

# VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION  
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

FRIDAY  
NOVEMBER 10, 1978

## High-level thinking

Space stories seldom make front pages anymore, but history's longest manned space flight, completed last week when two Soviet cosmonauts came home, was an extraordinary achievement that deserves special attention.

Vladimir Kovalenok and Alexander Ivanchenkov orbited Earth for more than four months. As they worked — and even entertained visitors to their space station (other cosmonauts) — they provided further evidence that humans can live productively for long periods in man-made worlds circling invisibly far above the natural world. Thus they helped advance the day when explorers will venture out to other planets.

But the Soviet success should spur practical benefits before that — and long before the day seen by a top Soviet astrophysicist when an "artificial biosphere" able to support giant colonies of humans will be built in space. At best, such a home away from home is for future generations, not ours.

New industries and new research projects in orbiting labs, however, are probable in the nearer future. The cosmonauts' mission included work aimed at speeding in-space production of materials for computers and other technologies that defy successful manufacture on Earth.

That's important. High-level Soviet thinking accepts the idea that countries not involved in space may soon be left behind in industrial competition below. Projects such as their latest record-setter indicate that the Soviets plan to be part of that coming industrial revolution.

Chicago Sun-Times

## Bill must protect Alaska's wilderness

By LYNN TIMKEN

By Dec. 18, 1978, Congress must decide the destiny of an empire of government-owned fjords, mountains, rivers, and flatlands. The land is Alaska.

Alaska, with a total of 375 million acres, is equal to the aggregate of Texas, California, the six New England states plus New York and Pennsylvania. The state includes seven major mountain ranges, 6,640 miles of fjords and a vast tundra with a third of it north of the Arctic Circle.

With its spectacular wildlife resources Alaska is both a state and a national treasure. The land is home to a large number of species unique to the state including grizzlies, bald eagles, polar bears, wolves, caribou, peregrine falcons, curly-horned Dall sheep, and sea otters.

Alaska's resources have deteriorated since the 1960s due to the introduction of the snowmobile. It has given hunters a deadly advantage over the land's natural inhabitants. Last year, the state's biggest caribou herd population (242,000 in 1971) was suddenly discovered to have plum-

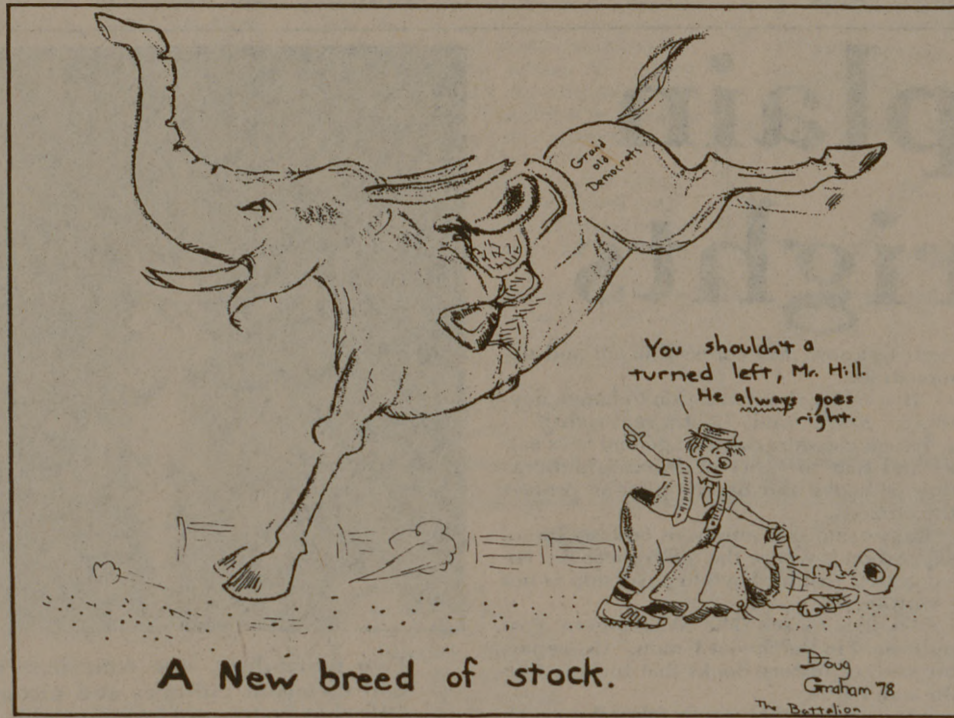
meted to 50,000 animals. Overhunting was at least one cause.

