

# VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION • TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY • THURSDAY • JULY 31, 1979

## Army should pledge its help to unwitting drug volunteers

At the prodding of a civilian organization, a few of the 2,490 men who participated in an Army drug testing program are beginning to step forward and share the horror of their experiences.

In the 60s and 70s, the Army asked for volunteers to participate in the experiment. Those who did volunteer said they were not told they would be testing a drug 10 times more powerful than LSD. Some were told they would attend chemical warfare school, others that they would be testing clothing. In exchange for their cooperation, they were promised extra pay, leaves, steak dinners, maids to clean their rooms and no KP. Not only did they get these, they also got shot with a drug whose effects can last up to 80 hours.

The drug — known as BZ — was part of the Defense Department's search for the ultimate chemical weapon

that would incapacitate without killing. And incapacitate it did if the stories told by some of the participants are true. Reports of flashbacks and suicidal tendencies are prevalent among the tales these men have to tell.

The department admits the men were not given follow-up examinations, but said the drug caused no lasting, harmful effects despite the protestations of the few volunteers who stepped forward at the request of American Citizens for Honesty in Government.

The Army showed stupidity and irresponsibility in using human guinea pigs to test a drug whose effects are highly questionable and which may have possible life-time traumas associated with them.

It is ironic that a country whose government officials seem so anti-drug oriented would condone the trial of a hallucinogenic drug on unwitting subjects.

The men who participated in this experiment deserve special consideration from the government — both financial aid if earning ability was impaired and medical and psychiatric help if they are still suffering the debilitating effects of the drug.

The citizens' group has taken a step in the right direction. They have promised respondents to their advertisements medical exams to check the after-effects as well as requesting the men's service records. A class action suit is also being considered.

Men who are drafted to fight a war for their country should not have to fight one against it, too. Everyone should desire to reach the bottom of this atrocity and to find out whether similar incidents have occurred and then see that nothing like this occurs again, whether it be on our own soldiers or our enemy's. —K.L.R.

## Construction, construction everywhere

### The price of progress is concrete

Like the Gulf Freeway in Houston, the campus of Texas A&M University will never be finished.

Everytime the Board of Regents meet, you can count on another plot of University land to be torn to pieces to build another structure. It is just a matter of time before every square inch of this campus will be covered with concrete or "Prarie Film."

Of course, there is no easy solution to this problem. New students and more research facilities are needed make sure the University keeps its current rate of progress as an educational institution.

But sometimes it is a pity to see an old campus structure or a grassy knoll destroyed for the sake of a new dormi-

tory or science lab.

The old Board of Regents house is an example. It is one of the oldest structures on campus. A fire during the last spring semester severely damaged the house. The regents decided to tear it down rather than restore it. In its place, a new modular dormitory will be built. A gazebo to commemorate the house will also be built.

So a situation with no solution seems to exist. The dorm is needed, but a historical house has to fall.

It would seem cheaper to restore the old house, locate the modular dormitory elsewhere, and forget the gazebo.

But then there would be the prob-

lem of where to put the new dorm. The land next to Hotard could be used, but then Texas A&M would lose even more of its dwindling greenery.

Maybe there is a solution in the world of modern architecture. Texas A&M has a progressive school of architecture, despite the concrete monolith they house themselves in. Surely an aspiring environmental de-

sign graduate could show the regents a way to build without giving up historical structures or grass and trees.

But no matter what the solution is, we should hope it comes before we lose all of our grass and old buildings. I would hate to see the campus turn into a monument to the wonders of modern concrete construction.

—K.A.T.

## Gas rationing plan breaks down — again

By DON PHILLIPS  
United Press International  
WASHINGTON — It was all a misunderstanding.

At least that's what House Democratic leaders say happened when standby gasoline rationing legislation broke down in confusion last week, gutted by an amendment by Rep. Benjamin Gilman, R-N.Y.

Only moments before the amendment passed, a nearly identical one by Rep. James Broyhill, R-N.C., had been defeated by nearly the same margin. For some reason, the sentiment in the House had flipflopped.

Rep. John Dingell, D-Mich., shocked by the strange turn of events, halted further action on the bill.

The vote on the Gilman amendment — which adds a new layer of congressional approval to any rationing plan — may be reversed later after Democratic leaders have a chance to twist some arms.

These factors combined to upset the rationing apocryph: —Gilman himself is popular among Democrats as a man who usually "plays it straight." They had

no reason to suspect when he argued that with his plan Congress would not be put in the position of having a system thrust on it at the height of a gas emergency.

