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Fly's eye view

Photography editor Pat O'Malley caught multiple image reflection of himself and the common lounge area in the multiple curved mirrors which decorate that part of the Krueger-Dunn-Mosher-Aston dormitory complex.

Battalion photo by Pat O'Malley

American reporters convicted in Moscow

MOSCOW — Two American reporters were convicted in Soviet court Tuesday on charges of libeling Soviet television officials.

The court ordered the reporters to pay fines of \$1,647 each and publish retractions of the offending material in either Soviet or American newspapers.

The verdict came in a swift, three-hour trial that was boycotted by the defendants, Craig Whitney of The New York Times and Harold Piper of the Baltimore Sun.

Chief Judge Lev Almazov of the Moscow City Court ordered that Whitney and Piper pay their fines within 10 days and publish the retractions within five days.

Soviet television officials had brought the charges in a civil lawsuit, claiming they were slandered in dispatches written by the two Americans.

The verdict was considered sure to further strain U.S.-Soviet relations, coming just five days after the sentencing of Soviet human rights activists Anatoly Shcharansky and Alexander Ginzburg.

The Carter administration responded to the charges against the Americans by hinting that it might expel five Soviet reporters based in Washington.

The stories in question quoted Georgian dissident sources as saying the Soviet tele-

vision officials had fabricated the filmed confession of Georgian human rights activist Zviad Gamsakhourdia.

The Soviet television officials summoned the 39-year-old Gamsakhourdia — who is now serving a three-year prison sentence for anti-Soviet activities — as their key witness.

With Soviet and Western journalists and television cameramen looking on, the prosecution aimed its case at showing that Whitney and Piper allegedly virtually ignored such official Soviet sources as Tass news agency and opted instead to believe what the prosecution called "unreliable dissident sources."

Prosecutor Georgy Skaredov told the court in his summation, "Whitney and Piper are slanderers only interested in distorting Soviet reality."

He asked the court to convict the Americans, send a letter to the Soviet Foreign Ministry asking that they be deprived of their official accreditation, order them to pay \$3,168 in fines and court costs, apologize to the Soviet television officials and publish a retraction both in the United States and the Soviet Union.

In a preliminary hearing July 7, Whitney and Piper challenged Soviet jurisdiction over articles published outside the Soviet Union.

Before the verdict, one senior Western

diplomat in Moscow said the Soviet Union would be well advised to drop the whole thing.

"They made their point and managed to make themselves look like fools in the process," the diplomat said. "Now they ought to make as graceful an exit as possible by just dropping it."

The New York Times said it would have no immediate comment but might issue a statement later.

Paul Banker, managing editor of the Baltimore Morning Sun, said the paper was prepared to pay the fine but that the required retraction was another matter.

"The conviction is what we expected," he said. "Piper was convicted the moment he was charged. We stand on the contention that the news article was correct that friends of the dissidents said they doubted the confession." Banker said he had talked with Piper briefly over the phone after the report of his conviction. He said Piper was scheduled to spend a couple of weeks on vacation but would then return to his assignment in Russia.

"I don't know what the Russians mean by a retraction," said Banker. "I don't see how we can do that. We didn't say the dissidents said the television program was faked. It was friends of the dissidents who said that and they did. If they want us to retract that I don't see how we can."

Relief for ranchers, farmers

Senate committee okays tax based on land productivity

AUSTIN — A Texas Senate committee, prodded by pleas from farmers and ranchers for relief from high property taxes, Tuesday approved a proposed constitutional amendment allowing agricultural land to be taxed on the basis of its productivity rather than its market value and sent it to the full Senate for debate.

The amendment, the third major provision of Gov. Dolph Briscoe's tax relief package to be considered during the special session, is expected to be considered by the full Senate today.

A similar proposal easily passed the Senate in 1977, but failed by one vote in the House.

Pat Smith, representing the 200,000-member Texas Farm Bureau, told the committee farm and ranch lands near urban areas are being assessed and taxed at the same values as nearby land being developed for subdivisions.

