

Hydrogen publicity hides real discovery

Last week, national attention was focused on a team of Texas A&M researchers who developed a more efficient method of producing hydrogen fuel from water using solar energy. This discovery was heralded as a "breakthrough that could change the world as profoundly as the discovery of electricity."

Reporters from around the world — Boston, New York, Canada, Australia and London — joined in the media hoopla.

Now Dr. John Bockris, director of the research team, says he may have overstated himself when he first described the discovery. Since the initial announcement, he has gone from calling the procedure a "quantum leap" to a "breakthrough" to an "academic advance."

From the beginning, Bockris said time is a key element in the development of hydrogen fuel. Conversion to a hydrogen-based economy will be gradual and will require hundreds of millions of dollars, he said.

So why did Bockris choose to publicize his discovery instead of following the routine procedure of publishing his findings in an academic journal before making a public announcement?

This deviation from routine created a situation that now threatens to overshadow the discovery. More questions are being raised about his presentation of the discovery than the discovery itself.

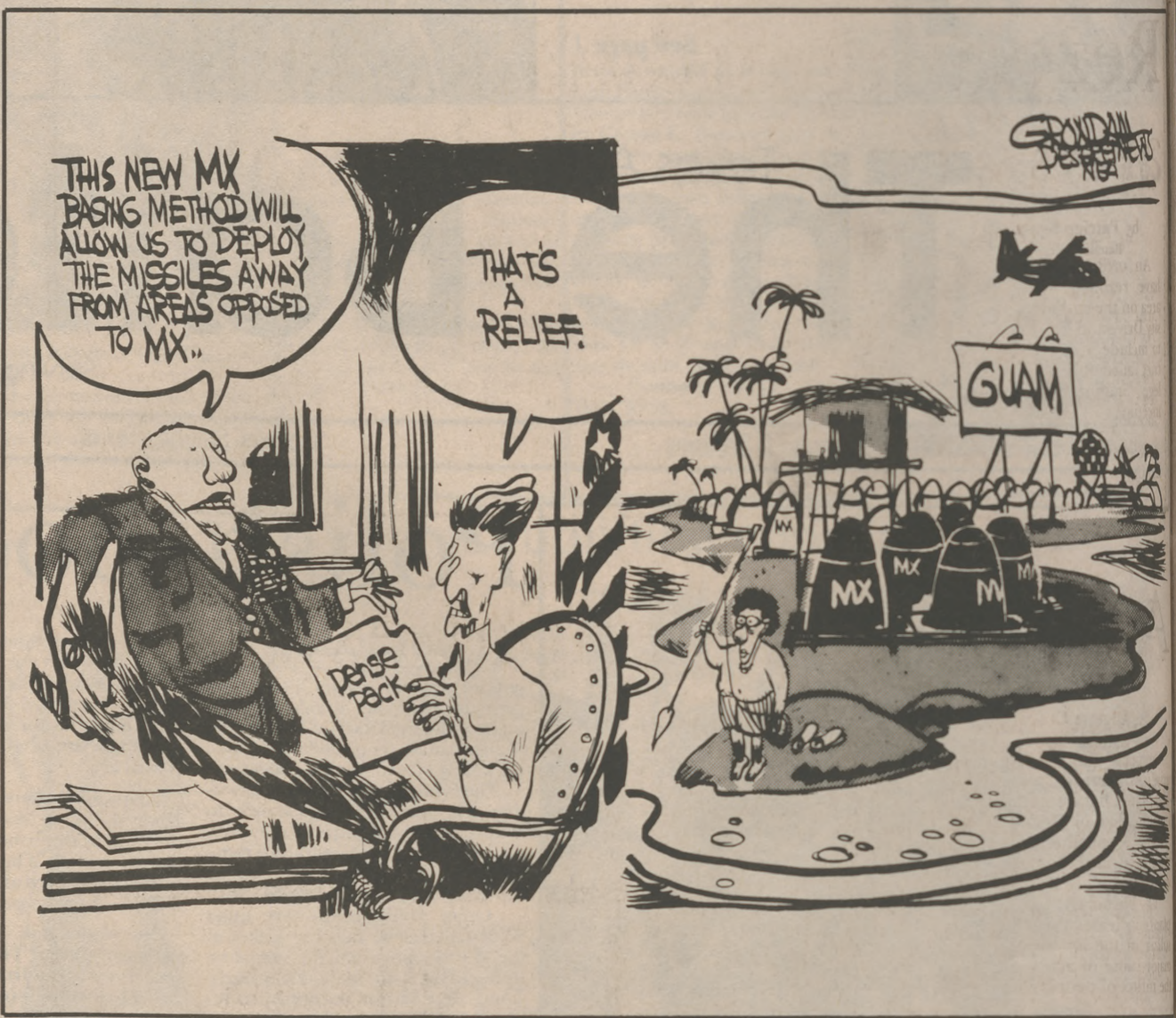
Bockris is trying to regain control of the situation by setting the record straight. He said he would accept responsibility if unrealistic conclusions had been drawn from his original statements.

