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The Weather

Yesterday	Today
High	High
Low	Low
Rain	0.00 inches

Meat handlers on strike for insurance benefits

By CINDY GEE
Battalion Reporter

Meat handlers at Kroger Family Center are on strike and those at Weingarten's are locked out in a dispute over employee benefits and cost of living increases. Strikers picketing the two Bryan stores say it's not the way that they're unhappy with, it's that their companies won't guarantee insurance benefits and cost-of-living raises.

"Our occupation is considered by the federal government as one of the most hazardous," one Kroger striker said, "and the insurance is expensive. We've had it for years and years and now they want to cut it off. They don't know why, but any kindergarten kid could tell you it's because they want to pocket that money."

Meat handlers at Weingarten's are not on strike; however, their company has locked them out to sympathize with the Kroger stores. Certain local grocery stores have an agreement that if any union segment locks one merchant, the other participating merchants will lock those union employees out until a settlement has been reached, said Joe Marek, assistant manager of Weingarten's.

"This is all from our Houston office," Marek said. "It is definitely hard to lock out an employee that you're used to working with."

Buddy Harper, a meat cutter at Kroger's for three years, said he felt his company was putting out information to make the strikers look bad. He said local Kroger

managers are telling other store employees that the meat cutters want a \$4 an hour raise, in an effort to get them not to walk out.

"If they did give us a \$4 an hour raise, we'd go buy our own insurance," Harper said.

He added that recent media reports that union employees had been offered \$7 an hour increase were wrong. James Brock, manager of the Bryan Kroger's, said: "We're not passing on any rumors, we're just telling the other workers what is passed down to us."

He said any other information would have to be obtained from the Kroger office in Houston. A spokesman for that office could not be reached for comment.

Union retail clerks from Kroger's who met Wednesday night decided by a vote of 22 to two not to honor the meat cutters' pickets lines.

Brad Willingham, a front-end supervisor at Kroger's who attended the meeting, said the clerks "essentially voted uninformed." He said they just wanted to keep on working.

Safeway stores in the Bryan-College Station area are not presently affected by the strike because Safeway's contract with its meat handling employees will not expire for another two weeks. Richard Colby, a union meat cutter for Safeway, said the Safeway employees' contract is completely different.

"I think we're pretty well satisfied with what Safeway gives us," he said. "I don't expect any problems when our contract expires. We're all hoping there won't be any."

Lynard Warhol, meat manager of Weingarten's, said the companies have proposed a \$3 increase over the next three years with no guaranteed benefits. A 32-year veteran of the meat cutting business, Warhol said this is the time in his life when he is most prone to use health insurance.

Mary Nell Ryan and Virginia Gomez were picketing outside of the local Weingarten's store along with Warhol. Both Ryan and Gomez have been employed by Weingarten's for over 20 years. The three were told Monday afternoon not to return to work.

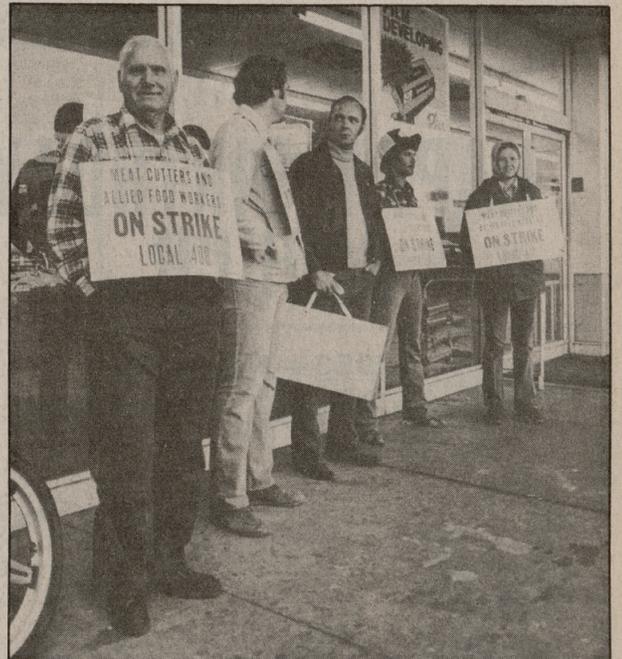
"I was kind of surprised," Ryan said. "It's pitiful when you want to work and they won't let you. It's pretty hard not to get a salary right around Christmas. I guess we'll just do without; Santa Claus may fall a little short."

The meat counter at Kroger's did not seem to be greatly affected by the strike. Many people were still buying meat and the counters were not empty.

Trucks are currently delivering meat; however, the truck drivers will not cross the picket lines. Consequently, store managers are having to back the trucks into the delivery station and unload the meat themselves.

The strikers said they weren't sure how long the strike would last. "Somebody's gonna have to give in and I don't feel like we will," one said.

Piggly Wiggly and Skaggs Alpha-Beta are non-union stores and haven't been affected by the strike. Spokesmen for the stores say they haven't noticed any change in their meat sales.



