



VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

THURSDAY
FEBRUARY 22, 1979



TOP OF THE NEWS CAMPUS

Motorcycle safety program cited

The Industrial Education Department of Texas A&M University has been recognized for its efforts in promoting motorcycle safety through instructor preparation. The department will receive an award this spring from a seminar of the Motorcycle Safety Foundation. The department offered a course designed by the foundation involving 20 hours of instruction on the operation of the motorcycle for new riders. Only 12 schools out of the 50 offering the course will receive an award.

LOCAL

Local churches to hold seminar

Nine parishes in the Bryan-College Station area have completed plans for an ecumenical seminar to be held at the first Presbyterian Church in Bryan on March 2 and 3. The theme of the three-day seminar will be "Approaches to Christian Formation." The seminar is being held in cooperation with the Council of Southwestern Theological Schools and the H.E. Butt Foundation.

STATE

Davis lawyers told to be specific

The district judge hearing the divorce case between Fort Worth millionaire T. Cullen Davis and his estranged wife, Priscilla, told her attorneys to "hit the jugular vein" with more specific questions. Judge John M. Barron of Bryan told the lawyers to simplify their questioning. Most of the testimony presented Wednesday had been gone over the day before. The case involves millions of dollars in community property and has lasted over five years.

Insurance firms called alarmist

Three insurance companies, including one in Texas, have been accused of creating "an emotional atmosphere of concern about contracting cancer," the Massachusetts Insurance Division reported Tuesday. The division cited American Income Life Insurance Co. of Waco, the Family Life Insurance Co. of Columbus, Ga., and the Washington National Insurance Co. of Evanston, Ill., for questionable advertising. The division said the companies used lists of celebrities who have died of cancer, statistics on death rates from cancer, and warnings in capital letters, such as "CANCER CAN HAPPEN TO YOU," in their advertising. The agency said the ads focused on the disease itself rather than the cost or possible benefits of the insurance. The companies have sold most of their policies in Massachusetts, according to state officials.

School plan goes to high court

The U.S. Supreme Court granted a hearing Wednesday to Dallas school officials who argue that a desegregation plan allowing one-race schools to continue operating meets constitutional standards. In 1976, U.S. District Court Judge W.M. Taylor permitted one-race schools to remain in Dallas because of the distance students would have to be bused. A U.S. Appeals court later ordered Taylor to hold further hearings on the matter and to draw up a new Dallas student assignment plan with justification for one-race schools. The Supreme Court agreed earlier this year to hear similar cases involving schools in Columbus and Dayton, Ohio.

WORLD

Irish gang members sentenced

Eleven members of a fanatical gang in Belfast, Northern Ireland, were sentenced to a total of 42 life sentences plus 900 years Tuesday. Judge Thorough O'Donnell in sentencing the "Shankill Butchers," as they were called, said the men had committed crimes "so cruel and so revolting to be beyond the comprehension of a normal person." The leader of the gang, Billy Moore, 30, was given 14 life sentences on charges of murder, attempted murder, kidnapping and bombings. Another gang member William Bates, also 30, received 16 life sentences. The judge recommended that the two should never be paroled.

Premier loses support in Italy

The Socialist Party in Italy has refused to support Premier-designate Giulio Andreotti of the Christian Democrat party increasing the possibility of early national elections there. Italy has been without a government since Jan. 31 after the Communist Party withdrew its support of Andreotti. Andreotti was hoping for the socialist support to keep his government in power. Italian President Sandro Pertini, a Socialist, is considering appointing a politician outside of the Christian Democrat party to form the 41st government in Italy since the end of World War II. Socialist Party leader, Bettino Craxi, said Andreotti's unsuccessful attempts at forming a government prevent him from allowing socialist support.

WEATHER

Overcast skies, drizzle and fog with a chance of thunder-showers this afternoon and tonight. High today 74° and a low of 60°. Winds are S-SE at 10-15 mph. A cool front will be moving into the Bryan-College Station area tomorrow morning.

THE BATTALION

LETTERS POLICY

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words and are subject to being cut to that length or less if longer. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit such letters and does not guarantee to publish any letter. Each letter must be signed, show the address of the writer and list a telephone number for verification. Address correspondence to Letters to the Editor, The Battalion, Room 216, Reed McDonald Building, College Station, Texas 77843. Represented nationally by National Educational Advertising Services, Inc., New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles. The Battalion is published Monday through Friday from September through May except during exam and holiday periods and the summer, when it is published on Tuesday through Thursday. Mail subscriptions are \$16.75 per semester, \$33.25 per school year; \$35.00 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request. Address: The Battalion, Room 216, Reed McDonald Building, College Station, Texas 77843. United Press International is entitled exclusively to the use for reproduction of all news dispatches credited to it. Rights of reproduction of all other matter herein reserved. Second-Class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.

