

Aggie QBs vie for No. 1 spot

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A day in the life of special people

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Texas A&M The Battalion

Serving the University community

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Shuttle mission winds down

United Press International
CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — The crewmen of the shuttle Challenger cruised into their fifth and last full day of flight today, with space officials confident the mission's spectacular space walk has paved the way for more ambitious outside ventures.

Paul Weitz, Karol Bobko, Story Musgrave and Donald Peterson return to Earth Saturday from a mission that must rank as one of the most successful yet in the two years the space planes have been flying.

Musgrave and Peterson spent nearly four hours space-walking in Challenger's cargo bay late Thursday to cap the achievements of this sixth flight in the \$10 billion shuttle program.

"It was quite a spectacular show," flight director Harold Draughon said Thursday night. "Everything was really smooth. It was really a clock-work procedure."

"The crews were quite well rehearsed and obviously very prepared to do the tasks we asked them to do. They went through them in a very timely fashion."

The spacemen ended their busy day about 10:30 p.m. during the Challenger's 55th orbit.

Challenger is scheduled to end its maiden, 2.1-million-mile voyage with a 12:47 p.m. landing Saturday on a paved runway at Edwards Air Force Base in the high desert northeast of Los Angeles.

'Dial-a-Shuttle' lets people listen in on astronauts' conversation

by **Donn Friedman**
Battalion Reporter

"This is Mission Control, Houston. Do you copy, space shuttle?"

There was no immediate response to the beckon, but in the background a space-walking astronaut could be heard talking to his partner inside the craft.

"If you guys get a chance, turn your lights off," the astronaut said as he floated outside the shuttle. Then the signal blacked-out as the shuttle passed over Guam.

The signal, which had traveled from space to a phone in The Battalion newsroom, then was replaced by a promotion for the organization that was sponsoring the "dial-a-shuttle" connection.

By Thursday, more than 552,000 people had listened — the astronauts can't hear you — to the conversations of the Space Shuttle by calling 1-900-410-6272.

"Dial-a-Shuttle" — like all 900 phone numbers — is charged to the caller. But instead of being charged a rate calculated on the distance, which fluctuates with the orbit, the listener is billed 50 cents for the first minute and 35 cents for each additional minute.

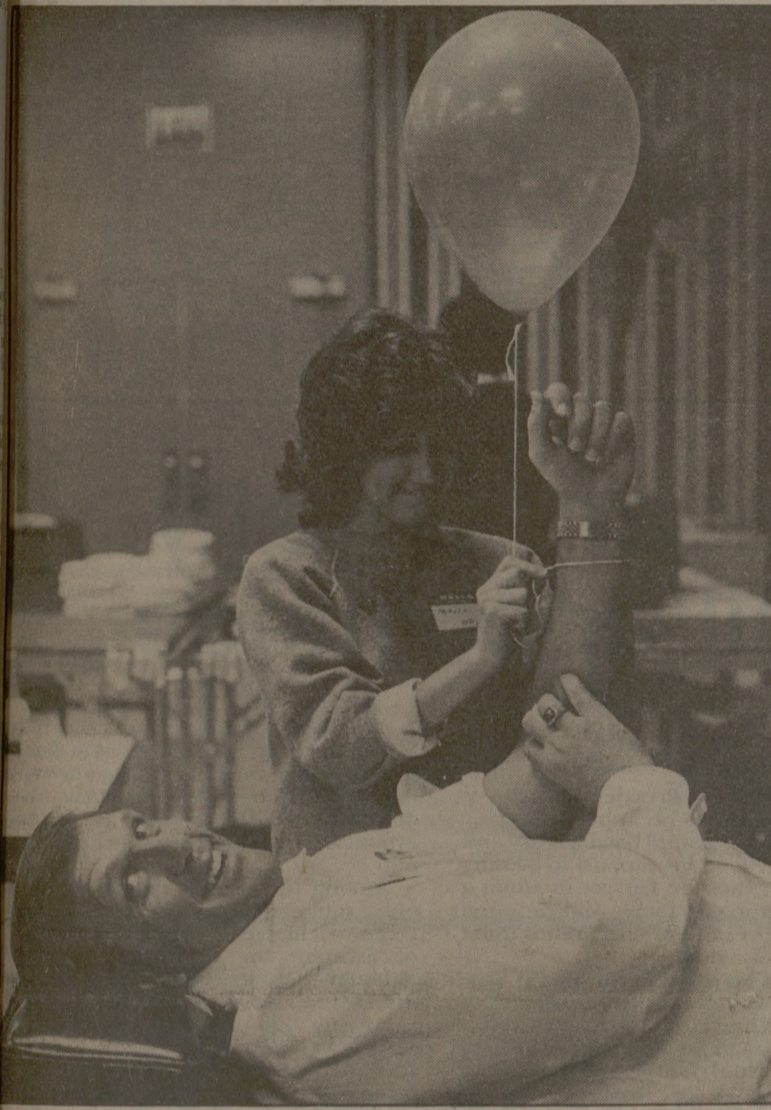
When man first landed on the moon July 21, 1969, Americans watched on television, but what they saw looked like an Arctic blizzard. Now, because of advances made in telecommunications, the astronauts' conversations sound as if they could be speaking from across the country rather than from across the ionosphere.

