

# The Battalion

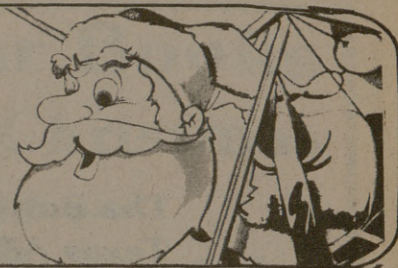
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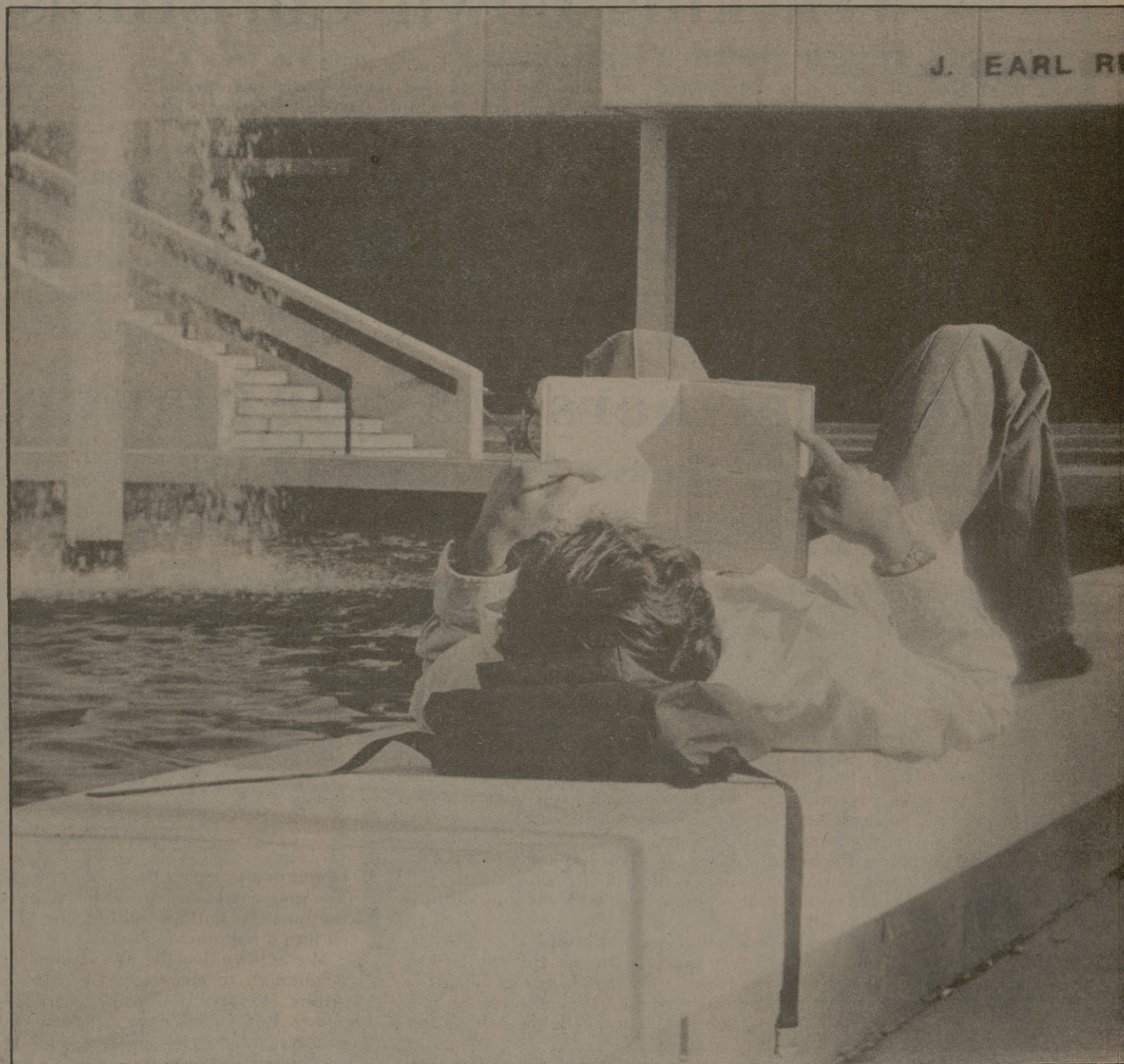


