

# THE BATTALION

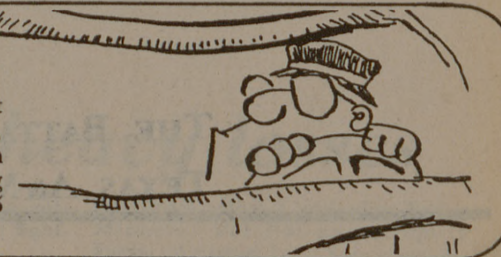
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## Bikers beware

Motorists may be out to get bicycle riders in Washington, D.C., but legislation pending in Congress would make sharing the road with traffic at least \$25 million easier. See page 7.



## Inmate kept alive despite will to die

United Press International  
HUNTSVILLE — Texas prison officials Monday convicted murderer David Powell would be force-fed or fed intravenously if necessary to keep him alive for execution.  
Powell, 27, a former University of Texas student, entered his 13th day of a hunger strike in an attempt to die of malnutrition.  
"He hasn't taken any nourishment," Texas Department of Corrections spokesman Ron Taylor said. "His food is on a table before his cell on death row."  
"He is being seen by medical personnel. When they decide something must be done, it will be done. We will either force him or feed him intravenously, whatever the medical personnel suggest," he said.  
Powell's mother has confirmed that the fast was initiated because her son wanted to die.  
"And Powell's death wish has placed the CDC in the strange position of keeping a man alive so that he can be killed."  
"I would say it's ironic," said Taylor.

In Austin on Sept. 28, Powell was sentenced to die by lethal injection for the May 18 shooting of officer Ralph Albenado with a Russian-made machine gun. No execution date was set.

Powell, who had pleaded innocent by reason of insanity, had asked his attorneys not to oppose the death penalty if he was convicted of the murder. The attorneys disregarded Powell's request, however, and argued unsuccessfully for their client to be sentenced to life in prison rather than to death.

During his trial, psychiatrists testified Powell had tried to portray himself as a Charles Manson-style leader and delved deeply into drugs.

Powell was transferred Friday from Austin to the Texas Department of Corrections to await execution. Travis County Sheriff Raymond Frank said Powell had not eaten any solid food during the five days prior to his transfer to Huntsville.

"He still refuses to eat," Taylor said. "He has had nothing at all. It's been quite a while."

## No gravity in Columbus' day

## Man claims earth is flat

United Press International  
LANCASTER, Calif. — Charles K. Johnson swears he is on the level.  
The president of the 1,500 member International Flat Earth Society spends his time trying to prove the world is "flat as a penny."  
One of the society's super-heroes is Christopher Columbus.  
"Contrary to the history books, we claim Columbus proved the world flat," said Johnson, 54.  
"At the time Columbus made his voyage everyone believed the world was a ball — except for Columbus. He was not one of them. They were afraid they would fall off the edge of the earth because it was round, not flat."  
"Columbus is one of our heroes because he didn't fall off — gravity wasn't invented yet. Gravity was invented by a priest in England," Johnson said. "There was no gravity in Columbus' day."  
"Every year around Columbus day," Johnson said, "there is a great controversy about the earth's shape."  
"The average person believes the world is round because modern science says so," Johnson said. "But it's just not true. Col-

umbus did not fall off so that proves it."  
Johnson's Flat Earth Society boasts 1,500 members worldwide.

"Most live in the United States, but we have many others in 167 countries. We publish the Flat Earth Quarterly with the objective to restore the world's sanity," Johnson said.