The space-line is sponsored by the National Space Institute, a non-profit organization. The organization's purpose is to inform the public of the importance of the scientific exploration of space.

The National Space Institute is operating the line from a trailer behind the Johnson Space Center near Houston. Their signal is fed live from Mission Control — under the name of NASA Select Mission Audio. It's one of five lines of communication that the shuttle sends from space, and is the same line that is sent into the press room.

With less than a 0.25 second delay, audio is fed into hard-wired phone lines that transfer the calls to the American Telegraph and Telephone "Dial-It" center in Kansas City. When a person calls the "Dial-a-Shuttle" number, they're directly hooked into the conversation. Up to 18,000 space buffs can listen to the space jargon at one time.

The 24-hour-a-day phone coverage began Monday at 5 a.m. and will continue until landing — scheduled for just past noon Saturday.



staff photo by David Fisher

Does he bleed red or maroon?

Texas A&M head football coach Jackie Sherrill applies pressure to the spot where the needle went in when he gave blood Friday, while Mitzi Muirhead, Omega Phi Alpha member, ties a balloon to his wrist as a reward. The blood drive ended Thursday and 2291 people showed up to give blood. Muirhead is a junior from Plano studying education, and was helping out with the blood drive.

China-U.S. cultural ties cut

United Press International
PEKING (UPI) — China cut off all cultural and sports exchanges with the United States for the rest of the year Thursday in retaliation for the administration's decision to grant political asylum to Chinese tennis star Hu Na.

The decision announced by the official Xinhua news agency plunged Sino-U.S. relations to a new low.

"The Chinese government will stop implementing all the remaining

items of cultural exchange with the United States" for 1983, said the agency, quoting a statement by China's Ministry of Culture.

The Chinese decision is effective immediately, the agency said.

Affected were at least eight official exchanges ranging from art exhibitions and film weeks to scheduled visits by American journalists, Xinhua said.

Commenting on the Chinese move, a U.S. Embassy spokesman said in a

terse statement, "We consider it to be an overreaction on the Chinese side and a matter of regret to us."

The embassy spokesman refused to elaborate, saying subsequent statements would have to come from Washington.

Miss Hu, 19, who defected last July during a tennis tournament in Santa Clara, Calif., was granted political asylum by the United States Monday.

China's retaliation was announced less than 24 hours after Peking, acting

with unusual speed, lodged an extremely bitter protest with the United States over the decision and warned U.S. relations with the communist giant would suffer.

Diplomatic sources said U.S. Charge d'Affaires Charles Freeman and an embassy cultural officer were summoned to the Culture Ministry to receive the decision from Ding Gu, director of the ministry's Bureau for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries.

New group to discuss local consumers' cable problems

by **Kelley Smith**

The newly formed Cable Improvement Association will meet at 7:30 p.m. Sunday in the Bryan-College Station Eagle meeting room to discuss problems consumers face with local cable companies.

"We are going to put together a complete and comprehensive list of problems consumers are having with the cable companies and present it to the cable companies and the city councils (of Bryan and College Station)," said David Hill, a founding member of CIA.

