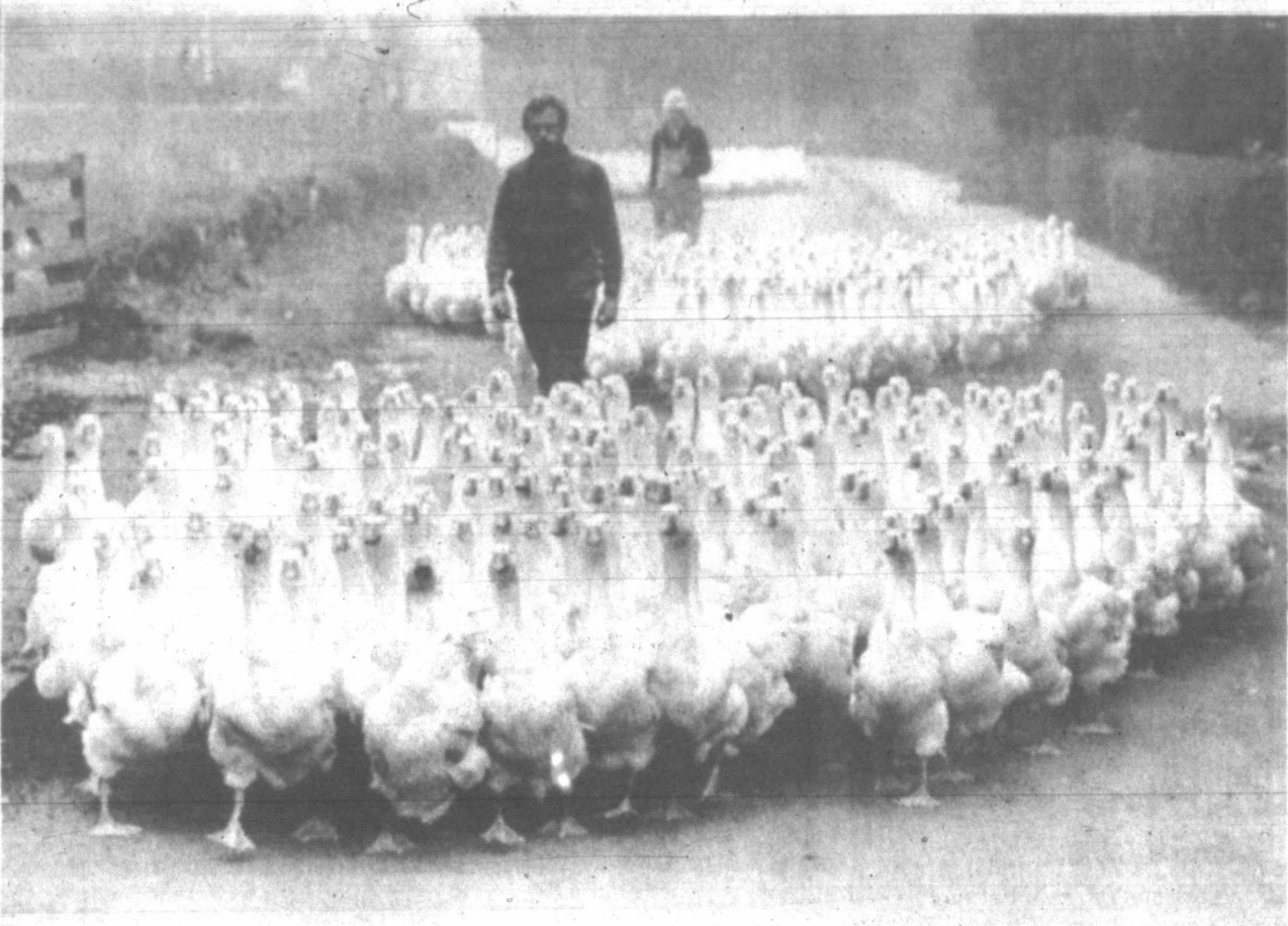


Good for the goose?



(AP Laserphoto)

MARKERUP, Northern Germany — West German farmer Juergen Klinkenhoff steps along with his flock of geese returning from the meadows to the farmhouse at Markerup near the Danish border. In the warm stables, the geese will be crammed and stuffed in preparation for Christmassales all over Germany. It's traditional in Germany to eat a goose on Christmas.

Southland: may not make '91 payments

DALLAS (AP) — Lower than expected sales and earnings growth is threatening to put Southland Corp. in violation of its credit agreements, forcing the company to consider a restructuring less than two years after a \$4.9 billion leveraged buyout.

The Dallas-based parent of the 7-Eleven convenience store chain, the nation's largest, said Tuesday that current projections indicate the company will not be able to meet its debt payment obligations in 1991, despite better-than-industry-average increases in average store sales.

Financial analysts for months have been expressing concerns that Southland faced problems with the huge debt, although the company until now had maintained that it could meet its obligations. But the company said previous sales projections at its 7-Eleven convenience stores had not been met.

Although President Jere Thompson said Southland would meet its \$225 million principal payment due next month, "given the convenience retailing environment, Southland believes its working capital may not be sufficient in 1991 to meet its principal and interest obligations

and other requirements of the business."

