

OPINION



Higher taxes would compensate for Texas' declining oil revenues

Poor Granny, Ellie May, Jethro and Jed. The Clampetts are moving from Beverly Hills back to the woods. They just can't afford the cement pond anymore. As for Mr. Drysdale, he's facing big problems. Over the years he's relied primarily on the Clampett's money as a source of revenue. But now Drysdale is faced with the task of finding new ways to generate revenues — something he's never had to do before.



Kevin Inda

those same revenues are expected only to reach \$3.7 billion in the proposed 1986-1987 biennial budget. For a state that relies on oil and gas taxes for almost 30 percent of its total tax collections, a \$600 million shortfall would be a major blow to the state's pay-as-you-go budget.

To put the situation in more monetary terms, consider that fact that every time the price of oil drops one dollar, Texas is losing about \$40 million a year in severance taxes and about \$90 million a year in total revenue. But the future is even more frightening.

A Texas Railroad Commission study indicates oil production and reserves in Texas are rapidly declining. The study shows that in 1984, 881 million barrels of oil were produced. Total reserves for 1984 was estimated at 7.6 billion barrels. But in the year 2003, oil production is expected to drop to 525 million barrels with reserves totaling only 4.9 billion barrels.

If oil production and reserves decrease as the study predicts, Texas will be facing a 35 percent decrease in oil reserves and a 40 percent decrease in oil production over the next 19 years. A 40 percent decrease in production — assuming the price of oil remained at \$27

a barrel — would deprive Texas of over \$16 billion in oil taxes over the next 19 years.

The State of Texas can no longer rely on oil and gas taxes as a crutch to support the state. The oil industry will continue to provide a significant source of revenues for the state but nothing like it once did. The State of Texas needs to instigate new ways of generating revenue that will provide a steady source of income — mainly new taxes.

The thought of new taxes might anger most Texans, but in actuality we're spoiled. Texans pay less state taxes than the residents of 43 other states. In 1983, Texas paid an average of \$579 per capita in state tax while the national average was \$739 per capita.

It's time for Drysdale, as well as his customers, to face the facts. It looks like the Clampetts aren't going to be back in Beverly Hills for a while so Drysdale can no longer rely on their money as a significant source of revenue. Drysdale's customers aren't going to be happy, but it's time for him to raise their service charge.

Kevin S. Inda is a senior journalism major and a weekly columnist for *The Battalion*.

Reagan misplayed hand in disarmament game

By ART BUCHWALD

Columnist for *The Los Angeles Times Syndicate*

I had no objection to President Reagan turning down Mikhail Gorbachev's suggestion that the West join the Soviets in a freeze on medium-range nuclear weapons. What did bother me was the haste in which it was done.

The words were hardly out of Gorbachev's mouth when the Western White House rejected it as a dirty commie trick. One got the impression the Reagan administration was more furious with the freeze than if the Soviet premier had announced he was going to double the number of SS-20s on the Soviet border.

There is no question in my mind that Mikhail was making a grandstand play for the benefit of the NATO countries.

Yet if disarmament is a game — and everyone knows it is — it would have been much better for our side if Mr. Reagan did not react so predictably.

Had the president responded immediately that he was "very interested" in the Gorbachev proposal and wanted to "fine-tune" it, this is what probably would have happened in the Kremlin.

"Comrade Number One — this just in from Santa Barbara. President Reagan thinks your offer to freeze the SS-20s is a very generous one and he is glad you put it on the table."

"What are you saying, Marshal Potemkin? If Reagan likes my plan there must be something wrong with it."

"Our intelligence people have come to the same conclusion. They are perplexed that Reagan would jump at it so fast. Our scenario was that the president would dismiss your proposal and attack us for maintaining a 10-to-1 missile superiority. Then we could attack him for wanting to keep the arms race going, thereby winning the hearts and minds of the West European population."

"I'm aware of what our scenario was, Marshal. What I want to know is if Reagan is in favor of it."

