

Staff photo by Colin Valentine

Spit shine

Rolf Butters, a junior mechanical engineering major from Mesquite, shines his motorcycle by Rudder Fountain. Butters, a member of the Texas A&M Motorcycle Club, tried to raise interest in the club.

Taste tests begin study

Light affecting milk

WASHINGTON — Milk sold in one-gallon clear plastic jugs loses both its nutrients and flavor when displayed for several hours in supermarkets, a dairy researcher from Clemson University says.

The dairy scientist, Jack Janzen says he thinks general loss of flavor in milk may have something to do with an ongoing decline in U.S. milk consumption.

Whether he can prove it is another thing, but Janzen said he is going to try. He has completed taste tests using panels of students and consumers.

Another phase will involve families who will receive two quarts of milk at a time, one that has lost its nutrients and flavor and one that has not.

With detailed questionnaires filled out by the families, Janzen said he hopes to be able to determine which of the samples they would be more likely to purchase and whether the families would drink the good sample more often than they drink milk now.

Janzen said if he can prove his theory and show there are economic implications of selling off-flavor milk to the public, the industry might change the containers in which they sell milk.

The problem is that milk in plastic jugs displayed under fluorescent lights loses vitamin content and gets an off-flavor that Janzen says is like the aroma of a storeroom filled with paper products.

Scientists call it light-activated oxidized flavor, possibly caused by a chemical reaction involving the light and the milk's protein. It happens two to four hours after milk is placed under the lights. After six to eight hours, most people can detect the off-flavor. After 10 to 14 hours, everyone can tell the difference.

That cardboard-like flavor, as Janzen describes it, is not present in most milk sold in cartons, because the cardboard is coated with plastic.

Janzen said loss of vitamins begins almost immediately after milk in plastic jugs is put on grocery shelves under fluorescent lights. Other researchers have found losses in vitamin A, an important nutrient in milk.

Although vitamin C is not important to milk, Janzen has studied it because it is easy to measure. He found the vitamin C in milk is lost after 24 to 36 hours under lights.

Although the industry has not yet been convinced to change containers, Janzen said, "One solution would be simply to go back to old-fashioned fiberboard containers.

"Or they could use an opaque plastic bottle that light couldn't penetrate, like those used for bleaches."

Janzen is hoping his research may convince the industry to put in color or a light-ray inhibitor in the jugs.

"I think one reason (why the industry has not changed) is they feel quite strongly that the housewife demands the plastic container because of the handle," he said.

The glass milk bottles sold a generation ago did not cause problems because when they were in use, stores did not sell milk in open refrigerated cases and the milk was not put under fluorescent lights.

Janzen's work several years ago found 60 percent to 65 percent of milk in plastic jugs in supermarkets had the off-flavor.

One thing Janzen has learned and found to be especially disturbing is that young adults who have known nothing but plastic jugs are beginning to accept the off-flavor as normal.

Criminals cash in on elderly victims

WASHINGTON — Purse-snatchers or corner stickup men are more likely to pick on the elderly rather than younger people, a Justice Department study says.

Overall, crimes of violence against the elderly have decreased in the past seven years, according to the study by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. The study said about 75 percent of all crimes against the elderly were common thefts.

In the category of personal larceny with contact, such as theft of a purse, wallet, cash or other property, the elderly were more often victims. People over 65 were victims 3.2 times per 1,000 incidents and people under 65 were victims 2.9 times per 1,000 incidents, the study showed.

"When a purse is snatched or a pocket is picked, the direct contact with the offender may

be very frightening even though it results in no injury," the study said. "And the economic loss involved may be particularly upsetting to a person who is living on a fixed income."

The study was based on statistics from 1973 through 1980 gathered by the National Crime Survey. It showed those between the ages of 12 and 25 were most likely to be crime victims.

Crimes of violence against people 65 and older decreased from 8.5 per 1,000 in 1973 to 6.9 per 1,000 in 1980, the study said.

Another study released earlier, "Crime Against the Elderly in 26 Cities," showed that elderly are least likely to be injured, most likely to have their purses snatched or pockets picked, most likely to be victims of completed rather than attempted crimes, and more likely to report crimes.

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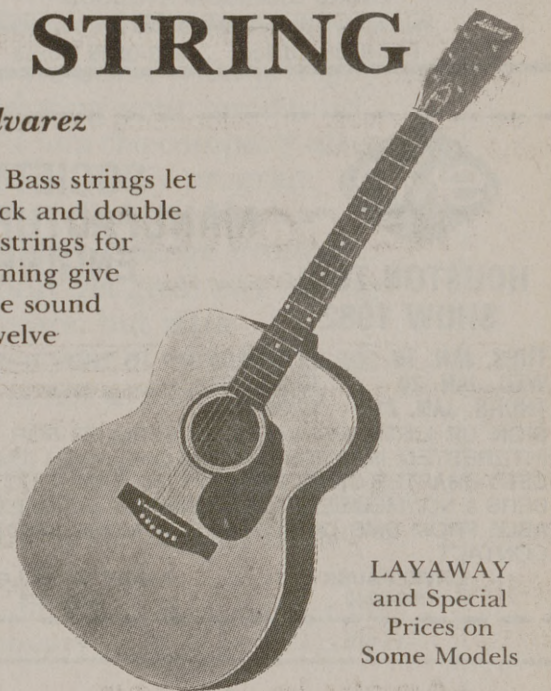
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Tough opposition
for Reagan in '82

WASHINGTON — Though riding a wave of success in Congress to approve his budget cuts, President Reagan realizes he may not win all the battles the next time around, a White House official says.

The official spoke in a background interview, which means his name cannot be used. He said the administration recognizes that this year, it may be facing a showdown it cannot win.

"We've won seven major legislative battles without a loss," he said. "Quite candidly, we can't reasonably expect to continue to do that well forever."

"Sooner or later, we're going to have a legislative defeat. It stands to reason," he said, knocking on a wooden table for luck.

The result apparently has been to work realistic goals into the 1982 administration game plan.

"This is a political year, we have elections coming up and it's a lot tougher to make these hard political choices in an election year," the official said.

Reagan managed to pump

out a surprising series of victories last year by bolstering his Republican strength in Congress last year with a number of southern Democrats.

One problem this year will be opposition to raising defense spending while cutting funds for social programs. The official said the sentiment for slashing defense funds is "increasing (and) extremely strong on Capitol Hill."

"We understand that, but the president has made his position extremely clear on this and we just have to deal with this issue. When we confront it, we're going to be fighting for that increase, because that's what the president wants," he said.

"It's important that we get off on the right foot, that we send something up that has some chance of succeeding," he said. "We're very conscious of that in drafting this package and we're conscious of looking at some political tradeoffs."

He would not discuss specifics of Reagan's budget, which will be unveiled Feb. 8.

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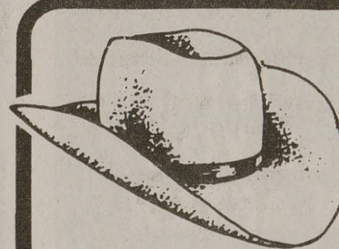
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