"We are absolutely committed to improving our operating results," said Thompson, a member of the founding family which bought the company to avoid corporate raider Sam Belzberg.

"In addition, we feel it is only prudent to consider financial restructuring alternatives well in advance of the time this cash shortfall could occur."

He said one alternative was a comprehensive recapitalization. In a recapitalization, a company alters its levels of debt and equity.

Company spokeswoman Markeeta McNatt said an additional \$66 million interest payment is due in 1991, adding to the bank interest and \$140 million in cash interest Southland already is paying.

The company has been selling assets since the leveraged buyout to help pay off its debt, and announced Tuesday an agreement to sell its 58 Hawaiian stores to Seven-Eleven Japan Co. Ltd. for \$75 million cash. The deal is expected to close by the end of the year.

Last week, Southland said it had agreed to sell its remaining 50 per-

cent interest in Citgo Petroleum Corp. to Venezuela's state-owned oil company for \$675 million. The sale should be completed by the end of January, the company said.

Proceeds from both transactions will be used to reduce the LBO debt, the company said.

Thompson said the company also continues to explore selling other assets, including its five distribution centers and six food processing centers.

"The last public projections we had were October, 1988 and the operating numbers that we were projecting have not materialized," Ms. McNatt said. "Our sales and margins are still extremely good but they have not met our own projections."

Chameleon skins to be launched

By SUZANNE GAMBOA
Associated Press Writer

LAS CRUCES, N.M. (AP) — Scientists are hoping to find out more about muscle and bone disease by sending chameleon skins near the edge of outer space and finding out if they change color.

The skins of chameleons, packaged in a specially designed robotic device, are among 12 experiments aboard a commercial rocket to be launched from White Sands Missile Range, N.M. this morning.

The suborbital flight of Consort 2 will provide researchers with seven minutes of microgravity, in which gravity is extremely low, to test how numerous products act in a weightless environment.

Roy Hammerstedt, Penn State professor of biochemistry, is sending 32 chameleon skins 200 miles up in hopes of providing insight to such diseases as osteoporosis and muscular degeneration conditions.

"These human diseases have proven extremely difficult to study because they're complex, their occurrence happens over a long time period and the area needs fresh ideas to help hasten getting results," Hammerstedt said.

Hammerstedt said that recent studies by the Penn State Center for Cell Research have found that cells that produce growth hormones, like those found in the pituitary gland, behave differently in space. Astronauts and other animals sent in space have experienced accelerated bone loss.

"One of the things we're hoping to do is to ultimately identify some of the factors that are at work in the bone and muscle loss in microgravity and use these as clues in research on earth in dealing with more conventional disease problems," he said.

Hammerstedt's experiment will test the hypothesis that the reason the cells malfunction in microgravity is that the internal cell structure is altered.

To test the hypothesis, Hammerstedt and the Penn State research team designed a robotic device, dubbed the Penn State Biomodule, with a plastic T-shaped "test tube."

The module has been programmed by computer to time release chemicals from one side of the tube to stimulate the skin. The module will release another chemical from the other side of the tube to "pickle" the skin and preserve its reaction.

Chameleon skin was picked because the skin's "robust" cells can withstand the stress of the launch and the color change provides an immediate visual result, Hammerstedt said.

The chemicals will be released at different times on separate samples and at various stages of the orbit, he said.

The launch on Wednesday will be the second sponsored by the Consortium for Materials Development in Space at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, which contracted for more than \$1 million

with Space Sciences Inc. The Houston-based built the Starfire 1 rocket being used for the launch and is providing launch services.

The payload will be parachuted back to a site several miles north of the launch site.

Other experiments to be conducted on board include three experiments for the Battelle Advanced Materials Center in Columbus, Ohio that could lead to improved polymer materials.

"Polymers can be improved," said Frank J. Jelinek, director of the Battelle Center also funded by NASA.

One of those experiments could lead to improved polymer filters for dialysis machines and other filtration applications and will serve as a precursor to an experiment to be performed by Battelle on the space shuttle early next year, he said.

Heard-Jones

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Check out these champs of cheapdom

By TONI Y. JOSEPH
The Dallas Morning News

ATHENS (AP) — Shortly after the couple began dating two years ago, Joe Ann Reiland realized her groom-to-be lived life in the tight lane.

Her clothes were chic. His clothes were, well, old — behind the times. She offered to buy her Romeo a new blue suit for the nights they spent ballroom dancing. He cheerfully admonished her for her wasteful thoughts.

Intrigued, Joe Ann, 60, soon discovered that clothes weren't the only corners her man cut. She married him anyway, despite his promise to retreat to the kitchen to cook food for the reception right after the couple exchanged vows.

"I couldn't get him to buy a new suit for the wedding, so I knew I couldn't press my luck for a reception," she says.

Peter Reiland, a retired tool designer and wood and metal pattern maker, calls himself frugal. He grew up during the Depression, an era that taught many of its survivors a thing or two about squeezing a buck. He says his habits also result from a cost-analysis job he once held.

