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Michener discusses Texas, University

by Jennifer Carr

Pulitzer prize-winning writer James Michener held his standing-room-only audience spellbound Tuesday morning as he answered questions ranging from education to what he thinks of Texas to how he deals with writer's block.

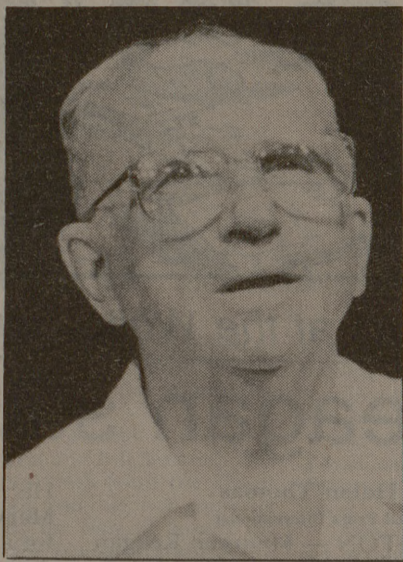
Michener said it was two years ago, during one of his dead periods, that the Texas governor and Senate invited him down to look around and see if he was interested in writing a book for the state's sesquicentennial — the 150th anniversary.

As he drove from San Antonio to Austin with the chief of police, Michener said, the chief pointed out that the stretch of highway they were traveling was the most dangerous in the United States. If he stopped a car headed south, chances are it was stolen in the north and was headed to Mexico to be sold, the chief said. And stopping cars headed north was even worse. Chances are the car was full of drugs headed for the north. Gunfights also weren't unusual, he said.

When they got to Round Rock, Michener said, he met a Texas banker. The banker also had a story to tell. A man had come into the bank that day with \$1.25 million to deposit in a special account. The man's wife was going to New York and he didn't want her to get caught short of money.

That same night, Michener said, about 2 a.m., a Texas legislator was shot outside his hotel. As it turned out, the legislator, who was trying to get evolutionist Charles Darwin's teachings banned from Texas schools, had arranged the shooting to get sympathy for his cause.

"I figured any state that could provide me with three such marve-



James Michener

lous stories in 24 hours weighed enough."

Texas is a major power factor, Michener said. It has the Alamo, San Jacinto, oil and a foreign border with a different language and religion. It's been its own nation, it's been to war with a foreign power and it's gaining representation in Congress. In a novel about the accumulation of power, he said, Texas has an advantage.

Michener said he follows Texas A&M's career with great interest. He compares it with the University of Texas and other universities and finds many similarities, he said, and Texas A&M stands high in comparison.

Michener said he is impressed by the number of honor students here, and by the attempts to attract outstanding faculty. However, he said Texas A&M is not as unique as some

people might think. He's not in awe of Texas A&M, but he said Texas is lucky to have the University.

Education is encouraging to young people — an avenue of escape from whatever position they are locked into, Michener said. The fact that Texas A&M is here is proof that this was true in the past. It's all open, he said, and he is baffled that people today don't take advantage of it.

As a student, Michener said he always looked a little farther, always tried to do something of excellence. He raised a cheer from the many educators in the audience when he said: "I can't conceive of education being effective unless term papers are required."

"The very good today are at least as good as I was, maybe even better," Michener said. It's the upper middle level that has deteriorated, which is a terrible group to lose, he said, because they are the ones who run society.

Michener compared education with the publishing industry, saying both are cheapening. Publishers all want established writers like Michener, not young writers who will someday be great.

This attitude has never been worse or more disadvantageous to young writers or to the world as a whole, he said. Publishers allow themselves to fall into the groove of a popular name or idea. The "follow the leader" ambiance leads to a cheapening of values, he said.

To break the pattern, Michener said one must do the best work he can in his own field, and "patronize and support those who try to break out."

"It is a writer's obligation to write in a variety of fields," he said.

