

Viewpoint

The Battalion
Texas A&M University

Monday
November 7, 1977

Carter energy program has hidden flaw

By DAVID S. BRODER
WASHINGTON—The best costume award at one Washington Halloween party went to the fellow who opened up some more seams and tore some new holes in an old suit and came as the Carter Energy Plan. This is late in a session of Congress, a sight gag like that can seem funny.

The wearer was an old Democrat who knows that many of the important parts of the Carter plan are in far less trouble than the press accounts of the last two weeks would suggest. He's also a fellow who has defended most of the plan from the start and who has no doubt that there is a world energy crisis.

What we had, in short, was a defector who still takes the energy crisis seriously but who is beginning to have trouble doing the same with the administration's efforts to deal with it. And for those who cared, he had an interesting explanation of his urge to defect.

It seems that a bill designed to streamline the licensing process for nuclear power plants has been circulating in town for some weeks. It is now in its fourth draft, and is scheduled to be taken up in hearings next week by Sen. Gary Hart (D-Colo.).

There is some question whether the bill gets to the heart of the problem. People who want many more nuclear power plants—and, obviously, not all supporters of the Carter program do—tend to doubt that construction delays can be cut down simply by changing the licensing process. Slow deliveries of parts, erratic demand, high construction costs and high interest rates are also part of the problem.

Licensing delays are serious, but people at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, who deal with licens-

ing every day, say the new process might only cut six months out of a lead-time for nuclear plants that now averages about 12 years.

A much more puzzling aspect of the bill is that it blunders headlong into a delicately negotiated agreement between the states and Washington about how and where to build power plants, refineries and other energy-related facilities along the U.S. coastline.

The last page of the draft bill proposes to amend the Coastal Zone Management Act, which sets the terms of federal-state decisions on coastal energy facilities in 31 Seaboard and Great Lake states.

Neither the act nor its regulations are matters of front-page news, but that does not mean they are unimportant. The basic premise of the coastal act is that beaches and wetlands and estuaries are national resources that can be destroyed for generations if developers are care-

less about where they put their condominiums and harbor facilities and power plants.

The coastal act creates a partnership arrangement between Washington and the states for these decisions. There are grants from Washington to the states to help them zone their coastlines, to select sites for development and to protect areas that should be preserved.

Once the federal government approves a state's zoning plan, it also binds itself to abide by its terms in any development involving federal money or licenses. That's where the energy problem enters.

Under the present law, the Secretary of Commerce can grant an exception to the state zoning law for a federal project only if it is found to be "in the national interest" or necessary for "national security." Now "national interest" is a slippery concept. It means one thing to an oil company trying to bring a pipeline

ashore in California, and it means something else to an environmental protection agency. But, so far, the negotiations between the states and the Commerce Department have been civil and muted and have not done violence to federal-state regulations.

But the administration draft bill would change all of this by giving Secretary of Energy James Schlesinger sole authority to decide whether a state plan should be accepted or rejected. He—not Commerce's Juanita Kreps—would review all proposed coastal plans, compare their provisions with his blueprint for the national energy blitz and, presumably, send them back if they threatened to interfere with any part of his department's program.

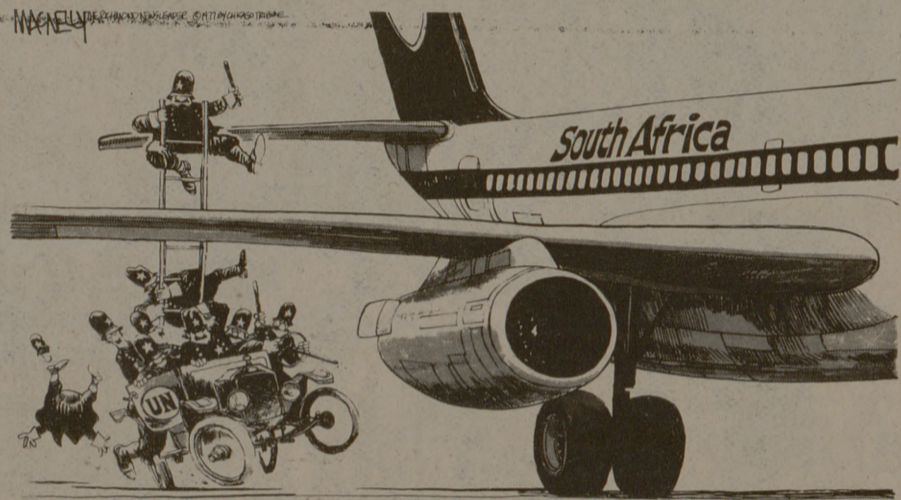
During his campaign, President Carter seemed to understand quite clearly that the mood of the people was resentful of Washington's instinct for dictatorial bureaucracy. But now, the energy plan is all-important to him and Schlesinger.

