

The Battalion

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Jet stream shift blamed for cold spell

By RENE OGLETREE

This may become the coldest winter on record for the Brazos Valley because of a jet stream shift, according to Walter K. Henry, Texas A&M University meteorology associate professor.

In a recent interview, Henry said, "The jet stream is located approximately five to six miles above the earth's surface with winds ranging up to 200 miles per hour, but averaging from 70 to 80 m.p.h."

The jet stream is located in the center of the prevailing westerly winds which blow from west to east with variances in northern and southern directions. It moves like a river of air and allows channels to branch off just as a river does, Henry said.

As the main cause for weather conditions, it meanders like a river, following the sun and causing the air current to be more noticeable in the winter in the northern hemisphere, Henry said.

He explained that the further south the current dips, the more polar air it brings with it, causing colder temperatures.

When the current moves northward, it takes warm air with it, creating the warmer temperatures. This can be found in Alaska and Iceland this winter.

In another interview, John F. Griffiths, an A&M meteorology professor said the lower the temperature falls the greater the area is that is affected.

At College Station last October and November, meteorologists recorded mean average temperatures for each month 10 degrees lower than the normal averages. December varied only five degrees, recording an average of 47 degrees to the normal average of 52 degrees. January totals have not yet been compiled, Griffiths said.

A new method to measure the coldness of winter involves determining the days homeowners use fuel to maintain a 65-degree temperature in their homes, Griffiths said. This year 80 per cent more days required additional heating, Griffiths said.



Flags displayed daily

The United States' flags, in front of the Administration Building are raised each morning about 6 a.m. and taken down after 5 p.m. by University policemen. This photo, taken yesterday evening, has two of the flags' poles framing the Oceanography and Meteorology Building and emphasizes our American flag with some backlighting from the sun.

Carter to stress energy in fireside chat tonight

By HELEN THOMAS
United Press International

WASHINGTON — President Carter, keeping a promise "to communicate with the folks" was expected to stress the need for sacrifices to save energy in his first televised "fireside chat" from the White House tonight.

The broadcast, at 9 p.m. CST, will be delivered beside a crackling wood fire in the fireplace of the library on the mansion's ground floor and is one of a series Carter plans over the next three months.

Asked why Carter was going on the air so early in the presidency an aide said: "He made a commitment to communicate with the folks. This is an opportunity for him to lay out, in a relaxed way, his hopes and aspirations."

Early in the day Carter was to receive a firsthand report from Vice President Walter F. Mondale assessing his eight-day, six-country journey to Europe and Japan and a rundown on the leaders he met in his travels.

Carter went to the airport to welcome Mondale home personally from his diplomatic mission around the world. He said the vice president did "an absolutely superb job."

Later in the day Carter met with Soviet ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin, and told him "we're not going to back down" on U.S. defense of human rights.

At the same time, Carter assured Dobrynin the American diplomatic position is directed toward promoting civil rights everywhere, and is not a campaign against the Kremlin.

The subject of Carter's conversation with Dobrynin arose on the helicopter flight back from Andrews Air Force Base when Mondale asked whether the "flap" over Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov had died down.

"I told Dobrynin we're not going to back down on that," Carter replied.

A White House spokesman later stressed that Carter was talking about "human

rights" and did not mention Sakharov by name in his talk with the Russian diplomat. Carter told Dobrynin: "I've heard great things about you and your service in Washington."

An aide said Carter, in his "chat" tonight, would focus chiefly on domestic themes, particularly the energy shortage and his program to prime the economy

with tax cuts and rebates and the creation of 750,000 jobs for the unemployed.

The aide said Carter also wants to give the American people "a feel for the way Jimmy Carter approaches the presidency... the attitude and tone his administration will take..."

Carter plans to sit in a red armchair and will use a teleprompter.

Groundhog Day... Legend or hoax?

United Press International

PUNXSUTAWNEY, Pa. — In a winter as bad as this, with the weatherman predicting more of the same, it may be understandable if some winter-weary Americans look to the groundhog Punxsutawney Phil for some hope.

But no, Virginia — and Ohio and New York and Michigan and Illinois and the rest of you in the freeze belt — there really is no meteorologically omniscient critter living in a burrow on Gobbler's Knob in Punxsutawney, a southwestern Pennsylvania community.