"Our people now have more missiles in Europe than the United States will permit to, and if the Americans agree to freeze at this time it would give us an 8-to-1 advantage over us."

"Now you tell me. Why didn't you know this before I made an offer to freeze our missiles?"

"Our KGB people in Washington assured us that the White House would denounce your offer because it endangered their request for an increase in military budget. The fact the president didn't can only mean we've underestimated number of nuclear weapons the United States has aimed at us. It is why we can't trust the Americans. They're always crying they are behind in missiles — when the true facts are ahead."

"What do I do if Reagan agrees to freeze his weapons? Should I say freeze is off?"

"No, Comrade Number One. You would make it appear we believe Americans are stronger than we are. What you must do is to improve our offer of a freeze by making a unilateral reduction in weapons. This will win the West. They will be certain the reason we're doing it is that we have many missiles we can afford to reduce our nuclear arsenal without endangering our defense. Reagan will have to publicly say it's a trap and denounce for it. And then we'll be known in Western Europe as the peacemakers."

"That's what you said before you freeze speech. Suppose he doesn't announce me and says he's glad to see your offer on the table? How long do you think it will take to keep disarming Mother Russia show how strong we really are?"

"Until Reagan cries, 'Unde.'"

Some students are not quite ready to graduate

Ann Cervenka

The end of April is always a time for change.

April marks the beginning of Spring. Spring means students inevitably find lying in the sun and playing baseball or frisbee more important than studying.

Unfortunately, the end of April also means that the end of the semester is just around the corner. Projects, papers and programs are due. Deadlines are piled upon deadlines, assignments upon assignments. Just as one is tackled, another arises. But just as the weight of all the last-minute obstacles begins to lift, it's finals week.

That is, unless you're a graduating senior.

Right now, they may be working like the rest of us, trying to turn everything in to professors and finish with the last round of exams.

A good friend of mine rattled off a list of about ten assignments, projects, exams and reports that his professors crammed into his last two weeks at A&M. Sure his schedule may look hectic now, but I know he has caught a glimpse of that light at the end of the tunnel.

Something about the attitude of these graduating seniors is different.

Some simply don't care anymore. But all seem to be wearing perpetual smiles. The thought of graduating after four, well maybe five, long years of hard work and hard fun makes their faces light up. They know that they actually will walk across that stage and get the long-sought-after diploma.

They are all too happy to remind their underclassmen friends: "This is my last exam," or "I can't wait to go to Lake Somerville during dead week."

Sure, some may miss their college days, but look at what they have to look forward to: the real world.

No more of the wholesome, pseudo-world of Texas A&M.

That means no more going to the Chicken on Thursday nights. Or no more late-night Dominoes Pizza orders with roommates.

But that also means no more bouncing checks and asking parents for money at the end of the month. The real world means real money; unless, of course, they don't have a job.

When they are asked what they are going to do after graduation, the answers vary.

I have heard it all.

Of course there are the few people who have the perfect job lined up with the number one company in the field and who will be making top dollars fresh out of school.

For these people, the answer is simple. "I'll begin my career."

But what about the rest of those seniors who are still unemployed.

I was talking to a fellow journalism major the other day. She merely said "Get drunk."

Others plan to spend money made of make it, maybe by traveling to Europe. But after that? Who knows.

Still others talk about swallowing their pride and moving back home to their parents, maybe to work at McDonald's until they find a real job.

I know these people will find the places in the real world, and I wish them the best of luck.

But for now, I think I'll be content to enjoy another three semesters at Texas A&M.

Ann Cervenka is a junior journalism major and a staff writer for *The Battalion*.

LETTERS:

Student input in Senate encouraged

EDITOR:

In last Monday's *Battalion* there was an article on the Faculty Senate subcommittee on Course/Instructor evaluations. The article was vague on student representation because, basically, no students have been chosen to be on the committee.

As the ranking student on academic matters in the Student Senate, I am inviting any student who is interested in this area to be on the committee. The committee would look at the feasibility of creating a university-wide teaching evaluation policy at A&M. If feasible, the results of the evaluation would probably be published and made available to students. The Faculty Senate and the administration are looking for student input — this is one of the ways that your voice can be heard.