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Chancellor? What chancellor?

It's been a month now since Texas A&M Chancellor Jack Williams resigned. Since then the Board of Regents has made no apparent move to find a replacement for him.

Regents said a search committee would be formed to look for a new chancellor. However, the committee hasn't been designated and the regents show no urgency about it — about finding a person presumed to be a major administrator for a university system.

Board Chairman Clyde Wells has said the System needs a chancellor. That is, nobody wants only one person to administer the University and the 11 other parts of the System.

When Williams resigned, Wells was designated to perform the duties of the chancellor, coming to campus a few times each week. At the

Reflections

Hsin Y. Son

Academic Council meeting last Friday, Texas A&M President Miller emphasized that Wells is not acting chancellor — but has been delegated the tasks of the chancellor.

This fine distinction probably allows Wells to stay off campus more, which may be why he's not "acting chancellor."

Wells has delegated many of his duties and says he's had no problems since Chancellor Williams resigned — the job doesn't seem to be much added burden.

Still unclear is why the regents have made no steps toward finding a new chancellor. Maybe the regents are eyeing President Miller for System president — the post Williams had before the chancellorship was created.

The move would follow an Aggie tradition — abandon the two-man set-up and give the current Texas A&M president all the duties.

Take the Earl Rudder-M.T. Harrington case as one example.

Like the Williams-Miller sequence, President Harrington was "promoted" to chancellor and eventually resigned after reports of friction between the two leaders. The board then chose Earl Rudder to be president of the University System.

The current board shows every indication that it may follow this path and make Jarvis Miller president of the System.

Miller has been given several systems-level responsibilities as the Texas A&M president. Both the agricultural and engineering extension services and research stations were given to Miller when the board created new vice presidents for them under him. Moody College which has also been part of the system's duties was also designated to report through Miller to the chancellor.

That leaves Tarleton State University, the Forestry Service and Prairie View A&M University on the chancellor-systems level — comparatively small duties next to the Texas A&M president's present role.

So far Dr. Williams has made no statement about his reasons for leaving. The regents named him assistant to the board as an adviser shortly after his resignation. However, Williams has not moved back to his office in the Systems building and appears to be taking the leave of absence he said he planned when he resigned. The post seems more a title — a reason to continue paying Williams his former salary — than anything else.

The next scheduled Board of Regents meeting won't be until the end of March.

Perhaps the regents want to see how President Miller handles his increased responsibilities — to see if he's fit for the System presidency. Or maybe they have found someone within the present system they're grooming for the chancellor's job.

And they don't seem to mind making us wait.

Letters to the Editor

No need to hazard Nukes

Editor:

I have a few comments to make in response to David Eppes' letter (Battalion, Feb. 29).

First, I would like to point out that his statement concerning the nuclear industries "flawless safety record" is just plain false. Granted, there have not been any major catastrophes, however, a little research into the matter reveals numerous accounts of radioactive leaks and spills. (For instance read the U.S. Congressional Record for March 11, 1976).

You apparently have not heard about the Karen Silkwood case. You might find a few unpleasant surprises if you read about that. Maybe when you said "flawless safety record" you forgot that the nuclear power process starts with uranium mining and doesn't end until the radioactive wastes are disposed. By the way, I'd like to hear more about your safe, simple solution for nuclear waste disposal. You are the first person I've heard make such a claim.

The truth of the matter is that nuclear power is unnecessary. There are other energy sources (solar, wind, geothermal etc.) that will work just as well if we put the time and money into them that has gone into developing nuclear power. So why risk the safety hazard and why dig up the country looking for uranium.

Most of all, why put so much investment into still another limited energy source. The sun, wind and others will be around as long as we will but uranium won't. Personally, I feel it is unfortunate that more people don't know just how bad nuclear power is. NO NUKES!

—Dennis Chester, 81

Ya' done good

Editor:

This is an open letter to congratulate the SCONA committee on the success of an important, well-organized, and efficiently run conference on national affairs. The choice of subject matter was timely and the selection of speakers was excellent.

The overall quality of SCONA is a credit to their ability to design, finance, and complete a complex project and the results reflect well on Texas A&M, and the students should be justly proud.

It gave me a great deal of personal pleasure to be involved as a round table co-chairman interacting with all the students, but I also felt a strong sense of pride in them as Texas A&M University students for taking the leadership role to make SCONA happen.