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Israel envoy visits U.S. to discuss troop pullout

United Press International

Israel dispatched a top envoy to Washington today to discuss a partial pullback of its forces in Lebanon amid reports of new fighting with Syrian forces deployed in the eastern Bekaa Valley.

Israeli warplanes thundered over Beirut today and police said a roadside charge went off as an Israeli convoy was passing by in the southern part of Sidon, 24 miles south of Beirut. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

Since the June 6 invasion, 500 Israelis have been killed in Lebanon and Prime Minister Menachem Begin

has come under fire at home for his government's handling of the war and the occupation. The newspaper Ma'ariv said Prime Minister Menachem Begin already has decided to order the withdrawal from the Beirut area and the central Lebanese Shouf mountains and that it could start within weeks.

A senior official denied that a decision had been made to redeploy troops — a move opposed by Washington — and said, "There is certainly no date and no deadline," but he said Foreign Ministry Director-General David Kimche was traveling to Washington to discuss partial pull-

back despite Washington's fears that a unilateral redeployment into south Lebanon would encourage Syria to keep its troops in Lebanon.

Deputy Foreign Minister Yehuda Ben-Meir, who said he was unaware of a decision on redeployment, said Israel "does not need anyone's permission if it wants to bring the Israel DTWTE Forces back from any parts of Lebanon."

Israeli and Syrian troops traded mortar fire for an hour in the Bekaa Valley Monday, the second serious confrontation between the opposing armies in a month along the confrontation line in eastern Lebanon, Beirut radio said.

Green Berets set up facility in Honduras

United Press International

PUERTO CASTILLA, Honduras — More than 100 Green Berets — many Vietnam veterans — began constructing a 200-acre military base to train Salvadoran troops in Honduras by the end of the month.

The 114 Green Berets, wearing canvas "slouch" hats and fatigues, landed Tuesday in the Caribbean port of Puerto Castilla, 180 miles northeast of Tegucigalpa, joining six

other American soldiers at the site.

The military base is controversial in Honduras and in other Latin nations, which see it as a major escalation of the Reagan administration's military commitment in Central America.

The special forces troops have only about 48 hours to set up tents and construct field kitchens and other facilities on the brush-covered land,

before their transport ship, the USS Lemore Country, departs.

The group's commander, Maj. Arthur N. Zieske, 44, said his men would turn the 200-acre site, 6 miles

outside Puerto Castilla, into a temporary base ready to receive trainees by the end of the month.

Baptists asked to nix public school prayer

United Press International

PITTSBURGH — Southern Baptists, who comprise the nation's largest Protestant denomination, are being asked to oppose government-prescribed prayers in public schools.

A resolution opposing such prayer was introduced Tuesday at the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting, and will be voted on either today or Thursday.

The convention passed a resolution last year expressing support for voluntary prayer in public schools.

"When we get law into the regulation of religion in any fashion, we have violated what we believed as Americans since our Constitution was written," the Rev. Wendell G. Davis, pastor of a Baptist church in North

Carolina, told the resolutions committee.

Davis said he did not anticipate any opposition to his resolution.

The Rev. Jimmy Draper, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Euless, near Dallas, had predicted earlier the school prayer controversy would not be an issue.

Davis wrote the resolution jointly with James M. Dunn, the executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in Washington.

Dunn testified last month at Senate subcommittee hearings on a constitutional amendment allowing voluntary school prayers, supported by President Reagan. Dunn told the hearing "the Constitution as it now stands offers ample protection for worship."

In another resolution introduced,

The Rev. J. Donald Keen, of the Park Road Baptist Church in Charlotte, N.C., asked support for a mutually verifiable nuclear weapons freeze between the United States and the Soviet Union.

"Without a change in our present course there will not be a chance to work on other problems, because otherwise human life as we know it will be destroyed," Keen said.

Draper, speaking at the opening session, told 17,000 conventioners representing nearly 14 million Southern Baptists that only people with a deep commitment to Christ can change a "sin-cursed world."

"We have made a firm commitment to biblical principles, for which principles our forefathers even dared to die," Draper said.

