

The Battalion

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Possible safety hazard due to acid corrosion

By PAIGE BEASLEY

The use of acids, which is causing corrosion in and outside the Oceanography and Geology Building at Texas A&M University could develop into a safety hazard. The problem originated with the design of the building. Before construction was completed, the building was redesigned and chemists discovered there were no fume hoods capable of handling the use of hydrochloric acid, a highly corrosive combination of oxygen and chlorine. Furthermore, the fume hood ducts were not properly placed.

"A year or so after we moved into the building, it was found that the blower units put into the fume hood system were inadequate for the volumes and types of acids we were evaporating into the fume hoods," said Dr. Bobby J. Presley, associate professor of oceanography. "The blowers were getting eaten up, and the fume hoods would stop working."

When you're designing a building with fume hoods in it, the fume hoods should run straight up to the roof and discharge, but in this building they go all over the place," said Dr. David Schink, associate

professor of oceanography.

The ducting, the passageways for fumes being carried from the hoods, have right angle bends, which slow down the speed at which fumes leave the building.

An improper air balance, the inside air has a slightly lower pressure than the air outside, makes it difficult to blow the air out of the fume hoods, Schink said.

Earl F. Cook, Dean of Geosciences, said these conditions are causing "not only corrosion, but somewhere down the line it could cause unhealthy conditions in the laboratories.

"Before the later happens, we've got to get the problem corrected, and it's a difficult and expensive thing to do because we don't know what it involves," Cook said.

Acid fumes can burn the eyes and skin and cause lung deterioration, said Pete Rodriguez, administrative services officer and chemist.

Nevertheless, Cook said, chemical oceanographers must conclude research on time, "without endangering our people."

"They are using the fume hoods until they come to the point where the situation is really dangerous, and they have to cut it (research) down, and try to patch them."

The acids we are using are not unusual," Presley said. "Laboratories all over the world use these kinds of acids. Laboratories all over the world have fume hoods that work. The question is, why don't the fume hoods work in Aggieland?"

Schink said that along with faulty ventilation, there is a shortage of hoods for the lab work. Researchers are forced to use acids outside of the hoods, which in turn causes corrosion inside the laboratories.

Corrosion is also taking place outside the building. "The building is faced with limestone which is soluble in acid, so when the acid fumes go out the ducts and they touch the walls of the building, they dissolve it," Schink said.

"The fume hood exhausts are not properly placed so the fumes are hitting the windows up there in the observatory," he said. "We use hydrofluoric acid which etches glass so we are etching the windows."

Paul Stevens of the Texas A&M physical plant said there are three possible options to decrease problems in the building: to redesign the ventilation system, to increase the speed at which the fumes leave the building, or to provide a means of replenishing the fresh air in the laboratories.

Presently contractors are working on plans and prices. Until presentation by contractors and approval by the University, research will continue at half speed because of the inadequate fume hood system.

U.S. confident peace talks to resume in Middle East

United Press International

The United States, confident that negotiations between Egypt and Israel will resume next week, is now trying to bring King Hussein into the Middle East peace process.

Egypt and Israel, who broke off negotiations nine days ago in a bitter exchange of accusations, predicted Thursday that stalled military talks will resume in Cairo next week.

Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan took one step further and said that thanks to U.S. mediation Israel and Egypt are close to an accord on a "statement of principles" on a Middle East settlement.

"I am hopeful that we can reach — and this is mainly due to the American contribution — an agreement about the principles that would be acceptable to the Egyptians and ourselves," Dayan said.

Such guidelines could pave the way for a resumption of the Israeli-Egyptian political talks suspended by President Anwar Sadat last week.

U.S. diplomats said Assistant Secretary of State Alfred Atherton, who met with Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin for 90 minutes Thursday, will travel to Jordan Saturday to try to draw Hussein into the peace process.

They said Atherton would meet six U.S. ambassadors in Amman and then pay a "courtesy call" on Hussein. The Hashemite monarch's participation is considered crucial for negotiating a settlement to the Palestinian issue.

Officials in Jerusalem said Atherton will arrive in Cairo next week, probably carrying new ideas that could prove crucial in determining the next step in the peace-making effort.

In a related development, the New York Times reported today that both Sadat and Begin may travel to Washington within the next month for separate meetings with President Carter.

Deputy constables arrest three for check violations

By TERESA HUDDLESTON and GARY WELCH

Hot check writers found themselves in even hotter water Thursday night when Brazos County deputy constables conducted raids to round up area hot check writers.