Certainly, it is important. But to the people who live there or earn their living there, so is a beach in upper Michigan or port in lower Florida. Those conflicts deserve to be negotiated—not ruled on arbitrarily by the bureaucrats in the energy agency.

That, said the party guest, is the abstract problem with the draft bill. The concrete problem is this: The drafter and protectors of the Coastal Zone Act are Sens. Warren G. Magnuson (D-Wash.) and Ernest F. Hollings (D-S.C.). Neither is the kind of fellow Carter needs to be picking a fight with at this moment. Not if he's smart.

It was enough to make a good Democrat go tear holes in his suit.

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New life — animal, mineral or political?

By DICK WEST
United Press International

WASHINGTON — Scientists almost always have trouble making their work understandable to laymen.

The problem is that most research nowadays is so esoteric it can't be reduced to terms a layman can fully comprehend.

Therefore, whenever there is an important scientific development, we laymen tend to relate it to something in our own experience, and usually the analogy self-destructs.

At the breakfast table the other morning I came across a piece in the paper about the team of University of Illinois researchers who reported the discovery of a new form of life on earth.

It was the third life form to be identified

thus far, if you don't count sex change operations.

I found the story so fascinating I read part of it aloud. I quoted one of the scientists as saying the organism came out of the primordial ooze, produces methane gas and thrives on simple, inorganic chemicals.

The Lighter Side

"That's not new," my teenage son commented. "It sounds like Uncle Albert to me."

I acknowledged the similarity but pointed out that "this organism is so small you need a microscope to see it."

My son was not convinced. "Maybe Uncle Albert is an overweight version of

it," he suggested.

My son had never before exhibited much interest in science, or any other academic subject for that matter, so I was reluctant to dampen his newly awakened intellectual curiosity.

"Let's leave your Uncle Albert out of this," I said. "However, scientists say there may be still other forms of life that haven't been found yet. Perhaps one of them will turn out to be a relative — on your mother's side, of course."

Later on, I was talking with a colleague, a political reporter, about the discovery. He said he was wondering if the third life form might have been the nucleus of one of the third party movements that had sprung up from time to time.

"Some of those third party movements never developed beyond the microscopic

stage," he said. "It could be that nobody noticed this one at all."

I said, "I have read several accounts of the discovery and saw nothing to indicate the third life form was ever a political organism. What gave you that impression?"

"Three things," he said. "First off, the organisms are called archaeobacteria or methanogens. That sounds suspiciously like the name of a third party movement."

"Number two, the organisms exist in muddy places, such as the bottom of San Francisco Bay. I hardly need add that mud and politics go together like apple pie and motherhood."

"But the real tipoff is that business about the third life form thriving where there is no oxygen. That's exactly the kind of atmosphere you get in a smoke-filled room."

Letters to the editor

Bakke must pay for past discrimination

Editor: I would like to comment on the Bakke case which is presently making the major headlines around the country.

Mr. Bakke is very willing to point out that he is superior (grade-wise) to the sixteen minorities selected for the class of

one hundred at the UC medical school at Davis. Also he is very willing to point out that he is a victim of reverse discrimination.