## Tornado kills 1, Houston dazed

**United Press International**  
HOUSTON — As was his custom, G. J. Martin, 77, sat on the front porch to collect his morning thoughts, concerned principally with his chewing tobacco and the spitting distance of the nearby coffee spittoon.  
All was quiet and still on a rainy Tuesday in December, but then he heard that noise — a roar which another witness described as "an old buzz saw" — screaming through his neighborhood.  
"Mama, it's a cyclone for sure," he shouted through the screen door to his 69-year-old wife.  
Mesmerized, they froze as a surprise tornado ripped across their line of sight and into the wooded countryside northeast of Houston. One person died and about 40 others were injured in the brief but intense storm produced by a morning thunderstorm.  
"Papa was sitting on the front porch. He watched it all. Just sat there and watched," said Mrs. Martin, who was changing a light bulb when the house started shaking. The light bulb is sitting where I left it. Don't matter. Got no electricity, anyhow," she said after the storm.  
The storm created havoc among rush-hour drivers.  
Billy Hester Burton, 54, died of a skull fracture and crushed chest received when

the storm flipped his truck in the 5700 block of Oats Road.  
The huge thunderstorm covered southeast Texas with heavy rain and hail and later produced two more twisters. The first struck near the small town of Crosby to the east; the second, the eastern edge of downtown Houston.  
At Frank Lawrence's American Auto Parts store no one was injured but those who gathered after the storm joked nervously and recalled their impressions of the minute-long ordeal.  
"This is the first tornado I've been through," said Lawrence, 39. "I've often wondered what it looked like up close. I got a bird's eye view this time."  
"It was black and whirling. It was very dark. The whole thing started out about 10' after eight. Then it got quiet for a second. Then it sounded like an old buzz saw cranking off."  
For the next minute or so things got a little confused around the auto parts store that sits at the intersection of Liberty Road and what locals call the Old Beaumont Highway.  
"That's when the glass came flying through the office. I didn't have to tell anyone to hit the floor, but everybody did. I did, too," he said.  
"I don't think we got the full force of it, judging by other damage. I believe we'd been dead, if we got hit hard here. We got

the fringe of it rather than the full center. It scared the dickens out of everybody. But there's a lot of people worse off than we are."  
Ambulance Division Chief L. O. "Whitey" Martin of the Houston Fire Department said an estimated 600 buildings were damaged in some way by the twister.  
The twister first struck along U.S. 90 about five miles from the middle of downtown, and moved on the ground northeast in a straight line five miles long and 100 to 500 feet wide.  
Law enforcement officials said looters descended quickly and Harris County deputies cordoned off the area while telephone and utility company personnel worked in a second rainstorm to restore power and other services.  
"There'll probably be at least 60 to 80 off-duty policemen out because people aren't people anymore," said deputy Ron Genovese. "They got to steal."  
Don Wernly, spokesman for the National Weather Service in Fort Worth, said there was some indication of severe weather, but not enough to issue a tornado watch or warning.  
"Right around sunrise is a minimum period for this kind of weather," he said. "There wasn't a watch out. Then the tornado was sighted and a warning was issued."



## Sunny studies

Wildlife and Fisheries graduate student Shad Wendorf finds that open-air studying beats the crowded conditions in the library during finals

week. The library will close at midnight tonight, ending this week's continuous operation.

Battalion staff photo

## Charter plane crashes, basketball team killed

**United Press International**  
EVANSVILLE, Ind. — Two minutes after takeoff Tuesday night, with no time to get off a radio message, the chartered DC-3 carrying the University of Evansville basketball team plunged into a fog-shrouded ravine, killing all 29 on board.  
Only one lived long enough to reach a hospital. The last of the 14 team members, Chris Greg Smith, 18, of West Frankfort, Ill., died early today in an Evansville hospital.  
The plane, owned by National Jet Service Inc. of Indianapolis, went down about 15 miles east of the main runway at Dress Regional Airport in this Ohio River city.  
The plane disappeared into the fog and about a minute and a half later I heard the engine cutting out, and it went down," said Rick Notter, an airport worker. "I saw it explode in flame."  
Airport manager James Stapleton said the plane struck below the crest of the small hill at a time when visibility was three-quarters of a mile, but fog was heavy in places.  
"Bodies in the front were melted into the wreckage," said Stapleton, who rushed to the crash site. "Some of the bodies were pressed into a gully. It was a tragic, gruesome scene."  
Killed in the crash of the vintage, twin-engine plane were all 24 passengers and five crew members. Among the passengers were Coach Bobby Watson, sportscaster Marvin Bates and executives of the charter firm.  
The team was flying to Nashville, Tenn., for a game tonight at Middle Tennessee State at Murfreesboro.  
The University of Evansville, once a Midwestern small college basketball powerhouse which moved into major college competition this season, declared a day of

