

State



The face of finals week

Photo by Tommy Keith

Rawhide, a 7-week-old bulldog puppy owned by Andrew Pawelek, doesn't seem too happy about spending his summer fenced in. His appearance could reflect the mood of Texas A&M University students who begin a week of final examinations Monday.

Prison serves cheeseburgers to lure convicts to mess hall

United Press International
TEXARKANA — Federal prison officials said Thursday they hoped to end a four-day mess hall boycott by coaxing the convicts back to the table with cheeseburgers.

Officials also received an anonymous list of demands — most dealing with the chow — but prison spokesman Ray Farrow said no action could be taken on them until the demands were made through proper channels.

Farrow said 58 inmates at the Federal Correctional Institution ate breakfast at the dining hall Thursday, while the balance of the prison's 534 inmates continued their boycott, subsisting on junk food from the prison commissary.

"We have cheeseburgers out on the line for lunch," Farrow said. "We're crossing our fingers."

"We had an anonymous list of demands laid on a supervisor's desk," he said. "They were speaking to the preparation and quality and variety of food. Some of them were kind of silly — they wanted more pastries during the week, more bacon, more eggs."

He said nothing could be done until the inmates made their demands through proper channels.

"We can't deal with it since we don't know if this is what all the inmates want or it's just one man, or what," he said.

An inmate who contacted UPI said the foodstrike was "a peaceful way of getting in touch with the

staff, which we feel is far out of touch with the inmates."

The inmate, who declined to allow his name be used for fear of retaliation, said the basic complaint was with food preparation, and with "generally being treated like children."

"So far nothing seems to have changed," the inmate said. "Rumor has it that a work strike is imminent."

The inmate said the prisoners' demands had not been formally presented because of fear of retaliation by prison officials.

"Here's how they do: if someone were fool enough to put themselves in that position, he would be moved from institution to institution every two weeks, and no

one would catch up with him for months, because he'd never touch down long enough to collect mail and pick up personal belongings."

Inmates began the protest Monday, when only 34 prisoners showed up for breakfast.

Farrow said protestors were buying potato chips, candy bars and other small food items at the prison's commissary.

He said prison officials have been able to provide nutritious meals, but were limited by an allocation of \$1.30 per man per day, so they weren't able to provide the kind of food the inmates apparently want.

FCI-Texarkana is a medium security prison with inmates serving an average sentence of 8 years.

Air Force will not retaliate for dismissed sex bias suit

United Press International
FORT WORTH — The Air Force has agreed not to retaliate against an officer who sued, claiming she was the target of sex discrimination for complaining about an Air Force-sponsored "rent-a-girl" program in the Philippines.

U.S. District Judge Eldon Mahon dismissed the suit by Capt. Phoebe Spinrad Wednesday, after the Air Force pledged not to retaliate. Air Force officials did not admit to sponsoring the program that permitted airmen to buy the companionship of Filipino

women. Capt. Spinrad said she was assigned in 1974 as equal opportunity officer at Clark AFB in the Philippines, where she said she found the airmen's dining hall sponsored a program that allowed them to contract for Filipino women to act as "receptionists."

She said she complained about the program, which resulted in humiliating remarks by male officers, pressure to seek reassignment, and low efficiency ratings she said hurt her career.

On-the-job death rate in Texas leads country

United Press International
DALLAS — Government neglect and industry's concern for productivity have combined to raise Texas' on-the-job death rate to three times the national average, state safety officials say.

Statistics compiled by the state health department indicate Texas led the country with 1,034 deaths estimated to have occurred on the job in 1980. Only 813 on-the-job deaths were reported in California during the period and 671 in New York.

The state's industrial accident rate is an estimate, since the state stopped keeping records on occupational accidents in 1975.

"Lack of statistics has helped to disguise the extent of tragedies resulting from occupational injuries and diseases in Texas," says former state AFL-CIO chief Roy Evans.

State safety officials blame Texas' high worker death rate both on the lack of effective safety programs and the state's booming business climate.

"We don't have effective safety programs in Texas," said Bill Tracey, executive director of the Texas Industrial Accident Board. "We've tried to get some funds but haven't been able to. What makes it so hard is knowing that a death could have been avoided if there had been a (safety) program."

With no effective government controls, the burden of industrial safety falls on industry, which has a mixed record.

"We're in the middle of a construction boom in Dallas, Houston, Fort Worth," Tracey said. "Because of that, the skilled labor

force is very busy and that leaves the unskilled labor to fulfill the rest of the construction.

"There are a lot of subcontractors out there using unsafe equipment and following unsafe practices. They're trying to compete and safety takes money."

Texas ceded occupational safety effort — which was costing about

\$1.2 million a year — in 1975 to the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration and quit monitoring health hazards in the workplace.

In its 1974 report, the state cited 11.4 workers per 100 were injured on the job, compared to 9.1 nationwide.

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