counties. This was a complicated problem for two reasons. First, the precinct-by-precinct voting history of Travis County did not indicate that a liberal could beat a moderate. Second, Angly had far greater financial resources than Doggett. In addition, our analysis suggested that the more conservative Cavness voters were more likely to vote in the runoff than were liberals.

IN OUR RUNOFF POLLS, we were able to use poll lists and voter registration lists to create our samples, rather than having to depend on the telephone book. On the 23rd of July, we found Doggett ahead with 38 percent to Angly's 33 percent, with 28 percent undecided. But Doggett was not getting the one-third of Cavness voters which he needed. In addition, we were worried that the liberal precincts would follow their historical pattern of lower turnouts in runoff elections. We expected Angly to run a strong positive campaign, which would help him keep his moderate and liberal support while diminishing Doggett supporters' motivation. Angly could already expect to capture all of the conservative turnout. While there was some feeling the Watergate affair and Angly's Republicanism might weaken him, our polls indicated that these were not thought relevant by the voters. Nor were the voters apparently concerned about the no-fault insurance issue, or about blaming Republicans for inflation.

As might be expected, there were some interesting cross-cutting themes. Cavness voters agreed with Angly voters that Doggett was too young to make a good senator. And they agreed with Doggett's supporters' skepticism regarding Angly's past effectiveness as a legislator. The data suggested the possibility that, while few people were going to blame Angly for the Watergate, he might nevertheless suffer from a general decline in Republican prestige. Similarly, while Republicans were not directly blamed for inflation, people generally felt that Democrats would do a better job of managing the economy.

The obvious strategy for Doggett was to continue stressing such issues as consumer protection, the environment, protection of neighborhoods from unplanned development, and the need for reasonable solutions to the energy crisis. This, combined with a strong appeal to Democratic party loyalty, seemed sound until Angly's media campaign began in late July.

Rather than moving toward the moderate center, Angly's campaign veered sharply to the right. His media campaign was a textbook example of appeals to what

is known as "the social issue," basically a camouflaged appeal to voters' fears. Blending subtle themes of racism, coded as "welfare," and radicalism, coded in this case as "McGovernism," the social issue campaign seeks to arouse conservative voters by making them feel threatened. First described by two liberal Democrats, Richard Scammon and Ben Wattenberg in their book *The Real Majority*, the social issue campaign has had only limited success in local elections throughout the United States. But even where unsuccessful, it may have long-term effects of polarizing the electorate and raising community hostilities. As Danny Parrish, one of Angly's political consultants, admitted, the whole point was to get out the Wallace vote.

Angly's media campaign began with a sharp attack on Doggett's support for Senator George McGovern in the 1972 Presidential Election. Coupled with this was an attack on Doggett as a "lobbyist," without mentioning that his clients were the members of the Texas Consumer Association. A week after Angly's media campaign started, we polled to determine its effectiveness. Even though appeals to the far right have generally failed in Central Texas, leaders of the Doggett campaign were worried that such a divisive tactic could polarize the electorate and so disgust the moderates that they would not turn out.

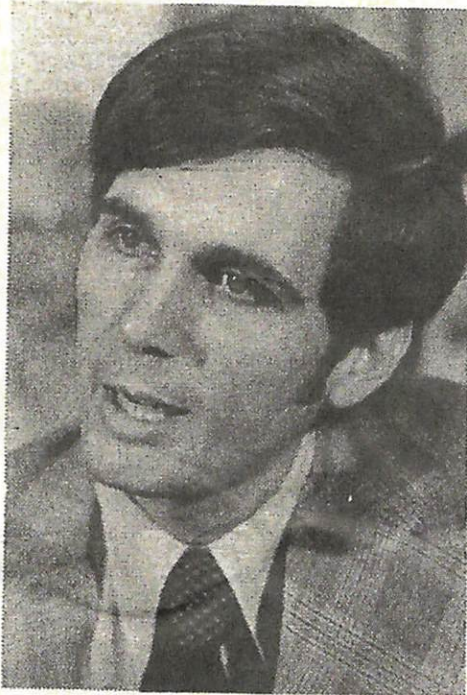
ANGLY WAS USING saturation media, and over 70 percent of the people we polled had seen or heard it. Of those, 60 percent did not like it. Forty percent of Angly's own supporters disliked it, along with 60 percent of the Cavness voters. Only 11 percent of those who had seen Angly's media said that they were more likely to vote for him because of it. Even with this overwhelmingly negative response, however, Angly's support had risen dramatically. Thus, the effects of the media barrage were not clear. One possibility was that a negative media campaign could be used to motivate his voters and conservative Democrats, and that a positive, issue-oriented followup barrage could mute the negative effects of the initial attack. It was possible that Angly's negative media campaign was also intended to provoke a sharp ideological response from Doggett and tarnish his image as a clean campaigner.

