

# THE BATTALION

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## Inside Tuesday

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## Amelia fades away into rainshowers

United Press International

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas — With the last of the missing boats accounted for and their crews recovering from Amelia's buffeting, the tropical storm that alarmed the Gulf Coast drizzled away today in the hills of Central Texas.

The Coast Guard reported no deaths or injuries from the storm that had winds as high as 70 mph and blew in suddenly off the Gulf Sunday afternoon, stranding at least eight boats to ride out the waves and await rescue.

What was left of the storm had broken up into light rainshowers around San Antonio, Texas.

"It's so weak right now you can't even find it (on radar)," a National Weather Service spokesman in San Antonio said today. "The circle is gone. Right now we're getting good rain, and some thunderstorms."

The storm stayed in the Gulf long enough Sunday afternoon to pick up wind speed, and then hit the coast between Brownsville and Corpus Christi, Texas.

Amelia caught several fishing and pleasure boats before they could reach shore. "This storm sneaked up and they didn't have a chance to get back," said George Reichwein of the Coast Guard's Padre Island station.

The Coast Guard pulled a father and his two sons, one a paraplegic, from the fishing boat Frankie E. in the Gulf 25 miles east of Port Mansfield, which had been missing since Sunday night. The three, Clifton R. Fincher, 56, of Fort Worth, and his sons, John, 31, of Port Isabel and Victor Paul, 24, of Fort Worth, were hoisted aboard a helicopter and were taken to a hospital in Brownsville.

Clifton and John Fincher were treated and released Monday. A spokesman at

Brownsville Medical Center said Victor Paul, who was paralyzed from the waist down by a motorcycle accident two years ago, was in fair but stable condition today under treatment for exposure.

Three other persons were found clinging to the inside of the overturned Lorie Ann. Rescue workers used an ax to chop through the hull and pull out three men.

Coast Guard spokesman Bob Baeton in New Orleans said the three appeared in good condition despite the overnight ordeal. They were taken to a hospital as a precaution.

Two other persons reported missing earlier when their catamaran was found beached between Port Isabel and Port Mansfield also were located, Baeton said.

Earlier, a Coast Guard helicopter rescued 19 crewmen from a wobbling offshore oil rig, the George R. Farris, located 23 miles north of Port Isabel.

## Senate defeats revision of property tax system

United Press International

AUSTIN — The Senate Monday quickly defeated 18-9 a major revision of the state's property tax system, apparently killing chances that the proposal can be passed during the special legislative session.

"It's dead for the session," Lt. Gov. William P. Hobby said. "I'm glad its disposed of one way or the other."

The House scheduled a second attempt Monday afternoon at passing a proposed constitutional amendment dealing with tax relief, and had planned to begin immediate consideration after that vote of its own version of the property tax reform bill sponsored by Rep. Wayne Peveto, D-Orange.

Even if the House passed the Peveto bill, however, it could not be considered in the Senate because the upper chamber already has defeated a bill on the same subject.

Senate opponents to the bill had prepared a long series of proposed amendments to the property tax revision proposal sponsored by Sen. Grant Jones, D-Abilene, but quickly withdrew the

amendments and called for an immediate vote when it became clear Jones did not have enough votes to pass the bill.

Jones and Peveto blamed the failure of the proposal on strong opposition from special interest groups.

"I thought we had a 50-50 chance," Peveto said. "Evidently the special interest lobbies have done their homework. I think at some point the people will demand that this bill pass. I'll just have to wait."

Jones said, "We've got some property taxpayers who feel they're enjoying a more favorable appraisal than they would under a realistic tax administration system. I think something similar to this will be passed, or something similar to this will be imposed on us by the courts."

The bill would have created a single tax

appraisal authority in each of the state's 254 counties to replace appraisals now done by more than 2,000 taxing authorities. It also would have established guidelines for uniform assessment of values, set up procedures for property owners to appeal valuations, and prevented local governments from increasing taxes either by increasing rates or appraisal without a public hearing.

Sen. Walter Mengden, R-Houston, warned senators about possible consequences of the bill, contending, "If it should happen to pass it would result in the most massive tax increase in the history of the state of Texas."

Jones argued that the Legislature should revise the system of administering the property tax before a court orders such a revision.

## Locusts sweep through Somalia

United Press International

HARGEISA, Somalia — Clouds of voracious locusts are massing in the remote and forbidding mountains of Somalia, waiting to ride the wind across East Africa and destroy billions of dollars worth of crops.

Health officials say vast swarms of the insects have been swept into the high ground by strong monsoon winds along Somalia's northern coast bordering the Gulf of Aden.

Now, these same strong currents are preventing extermination teams in their light spray planes from reaching the locusts.