"Thursday night is a good night to catch them at home," said Constable E. W. Sayers. "Friday night everyone is gone." Sayers said he mailed about 100 summonses to hot check passers around the county. Some were due for payment last Friday and others for last Monday. Those

who did not pay their checks by the deadline had warrants issued for their arrests.

Deputies gave each hot check writer a chance to pay both the unpaid check and a fine for not answering the summons. If both accounts were not paid in cash immediately, the person was taken to the county jail and given the option to either post bond or spend the night in jail.

By 10 p. m., deputies had arrested three people who did not pay immediately. Most of those who were home paid in order to stay out of jail.

A local radio station announced Thurs-

day that the raids would take place, driving some offenders away from home for the evening.

But Sayers said the announcement caused a flood of telephone calls from people wanting to know if there were warrants out on them.

"They really came out of the woodwork," Sayers said. Although the announcement allowed some offenders to elude the deputies, he said, it made people aware that hot check passers were being prosecuted.

Deputies Art Dixon and Johnny Ramirez served a warrant to a local man for a \$30 debt owed to a local merchant. The man produced a money order receipt for the same amount, and Dixon said he would check today to see if the debt had actually been paid.

The deputies also collected a \$74.50 fine for the man's failure to answer the summons.

Dixon and Ramirez served another warrant in the Finfeather Acres trailer park, but found the person had moved. They checked with a neighbor and found the person had left in November and moved into an apartment in Bryan.

"I'll have to do some tracking down tomorrow," Dixon said. By checking with local utility and cable companies, he said, deputies should be able to find correct addresses on some outstanding warrants.

"We'll do a lot of cross checking," he said. "We'll get 'em."

Sayers said that many warrants could not be served because the people had moved, but deputies were able to find out where most of them could be found.

"Although we didn't collect them all," he said, "we found out where we can get them."

Cash limits reduced

Merchants alter check policy

By JANICE STRIPLING
More and more businesses in College Station are refusing to accept checks because of losses from bad checks.

Although businessmen have accepted inconveniences in dealing with checks, they now protect their interests by implementing check cashing policy changes. Due to excessive losses, businesses in College Station are now accepting checks on a limited basis.

Bobby Bosquez, Piggly Wiggly assistant manager said, "Students assume we are a bank and that's not true." The \$5 cash limit is a convenience and it shouldn't be taken for granted, he said.

Six months ago Piggly Wiggly set a \$10 limit for cash. That policy was changed recently to a \$5 limit.

"Seventy-five percent out of 100 bad checks are from students," Bosquez said.

Students closing their accounts at banks for the summer is Piggly Wiggly's largest problem said Bosquez.

Extension of hours ready for approval

By PAUL BARTON

Closing hours at the Memorial Student Center will be extended from 11 p. m. to 2 a. m. Sunday through Thursday, if a proposal passed by the MSC council is approved by the University Center Board of Directors.

The new hours are the result of university-wide survey that showed students would prefer to have the MSC open later for studying purposes, said Sharon Taulman, vice-president for administration on the council.

The council approved an overall budget request of \$540,094.05 for 1978-79, an increase of \$45,113.05 over this year's budget. Of the total, \$173,617.05 will come from student service fees, an increase of \$14,685.05 over 1977-78. These budget requests must now be approved by the Student Service Fee allocations Committee during its hearings Jan. 31-Feb. 2.

The money will be used to support 20 MSC committees ranging from Aggie Cinema to Political Forum and Town Hall Opera and Performing Arts, Town Hall

and the Video Tape committee were among organizations requesting the largest budget increases.

OPAS' \$4,075 increase and Town Hall's \$15,300 increase were due largely to inflation and the new federal copyright law, said Lynn A. Gibson, president of the MSC Council.

According to Sarah Ferry, OPAS committee chairman, royalties have to be paid to composers and copyright companies whenever their works are performed before audiences. Ferry says the group hiring the performer must pay the royalties.

The jury deliberated only 15 minutes before announcing it had determined Yarbrough lied to a Travis County jury on June 28, 1977, about a meeting with a former business associate.

Yarbrough stood solemnly with his hands folded in front of him as District Judge Mace B. Thurman read the verdict. He showed no signs of emotion.

The jury will resume deliberations today to consider the sentencing for the 36-year-old former justice.

