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Comptroller position unconstitutional

By LIZ NEWLIN
Battalion Staff

The position of Student Government comptroller was ruled unconstitutional by a vote of the Judicial Board Monday night. The eight-member board split 4-4 on the issue in a 40-minute deliberation, leaving Chairman Stan Stanfield to cast the deciding vote. "The Judicial Board feels though the concept (of a comptroller) is a good concept it does conflict with the constitution (of Texas A&M University)," Stanfield said, announcing the majority decision. This action prohibits comptroller Stuart Kingsbery from performing any duties assigned him by the Senate bill which created his post Sept. 22. His duties would have been accounting and bookkeeping of Student Government funds, including signing checks for any payment using Student Service fees. The position was created by the Student Government legislature and placed under the body's executive branch. The plaintiffs in the hearing objected to this move because it was done without student body approval, and for other reasons. The defense said the move was constitutional. In the past, the vice president for finance and the student body president had authority to sign checks, but both signatures were not required. Generally, the

president signed checks only during the summer or when the vice president was not available. If the position of comptroller had been okayed, the vice president would have become strictly a policy-maker. The J-board issued a temporary injunction restraining the comptroller from his duties, Sept. 30, and Monday's ruling was the final decision of the issue. Students acting as attorneys presented written depositions and witnesses for both sides. Acting attorney Scott Gregson and Student Government Senator Lynn Gibson brought the initial question of constitutionality to the J-board that resulted in the temporary injunction. Gregson is a former vice president for finance and presented the plaintiffs' case. Student Body President Robert Harvey acted as attorney for the defense. "It is my contention then that the spending of Student Government funds... is an executive function necessary for the successful implementation of such legislation. It is not specifically denied by the constitution; therefore, this power may be assumed by the President," Harvey stated. Gregson gave three arguments in challenging the position of comptroller. The post was not constitutional, he said, and had not been used in the past. And, he said, the move would change the duties of the vice president for finance without the necessary

student body approval since it was a structural change in Student Government. "The person (comptroller) that would fill this position was originally intended to oversee the overall handling of the books of Student Government... his official functions were to have nothing to do with the actual and physical writing of checks. Now, as envisioned in the Senate Bill (creating the post), the comptroller would assume a much larger and have a more far-reaching set of duties, that of acting as a check for the disbursement of Student Government funds through a dual check signing system with the President of the Student Body... Also, as mentioned by Robert Harvey on Sept. 7, 1977... the comptroller would be responsible to the Executive Committee," Gregson stated. Stanfield said the J-board was concerned with how the bill would be enacted. First, the bill would give the student body president new appointment procedures. Also, the bill would add duties to the Executive Committee of Student Government by making the comptroller responsible to that body. Presently, the committee's duties are to review legislation and act instead of the Student Senate when it cannot meet. "The J-board said the bill creating a comptroller 'does conflict with the constitution,' but did not elaborate. Majority and minority opinions are expected to be issued next week.



Catching some zzzzz's

Even freshmen have to sleep sometime, and apparently Dr. C. Miller's Math 150 class Monday was as good a place as any. Robin Edwards, a

member of the Aggie Band, remains oblivious to the photographer's camera.

Battalion photo by Ken Herrera.

Psychiatrist says mental illness of Martha Mitchell not for real

WASHINGTON — A noted forensic psychiatrist says the late Martha Mitchell might have averted Watergate but was silenced and labeled a mental case, treated against her will by doctors who forcibly hospitalized her. Dr. Jonas B. Robitscher, who teaches law and psychiatry as holder of the Henry R. Luce Chair of Law and the Behavioral Sciences at Emory University in Atlanta, cited the case in a lecture series at George Washington University on the "Abuses of Psychiatry." Speaking of interaction between government and mental health, Robitscher noted "the recent resignation of a president after a period of stress during which many people, psychiatrists and laymen, were concerned about his mental stability and were uncertain how to deal with the incompetency of a chief executive."