Officials of the Desert Locusts Control Organization of Eastern Africa are now organizing a battered fleet of aircraft and vehicles to fight the locusts when they emerge from the mountains in the next few weeks.

At stake is at least \$15 billion worth of crops in several African countries that the locusts could destroy in a matter of weeks.

"The locusts have come from Ethiopia and Djibouti and are hiding in the mountains along the coast," Osman Deria, chief of operations for DLCOEA said.

"We are regrouping, fixing our vehicles and planes and waiting for the winds to stop. If they get by us and into the Ethiopian areas of the Ogaden and further, it will be a real disaster."

The locust teams are being hampered in their efforts by poor equipment, poor cooperation between neighboring countries and the wars continuing to rage both in the Ogaden Desert and in Ethiopia's northern province of Eritrea.

A team of 100 Somali workers have only seven aircraft and a few old and battered vehicles.

DLCOEA officials expect rain in late August. This would make the Ogaden region an ideal breeding area for even more locusts if they escape the small teams currently waiting at the foot of the Somalia mountains for them to emerge.



### French kiss anyone?

Patrick Childers of Bryan, a horticulture major at Texas A&M, allows his double yellow-headed Amazon "Lefty" uncanny freedom during his training

sessions. Childers has several of these tropical birds that he trains in his spare time.

Battalion photo by Jay Barker

### Several wounded in shootings

## Gunmen flee Iraqi embassy

United Press International

PARIS — A fusillade of bullets Monday night ended an eight-hour siege of the Iraqi Embassy by two Arab-speaking gunmen who reportedly had threatened to kill eight hostages unless they got a plane to London to free a woman comrade.

First reports, without official confirmation, said one policeman was killed and two were wounded. At least one person had been critically wounded earlier, and other reports said six other people had been injured.

It was not immediately clear who started shooting, or whether one or both gunmen were involved. People outside the embassy, just a few doors from the home of French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing, dropped to the street, some because they had been wounded, others to avoid the hail of bullets.

The firing began soon after an Arab diplomat entered the embassy at 6 p.m. to negotiate with the terrorists. The diplomat emerged with one or both of the gunmen a few minutes later. Shots were fired as they stepped into a small car.

Witnesses closest to the scene said the firing may have come from embassy security men inside the building. They said it appeared that one of the gunmen, who had surrendered no weapons, opened fire on the police at point-blank range.

The two terrorists had been in command of a

frightened group of hostages in the embassy. A third gunman had fled on foot at the outset of the siege.

The terrorists reportedly wanted to free a woman who was arrested in London last Friday after a bomb went off under the Iraqi ambassador's car, injuring two bystanders.

The Iraqi story said the two gunmen had allowed an earlier deadline to expire without apparent action, however. The report also said one of the gunmen claimed to be the brother of Said Hammami, a Palestine Liberation Organization representative slain in London earlier this year.

An Iraqi embassy employee who escaped said the terrorists "walked in and said they wanted to see somebody, they didn't say who."

"Then they began firing like wild men," he said.

Amid a series of conflicting reports, the extent of the hostage situation was not clear. The gunmen, who were reported to speak both French and Arabic, were visible at windows on the lower three floors of the building. A number of embassy employees were visible one floor above, but it was not clear if they were being held hostage or had not yet been discovered by the terrorists.

One French radio report said the gunmen held eight hostages, including three women, and said at least 10

other employees had barricaded themselves off from the gunmen on the top floor.

An embassy employee who escaped said he believed four or five employees, mostly secretaries and bookkeepers, had been taken hostage.

Five hours after the 10 a.m. attack, which included at least one hand-grenade explosion, a man tentatively identified as an Algerian diplomat entered the embassy building. About an hour later he left, and a hostage riddled with bullet wounds was removed from the embassy and taken away in an ambulance.

The wounded person was not immediately identified.

A diplomat of the Malaysian embassy, which is directly across the street said: "The first thing I heard was two single shots, then a submachine gun. Then a hand grenade went off and we saw smoke rolling out the door of the embassy."

"There were more shots and the submachine gun opened up again. I looked out the window and saw a man running. One policeman and several civilians were chasing him. He disappeared in the direction of the Porte Dauphine Metro (subway) station. More shots went off. The man was apparently firing at his pursuers. I heard people screaming inside the embassy."

## Shell Oil checks biorhythms to improve worker safety

United Press International

NEW ORLEANS — Bulletin boards on several oil rigs in the Gulf of Mexico, in addition to the usual safety notices and crew reminders, carry sheets listing the workers' "critical days" in their biorhythm cycles.

It's part of a new experiment by Shell Oil to see whether biorhythms, a theory that recently has hit a wave of popularity like fad foods or astrology, can be useful in preventing accidents among industrial workers. No results are in yet, but Shell safety specialist Rupert Turner said the program is worth a try.