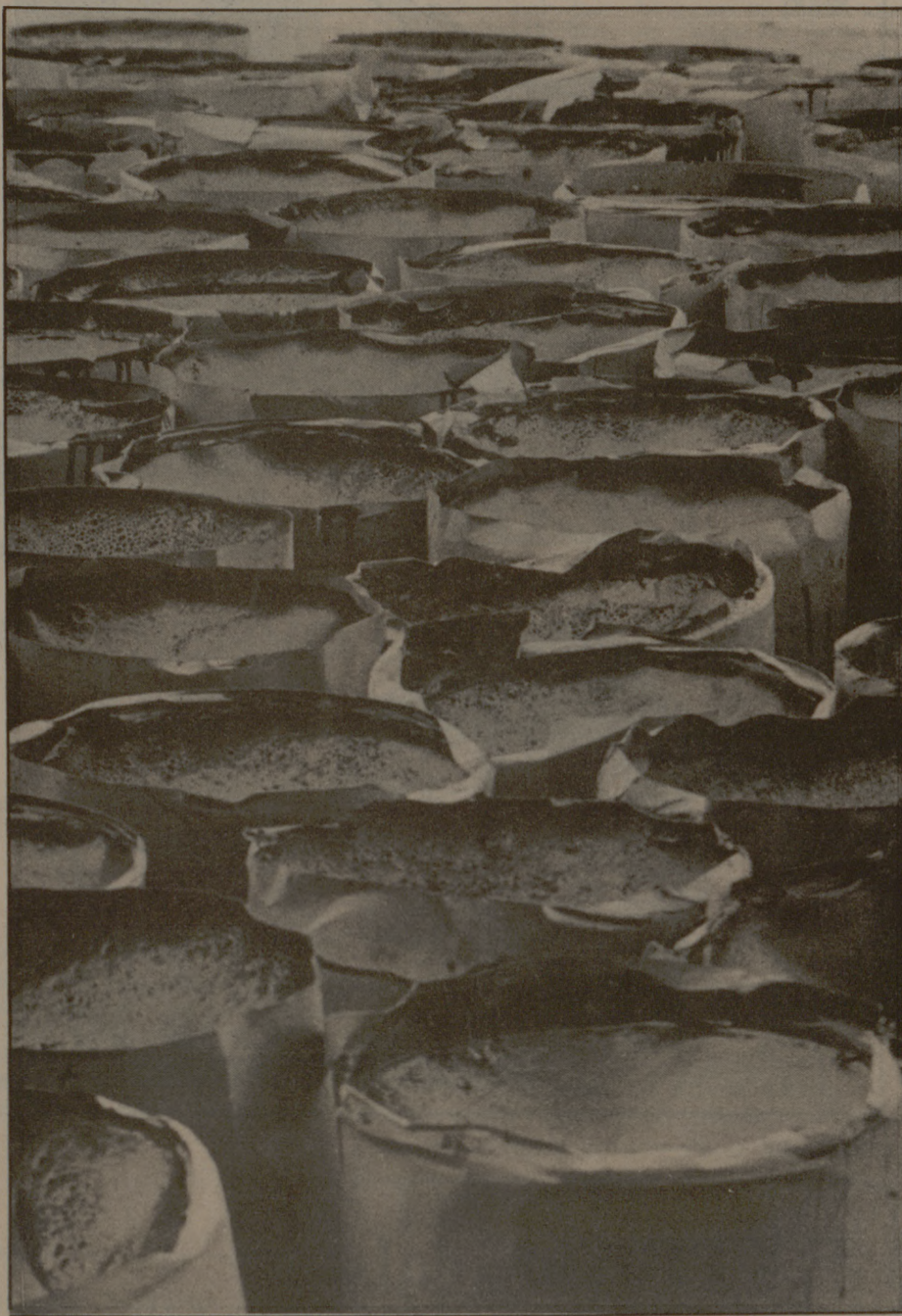
"We consider this the world's most superstitious age," he said. "From integration to going to the moon, the world is a vast and complex place. We try to get people to use their minds logically."

But what about the space shots? Millions remember live pictures from space showing Earth spinning in the distance.

"The whole thing was a science fiction TV movie," Johnson said. "We aren't accusing the government of anything. The whole thing is a plot by Nazi-German scientists. They are the nucleus of the U.S. space program."

Surprisingly, the flat earth concept is usually met with polite interest, rather than rudeness or hysteria.

"There is a lurking sanity in the American public's mind, no matter what the American space program claims," Johnson said. "People don't condemn us."



Battalion photo by Lee Roy Leschper Jr.

## Speaking of 'Tarred out'

These rolls of tar were sitting out by Heaton Hall. They will be melted for the roof of Leggett Hall, now being renovated.

## Land tax proposal tabled by Bryan

By LYLE LOVETT  
Battalion Reporter

The Bryan City Council tabled a proposal from the city's Board of Equalization Monday that unsold developed lots be taxed on raw land values rather than actual market value.

Developers contend that improvements are a service to the city and should not be subjected to increased taxes.

Mayor Richard Smith said that under present policy, land valuation goes up as developers improve lots and pointed out that land is to be taxed at fair market value according to the state constitution.

Smith said the Internal Revenue Service considers unsold developed lots as inventory of developers. He suggested that this inventory be taxed on the market value of the land as a unit rather than on the value of individual lots, as is the present system. Smith said his plan would result in slightly lower property taxes for developers, perhaps encouraging development within the city.

Council members said the Board of Equalization's plan also would encourage development within Bryan. Smith agreed, but spoke against the idea.

"How far do you go to encourage growth?" he said. "What about the people

who are already here and didn't get that deal? They (the tax office) should appraise lots according to the state constitution."

City Secretary Joe Evans said the ideas discussed in Monday's council meeting would be presented to the tax office.