In this August 1 poll, we also tested the likely effects of endorsements by various other public figures. We found that Senator Charles Herring's recommendation as to who should take his seat would have the strongest effect, even as compared to endorsements by Governor Briscoe or John Connally. Actually, each endorsement brings with it both positive and negative effects, but the overall result of the many endorsements which Doggett received was

to unify the Democratic Party behind him, a not inconsiderable factor in Texas.

Overall, the early August results were not encouraging. What many had thought would be a simple runoff campaign had the distinct possibility of becoming a narrow defeat. It appeared that Angly's use of the welfare issue was scoring and that the lobbyist issue might have told heavily. Furthermore, the welfare issue was so potentially explosive that it was impossible to make a reasonable and responsible answer in a short period of time.

However, our later polls showed that Angly's attack on removing the welfare ceiling from the Constitution focused on



the least emotional aspect of the overall welfare issue. In fact, a slight plurality of voters felt that the ceiling should be removed. On the other hand 77 percent of Cavness voters, 80 percent of Angly voters and 30 percent of Doggett voters agreed with the statement that "the government spends too much money paying welfare to a lot of people who don't really deserve it." It seemed that Angly had hit a strong issue with a cracked bat.

OUR FINAL POLL, taken just two days before the election, showed Doggett leading with 47 percent of the vote to 34 percent for Angly. Allocating the 19 percent undecided on the basis of issues which discriminated between Doggett and Angly voters, we predicted that Doggett would receive around 56 percent of the vote. This last sample was felt to be the best we had drawn so far, although it had the usual problems regarding undersampling of minority groups and students, so we felt confident that Doggett would not drop below about 55 percent. The final tally showed Doggett elected with 58.24 of the vote.

On the Friday before the election, Angly

announced the results of his own poll, which he claimed showed him winning over Doggett with 51.5 percent of the vote. While his base data was not totally inconsistent with our own, his poll's method of allocating the undecided vote was quite different from our own, which may account for his poor results.

As a result of Angly's announcement, we realized there were problems which we had not explored. Would there be, as Angly had claimed, a large influx of voters in the runoff who had not voted in the July 17 election? And if there were, who would benefit? Was Doggett losing support? To answer these questions, we hurriedly and intensively sampled selected precincts in which Angly and Cavness had strong support. We did, in fact, find greater interest in the runoff than in the first election, but there appeared to be no significant shift to Angly and we concluded that a large turnout would not affect the result of the election.

Analyzing the overall results of these polls, we can form a fairly clear picture of the differences between those who voted for Doggett and those who voted for Angly. We found that Angly supporters were not as concerned as Doggett supporters about everyday pocketbook issues such as food prices and property taxes. This was not unexpected, and suggests an income bias in Angly's support. Consumer issues were important to both groups, but more important to Doggett supporters; generally the voters are quite pessimistic about the future of the economy, again with Doggett voters more strongly concerned.

Perhaps some of the most interesting findings came as a result of academic questions designed to measure the effects of Watergate on the electorate. Although few voters could be found who would admit they were voting against Angly because of his Republicanism or because of Watergate, the strongest difference between his supporters and those of Doggett came on the following question: "Do you think the President is being truthful about the Watergate; or is he holding something back?" Angly voters overwhelmingly thought that the President was being truthful, while Doggett and, significantly, prior Cavness voters overwhelmingly thought Nixon was holding something back. Thus, Angly may well be on strong ground when he says that Watergate helped to defeat him. I am presently trying to measure the impact of the President's more recent actions through recall polling of these same respondents and hope to publish the findings later this fall.

THE IMMEDIATE implications for Central Texas politics of this whole series of polls are worth mentioning. Hopefully, it will finally be clear to all that voters are fed up with empty emotional appeals to their fears. Lloyd Doggett has

demonstrated that a relatively unknown candidate can run a sophisticated liberal campaign and win big. In this campaign, we saw the emergence of a new coalition between liberals and moderates under the banner of Democratic unity. This coalition could alter the entire balance of Central Texas politics. The days when the right wing could count on carrying moderates because of their fears of radical liberals would be over. The issues of consumer protection, urban planning, the energy crisis, and Watergate may have washed away the Democratic factionalism for as far as one can see into the future — which is about as far as the May primaries.

It may well be that one of the

fundamental changes which has taken place in Central Texas, and in other places as well, is that the voters have become too sophisticated for campaigns based on labels alone. They are more concerned with a candidate's position on the issues, and even there the voters are more sophisticated.

It is possible, though, that polling is even more sophisticated. The ethical question for a poller is whether to give a candidate the benefit of in-depth issue surveys, whether to give a candidate the opportunity to tailor or even distort his stand on "important" questions.

