

THE BATTALION

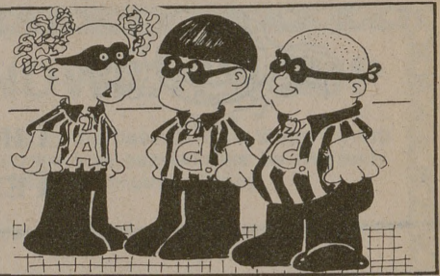
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Three fates — all bad

The Aggie basketball team fell one point short, 63-62, of beating the Texas Tech Red Raiders in the Houston Summit Thursday. See page 10 for details.



China asks for war settlement

United Press International
Vietnam said Thursday it has repulsed a re-pronged Chinese drive against the strategic provincial capital of Lang Son in what could be the decisive battle of the war. China formally asked Vietnam to negotiate a settlement of the border war "as soon as possible."
Western intelligence sources said the Chinese remained in control of the deserted town of Lang Son at least partly because a division of regular infantry — about 100 troops — had been thrown into the town.
In Peking, China announced it has sent a message to Vietnam calling for negotiations at cabinet level to settle their 13-day-old war.
The New China News Agency said the proposal was made by the Chinese foreign minister to the foreign ministry of Vietnam and delivered to the Vietnamese Embassy in Peking Thursday.
The Chinese note said the meeting should take place "as soon as possible at a mutually agreed place." The proposal also said Peking would "welcome Vietnamese proposals" as to level, location and other matters concerning the proposed negotiations. The proposal called for high-level meetings between government representatives "that each government appoint a vice minister of foreign affairs as representative."
It was China's first formal appeal for negotiations since Chinese forces pushed into Vietnam Feb. 17. The Chinese made an earlier formal request for negotiations —

but it was issued just hours before they sent their troops across the border.
In the meantime, numerous official but informal appeals have been sent out — by Senior Vice Premier Teng Hsiao-ping in talks with foreign visitors, in editorials in the official Communist Party newspaper People's Daily, and in "authorized statements" by the equally official New China News Agency.
The Vietnamese rejected the appeals, saying they would not negotiate until the Chinese pulled back across their borders.
The broadcast reported "nearly 2,000" casualties on Wednesday on hills, ridges and roads overlooking the province capital. Vietnamese officials evacuated civilians from Lang Son early last week, then set up defense lines on three sides of the town of 25,000.
Vietnamese reports said the Chinese were pushed back in two days of heavy fighting and were "heavily beaten" in the attacks on Vietnamese-held high points and small villages on provincial Highway 403 to the east of the Lang Son.
Vietnam did not claim final victory, however, and analysts said more fighting was almost assured.
At the United Nations, the Security Council, paralyzed by threats of a Soviet veto, adjourned its debate on the war between the Asian communist nations without setting the date for a new session.
The movement of the full division, one of the four crack divisions defending Hanoi, was the first concrete indication that Vietnam intends to fight to hold Lang Son.