Staff photo by Pat O'Malley

Butchers from Weingarten's stand outside the store in a picket line Wednesday in a dispute over employee benefits and cost of living increases.

Senate passes version of original Taps bill

By NANCY ANDERSEN
Battalion Staff

The student senate passed amended versions of the Enhancement of Silver Taps and the Campus Beautification bills Wednesday.

The enhancement bill originally would have recommended closing all campus facilities for an hour on the Tuesdays when Silver Taps is held. These facilities are disrupting Silver Taps, said Tracy O'Connell, bill sponsor and vice president for the senate.

The amended version will not close the library, the remote computing centers or classrooms, it only recommends canceling all intramural events.

Senator Mary Ann French who helped research the bill said the library administration was not in favor of the bill. Too many students rely on the library to study and it would be impractical to close for just an hour, French said.

The computing center staff was not opposed to closing down for an hour and had done it in the past, French said, but the student service committee decided that the centers were not disruptive.

As for closing all classrooms, French said many classes are held during this time, making it impractical.

Earlier this year, Director of Intramurals Dennis Corrington said he will not schedule any outdoor games during Silver Taps and would consider doing the same for indoor games.

The beautification bill recommends that the campus be taken to repair the rut paths cre-

ated by continuous pedestrian traffic. The original bill only mentioned three paths, but 12 other areas were added to the bill.

In other action, the senators heard but took no action on three bills and a constitutional amendment on first reading.

The "Is There a Doctor in the House Bill" recommends increasing the student service fees \$3.75 to hire five additional doctors for the A.P. Beutal Health Center. The current student service fee is \$33.50.

The Bibliotique Bill recommends changing the library closing time from 11 p.m. to 1:30 a.m. Monday through Thursday, from 11 p.m. on Saturdays to 6 p.m. and from midnight to 1 p.m. on Sundays. It also recommends opening the reserve room at 9 a.m. on Sundays.

The COSGA Budget Appropriations Bill would grant the external affairs committee \$400 from the program development fund for its first conference on Student Government associations this February.

The constitutional amendment would create an international student senate seat. Over 1,500 students from 86 different countries attend Texas A&M University, said Tim Cavell, bill sponsor and liberal arts graduate student.

Creating a special seat would be a symbolic gesture to show a positive, active attempt at incorporating the international student body into the mainstream of life at Texas A&M, Cavell said.

If approved, the student body would vote on the amendment during spring elections.

Turning on heaters causes problems

By BOBBY SWANSON
Battalion Reporter

Several Texas A&M University officials have said tampering with the high pressure heating units in dormitory rooms can result in serious injury and disciplinary action.

An incident in Law Hall Monday prompted several of the maintenance workers and supervisors to be concerned for the safety of students who try to turn on their room heaters. Don Roberts, assistant maintenance foreman for Area Four, said.

The heat was turned on Monday in the Corps dormitories, Puryer, Law, Walton, Moses, Crocker, Davis-Gary and Moore halls, Roberts said. Work has begun to turn the heat on in other dormitories. He said students who think the heat will not be on until after Thanksgiving are incorrect and any student who does not have heat in their room after the building's system has been turned on should call University maintenance and the work will be done the same day if possible.

The incident in Law Hall Monday could have been

worse, said Roberts, the supervisor who went to Law after water began to pour from a radiator students said they had tried to turn on.

"What we are concerned about is the fact that so many students are doing this sort of thing, which they know nothing about and which could get them permanently injured."

The heated water in the Law system had only been on a few hours when Monday's accident occurred, and the heat had only risen to half its potential, another supervisor said. The dormitories that are heated on the hot water system use 80-100 pounds-per-square-inch pressure at 170-180 degrees, maintenance records show.

Ron Sasse of the housing office said students are required to know and respect the University rules and regulations. Part of this includes students' responsibility to abide by the policies of the housing guide which states that student will not make maintenance adjustments, Sasse said.

"We expect students to call in a work order on all

maintenance-type operations," Sasse said. Students can, and have, had disciplinary action taken against them for ignoring this policy, he said.

"I don't have the report yet regarding the Law Hall incident so I can't say what we will do in regard to the students involved," Sasse said.

Monica Christen, assistant North Area coordinator, said her office will wait until the dormitory dries out and extent of the damage can be determined before any recommendation will be made to Sasse's office.

Roberts and his workers are professionals who are trained to work safely around high pressure and steam, he said. "Messing with this stuff can get you hurt if you don't know what you're doing," Roberts said. "The people in Law were very lucky."

"Others who might think about tampering with these units should ask themselves, 'Would I drive my car to Houston and then open my hood and pull off the radiator cap with my face over the top of it?'" Roberts said.

"It's just the same."

Court refuses slander case

United Press International

AUSTIN — The Texas Supreme Court refused to reconsider a decision which dismissed the appeal of a former Southwestern Bell Telephone Co. employee and widow of another to collect millions of dollars in damages from the company for slander.