But why wasn't the record straight to begin with?

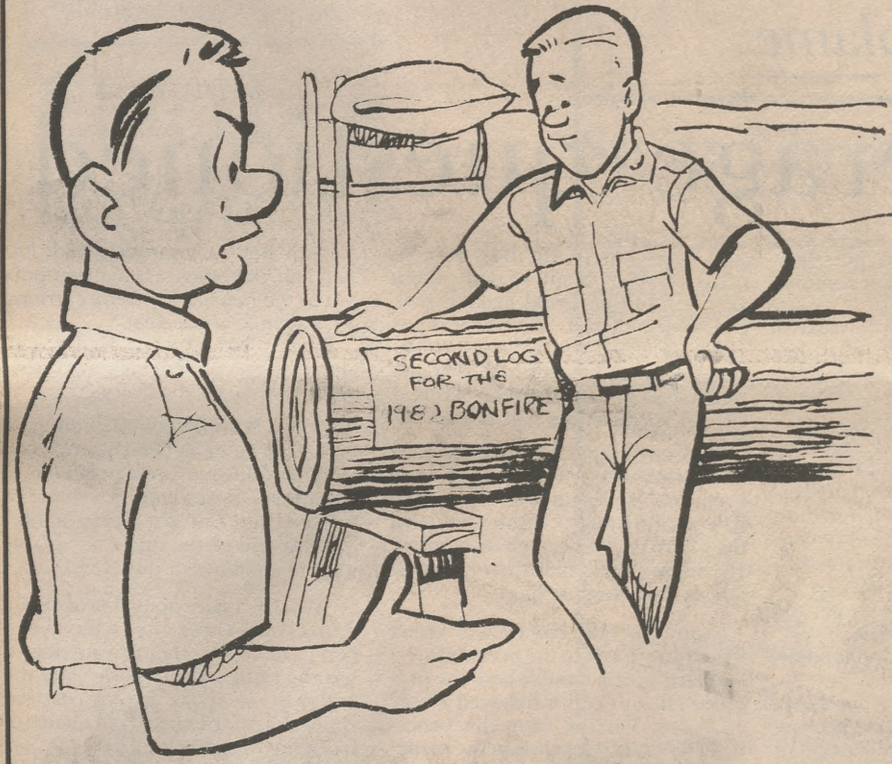
Did the public and the media overreact? Probably. Maybe too much was said too soon. Maybe Bockris should have published the article and let his peers evaluate it. Then tested and retested the discovery. And then made the public announcement.

This time the order was reversed. Bockris announced the discovery, then elaborated on its implications. And visions of a hydrogen society attracted the nation's attention.

But it's too early to tell whether the discovery was overemphasized. As Bockris said, time is a key element in the development of hydrogen as a fuel source.



Slouch By Jim Earle



"I'm not upset because you didn't cut the first log, I'm upset because you put it in my room."