Texas senator predicts Carter's gas ration plan will favor northern states

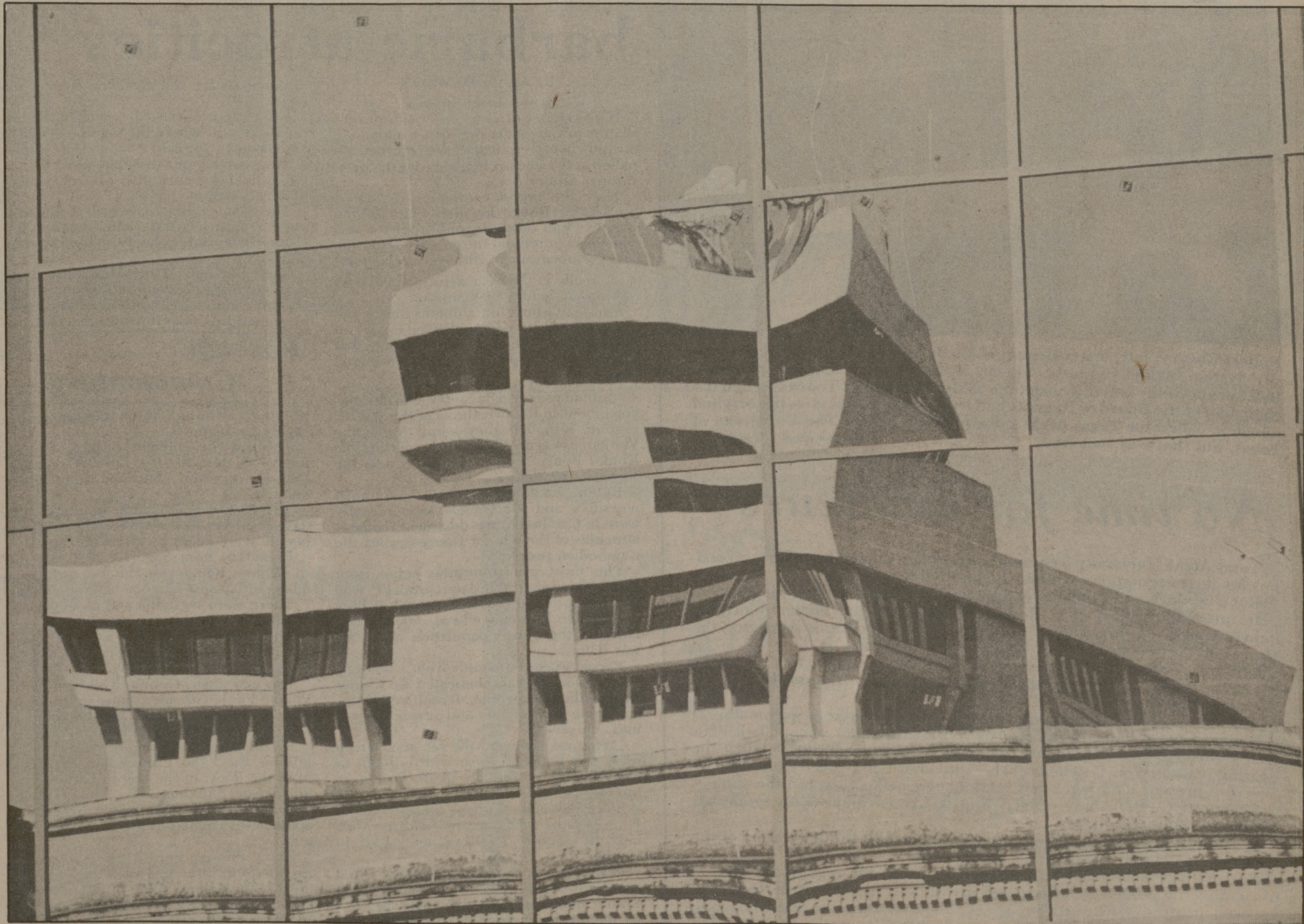
United Press International
AUSTIN — Texas motorists will be paying \$2.25 a gallon for gasoline — \$1 for the gas and \$1.25 to buy a ration coupon — within a year under President Carter's rationing plan, a Houston senator predicts.
Sen. Walter Mengden, R-Houston, said Carter's plan would cut Texas' gasoline supplies to 66 percent of what the state used in 1976 and force Texas motorists to purchase ration coupons from residents of other and Northeastern states, which he said would be allotted more fuel than they need.
"As soon as this plan is implemented our ration bill is going to be doubled," Mengden said Thursday in a personal privilege speech to the Senate.
Mengden said federal officials outlined details of the rationing plan and other steps to curtail energy consumption at a meeting of the Southwest Regional Energy Council where he represented Texas.
"They are predicting within a year we'll be in gasoline rationing," Mengden said.
Mengden said the rationing system federal officials are planning would enrich the North and Northeast at the expense of Sun Belt states.
"We have a reverse Robin Hood effect of taking the wealth in that the poor are going

