

We'll be watching

A different staff — mostly the same people with changed jobs — produced the newspaper you are holding.

The staff box in the lower right-hand corner of this page lists them. For the next two weeks, and one day during Finals Week, they will familiarize themselves with the duties and problems of their new positions.

Then most of them will leave for the summer, and another, smaller crew will direct the paper. Karen Rogers is the summer editor.

ON THE FIRST DAY of the fall semester, the staff box below will reappear; those students will control the newspaper. And they really do control the newspaper.

No faculty, staff or board member has the authority to censor what appears in the pages of The Battalion. After the newspaper is printed, no one outside the editor has the authority to punish staffers, except through lawsuits.

The Battalion is a free voice. The administration can't — and hasn't tried much lately — to control it.

SADLY, IT'S PROBABLY the most freedom reporters and editors will ever get in their career. In the "real" world, publishers often bend to political and advertiser pressure, bending their staffs to follow suit.

So this staff has the opportunity to report exactly what they see. But what will they see in 1979-80?

IT WILL BE A YEAR that will make a difference in the future of this institution. Texas A&M University — and the system it shares — face crossroads.

Several factors will determine if Texas A&M continues to excel or stagnates:

—Student enrollment is beginning to level off.

—Dr. Jarvis E. Miller has had two years to get on his feet as president, during which he has made changes that make the president more powerful. How Miller uses that power affects the entire System.

—The System still has no chancellor. His selection and the strength of his position, relative to Miller's, will influence the direction of the System.

—The HEW report on racial discrimination in Texas universities may appear by the end of this month. Texas Attorney General Mark White already has warned Texas A&M that HEW Secretary Joseph Califano is "seriously contemplating" a suit against it over the financial treatment of Prairie View A&M University.

—The Corps of Cadets must decide how it will treat female cadets. FOR ALL THESE AREAS, the next few months will be crucial in shaping Texas A&M's future.

We hope the news will be good. If it is not, The Batt will still report and comment on it. That's why we're a free press — so we can report the bad news too. For those who enjoy that rarest kind of freedom, the worst abuse is to remain silent.

—Liz Newlin

Accident sways British

By BRYAN SILCOCK
LONDON — For more than a decade, Britain's energy experts have been wrangling over whether to continue with gas-cooled reactors designed here or switch to the American pressurized water type for the country's future nuclear generators.

But now it looks like the debate could turn out to be academic. For the nuclear plant at Pennsylvania's Three Mile Island was outfitted with pressurized water reactors, and the fallout from the recent accident there has strengthened the hand of their British opponents.

The accident inadvertently reinforced the position of Anthony Wedgwood-Benn, the Minister of Energy in the wobbly Labor government. He has been contending consistently that the pressurized water system, though cheaper, is potentially more dangerous than gas-cooled reactors. He has voiced doubts about the ability of pressure vessels to resist cracks or corrosion.

A major criticism of gas-cooled reactors, which use carbon dioxide to extract heat, is that they cannot be built in prefabricated sections but must be constructed on site which makes them expensive.

Nevertheless, Benn sounded almost smug on television recently, saying that the Three Mile Island accident proved that his decision to stick with gas-cooled reactors "was the wisest we have ever taken in the nuclear field."

When Benn took the decision last year, however, he was compelled by extremely strong political pressure to make a big concession. He authorized the government-run Central Electricity Generating Board, which has been trying to change reactor types, to order a single nuclear plant with water-cooled reactors for evaluation purposes.

This approach, it is hoped, will not only resolve the quarrel over the costs of such reactors, but also provide the official Nuclear Inspectorate with the opportunity to conduct a full security study.

Bids for the new plant are nearly all in, and a contractor will probably be selected

in the coming weeks. But the Nuclear Inspectorate must approve the design beforehand, and there will almost surely be public hearings on the subject.

The hearings will create problems for Benn and other partisans of gas-cooled reactors. They cannot make too much of possible mishaps, even with a rival reactor, without courting the risk of playing into the hands of foes of all forms of nuclear energy.