Joy to the point of gluttony

by Dick West

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Has America finally produced so many pleasure points that we have an enjoyment glut?

A Houston specialty store owner, Robert Sakowitz, seems to take the affirmative in introducing his 1982 Christmas catalog.

Sakowitz doesn't go so far as to predict that enjoyment lines will be forming in poorer areas the way the needy now line up for giveaway rations of surplus cheese.

But he does aver that "there are so many possibilities for enjoyment that people are often frustrated with the overabundance of choices."

To that observation I can only add a rueful "Ain't it so?"

I don't know whether as yet any marriages have been dissolved because of incompatibility stemming from a couple's inability to agree on which ways to enjoy themselves.

But if divorces are granted on such grounds, it presumably will be up to the courts to decide which party gets custody of the roller coaster.

A "full size roller coaster" costing a minimum of \$2,430,000 is one of the items touted by the Sakowitz catalog as "the ultimate gift."

Sakowitz appears to believe a gift such as this would quell any sense of frustration we might feel due to the overabundance of choices for enjoyment.

"To be able to enjoy one's self without envy or covetousness or frustration is indeed one of the great gifts of life," he philosophizes.

Maybe so, but I can see where having a private roller coaster in your neighborhood could create more frustration than it abates.

This much I can tell you for certain: If my neighbor Phizbeam gets a roller coaster for Christmas this year, and I don't, I am going to be as covetous as all get-out.

It is difficult for me to see how anyone could look out the kitchen window and watch a neighbor enjoying a loop-the-loop in his backyard without experiencing at least a small twinge of envy.

Frankly, the shoppers on whose Christmas lists my name appears are more the types who would gift-wrap stock tickers.

Featured in the Sakowitz catalog, also with the roller coaster, is a \$3,158 ticker that provides "real time price information on the stocks or commodities you select."

"The ticker tape printout gives you a permanent reference to the day's transaction," says. "The perfect way to monitor your investments!"

While I can envision myself deriving a certain amount of enjoyment from keeping track of the Dow Jones averages in the privacy of my own home, the prospect of owning a ticker tape printout sort of spoils the concept for me.

Having one's own inventory of old ticker figure at parades, sure. But I'm afraid there aren't enough parades in my neighborhood to completely eradicate the frustration.

I can foresee having to reduce the stocking by flinging ticker tape confetti across the fence at Phizbeam as he whizzes by on his roller coaster.

That is the point where I would favor enactment of an enjoyment conservation program.

Letters: Drink, but please don't drive

Editor:

I am moved to write this letter in response to Mr. Goerner's letter (Oct. 8) regarding the proposed raising of the drinking age back to 21 years of age. While, as a non-drinker of alcoholic beverages of 23, my viewpoint might be considered biased, I felt compelled by his letter to voice a dissenting opinion.

The consuming of whatever one pleases (short of killing oneself) is one of many rights we have in this country. Driving an automobile while intoxicated, however, is (thankfully and I believe rightfully) against the law. This abuse of personal liberties is far too prevalent in all age groups; and, perhaps the 18 to 20-year-olds should not be singled out. The neglect of responsibilities, however, can justly result in the loss of corresponding privileges. Some see this legislation as another attempt to legislate morals, a practice which historically is unfruitful (e.g. Prohibition). The danger I see is not the infringement of drinker's rights, but the continuing, needless taking of life by those who contend that they can "handle their liquor" and then get in their cars and prove otherwise.

Mr. Goerner is all too correct that raising the legal drinking age to 21 will not stop 18 to 20-year-olds from drinking, any more than speed limits stop speeding. It may, however, keep a few more drunk drivers off the roads and save a few more lives. What is needed most surely are stricter DWI laws and a more efficient enforcement of them.

To Mr. Goerner, and all Ags everywhere, by all means, communicate your opinions to your elected representatives, now and on election day. Too many of us have been silent too long. But, when you write or phone your congressmen, senators and governor, I ask you to tell them that you are also tired of innocent people

dying at the hands of irresponsible, unthinking people.