After the second and final reading of an ordinance making appropriations for fiscal year 1978-79, the council passed the \$32.9 million budget. Last year's budget totalled \$29.2 million. The council again held a public hearing on the budget but, like the Sept. 25 hearing, there was no comment from the handful of residents present.

The council also voted to keep last year's property tax rate for the upcoming fiscal year — 62 cents per \$100 valuation at 80 percent appraised value.

In other action, the council adopted a resolution to help pay for a railroad planning study in conjunction with the City of College Station and Brazos County.

The council also agreed to extend a contract with the Brazos Valley Community Action Agency, providing the Neal Child Development Center with appropriations of \$11,000 for next year. The building used by the center is owned by the city. The center pays \$500 rent each month, leaving it a net \$5,000 for operation costs.

## Bryan schools lose \$700,000 in taxes

By ROY BRAGG  
Battalion Reporter

In the last 40 years, the Bryan Independent School District has lost nearly \$700,000 in delinquent taxes and recent figures show the amount of 1978 unpaid taxes up from last year.

Glen Brewer, tax assessor-collector for the district, told the school board Monday night that uncollected taxes date back to 1939 and if records had been kept prior to that year the figure probably would be even higher.

In 1939 the Texas Legislature negated all delinquent taxes up to that time.

Brewer said that as of Aug. 31, delinquent taxes for 1978 constitute 13.2 percent of the total taxes collected this year. He said delinquent taxes equalled 10 percent of the total tax revenues in 1977.

He advised the board to adopt a definite plan for collection of delinquent taxes before the district begins its independent collection program in mid-1979.

In past years, the City of Bryan has collected school taxes for the district.

School Board President Woody Humphries explained that the district's method of collection would be "fair, reasonable and firm."

The board also authorized Superintendent Wesley Summers to negotiate two contracts concerning the leasing of two district properties.

The first contract is an extension of a lease for part of Neal School with The Brazos Valley Community Action Agency. The BVCAA currently runs a day care

center there.  
The other contract is a lease with the Brazos Valley Development Council for use of one classroom and two offices. The rooms will be used by the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act programs of the BVDC. The CETA programs consist of job training and instruction for the unemployed.

The board also registered its concern over a proposed reclassification of member schools by the University Interscholastic League — the governing body for high school arts and athletic competition. The re-alignment would place Bryan High School in a district with schools in Tyler, Richardson, Temple, Killeen and Texarkana. Another proposal the UIL is considering would create a 5A conference with similar districts.

Summers said that either district would place Bryan at a disadvantage competitively because of the distance involved in traveling. Summers also said students involved in district competition would have to miss two days of class whenever travel to Texarkana would be involved.

Board member Travis Bryan Jr., chairman of the building committee, reported that construction on additions to Bryan High athletic and choir facilities are 90 percent complete.

The board authorized payment of \$55,000 to Jordan and Wood, contractors for the additions. The board also authorized payment of \$740 to architect M.O. Lawrence for the project.

## Energy problems bug A&M, computer

By MARILYN FAULKENBERRY  
Battalion Staff

As energy costs continue to climb and availability dwindles, the Texas A&M University System has been forced to become more energy-conscious and has purchased a computer to help.

The University's goal for this year is to knock 10 percent from the energy budget — about \$1 million. So the system is centralizing temperature control, removing light bulbs and trying to build new buildings with more energy-efficient designs.

Many of the buildings on campus were built when there was little concern for saving energy and a lot of work is required to make them more efficient, University Physical Plant officials said.

Logan B. Council, director of the Physical Plant Division of the University System Facilities Planning and Construction Department, said conservation efforts were begun in 1972-1973.

Most of the University's efficiency problems are with air conditioning systems. In an effort to conserve less fuel, the University bought a computerized control and management system in 1975. It is designed to turn off cooling and heating systems when they are not needed.

The system was "substantially completed" in 1978, but many problems have kept the system from being put into full use, said Gerald

Scott, manager of engineering and design for facilities. Problems include equipment malfunctions and difficulties in running programs, Scott said. He said the system will be in full use after the first of 1979, and about 42 or 43 buildings will be controlled by it.

"It's like a shake-down cruise for a ship," Scott said. "There's no doubt it will save energy." The computer cost about \$1.2 million and Scott estimated it will take about three years to pay for itself once it is in full operation.

Scott said the computer cannot control thermostats in individual buildings. But it can monitor the temperature in individual classrooms in programmed buildings, he said, to discover if complaints that classrooms are too warm or too cold are valid. Its main function, however, is to start and stop systems.

Physical Plant officials have faith that their computer will increase efficiency. But they say the real problems lie in the individual systems on campus.