Besides, Benn and his backers are well aware that accidents can also occur with gas-cooled reactors. Indeed, there was a disturbing "incident" not long ago at the Hinkley Point nuclear power station, when the breakdown of a duct temporarily left a reactor without its supply of coolant gas.

The accident was not even remotely comparable to the Three Mile Island calamity. There was never any danger of a dreaded meltdown. The reactor was quickly repaired, thereby bolstering the claim of supporters of gas-cooled reactors that they can be dealt with more rapidly than the water cooled type.

But that point is rather too fine to reassure a public generally worried about nuclear safety. That accidents are possible with any kind of reactor is further reflected in the fact that everyone knows that British nuclear power stations have emergency evacuation plans, stocks of anti-radiation pills and liaison committees to alert the local community.

Oddly enough, the misfortune at Three Mile Island has not provoked massive demonstrations against nuclear energy here, as it has in West Germany — perhaps because the public is too preoccupied with Irish terrorism and with the forthcoming elections.

Though a catastrophe was averted, the accident served to remind people everywhere, including the British, that a nuclear disaster can be real. The growing public interest in the battle over the reactors, therefore, indicates the degree to which sensitivities to the formerly esoteric subject of nuclear energy have been heightened — and are likely to remain so.

Debaters most successful ever

Texas A&M University's debate team had its most successful season ever this year as two of its members placed high at the National Junior Varsity Debate Tournament. Sophomore Michael Shelby led the 7th highest number of speaker points at the meet, while freshman James Starr finished 12th. There were 118 speakers on 59 teams. Shelby and Starr had a winning percentage of 72, the best ever for an Aggie team.

NATION

Gas well fire extinguishes self

An offshore gas well that blew out in the Gulf of Mexico off south-west Louisiana extinguished itself without the help of firefighters, officials of the U.S. Geological Survey said Sunday. The \$25 million rig, the Salenergy II, was destroyed by the fire that erupted early Saturday. The raging fire, which sent flames 100 feet into the air, extinguished itself late Saturday. No one was injured. Wild-wild fighting teams from the Houston-based Red Adair Co. watched passively as the well snuffed itself out. Earlier, officials of McMillan Offshore Exploration Co. said it might take several weeks to control the fire. Three other rigs located within about a mile of the burning hole were not in danger during the 16-hour blaze. All 40 crew members aboard the rig were evacuated when they received advance warning that gas pressure was building up.

546 bodies to be returned

The bodies of the remaining 546 victims of the Peoples Temple mass suicide will be shipped overland from Delaware to California, beginning next Thursday, according to the State Department. The bodies are now at Dover Air Force Base, Del., where they were flown from Guyana on U.S. Air Force aircraft as part of an operation that cost the federal government \$4 million. A total of 913 persons, including cult leader Jim Jones, died last November at Jonestown, Guyana, in a mass suicide that followed the killing of Rep. Leo Ryan, D-Calif., and members of his party. The department said about 200 of 298 bodies that have been identified will be shipped next Thursday on moving vans to Oakland Army Base in the San Francisco area. The remaining identified bodies will be transported to Fort MacArthur, near Los Angeles. Another 248 bodies at Dover remain unidentified, of which about 210 are children. The unidentified bodies will be taken to the San Francisco Bay area for burial.

Seventh cruise missile crashes

A Tomahawk sea-launched cruise missile crashed Saturday on the Fort Irwin, Calif., range shortly after being launched from a U.S. Navy A-6 aircraft, the Defense Department announced. The missile caused no damage and there were no casualties, a spokesman said. An investigation of the wreckage and the telemetry is under way to determine the cause of the crash. This was the seventh failure of the Tomahawk missile in the 41 test flights conducted, a Pentagon spokesman said.

Nuke plants change operations

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission directed the operators of reactors in six states Saturday to revise operating procedures in a bid to prevent an atomic accident similar to the Three Mile Island mishap last month. The NRC's staff outlined the new regulations in directives sent to the operators of reactors manufactured by Babcock and Wilcox, the firm that made the Three Mile Island facility. The six utilities, including the operator of the Three Mile Island facility, were given 24 hours to reset instruments so that their reactors would shut down at a lower pressure than previously required. In addition, each operator was given 14 days to "develop procedures and train personnel to manually shut down the reactor when certain unusual events take place." The "unusual events" were loss of primary cooling water, shutdown of a turbine, closure of a main steam isolation valve, loss of off-site power, low water level in a steam generator and low water-level pressurizer reading.

