

Waiting for dry weather, high temps

# Prarie Film walk to be repaired

By SCOTT D. HARING  
Battalion Reporter

Some of the crumbling sidewalks on campus will get a face-lift as soon as the weather breaks, says Gene Ray, director of the Grounds Maintenance Department at Texas A&M.

Work will begin "when we get dry weather and proper temperatures," Ray said. It will take two weeks of no rain to dry out the ground.

The problem is with a surface called Prarie Film, an epoxy-pebble mix used for paving pedestrian areas. It was first used here in the fall of 1975.

"As long as you follow the directions, it's a good product," Ray said. But that's where the difficulty lies. Some areas, most notably a section north of the Academic Building, have crumbled. Barricades in the area north of the Academic Building divert pedestrians, and one path of wooden boards allows safe passage across it.

Ray said that section was the first one done by contractors in 1975, and their lack of experience may have contributed to the deterioration.

Prarie film must be mixed between 65 and 90 degrees, or it won't set properly, Ray said. There can't even be the slightest film of water, and the base must be the correct thickness and composition.

The Grounds Maintenance Department will do its own repair work, which Ray said may last into the summer. Ray said his department has put down nearly 10,000 square feet of Prarie Film without having to patch any of it.

In addition to the area north of the Academic Building, Ray said there are plans to do work along Ross Street and Joe Rott Boulevard. A number of small holes scattered over campus will also be patched.

The contractor's guarantee on the work lasted only for a year, so the repair work will be done at University expense. Ray said the cost will run in the thousands of dollars.

Ray is still a big fan of Prarie Film, though. Not only does it provide a good surface for foot traffic, but its porous surface lets water down to the roots of the trees, keeping them from being destroyed by progress.



This area of Prarie Film north of the Academic Building is the first scheduled for repair by the University. When it's in good shape, it

provides a sturdy surface for foot traffic and allows water to seep down to trees' roots.

Battalion photo by Cam Cope

# Hamburger price may rise to \$2

The retail price of ground beef more than doubled in Dallas last year in Houston, the jump was 93 percent.

Beef experts predict ground beef prices will continue to increase in Texas, the nation's richest cattle producing state. Ground beef prices are expected to hit \$2 a pound or more in certain areas of Texas, says Dr. Edward Uvacek, a Texas A&M University cattle economics expert.

Ground beef, the staple of the food budget, sold for \$1.94 a pound in Dallas supermarkets the second week in February, according to a survey by the National Cattleman's Association.

A year ago, the price in Dallas was 92 cents a pound. In Houston stores hamburger averaged \$1.62 a

pound in mid-February; a year ago it was 84 cents.

"Consumers must expect retail prices of ground beef to continue to increase," says Uvacek, a livestock marketing specialist for the Texas Agricultural Extension Service here. "I suspect we will hit a peak by summer, but I don't expect the price to come down for the next year or so."

Uvacek says ground beef prices will rise another 25-50 cents a pound by midsummer both statewide and nationally. That would put the national average at close to \$2 a pound. The average price in Texas could be substantially more than \$2, he says.

The cattlemen's survey of 19 cities across the nation showed

ground beef currently selling for \$1.50 a pound.

Accelerated beef production began about four years ago when cattlemen began liquidating herds, Uvacek says.

Many of the breeding cattle were going on the block for hamburger and the cold cut market. The effect was to hold down ground beef prices.

"Now we are in the buildup phase of the cattle cycle and very few of the breeding cows are going to slaughter," he says. "With fewer of this type of cattle being processed, prices are naturally going to rise as long as demand for ground beef continues."

"We are about to enter an unusual period in the cattle cycle.

Prices of the choice cuts will move up, along with even higher prices for ground beef," he says.

Uvacek also expects meat processors and many fast-food outlets will be forced by economics to increase the use of extenders in the product they sell. The extenders, primarily soybean by-products are normally used to produce a 75 percent ground beef, 25 percent soy protein mix that competes with straight ground beef.

The cattle economist notes one of the primary causes of the upward push in overall beef prices has been the demand for hamburger. Ground beef is now used extensively in homes and is the main product of fast-food outlets. More than 25 percent of the total beef car-

case is ground beef.

As hamburger prices rise sharply, so does the overall average beef price.

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# U.S. marine captured by Iranians begins rest at home after ordeal

United Press International  
LANSDALE, Pa. — Marine Sgt. Kenneth Kraus, who received a hero's welcome on his return to the United States, Saturday began a 15-day leave to rest from his capture by leftist guerrillas in Iran.

Kraus, 22, was greeted by his mother, fiancée, three sisters, Navy Secretary W. Graham Clayton, Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Louis Wilson and others during full military ceremonies Friday on his arrival at Andrews Air Force Base near Washington.

Later Kraus and his family were flown back to the Willow Grove Naval Air Station in Montgomery County, Pa., and driven to his home in Upper Gwynedd Township. They arrived early Friday night.

In contrast to the fanfare at Andrews where Kraus received a Navy commendation medal and a Purple

Heart, there was only a hand-painted sign saying: "Welcome Home Ken."

The sign was unfired by a group of neighborhood boys as the Kraus family drove up in three Marine Corps cars.

Kraus said he plans "to stay at home with my family and do some visiting with the neighbors," during his leave.

Kraus, who was part of the Marine Corps detachment assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Iran when it was attacked Feb. 14, said he will go if he is given another embassy assignment.

"Wherever they send me, I'm going to go," said Kraus, a graduate of the Valley Forge Military

Academy and the Marine security guard school.

Kraus was wounded in the attack on the embassy and was hospitalized. He later was kidnapped by four leftist guerrillas and whisked away blindfolded while in his pajamas.

Later during an eight-minute trial conducted by his captors, he was sentenced to death for his actions in guarding the embassy during the attack.

Negotiations later won his release and his eventual return to the United States.

Kraus said that during his captivity, "I was the only American there and I was scared."

He said his return home was "almost a miracle. I can hardly believe it."

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