

Biologist says global famine will be occurring by 1984

By DOUG GRAHAM
Battalion Staff

Widespread global famine will be occurring by 1984, and the United States will be unable to produce enough food to stop it, Shell Oil Co. biologist William Cursey told students who attended an environmental and energy conference at Texas A&M.

He said even with peak production, the United States could do nothing to close the widening food and population gap.

Other speakers at the conference talked on nuclear safety, coal uses, the importance of petrochemicals, energy, and cancerous compounds in the environment. The 131 high school students who attended came from 46 states. They were guests of the National Council of State Garden Clubs and Shell Oil Co., co-sponsors of the conference.

All speakers stressed the need for greater awareness of one's environment. Cursey said it was impossible to remain isolated from the world food situation. Solutions to problems would be neither easy nor simple, he said.

A speaker on the use of petrochemicals echoed that position. He said replacement of synthetic fibers with natural ones would lead to unforeseen consequences. To replace polyesters with cotton would require that 60 percent more land be planted in cotton — land which he said would be diverted from raising foodstuffs.

Dr. Linn Carter of the University of Texas said the odds of a nuclear accident occurring were less than those for the occurrence of some

natural disaster such as a tornado. He said that since the first commercial plant went into operation, there has not been one fatal nuclear accident.

Dr. Van Bavel, a professor at Texas A&M, spoke on solar energy. He stressed the fact that the currently fashionable alternate energy source has some very real limitations such as the ability to provide concentrated enough energy for industrial use.

Dr. K. Sommers, toxicologist for Shell Oil Co., discussed carcinogens in the environment. She said that contrary to popular belief, there is no dramatic increase in cancer cases. Although there is an overall increase in the number of cancer cases, it is primarily due to the population growth, she said.

Once the figures are adjusted for population increase, they show that most types of cancer are leveling off or declining because of improved methods of treatment and detection. She said the exception is lung cancer, which is continuing to rise dramatically in men and to a lesser extent in women.

Approximately 70 percent of cancer deaths are caused by life style, she said. That includes smoking, consuming alcohol, and eating overly fatty foods.

She said industry-caused cancer deaths account for only 2-5 percent of the total. She said those deaths are on the downswing because of increased worker protection and chemical testing.

In a later interview, Sommers said companies had solid economic reasons for giving their workers bet-

ter protection. She said the companies have to contribute to health plans and compensation. They also have to absorb the cost of training replacements.

Though two girls attending the conference said they were bored, Gary Wallace of Montgomery, Ala., said he enjoyed it.

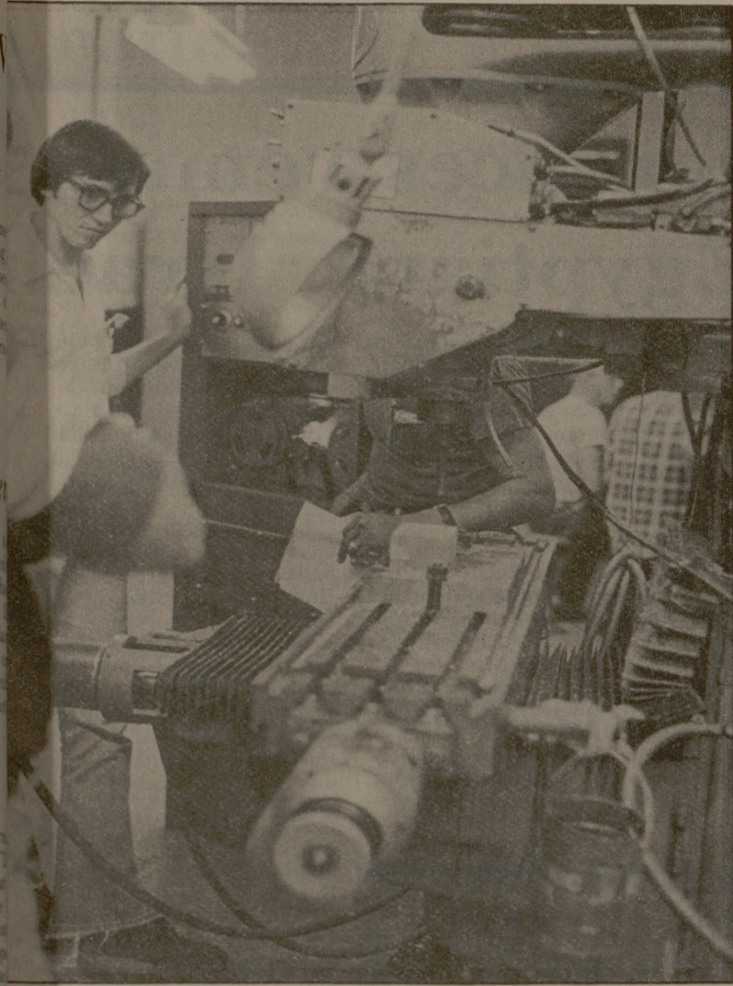
"I've gained an insight on energy and environmental problems," he said. He explained this by saying he was unaware of the shortcomings of solar energy, or of the risk involved in drilling for oil.