The most effective method of wildlife destruction is the aircraft. By permitting unrestricted use of aircraft, Alaska's wildlife could be wiped out within 10 years. There is no stalking, no matching of wits, only a roaring airplane pursuing a wild animal until he can no longer run.

Until recently the sea otter had de-

### Reader's Forum

veloped a breeding ground stronghold on Amchitka Island in the Aleutians National Wildlife Refuge — it is now the site of atomic bomb tests. Last year the total number of grizzly bears killed was estimated to be between 900 and 1,000; the polar bear estimate was 1,300-1,400. No one knows whether these species are holding their own as very little research has been done in that area.



Perhaps the greatest threat to Alaskan wildlife comes with the destruction of the land. About half of the state is underlain by permafrost which is ground that froze centuries ago and has never thawed. As a result, there are only 306 miles of paved road in the entire state. The lack of roads in Alaska is the state's saving grace. Build roads, and the animals will soon be hunted out, and the natural beauty will be hidden behind roadside developments.

In December, 1978, Congress must decide which government agency should manage the vast lands of Alaska. Almost all of the 350 million federally owned acres are controlled by the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service, which means that over 90 percent of the state is vulnerable to development. The only slice that is protected is the 30 million acres run by the "special use" agencies.

A conservationist lobby called the Alaska Coalition has introduced a bill (numbered HR-39) into the House through Rep. Morris Udall. It is based on the "ecosystem" approach which calls for setting aside entire mountain ranges, river watersheds and animal migration routes for the preservation of wildlife. In north-west Alaska the Coalition wants to create a solid mass of parks and refuges whose 26.5 million acres would include the entire watershed of the 425 mile-long Noatak River.

In southern Alaska the Wrangell Mountain Range (15.8 million acres) would be protected, along with the Yukon Flats

(12.3 million acres). This would form a single game preserve larger than the state of New York. The area will be designated as "wilderness" along with the existing parks and refuges.

Prodevelopment interests — oil companies, hunting guides, and mining companies — are planning a \$900,000 lobbying campaign against the bill. Attempts are being made at massive reorganization for the land that will involve drowning thousands of square miles to obtain minerals (of uncertain availability).

Along with the minerals and trees go, of course, a highly complex and vital society of plants and animals without which the land could never have achieved the development that has made it so rich.

Throughout Alaska great fields of coal lie within strip-mining depth of the surface. Oil crews have descended on the coastal wilderness, bringing roads, people and villages. The Arctic National Wildlife Range lies only a short distance from oil strike on Prudhoe Bay. If Alaska is to keep its abundance and variety of wild creatures, plans for conserving them must be included in the state's future.

Perhaps it is too much to expect Americans to appreciate the value of land that is not "developed" by man. Unless the United States exercises a great deal of care in plotting the future course of Alaska, the state will resemble the lower 48.

Lynn Timken is a senior recreation and parks major.

### Letters to the Editor

#### Seal poor '78 gift

Editor:

Again I will extend on behalf of all '78 seniors an apology to all the following Ags for getting in their way. Last spring I wrote a letter regarding the obstruction my class had placed in the Academic Building.

Please remember that it was our intentions to give you a splendid, beautiful seal of Texas A&M to be viewed and admired for all who come upon it in its place below the bell and copper dome of the Academic Building.

But for some reason, in the process of constructing the project, our class officers saw fit to give the job to people obviously not as interested in putting quality workmanship to make a beautiful, lasting product as they were in cutting costs and making the buck, and now there is a shoddy space of poorly placed tile that doesn't even need someone to walk on it to break apart, where once there was solid footing for everyone.

How these people were chosen I will never know, as one writer replied to my letter, a Mr. McMurry, I failed to faithfully attend every meeting held by my class officers, I merely assumed they could do their job right without my constant supervision.