mourning and cancelled classes for its 3,000 students.  
"It's a tragedy that defies description," said university President Wallace Graves. Authorities originally reported 31 persons aboard the plane Tuesday night on the basis of a Federal Aviation Administration passenger manifest. But one of those on the list, student radio announcer Mark Moulton, decided to skip the trip because he had the flu.  
Witnesses said the aircraft plowed into the 50-foot hill, snapping both wings and the fuselage. Bodies, duffel bags, sports equipment and college leather jackets were tossed onto the slope.  
There will be no quick way to measure the impact of the first nationwide farmers strike, but — except for the strikers themselves — most agricultural observers are skeptical about the farmers' chances for success.  
The strike apparently is limited to grain farmers and veteran grain speculators doubt that if the market rises the farmers will stick to their pledge not to sell their crops.  
The timing of the strike should prevent its effects from being felt for at least several months.  
With the harvest past and the winter wheat planted, the cold months of the year usually find farmers in the kitchen talking low and warming their hands around a coffee cup.  
"I don't expect we'll know anything until spring," said Tom Sand, a spokesman for Agriculture Secretary Bob Bergland.  
The strikers, led by a maverick group called American Agriculture, say they're going broke. A bushel of wheat costs about \$5 to grow. It sells for \$2.45.  
Thousands of farmers have said they won't sell any more crops until they get at least a break-even price for crops. No one, not even strike leaders, knows how many farmers will keep their promise, or for how long.  
"We would be fishing if we tried to say what will happen," said Jordan Hollander, a director on the

Chicago Board of Trade. "We don't have an answer."  
Milk farmers, poultrymen, cattle ranchers and hog producers are not expected to join the strike.  
"We have perishable products," said Wray Finney, immediate past president of the National Cattlemen's Association. "We're in much the same situation as people in the milk and poultry business."  
Wheat farmers are a different story. Fall harvest in the West was good, and grain storage bins are full. More than two billion bushels of wheat were harvested in the nation during 1977, and one-fifth of the crop is under federal price support loans. Therein lies what American Agriculture farmers call their "ace in the hole."  
If their plans work, the federal government will find itself in the position of partly financing the strike.  
"The way this new farm bill is set up, it gives the family farmer an out," said organizer Bob Keenan in Denver. "He can get government loans on his grain, and he can give that money to the banker or his financing company and take some of the pressure off."  
Under federal price support loans, a program which started in the New Deal, farmers use their stored grain for collateral.  
Money from the federal loans would be paid to banks and finance companies holding notes on farms, like borrowing from Peter to pay Paul. Travis

## Strength of farm strike questioned

Waller, president of the First National Bank in the small rural town of Springfield, Colo., says it will work.  
"The farmer can put his products in government loan and get almost as much as he could by selling them," said Waller. "Plus, he is still retaining control of his product, holding it off the market. And there is no problem qualifying for the federal loans."  
Waller, whose bank has \$14 million out in loans to farmers, said he believes the farm strike will at least alert the American public to the plight of the farmer. "To say I wasn't worried at all would be somewhat of a misnomer," he said. "But I'm still able to sleep at night."  
Small rural banks that have loaned up to their legal limit pass off some of the loan notes to larger banks, such as the Colorado National Bank in Denver. Charles Kirk, vice president at Colorado National, says the money from federal price support loans should keep both farmers and small banks out of financial trouble.  
Much of the skepticism about the strike's chances for success derives from the belief farmers will not stick together.  
A long-time observer of the grain markets, Roderick Turnbull of the Kansas City Commodity Market, said farmers lack the solidarity necessary for a successful strike.  
"It's hard for me to believe that all farmers will cooperate," he said. "This is farmer against farmer. You've got to remember that the fellow who raises