"I didn't know only one out of forty wells even broke even," he said.

He said that although he maintains his stand against nuclear energy, he was glad he became aware of its safety factors and possibilities.

All of the students were left with the fundamental problem posed by Cursey: a philosophy needs to be developed that stresses the need for preservation of the environment. He said that over-intensification of agriculture could lead to ecological catastrophes similar to those that destroyed past civilizations such as Sumeria or the Indus valley. He said that such a disaster needs to be prevented.

He asked if the United States is ready to say "We can provide no greater quantities of food without causing serious disruption to our environment and great harm to our wildlife resources — and what hungry person will accept a logic which causes him to continue to go hungry?"



Battalion photo by Pat O'Malley

Here goes nothing . . .

Griffin, a senior engineering technology major from Bryan, practices milling styrofoam on this machine that is normally used for making tools out of steel blocks.

TAMU professor displays art in Houston gallery

Texas A&M University professor Joseph Donaldson finds it a bit funny that his art show at The Offward Gallery in Houston is titled "A person can't live in New Orleans for any length of time and not get almost addicted to their beauty."

"I'll tell you, to see one of those creatures come into port with their nets is a sight to behold," he said. "I don't know how anyone could see a sight like that and not be moved."

Though he doesn't like to classify himself or other artists into categories, the salt-and-pepper-haired professor thinks of himself as an "expressionist" artist.

"If I had to be classified I'd call myself an expressionist, not an impressionist," Donaldson commented. "I want my paintings to show how I feel, what I'm thinking. I love to draw realistically and abstractly."

"Whatever I paint I've got to feel it," he added. "I don't care if I'm drawing with a matchstick, which I'm prone to do, or with a brush, I have to feel connected to what I'm painting."

What will he do when he retires next year? "I've got plenty to keep me busy," he said. "I'm currently working on a book of my own drawings and poetry. I've got my painting and I may teach part-time."

Teaching has been one of the greater joys of his life, Donaldson said. Though he said he won't miss getting up for 8 a.m. Monday classes, he admitted he will miss the students.

"I've seen some great minds come through here," he said. "Life at Texas A&M has been good to me. I never felt poor. There's always been enough beautiful and exciting things going on that I've never felt poor. I think Charles Dickens said it best in his novel, Tale of Two Cities: 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.'"

Donaldson, a member of the architecture and architectural design faculty since 1965, has come a long way from the scribbles on a kitchen floor. His work hangs in private collections of notables like Burl Ives and exhibitions have hung from Houston to the Virgin Islands.

His first studio in St. Thomas was the top of Bluebeard's castle, the Virgin Islands, Donaldson said. "I lived down there for five years writing, teaching and running a gallery."

After the islands came to Texas, he continued. "It may be strange, but I've never really leaving. Oh, it was a pretty but I like it here, too."

Donaldson's work is filled with scenes to people, trees, landscapes and one of his favorite subjects, shrimp boats.

"You can see how easy it'd be for me to like shrimp boats," Donaldson said. "A person can't live in New Orleans for any length of time and not get almost addicted to their beauty."

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