to be helping the rich under this plan," Mengden said. "It's being represented as an equal sacrifice for all citizens. The ultimate effect is to the contrary."
Mengden said the formula federal bureaucrats have drawn up for rationing gasoline will give states in the North and Northeast more fuel than they currently use while cutting Texas to 65.9 percent of the state's average monthly consumption in 1976.
"What we're getting into with this gasoline rationing plan is redistributing the wealth from the South and Southwest to the North and Northeast," Mengden said. "They're going to get more gasoline than they can possibly use while we here in Texas will get cut back. We here in Texas — and we produce all this gas and oil — are going to be supporting them."
The Houston senator said the ration system will drain \$66 to \$88 million a year from the Texas economy while boosting the economies of states such as Pennsylvania where he said so-called "white market" sales of ration coupons would bring residents \$90 to \$120 million a year.
Mengden said for a typical motorist who drives a car that gets 15 miles per gallon and pays 70 cents a gallon to fuel his auto, gasoline bills will jump from \$58 a month to \$125 a month.

No-name off-campus group wants more University funding

By LORI SHULER
Battalion Reporter
Members of the group being formed by the merger of two organizations that represent off-campus students are hoping for an increase in funding from Texas A&M University.
The group, which has no name yet, will combine the Off-Campus Student Association and Hassle-Free.
Scott Terry, OSA treasurer, and Wayne Morrison, student government vice president for finance, both said they hope the new group will be invited to submit an itemized budget requesting administrative funds.
To receive administration funding, an organization must be invited to submit a budget request, said Dr. Carolyn Adair, director of student activities.
Adair said that last year 17 groups, including the Resident Hall Association, the Aggie Band and the Student "Y," received administrative funding totaling more than \$80,000. All 17 of these groups have been asked to submit budgets again this year.
Adair, Dr. John Koldus, vice president for student services, and Howard Perry, associate vice president for student services, are in charge of allocating the administrative funds. These funds consist of profits from the MSC Bookstore, donations from former students and the Parent Fund.

The money not used in administrative funding is distributed to all other recognized student organizations that submit budgets. This money is allocated by the Student Organizations Board, which consists of 10 faculty and staff members and five students.
Last year, OSA received \$250 from this fund, after requesting \$500, Terry said.
Adair said no group ever receives as much as it requests. "Last year, we had less than \$150,000 in the total fund and we had \$500,000 worth of requests."
Terry said a large carry-over balance from last year helped the group survive financially, but with the merger and plans for more activities, the group must have more money.
Morrison said the administration has "recognized the deficiency" in funds for off-campus students. He said they are willing to pump some money into the organization because it does represent the "vast majority of the student body."
Terry, Morrison and Jill Hall, OSA president, are all optimistic that the off-campus student organization will receive administrative funding, but Koldus said nothing is certain yet.
"I haven't thought about it yet, so I really don't know," Koldus said. Budgeting of the organizations will begin after March 15. He said he will have to see what the different or-



Oceanography on the waves

Battalion photo by Robert Cook

The windows of the Sterling C. Evans Library addition reflect the Oceanography and Meteorology Building. The move to the new addition

will begin over Spring Break, but only for administrative offices. Books and other materials will be moved after classes are out in May.

Hotard residents first to arrive on scene

Fire coverage leaves students cold

By ANDY WILLIAMS
Battalion Staff
Several Hotard Hall residents, passed over in the first media reports, were among the actors in Tuesday morning's fire drama at the old Board of Directors Quarters.
Rob Colburn says the fire marshal told him his report of the fire was the first. Ben Bryan was one of the first inside the house, and he thought to turn off the electricity by throwing the main breaker switch. And Bill Pruitt thinks he saw the light bulb that is believed to have started the fire.
The three of them said a number of other Hotard residents were involved in the story.
The building was the home of Dr. and Mrs. Jack K. Williams and housed the

Texas A&M University Press. The couple was not hurt.
The fire burned from about 2:45 a.m. until about 5 a.m.
Colburn, a sophomore architecture and building construction major, saw the fire on his way home from the architecture building, where he'd been doing work for a class.
"I was walking down Asbury Street over by the Physical Plant when I saw it," Colburn said. He ran to the dorm and called the fire department.
Bryan, a junior biology major who hopes to be an emergency medical technician in Dallas when he graduates, said he ran from the dorm to the house, where two policemen were standing in the lawn.
"They probably had just got there," he said.
Bryan first wanted to know about the Williamses.
"Are they out? Are they out?" he yelled at the policemen. But he said they didn't know anyone lived in the building.
"I ran around and started yelling at the front windows of the house," Bryan said. "Mrs. Williams came and opened up the curtains and said, 'What is it? What's the matter?'"
"And I said, 'Y'all get out, y'all's house is afire!'"