corn is one fellow and one who raises hogs and buys the corn to feed them is another."  
Some grain speculators in Chicago say even if the farmers withhold grain long enough to force prices up a bit, some farmers will quietly begin selling their grain bringing prices down again and breaking the strike's back.  
"We had such a big wheat crop last fall that somebody, somehow, is going to sell grain," said Hollander. "If the market is forced up, somebody will sell quietly. It's going to be awful hard to keep a finger on the effects of this strike."  
"It won't be a fast moving thing," said Hollander. "We're running into the Christmas season now so we don't have a lot of selling anyway. We're just sitting back and seeing if it develops."  
John McLenathan of the Illinois Grain Company in Chicago said the strike will face its most serious test in the spring. "If they still plant the big crops this spring the affect of the strike could be pretty minimal."  
None of the large farm organizations in the country have officially endorsed the strike, although many members said they would participate in an effort to save the family farm, traditionally the backbone of American agriculture.  
A national farm strike in this country is without precedent, but farmers once called for a strike in the Midwest during the Great Depression. Farmers marched on state capitals in a demand for relief and moratoriums on foreclosures. The strike failed.

## Powerhouse dream ended for the Aces

**United Press International**  
EVANSVILLE, Ind. — A dream died Tuesday night.  
The University of Evansville basketball team, long a power in NCAA Division II, ended the "big boys" in Division I this season with great expectations for the future.  
But the latest in a long list of air sports tragedies wiped out the Aces and new coach Bobby Watson when their chartered plane crashed in dense fog shortly after takeoff and burst into flames.  
The team was en route to Nashville, Tenn., and was scheduled to play Middle Tennessee tonight.  
Watson, 34, took over from the retired Brad McCutcheon this fall and recruited a team that included eight freshmen. They dropped three of their first four games, but Watson didn't seem to be too disturbed. He was convinced he could sell his program and build the Aces into a powerhouse once more.  
During McCutcheon's 30-year coaching reign, the Aces won the Division II championship five times — in 1959, 1960, 1964, 1965 and 1971. The 1964 team featured Jerry Sloan, later of the Chicago Bulls, who last spring agreed to take the Evansville coaching job, then abruptly changed his mind.



## Semblance of snow

Krueger Hall residents Leslie Coulter and Allyson Arnett have decided to replace their door with a snowy window, despite the warm weather outside.

Battalion staff photo

## Home-cooked meals offered campus-bound internationals

By ROBIN LINN

Christmas for many students means a good meal at home with friends, but for some international students who can't make it home it's a chance to eat a holiday dinner with local residents.  
The program, a joint effort of the Baptist Student Union and the international students office, will operate from Dec. 19 to Jan. 2. They now have 30 families waiting for international students to sign up to eat a holiday dinner with them.  
Texas A&M has some 1,000 international students enrolled from 75 countries, said Corky Sandel, international student adviser.  
"It is too expensive for some international students to go home, so this is a chance for us to share some of our culture with them," said Bill Barnett, coordinating the program for the Baptist Student Union (BSU). He added that many interna-

tional students are hesitant when they find out it's a church sponsored program.  
Barnett said sponsors vary in their religious denomination, even though the program is worked through BSU.  
"My concern is getting community families who want to help, I often don't know what denomination they are," he said.  
The first program this Thanksgiving placed 20 students with local families for turkey dinners with dressing as well as a chance for international students to find out what the American family is like.  
"We are trying to provide some type of activity for international students so they can see how the American family lives," Barnett said.  
The service not only provides a meal, but a chance to go out and do

things with the family. Students and family are provided with a calendar of events for December in the Bryan-College Station area which includes notes on interesting things to do over the Christmas holidays.  
Sandel said international students add another dimension to A&M, and are neglected as an educational source for the local community. Presently, Sandel is attempting to form an "International Speakers Bureau" which would involve the international student in local affairs by having them speak to classes at public schools about their country.  
Eventually, he hopes to set up a hospitality committee to work with international students.  
Sandel said that international students that are interested in eating dinner with a local family for Christmas can sign up on the second floor of the MSC.