

Ice-snow closing an A&M oddity

by Tracey Buchanan
Battalion Reporter
Through rain, snow, sleet or hail — the mail goes out and Texas A&M University usually stays open.

When the temperature plunges and snow and ice make driving conditions hazardous, the University may close. However, there is no formal written policy about closing the

University because of bad weather. One week ago at noon, University President Frank Vandiver closed Texas A&M because the weather was bad and getting

worse, Assistant to the President Sheran Riley said. "He was concerned for the safety of the staff and personnel," she said.

When Vandiver closed the University, snow was falling, it was 26 degrees and the wind was blowing from the north at 16 mph to 18 mph, making the wind chill factor zero. A thin layer of ice under the snow also caused roads to be slick.

Howard Perry, associate vice president for student affairs, said the last time he remembers the University closing due to bad weather was in the early '60s. No official record could be located. Since classes had not begun, the shuttle buses were not running. If the University closed,

the buses would not run, Jim Ferguson, manager of administrative services, said.

"If we just had bad weather, it would be up to me and the manager of Transportation Enterprises to decide if the buses would run," Ferguson said. "It's never come up, but if it did it would just be a judgment call." Aside from forcing the closing of the University, the freezing weather caused other problems.

Ed Kozlowski, associate director for maintenance and modification director of the physical plant, said frozen water pipes burst causing between \$5,000 and \$6,000 in damages to the Chemistry Building and about \$10,000 damage in the Reed McDonald Building.

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Body of student discovered in car

United Press International
HOUSTON — Police Tuesday said they have no suspects and few clues in the slaying of a

Rice University architecture student found dead in the locked trunk of her car a block from her home.

Margaret Everson Fossi, 25, was found dead Monday. An autopsy was planned Tuesday to determine the exact cause of death.

Fossi was reported missing Sunday by relatives Wayne and Cathy Gregory, with whom she had lived since August.

Police said Fossi went with fellow students to Gilley's Club Saturday night. They later dropped her off at her car, parked near the Rice School of Architecture, investigators said.

One classmate told officers he watched her drive out of the parking lot about 2:30 a.m. Sunday, apparently headed home.

Mrs. Gregory said Fossi did not usually stay out all night and was safety-conscious, telephoning home if she expected to be as much as a half-hour late.

Gregory went looking for Fossi's car and found it a block from home. The car reportedly had two flat tires and was towed to the police department garage Sunday. The police discovered the body inside the trunk when they inspected the car Monday.

Fossi's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Everson of Lake Forest, Ill., and her husband Larry, a law student at Yale University in New Haven, Conn., flew to Houston Sunday.



Donald Holan, a junior chemistry major from Station, and Ricardo Ramirez, a junior in general from San Antonio, look at the snowman they built waiting for the University to open registration Thursday.

Mistrial declared in brutality case, retrial scheduled

United Press International
BROWNSVILLE — With a mistrial declared in the first of five civil rights cases against former McAllen policemen, government prosecutors must decide whether to retry former police Lt. Roberto Ramos and proceed with the four other brutality cases.

A mistrial was declared in the case against Ramos, 33, late Monday after a jury said it was "hopelessly deadlocked" on whether Ramos ordered his subordinates to beat a handcuffed prisoner, violating the man's civil rights.

U.S. District Judge Filemon Vela declared the mistrial after the jury said it was deadlocked, 10-2 for conviction — despite four hours and 40 minutes of deliberation Friday and Monday.

Although the deliberation time appeared comparatively short, courtroom observers said the issues in the case were cut and a verdict should have been returned quickly.

The trial was the first of five indictments returned against McAllen policemen by a grand jury that watched hundreds of hours of videotapes by collecting campaign funds.

The videotapes were made by a camera behind the Texas city's police department booking desk. Ironically, a camera had been installed to protect police officers from charges of brutality.

When asked if they would again prosecute Ramos, county district attorney general Richard's to his secretary would have to check with the Department of Justice, officials said.

Nonetheless, Vela scheduled pretrial motions for Ramos for Feb. 1 and said jury selection would begin Feb. 5.

Ramos, who denied ordering the Sept. 24, 1977, beating of Rene Escamilla following an arrest on traffic violation, declined to comment on the trial.

Escamilla testified he was beaten so severely while cuffed, he became unconscious and later had to sop up blood from his face on his shirt. He would not be visible when officers took his mug shot. He was a sergeant and patrol supervisor at the time.

Former colleagues of Ramos testified the 11-year veteran had been involved in several incidents of violence against prisoners.

One officer testified he told Ramos tell officers in the night Escamilla was "Beat him up. I can't believe how many times he had to be hospitalized."

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