"I always had to be aware of shaving a tenth of a cent off the cost of a project," Peter says. "It rubs off on you. Manufacturers are set up to get my money. By golly, I'm going to spend the way I want to, not the way they want me to."

Joe Ann tattled on her proud skinflint in The Dallas Morning News "Turn In a Tightwad" contest. Of the 120 nominees, penny-pinching Peter scrimped his way to the No. 1 spot. In her contest entry letter, Mrs. R. wrote that living with

a cheapskate provides some wonderful perks: "Thanks to my tightwad husband, we have a lovely, well-kept home and enjoy a better lifestyle. One of his most important habits is to save some time to help a friend or neighbor save a dollar."

Other tightwads that readers turned in:

— A man who opens his car door at the Dallas North Tollway toll booth to search for change.

— A school principal who lowers his head and walks the halls between classes pocketing coins dropped by students.

— Several people who snip signatures off greeting cards and send them to friends and family.

— A dozen germ-be-damned nominees who reuse facial tissues until they disintegrate.

— Several nominees who shamelessly ration sheets of toilet paper to visitors in their homes, including the woman who bragged "I can take four sheets of toilet paper and fold it like it was five."

— A man who asks for lemons and sugar with restaurant meals and makes his own lemonade to keep from ordering a beverage.

— Several people who wear their underwear inside out to keep from buying new.

— A woman who recommends secretly clipping cuttings from plants at department stores.

But Mrs. Reiland says that while marriage to one of the cheapest guys around has meant learning to sacrifice gas heat and air conditioning, it also means a little vindication: Thanks to a homemade wood-burning stove, the couple's power bills rarely climb above \$35 a month in the dead of winter.

"The electric company comes out twice a year to find out why our

bills are so low," Peter boasts.

Low utility costs may be the most mundane testimony to Peter's thriftiness. He loves to show off a jar full of dirt, the last piece of earth that stood between him and the in-ground swimming pool he dug by hand.

Peter, 64, can't help himself, his friends and family say. He installed a gas tank on his property to save 15 cents to 20 cents per gallon; his wife commutes 160 miles daily for her secretarial job in Dallas.

He built a purple martin house so the bug-loving birds would eat insects and keep the couple from having to buy insecticide. He also bought a cow, which makes their 7-acre spread a farm under Internal Revenue Service rules and cuts their tax liability.

"It's in his genes," says Patrick Reiland, 39, his son. "He's quite inventive."

Patrick, a machinist in St. Paul, Minn., found out just how inventive after a drive from Minnesota to Connecticut a few years back. Slipping into his father's shower, Patrick found a timer on the controls. The device restricted the water flow to three one-minute bursts before completely shutting off for 20 minutes.

Daughter Margaret Reiland, 37, says she and her brothers were discouraged from flushing the toilet until it was really necessary. Although that restriction resulted from attention to the bottom line, it also prevented the family from adding to the drain on the nation's precious water supply.

"He was 25 years ahead of the times," says Margaret, who called The Dallas Morning News collect from Colorado.

Joe Ann Reiland says she and

her husband always shower together — at his request — to save water. If they bathed separately, one of them would get doused with chilly water. The couple's heater warms only 10 gallons at a time.

Neighbors also notice Peter Reiland's cheapness. It's not like he tries to hide it, says Durward Pirtle.

"He said, 'When you haul off your junk, bring it by and let me take a look at it,'" Pirtle says. "He picks through it to get little pieces of metal, mostly pipe, normal stuff like most people throw away."

Like the 30-year-old piece of Formica he hauled across the country every time the family would move. Finally, Joe Ann needed a shelf on which to set cups and books while she sat in bed. Voila!

People who know Peter realize he's not stingy, says Lorene Ryon, another Athens friend. Whenever anyone asks for help, Reiland busies himself repairing their broken appliances, baking cheesecakes or mounting hunks of petrified wood for gift-giving throughout the community.

"He'd cut his heart out and give it to you," Mrs. Ryon said. "That's how nice he is."

But at times, Peter has startled Mrs. Ryon with his insistence on conservation.

"After he got married, he wouldn't run his air conditioner," Mrs. Ryon says. "I thought that was really something. He had us up for dinner. We were sitting at the table and I thought I was going to have to pull off some clothes. I got to sweating so."

"I appreciate that he's retired. We are, too," says Mrs. Ryon. "But we're going to turn on the heat and air conditioning."

Movie to show superiority of U.S. Army weapons

FORT HOOD (AP) — A leather-faced colonel strides out of a Fort Hood airfield hangar and tells a group of the Army's best Apache helicopter pilots to get ready for combat.

In 72 hours they will support a Drug Enforcement Administration effort to arrest drug cartel leaders in South America.

"Our job is to make damn sure they get that chance," the colonel says.

It could happen. But this time it's Hollywood, not Holocaust.

Fort Hood is hosting filmmakers and actors Tommy Lee Jones, Nicolas Cage and Sean Young this week in a movie collaboration to create Wings of the Apache.

Army officials hope the movie, which has been in the works for two years at various air bases, will do for the AH-64 Apache attack helicopter what Tom Cruise and Top Gun did for the Navy's F-14 Tomcat warplanes — show superiority of American military weapons.