Mr. McMurry had said something was in the process to alleviate the problem, and since it seemed that he knew what he was saying and sure of it, I retracted my pen to watch the progress.

Well, the rest of the spring, two summer sessions and half of the fall has passed a not a single thing has been done to it.

The tile never was pulled up and replaced either with a new more durable seal, or filled in as to not be an obstruction.

STILL there is a crumbling piece of shoddy workmanship and a make-shift rope barrier to divert everyone around the mistake — to indicate to all following classes where the interests of the class of '78 wasn't at.

Which couldn't be further from truth, because '78 was the best class that ever was and will be. Yet, though I can't speak for everyone in my class, I would like to think that eventually someone will just remove the tile and fill it in with something so future Ags won't think of my class as "The Class That Got in the Way."

— David W. Loper, '78

ing about is BONFIRE. Fire up your burning desire to beat the hell out of t.u. and get involved with BONFIRE.

I can guarantee that the Spirit of Aggieland and BONFIRE will take on a whole new meaning if you get involved. Just because we live off campus doesn't mean we don't have to work on it.

Call me or another off-campus "yellow pot" to find out how you can get involved. Phone numbers are on the red bonfire posters.

— Steve Foucart, '79  
693-9502

#### Worry rationally

Editor:

I am sure that all students at Texas A&M University are concerned about their grades. And from talking to people, I have found that many worry about their performance in school. I have also found from experience that worrying gets me nothing but stress.

Of course I believe that some worry is healthy for the student. It brings to reality the importance of school.

Recently I sat down and tried to figure out just how much school worried me. This is what I came up with:

I'm carrying 16 hours and of those 16, only 4 do not have me worried. And of the 12 that worry me, only 3 do not worry me as much. Of the 9 hours that worry me more than the 3 that do not worry me as much or the 4 that do not worry me at all, only 6 have real cause for worry.

Of the 9 hours of which only 6 have real cause for worry the remaining 3 do not worry me as much and 3 worry me even less.

I would say then, that I have just enough worry to keep me somewhere between health and stress. If this letter does not get printed, I will try not to worry about it.

— Jeff Krenek, '81

#### Genuine 'Good Ags'

Editor:

There's more to being friendly than saying "howdy!" on campus. Being a "good Ag" has little to do with memorialized grass and athletic events — and a lot to do with helping two coeds with a flat tire and flatter spare at 10 p.m., especially when you've got a major exam the next morning!

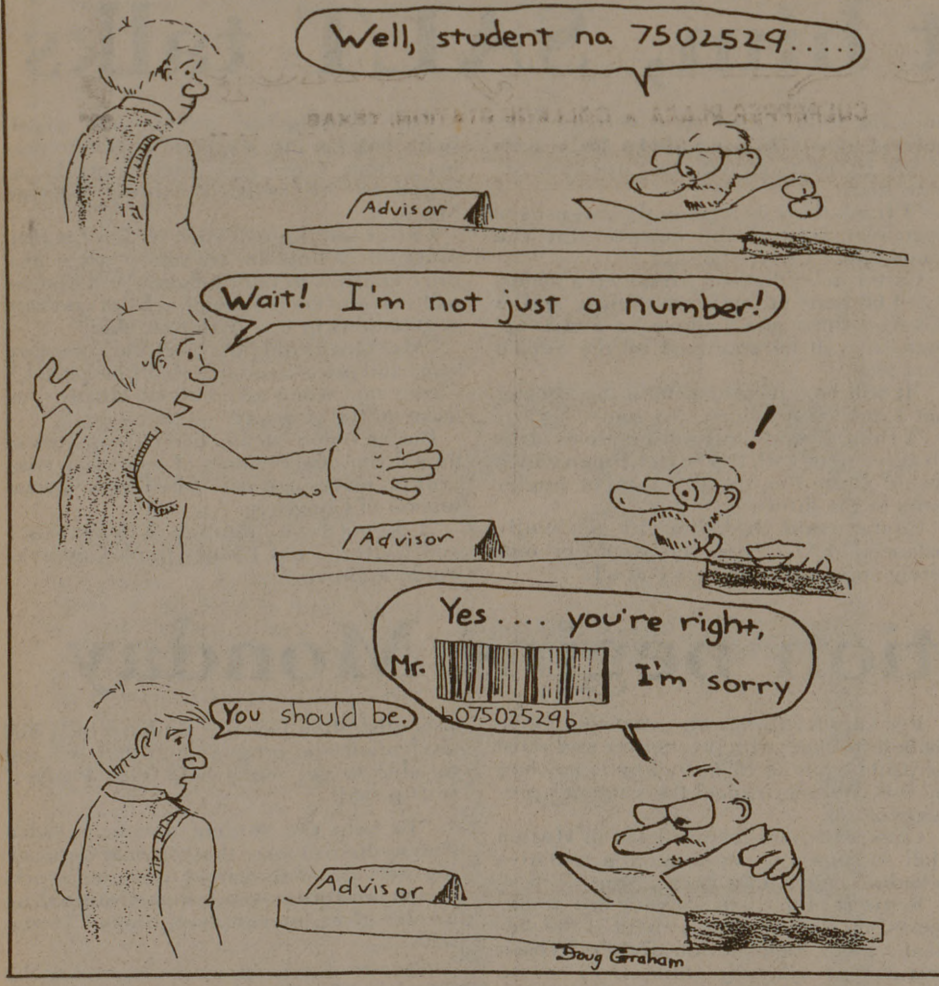
Kathy and Robby, we're proud that you're a part of Texas A&M. We plan to follow your example of kindness and genuine concern for other people. Thank you, and God bless you!