The court, without written comment Wednesday, rejected reconsideration of an Oct. 22 decision dismissing the appeal of Meta Gravitt Dixon, widow of O.T. Gravitt, and James Ashley, who contended Southwestern Bell slandered the two telephone company officials and drove Gravitt to suicide.

A trial court had awarded Mrs. Gravitt and Ashley \$1.5 million, but the court of appeals overturned that decision, ruling there had been no evidence showing the telephone company acted in malice in investigation of allegations of sexual improprieties and expense account abuse against the two employees.

Gravitt was a vice president of Southwestern Bell, and Ashley was commercial manager for San Antonio when the company began investigating the two in the fall of 1974. Gravitt died of carbon monoxide poisoning in the garage of his Dallas home the week after he was suspended by the company, and Ashley was fired two weeks later.

The Supreme Court, in its Oct. 22 ruling, said state law does not permit appeal of slander cases to the Supreme Court unless there is conflict among other appellate courts or between the civil appeals court and Supreme Court decisions. There was no such conflict in the Bell case, the court ruled, and the appeal was dismissed. The court Wednesday denied a motion for rehearing filed by Mrs. Dixon and Ashley.

Storm leaves blanket of snow

United Press International

Northeasters dug out Wednesday from a savage storm that left a blanket of foot-deep snow, at least 20 people dead and weary motorists stranded on snow-packed highways from Texas to New England — with winter more than a month away.

The National Weather Service said the storm, which first socked New Mexico and Texas, then moved over the Atlantic Ocean. South Florida, however, was enjoying a record warm spell, with temperatures in the upper 80s Tuesday. Hollywood, Fla., recorded the high for the nation with 89 degrees.

New England was inundated with up to a foot of snow in the mountains, and 4 to 9 inches elsewhere. Motorists were caught by surprise, many without snow tires or chains, and a flurry of minor accidents occurred.

Thirteen people died in Pennsylvania, including seven men who were shoveling snow that buried the state under 15 inches.

Pittsburgh Coroner Dr. Joshua Perper called the snow-shoveling deaths a "mini-epidemic."

One person in Massachusetts and two in New Hampshire also died shoveling snow. During the past weekend, Texas reported three deaths and Oklahoma one as the storm raged northward.

Children in many communities throughout New England enjoyed an unscheduled holiday because schools were closed due to the weather.

A 9-inch snowfall measured at Concord, N.H., Airport broke a 20-year record "for the greatest amount of snow in a day so early in the season," said meteorologist Gil McCall.

The storm dumped 9 inches of snow in Connecticut, more than half the total snowfall recorded during all of last winter. Massachusetts was hit with 10 inches.

Texas tickets on sale Friday

Football ticket distribution schedules have been changed for the Texas A&M-Texas football game because of the Thanksgiving holidays.

Senior tickets for the game will go on sale Friday at the ticket windows at G. Rollie White Coliseum. Juniors can buy their tickets Monday morning, sophomores Monday afternoon and freshmen on Tuesday.

Any tickets left will go on sale to the general public beginning Tuesday. Ticket prices are \$10 each.

EPA looks at water in West Texas aquifer

United Press International

DALLAS — Underground water in Southeast New Mexico and West Texas may soon be protected from contamination if the area is designated a "sole source" for drinking water, the Environmental Protection Agency said.

The Odessa chapter of the League of Women voters requested the designation for the Delaware Basin Aquifer.

The aquifer system is made up of four reservoirs — Cenozoic Alluvium, Santa

Rosa, Rustler and Capitan — and involves the New Mexico counties of Eddy and Lea and the Texas counties of Crane, Loving, Culberson, Pecos, Reeves, Ward and Winkler.

The system serves an estimated 75,000 people in the two states. If the system is designated "sole source," no federal money could be provided for any construction project which could contaminate groundwater in the aquifer's recharge zone, the EPA said.

'Smokeout' day today

"Kiss me — I don't smoke," the little green frog on the sticker says.

Today is "The Great American Smokeout" — a day when all smokers are encouraged to give up smoking for 24 hours, or longer.

The smokeout is an annual event sponsored by the American Cancer Society.

Members of the Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity are helping with the no-smoking push by manning booths in local shopping centers and in the Memorial Student Center at Texas A&M University.

Members of the fraternity and their "little sisters" ask people passing by if they smoke; if the response is negative, they stick a "Kiss me — I don't smoke" sticker on their shirt.

Those who answer "yes" are asked to sign a pledge card saying they will not smoke today.

TKE President Brett Creeser said the fraternity had volunteered its services to

the American Cancer Society to help fulfill its commitment to civic service.

Last weekend, the group set up booths at Culpepper Plaza and Manor East Mall, Creeser said, and this week a booth was set up in the MSC to warn people of the dangers of smoking and encourage them not to smoke today.



Staff photo by Pat O'Malley

Mobile homes

These trucks are lined up waiting to dispose of their cargo at the modular dorm construction site behind the Commons Dorms. Each truck carries a separate dorm

room, complete from top to bottom aside from a small amount of finish work. The rooms are stacked one on top of another to form a complete complex.