



Spring time?

staff photo by Sumanesh Agrawal

This squirrel was found nibbling away in one of the trees in front of the Biological Sciences Building. A number of

squirrels can often be found playing and eating in that area.

Storms, winds trigger floods, mudslides, killing at least 4

United Press International
A series of storms ravaged the Pacific Northwest with gale-force winds and rain, triggering mudslides and flooding that killed at least four people. Rising temperatures compounded the problem by melting snow to create avalanches.

Worried homeowners in the San Francisco area, still haunted by the January mudslides that killed 37 people, jammed switchboards Monday with calls to authorities seeking information on evacuations as rain fell for a third straight day.

"Everything is stable right

now," said a California Highway Patrol spokesman in Santa Cruz County. "But the ground can't take too much more water."

The storms have dumped up to 10 inches of rain in the past five days. They set off snow and mudslides in Washington, burying a highway worker who had been clearing debris.

Avalanche and flood warnings were issued as rapidly rising temperatures melted more than three feet of snow that accumulated in mountain areas since Feb. 8. Roads littered with rocks and muddy debris were closed. Gale and flood warnings were

in effect for the coast of Oregon and Northern California. Heavy rain and winds gusting to 65 mph swamped the Oregon coast where more than eight inches of rain has fallen.

Heavy rains pounded northern California and the National Weather Service predicted another four inches of rain in the saturated area. Minor flooding and landslides were reported.

"Right now it's kind of a wait and see proposition," a state's Emergency Services Department spokeswoman said. Washington's Snohomish

River crested three feet over flood stage in pasture land late Monday and flood warnings were in effect for the Snoqualmie and upper Cowlitz rivers, among others.

The rain-swollen Salmon River in Idaho was clogged by an icejam and backed up into part of the town of Salmon, flooding City Hall and several businesses and homes.

The Gulf Coast also was doused with up to three inches of rain from southeast Texas to Florida. Some street flooding was reported in Beaumont, Texas.

Drug agents express fears and frustrations

United Press International
The dealer looked nervously at his buyer.

"Are you a DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) agent?"

"No," replied the buyer, an undercover narcotics officer with the Texas Department of Public Safety.

The dealer, a 28-year-old professor of music at a west Texas college, appeared satisfied, then glanced across the street at an innocent-looking van.

"That van," he said with a grin, "it's probably full of narcs."

The agent shook his head, laughed and the deal was made — 1,000 hits of LSD for \$3 apiece.

But the van was filled with "narcs" who were recording the transaction on film. The music professor is currently serving a sentence in the Texas Department of Corrections — the result of DPS undercover work that is sometimes successful, sometimes fruitless, but always dangerous.

The DPS agent, based in west Texas, cannot be identified for safety reasons and to protect further operations. But his methods, fears, failures, victories and frustrations are very real and are shared by other agents who buy drugs for the law.

"I usually grow my hair longer and grow a beard before going undercover," he said. "I've had my cover blown and people (dealers) have mentioned my real name before, asking me if that's who I was. I just say no and they deal."

The agent said that most drug dealers who are hard to "make" are not stupid, but "just greedy."

"That college professor — his case stands out," the agent said. "He was 28 years old, had a doctorate degree, and was the head of a music department. He felt something was wrong but he took a chance."

But much undercover work is routine. The DPS agent said that often, many small drug purch-

The music professor is currently serving a sentence in the Texas Department of Corrections — the result of DPS undercover work that is sometimes successful, sometimes fruitless, but always dangerous.

ases must be made over a period of time in order to catch a bigger dealer. Sometimes the work results in nothing at all.

With court dockets crowded with cases of violent crime, drug case are often pushed aside or pleaded out, he said.

"It's hard to keep it from getting personal. You have people beat you (in court) after spending time away from your wife and kids. Yes, it gets damn personal."

"Sometimes I feel like I'm fighting a losing battle," the agent said. "The courts are overcrowded and there's too much plea bargaining. When you do go to court, they don't try the people, they try my case to see if I did anything wrong."

"If people could see if from

where we see it. We'll go into a filthy place and there'll be these dirty people and they may have some dirty kids. And if we're working a case (undercover), they may look better than we do."

"Later, in court, we sit there knowing the truth, they may even have other cases that they (the prosecution) can't bring up. It's a circus," he said.

But the agent still prefers life "in the street" to desk work and he said more and more drugs are showing up on west Texas streets.

"The deals are getting bigger and the dope is getting more expensive," he warned.

Because it has so many remote areas, west Texas is a prime spot for airplane deliveries. Often they land on out-of-the-way farm to markets roads or at night on highways lit with long strips of burning gasoline or lighter fluid.

"There's no telling how many aircraft get through," he said.

Some planes are spotted by the border patrol and the FAA helps when it can. But a narcotics agent's biggest assets, for deals both large and small, are informants.

"A narcotics agent without an informant might as well stay at the house," he said. "Some people volunteer information — their wife or husband may be on drugs — and some do it out of civic duty. Others do it for money."

"But we've always got something going."

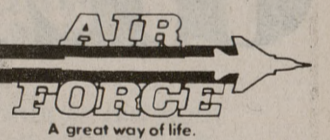
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