

THE BATTALION

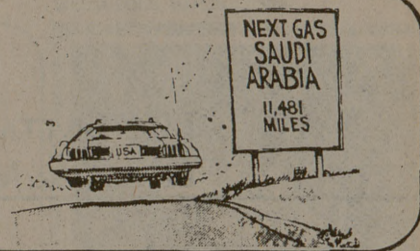
Vol. 71 No. 108
14 Pages

Wednesday, March 1, 1978
College Station, Texas

News Dept. 845-2611
Business Dept. 845-2611

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Employees now receive coverage on outside jobs

By CHRIS CAIN

University employees and their dependents now have hospitalization coverage without increase in rates when engaged in consulting work or other outside employment.

Prior to Feb. 20, Texas A&M University faculty and staff members working outside the University system had no medical insurance coverage.

H. Ray Smith, director of personnel, notified University employees of the omission of coverage in a memorandum after some insurance claims were denied.

Smith said omission of coverage for University employees involved in outside employment was a standard feature of group medical insurance in Texas. But Southwestern Life Insurance Co., the group

medical insurance carrier, has recently decided to provide this medical coverage for University employees working outside the system.

In a Feb. 22 memorandum sent to vice presidents, deans, directors and heads of departments at Texas A&M, Smith said, "Southwestern Life has now agreed to amend our policy to provide each insured employee and dependent with coverage for all claims, except those payable under worker's compensation or similar legislation, at no increase in premium rates."

Bill Hickman, a representative of Southwestern in Dallas, said the decision was a financial one to include medical coverage for consultants or others employed outside the system in the University's group medical insurance plan.

"We can allow for it, but we will take a certain amount of risk in doing so," he said.

Assistant Director of Personnel John E. Honea said, "The purpose of group insurance is to spread the risk of a few out across everyone." If a premium rate for optional medical insurance was charged for outside work, only those persons able to afford the rate could have coverage while working outside the University, said Honea. This might discriminate against faculty and staff who are unable to afford the extra premium rate, he added.

With medical coverage for all claims, Honea said, no one will be discriminated against because the premium rate increase will be spread out among everyone, thus the amount per person would be much smaller. However, there is no premium

rate increase at all for the new medical insurance coverage, he stated.

Honea said Southwestern can offer this coverage with no increase in premium rates because the University's insurance program, based on its own experience over a number of years, is in a good situation now. Its claims and medical costs have stabilized, Honea said.

Representatives of Southwestern met with officials of the University and the Texas A&M University System Personnel Policy and Employee Benefits Committee on Jan. 27. They discussed the company's offer of medical coverage on an optional basis for those desiring such coverage for additional premium rates, said K. A. Manning, assistant to director of the Texas Transportation Institute and chairman of the benefits committee.

On Feb. 6, Southwestern told the personnel department they would provide medical coverage for insured employees and dependents for all claims at no increase in premium rates, Manning said.

The benefits committee voted to recommend to the A&M administration amendment of the University's group medical insurance policy on Feb. 17, said Manning. And on Feb. 20, approval to amend the policy was authorized with the signatures of Dr. Jack J. Williams, chancellor, and W. Clyde Freeman, executive vice chancellor for administration.

Manning said University system employees will receive medical coverage while engaged in outside employment with one exception. All claims payable under worker's compensation by the person's other employer will not be covered by the University's medical insurance.

A benefits committee press release gives an example of this situation.

"If a University staff employee works for a Houston firm on weekends and is injured on the job, his medical costs will now be covered by the University's group medical plan if his Houston employer does not cover him under worker's compensation insurance."

After three months of negotiations and meetings, a standard contractual provision of most group insurance programs in the state of Texas has begun its first changes at Texas A&M.

"I think we're the first to deviate from this standard feature," said Honea. "I'm glad to see this issue come up because I think it's going to change a lot of trends in the state of Texas," he added.

Health not only issue in policies, prof says

By LIZ NEWLIN
Battalion Staff

If all America's energy was supplied by nuclear power plants, each individual's increased health danger would be comparable to smoking one cigarette every 10 weeks, Dr. Bernard Cohen, a physics professor at the University of Pittsburgh and debater on nuclear safety said Tuesday night.

Governors get royal treatment

United Press International

WASHINGTON — There was a time when the nation's governors got no respect when they came to the White House. Now they're treated like royalty.

The governors wound up their annual winter conference Tuesday night and almost to a man and woman agreed they never had such a relationship with an administration.

