

State

Limb reattachment successful, doctor says

HOUSTON — Doctors at Hermann Hospital were optimistic Tuesday that an 11-year-old boy would regain partial use of his leg, which was severed and reattached during 19 hours of surgery.

Kirk Sapp, of Hearne, lost his right leg near the hip and left foot last Wednesday when he tried to climb across the coupling between two railroad cars on a Southern Pacific coal train.

The boy was immediately flown to the Hermann Hospital and Dr. John Burns led a nine-member hospital team in a 19-hour operation to reattach the boy's right leg.

The boy's foot could not be reattached because it was crushed by the train.

"Kirk is awake and alert and is responding to conversation with his family and doctors," hospital spokeswoman Susan Fox said.

The boy's uncle and aunt have been with him since the accident on Jan. 6. His doctors say because of his age, Kirk has a reasonable chance of regaining some use of his leg but full use of the limb is not expected.

The boy's condition since the surgery has been listed as stable. Burns said he would not know until Jan. 20 whether the operation succeeded.

"The two weeks following surgery are critical and at this point we are pleased with the progress," Burns said. "Many things can go wrong,

but we are hoping they will not go wrong."

At a news conference Monday, Burns explained the surgery and noted the proper care and transportation of severed limbs are paramount as the initial step to successful surgery to reattach the limbs.

But before any surgery can be done, the severed limb, hand or foot must be properly transferred from the site of the accident to the hospital and maintained at a proper temperature, he said.

For example, Burns said, if a hand is cut off, it should be picked up, cleaned and placed in a clean, dry plastic bag. The bag should be sealed and kept cool in a bucket containing ice cubes.

He said no solutions — such as alcohol or saline — should be put on or near the limb.

"Too often they put a solution to keep it clean, but that makes the ensuing surgery difficult," Burns said. The limb should be reattached within six hours of dismemberment for the surgery to have a chance for success.

He said limbs that are cut off, rather than crushed or mutilated, are easier to reattach.

"Replacing a limb doesn't make it a workable limb," Burns said. "That is only reattaching it. It's a long process and people should understand it is such a process."

He said most patients need more than one operation before the limb becomes functional.

Agriculture '81: stormy

United Press International
Texas agriculture officials are giving mixed reviews to 1981 — a year that began favorably but soon fell victim to the whims of Texas weather.

Bill Braden, a spokesman with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, said agriculture officials were hopeful at the start of 1981.

"After a drought the year before, 1981 began favorably enough," Braden said. "The winter was mild, and spring rains came with regularity over the state. And ranchers in western parts of the Lone Star State found the grazing conditions the best in 25 years."

But problems set in.

Flood waters in parts of north central and west central Texas, the Hill Country and the Coastal Bend resulted in the loss of livestock, he said. The same late summer and fall flooding damaged heavy livestock and poultry and hurt cotton and peanut plants.

Worst hit were the northern counties of the Coastal Bend where almost 20 inches of rain fell and drowned thousands of chickens.

He said some south Texas farmers, stung by a combination of

heavy rain and damaging hail, were forced to replant. By the end of the year it was clear that cotton and soybean crops along the upper coast were largely a loss.

"Baled cotton and cotton in modules also was lost in the Coastal Bend," Braden said. "Fall rains over much of the plains and western areas also delayed cotton maturity, but a later than normal killing frost helped counter the problem."

South Texas cattle also were hit by brucellosis, an infectious disease. In west Texas some livestock died because of grazing poisonous range plants. Additionally, cotton root rot, a severe disease during wet years, took a heavy toll of the crop in the central Texas blacklands where cotton is most prevalent. Losses ranged from 15 to 30 percent.

He said farmers who survived the excessive rain and poisonous plants had more troubles at the market. Finally, in the middle of the year, prices began climbing. But the gains were only mild and shortlived. The sluggish market affected both meat and grain producers.

Despite the rains and diseases, Texas farmers harvested record

yields of wheat, corn and grain sorghum and better-than-average yields of cotton, rice, peanuts and most other crops.

Braden said state officials attrib-

bute the low market prices for Texas agricultural goods in 1981 to oversupply and already-filled warehouses.



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Attorney asks court to delay filing date

United Press International
AUSTIN — The attorney for the plaintiffs in a congressional redistricting suit has asked a federal court to move back the Feb. 1 deadline for filing in congressional races.

Dave Richards, attorney for plaintiffs who filed suit in federal court challenging the validity of the new congressional districts, filed a motion Monday asking the court to delay the filing deadline.

Richards said it is unlikely the

U.S. Department of Justice will clear the redistricting plan under the Voting Rights Act before Feb. 1, and the court has said it will not rule until after the Justice Department acts on the plan.

Although Richards' motion applies only to the congressional redistricting plan, another trial begins in Dallas Monday challenging the House and Senate reapportionments, and the filing deadline for those offices also may be delayed.

Official resigns after harassment charges

United Press International
AMARILLO — Potter County's self-described "friendly, affectionate" treasurer has been asked to resign his post because of allegations of sexual harassment.

The Amarillo Globe-News reported Monday that long-time County Treasurer Al Whitaker was asked by County Judge Cliff Roberts and Commissioner Pat Cunningham to resign after charges of sexual harassment by women employees at the courthouse.

Roberts and Cunningham told the 73-year-old Whitaker to resign last week or they would make public the sexual harassment complaints, the paper said.

Whitaker, who refused to resign and denied the allegations, recently announced his intentions to run for re-election.

The Globe-News reported it had obtained affidavits from two women and had spoken to a third woman about the sexual harassment complaints. The charges included a touching incident and offers of gifts in return for sexual favors.

Roberts told the newspaper the problems were ongoing but that he had not been willing to publicize the matter at this time.

But when asked by the newspaper if he had asked Whitaker to resign, Roberts said: "I had to admit it was true — that Al (Whitaker) had been asked to resign in the best interests of Potter County and himself."

Whitaker, who has served as county treasurer for 13 years, told the newspaper he had nothing to hide.



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