

Rainmakers at work in Texas despite experts' harsh criticism

United Press International
In drought-scorched fields across the High Plains and Midwestern prairie, men aim machines at the barren sky and promise rain.

They call themselves weather modification specialists. Farmers call them rain-makers. They come with the droughts.

"In west Texas, they came in droves when the bad, hot weather hit," said Bill Braden, agriculture spokesman with Texas A&M University.

Experts say the century-old art of weather modification thrives across the region.

In south central Oklahoma, farmers and ranchers help distribute small electric generators that spew particles into the atmosphere in hopes of inducing high-domed thunderheads to produce rain.

In the Diablo Plateau of west Texas, water officials lobby state officials to accelerate the licensing process for cloudseeding projects.

The hitch in rain-making, some experts say, is that there is

no proof it works.

"I hate to dispel all the hopes because of all the believers," said Wayne Decker, atmospheric science professor at the University of Missouri. "But there have never been demonstrated any positive results from such things as cloud seeding."

"I mean never, never."

Decker said the university conducted experiments in cloud-seeding for four years in southern Missouri.

"Sometimes it rained. Sometimes it didn't. We could never demonstrate that we caused the rain."

"We tried a lot of weather modification. All we ever got was hail and storms, hardly any rain," said Tom Cook, 46, a dryland wheat farmer from Levant, Kan.

Because of the hail and storm threat, the Texas Farm Bureau network was forced to issue guidelines on when and where modification techniques should be used.

Weather modification began as a science during the Civil War when observers noted it rained after heavy artillery barrages. Initially they thought the sound of thunder induced rain. Ex-

perimenters, including C.W. Post, the cereal maker, set off dynamite from hot-air balloons or mountaintops.

After World War II, silver iodide particles were injected into super-cooled cloud formations created in laboratories and rain resulted.

The region's most successful weather modification project using silver iodide is underway in west Texas on 3,700 square miles of farmland from Abilene to Odessa.

"We've been involved for 13 years and we wouldn't be spending the money and time if we didn't think it worked," said Owen Ivie, director of the Upper Colorado River Authority. "Our reason for getting involved was to increase rainfall and runoff into the lakes."

The UCRA owns two small planes that seed clouds selected by an agency meteorologist tracking wind movement and conditions. When the planes find promising updrafts, they release the minuscule particles—3,000 amount to a pin-point.

It costs the agency \$80,000 annually to maintain the program, but Ivie said critics are scarce.

"We have some who complain that we make it rain too much, and others who complain on religious grounds. They say if God wanted it to rain, it would rain."

Bob Riggio, licensing agent with the Texas Water Resources Department, said it is against the law to practice rain-making in Texas without a license. But the flim-flam artists still exist.

"In the latest scam somebody approached the Dallas area and asked farmers to put \$10,000 or \$20,000 in escrow in a bank," he said. "They said if it rains in the next month or so, they get to collect the money. If it doesn't rain, the money stays. The rain-

makers have nothing to lose."

Riggio said applications for weather modification programs are on the upswing.

"We just got a call from the Red Bluff water district (near El Paso) to start up a program, using a California contractor. The water district used seeding in the late '70s, then discontinued it," Riggio said.

"Now the district wants us to speed up the permitting process so the program can be started quickly."

Jim Kinder, a farmer from Cooktown, Okla., near the Texas border, heads a group that has been investing in ground-based particle generators since 1972.

"Everybody was taking our efforts for granted until 1981 when we stopped the program and we had our first below average crop in years," he said. "With the program we've had three bumper crops and five average ones."

"We have some 25 to 30 generators in Texas and Oklahoma. We think it works, he said."

Mideast conflict continues in Syria

United Press International
Israeli forces pulled out of Lebanon's Shouf Mountains Sunday, fighting off a Syrian tank advance with an air strike and leaving behind a region engulfed in sectarian warfare. A U.S. Marine was slightly wounded in the new clashes.

Artillery battles between Christian and Druze Moslem factions raged across the region and spilled again into the capital, slamming into the suburbs and Lebanese army targets near the U.S. Marines who surround Beirut airport.

Barrages of shells and rockets sprayed across the Christian half of the city and one stray rocket fell in west Beirut.

Radio reports listed two people dead. Among the casualties was a Marine who was lightly wounded by shrapnel in the arm. He requested his name not be released. An Italian peacekeeper suffered light wounds in the arm and leg.

The battle for the Shouf overshadowed a car-bomb attack in the south of Beirut, the stronghold of the Shiite Moslems who rebelled against the government of President Amin Gemayel last week.

State-run Beirut radio reported nine charred and torn bodies, including that of a child, and another 14 wounded.

Syria, which immediately began to advance in one area vacated by the Israelis, said the Israeli withdrawal to the long-term positions south of the dangerous Shouf meant "Lebanon becomes partitioned."

U.S. Middle East envoy Richard Fairbanks met President Amin Gemayel at the presidential palace. In Washington, senior Middle

East envoy Robert McFarlane met at the White House with President Reagan and congressional leaders.

Asked if the Israeli pullout would spoil U.S.-led peace efforts, Reagan said, "No, Israel had already delayed (the pullback) twice at our request."

Lebanese army plans to fill the void left by Israel appeared to collapse in the face of the abrupt pullback and the bitter fighting between the Christian Lebanese militiamen and their Druze enemies, backed by Syrian troops.