I implore you all, if you drink, please don't drive.

Byron Rogers
Graduate Chemistry Student

Volleyball team praise

Editor:

Of all the sports events that I have seen at Texas A&M, last night's volleyball game against the University of Texas has to rank among the best, if not the best! From the beginning until the end, there was excitement and the smell of victory in the air, and the fans showed their approval throughout the game as the team beat the hell out of t.u.

One has to give credit to the whole team, for they played their hearts out. There was never a moment in the game when they didn't play 100 percent. The volleyball team is now in control of their own fate, and I believe that their fate is nothing less than number one in the Southwest Conference.

Aggies, if you have time next Monday night, come watch the volleyball team beat the hell out of Rice. You never know, you might enjoy it more than the football game.

Keep up the hard work girls!

Charles Pietsch, '85

Give Sherrill time

Editor:

I am writing in reply to the letter submitted by Mark W. Shomaker, concerning Coach Jackie Sherrill and the Fighting Texas Aggie Football Team.

Mr. Shomaker, you were very wrong in your assumption that your feelings

also reflected those of the student body. Jackie Sherrill is the best thing to happen to this University in years. The man is a living legend, and you Mr. Shomaker, question his ability as a coach.

Coach Sherrill's credentials should be enough for anyone to see that he definitely knows football. He's had years of coaching experience, coaching greats like Tony Dorsett and Hugh Green, while leading Pittsburgh to a national championship, and many top ten rankings. Coach Sherrill did not come to Texas A&M looking for a job, A&M went to him with an offer that he accepted.

I believe that on those grounds alone he should be given some breathing room, and a chance to install his own program. To say that he should have been there for the game is purely ridiculous. Sherrill was in that game from beginning to end and I'm sure nobody felt worse about losing.

Mr. Shomaker, you are obviously not a football coach. Even the worst coaches know that without any kind of running game a quarterback is a prime target for an interception. Please let our coaching ace, Jackie Sherrill, handle the football team. I can assure you that you won't be sorry. He will take the Aggies to the Cotton Bowl in a very short time. I think Coach Sherrill deserves that time.

Charles C. Murphy, Jr. '86

Cavalry problems

Editor:

Every Corps organization maintains the highest standards of discipline and professionalism, except the Cavalry. As loyal and proud Aggies, we wish to offer some suggestions.

First, learn to ride. There is a proper way to ride a horse. Might we suggest you read "The Cavalry Manual of Horsemanship and Horsemastership," by Gordon Wright — the official manual for military equitation. Also, Animal Science 311, Horse Management, and 312, Basic Equitation might be of some use.

Secondly, neither FM 22-5 nor the Officer's Guide authorize a Larry Mahan crease in campaign hats. Those are part of your uniform and not cowboy hats. After all, you are still in the Corps, aren't you?

Finally, your organization requires a great deal of money to operate (i.e., feed, tack, land, horses etc.) — more than most other student-run organizations. Until such time as you fund the Cavalry by yourselves without donations or University assistance, we believe that training time (riding lessons, horse care and stall care) should be mandatory and tough. We would be very angry to find that we had donated a horse, and his rider was using him to play tag instead of practice drill, or worse yet, not practicing at all.

In conclusion, we realize that you have no pride in the way you look or perform, but the rest of the University does. A mounted drill team is still a drill team. How about a little spit, polish and precision, and, above all, a little military bearing?

Barry Papke, '80
Kim Papke, '80

Correction

In a photo of Aggie mum sales in Thursday's Battalion, several students were misidentified. The people in the photo were actually Ken Doherty and Scott Kilough selling mums to Allen Dunwoody as Stuart Perkins watches. The Battalion regrets the error.

The Battalion

USPS 045 360

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The Battalion is published daily during Texas A&M fall and spring semesters, except for holiday and examination periods. Mail subscriptions are \$16.75 per semester, \$33.25 per school year and \$35 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.

Our address: The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald Building, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.

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