The story will tell of a U.S. military task force attack on the drug cartel's "unnamed South American country." And it will feature the special fighting abilities of the \$10 million Apache, considered the first chopper

maneuverable enough for air-to-air combat.

Fort Hood will act mostly as an Apache-heavy backdrop to character acting scenes, with most of the combat and destruction taking place at Arizona sites. The movie will cost \$16.9 million and will hit theaters next summer, said producer William Badalato, who also produced Top Gun.

Production officials use that movie — in which Cruise shoots down Russian MiG warplanes — to describe the spirit of Wings of the Apache. But they emphasize that their movie will have more depth and character development than its cousin.

More importantly for the Army, the film will put a positive spotlight on a helicopter that has weathered negative publicity about several mechanical malfunctions in its brief history.

The military temporarily grounded its Apaches on those occasions to make sure the problems weren't fleetwide, and each time the choppers were approved again for use.

"One thing everybody has to understand is it's been in the field since 1985," said Fort Hood Apache pilot Bill Lee, who is flying the ship for the filmmakers.

How sweet it is!

HOUSTON (AP) — Dwindling stockpiles of sugar internationally are helping pump up prices and produce a lucrative market for Texas sugar beet and sugar cane farmers.

At the end of the 1987-88 crop year, stocks amounted to 31 percent of anticipated consumption, said Imperial Holly President Robert Hanna. Since then, supplies have dropped to 29 percent and are expected to be 27.5 percent at the end of this crop year.

World sugar prices, meanwhile, have gone from 9 cents to 14.5 cents, Hanna said.

Judith Gaines, a sugar analyst with Shearson Lehman Hutton in New York, forecasts a world price of 18 to 20 cents a pound in the next three to four months.

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U.S. braces for East Asia oil boom

By BRUCE NICHOLS
The Dallas Morning News

HOUSTON (AP) — The coming east Asian petrochemical boom will far outdistance the recent dramatic expansion of plants along the Texas Gulf Coast and will present both opportunities and challenges for U.S. companies.

That was the basic message of the Conference on Asia-Pacific Petrochemical & Refinery Integration attended this week by about 220 Asians and Americans involved in various aspects of the petrochemical manufacturing business.

"Changes in that part of the world have been coming so rapidly that we wanted to make sure U.S. companies — still the leading producers of these technologies — are aware," said David Fridley, a research associate at the Honolulu-based East-West Center, which organized the meeting.

One expert who addressed the group said that by 1995, east Asian countries plan a 75 percent increase in their capacity to produce ethylene, a basic petrochemical. Carl Steinbam, an international energy expert at Massachusetts-based Arthur D. Little Inc., said plans call for capacity to increase from 8.3 million metric tons per year to more than 14 million tons annually.

Such an expansion will require investment of more than \$26 billion in new plants, Steinbam said. That compares with the much-bally-hooded \$5 billion in announced expansions in the Houston area in the past couple of years.

Although several experts expressed doubt whether market conditions will allow all the announced Asian projects to be built, the opportunity to sell technology, engineering and other services needed for the expansion attracted Americans to the conference.

"The region represents a real opportunity," said John Green, vice president of technology sales and licensing for New Jersey-based Mobil Research and Development Corp., which would like to license chemical production processes to

Asian countries. Jack Peterson, manager of licensed technology for M.W. Kellogg Co. of Houston, one of the major providers of engineering services in east Asia, said interacting with Asian clients "helps us in planning what we should be doing," Peterson said.

There is increasing competition to sell petrochemical technology, and Americans aren't the only source, said Walter Potter of the Houston office of Boston-based Stone & Webster Engineering Corp. "If we don't supply the technology, somebody else will," Potter said.

Indeed, not every Asian at the conference was interested in buying from Americans. The Japanese were there to sell, too. "We can do technology," said Makoto Homma, senior secretary of Showa Sell Sekiyu K.K. of Tokyo, and if a customer needs financing, training or other services, he also can provide those.

Brown & Root's Thomas Jelson, director of corporate development and finance for the Houston construction company, acknowledged the rivalry. "There's strong compe-

dition from the Japanese, but there's probably enough work to go around. We think everybody's going to win in the long run," Jelson said.

But the expansion also represents a challenge to U.S. companies because it could contribute to worldwide petrochemical overcapacity, cut prices and hurt profitability, experts said.

Asian expansion could reduce U.S. exports because Asia has been a big buyer of U.S. chemicals. The region accounts for half or more of global trade in such products as polypropylene, styrene and ethylene glycol, Steinbam said.

Those concerns are important in Texas because it is one of the nation's largest chemical exporting states. In both 1987 and 1988, the petrochemical and refining sectors accounted for 30 percent of all Texas exports, \$10 billion of the \$34 billion total, according to the Texas Department of Commerce.

"I think what's happening in Asia is going to have significant repercussions in the United States," said John G. Chapman, vice president of California-based Unocal International Supply & Trading Co.

Activist declares candidacy for treasurer

AUSTIN (AP) — It takes a more than someone who can count money to be state treasurer in a time of economic trouble, says the newest Democratic candidate for the job.