WORLD

Palestinian terrorists kill four

A four-man seaborne Palestinian terrorist squad struck the northern Israeli coastal resort of Nahariya early Sunday. Four Israelis were killed in the attack and a shootout with security forces on the beach, military sources said. Two terrorists were killed and two others were captured in the 3 a.m. (8 p.m. EST Saturday) attack, the military command said. The command said four Israelis, including two children, were killed and four others wounded.

SALT II treaty discussion to end

The final details of a SALT II treaty will be discussed early next week by Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin. The intense series of discussions — 19 so far this year — were suspended for the weekend as Vance took a short-country holiday in Virginia. He met Dobrynin for about 40 minutes Friday afternoon, but by mutual agreement there was no information given out later about the meeting. Carter said he expected the next Vance-Dobrynin meeting would take place early this week. The basic text of the complex Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty is reported to have been completed, although exact language must be drafted on two key articles. One covers the upper and lower limits for modifying the size of missiles. It has been agreed, according to diplomatic sources, that an increase in size of 5 percent would, by definition, constitute a new missile. Each would be permitted to develop only one new type of missile in the course of the treaty. Neither side would be permitted to encode the telemetry information being sent back by missiles during testing. Both sides say the other has resorted to such concealment, giving rise to suspicion of potential violations of the arms agreement.

WEATHER

Partly cloudy and mild with a high today of 70 and a low of 60. Wind will be N.N.E. at 5-10 m.p.h.

THE BATTALION

MEMBER
Texas Press Association
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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.

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Letters to the Editor

2-percenter speaks out

Editor:

With the close of the semester coming nearer, I can't think of anyone who'll be more pleased than I. I transferred to A&M from Kilgore College this year with high hopes of having the times of my life for the next couple of years here. Well, things just weren't to be, at least not for me. Never have I seen so many reserved — or call it shy or stuck-up, to you own preference — people in all of my life! I realize that living off campus puts a strain on social activities on campus, however, this has been to an extreme.

I have caught some flak from friends here for apparently being a so-called "2-percenter." Maybe this letter will explain to them and I hope that all of you "Good Ags" will read this with an open mind.

The first thing the school did was to somehow record my home address as being somewhere across College Station and listed another number and address in the student directory. One of these days I'd like to visit San Antonio. I hear it's nice. I had no idea of this mistake until I went to preregister last fall. Then I went through seven hours of one runaround after another, including scraping up \$30 to pay a fee that was mailed to San Antonio, I guess.

Now comes the annihilation of my poor little sports car. God help me! Last fall some folks stole my gas cap and a few days later helped themselves to my stickshift knob, which I'm sure came in handy on the column of their '67 Bel Air. That was trivial in contrast to the month of March. First, one night before spring break, someone backed into the front fender. His spring break was apparently all ready in full swing and he wasn't letting anything stop it. He wasn't paying for anything either. I never saw or heard from a soul. Six hundred and fifty bucks down the tube and I haven't left town. Hey, I'm back with my shiny car for one week and bang! This time the guy has no insurance. I hope I don't have to pay another \$600. I'm scared to bring the car back now. Believe it or not I'm still sane, barely. Next comes the ultimate test that nearly did me in.

Last Wednesday while pausing in the MSC during some typical weather here at C.S. — a monsoon — another friendly Aggie helped himself to my umbrella. Big deal right, heck I only paid seven dollars for it, besides I enjoyed the swim.

Now, my advisors finally help me. They tell me it would be to my benefit to consider seeking another major. To this I say "wrong." I've decided to seek another school.

I know that not everyone here commits felonies and tedious little crimes, however, they all seem to follow me like a cloud. Oh, by the way, it only happens here, you know like "Nowhere but A&M." I can assure you I'm not proud to have attended this school and none of my friends or future family will think of enrolling if I can help it.