"She went on back inside, and I ran around to the door. While I was running, I heard glass breaking."
The breaking glass was in the front door, where University policeman Michael Janeczek had broken out the window to unlock the dead bolt.
Bryan went into the house through the now-opened front door.
"They'd gotten Dr. Williams out, but gone off and left Mrs. Williams in the bedroom. She was gathering up a lot of stuff."
"She asked me if I thought they ought to move the cars (which might have blocked the fire trucks), and I said, 'Yes ma'am, it might be a good idea.'"
He found the main breaker switch and threw it.
Bryan helped firemen carry a hose into the house. Later, he stood in a second-story window and hauled up lengths of hose.
Pruitt went to the house as soon as he heard what was happening. When he heard that fire officials had determined the blaze had been set by a light bulb, Pruitt recalled an image.
"There was a light on up near the chimney on the second floor, and I saw it while I was running over there," he said. "It was a light and not the fire because it was constant."

"I could see a painting inside there. And I remember thinking when I saw the light that maybe Dr. Williams was up there looking at the fire."
Pruitt was irritated because he thought the fire could have been contained much more quickly than it was. "They took at least five to seven minutes to get the water on after they were hooked up," he said.
Lt. Tim Fickey of the College Station fire department agreed that it had taken a long time to begin pumping water, but said it was because of the size of the fire.
"We were in the middle of the house, where nobody could see us," Fickey said. "We were flowing water on the inside a good 15 minutes before anybody outside knew what was going on."
He said safety precautions for such a big fire took time to complete.
"We don't jump into something like that. We take at least enough equipment in there to where we know we can escape."
Colburn remembered a moment of grim humor from the evening.
"Six or eight of us moved some cars. There was a little Toyota in the way, and the steering was locked."
"We picked it up and kind of carried it across the street."

Temporary lights caused fire in campus house, marshal says

College Station Fire Marshal Harry Davis said Thursday that the fire that burned the old Board of Directors Quarters Tuesday morning was started by temporary lights being used by carpenters.
The workers were using two 100-watt bulbs while they paneled a room on the second floor of the house. The bulbs were placed inside the ceiling's new sheetrock when it was installed.
Plans called for a hole to be cut in the sheetrock when permanent light fixtures were installed.
Davis said the room's light switch was off when the carpenters left Monday night, but it was apparently turned on later. The bulbs appeared to have been on for eight or nine hours.
"What this made was a little oven, with those 100-watt bulbs next to wood joists and stuff like that," Davis said.
The building was the home of Dr. and Mrs. Jack K. Williams. Both escaped uninjured. Williams is former chancellor of the Texas A&M University System.
The Texas A&M University Press was also in the structure.

The fire was reported to the College Station fire department at 2:50 a.m. Tuesday. It burned until about 5 a.m.
No decision will be made on whether the remains of the two-story structure will be demolished until the Board of Regents scheduled meeting March 26-27.
Howard Vestal, Texas A&M University's

vice president for financial affairs, said he met with board Chairman Clyde Wells Thursday afternoon and decided the regents should decide the matter.
Vestal said he and Wells also discussed relocating the Texas A&M University Press, but he declined to give any details.
release workers attending precinct conventions, but this does not extend to counties or the state.
"In effect, many people are eliminated as choices for delegate posts to county or state conventions because they cannot get off work," Parker said. "It is enough penalty when a person does attend a convention and he is not paid for that day's work."

Proposed bill would give time off for political meets

United Press International
AUSTIN — Employees may get time off from work for county and state political conventions with a bill introduced Thursday by Sen. Carl Parker, D-Port Arthur.
Parker's bill would require employers to allow employees time off from work to attend county or state conventions as a delegate. Under current law employers must