Lewis predicts two sessions

United Press International

SAN ANTONIO — Because lawmakers failed to act on a number of key issues during the regular legislative session, House Speaker Gib Lewis predicts Gov. Mark White may call two special sessions, the first in two weeks.

Lewis said Tuesday he expected White to call the first to solve the brucellosis controversy and to allow lawmakers to renew the Texas Employment Commission. He said he

thought White would call a second special session in "four or five months" to deal with education funds.

The brucellosis issue could be resolved Thursday when federal Judge H.F. Garcia is expected to rule in Austin on whether to quarantine Texas cattle.

A state court order prohibits enforcement of the state's current brucellosis program. Brucellosis is an illness that affects calving and milk

production.

The Department of Agriculture planned a quarantine for June 1 because the state's brucellosis law does not meet federal guidelines, but the quarantine was postponed by court order.

White had hoped to meet with Department of Agriculture Secretary John Block to discuss the controversy Tuesday night, but a spokesman for Block said there was no meeting Tuesday and none was scheduled.

A&M to become center for marine geoscience research

by Angel Stokes

Texas A&M will become an international center for marine geoscience research as science operator of the advanced Ocean Drilling Program — one of the largest basic research programs in the world.

The program, sponsored by the Joint Oceanographic Institutions Deep Earth Sampling, began in 1968 with four member institutions and lat-

ter expanded to 10. Texas A&M is a member institution.

Texas A&M will manage scientific and ship operations, as well as provide a storage place for retrieved ocean cores, Dr. Stefan Gartner, chief scientist of the program and a professor of oceanography at Texas A&M, said.

He said all JOIDES member institutions were invited to submit an offer to become science operator for the program to the Joint Oceanog-

raphic Institutions Inc. board of governors, which manages the deep-sea drilling for the National Science Foundation.

"A&M made the best offer," Gartner said. Texas A&M made a commitment to build a special storage facility for the cores and facilities for offices and laboratories, he said, as well as fund the transition period between projects and provide three or four faculty positions in connection with the project.

Final plans for the facility and its location have not been approved.

A permanent staff of at least 100 people will be associated with the \$30 million a year project, which is funded by the National Science Foundation and supplements from some foreign governments.

JOIDES formulates the general program, he said, while A&M develops the detailed program and provides the support staff that goes on the exploration ship.

Dr. Philip D. Rabinowitz, director of the project and a professor of oceanography at Texas A&M, said the final proposals must be approved by July 8 by the JOI committee and submitted by July 15 to the National Science Board. The board is the last hurdle, he said.

Texas A&M should begin taking over the project in mid-October, he said.

Previously, the Deep Sea Drilling Program — a data-collecting phase of

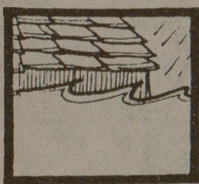
the program — was operated by Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla, Calif.

During that time the Glomar Challenger was built for the purpose of deep sea ocean drilling. Although the most advanced ship of its time when built, drill ships used for oil exploration and drilling have become more sophisticated than the Challenger, Gartner said.

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forecast

Cloudy to partly cloudy skies with a 20 percent chance of showers or thunderstorms through Thursday. The high today and Thursday near 89. The low tonight near 69.

Former student saves five lives in North Pole rescue mission

by Scott Griffin

On April 23, Major Don J. Currie, chief of operations and training at Thule Air Force Base in Greenland, led a rescue mission near the North Pole that saved five lives.

Currie, Class of '68, recently sent The Battalion a copy of the rescue report and several photographs.

"I don't know if the 'Batt' has ever been to the North Pole before," Currie said, "but I'm enclosing a picture that proves it has been there before."

Currie said his trip started out as an orientation visit to the Polar Research Laboratory at Ice Station Crystal. But before boarding his airplane, Currie was told that two Cessna aircraft used by the laboratory were lost near the Pole.