Just before the jury received the case, Travis County District Attorney Carol Vance gave the final argument for the state, saying the jury had to find Yarbrough guilty.

"I submit to you we have proven this case not only beyond a reasonable doubt, but beyond any doubt," Vance said.

Yarbrough was accused of lying to the Travis County grand jury which was investigating allegations he had participated in the forgery of an automobile title.

Yarbrough told the grand jury he had not met his former business associate John W. Rothkopf between Christmas of 1976 and June 10 of 1977.

Evidence presented at the trial, including testimony of Rothkopf and tape recordings of a conversation between the two, showed Yarbrough met Rothkopf at an Austin motel May 16 and supervised the forging of the automobile registration.

Testimony ended early Thursday with no evidence presented in Yarbrough's defense.

Jury finds Yarbrough guilty in prejury charge

United Press International

AUSTIN — Former Supreme Court Associate Justice Donald B. Yarbrough was found guilty Thursday of aggravated perjury by a five-man, six-woman jury.

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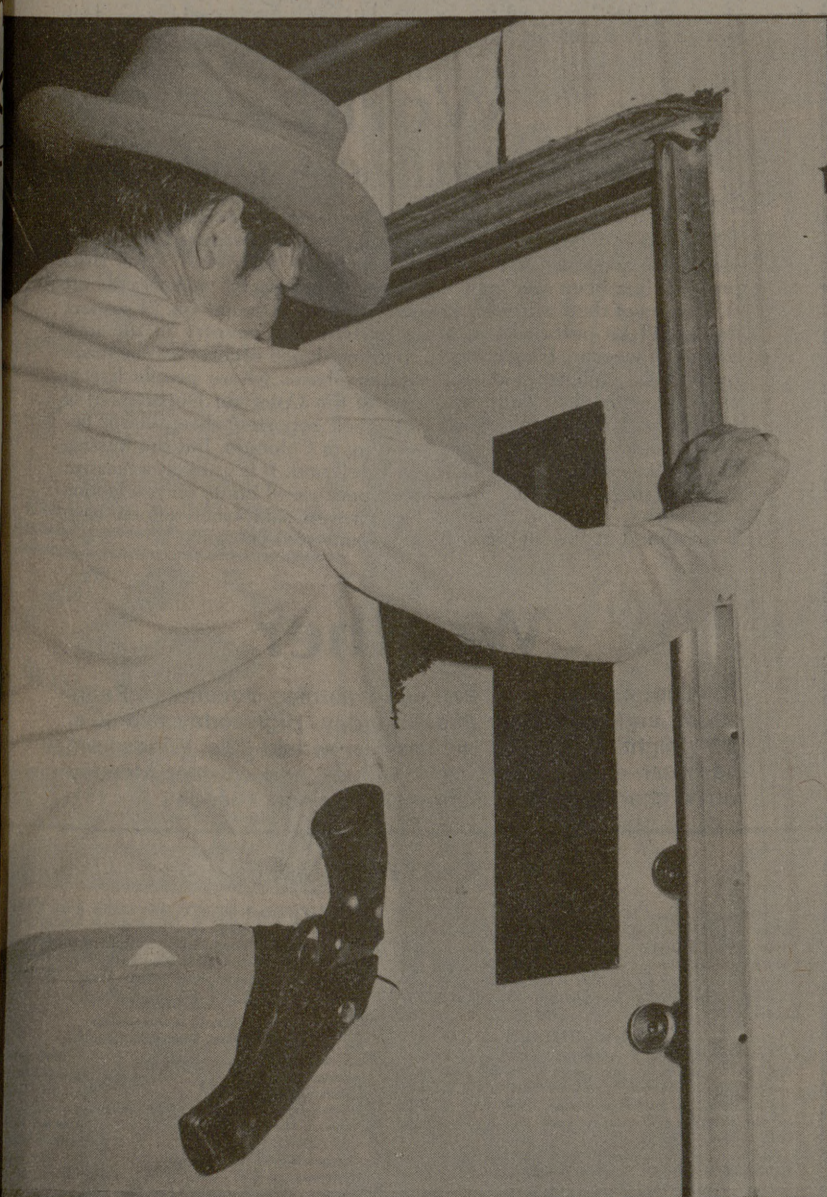
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Battalion photo by Susan Webb

Chester Price, deputy constable of Brazos County, knocks to serve a summons for writing hot checks. A "raid" was conducted last night, requiring persons to pay for the bad checks, and a fine, or go to jail for the night.