Republicans and Democrats alike praised President Carter throughout the meeting, not only for his cooperation, but for giving the governors a role in developing such key administration issues as welfare reform and urban policy.

And the administration showed the governors it considers their clout to be considerable. Consider:

—Carter met face-to-face with them for an hour and a half to discuss the nation's energy problems.

—Carter invited them to the White House not only for the ritual formal dinner, but the first dancing-after-dinner event since he took office.

—Vice President Walter Mondale's speech to the governors was almost entirely devoted to forming a "new partnership" with the states.

—The Cabinet members who came to the conference to discuss issues with the governors included Secretaries Cyrus Vance of State; Joseph Califano of Health, Education and Welfare; Patricia Roberts Harris of Housing; Brock Adams of Transportation; Ray Marshall of Labor and James Schlesinger of Energy.

—Carter also sent Stuart Eizenstat, Jack Watson and Bert Carp, his top three domestic aides, to the conference to hear what the governors wanted.

On the administration's welfare reform bill now in Congress, Califano said he was "deeply indebted to the governors for helping us put it together." And he urged them to "give us all the help you can this year" in getting the bill through Congress.

Larry Tye, an energy researcher for the Union of Concerned Scientists, argued that even the government admits many serious problems remain in using nuclear energy. Tye contended that the country should turn to solar energy instead.

Cohen cited studies by the government and the Union of Concerned Scientists that "prove" nuclear power is needed, inexpensive, safe and clean.

Tye questioned the validity of the government studies, but his main argument was that nuclear power is not the only or best answer to the energy problem.

Tye also described the 1974 accident at Brown's Ferry Nuclear Plant in Alabama, the worst commercial accident so far. Cables that controlled both the main reactor and its safety devices were destroyed when a worker ignited sealing plastics with a candle used to check for air leaks. No major damage occurred, Tye said, but the accident did demonstrate the failure of government regulations. He said that many of the design problems that led to the accident have not been corrected in other nuclear plants across the country.

More than 300 people, including many nuclear engineering students and physics

teachers, attended the debate in Rudder Theater sponsored by the Great Issues committee.

"We're proceeding with a technology on the basis of fate," Tye said, referring to a report study made by the California State Energy Commission. Because of problems cited in the report, the state does not allow nuclear energy. "That's what we're doing now and this is not necessary."

The Union of Concerned Scientists, which private nuclear scientists organized in 1969, will publish a report in March evaluating alternate energy resources.

"America need not rely on nuclear power to meet its needs," the report concludes. Future energy policy should emphasize solar energy, Tye said, instead of only coal and nuclear power.

"We must insist that government shift its emphasis to solar," Tye said. The UCS policy also advocates using America's coal reserves, but mining and burning procedures must be made safer and cleaner.

After the debate, Cohen said he favors developing all energy sources, but he said that solar energy is receiving maximum funding. He added, however, that "he's not on top of solar."

UT students try to abolish 'out-moded' government

United Press International

AUSTIN — Student government at the University of Texas, once a political stepping stone for John Connally and Allan Shivers, has degenerated into a "cruel joke" with no real power or influence, said two students who are seeking its abolition.

David Haug, a junior from Fort Worth, and senior Mark Addicks of Houston said they founded the Coalition to Retire Aspiring Politicos (C.R.A.P.) because they believe no student government at UT is the best government.

"For the last few years, student government has been a cruel joke played on student politicians," Haug and Addicks said. "In the next few days C.R.A.P. plans to wage an all-out effort to guarantee that students realize they can have the last laugh."

The two government majors will discover whether their colleagues at the state's largest university are in tune with their feelings Wednesday in a referendum scheduled in conjunction with spring student elections.

The pair obtained 1,400 student signatures for the referendum and has been handing out leaflets and tacking posters on bulletin boards across the campus to pro-

mote their cause.

"There is no real reason for the student government to exist now because it doesn't effect our lives," Haug said. "I say the only input is no input at all."

Haug and Addicks contend student government at UT is as out-moded as the ideology that ordinary citizens can accomplish goals by working through the system.

The "cruel joke" on the UT students began in 1971 when the system regents made student government funding mandatory rather than voluntary, Haug said. Because they then were funded by the state, student government leaders lost control of their finances to the UT Board of Regents.

Prior to the regents' take-over, student government spent its \$700,000 annual budget as it wished, Haug said, but most of its \$45,000 budget now pays salaries and administrative costs.

"Student government does nothing on \$45,000," Haug said. "We can get nothing for less than that."