It's all a hoax, albeit a good-natured one, to give the town's 10,000 residents an excuse to shuck the winter doldrums once a year and have a good time — with community leaders in formal morning clothes and top hats to lend an atmosphere of pomp and circumstance to the silliness.

The festivities have been an annual event since 1887, when a group of "old timers," who got together on Gobbler's Knob to play poker, drink beer and have a good time, formed the Punxsutawney Groundhog Club.

"Everyone wanted to get in on the action," said Sam Light, president-emeritus of the club. "The club has grown and grown to where there's more than 1,000 members today and everyone has had a marvelous time."

The official groundhog ceremony is followed by a huge breakfast at the Punxsutawney Country Club; the crowning of a Groundhog King and Queen by the local high school; and the awarding of the Man and Woman of the Year awards at a banquet that night.

The current Phil — no one is sure how many there have been — was imported from the Pittsburgh Zoo three years ago.

He is kept with his mate, Phyllis, in a glass-enclosed home at the local civic center most of the time.

But today, local leaders dumped him on Gobbler's Knob for the Groundhog Day ritual.

Phil emerged from his burrow exactly at 7:27 a.m., as scheduled, but what he saw — his shadow — doomed the country to six more weeks of miserable weather. If he had not seen his shadow, spring would have been right around the corner. Phil's unwelcome prognosis was greeted by a chorus of boos from the several hundred high school students who braved the 12-degree temperatures to view the groundhog's entrance.

Human forecasters say the formula usually works out, at least for the short term. A bright winter morning is likely to be cold and a cloudy one warm.

Light, who headed the Groundhog Club for 25 years, does his best to promote the legend, claiming Phil has been on target every year since 1887.

"At the first crack of dawn, Punxsutawney Phil, the Seer of Seers, the Prophet Extraordinary, comes out of his lair, stands up on his hind legs, looks over his shoulder at the sky, and in groundhogese, he whispers in my ear and tells me what the forecast is," Light explained.

"In 90 years the groundhog has been right every time. Once, during World War II, the government asked us not to make a prediction because they didn't want to give peace and comfort to the enemy." Light attributes Phil's longevity to a secret "Groundhog Punch," saying "one swallow adds 10 years to his life."

But don't turn those thermostats back up yet, folks.

Teachers have choice in enforcement

Attendance mandatory, affects grade

By MARY HARDIN

Professors at Texas A&M University can now make class attendance mandatory as stated in A&M's 1976-1977 attendance policy.

The attendance policy given in A&M's Rules and Regulations book says that the university feels that class attendance is the responsibility of the individual student. Students are expected to attend class and instructors are expected to take roll.

Individual instructors may use class attendance as a factor in determining a student's grade.

"It's just an opportunity for a few professors to use attendance in determining grades," said Susan Rudd in reference to the current policy.

Rudd, who is Student Government vice president for rules and regulations, said the policy, in effect, reads, "We realize you are mature enough to take care of

yourself, but we are going to make you come to class anyway."

Student Government decided in favor of nonmandatory class attendance after the new policy came out. It has been trying since then to get the old nonmandatory policy reinstated.

"When I came here in 1973 there was mandatory attendance. I worked to change the policy to nonmandatory," said Dr. John J. Koldus, vice president for student services. He was upset when the new mandatory policy came out in the spring of 1976.

Dr. Diane Strommer, associate dean of the College of Liberal Arts was involved in rewriting the attendance policy.

Strommer said she does not believe the policy to be mandatory. "It put the matter of attendance between the student and the professor."

"This is not a new policy, but a clearer

version of the old one," Dr. Strommer added.

Dr. Koldus said that the major difference between the two policies is that instructors are expected to take roll and that they can use attendance as a determinant in grading.

This makes attendance mandatory, he explained.

Rudd said that the statement about using attendance in grading is the major reason Student Government wants the policy changed.

"As long as the student turns in his assignments and takes the tests on time, I feel he has fulfilled his part of the bargain," Rudd said.

Sam Houston State University has a mandatory attendance policy similar to A&M's policy.

"We don't like to call it mandatory, but the students are expected to attend class," said Dr. Robert C. Brooks, vice president for academic affairs at Sam Houston.

Sam Houston's policy states that the students may not be penalized for three or less unexcused absences.