To date, liberal candidates have not used issue surveys for such nefarious purposes. In fact, a more important problem for

pollers who wish to work for liberal politicians in Texas has been to convince them that such applied social science is fair or even useful. The liberal tends to believe his direct contact with the people is more valuable, not to mention more honorable, in a truly progressive campaign. The poller is still regarded as an adjunct to a manipulative campaign, a "selling" of a candidate. A short special-election campaign is no basis for definite conclusions, but it is at least possible that information from valid surveys can be used for the opposite purpose, to defeat attempts to manipulate voters and to appeal to them on the basis of the issues that matter to them. □

Texas women politic

San Antonio

The members of the Texas Women's Political Caucus got together in San Antonio in mid-August and got it together.

The TWPC was born amid factious anarchy in November, 1971. The growing pains of the baby organization continued to show themselves at the Mesquite convention in March, 1972. There was much shrieking and weeping, interminable debates and lots of satisfactorily idiotic scenes. Every beginning political organization suffers from the same kind of shakedown problems, but it's only when women get together that the press calls such political differences catfights rather than power struggles.

BUT NOW THE BABY is showing some phenomenal signs of maturity, and it continues to grow like a snowball headed downhill. "They're coming out of the woodwork," marvelled Helen Cassady of Houston. "Women are hungry for this kind of thing." Depending on who you listen to, and trying to get the optimistic inflation out of the number, membership is now around 1500: up from 150 in two years. There were 503 women registered for the San Antonio convention and about 800 were there for Sissy Farenthold's keynote address.

Differences among caucus members have been partly a matter of style. "I was afraid at the beginning that we were going to be a little too well-dressed and that our minds would be a little buttoned-down too," said Cassady. Cassady, an activist with the National Women's Organization, is the antonym of buttoned down. She is a cheerful, raucous person with the gall of a Dick Tuck. "I decided at the first convention that I'd stick with it if they supported the Equal Rights Amendment and woman's right to control her own body. They okayed the E.R.A. because most of them didn't know what it meant and we won on the abortion resolution after a bitter fight."

Other differences generally stem from the length of time a woman has been in the feminist movement. (Five or six years now makes a feminist an old-timer.) For example, most feminists have no qualms about accepting lesbians as sisters in the movement. But many women new to the movement, even if they have no personal misconceptions about the humanity and rights of lesbians, tend to fret over the public relations impact of supporting them. Two resolutions concerning lesbians were passed in San Antonio. One was a general statement of support and sisterhood, the other a declaration of moral and financial support for a lesbian mother involved in a legal test case to keep her child. The only discussion on the second resolution centered on whether the caucus could afford the financial support and it was decided that the caucus could.

One woman did rise to make a somewhat incoherent speech concerning Dean Corll, the Houston mass murderer, and asserting that lesbians might someday molest little girls. A member of the lesbian caucus calmly replied that Dean Corll was a psychopathic maniac who simply happened to be homosexual. Almost no one seemed much interested in the exchange.

THERE WERE only two points of serious division. The first was a successful attempt to change the by-laws of the organization so that male members could vote. The change was carried by a narrow margin, but many of the members direfully predicted that men would try to take over the organization as soon as it proved its political power. "I feel sorry for the man who tries," said Cassady. Those opposed to the measure pointed to the example of black organizations taken over by white liberals in the '60's. At present, men are a miniscule minority of the caucus membership.

The second battle focused on a resolution to impeach Richard Nixon,

which was narrowly defeated. Republicans in the caucus are in a distinct minority (although a Republican was elected to the policy committee of the caucus) and the majority of the members are liberal or left in their political thinking. In fact, there was probably majority sentiment for impeachment, but the wording of the resolution was unacceptable to many. "Tacky," sniffed one member. "It was divisive and abusive," said Jane Wells, member of the State Board of Education. "It used the same kind of rhetoric we have been accusing Nixon of using. I worked the floor against it." Floor work and some parliamentary maneuvering defeated the resolution and it was interesting to watch the women on both sides of the question learn as they went along about parliamentary procedure and convention politicking.

The press coverage given the San Antonio convention was one indication of the kind of progress the TWPC has made. The convention was front-page news in most major state dailies and made the first news section in all of them. That's a quantum jump from the women's sections, where TWPC news has resided heretofore. Most of the major dailies sent reporters to cover the doings: the notable exception was the *Houston Chronicle*, which decided to leave the story to the wires despite the hometown angle in Helen Cassady who has been chairperson since the Mesquite convention. The improved coverage was no accident: considerable skill and energy went into it. Professional public relations women in the caucus donated their time to preparing press kits and setting up facilities. They wooed press honchos in San Antonio and wound up with editorial endorsement from the *San Antonio Express*.