The problem was not new with Richard Nixon's ordeal, he said, citing the final diagnoses of John Garfield and Woodrow Wilson and "the case of Franklin Roosevelt whose physical and mental states deteriorated dramatically... in his final year."

He also noted the break-in of the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist in a search for psychiatric information with which to discredit Ellsberg, and turned to the interesting and tragic case of Martha Mitchell, in my mind a very great and a much abused lady."

Calling Mrs. Mitchell "the only person whose source of power who saw Watergate whole and early and who tried to blow the whistle," Robitscher said:

"First, if Martha Mitchell had not been severely restrained and kept from contact with newspaper people through the use of force, threats and tranquilizing drugs, and

"Second, if she had not been ridiculed and labeled as a mental case, Nixon would have won his second term."

for 1976, noted that "it is not only in the Soviet Union that politicians call their detractors mentally ill."

"When Elizabeth Ray revealed that she had been on Congressman Wayne Hays'

payroll for other than secretarial purposes, the first reaction of the congressman was to tell the press that the poor girl was emotionally ill and in the care of psychiatrist," he said.

Easterwood tower: long way to the top

By GARY WELCH

Only 69 steps up from ground level lies the floor of Easterwood Airport's air traffic control tower. The connotation that this tower belongs to the airport is a misnomer; it belongs to the U.S. Government, is administered under the Department of Transportation, and is operated by the Federal Aviation Administration.

In other words, to an air traffic controller, it is indeed a long way to the top.

The view from the tower is striking in all directions. The Texas A&M University campus rises to the east, every airport runway is completely visible, and many surrounding highways can be traced into the distance until trees or hills or just plain distance obscure any further view.

Inside the tower, charts, radios, and even a water fountain line the walls, leaving the middle open for easy movement and, more importantly, for complete visibility in all directions.

Next to the water fountain, a coffee pot and other eating utensils give evidence of the human side of tower operations.

"We eat at our positions up in the tower," said Elam Holcomb, an air traffic controller at Easterwood. "When we get a break we swap out positions and allow one of us time to eat. We usually rotate positions anyway every two hours. It gives us relief from working each position."

Holcomb explained that the "positions" are the four positions of operation located within the tower. At most, three men operate the four positions. And because tower activity would probably hit one of two or three daily peaks soon, three controllers were on duty. The other two controllers, Terry Smith and Bob Rexer, were handling all four positions.

"The first position is ground control," Holcomb said. "That controller is responsible for all movement on the airport itself except for the runways in use." All planes moving from hangar to runway or vice versa, he said, must communicate with the ground controller to keep them from the

paths of arriving or departing aircraft.

"Next is tower control," Holcomb said. "He has responsibility for the airspace for a five mile radius around the tower up to but not including 3,000 feet altitude, and for all runways in use." He explained that this controller must spot all incoming aircraft, and communicating by radio must sequence them (arrange them in a certain order) and allow them to land far enough apart to preclude any possible collisions.

The tower controller must also sequence departing aircraft, Holcomb added.

At this time Rexer was operating both ground and tower controls.

Holcomb pointed to the low haze sitting on the horizon. "Today he is having a little more trouble than usual because that haze makes it hard for him to spot incoming aircraft," he said. Periodically Rexer's headset crackled with a pilot's position report, and he would stand and sweep that general area with binoculars until he could find the plane.

When two planes reported from the same area, Rexer tried to spot them while at the same time telling each pilot the other's position so they could spot each other. One pilot did not know his exact position, so each pilot did not know where he was in relation to the other plane.

Rexer talked to both pilots constantly while searching with his binoculars. He spotted one plane almost immediately, but could not locate the confused pilot's plane. Finally, by discussing landmarks and highway positions with the lost pilot, Rexer ascertained his position and informed both pilots.

Because both planes positions had been pinpointed, it was only seconds before they had spotted each other. Rexer then sequenced them for landing.

Holcomb continued listing tower positions.