"We try to discourage professors from using attendance for grading purposes," Dr. Brooks said.

Dr. Brooks said that the policy is accepted by the students and is not a political issue.

Whitey Greer, president of student government at Sam Houston said that most of the students there view mandatory attendance as unnecessary.

"The type of class should dictate the need to attend class," Greer said.

He said they have tried to change the attendance policy, but can't get the administration to agree.

Rudd said she feels that Student Government can get the policy here changed.

Legal adviser withdraws to begin private practice

By MARK PENNY

The former head legal adviser for Texas A&M students, Kenneth M. Robison, went into private practice yesterday.

Robison said that he wanted to get more realistic trial experience.

"I want to get it out of my system," he said.

"It has been most rewarding to help students even though their matters may seem trivial to someone else," Robison said.

The legal advisers handle 200 to 300 cases a month. Robison said that most of the cases are solved quickly.

"This brings a lot of personal satisfaction," he said.

Robison graduated from Texas A&M University in 1968. He earned his law degree from Houston's South Texas College of Law in 1974.

In March, 1975, Robison joined the Student Services staff as legal adviser.

"It's been a most enjoyable two years," he said. "I've gotten (the program) started and firmly introduced."

"This service is a relatively new idea," he said. "The advisers not only work with in-

dividuals, they also council student organizations."

Robison said the 200 to 300 cases a month refer only to appointments, not to people who telephoned or who walked in to try to catch them during a free moment.

"I've also hired another attorney and a part-time secretary to help with the case load," Robison said.

Chris Kling, who joined the staff in September, 1976 as assistant legal adviser has assumed Robison's position.

Kling said that he is now interviewing for the assistant position. A part-time adviser may be hired soon to fill the gap until a permanent replacement can be found.

The permanent adviser may not be hired until May. Present law school graduates taking their bar examinations in February will not receive the results until May.

Linda Brochu, former full-time secretary for the legal advisers, joined Robison in his private practice. Susan Kitchen advanced from part-time status to replace her.

"I am presently interviewing for an immediate replacement for the part-time secretary position," Kling said.

Robison said that he enjoyed working with the other people in the student service area.

"Dr. Koldus, vice-president for student services has been very helpful and beneficial," Robison said. "He has never tried to hold me down."

"Dr. Goswick (director of the health center), the University Police, and the MSC have all been very helpful," he added. "They all have the students' best interest in mind."

Robison is going into practice with Mike Callihan, justice of the peace for precinct seven.

Control of pest birds investigated

By DEBBIE LIGHTFOOT

Methods of controlling pest birds without destroying them are currently being studied by ornithologists with the Texas A&M University department of wildlife and fisheries sciences.

The influx of an estimated 1.5 million birds to the A&M campus during the Christmas holidays was just one example of a problem that has been under investigation at A&M for 10 years, Dr. Keith A. Arnold, associate professor of wildlife and fisheries sciences, said Friday.

He explained that the goal of the research has been to learn about the biology of the birds in an effort to control them.

Arnold said he favors natural methods of pest control, such as altering the environment to discourage undesirable species from moving into an area.

"If we know something about the biology of the birds, he said, then we can alter the environment more effectively."

Current research has focused on the behavior, ecology, feeding habits and reproduction of cowbirds and grackles, Arnold said. Beginning this fall, more work will be done with starlings and house sparrows, two of the major nuisance species in our area.

The birds that flocked to the A&M campus during the holidays were mostly cowbirds and starlings, he said. They are social species that gather in large numbers in the winter, and they need clumps of trees as roost sites to provide protection from wind and rain.

The birds, however, will not crowd up too close to one another, Arnold said. They need some space between themselves and other birds, so decreasing the available roosting space by trimming trees

may be one way to drive the birds from an area.

He explained that by reducing the available roosting space, the birds become crowded and agitated at night. Hopefully, he said, the turmoil will eventually drive the birds away from the roost.

Arnold said that future research will be aimed at finding ways, like tree-trimming, to move birds and keep their numbers down to levels humans can tolerate without having to actually destroy the birds.

Texas natural gas could go interstate

United Press International

DALLAS — Easterners who want to buy hoards of Texas natural gas to alleviate their winter energy crisis may find a bill pending in Congress to allow such purchases more of a hope than a guarantee.