One last word, to you people out there who have no connections whatsoever to things like this, I wish you all the luck in the world. Don't let them get you down.

—Mark Barnard

GTE strikes again

Editor:

Gee, I just changed apartments — within the same apartment complex. I

needed two services attended to: the phone and cablevision.

I called cablevision. They were out the next day and hooked up the TV to a previously installed outlet. No charge.

I called the phone company. They came out the following week and hooked up the phone to a previously installed outlet. Thirty-five dollars! And time and material were no different.

Where is consumer protection when you really need it? And where will this week's grocery money be next week? Gee ... no GTE!

—Mark Rubash, '81

Writing the editor

The Battalion welcomes letters to the editor on any subject. However, to be acceptable for publication these letters must meet certain criteria. They should:

✓ Not exceed 300 words or 1800 characters in length.

✓ Be neatly typed whenever possible. Hand-written letters are acceptable.

✓ Include the author's name, address and telephone number for verification.

Letters to the editor are printed as a service to our readers. Publication of a letter is never guaranteed. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters to remove grammatical errors and to avoid litigation.

Address letters to the editor to:

Letters to the Editor
The Battalion
Room 216
Reed McDonald Building
College Station, Texas 77843

New national holiday

By DICK WEST
WASHINGTON — Each year, it seems, more and more people join in the observance of Taxmas, the ritualistic income sacrifice that takes place on April 15.

It should be a joyous occasion. Beating the filing deadline, unburdening one's self of IRS forms for another year, sharing in the support of democracy — those surely are activities to gladden the heart.

Yet you can tell from the Taxmas Night photographs published last week that the throngs gathered at post offices to mail their returns weren't in a festive mood. Some had faces longer than the lines they were standing in.

Clearly, Taxmas lacks something — something that keeps it from generating the good cheer and fellowship manifested on such occasions as Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving and Valentine's Day.

The missing ingredient, I believe, is symbolism.

Christmas, Easter, et al, are symbolized by jolly little fables and figments that add to the gaiety. Who can resist Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, Cupid, the Great Pumpkin and so on?

Before Taxmas can similarly fill its adherents with merriment and warm glow, it must acquire some cutesy, adorable folklore of its own. Here's one way to get a legend started:

A young girl writes a letter to a newspaper asking whether there really is a Fairy Auditor.

The girl, whose name can be Virginia, or maybe North Dakota, says she has heard that the Fairy Auditor dwells somewhere in the far recesses of the IRS. On Taxmas Night it flits out through the loopholes to protect last minute filers from the Martinsburg Monster, as the IRS computer is called.

She also says she has been told that if the filers claim the proper deductions, don't forget to sign their returns, address

their envelopes properly and apply the right postage, the Fairy Auditor will bring them a rebate.

Isn't that a lovely legend? Once disseminated, it should put the Fairy Auditor right up there with St. Nick, the Easter Bunny and the Tooth Fairy in philanthropic symbolism.

But fable alone isn't enough. To compete with the other figmentary benefactors, the Taxmas symbol will need some sort of visual personification.

Perhaps the IRS should commission the Disney studios to create a cartoon version. Then, on Taxmas Night, post offices that remain open to accommodate 11th hour filers could add to the fun by displaying cardboard cutouts of the Fairy Auditor.

Those waiting in line to mail their returns could drink toasts to IRS Commissioner Jerome (Soft-hearted Jerry) Kurtz and sing carols like "Away in a Tax Shelter" and "O, Little Town of Leavenworth."

Few would be so credulous as to expect an actual rebate, of course. It's the spirit of Taxmas that counts.

Talk with Dr. Miller

The Battalion's new reader's letter section gives students more access to the newspaper and to the University.

"Talk with Dr. Miller" is a forum for readers to address questions to the administration about University policies and procedures.

Questions should be addressed to The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, and should specify that they are to be used for this column. Names and phone numbers will be required on all questions and Dr. Miller has the option to decline to answer a question or request others on the staff or faculty to answer it.

Questions and answers will be published on the editorial page.