"Approach control is responsible for a 20-mile radius around the tower and altitude up to 4,000 feet, not including tower control's airspace," he said. "His re-

Puerto Rico to apply for statehood soon

United Press International

DORADO, Puerto Rico — Gov. Carlos Romero Barcelo says it is time for Puerto Rico to cast off what he calls its semi-colonial political status and become a full-fledged state of the union.

Romero, addressing the 18th annual United Press International Editors and Publishers Conference at this resort 30 miles west of San Juan Monday, said the island suffered from decades of neglect and inferior political rights but now has grown sufficiently to assert full equality with the 50 states.

"We are disenfranchised American citizens," the governor told the 400 conference participants. He said the commonwealth constitution for the island adopted in 1952 was "semi-colonial" and "semi-autonomous."

It exempted Puerto Rico from federal

taxes but did not give the island any representation in Congress.

"In the near future, I am convinced we shall formally petition Congress to grant us the full range of rights and responsibilities that should accompany our American citizenship," he said. "And that means statehood."

Romero said the island of 3.1 million inhabitants had been "discriminated against geographically" in the past but now could count on support from President Carter, should it request statehood.

Romero said the island was ready to accept federal taxation gradually, but he said Puerto Rico would keep its Spanish-language heritage.

"The nation already has 50 English-speaking states," he said. "It needs a Spanish-speaking state."

The governor asked the editors and publishers to educate their readers to help

break what he described as a negative image of the island on the mainland.

"The current image of Puerto Rico portrayed by the national and international press is that of a decadent, tropical paradise where a few enjoy a luxurious life of leisure and the rest are starving, on welfare, or exploited," he said.

The governor was the opening speaker at the conference, which was scheduled to hear an address by First Lady Rosalynn Carter Tuesday.

The conference heard the first of three panel discussions Monday on the theme, "Separatism — A Trend of the Future?" The panel was moderated by Wilbur C. Landrey, foreign editor of the St. Petersburg (Fla.) Times.

Other panel discussions were scheduled on the legalization of gambling casinos and Third World news coverage.

Cause of failure unknown

Soyuz lands safely today

United Press International

MOSCOW (UPI) — Two Soviet cosmonauts safely landed their troubled Soyuz 25 capsule in Soviet Asia Tuesday, ending a major space mission aborted only 130 yards from their goal — a link-up with an orbiting space station.

Moscow Radio said cosmonauts Vladimir Kovalenok and Valery Ryumin were in good condition. Their Soyuz capsule parachuted to earth safely in Kazakhstan, about 115 miles northwest of the town of Tselinograd.

"After braking by the atmosphere, the parachute system was brought into action at a calculated altitude," Moscow radio said. "In the close vicinity of the earth, the

soft-landing engines operated and the descent module landed in the target area."

The Soyuz 25 mission blasted into space early Sunday but was canceled just 26 hours into the mission because of unspecified trouble as they came to within 130 yards from docking with the new Salyut 6 space station.

The Soyuz 25 was the Soviet Union's first manned spaceflight since last February and observers had expected it would provide a space spectacular to mark this month's 20th anniversary of Sputnik 1 and next month's 60th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution.

It was the third such docking failure involving Soyuz capsules and Salyut stations in the last three years — with the Soyuz 25

failure following almost the exact pattern of failures by Soyuz 23 in October 1976 and Soyuz 15 in August 1974.

The announcement of cancellation of the Soyuz mission Monday came after nearly 24 hours of official silence, which raised fears for the safety of the two rookie cosmonauts.

Soyuz 25 was commanded by Lt. Col. Kovalenok, 35, a Soviet air force pilot and paratrooper who entered spaceflight training in 1967. Ryumin, 38, was his flight engineer and helped develop and test new space equipment.

Neither of the men had ever flown in space before — although they had helped control both manned and unmanned flights from the ground.

all the way into Alabama, and about 150 miles out into the Gulf of Mexico, he said.

"Finally, there is the flight data position, which coordinates with Houston Center on far instrument traffic and handles any telephone communication between the tower, the flight service and the public," Holcomb said.