The race for the chairperson post was exemplary and almost pleasant. Jane Hickie, 24, of Austin, defeated Lorey

The coming fortnight

By Suzanne Shelton

SEPTEMBER GRAB BAG

MASTERPIECES - Kimbell Museum comes of age as one of five U.S. museums to show a unique exhibition of French Impressionist and Post Impressionist Paintings on loan from Soviet galleries - works by Braque, Cezanne, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Matisse, Monet, Picasso, Renoir, Rousseau and others; no admission charge, through Sept. 16, Kimbell Museum, Fort Worth.

REMINGTONANA - Works by Frederic Remington, with newly-published illustrated catalogue on the Western artist; Brown Pavilion, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

TEXANA - 2,000 participants in the Second Annual Texas Folklife Festival, sponsored by UT-San Antonio, show how "Texans traditionally have fun"; but it's pretty eclectic, what with exhibitions of Chinese oil-painting, Belgian bowling, whittling, soapmaking, weaving, watermelon-seed spitting, etc., etc.; at HemisFair Plaza, Sept. 6 & 7, 5 p.m.-11 p.m., and Sept. 8 & 9, 1 p.m. - 10 p.m.

MIXED BAG - Three simultaneous exhibits: of Canadian landscapes 1670-1930; of small

weights used by Ashanti tribe to measure precious metals on the Gold Coast; of lithographs, silkscreens and aquatints by Adolph Gottlieb, the American abstract expressionist; through Sept. 30, UT-Austin Museum, Austin.

COUNTRY & SWING - Asleep at the Wheel, one of the country nouveau bands, has set dates for a waltz across Texas, or at least part of it; Sept. 5-8, Armadillo World Headquarters, Austin; Sept. 11-13, The Western Place, Dallas.

FRESH ART - Works by three American artist, Joan Mitchell, Sam Francis and Walasse Ting, in exhibit titled "Fresh Air School" in recognition of artists' attempts to translate into canvas the color intensities of nature; through Sept. 30, Michener Gallery, Humanities Research Center, University of Texas, Austin.

SEPTEMBER 6

GOSPEL SOUL - Andrae Crouch and the Disciples, in gospel soul concert; Larue Auditorium, San Antonio.

SEPTEMBER 7

HELLO, AGAIN - It's as gaudy as a feather boa, "Hello, Dolly," story of a Gay Nineties marriage broker who yearns for the millionaire she's promised to a milliner; touring cast headed by Marion Marlowe; through mid-September, Country Dinner Playhouse, Austin.

SEPTEMBER 8

SILENT SPARKLE - Not your ordinary street film, "Sunset Boulevard," with silent but radiant stars Gloria Swanson and Erich von Stroheim; also Sept. 9, Alley Theatre, Houston.

SEPTEMBER 14

MAKE MUSIC, NOT - War, the band once known only as Eric Burdon's sidemen, now smash-hit rockers in their own right; availability of tickets to general public depends on how advance sales to UT students go up to Sept. 12, but any left will be \$6, \$5, or \$4; 8 p.m., Municipal Auditorium, Austin.

SEPTEMBER 16

FREE CONCERT - Pack up for the park and music al fresco with Dallas Symphony Orchestra in afternoon free concert: 4:30 p.m., Northaven Park, 3800 Northaven, Dallas.

SEPTEMBER 17

PIANO COMPETITION - This is a biggie, the Van Cliburn International Quadrennial Piano Competition, with entrants from around the world and the winner to be presented in recital at Carnegie Hall; all playing sessions are public, a chance to hear some of the world's finest developing pianists; through Sept. 30, Tarrant County Convention Center Theatre and Texas Christian University, Fort Worth. Advance tickets from Central Ticket Office, Sheraton - Fort Worth or Ramada Inn Central.

SEPTEMBER 20

WAGNER'S "WALKUERE" - Dallas Symphony Orchestra opens its 1973-74 season with performance of first act of Richard Wagner's opera, "Die Walkure," under direction of guest conductor Sixten Ehrling, with Phyllis Curtin, Rene Kollo, and Ara Berberian in lead roles; also on the program is Aaron Copland's "Fanfare for the Common Man" and Liszt's "Les Preludes;" also Sept. 22, Music Hall, Fair Park, Dallas.

SIMON SAYS - Open your season with "Plaza Suite," (Neil) Simon's laffer in three parts, and that's just what the Zachary Scott Theatre Center is doing; on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights through Oct. 13, reservations (476-0541) necessary.

BIG TIME TENNIS - The biggest non-event of the month, the Bobby Riggs-Billie Jean King tennis match, will claim to settle the battle of the sexes and make the winner \$100,000 richer; tickets are \$6, \$10, \$15, \$20 and (gasp) \$100; 7 p.m., the Astrodome, Houston.

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Ronnie Dugger, Publisher

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