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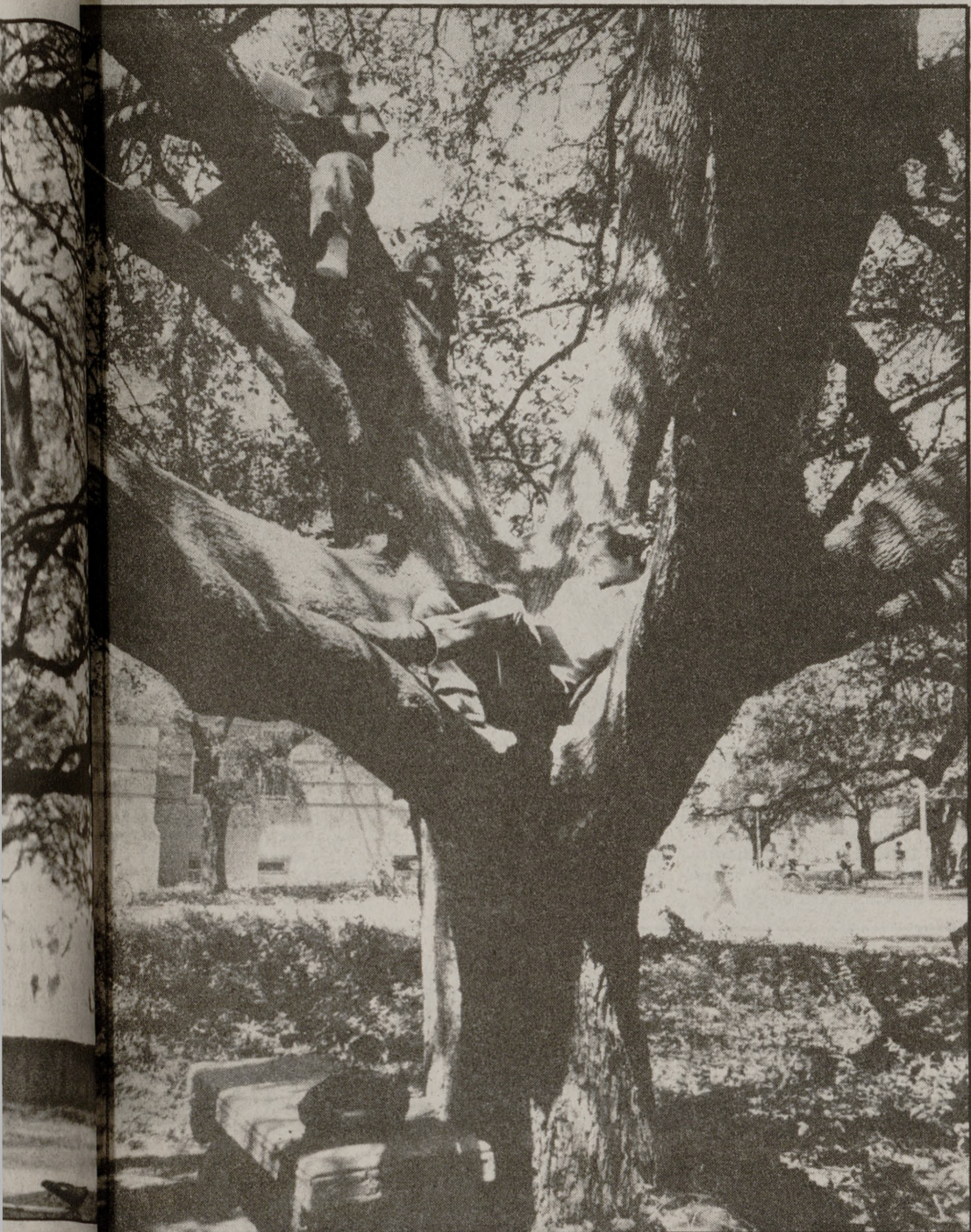


photo by Larry Coates photo by Athena Vourvoulis

Students reach heights

Enjoying the spring air and sun are Ben Barlass, a junior computer science major from Rockport, and Sarah Herlick, a biochemistry doctorate student from Hemlock, Mich.

Phillips gets patent after legal battle

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court has handed Phillips Petroleum Co. a victory in a lengthy dispute over patent rights to the material that goes into making plastic straws and numerous other household products.

The justices Monday refused to review an appellate court ruling that upheld Phillips' patent right to crystalline polypropylene.

For many years, Phillips was embroiled in a legal dispute with three other companies over who first invented the plastic in the 1950s. The substance is used to manufacture such common items as straws, upholstery, carpet and toys.

The U.S. Patent Office in 1971 granted the patent to Montedison of Milan, Italy. Phillips, Standard Oil of Indiana and E.I. du Pont de Nemours Co. challenged the patent decision.

In 1980 a federal judge gave the patent to Phillips.

The 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in October upheld the judge's ruling and the Supreme Court, by refusing to review, let it stand.

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Oil reserves fortify nation, Ford says

United Press International
ST. JAMES, La. — Former President Gerald Ford and Energy Secretary James Edwards say the stockpiling of 250 million barrels of oil in Louisiana salt domes will disarm the oil-producing countries' "oil weapon" and strengthen U.S. foreign policy.

Ford, who created the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to reduce dependence on the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, said he was delighted to see the end result Monday when the 250 millionth barrel of oil was pumped into the reserve.

While praising SPR as a major milestone for strengthening American flexibility in foreign policy, Ford warned: "America not yet out of the woods."

"We must remember the hardships that we have endured. We must renew our dedication to regaining our nation's independence."

Reagan has built the SPR to the point where it can effectively blunt the oil producing countries' use of the so-called oil weapon. OPEC's power is waning."

Ford, Edwards, Louisiana Gov. Dave Treen and other dignitaries stood in front of the tanker Cove Navigator while a pipeline was linked from the ship to the SPR terminal. The energy secretary then ordered workers to open the valves and start pumping oil into underground tanks in south Louisiana.

Edwards said recent allegations by a Louisiana official who reported \$8 billion worth of oil was stolen from SPR and replaced with hazardous wastes were outrageous.

Last week Steve Johnson, a field auditor for the Louisiana Office of Conservation, said he had delivered documents showing that much crude was diverted from the program when oil was transferred by barge at the Bayou Choctaw salt domes near Baton Rouge, La.

Edwards said: "These are rather outrageous allegations. The total project so far only cost \$6.8 billion."

While not commenting specifically on a Justice Department investigation of SPR, Edwards conceded there were reasonably minor violations in the program.

"Any time you have this kind of money involved, you have to look for fraud, waste and abuse," he said.

Any possible theft involved less than 9 million barrels of oil, Edwards said.

Since the SPR was started in 1977, the federal government has stored enough oil to survive six months without foreign supplied energy.

The Energy Department plans to pump 336,000 barrels a day into underground salt domes in Louisiana and Texas until the United States has a pool of 750 million barrels.

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