Haug and Addicks are pessimistic about their chances of winning the referendum, which would mean newly elected student government officers would lose their jobs on the same day they are elected. UT stu-

dents could surprise the abolitionists, having elected as their top government officers for 1976 Jay Adkins and Skip Slyfield who called their absurdist platform, "Arts and Sausages," a take-off on arts and sciences.

However, winning the referendum will not abolish student government at UT because the movement's protagonists, the Board of Regents, has the final say in the matter.

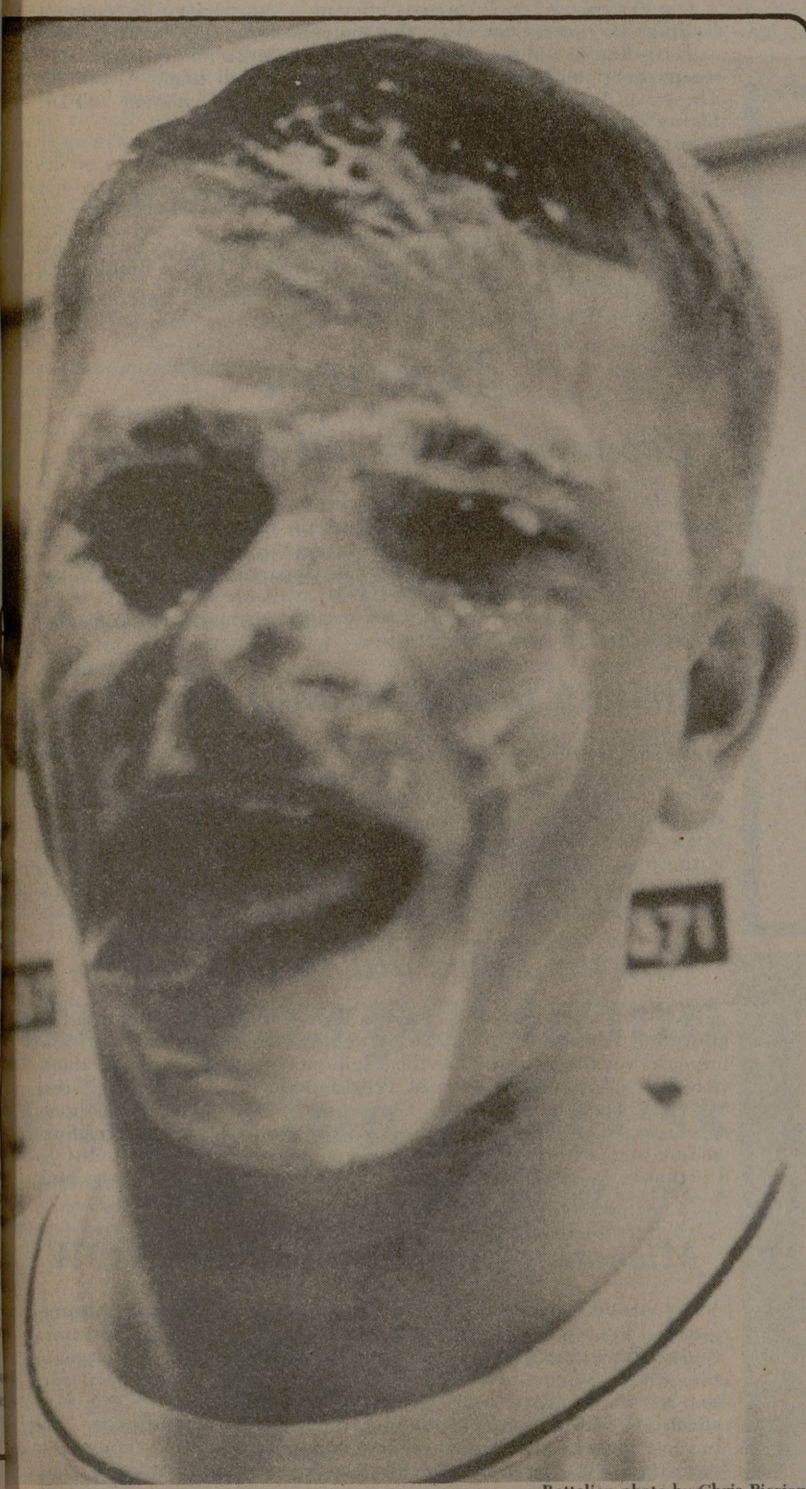
"Even if we win, the regents can still decide that students need a student government," Haug said.