Congressional absenteeism

By STEVE GERSTEL
United Press International

WASHINGTON — Some members of Congress — although certainly not all — are notorious truants.

They miss Senate and House sessions with sometimes dizzying frequency and can and have stalled legislation by their absences. Yet, the most that congressional leaders do is plead with their charges to be on hand.

It is not that unusual for Senate Democratic leader Robert Byrd to schedule a key vote at a time that accommodates both senators flying back from, and those flying to, somewhere else.

If the members of Congress were in the service, the military police would be placed on alert and a court martial for being AWOL would await them on their return. Or if they were kids in school, the truant officer would be pounding on the door.

Although it is little-known and completely ignored, Congress has a remedy for truancy and it is written in law.

The Foundation for the Study of Presidential and Congressional Terms, in a research report printed late last year, pointed out that a law, dating back to 1856, allows Congress to dock the pay of its members.

The law provides that a day's pay be deducted for each day that a senator or congressman is absent. The only excuses are sickness, either his own or in the family.

The proposal was a rider to a bill hiking the salary of members of Congress and was approved, as the foundation notes, when "absenteeism was pervasive."

The foundation found that the law was enforced twice in the House — in 1894 and again in 1914 — and periodically in

the Senate from 1856 to 1867.

Last year, the foundation found that senators could have been docked some \$277,000 and House members \$1.4 million. The foundation concedes that the amount would have been lower because many of the absences were undoubtedly legitimate.

Many absences are justified. In addition to illness, members of Congress are drawn away by field hearings, inspection trips and other affairs directly tied to legislation.

Many absences are not. They include extended vacations or weekends that start Thursday or end Tuesday or both; out-of-town speeches to pick up a little extra money; and, mainly, home-state campaigning.

It is not unusual for senators, especially, to spend weeks on end in their states campaigning for re-election — flying back for only the most critical votes.

And for those few with presidential aspirations the year before the national conventions becomes a caravan through the primary states with only a drop off in Washington.

It is highly unlikely that either the Senate or House will ever go back to docking their members.

According to the foundation, the House is relying on Deschler's Precedents which govern the rules of the House.

A section of those precedents states, "Due to the number of members, and to the proliferation of their official duties in Congress, committee field work, and in their enforcement of the law is no longer feasible."

The Senate's position is that it should not be enforced until the Senate decides whether such a step should be taken.

Key to one success: try it the other way

By LeROY POPE
UPI Business Writer

NEW YORK — "The less you know about what you're doing the better."

That may sound like strange advice from a businessman, but it's also reminiscent of the old saw about the chap who "didn't know it couldn't be done, so he went ahead and succeeded at it."

Robert Darvin, who runs a chain of 11 stores selling Scandinavian furniture in New England, appeared to contradict himself when he added a corollary: "Carefully monitor the leaders in your field — then avoid their methods like the plague." You can hardly monitor a business without becoming familiar with it.

Darvin and his wife, Gretchen, knew next to nothing about retailing when they started their business in 1965 at Natick, Mass. He was Boston sales manager for the building materials division of Jim Walter Corp. of Tampa. Gretchen, then his fiancée, was working for Sylvania. He and Gretchen were furnishing his apartment when a friend told them about Wilmer White, an Air Force pilot who was bringing quality furniture of unusual design from Denmark a piece at a time.

When White suddenly was transferred to Alaska by the Air Force Darvin bought his stock for \$3,000 — only \$200 down — and he and Gretchen went into the business of selling it.

Soon Darvin was faced with a hard choice. Jim Walter offered him a substantial promotion. He chose to quit and devote himself to selling the Danish furniture. Today, the Darvin's firm, Scandinavian Design, has 11 stores and annual sales of \$12 million.

Darvin says he achieves sales of \$300 to \$400 per square foot of floor space annually compared with an average of \$70 for the conventional furniture store. His profit averages 5 percent on sales against 2 percent for most furniture stores.

This high sales and profit ratio to area has enabled Darvin to make furniture re-

tailoring pay in relatively high rent shopping centers, something generally regarded as impossible.

"We break every rule in the book," Darvin says. "We make it a policy to resolve every complaint to the customer's satisfaction, even if it costs money. We don't regard ourselves as selling pieces of furniture but as helping families solve furnishing problems and so far we have helped some 400,000 families."

The Darvin's stores average only about 16,000 square feet compared with 42,000 for the conventional furniture store.

Darvin apparently is a born salesman. He made \$5,000 the year he was 16 selling printing while still in high school. During his college days at Rutgers and Columbia he sold shoes.

