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March 10, 1982

Visit to Poland prompts woman to begin volunteer aid project

United Press International
DALLAS — Prior to December 1981, Pat Biczynski ran an Erma Bombeck kind of household, tending to a gaggle of teenagers, a fertile pooch and a house that leaked water each spring.

After December, Biczynski — mother of four and keeper of six new puppies — was the one-person staff and executive council of an ambitious volunteer Polish aid operation.

"I've always been a student of history," said the Irish-born woman, who also works as an energy company public relations official. "Now, in a way, I'm a participant in history. It may sound a bit corny, but I feel I have a sense of mission. And I know I can help."

Her campaign, dubbed "Poland Running on Empty" and founded two months ago in a

two-room office in Dallas' Campbell Centre, immediately captured the attention of Polish and U.S. church relief organiza-

"We work through a number of charity organizations and we know the goods are getting to the people, not the government." — Pat Biczynski, head of Polish aid operation.

tions and offers for help began pouring in.

Recently, she said, the Polish American Congress, based in Chicago, called and asked if she could use some grain. She said she could. She was given

800,000 pounds of midwestern wheat.

"I've already lined up a miller in Buffalo, N.Y. who will turn it into flour free of charge," she said. "Now I just have to locate some trucks to bring the flour to Houston and get it from there to Poland."

She also is working to ship 300,000 pounds of meat from Iowa to Maryland and is promoting a church group's 50-truck convoy into Poland. She said she had arranged free shipping from Houston and New Orleans and had guaranteed ways of getting the supplies to the people.

"We work through a number of charity organizations, and we know the goods are getting to the people, not the government," she said. "The martial law government is letting charity supplies come in. They're that desperate for help."

The idea of a volunteer clearinghouse for Polish aid was born during a summer trip to Poland with her Polish-born husband, Andre.

"We visited his family, and that was the time before martial law," she remembered. "The atmosphere was almost giddy exhilaration, free speech."

But hardship was all around — food lines, power shutdowns, medical shortages.

"Andre's uncle had his leg

amputated," she said, "and there wasn't any aspirin for pain reliever, no bandages, no antibiotics, no heart medicine, no insulin." The Polish relative offered the Biczynskis their meager ration of fruit, bread and eggs.

"Several times we sat down at the table and our hosts watched us eat," she said. "There was no enough food left for them. My food stuck in my throat."

A more troubling vision emerged when the Gathor family traveled to the place where Andre spent the cream of his youth — Auschwitz concentration camp.

"Andre wanted to show the boys," she said. "My son is 17, the same age as my husband when he was first arrested. We found Andre's bunk. We saw the galleries full of nothing but human hair, shoes and baby buggies. It was a terrible night mare."

But the experience, she said, bolstered her resolve to do something personally to prevent that kind of hell from returning.