Mr. Bakke must realize that minorities have been discriminated against for many, many years, especially in the academic

world. It has been only in recent years that minorities have overcome many of the traditional, racist views that have infested our "land of the free." Something must be done to make up for the injustices previously imposed upon minorities, and special minority educational programs present in many schools are a way in which minorities are given compensation for years of wrong-doing!

As for Mr. Bakke, why must he make such a fuss about the sixteen spots out of one hundred unavailable to him? He should look at the 84 spots out of one hundred which were available to him: I might add, 84 spots, one of which Mr. Bakke was not able to secure regardless of the color of his skin!

—George Rooney

Aggie postal service

Editor:

People are always complaining about someone or something they dislike. You read about it every day. We are all quick to condemn. We should find something positive in our fellow Ags.

I recently lost a couple of letters while walking across campus to mail them at the MSC. They were already addressed and stamped. Although their written contents were not important they contained some irreplaceable items that I feared were forever lost.

I was relieved to find out several days later that each letter had reached its destination. I owe this to some considerate Ag. I thank whoever went out of his way to mail less than fifty cents of paper when he could just as easily have torn them up, opened them to read or just leave them lying on the ground.

—Bryan Grimes

New household word

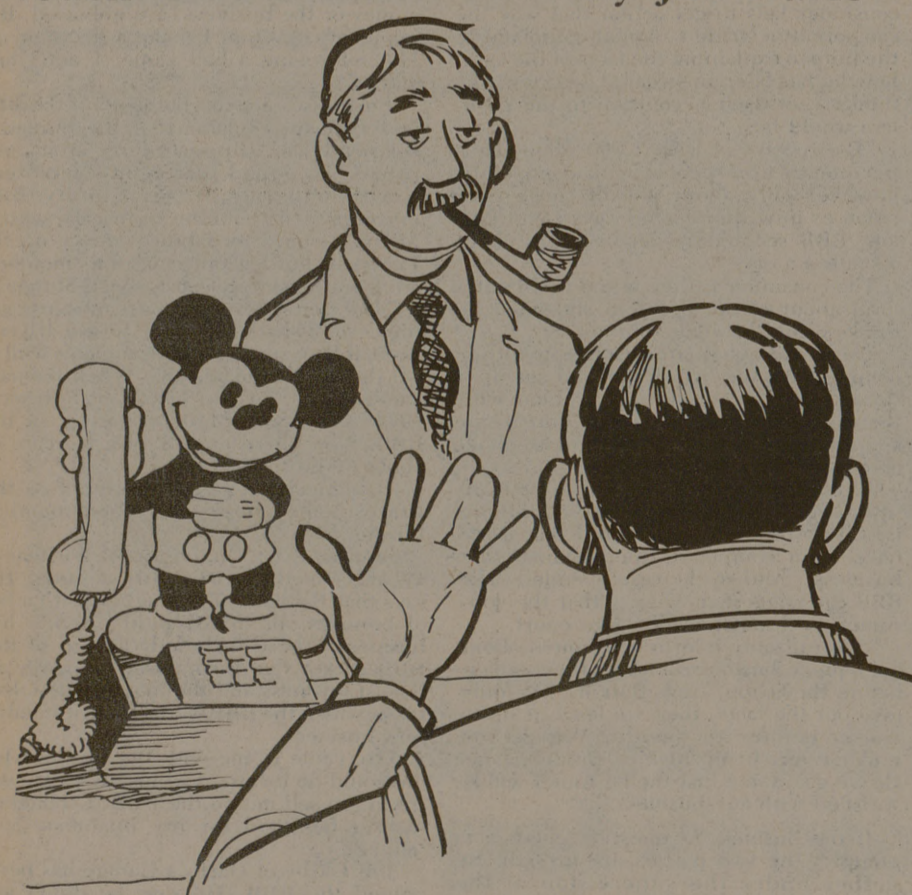
Editor:

One used to hear household names like George Carlin, Billy Carter or Richard Nixon. But now it's David Kotara. He's really shaking them up. Way to go David!

