

State



Rolling into spring

Photo by Joni Hennigan

Joey Wasilewsky, a senior zoology major, demonstrates a freestyle jump for students interested in the Texas A&M Roller Skating Club. An organizational meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. Wednesday in Room 110 of the Military Science Building.

New company formed for disasters

United Press International FORT WORTH — A Fort Worth company, likening itself to Red Adair after the fact, is cleaning the damage caused by the recent fire at the Las Vegas Hilton. "We're the one who goes in after the firemen leave," said a spokeswoman for Blackmon-Mooring Steamatic Catastrophe Inc.

Although the company signed a contract with the hotel Sunday, by Saturday it had hired 250 Las Vegas residents for the cleanup work. More than 700 people responded to a one-day advertisement for the \$7 per hour work which Marsha Anderson described as "not pretty. The smell is overwhelming and with wet carpets it's double indemnity." She believes the cleanup work on the 1,500 hotel rooms and connecting hallways will take from two to five weeks, "unless we run into something totally unthought of." The temporary employees began working in two eight-hour shifts Monday and a third shift may be added if the machinery can stand the stress. However, the cost of the cleanup has not been determined.

"I wouldn't dare make a cost estimate yet, it's a time and materials thing," said company president Scott W. Mooring in a telephone interview from the hotel. "We haven't seen the part that's been burned the worst," Mooring said Monday. He said a great deal of construction will be needed on several floors above the spot where the fire began on the eighth floor. Eight people died in the blaze.

The third through sixth floors have little damage, as well as those at the very top of the 29-story hotel, Mooring said. His company is working in the core of the hotel known as the original hotel. Mooring said there is little smoke damage in the rooms where doors were shut and not kicked in by firemen. The heaviest damage is on the floors closest to the fire and in rooms in which the doors were open, he said. "We won't have any idea of the dollar amount until the cleaning is completed," Anderson said. Unskilled labor alone, though, will cost a minimum of \$14,000 per day. "We've taken our experts from Los Angeles, Dallas, Fort Worth and Lubbock — 35 in all — to Las Vegas and we've hired local peo-

ple to come in and do the detail work, the things you don't have to be technically trained in," Anderson said. Technical knowledge is needed to operate the company's carpet cleaning and portable dry cleaning machines as well as cleaning and deodorizing the air conditioning and heating systems, she said. Unskilled workers are needed for cleaning the soot and smut from walls, desks and ceilings, Anderson noted.

The disastrous fire at Las Vegas' MGM Grand Hotel in November

was the impetus for forming the new catastrophe company. It's parent company, Blackmon-Mooring Steamatic Inc., has long dealt with cleanups following residential fires. "We've been dealing with a lot of arson recently and saw a growing need for someone to clean up commercial fires," Anderson said. "When the MCM Grand caught on fire, we sent one of our guys from Houston up," Anderson said. "We were very active in the bidding, but they decided to refurbish."

55 mph limit removal bill filed in Texas

United Press International AUSTIN — The price of gasoline does more to discourage energy waste than the 55 mph speed limit ever has, and Texas' speed limits should be put back up to 70, a Gulf Coast legislator contends. Rep. Ed Watson, D-Deer Park, said Monday he has filed a bill to repeal the 55 mph speed limit and return it to 70 — where it was before the energy crisis began. "The 55 mile per hour speed limit is absurd," Watson said. "It

was an emergency reactionary measure passed in 1974. Cars today are more fuel efficient than they were six years ago, and the high price of gasoline does more to discourage waste than the 55 mph limit ever has." Watson says the government should be realistic about the 55 mph limit. Watson says Texas doesn't have enough highway patrolmen to enforce the law, and is now wasting a lot of money on token enforcement.

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2 latest meningitis cases unrelated

United Press International HOUSTON — Doctors say the two latest diagnosed cases of meningitis are unrelated to the outbreak at an elementary school in late January and early February. Doctors say a 3-year-old boy who is still hospitalized and a 17-year-old who has recovered are the latest meningitis patients. The two cases, diagnosed Friday, raised the number in Houston and Harris County this year to an unusually high 38. Houston Health Department spokeswoman Shirlene Bridgewater said official concern will continue to lessen as long as new cases continue to be scattered. However,

she said officials will continue to monitor the meningitis outbreak. Three deaths have been officially attributed to meningitis, and the disease has been suspected as the cause of one other death in Harris County this year. Thirty cases of meningitis were recorded in Harris County last year. Medical officials expressed serious concern when five girls in one sixth grade class at Dodson Elementary School were diagnosed with the disease between Jan. 29 and Feb. 2. One of the girls died Jan. 31.

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