

Battalion photo by Kim Townsley

Check that gear

Stacy Smith, a freshman from Dallas, and Alan Snider, sophomore from Huntington, make necessary adjustments on their scuba gear during a check-out for beginning divers last weekend at Lake Travis in Austin. Smith and Snider, members of the Texas A&M University advanced dive class, assisted the beginning divers. The class has scheduled another check-out dive the weekend of Dec. 3 at Lake Travis.

Earth's life span 3 billion years

United Press International
GATLINBURG, Tenn. — New data indicates Earth won't become a "dead" planet for 3 billion more years, unless man destroys it first, a leading scientist says.

N. Mafi Toksoz, a geophysics professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, told a science writers' meeting this week his prediction on Earth's life span is based on discoveries about the evolution and history of planets made through space exploration in the last decade.

Toksoz told the 16th annual

briefing of the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing Monday the most up-to-date data shows Earth's crust has changed composition significantly from when it was formed 4.6 billion years ago.

Created from gaseous solar masses, Earth was similar in composition to the moon, Mars, Mercury and Venus. But its evolution as a planet that can sustain life is due to three factors, Toksoz said.

He said Earth's chemical composition, its size and atmospheric temperature have made it able to

support life.

Comparing Earth with Venus, Toksoz said both planets are about the same size and both have similar iron cores. But Venus, a hotter planet with more carbon dioxide in its atmosphere, has no water; and any trace of life there has long since burned up and vanished.

A similar carbon dioxide problem could affect Earth, due to man's heavy combustion of fossil fuels such as coal and oil. But Toksoz said he could not be sure whether that would speed up the rate of Earth's decay.

Still, the professor warned, the risk of a "runaway effect" from carbon dioxide pollution cannot be taken lightly.

Other scientists have predicted increased carbon dioxide in Earth's atmosphere will make polar ice fields melt quicker and cause a rapid rise in ocean water levels. But no firm time limit has been placed on the predictions.

Toksoz ended his address by predicting an increase in space exploration by the end of this century, adding that he thought some of the American missions again will be manned.

IRA bombs blitz towns, injure 40

United Press International
BELFAST, Northern Ireland — The Irish Republican Army has unleashed its heaviest bombing campaign across Ulster in two years in what police said was the IRA's pre-Christmas offensive.

The IRA said that the blitz would "intensify in the coming months."

More than 40 people were injured in the bombings in Belfast and seven other centers Tuesday. The bombings coincided with the arrival of two American congressmen on a peace mission.

Police said it would take days to assess the damage to businesses and homes.

The British army said it was the heaviest IRA offensive in two years and apparently marked the beginning of an offensive timed to coincide with the holiday season. The blitz started with four bombs in Londonderry, then spread to Omagh, Dungannon, Cookstown, Enniskillen, Belfast, Newry and Castlederg.

The bombs included cars stuffed with hundreds of pounds of explosives, firebombs and small devices.

Most of the injured were not seriously hurt because all the blasts were preceded by warnings from the IRA.

Rep. Mario Biaggi, D-N.Y. and Benjamin Gilman, R-N.Y., members of an ad hoc congressional committee on Irish affairs, arrived in Belfast as the bombs went off across the province.



The Athletic Attic is Coming!

#5 PLAIN TALK FROM ARMCO ON FINDING A JOB:

How Government's spending can price you out of work
Inflation's danger is very real to you because it threatens your chances of landing a job. We say our government, by trying to give us everything we want right now, actually causes inflation. Here's why.

If government collects enough taxes to pay its extra bills as it goes, those taxes raise everybody's costs. You pay more yourself in taxes on your income. And companies pay more income tax and taxes on the materials and services they have to buy. So everybody's tax bill goes up.

But as we all know, government is spending money even faster than it can collect taxes. Everybody still pays, because government handles the deficit either by borrowing money or printing it. Borrowed money costs extra to pay the interest—and our national debt is now more than \$550,000,000,000. Extra printed money simply dilutes the value of all the money in circulation. Either way, costs go up for everybody—and that's inflation. You'll pay \$2.25 today to buy what a dollar bought only 20 years ago.

It now costs business \$45,300 to create the average American job. (Armco's cost is \$57,520.) Every time the cost of a job goes up, fewer jobs can be created with the same amount of money. Some companies can't earn enough extra money these days to create so many new jobs.

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Plain talk about INFLATION

It's often fashionable to blame business and labor for higher prices. But that's taking a result and making it the cause. The more government tacks on additional charges, the higher costs have to go. And the more government spends

tomorrow's money today, the more prices rise to cover the cost. Most of all, the more causes and tasks we insist our government take on, the more money government must spend to carry out our will. Our federal deficit is running at least \$60,000,000,000 a year, now. That's a million and a third jobs we're missing, right there.

What can we do? We all have favorite programs we'd like our government to spend money on. But maybe spending only what we've paid in taxes is the most important service our government can provide us. If we could get government to set priorities—with every worthwhile goal in relation to all others—then maybe we could stop spending money so fast we create inflation.

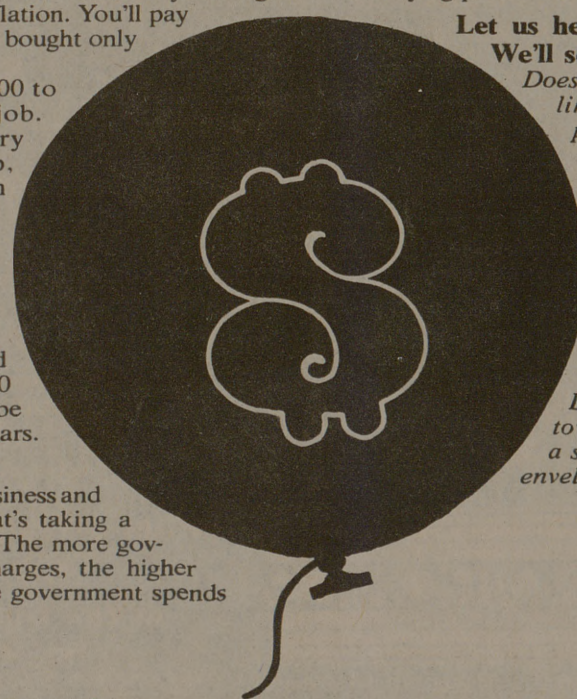
Next time somebody says government ought to do something, think about the job you want when you finish school. Then ask that person why you should give up your job or buying power for somebody else's pet idea.

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