Armando Gutierrez, a veteran party activist and campaigner for the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Tuesday declared his candidacy for state

treasurer, saying, "A bean counter is fine when there are plenty of beans to count. But when we need more beans, it takes more."

Gutierrez said that as treasurer, he would take an active role in generating more revenue for state government and protecting the state's economic interests.

"Banks are making good profits from us and taking the money to other states. We must bring the financial sector under state regulation and protect those local banks that try to serve community needs," he said.

The treasurer, he added, should "create incentives for banks to help small businesses and low- and middle-income Texans as they try to create opportunity and jobs and homes."

Gutierrez said Texas has suffered "a profound economic collapse" with more than 300 bank failures in the past three years.

"Our education funding system is in disarray. Texans pay more for insurance than they do for food. Our agricultural recovery is impeded by a governor who spends more time in a personal vendetta against

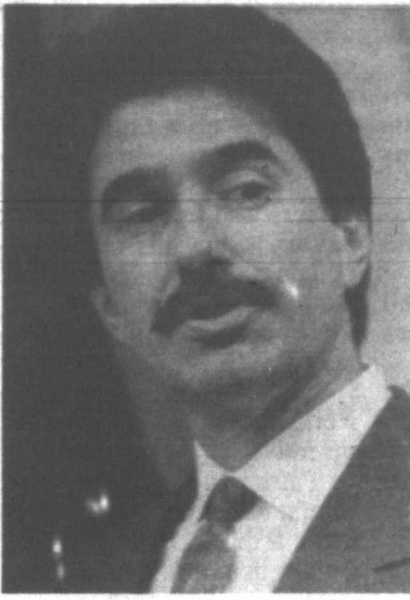
our agriculture commissioner than on the countless needs of Texans," Gutierrez said.

"Republican federal and state economic policies have allowed greed and corruption to run rampant. Give Republicans the keys to the vault and they make copies, give them to their cronies, raid the vault and leave the next generation to pay the bill."

A Corpus Christi native, Gutierrez, 42, has a doctorate in government from the University of Texas and has taught at UT and University of Houston. He was an adviser to Mexican presidents Jose Lopez Portillo and Miguel de la Madrid.

He worked in both of Jackson's presidential campaigns, as a policy adviser in the 1984 race and as issues director, then Texas campaign manager in 1988.

He joins a growing field of candidates, which includes Karen Friend of Houston and Harris County Treasurer Nikki Van Hightower in the Democratic primary and Kay Bailey Hutchison of Dallas in the GOP primary. The office is being vacated after two terms.



Gutierrez

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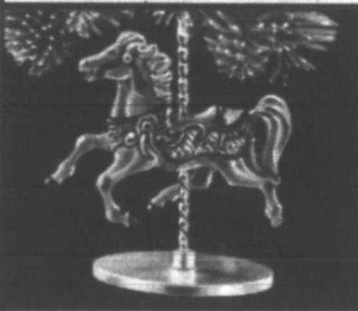


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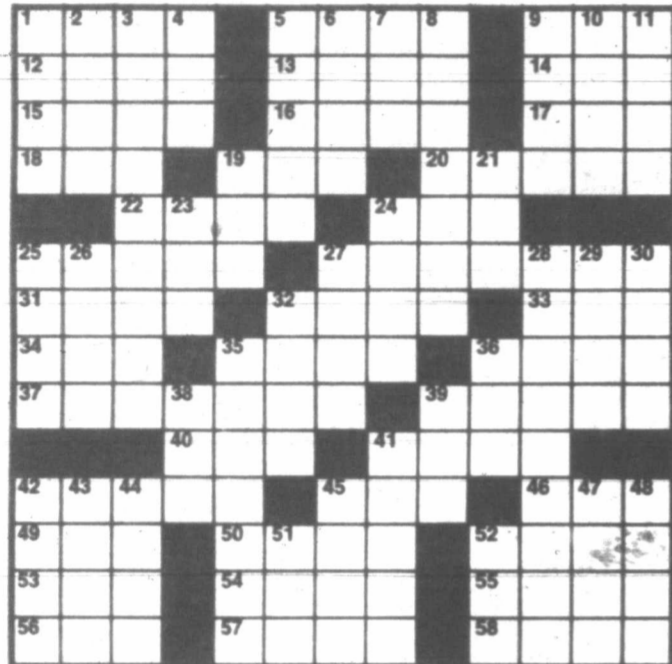
ACROSS

- 1 Bird call
- 5 — the night before Christmas
- 9 Sandwich type (abbr.)
- 12 Telephone service (abbr.)
- 13 Songbird
- 14 Over (poet.)
- 15 Folk singer
- 16 Emerald Isle
- 17 Fair grade
- 18 Neighbor of Fr.
- 19 Gamble
- 20 Wing-shaped
- 22 Wimp's kin
- 24 Engage in winter sport
- 25 Slinger —
- 27 Required
- 31 Author Gardner
- 32 Orange-red stone
- 33 Oxalis plant
- 34 Barbara — Goddess
- 35 Front
- 36 Narrated
- 37 Ideally