"We recognize going into it that it doesn't have any kind of satisfactory, scientific basis," Turner said. "We

recognize also that other people have used it, it has reduced accidents (elsewhere) and if it has some value, we're going to use it and keep some people from getting hurt."

The theory of biorhythms states that behavior moves in cyclical waves, with good and bad days on the opposite end of a chart. The physical cycle runs 23 days, the emotional 28 days and the intellectual 33 days.

"Critical days" are when a cycle crosses a theoretical line from "good days" to "bad days."

If all three cycles cross on the same day, for example, it's considered by adherents to be a good day to stay in bed.

Many companies, both domestic and foreign, have experimented

with biorhythm safety programs with some success. Turner said he believes Shell's program, which is being conducted with 200 employees of the Marlin, Bay Marchand, Rig 11 and Rig 21 units, is the first in the offshore oil and gas field.

The employees' birth dates are entered into a Shell computer, which figures the biorhythms. The "critical days" then are posted on charts.

Turner said the successes of the program at other companies may have been self-generated — that is, posting "critical days" and warning employees to be extra cautious on them may have reduced accidents whether or not they actually were days on which employees were more accident-prone.

## Bicycle thieves get swift kick from small boy

United Press International

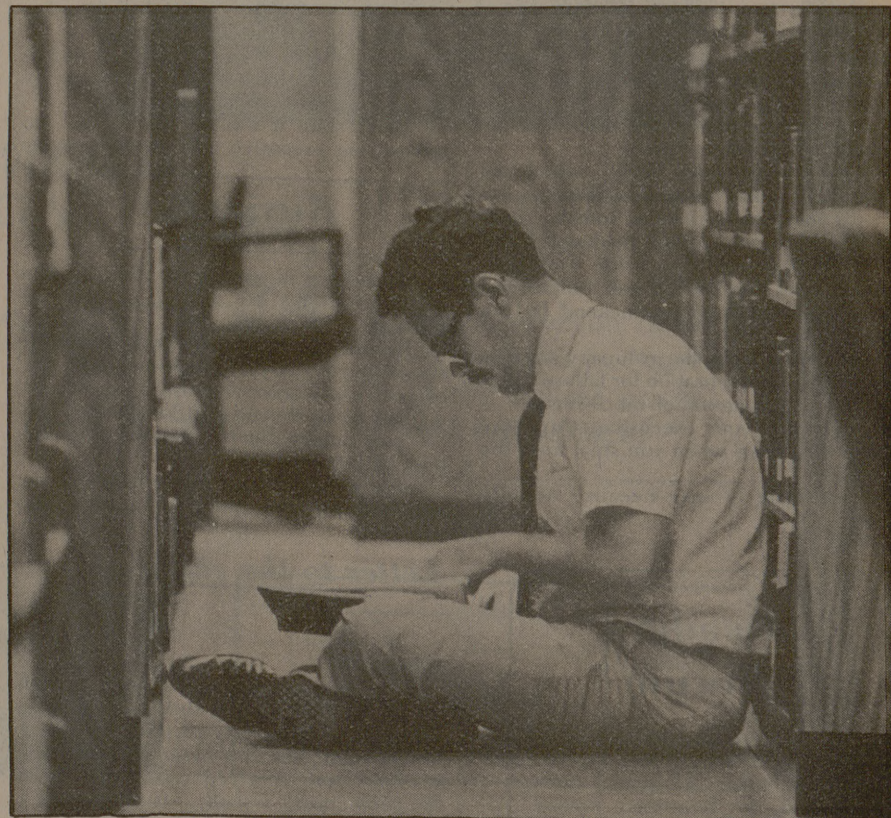
LAS VEGAS — Three men, each described as being at least 6 feet and weighing 170 pounds, were beaten up by a high school student when they attempted to steal his bicycle.

Police said Som Sack Bouppha, 16, 5 feet 4, 130 pounds was riding his motorized bicycle to his job at a restaurant and was accosted by four men at a traffic light.

The youth said no and two of the men reportedly grabbed the bike's handlebars. Bouppha, an expert in four martial arts, said he got off the bike and kicked both men in the head, knocking them unconscious.

A third suspect then swung at the youth with a piece of lumber, but the student blocked the blow with his arm and kicked the man in the head.

The fourth man ran away. Bouppha told authorities the suspects could be identified by their swollen faces.



### Taking it easy

Paul Scott, an employee for the University Archives, doesn't take time to find a chair when he sees a book that interests him. The floor will do just as well when he takes a few minutes out to scan through one of the books in the Archives.

Battalion photo by Pat O'Malley