Dingell and his supporters argued a new obstruction did not need to be put in the way of the bill — but they did not hammer at the theme that if the House disliked the preceding Broyhill amendment, it should dislike Gilman's.

The information sheet on upcoming amendments put out by the Democratic Study Group apparently did not adequately explain the amendment — at least according to some members.

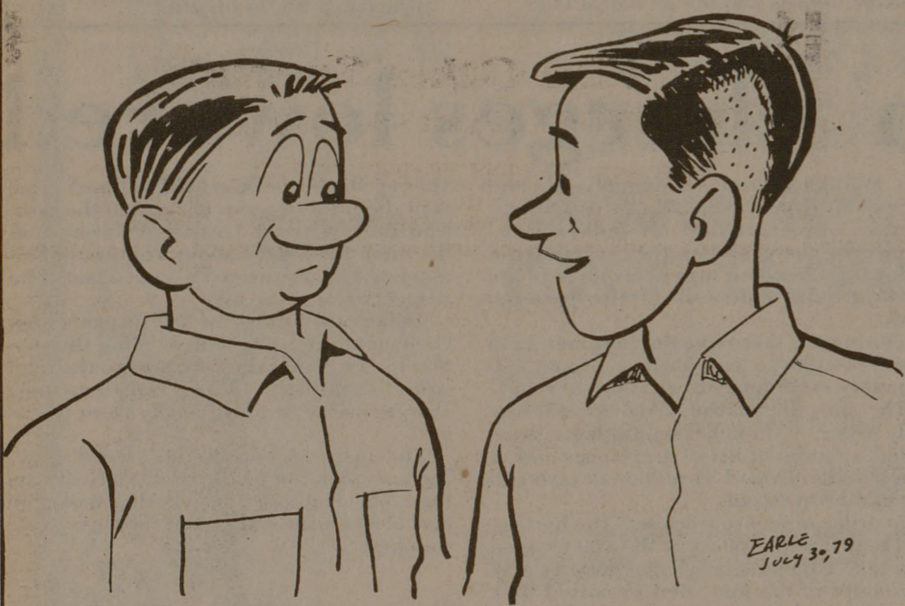
The vote took place at the dinner and cocktail hour, as the House worked late to complete the bill, so many members arrived at the last minute and had to make a quick, snap decision.

An analysis of the Gilman vote indicates 46 Democrats reversed their voting patterns.

The embarrassing vote may come back to haunt the Democrats. Republicans already are gleefully waiting to compare the first vote on the Gilman amendment with the next.

Slouch

by Jim Earle



## The moral equivalent of bank robbery

By DICK WEST  
United Press International  
WASHINGTON — Reports from here and there reveal that spot shortages of prison cells are developing across the country.

Several states already have experienced scarcities, most recently Virginia. Almost

400 Virginia prisoners were paroled ahead of schedule this week because of overcrowded conditions in the state's slammer.

So grim is the situation, some penologists are urging that President Carter make a televised appeal to the American people to commit fewer crimes.

"I'm not going to get into a big fingerprinting match over who is responsible for the cell shortage," one penal expert told me. "You could blame the governments for failing to build enough new jails. You could blame the courts for sending more prisoners up the river than the coolers could handle. Or you could say it is the

fault of greedy felons who have driven up the crime rate faster than additional hoosegows could be provided.

"Whoever is responsible, what it boils down to is the old supply-and-demand relationship. Ultimately, the only solution is going to be a cutback in the number of convicts."

I said, "Do you favor some system of mandatory controls?"

"If you are talking about rationing, no," the penologist replied.

"In principle, judiciary limitations are fine. We could assign each court a ceiling on the number of offenders it could put in stir. Or we could give judges sentencing quotas that would prevent them from throwing the book at guilty parties."

"In practice, however, prisoner rationing would be an administrative nightmare. While it might keep police, prosecutors and judges from overloading the clinks, how do you restrain grand juries from handing down indictments and trial juries from bringing in guilty verdicts?"

I said, "I can see the difficulty. On the other hand, the results of presidential exhortations during other shortages do not inspire confidence that Carter could induce voluntarily cutbacks on crime."

The penologist did not share my qualms. He insisted that forceful leadership from the White House would inspire a high degree of compliance among criminal elements.

"When people realize that the alternative to reducing the crime rate will be long lines of lawbreakers waiting for prison cells to become available, the pressure to curtail transgressions will be overwhelming," he predicted.