Haug pointed to a low turnout at student elections in the fall as an example of the student government's lack of influence on its constituents.

Twenty-three of the 37 student government candidates in Wednesday's elections are running unopposed.

"I have been a part of the student government and found it has no real power," said Addicks, who is former chairman for a state student lobby committee.

Because most students use the university ombudsman when they have problems, Haug said, the abolition of student government officers will not result in anarchy.



Battalion photo by Chris Piccione

Charles Phipps, junior agricultural economics major, learned the hard way that the mysterious Pie Man can strike anyone at any time. The Pie Man chooses to remain anonymous.

Pie Man cometh with cake, 'creams'

By CHRIS PICCIONE

I had a rendezvous with a tall, dark stranger wearing sunglasses and an English cap. He was no ordinary stranger. I was meeting the Pie Man.

There was no introduction. I sat down. He told me his story. The Pie Man has been on the Texas A&M campus for nearly a year and recently has begun an interesting service.

The Pie Man will tell anybody you want just about anything you would want to tell them — but you just can't seem to do it. He also delivers birthday cakes, recites love poems, and "creams" people with pies on request.

The Pie Man said he got his idea from a lady in Chicago. She was tired of staying home and after reading about people's frustrations, she decided they needed an outlet. She acted as a messenger for others and made a profit on the side.

For a five dollar fee, and on a one-day notice, the Pie Man will deliver almost any message.

"I'm not out to rip anybody off," he said. The Pie Man is willing to bargain for each individual errand if the cost seems unreasonable.

There will be an additional charge to deliver a birthday cake or for transportation expenses. There is no extra charge for his disguise.

"I wouldn't cuss anybody out or deliver ruthless messages," said the Pie Man. "I'm not out to hurt people or create enemies."

The Pie Man ran his ad in the Battalion last week, but was disappointed in the lack of response. He said the lack of interest might be because the idea is new around here.

One woman asked him to sing "Happy Birthday" to a friend. The Pie Man said the birthday cake delivery service ought to catch on.

He said he is running this service "mainly for a joke," but he hopes it may develop into a part-time job.

"I'm not out to make a million, but you never know what might become of it," he said.

The Pie Man plans to run his ad again this week. In the meantime, be on the lookout for a stranger with a pie in his hand. He may have a delivery for you: right in the face.

Rank-and-file miners may pass contract over loud opposition

United Press International

An angry and divided UMW rank and file wrangled over the union's proposed new contract with the Bituminous Coal Operators Association Tuesday as their strike — now in its 86th day — tightened the economic noose on the power-hungry Midwest.

In West Virginia — where opposition to the new pact burned hottest — ranks of unemployed stood at 67,000, with 200 laid off.

Revenues and personal income losses came to about \$534 million — 2.8 million that in miners' wages.

In Indiana, an estimated 40,000 were out of work — including 30,000 UMW members — and public utilities in the stricken state prepared electrical cutbacks to schools and industries as their coal supplies dwindled.

With the ratification vote looming over the weekend, UMW district officials headed a \$50,000 media drive to sell

the contract to the membership, and for all the sound and fury in the coal fields, most of them predicted approval.

"All the average coal miner looks at is the bottom line," said Ohio local president Gene Oiler, who opposes the contract himself. "It will probably pass, but I am saying this. I don't think it should."

For all the muscle with which the striking miners slowly are bringing utilities to their knees, however, the ultimate whiphand rested in Washington with President Carter's threat of the Taft-Hartley Act and federal seizure of the mines.

Defiance of the Taft-Hartley — and the striking miners almost universally have vowed to defy it's back-to-work order if invoked — could bring savage reprisals, both to the union and to the miners themselves.

The UMW could be bankrupted by fines in such a stand-off, and the strikers, without paychecks since Dec. 6, would

lose their eligibility for federally subsidized food stamps.

"If it isn't ratified," said Illinois local official LeRoy Bauer, "we are going to jeopardize our union."

While the debate raged, Indian police hovered protectively in the background as miners blocked the tracks at the switching yard and prevented the engineer from connecting to 57 coal-laden cars. Police said there were no weapons and no violence and the strikers used "jawboning" to dissuade the engineer.

In Indiana, Norfolk & Western Railroad obtained a temporary restraining order barring pickets from the railroad tracks and forbidding harassment of railroad workers.

As coal stocks dwindled, Indiana power companies imposed power curtailments of 15 percent to residential users, 25 percent for businesses and 40 percent for schools.