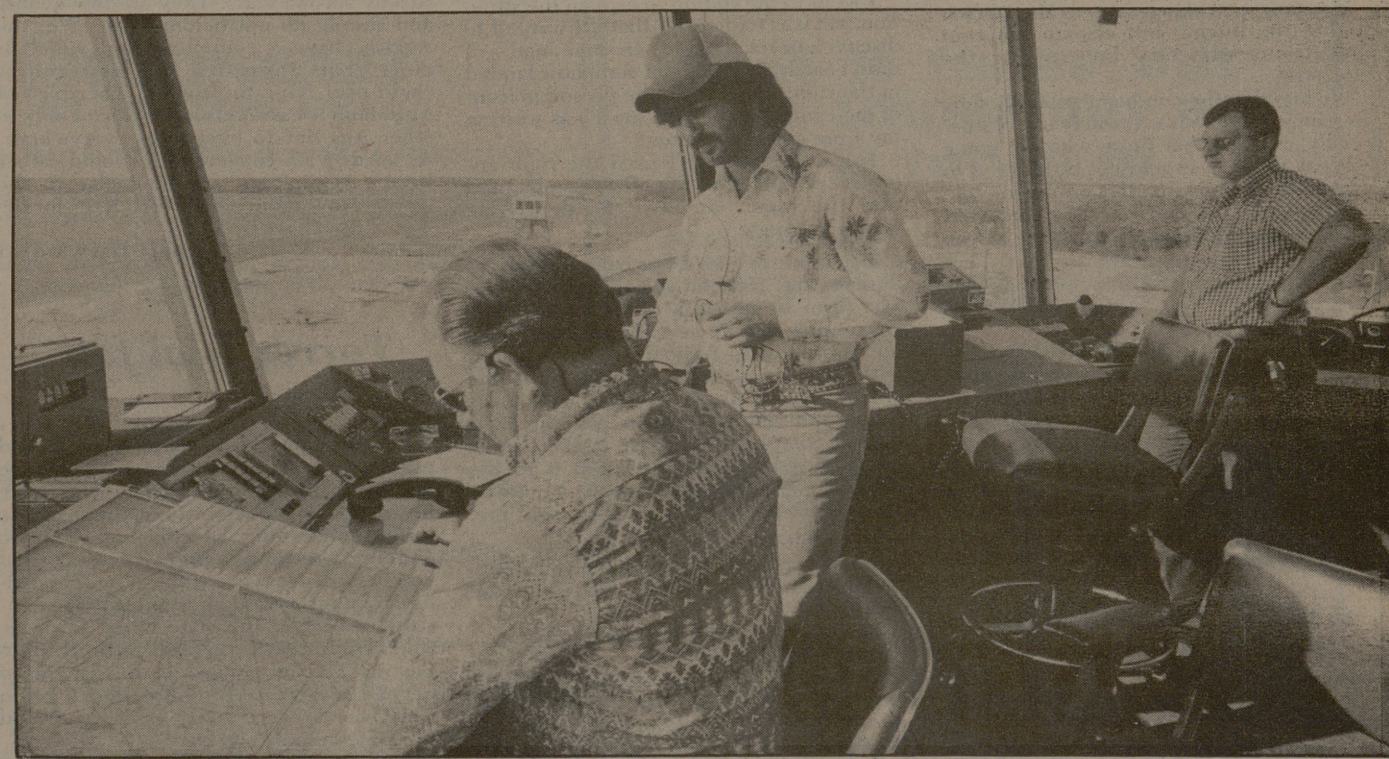
Smith was handling these two positions, and since the air traffic within his assigned area was relatively spread out, he ap-

peared more relaxed than Rexer.

Nine controllers operate Easterwood's tower. They work overlapping shifts from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m., 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Two of them are developmental controllers. In other words, they are able to perform any tower function but have limited experience.

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Charles Buckhaults, Rick Warren, and Robert Cotte work the four operation positions in the tower at Easterwood Airport. The nine controllers

at Easterwood's tower work overlapping shifts from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m., 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. Battalion photo by Ken Herrera.