"Before we can have effective energy control, we must improve the systems themselves," Scott said.

He cited the Oceanography and Meteorology Building, Rudder Tower and Zachry Engineering Center as great energy users. He said work will soon begin to rework the cooling and heating systems in those buildings to make them as

energy-efficient as their designs allow.

He said there are problems with systems all over campus.

"We'll just have to take them one at a time," he said.

Council said since 1973 a considerable number of lights have been disconnected in classrooms and hallways.

"People don't realize the difference," he said. No areas are left dark, he said, but "extra" lights have been removed. He said fluorescent lights and incandescent lights have been replaced with multi-vapor lights where they are "practical and convenient."

Multi-vapor lights are more efficient and emit a yellowish light that is "kinder to the eye," Council said.

The Physical Plant is also pushing for more energy efficient designs in new buildings. Skylights save light and openable windows allow fresh air to enter a building, a nice feature if the days ever come when energy is expensive enough to warrant opening windows certain times of the year, plant officials and architects on campus said.

But the Board of Regents and the administration do not necessarily follow the plant's recommendations and many of their decisions are made contrary to opinions of architects and engineers, plant officials said.

Even if the University sends its power to inefficient buildings, the

plant that generates that power is quite efficient. A utilities official, who prefers not to be identified, said the University plant is about 43 percent efficient, compared to the national average of 35 percent.

The University Utilities Plant generates all of the power used on campus. A 20-megawatt tie-in with Brazos Electric Power Cooperative prevents a major power outage in case one of the generators on campus goes out, he said.

The University plant burns only natural gas and recycles waste heat to increase efficiency, the official said. He said in a few years the University must decide whether to get a new generator or buy some power from outside sources.

"We've had more natural gas available in the last few years than we've ever had," the official said. He said as many consumers conserve and move to cheaper fuel sources gas becomes more abundant, even if at a higher price.

Physical Plant officials say they don't worry about a shortage of natural gas in the near or even distant future. He predicts that Texas A&M will not convert to any other fuel source for at least 20 years "and probably longer than that."

Scott said if conversion to any fuel other than gas and oil ever does happen, it will involve mass conversions all over campus and the purchase of much new equipment.

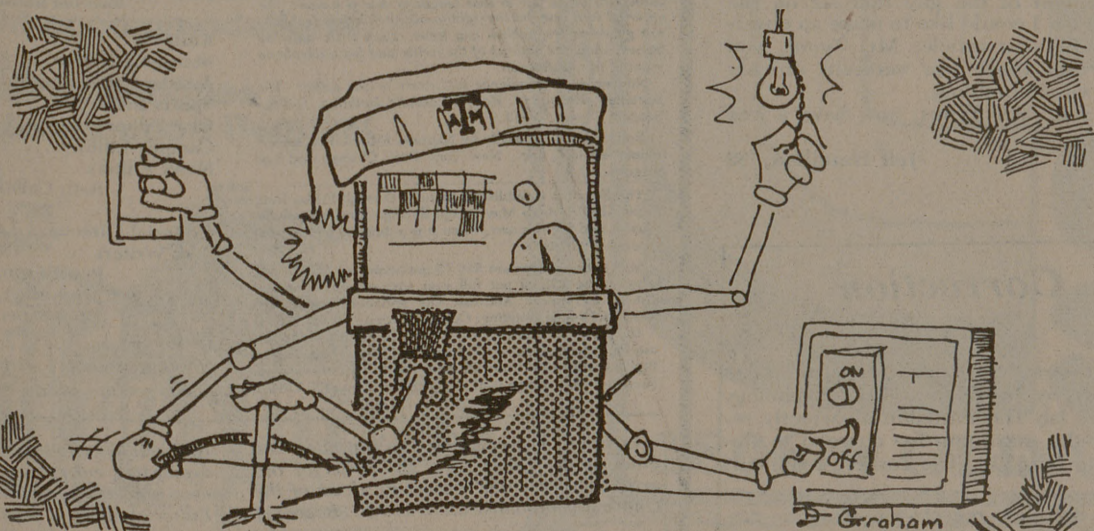
Nor do Physical Plant officials say Texas A&M will go back to the days of open windows and classes scheduled during the cool times of the day.

"We don't feel like we'll be faced with such a shortage of primary fuels that we'll go back to the days of pre-air conditioning," Scott said. "The new buildings just aren't made for it and again massive and costly renovations would be involved to open the windows."

He said that would be a step backward and he thinks better alternatives will be available.

"Who can really say what will be discovered or what technology will come up with?" Scott asked.

But the University outlook for a long time to come is to conserve — and to be prepared to pay a premium price for the convenience of natural gas.



D. Graham