The purchase of pilot White's furniture stock might have remained just a sideline venture for the Darvins if it hadn't been

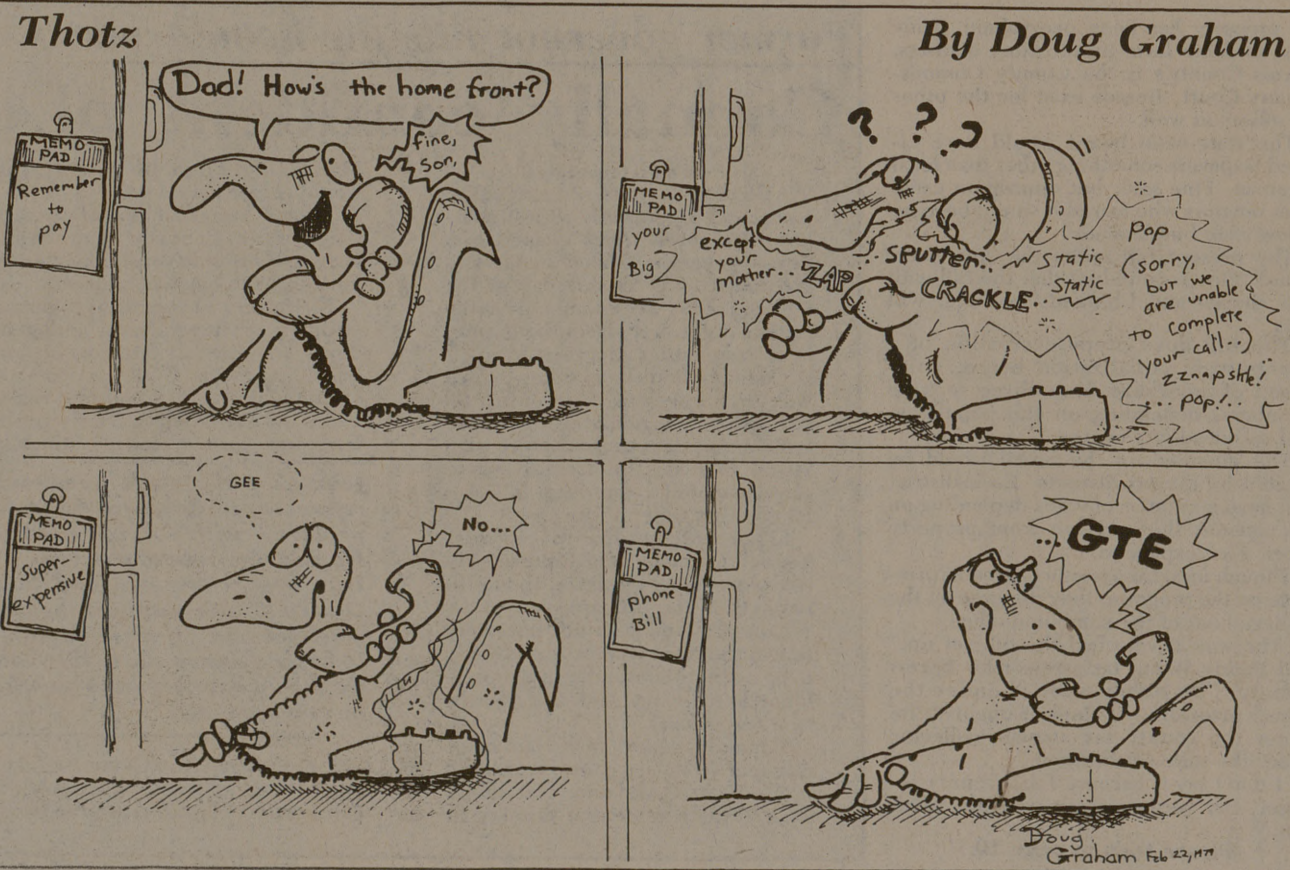
Business

for a trip they made to Denmark to visit the factory where White had bought the furniture. They financed the trip on a credit card, gambling that the visit to the factory would produce enough benefits to pay for it.

The Danish factory promptly presented them with a bill for the \$200 balance White owed. The Darvins didn't have the money to pay but by the time they were ready to come home they had talked the Danish firm, Moller & Rothe, out of a substantial new line of credit. Now they handle 40 percent of the factory's yearly output.

Four of the Darvin stores are in greater Boston, others elsewhere in Massachusetts, New York and Vermont. A store is to be opened in Providence this year.

"We don't let prospects get away," Darvin says. "We sell almost one of every three persons who comes in."



By Doug Graham

Doug Graham Feb 23, 1979