— Michell Marti, '79  
Sally Donaldson, '82

#### Fire up the spirit

Editor:

Off campus men, we need your help! One of the greatest traditions of A&M has already started and not enough of y'all are out there working. The tradition I'm talk-



## Anatomical spare parts

By DICK WEST

WASHINGTON — The latest issue of Smithsonian magazine, published by the institution of the same name, has an article on "bioengineering," the science of making spare parts for the human body.

Since most of the advances have developed piecemeal over the last 40 years, it is only when we see them all laid out together that we realize how far man has come toward artificially and mechanically reproducing himself.

The available inventory of artificial kidneys, heart-lung machines, synthetic valves and arteries and assorted other ersatz organs and limbs is too long to list here. Suffice to say that if part of your anatomy breaks down before the warranty expires, you can now do something besides wait around for your body to be recalled.

As for the future, Smithsonian mentions such prospects as "booster lungs" and computerized blood streams. But be assured those are by no means the outer limits of bioengineering.

If it is possible to duplicate, or simulate, existing parts of the body, what's to prevent the creation of new parts that nature failed to include in the original blueprints? When, for example, you complain about slow service in a restaurant, the waiter is apt to point out rather testily that "I only have two hands."

A three-handed waiter definitely would be a bioengineering triumph, comparable

in its way to the first cardiac pacemaker. And the breakthrough may come sooner than you think.

Already, according to the magazine, bioengineers are working on an artificial arm that uses electric motors controlled by muscle signals to perform "natural movement." Presumably, that would include picking up tips.

Another familiar excuse is: "I don't have eyes in the back of my head."

Well, sir, Smithsonian reports that "a daring attempt to develop artificial sight and hearing through the electric stimulation of nerve cells in the brain or ear is under way."

Once that process has been perfected, it should take only minor modifications to equip human beings with rearward vision. And while they're at it, why not also provide a rear breathing organ, somewhat like the nose, on the nape of the neck.

The rear nose could serve many useful purposes, such as functioning as a snorkel for skin diving or bobbing for apples.

I finished the article convinced that the ultimate achievement of bioengineering may be the first human photographic organ, located in the chest, where the camera now dangles, and capable of turning out color prints of landmarks and interesting rock formations.

I mean, if you think the "Six Million Dollar Man" is a marvel, wait 'til you get a load of the bionic tourist.

# TOP OF THE NEWS

## CAMPUS

### Reagan, Simon to speak at A&M

Former California governor Ronald Reagan and former U.S. Secretary of State William E. Simon are scheduled to speak at Texas A&M University next week in unrelated appearances. Simon's talk, "Consideration of the American Economic Picture," sponsored by the Great Issues committee, will be given Tuesday at 12:30 p.m. in the Rudder Theater. Reagan is sponsored by Political Forum and will speak Wednesday at 8 p.m. in the Rudder Auditorium. Admission to Simon's speech is free; tickets for Reagan's will cost \$1.50 for students and \$2.50 for non-students.