Some of the heaviest fighting erupted around the town of Bhamdoun, 12 miles east of Beirut, where Syrian troops were apparently intent on retaking positions lost to Israeli troops during the invasion 15 months ago.

"Two Israeli air force planes flying missions to cover the movement of the Israeli Defense Forces conducted three strafing dives against four tanks that crossed over from Syrian-held territory in the Bhamdoun area," the Israeli military command said in Tel Aviv.

Christian Phalange radio said its Lebanese Forces also destroyed two Soviet-made T-55 tanks in the Syrian advance on the town—a Christian enclave surrounded by Druze villages.

Israeli forces, moving under air cover, roared from the mountains in mile-long convoys of tanks, armored personnel carriers and troop trucks. The nighttime evacuation took only a matter of hours.

The only serious threat came when the forces were fired at with light weapons near the Christian village of

Deir El Kamar, but "Israeli tanks fired several shells at the source of the fire was silenced," an Israeli spokesman said.

The chaos in the wake of the withdrawal plunged the Lebanese government deep into crisis.

It had vowed to deploy its army in the vacant Israeli positions to head off the Christian-Druze fighting, but the Druze, accusing the army of backing the Christians, warned it would fight an army attempt to enter the mountains.

The only Lebanese army base in the Shouf came under attack by Sunday morning with the army reporting "men" had killed one soldier and wounded six at their positions in Kfar Matta.

Heavy fighting raged along the coastal highway south of Beirut after the last Israeli convoys had passed, with the Lebanese army trying to dislodge the Druze gunmen who immediately took up positions.

The Israelis officially announced their long-awaited pullback in the middle of the night, hours after the Lebanese government had protested the redeployment. Kapp was under way without promised coordination with the army.

Syria, seeking to block Lebanon's withdrawal agreement with Israel, has backed the revolt against Gemayel, both the Druze and Shiite populations. Damascus refused to withdraw its 40,000 troops from Lebanon.

Israel has refused to stage complete withdrawal of its estimated 30,000 troops unless Syria and the Palestinians do the same.



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United Press International
The traditional greeting of Jews, sholem aleichem, which means "And unto you, peace" also is used by Muslims, except it begins with an s instead of an sh and uses a k instead of a ch, thus: salaam aleikum.

United Press International
The First Computer Chronicle, a twice-monthly newspaper aimed at educating the layman about high technology, is attempting to convince technical neophytes that computers are money-savers.

Bill McCown, a management consultant, and partner Doug Powell, whose background is in direct mailing, began the publication in June and describe its progress as "phenomenal."

The Chronicle, distributed free of charge, features articles and columns by a variety of computer specialists. It is aimed at businesses with \$25 million or less in annual sales that either already have computer systems or are interested in getting them.

"One of the major things peo-

Computer newspaper for laymen

ple miss with computers isn't how to do their accounting functions and the financial sides of their businesses, but what I call the power of customer contact—who their customers are, the type of things they buy, when they buy them," said Powell, 33, the paper's advertising manager.

"The main reason people should be interested in computers is because they can make you money and not just count your money."

The Austin area is a prime spot for a publication like the Chronicle because of the city's growing computer industry. The new, multi-million-dollar Microelectronics and Computer Technology Corp., a research pool backed by a consortium of major U.S. firms—will be operating in Austin late next year.

McCown, the Chronicle's editor and publisher, said too many computer publications are filled with "computerese" that might tend to confuse the layman. The Chronicle's articles are geared away from the more technical aspects of computers.

"It has always been my feeling that it is not necessary to understand what makes pistons go up and down in order to know how to drive a car," said McCown, 45.

"The purpose of the paper is to present information about computers and formats so that people can hopefully figure out what questions they need to ask so that when they go in to talk to a computer salesman they won't be at his mercy."

He said 60 percent of the paper's 15,000 subscribers, who receive the publication through

direct mail, already have computer systems and want to know more about them. The remaining clients are interested in finding out how computers can help their businesses.

Advertisers are "really a body that wants to reach decision-makers and people in the upper-middle income range," McCown says.

Powell and McCown put \$40,000 to begin the newspaper in June with a 12-page first issue. The Chronicle's next issue will be an expanded 20 page and the co-owners say they expect the publication to continue to grow.

"On June 15, we rented a facility and moved, just to do it and jumped right into the middle of it," McCown said. "The success has been phenomenal."

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White House orders NASA to tone down Glenn image

United Press International
NEW YORK — In a bit of space politics, the White House ordered NASA not to portray Democratic presidential candi-

date John Glenn as a "superhero" during the space agency's 25th anniversary.

In its current edition Newsweek said the White House also was unhappy with NASA Administrator James Beggs, claiming he had a "lack of political sensitivity."

As the first American to orbit Earth, Glenn is mentioned

prominently in several of NASA's commemorative publications—but not too prominently, Newsweek said.

The magazine quoted an unidentified Reagan aide as saying, "We've told (NASA) to give the guy his due but not to make him a superhero."

Glenn, a Democratic candidate for president and U.S. senator from Ohio, also is in-

terested in not allowing his age as an astronaut to overshadow his political credentials, the magazine said.

As for Beggs, an unidentified senior Reagan administrator told Newsweek said White House was angered by photographs of California political activists Jane Fonda and Tom Hayden at the launch of the space shuttle Challenger last June.

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