The meeting, which is open to the public, will start a petition drive requesting that the councils investigate the complaints.

Hill, a political science professor at Texas A&M, said there has been simmering discontent with the quality of cable service for some time, but said that the recent deletion of some stations was the blow that got the group together.

Rodger L. Lewis, educational television program director at KAMU-TV, said programming decisions were made without regard to the community. The companies made no attempt to talk with the subscribers about the programming and did not offer any options, he said.

Lewis said customers paid for extra channels, but when the channels were removed, the rates did not go down.

Several other communities reprogrammed or dropped stations because of a new copyright law requiring cable companies to pay royalties on the programs they broadcast from other stations.

Hill said many consumers are concerned about the quality of service they receive from the companies. Cable company employees often seem discourteous to customers and are slow to take care of service problems, he said.

The first priority of a cable company should be high quality broadcasting, Hill said. However, many

parts of the city are receiving cable of poor quality, he said.

Lewis, a cable subscriber who says he cannot watch three of his channels because they are so bad, said technical standards should be established.

Midwest Video and Community Cable, the two companies servicing the area, were granted franchises by the cities more than 20 years ago, Lewis said, and the franchise agreements are too broad and outdated.

Since the boom in the cable business, newer franchise agreements for other companies have become lengthy and specific, Lewis said.

"We need to show the cities there is enough citizen interest and legitimate complaints to call the franchises in to question," he said.

Hill said he would like to hear from on-campus Texas A&M students who receive the cable service.

"Students sort of think they are not a part of the community so they don't complain," he said.

Bill to aid farmers wins endorsement

United Press International
AUSTIN — Proposed legislation designed to stem the flow of raw agricultural products out of Texas and give farmers a greater share of the consumer food dollar has drawn the endorsement of Agriculture Commissioner Jim Hightower.

The measure, introduced by state Sen. Ted Lyon, D-Rockwall, would authorize low-interest financing so independent producers could form agricultural processing industries on the county level, Hightower said Thursday.

"Texas is losing hundreds of mil-

ions of dollars annually because we find ourselves in the unenviable position of exporting raw agricultural products at a cheap price and importing processed food and fiber at a high price," Hightower said. "That's where the money is."

Lyon's bill would authorize counties to create Agriculture Development Corporations to sell tax-exempt revenue bonds. Proceeds from the bond sales would be available through low-interest loans to producers wanting to begin processing and marketing operations.

Two-alarm fire destroys house behind Northgate

A two-alarm fire destroyed a one-story house behind the Northgate area early today. The cause of the fire has not yet been determined.

The house, in the 300 block of Patricia Street, was vacant.

The College Station Fire Department arrived at the fire at 1:48 a.m. and had the blaze under control by 2:29 a.m., Fire Chief Douglas W. Landua said.

The blaze charred overhead electrical wires and light winds blew embers onto the roofs of nearby buildings.

"It was pretty dangerous there

for a while on the west side of the building, but the electrical department finally got here and cut (the power) off," Landua said.

Power in other neighborhood buildings was not affected.

"(Northgate) certainly was in danger for a while, but we had people up on the roofs trying to watch for (the spread of fire)," Landua said. "We were fortunate that it didn't hit a spot that would catch on fire. But so far, there is no damage to those (buildings) across the street."

Most Northgate merchants and revelers had gone home, but the

fire quickly drew a crowd of about 200.

A group of students held an impromptu yell practice in front of Chanell's Pizza — about 30 feet from the fire. Several other spectators snapped photographs in front of one of the four fire trucks that responded to the alarm.

But Landua said the crowd didn't pose too great a problem.

"They really didn't bother us that much this time," he said. "I have seen it when it will hamper you — when it gets too noisy, the firemen talking back and forth aren't really getting all the messages they need to get."



Staff photo by Diana Sultenfuss

College station firemen battle a two-alarm blaze early Friday morning in the 300 block

of Patricia. No one was hurt in the fire. The house was vacant at the time.

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forecast

Continued cool today with a 20 percent chance of showers and a high of 58. Northerly winds of around 15 mph. Cloudy to partly cloudy tonight with a low near 40 and a 20 percent chance of showers. Mostly clear skies Saturday with a high near 66.