"To tax agricultural land the same as subdivision land contiguous to it is to tax the farmer out of business and force him off the land his family may have held for generations," Smith said.

"We feel this special session is the only time we'll ever have to accomplish this goal. We can wait no longer for it to be on the ballot. We are losing 2,000 to 3,000 family farmers per year."

A House committee conducted a second day of hearings Tuesday on a series of proposed constitutional amendments providing tax relief and limiting future taxing authority of state and local governments.

Sen. Carlos Truan, D-Corpus Christi, voted against the amendment in committee, arguing agricultural land owned by large corporations should not receive the tax break.

Spokesmen for the Texas Independent Cattlemen's Association and Texans for Equitable Taxation said they would support the plan denying the tax break to large corporations if it was necessary for passage of the proposal in the House.

The Senate Administration Committee Tuesday delayed for at least one day action on a resolution by Sens. Bill Moore, D-Bryan, and Peyton McKnight, D-Tyler, to adjourn the special legislative session at 5 p.m. Friday.

(See related story, page 8)

Heat stroke deaths in Dallas keep breaking more records

DALLAS — The records are beginning to pile up. At least 21 deaths, more than can be remembered.

More people hospitalized. More electricity used. More water. More ice being used.

For the past 17 days it has been the same. By the time the sun rises in the morning the temperature already is in the 90s and as it crosses the clear North sky the heat keeps climbing.

By 11 a.m., it is 99 degrees. By noon, the temperature is 102. The signs on banks chart the steady increase: 102, 103, 105, 110.

Allen Fain, Dallas County health officer, said Tuesday at least 21 deaths were reported from heatstroke in the city heatwave that has gripped North Dallas. He said at least 14 had died in Dallas and another seven in the Fort Worth area. The actual figure may be higher. The death certificate lists primary cause of death and three contributing factors. "The technical cause is dehydration. It's related to the thing that got them in, what precipitated the failure, and that's heat."

The National Weather Service is predicting no change in the weather through Sunday and indicates the 100-plus degree temperatures that have been present for the last 17 days may even continue into next week.

"I was shocked when I heard on the news the number of deaths attributed to heat stroke," said Jeter Pruett, chief NWS area forecaster. "I didn't know it was that serious."

"The weather charts don't show any indications of a break in this spell of hot weather. The best bet may be to keep eye on the Gulf of Mexico for tropical storms and hurricanes. Sometimes an offshoot from one of these comes into central Texas and brings clouds and rains and relief from the dry spells."

Don Wilson, a spokesman for Dallas Power & Light Co., said records for electricity consumption were set five straight days beginning July 10.

He said on Friday, when the temperature was 102 at 4 p.m., the fuel consumption necessary to produce electricity that day was 19 million cubic feet of natural gas and 660 tons of lignite — enough electric-

ity to operate a normal Dallas household for 200 years.

Pumps at Dallas water stations have been moving more gallons to area residences than in any recent summer, much of it shooting out through lawn hoses in an attempt to keep grass green.

"We're pumping over 400 million gallons per day," said one spokesman. "It's above normal for July. It's the heat and the drought."

Ice dealers in Amarillo cited unprecedented demands from their customers. Pat McGinty of Amarillo Ice Co. said he had requests from Dallas, Houston, San Antonio and several other Texas cities for more than a million pounds of ice.

"We are now making about 75 tons of ice per day and can't keep up," McGinty said. "Even though we have doubled our production, we can't meet the needs."

"With this heat wave there is no way anybody is going to keep up with the demand," said Ken Hillier of Hillier Ice Co. "We're not taking on any new customers, we're just trying to keep the old ones satisfied."

Don Bartley, 32, a resident of Abilene, simply described the weather as "too damn hot."

"Yesterday was unbelievable and today is no better," he said from his air-conditioned office. "They're predicting 105 or better and I know it's that already. Even during the weekend there's nobody outside in my neighborhood, I mean no one. Everyone stays in."

Police suspect fits rapist's description

By MARK WILLIS
Battalion City Editor

College Station police believe they may have apprehended the man responsible for a series of rapes and assaults in this area during June and July.

