

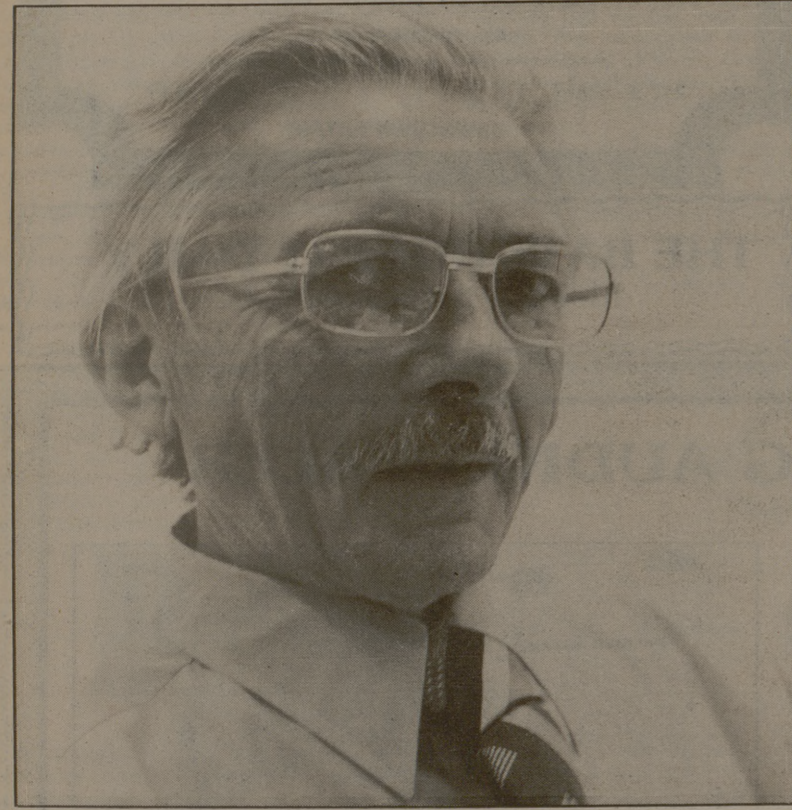
# Ex-editor criticizes media

Former Congressman Charles A. Mosher spoke of a "new openness in Congress" at a Monday night speech at Zachry Engineering Center. He said Congress needs assistance from scientists and engineers so its members can gain an understanding about the effects of their legislation. Mosher, once a newspaper editor and publisher before his election to Congress in 1960, also criticized the media, saying the press tends to "zero in" on certain events while other go uncovered.

"Their coverage tends to be only the sensational, while the other events are ignored," the Ohio republican said.  
Mosher said congressional reporting is difficult, but the press could do a better job.  
He said he understands the media's problem is much like Congress' problem — they can only focus on one thing at a time.  
Partly because of pressure by investigative reporters and the people's emphasis on ethics, Con-

gress has made changes in its practices, Mosher said.  
Committee sessions are now made public, and the seniority system in Congress has been broken, Mosher said. Also, subcommittees and their committee chairmen are now chosen by the caucus, he said.  
By adding engineers and scientists to their staffs, legislators can get a better understanding of the consequences of their decisions because science and technology are in-

involved in almost all congressional decisions," Mosher said.  
Congressman Olin E. Teague has asked Mosher to return to Washington to direct the staff of the House of Representatives Science and Technology Committee.  
During his 16 years in Congress, Mosher helped create the Sea Grant College Program, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Office of Science and Technology Policy, and the Office of Technology Assessment.



Dr. Johannes van Overbeek will retire next year after a 50-year career in biology.

# Biology will lose a 'valuable' prof

Biology professor Dr. Johannes van Overbeek will retire next year. And when he does, says his department head, Texas A&M University will be losing a valuable instructor.  
Dr. van Overbeek came to Texas A&M in 1967 as biology department head. During the last six years, he has taught advanced courses in biology.  
"The course he currently teaches has continued to increase in enrollment over the last few years," said Dr. John Seed, biology department head.  
"In addition, there have been some departments on campus in some other colleges that have made his particular course a required course," Seed said.  
Dr. van Overbeek said he tries to give students more freedom by not giving exams.  
"We give grades based on take-home work," van Overbeek explained. "The students find their own level. They determine their own grade."  
He added that he tries to make his classes more personal by answering each student's questions in writing.

severia plants which he said are his trademarks. They have been in his office since he came to A&M.  
"As editor of 'Plant Physiology,' he obviously brings in a very high scientific reputation to this department," Seed said. "The department gains from his reputation as we do from any scientist's reputation, but his turns out to be a very excellent one."  
In addition, of course, we gain a wealth of background in biological areas from his past experience both as a scientist, administrator, and more currently as a teacher. And I think he has expertise in all of those areas," the department head said.  
After a 50-year career in biology, van Overbeek said that he is looking forward to doing nature studies when he retires. He said he wants to be a naturalist again and study the bird life in Texas. Van Overbeek said he will miss students when he retires so he wants to write textbooks to help them understand biology.  
He received an honorary doctorate degree from the king of Belgium and an honorary life membership in the American Society of Plant Physiologists. Seed described van Overbeek as one of the most honored professors at Texas A&M.

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The 20 miles of books in the library hold needed information for term papers that will soon be due. Battalion photo by C. Kenneth...

# Term paper help ahead

By TOMONAVA MULLINS  
A term paper clinic, geared to help students find the information they need in the Sterling C. Evans Library, will begin in November.  
"We'll have a booth staffed by professional librarians to help students doing term papers find materials in the library," said Vicki Anders, instructional services librarian.  
"As a library grows up to the million-volume level, it's so complex to use. It's no longer a self-service library. You need to know how to get access materials," Anders said.  
"We try through tours to teach these skills but it can't be done in one hour," she said. Anders, an assistant

professor, is one of the two professional instructors on the library staff. She teaches Humanities 101, Library Sciences: The Library and Learning, in the department of philosophy and humanities. In addition, Sharon Smith, documents librarian and an instructor, teaches Humanities 311, Library Sciences: Use of Library Resources.  
Anders said she also guest lectures in English 104, Composition and Rhetoric, and in English 301, Technical Writing. "This usually involves a lecture in class, followed by a tour."  
"We're trying to expand the level to graduate students through a 694 problems course," she said.

Anders said she is also coordinating all instructional services offered by the library. This includes services such as sessions on how to use the library, teaching a Free University techniques workshop. She is in charge of sign-up tours.  
"We ran 60 tours in September," Anders said. "We try to get the freshman level. Some schools don't have a library first time those students enter this library they walk back door."  
Instructional services have formally available for the past year and a half, Anders said.

# Termites return life to soil

United Press International  
LAS CRUCES, N.M.—Termites, which can bring down a house, also may be able to help restore a vast desert in Mexico and the southwestern United States to fertile grassland, according to research biologist Dr. Walter Whitford.  
Under a grant from the National Science Foundation, Whitford, of New Mexico State University, is conducting laboratory and field research with termites and soil mites.  
Whitford said these insects can feed on dead plant material, process it with nitrogen through their own systems and return it to the lifeless soil as fertilizer.  
He believes they can help refer-

timize the Chihuahuan desert, which extends from Mexico City north to Socorro, N.M., west to Wilcox, Ariz., and east to the Big Bend area of Texas.  
Due to overgrazing and erosion, Whitford said the lush green

grassland of 70 or 80 years ago is now composed of sparse desert vegetation.  
Whitford said he believes he has shown lack of rainfall was much a limiting factor in desert reclamation as the lack of vegetation.

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