DOWN

- 1 Part of tree
- 2 Sway
- 3 Forever
- 4 Highway
- 5 Orange-red stone
- 6 Legal order
- 7 — Lingus (airline)
- 8 Shunk
- 9 — Raton, Florida

Answer to Previous Puzzle



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GEECH



By Jerry Bittle

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) Someone who is presently separated from you by distance and you've neglected to stay in touch with lately is worthy of a brief note or phone call today. Something constructive may result. Get a jump on life by understanding the influences which are governing you in the year ahead. Send for your Astro-Graph predictions today by mailing \$1.25 to Astro-Graph, c/o this newspaper, P.O. Box 91428, Cleveland, OH 44101-3428. Be sure to state your zodiac sign.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) It will be difficult for others to deceive you today, because you aren't likely to take things at face value. However, if you do catch someone telling a small fib, don't make it a big issue.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) Friends will find you an agreeable companion today because of your strong inclinations to be cooperative. Each compromise or concession you make will be matched in return.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 19) Establish meaningful objectives today where your work or career is concerned. This is one of those days when big things can be accomplished if you're of the mind to do so.

PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20) You have the ability to absorb knowledge quicker than usual today, especially when you're able to observe someone you admire in action. What they do now, you can do later.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) The end results should work out as you anticipate today, provided you don't leave anything up to chance. You can control events and not be controlled by them.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) Sunshine could start to filter into several situations today which were previously shrouded by clouds. What occurs should stimulate your enthusiasm and elevate your optimism.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) Your financial prospects look encouraging today, especially in matters where you offer your expertise or services. Compensation will be proportionate to your productivity.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) You are likely to place considerable emphasis on your personal interests today, yet it looks like you will do so in a manner that will gain support instead of opposition from others.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) Conditions in general should be more favorable for you today than they are apt to be tomorrow, so focus your energies on completing important assignments instead of letting them dangle.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) This is an attractive day to launch a new endeavor, especially if it is a project that involves one or more friends. Each could be quite lucky for the other.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) You could be luckier than usual today in situations that are materially meaningful. In fact, there's a possibility that something which looked only moderately profitable could turn out rather grand.