—Michael Fred

Slouch

by Jim Earle



"I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT—NO ONE TAKES ME SERIOUSLY ANY MORE!"

Put in your two cents' worth

Vote in tomorrow's State constitutional election

Top of the News

Campus

Swimming hours switched

Evening swimming hours at Texas A&M University have been switched from the outdoors Cain Pool to the indoors Downs Natatorium, announced Dr. Carl Landis, head of the Health and Physical Education Department. Noon to 1:30 p.m. lunchtime swim periods, at Cain Pool will not be disturbed. Recreational swimmers may now indulge at the indoor facilities on a schedule of 6 to 7 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays; 6 to 10 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays and 1 to 5 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays.

Announcements arrive soon

Texas A&M students who graduate in December may begin picking up graduation announcements Monday, Nov. 21. Orders placed earlier will be available in room 216A and B of the Memorial Student Center from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Extra graduation announcements will go on sale Monday, Nov. 28. They will be sold on a first come, first served basis, according to Marilyn Abbate of the Student Finance Center staff. The extra announcements will be disbursed at the center, MSC 217.

Local

Polls open tomorrow

Texas voters will consider seven amendments to the state's constitution Tuesday. Polls in Brazos County will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. A light voter turnout is expected. When absentee balloting closed Friday afternoon, 31 votes had been cast. Amendment one would expand the Court of Criminal Appeals to nine judges and allow the court to sit in panels of three. Amendment two would provide an additional \$200 million in bonds for the Veteran's Land Fund. Amendment three allows a judge to refuse bail to a defendant under prescribed circumstances. Amendment four would provide tax relief for cultural, historical or natural history resources. Amendment five gives the Legislature power to authorize farmer groups for assessment to be used in marketing their products. Amendment six permits the Legislature to approve the use of electronic banking services by state and national banks. Amendment seven would change the name of the Judicial Qualifications Commission to the Commission on Judicial Conduct, as well as broaden its power and membership.

State

Guy Lombardo dies

Bandleader Guy Lombardo, whose "sweetest music this side of heaven" became a New Year's Eve tradition, died Saturday in Houston of a lung ailment complicated by heart and kidney failure. He was 75. Lombardo's death was confirmed by Frank J. Weaver, a spokesman for Lombardo's physician, Dr. Michael E. Debakey. Weaver said Lombardo died Saturday at 9:45 p.m. apparently from respiratory insufficiency.

Defense turns to Priscilla

Two weeks into their case, defense lawyers for Fort Worth millionaire T. Cullen Davis have changed their approach in Amarillo, Texas. Having presented an alibi for their client — regarded as the wealthiest ever to stand trial for murder in Texas — defense attorneys have switched their target to Priscilla Davis, the defendant's estranged wife and chief accuser in the shooting death of her 12-year-old daughter. Jurors have heard defense witnesses' allegations of drug use and sex involving two generations of Fort Worth society and subculture. Prosecutors, however, prefer to describe the testimony as irrelevant, immaterial character assassinations.

Nation

Prisoners fear 'no return'

Seven American prisoners trying desperately to go home under the Mexico-U.S. prisoner exchange treaty fear they will be left behind in Mexican jails because of inaction by the Mexican and American governments, a spokesman for the prisoners said Sunday in Mexico City. Robert Lee Jackson, of San Diego and Felix Merendez Gortier, serving their terms in Santa Marta Acatitla Prison, said efforts by the seven to withdraw appeals of their cases in Mexico's Supreme Court have been unsuccessful. "We are afraid there will be only one group of exchanged prisoners and if we miss that December flight there will be no other," Merendez said.

Weather

Partly cloudy and mild today with southerly winds 7-14 mph. High today low 80s. Low tonight upper 50s. High tomorrow low 70s. 20 per cent chance of rain tonight increasing to 40 per cent tomorrow.

The Battalion

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Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words and are subject to being cut to that length or less if longer. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit such letters and does not guarantee to publish any letter. Each letter must be signed, show the address of the writer and list a telephone number for verification.

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