And Texans, who have been relatively secure in knowing there was at least enough gas in the state for the right price, may soon find there isn't enough gas at any price.

"During peak demand times here in Texas there just isn't that much gas available," said Don Newquist, a spokesman for Lo-Vaca Gathering Co., one of the state's largest intrastate suppliers.

"During normal times here, yes, we may be able to help out (the East). But during peak times there just may not be enough to go around."

The congressional bill would allow interstate gas suppliers to bid on gas normally available only to intrastate suppliers. If the bill is passed and signed by President Carter, Newquist said it could result in higher prices for Texas residents, and even cutbacks.

Newquist said most Texas-produced natural gas was purchased by intrastate suppliers on long-term contracts — and the Congressional bill would do nothing to affect those contracts.

He said, however, that when temperatures dropped in the state more gas was needed than the contractors could provide, forcing suppliers like Lo-Vaca to buy what is called "spot" gas. The congressional bill would allow interstate suppliers to bid on spot gas along with intrastate suppliers.

Newquist said if Lo-Vaca and other state suppliers could successfully bid against the out-of-state suppliers then there would be sufficient quantities for Texans — although consumers would have to pay the higher price. If the state suppliers were outbid, however, there could be cutbacks in Texas.

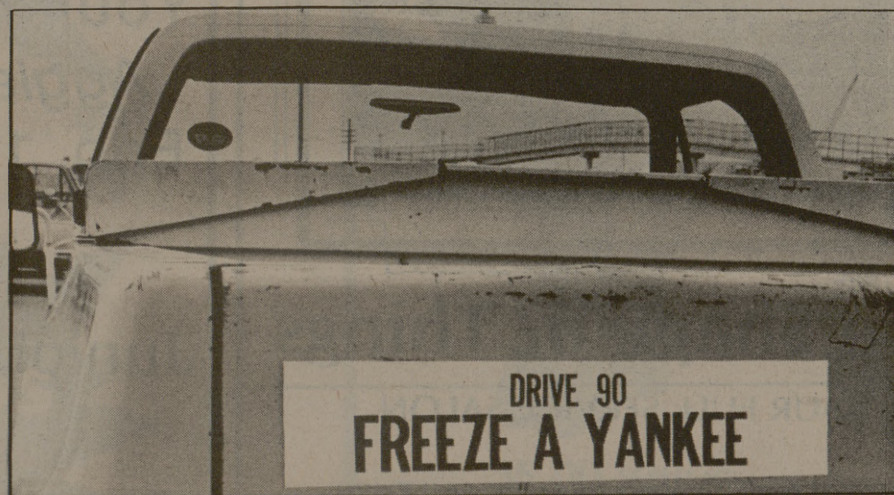
Dr. Phil Gramm, economist at Texas A&M University and unsuccessful Democratic U.S. Senate candidate, says federal price controls destroyed the interstate natural gas market and set the basis for the current crisis. The proof, he said, comes from the fact that Texans pay more for natural gas but during times of normal demand have all they need.

"Now they say, 'Well, since we have a shortage in the Northeast, we want to adjust the market so we can get some of your gas,'" he said.

"That seems to me inequitable. We've paid for 16 years not to have a shortage. It's like the guy on his deathbed who says to the Lord, 'If you can help me out, I will repent until I get well and then you can go to hell.'"

Federal controls on natural gas prices were installed in 1960 and Gramm said exploration immediately slowed.

The governors of Kansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas have all advised President Carter that controls should be permanently lifted from interstate natural gas so that a free market can generate adequate supplies. Oil companies surveyed by UPI echoed the sentiments.



Battalion photo by Pat McAuliff

Cold hearted rebel

Some Texans have no sympathy for Northerners because they feel that persons in the Northeast, who are suffering from a severe cold spell, will cause price hikes and curtailment of Texas gas supplies. This bumper sticker, which was seen in the parking lot behind Kyle Field on the Texas A&M University campus yesterday, reflects the sentiment that Texans have exclusive rights to Texas gas supplies.

weather

Mostly cloudy and mild today with winds gusting from the southeast at 8-14 mph. Precipitation probability 10 per cent today, 30 per cent tonight and 60 per cent tomorrow. High today in the low 50s. Low tonight in the low 40s. High tomorrow in the low 50s.