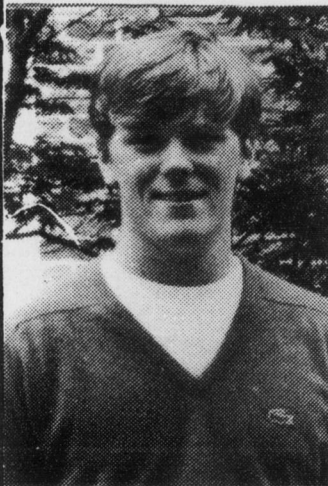


COMMENTARY

Quotables

“ *What is progressive music and will it get us in trouble?* ”

Compiled by Rolf Orsagh



Scott Kreitzman - "Rock, and I hope so."

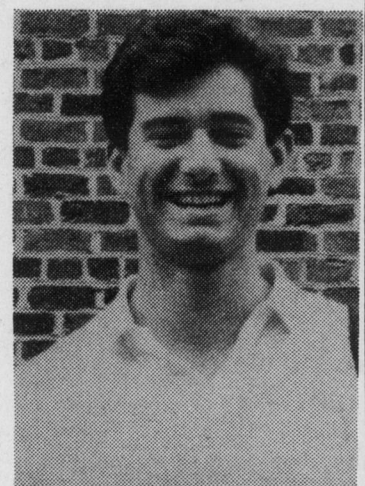


John Grimes - "Kiss, definitely."



Abbey Donahower - "The kind I listen to and I'm already in trouble."

Beth Mauldin - "What is she talking about?"



Craig Stephenson - "The kind of music WQFS plays. No it will do us good if anything."

Funk and Spunk

By JOHN K. COX

Oil prices plummet. OPEC meets frantically in Geneva. US gas prices tumble. Euphoria shows its bacchanalian head. While journalists have a heyday with phrases like "Saudi had US over a barrel" and "party over oil prices may run out of gas" and while voices of caution here and abroad warn us of imminent chaos, I laugh.

Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha. Eat my dust you blood-sucking phoney greedies, you oil magnates here and abroad. Don't we consumers deserve to gloat just a little, before the experts and prognosticators deprive us of our simple joy?

OK, OK, it probably is too soon to "dance on OPEC's grave"—these new prices seem too good to be true. Oh yeah, and there are reasons too. In an effort to trim production, the big oil companies are closing down their small-time wells, and there is a 5-7 year lag between the planning and production stages of new wells. But experts say we're going to need new wells soon because domestic gas consumption is going to rise through the roof this summer. (With regular at 69 cents a gallon, that's no overly sagacious prediction.) After the oil market does a brutal volte-face and prices follow demand into the stratosphere, the O-peckers will wield more power than ever and we'll actually have to pay attention again to what they're babbling about over there.

Now please keep in mind that these vituperative word aren't aimed at Middle Easterners per se. They're directed at mega-big business which has been shafting you and me for a decade. (Free enterprise and private initiative are such wonderful things; I wonder what has happened to them?) And I'm kind of maggoty these days on countries selling us oil spiced with terrorism, like several O-peckers do.

It seems strange that America lays down under the fact that part of our life blood is used by others as extortion-bait. I'm not surprised that a lot of bleeding hearts don't mind, figuring that since we've so long given the ramrod to the developing world, there's some kind of poetic justice in your and my doing de rigueur daily penance at the pumps. I don't buy it.

And neither do I have much truck with Vice-president Bush when he states—over there—that the oil price drop threatens US national security. And a big corporate chairman, oiling the wheels of future price roll-ups, proclaimed that the US "is being offered a modern-day Trojan horse...and, just as the gullible recipients did 3000 years ago, the nation is cheering as we dismantle our defenses to make way for the gift." Others stress the fact that oil's not a free market interest but a strategic commodity and therefore follows different rules of behavior.

That might be true. Yep, it maybe is—but I'm not believing it just because the bigwigs said it. There's more money in the oil

circles than you or I can conceive of, and, to quote an otherwise uninteresting pop artist, that "money talks—but it can't sing and dance and it don't walk" ('coz it rides in big limos with tinted windows and little curtains and we don't know who's behind them).

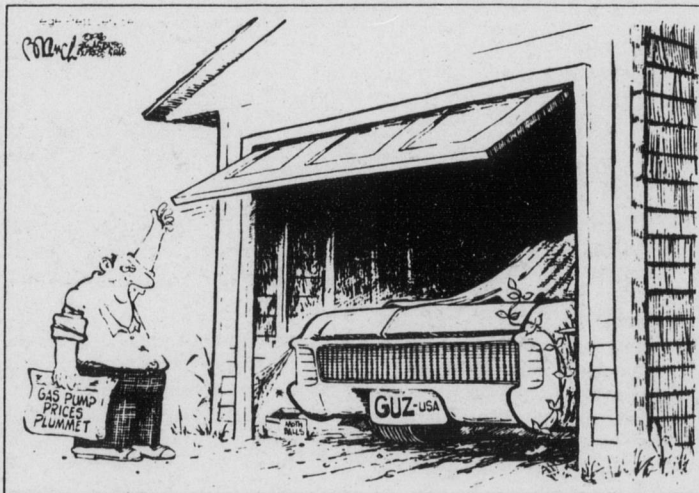
I think we need a responsible, diverse, multi-class commission to look into the oil affair and let us know what to expect and maybe even help us deal with it. And what better time than now to push alternative sources of energy and public transport? There's no compulsion to it today, but neither can crisis pounce if we fail. Hey man, give our coalminers and our atoms and genes a break—have fun with the sun! Let's go on the metro!

In the meanwhile, back to Geneva. Oil ministers from all over the world meet desperately,

round the clock, sucking Brazilian coffee and Guilford County cigarettes, trying to shore up their crumbling facade of price domination. And there in the corner crouch you and I and the hard-pressed, holey-pocketed consumers of states from Vermont to Alabama to Oregon, all sprites of a feather, laughing. Laugh, laugh, chortle, guffaw, and snicker, for tomorrow we'll wait in line.

Yes, I fear "they" will have the last word in this issue. But right now Iranian curses Saudi, Egyptian and Mexican exchange quizical glances, Libyan plots against everybody, Mr. Exxon gets an ulcer, and Saudi schemes against Iranian. Ain't life grand? And isn't it delicious, just for once to be able to say (like Rubashov's anonymous cell neighbor): "Bravo. The wolves devour each other"?

Laughter Is the Best Medicine



The Guilfordian

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