"This is Carter's big chance. Maybe his appeals to the public to hold down wages and prices and conserve energy did land largely on deaf ears. But if he can devise workable guidelines for stabilizing the prison population, all will be forgiven."



## TOP OF THE NEWS

### STATE

#### Judge trims Weed Eater's patent

Texas-based Weed Eater Inc. has lost its patents for a flexible line grass trimmer because a federal judge said the ideas for the machine were not unique. District Judge George Templar said he also rejected the patents because of inadequate specifications. The decision, filed Friday and made available Monday, concluded improvements made by George C. Ballas and Thomas N. Geist, on behalf of Weed Eater of Houston, were not sufficiently different from several earlier trimmers to warrant a patent.

### NATION

#### Prison returns to routine

Walpole State Prison in Massachusetts returned to "normal routine" Monday, less than eight hours after inmates released five hostages they held at knife point for more than 10 hours to protest living conditions and visitation rights. A guard at the state's only maximum security prison said the facility had returned to a "normal routine" and no general lockdown was in effect, but would not elaborate. Spokesmen at the Corrections Department were not immediately available for comment. The five hostages, including Superintendent Fred Butterworth, were released tired and shaken shortly after midnight from the old death row cellblock. None of the hostages was seriously injured, according to corrections spokesmen.

#### Americans healthy, but SG not happy

Although Americans generally are healthier than ever, an unprecedented survey of the national health by the surgeon general called for a second public health revolution to stem the death toll from heart disease, cancer and accidents, much the way polio, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases were tamed in the past. The report said the U.S. death rate has dropped from 17 per 1,000 persons per year in 1900 to fewer than nine per 1,000, while infant mortality rates dropped to a record low of 14 per 1,000 live births in 1977. A major reason for these improvements, it said is the vast reduction in deaths from communicable diseases, but deaths from degenerative diseases such as heart ailments, stroke and cancer have increased sharply and now account for 75 percent of all deaths in the United States.

#### The times they are a-changing

Joan Baez, a voice of social protest in the '60s, found herself the target of protests during the weekend. About 40 demonstrators attended her concert Saturday night at the Paramount Northwest Theater in Seattle to give Baez a hard time about her recent denouncement of the Vietnam government for its treatment of the "boat people." Members of the Vietnam Support Committee demonstrating outside the theater said recent statements by Ms. Baez, citing human rights violations in Vietnam, were unfounded. The protesters carried signs reading, "The CIA loves Joan Baez." They also passed out leaflets pointing out what they believe are inaccuracies in her statements.

#### Nevada says 'return to sender'

The state of Nevada Monday refused to accept a shipment of radioactive wastes for burial, saying it contained liquids and thus was unacceptable. State Radiological Health Officer John Vaden said the liquid was found in canisters in a shipment of radium liquid waste that arrived by truck at the dump site in Southern Nevada from Texas. "We loaded it up and sent it back," said Vaden. He said it would be returned to the Todd Shipyards in Houston. He said the company contended it had inspected at least 50 packages of the waste and found no liquid. Nevada does not accept radioactive wastes for burial in liquid form.

#### Firewoman wants breast for her child

The Iowa Civil Rights Commission began hearings Monday in the case of firefighter Linda Eaton, who contends the city fire department discriminated against her by prohibiting her from nursing her son at work. Attorneys for both sides said the courts eventually will have to decide whether women should be allowed to breast feed their children while at work, regardless of the outcome of the commission's week-long hearings. Jane Eikleberry, Ms. Eaton's attorney, said the complaint has been changed to include an allegation the city has retaliated against Ms. Eaton and harassed her since she filed the original complaint in late January. Ms. Eaton, 26, has been allowed to breast feed her son, Ian, twice a day at the station under a temporary court order.

### WORLD

#### New York to London for \$99

New York to London for \$99 will be only one of the startling new realities in the unregulated commercial aviation of this decade, says an economist. "With new airplanes and greater numbers of passenger seats to be filled, the last half of the 1980s will see better air fare bargains than anyone ever guessed," says David R. Raphael, a senior economist at SRI International and chairman of the Subcommittee on Aviation Assumptions of the Transportation Research Board. The board is a unit of the National Research Council and operates under the authority of the National Academy of Sciences and Engineering. Raphael thinks elimination of government regulation of routes and fares and subsequent competition among airlines will drive fares down, increase personal travel and airport congestion and result in boosted airline profits in the last half of the 1980s.

### THE BATTALION

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