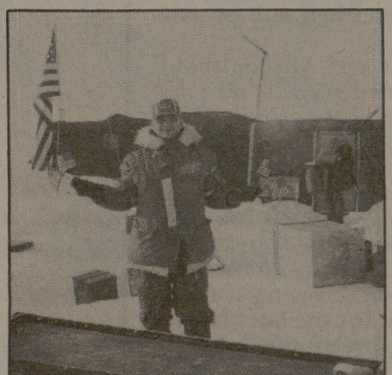
Currie described the mission in a recent issue of the his base newspaper, the Thule Times.

"We departed Thule at about 9 a.m.," Currie said. "Once we got airborne, we began to coordinate the search effort.

"We were lucky in that we still had periodic radio contact with the lost aircraft," he said. "But even though we could talk to them, we still had no idea where they were."

Currie said the navigation system used by the planes did not work well above 89 degrees north latitude.

"Shortly after we left Thule," Currie said, "the two Cessnas decided to land and talk over their



Maj. Don J. Currie

situation. Once on the ground, the aircraft pilots and Ice Station Crystal decided on a course of action. The Cessna then took off again, but were still unable to pick up the navigation signal being sent out from Crystal."

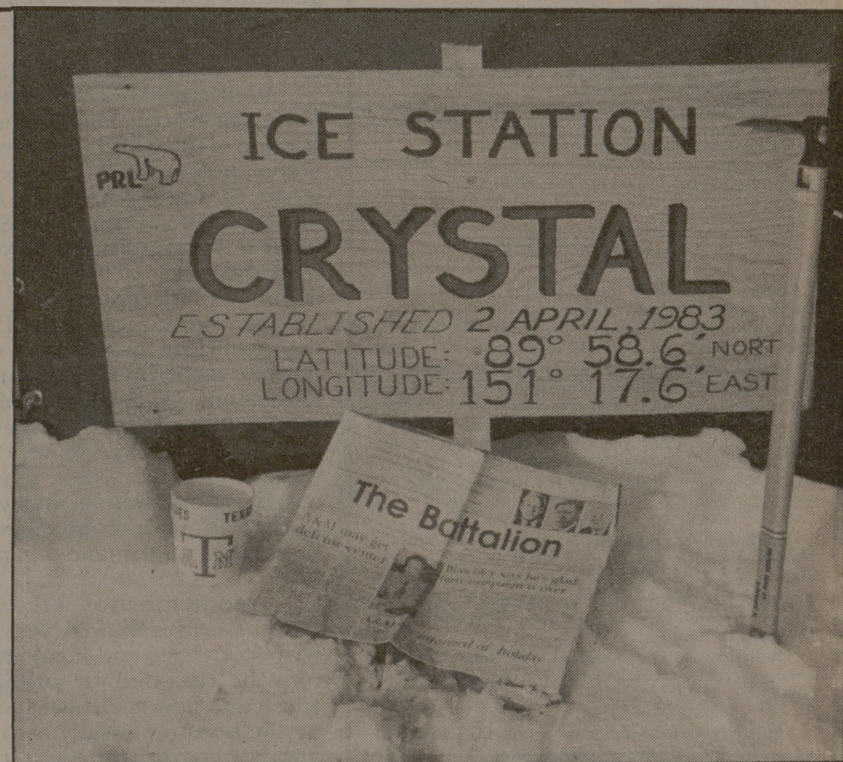
But Currie said the problems did not end there.

"Meanwhile, further north, one of the Cessnas was running low on fuel, and they both decided to land again," he said. "When they did land, the aircraft that still had fuel damaged its landing gear."

"Now they were really stuck," Currie said. "After they landed, we lost all communications with the aircraft."

Currie landed at Crystal at about 2 p.m., three hours after the last contact with the lost planes. About an hour later, the stranded crew contacted the station and reported that everyone was safe, but they were unable to move because of the damage.

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Maj. Don J. Currie contributed a bit of Aggeland to the North Pole, when he traveled to the Polar Research Laboratory at Ice Station Crystal for an orientation visit.