According to a "suspicious person" call Tuesday afternoon, police picked up a man fitting the description provided by victims of the attacks. He was described as a black male in his early twenties, approximately 5' 10" tall, and weigh-

ing about 165 pounds. The attacker is believed responsible for two rapes and three assaults in June and early July. On July 6, police issued a press release describing the attacker and requesting citizens to report suspicious persons fitting the description.

Police are withholding the suspect's name pending further investigation and positive identification by victims. A complete report should be issued sometime today, police officials said.

Proposed insurance hike aimed on car repair costs

STATION — Skyrocketing prices for auto parts and labor are largely to blame for the insurance industry's request for an increase in auto insurance rates, an industry spokesman said Tuesday.

Johns, president of the Southwest Insurance Information Service, said inflation rate has placed auto insurance rates in a critical situation.

Johns said a study shows it would cost \$1,000 to replace all the parts on a wrecked 1978 model car priced at \$7,000. The parts and generally not a new car at Texas insurance companies must use," Johns said. "The cost to repair cars is a major factor in helping to raise the cost of auto insurance for state residents."

State Insurance Board has scheduled public hearings today on the industry's request for an average 5.2 percent increase in private and com-

mercial vehicle insurance rates. The Insurance Board staff has recommended an increase of 5.2 percent, including a 3.2 percent increase on private passenger car coverage.

Johns said during a five-year period the parts costs for one popular model car increased 83.4 percent and labor costs increased 42.2 percent.

"The effect these skyrocketing price hikes has upon the insurance industry in Texas is significant," he said.

"No industry in the country can be expected to meet these kind of increases and provide the type of protection motorists are entitled to without some form of rate relief."

Auto insurance rates in Texas were last increased in 1976.

Former chairman Joe Christie recessed board hearings on an industry request for higher rates last year, noting State Farm had made sufficient profits under the old rates to pay stockholder dividends.

His marriage went to the dogs; now his dog goes with marriage

OAKLAND — Divorced and lonely, George Teebay had to go to court to win visitation rights to the family dog, Clyde.

His ex-wife, Susan, received custody of Clyde when the pair dissolved their marriage, but an agreement in their legal community property settlement gave George "reasonable visitation" rights to the golden retriever.

George complained in Alameda County Superior Court last week that his ex-wife wasn't letting him visit the animal. Once, said George, he found Clyde cold and whimpering in the yard next to Susan's house.

"Clyde was overjoyed to see me and needed me," George testified before Judge Richard A. Bancroft.

Clyde is happy, countered Susan, adding that she takes good care of him, that she lives alone and needs the protection of a dog.

The judge, who owns two golden retrievers himself, weighed the decision and rendered this judgment:

George "shall have visitation of the family dog, Clyde, on the second and fourth weekends of each and every month from Friday at 7 p.m. until Sunday at 4 p.m., commencing forthwith."

"It is expected that the parties will cooperate with one another to effect the intent of this order."

Kennedy sale items may not be authentic

HOUSTON — The Harris County District Attorney's consumer fraud division is investigating the sale of Rice Hotel items purported to be from the suite in which the late President John F. Kennedy spent his last night.

Spence Gardner, assistant district attorney, said investigators are checking allegations that few of the items sold were actually in the room when Kennedy stayed there 15 years ago.

Content Clearing and Exchange Co. of Wayne, Mich., held a two-day sale of items from the International Suite last weekend.

A spokesman for the company said none of the items were authenticated, but that suite furnishings were believed to be those in the room during Kennedy's visit Nov. 21, 1963.

The spokesman said the room was restored based on photographs and interviews with persons who worked at the hotel during the 1960s.

Investigators said the possibility of deceptive trade practices were being checked because of the clear implication that the items were actually used by Kennedy.



Time for summer cleaning

A lone popsicle stick floats among the green algae in one of the no-longer-cascading fountains on Texas

A&M's north mall. The fountain has gone without cleaning for some time.

Battalion photo by Pat O'Malley