## STATE

### More time in Torres case

The 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans has taken under consideration a Justice Department appeal for more stringent sentences against three Texas policemen convicted of violating the civil rights of Joe Campos Torres, a Mexican-American beaten and drowned in police custody. The appeal demands more than the 10-year probationary terms Terry Denson, Stephen Orlando and Joseph Janish for felony civil rights violations. The three received a year in prison for a misdemeanor violation. A federal court jury convicted Denson, Orlando and Janish of beating Torres after a barroom drunk arrest May 5, 1977, and then pushing him off a ledge into Buffalo Bayou downtown where he drowned. His body was found three days later.

## NATION

### Ships collide in Mississippi River

A Liberian bulk carrier and another ship collided head-on in the Mississippi River Thursday, spilling about 2,000 gallons of fuel oil into the water near New Orleans. "There is no fire and no injuries reported, but we are classifying it as a potential major oil spill," said Coast Guard spokesman Bob Baeton. Water intakes, fisheries and wildlife people, and pollution experts have been notified, said Baeton. He said the leak came from the fuel tanks of a Liberian vessel carrying a load of crude oil. A Panamanian bulk carrier loaded with scrap ran aground but no damage was reported. The collision occurred two miles downstream from the Belle Chase ferry landing, which is used by suburban New Orleans commuters crossing the river.

### Stassen will run for president

Harold Stassen, apparently spurred by Republican victories in Minnesota, Thursday announced at a news conference he will run for president again in 1980. The 70-year-old former governor has been involved in presidential politics for more than 30 years, but was defeated in the recent senatorial primary by Rudy Boschwitz who went on to win Tuesday. Stassen said he will run on a platform to "clean out the corruption in Washington" and "overcome inflation with full employment." Stassen said the GOP must begin to look towards 1980 and the serious problems at home and abroad which have been mismanaged by the Carter administration. Stassen was a leading contender in 1948 for the GOP nomination for president and later made several bids to become the party's candidate.

### Carter signs his energy policy

President Carter signed the five parts of his national energy plan into law Thursday, giving homeowners tax breaks for insulation costs and beginning the deregulation of natural gas prices. Carter said the plan will help reduce costly reliance on foreign oil suppliers by saving 2.5 million barrels of oil a day by 1985, less than he had hoped when he submitted the plan to Congress almost 19 months ago, but still a substantial improvement. "We have acquitted ourselves well as a nation. While the world watched, we have shown the will and courage to face up to this complex problem," he said.

## WORLD

### Meir still in hospital; improving

The condition of former Prime Minister Golda Meir improved slightly Thursday despite leg and back pains stemming from a viral infection, a spokesman at Hadassah Hospital said Thursday in Jerusalem. The spokesman, Azariah Rappaport, said the 80-year-old Meir was following political developments in Israel and the United States, but refused to issue a statement from her hospital room. But, he said he discussed with Meir a spate of rumors that she is suffering from an incurable disease. "Let them come and ask me about that," Rappaport quoted the former prime minister as saying. The spokesman said although Meir was being treated in the hematology ward of the hospital it did not indicate she suffered a blood disease.

### U.S. and China swap experts

Agriculture Secretary Bob Bergland said Thursday the United States and China will exchange agricultural specialists early next year. Bergland told a news conference Wednesday he was "encouraged by the prospects and potential for further growth" of the expanding Sino-American trade in farm goods. The countries will exchange seed technologists, animal health and insect control experts. The U.S. also promised to promote contacts between U.S. and China firms able to provide equipment and technology the Chinese need to meet growing consumer demand and to increase their exports, he said. Bergland said privately Tuesday night that China must buy feed and feed supplements if it is to expand livestock production. Bergland said he told China the U.S. would not enter into other bilateral grain agreements.

## WEATHER

Partly cloudy and warmer through Saturday. High Friday near 80, low early Saturday mid-50's.

## THE BATTALION

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