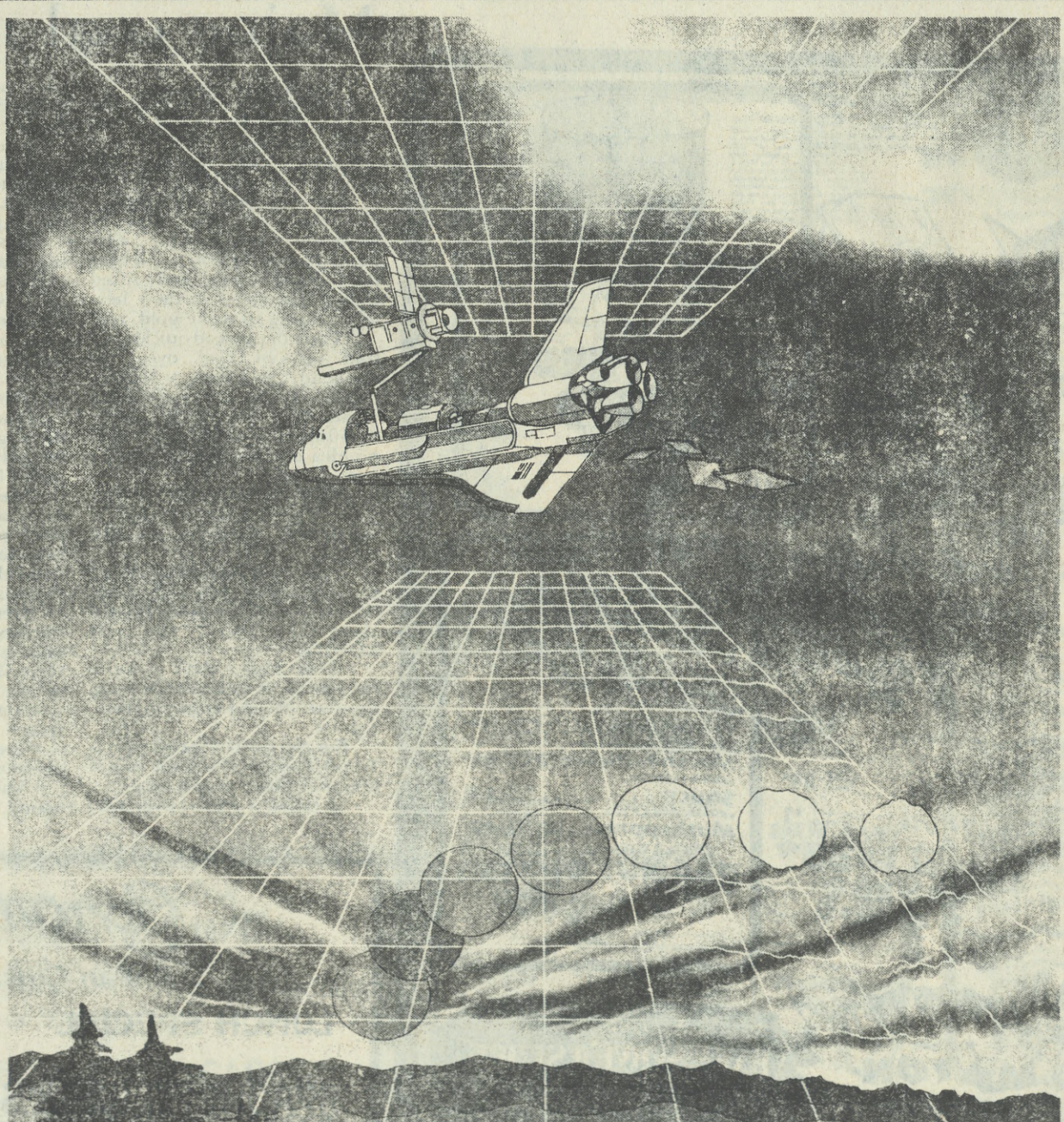
"They were brutally crushed," she writes in a campaign leaflet. "(Polish)

Archbishop Glemp asked the Poles to unite 'because no one will help us.'

"He is wrong, of course."

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Today's Almanac

United Press International
Today is Wednesday, March 10, the 69th day of 1982, with 296 to follow.

The morning stars are Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn.

There is no evening star.

On this date in history:
In 1862, the U.S. Treasury issued the first American paper money, in denominations from \$5 to \$1,000.

In 1945, B-29 bombers of the U.S. Army Air Force began incendiary raids on Japan in the

waning days of World War II.

In 1969, James Earl Ray pleaded guilty to the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King and was sentenced to 99 years in prison.

In 1981, President Reagan arrived in Ottawa for the first visit of a U.S. president to Canada since 1972.

A thought for the day: President Dwight D. Eisenhower, while supreme commander of Allied forces in World War II, said: "In the final choice, a soldier's pack is not so heavy a burden as a prisoner's chains."

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MANDATORY INFORMATION
MEETING

March 10 or 11

7:00 p.m. Room 701 Rudder

REQUIREMENTS:

Minimum GPR 3.25

Jr. Classification: Min. 60 hrs.-Max. 94 hrs. Attended 1982 Spring Semester at TAMU.

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