THE WIZARD OF ID

By Brant Parker and Johnny Hart



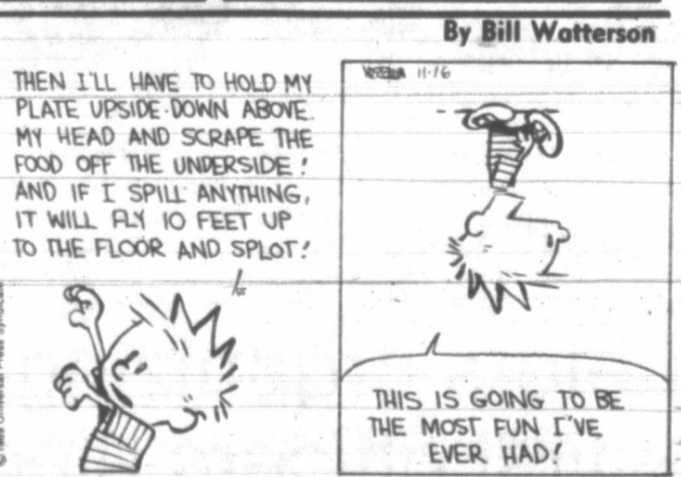
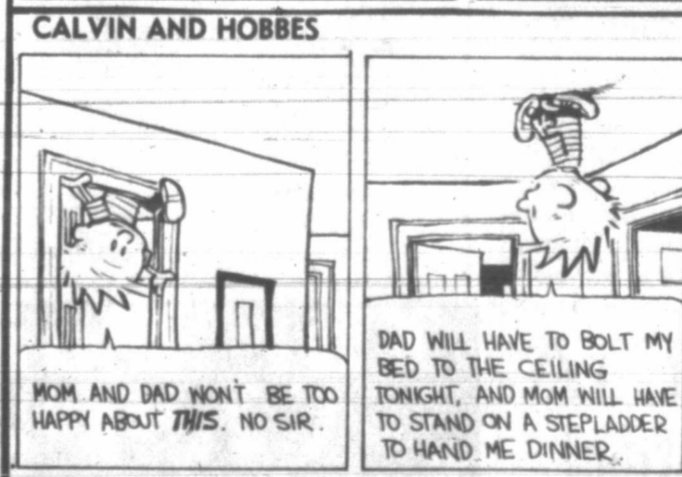
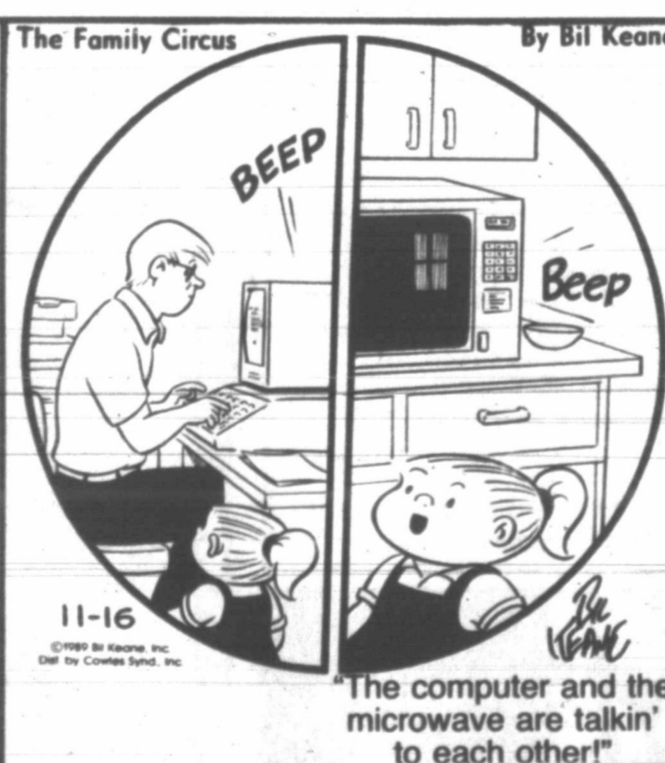
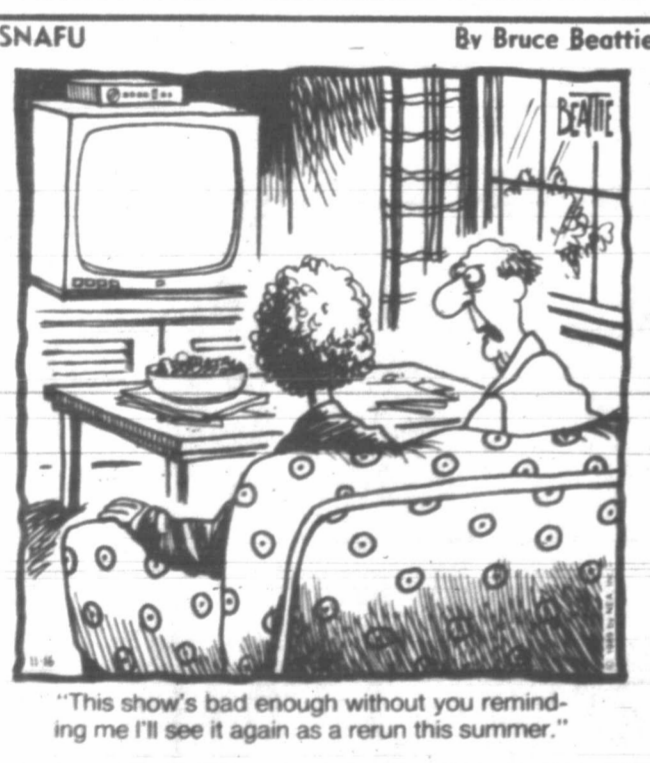
ECK & MEEK

By Howie Schneider



B.C.

By Johnny Hart



Bush under pressure to call conference on aging

By NANCY BENAC
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Advocates for the elderly are dismayed that President Bush has not called what would be the fourth decennial White House Conference on Aging for 1991 to help guide a graying America into the next century.

Time is short for planning a productive conference that can steer clear of intergenerational conflicts and avoid political pitfalls that plagued the last such gathering in 1981, supporters say. Opinion is divided, however, on whether the inaction is a result of normal bureaucratic delay, a reluctance to convene a populist gathering of the elderly or a desire to limit its scope.

"There is a growing sense that the White House really doesn't want this conference and therefore would like to delay it as long as possible," said Fernando Torrez-Gil, president-elect of the American Society on Aging.

The White House conferences, which bring together thousands of delegates from around the nation to focus on the needs and contributions of the elderly and their role in society, have been a decennial tradition since 1961.

Retirement rule irks some, but FAA sees no changes ahead

By ROBERT BYRD
Associated Press Writer

ATLANTA (AP) — To hear Capt. Jack Young tell it, just when you've reached the peak of your abilities flying a jetliner, they kick you out of the cockpit.

"When a pilot reaches 60, he has gotten there because he's healthy and proficient," said Young, 69, who was forced by 30-year-old Federal Aviation Administration rules to quit flying airliners after 35 years in the cockpit.

Despite mounting pressure and the heroics of veteran pilots, the FAA sees no reason to change its ruling that commercial pilots and co-pilots hand over the controls at 60, or at least get in the back seat as flight engineer.

"It should be optional to continue or retire at 60 or any other age. If a man is physically fit and functionally able and motivated to continue flying, he should be able to do so," said Young, a former Eastern Airlines pilot and the founder of the "Gray Eagles" — formally the Pilots Rights Association.

He hopes to draw on public admiration for veterans like Al Haynes, 58, the United Airlines captain who landed in Iowa in July with no hydraulic controls, and David Cronin, 59, the United pilot who safely landed in February, on his second-to-last commercial flight, after a section of fuselage blew out.

The FAA developed the rule because statistics showed "a significantly higher incidence of incapacitating events" after age 60, said John Leyden, a spokesman in Washington. "That has been the basis for 30 years."