If you are interested in this area, call me at 845-3051 (Student Government) or at my number, 260-7384. Keep these numbers: as Vice-President of Academic Affairs I want to increase student input in Student Government. I would be happy to talk to anyone about Course/Instructor evaluations or any other academic area, now, and in the future.

James Cleary
Vice-President of Academic Affairs

Politicians sidestep important questions

EDITOR:

For a long time, I've been sitting, standing around listening to the mass media and politicians proclaim their "well founded" status as experts on communication and information. Yes, and I even allowed myself to be persuaded by these mind directing pressures enough to attend the recent Wiley Lecture Series presentation; "U.S.-So-

viet Relations: The Quest for International Security".

One could predict from the start the outcome of the seminar. So, why attend? Perhaps it was a desire to learn the "ways and means" of a politician: not answering questions by answering them, agreeing with another by disagreeing, or for that matter, convincing an audience as well as himself as to the verity of his statements. Perhaps it was a want for enlightenment on major international issues.

Though one of the prevalent issues of today, Star Wars was barely discussed. It could be because the subject immediately lends itself to a farcical air as indeed it should. A previous Wiley Lecture Series seminar, "Star Wars: The Strategic Defense Initiative," also failed to convince me of the system's utility. Is it too hard to imagine the various flaws in such systems? Pretend the accuracy of the system could be as high as 99 percent, what of these kinetic energy beams that fail to "inactivate" (whatever that means, radiation is still there!) their assigned ballistic targets? Is it hard to conceive, that even with a 99 percent efficiency rate, some missiles will penetrate our defenses and still destroy unpredictable targets? What decides which missiles to or not to "inactivate" on an extreme case of overload? Can't dummy missiles be sent along with armed missiles in order to occupy the various defensive satellites? If Star Wars is to be used in such a manner as to destroy missiles while outside the atmosphere (reducing radiation exposure to earth), is it hard to realize faster, lower flying missiles that never exit the atmosphere? Is Star Wars the end or just another beginning?

Did I hear the answer to these and many other questions at either lecture attended? While thanking the Wiley Lecture Series staff for their efforts, I wish to chastise the politicians who sidestep the issues and attempt to influence the

public minds with their mythological truths and transparent facades.

Rick Matos

Reward offered for stolen saddle

EDITOR:

This letter is to any Ag who can help! As the police beat reported in *The Battalion* last week, ten tires were stolen off of horse trailers belonging to members of the Parson's Mounted Cavalry. But that report didn't mention that a saddle was also stolen: my saddle!!

Now, I'm not a member of PMC. I'm not even in the Corps of Cadets. But I have a horse up here and I enjoy riding. OK, at least, I used to.

It is a western saddle and it means a lot to me. The PMC has reason to believe that the items were stolen as a joke (or revenge). And they have ideas on who it might be (along with a few leads). None of the items have been returned (so far). But a detective is investigating.

I am offering a reward to anyone who can help me get my saddle back. No questions will be asked! I don't want anyone to get in trouble, I just want my saddle. So, if it was a joke, and you know where it is, or you know someone who might, let me know. Or put it back where it came from. Any information leading to the recovery of my saddle will be rewarded.

Please help me if you can, Ags! The saddle has a faded, yellow-green, cushioned seat. It has a padded cinch and an old, worn leather breast-collar. There are two cracks (lines) on the saddle horn. There might also be a thick, dark chocolate brown saddle blanket with it. (Yes, they took my blanket, too).

If anyone has any information, please call 260-6065 or 260-7486.

Thanks, Ags. It means a lot to me.

Jodi Felton, '87

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Opinions expressed in *The Battalion* are those of the Editorial Board or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty or the Board of Regents.
The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography courses within the Department of Communications.

Letters Policy
Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit for style and length but will make every effort to preserve the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and include the address and telephone number of the writer.
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