The agency has never satisfied itself of a way to separate healthy 60-year-olds from those showing their age, Leyden said. "Making it 60 may not be the best way to go, but we don't know of any better way."

The Age 60 Rule, which took effect March 15, 1960, has been challenged repeatedly at the FAA and in the courts. Numerous pilots have sought exemptions but all have lost — most recently in a May decision on a request by 24 pilots.

The FAA noted that while a number of older pilots oppose the rule, others — and their union, the Air Line Pilots Association — support it.

"We're opposed to changing the rule," said Dick Stone, 57, Delta captain and ALPA executive chairman for aeromedical resources. Health and safety aside, he said, the rule "ensures promotion for younger pilots. If we changed the age to an older age, it would stall the careers of some pilots."

"Age, in and of itself, should not be the criterion," said Dr. Herbert Karp, a professor of medicine and neurology at Atlanta's Emory University and medical director at the Wesley Woods Geriatric Hospital. "We know that as we get older, there are certain physiological changes that do occur."

"But there's a great variability in the occurrence of these changes."

Mandatory retirement based on age has "very little justification," and even if there were such a cutoff, 60 is probably as much as a decade too soon, he said. "We can't say, but it would be likely to be in the seventh decade."

"We really think of problems emerging at 75 and above," said Dr. Robert N. Butler, Brookdale professor of Geriatrics at New York's Mount Sinai Medical Center. "There is an increased incidence of cardiovascular disease in the late 50s and 60s but there's no sort of arbitrary jump at a magical age called 60."

Besides, Butler said, in a jetliner there's at least one other crew member to fly if the pilot suffers a heart attack.

The first two helped launch federal programs ranging from Medicare to Meals-on-Wheels. The 1981 gathering, though marred by accusations that the Reagan administration tried to stack it in favor of Social Security cutbacks, ultimately helped fend off those cuts.

Bush is "interested in having one, but more work needs to be done before a final decision can be made," said White House spokeswoman Alixe Glen.

Twenty-four major groups, the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations, wrote to Bush in August urging him to call a conference, and 90 House members sent a similar request in September, warning that "time is running out." The House letter was initiated by Rep. Thomas Downey, D-N.Y., who said previous presidents acted earlier to call each of the preceding conferences.

Expectations that a 1991 conference was certain in light of Congressional authorization are yielding to "skepticism about whether there will be one," said Dan Quirk of the National Association of State Units on Aging.

"Every institution in society is going to have to respond to the needs of a much older population," Quirk said. "This conference could set the stage to prepare for that demographic revolution."

Bush could derive "real dividends" from "a gen-

uine town meeting on issues in the field of aging," said Arthur Flemming, former health, education and welfare secretary who chaired the 1971 conference.

But Daniel Schuler of the National Council on the Aging said Bush may be dragging his feet to limit a conference's scope and reduce grass-roots interest generated by the state and local forums that typically precede it.

"If you delay long enough, you only have time for a much smaller kind of conference, directed toward mavens and experts, rather than a popular conference," he said. "The signals are clearly dilatory."

The death of Rep. Claude Pepper, the champion of the elderly, has limited Congress' ability to exert pressure for a 1991 conference, Schuler said.

In the absence of a decision from Washington, some states are moving ahead on their own. Illinois, for example, is organizing local forums and a state conference regardless of what Bush does.

While most advocacy groups are pressing for a 1991 conference, a few voices question its usefulness and warn of a potential backlash against the elderly.

Dr. Robert Butler, a former director of the National Institute on Aging, questions whether spending millions on a "vapid, decennial ritual" that he said could fuel

conflicts between the young and old while accomplishing little.

"Let us not provide another opportunity for writers, press, and the public to image older people as special pleaders or 'greedy geezers,'" Butler wrote recently. He said an annual report on the status of the aged would be better.

Supporters of a conference on aging believe it must focus not on what government can do for senior citizens but on how the nation's aging affects all of society and on concerns that cut across generations.

Joyce Berry, acting U.S. commissioner on aging, this summer told a House panel that Health and Human Services Secretary Louis Sullivan was interested in focusing the conference on a "binding of generations and capitalizing upon what generations can do for each other."

Issues such as access to health care, nursing home costs, employment, income security and family caregiving are "no longer older persons issues, they are family issues," said Illinois Aging Director Janet Otwell.

The National Council on the Aging suggested a concurrent White House conference on children so common problems could be evaluated in a coordinated way without pitting young and old against one another.

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- COSTUME JEWELRY AND SCARVES
- VINYL AND LEATHER HANDBAGS
- MENS, WOMENS, KIDS ATHLETIC SHOES
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- GIRLS 4-14, INFANT & TODDLER DRESSES
- BOYS SIZE 8-20 KNIT AND WOVEN SHIRTS
- BOYS SIZE 4-14 PLAYWEAR
- BOYS SIZE 4-14 JEANS
- BOYS SIZE 8-20 CASUAL PANTS
- INFANT AND TODDLER PLAYWEAR
- INFANTS COTTON INTERLOCK SETS
- LADIES POLY-COTTON DUSTERS
- MISSES SLEEPWEAR
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