

What's Up

Wednesday

GRADUATE STUDENT COUNCIL: Will meet at 4 p.m. in 216T MSC.
BISHOPAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION: The group will meet for Holy Eucharist and supper at 5:30 p.m. in the Canterbury House, 902 Jersey St.

Inmate won't talk of Nazi-like group

HUNTSVILLE — Texas death row inmate James Michael Briddle wears the tattoos of the Aryan Brotherhood, a white supremacist group whose members are locked in its members behind prison walls. Briddle, 27, of Glendale, Calif., won't say what his connection is with the group, whose motto is "Kill to get in and die to get out." But Atlanta FBI agent Procopio said the organization started in San Quentin Prison, California in the 1960s and still has about 300 members nationwide.

The Brotherhood is the best organized of prison groups and their members are stone-cold killers. They are the best argument I know for the death penalty," said Procopio, who helped convict the conviction of Barry "The Iron" Mills, a reputed commissioner of the Brotherhood. Briddle, who is called "Cos" by other inmates, wears a swastika and the Nazi SS lightning bolt tattoo on his left arm. He maintains silence on the subject of the Brotherhood. "Listen to me," Briddle told a Houston Chronicle reporter. "I don't fear the death penalty hanging over me. But I do fear a piece of steel in my belly. Let's talk about the Brotherhood."

Woman murdered; assailant unknown

HOUSTON — A woman, 37, sitting with a friend for a repairman to fix their truck, was killed by an unidentified man who walked up to the truck window and shot her to death Monday night. The woman from Liberty was killed immediately, police said. Her boyfriend was not injured, although he was sitting next to her in the vehicle. No names have been released. Police said the woman, her boyfriend and his brother were driving in southeast Houston about 9:15 p.m. Monday when the truck broke down. The brother went to call for help and the couple waited inside the cab of the truck. Three unidentified Hispanic

males approached the vehicle, and one, armed with a .38 caliber revolver, put the gun to the truck window and fired, police said. The three men fled on foot.

Marijuana becoming big cash crop

Texas pot farming on the rise

United Press International DALLAS — Cotton may be king in Texas, but there is growing concern among law enforcement officers that marijuana has the potential to become one of the state's major cash crops. "We don't know how big the problem is here in Texas. That's part of the problem," said George Ellington, a Department of Public Safety officer based in Kerrville.

"It's ever-increasing. I understand it's probably the fifth crop in the nation right now agriculture-wise. It's the No. 1 crop in California I believe," said Tommy Ryno, Ellington's partner, "and I believe No. 4 in Oklahoma." The problem is not with mom and pop operators — marijuana smokers who cultivate a few plants in the back yard for their own use. The problem is commercial marijuana farms. Bastrop County Sheriff's Deputy Paul Alexander joked that commercial marijuana production has become so prevalent in Bastrop County that the Cham-

ber of Commerce should offer membership to growers. Alexander said that in a five-month period last fall, authorities discovered six pot farms and seized 12,000 to 14,000 pounds of marijuana. "We had plants we had to cut down with chainsaws," he said. "We had plants that were 21 feet tall. I'm serious. Full-grown men couldn't pull them. They grew like trees."

The DPS does not keep separate figures for the smuggled and home-grown marijuana it confiscates, so there is no way to be sure how big Texas marijuana production is, but Roger Coston of the Drug Enforcement Administration insists that imported marijuana is a much bigger problem than home-grown. "When you compare it to the multi-tons that are imported across the border," Coston said, "it pales in importance." Ryno agreed, but he said American-grown marijuana is gaining an edge on the foreign competition.

"In Mexico (and) Columbia marijuana trading is dropping off and they're blaming it on home-grown." Ryno said Americans began to cultivate their own marijuana out of fear. "Several years ago when they started the paraquat spraying in Mexico, the spraying kind of put a scare into people," he explained. He said that led producers to experiment with cross-breeding, and one of the results was sinsemilla, a strain of marijuana from 7 to 10 times more potent than what Ryno called regular marijuana.

"A full-grown plant could yield up around 2 or 3 pounds," Ryno said of the high-grade marijuana. "On the street this is selling for approximately \$2,000 a pound, so you're talking about a plant that can make \$6,000." But pot growing is a sophisticated business, one that involves a good deal of up-front money. Ryno believes organized crime is involved. "Somewhere there has to be

some front money," Alexander said. "Most people don't have the money in their pockets to start something like this. It takes a lot of money to get started, a lot of fertilizer and a lot of irrigation. You know they have their overhead." But it does not take much land. Alexander said the biggest patch Bastrop County authorities discovered last fall was just 3 or 4 acres, and he described it: "They had a drying shed with exhaust fans. It looked like a tobacco plantation."

Alexander said growers are drawn to Bastrop County for a number of reasons: "Good soil, good sandy loam, lots of good old sunshine, no pollution, lots of irrigation, and

it's isolated." But Ryno insisted growers could raise a bumper crop almost anywhere if they use greenhouses. Aside from the money, Ryno said, growing marijuana is attractive because it is less risky than trying to smuggle drugs into the country. "When an old boy grows his own, he's got control of it from the day it comes up to the day it's harvested. The risks of being detected aren't nearly so great (as in smuggling)," he said.

Alexander agreed. "It's a pretty good way to retire and buy a place in Puerto Vallarta (Mexico)," Alexander said.

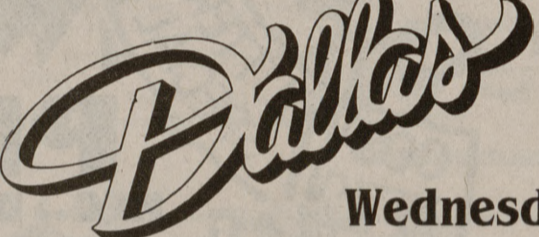
Marcello trial delayed: move to New Orleans?

United Press International SAN ANTONIO — A trial for New Orleans restaurateur Joseph Marcello, accused of lying to a grand jury about his knowledge of the assassination of a federal judge, was postponed Tuesday for the convenience of both sides.

Marcello was to make last-ditch arguments to have his trial moved to New Orleans and was to go to trial later Tuesday if the judge refused. The hearing and trial will be rescheduled in a week or two, a clerk to federal Judge H.F. "Hippo" Garcia said. Marcello argued at a hearing last month that publicity about the 1979 shooting death of federal Judge John H. Wood has been so extensive in San Antonio that he could not receive a fair trial. But prosecutors said Marcello, the brother of organized crime leader Carlos Marcello of New Orleans, would face even

more prejudice in his hometown. Marcello is not accused in Wood's death, but prosecutors say they have a tape of Marcello referring to the people involved in the slaying. Before the grand jury in June 1980, Marcello refused to identify his voice on the tape, they said.

The FBI tapes were made when Carlos Marcello's office in Metairie, La., was bugged during the federal Brilab investigation. If convicted, Marcello could be sentenced to 10 years in prison and fined \$20,000. Garcia's decision could be a clue to future change of venue rulings in the Wood case. Five defendants accused in Wood's hired slaying have asked another judge to move their trials out of San Antonio because of pretrial publicity. They have pointed out that even the federal courthouse in San Antonio is named for Wood, and the federal judges were his friends. Wood was gunned down outside his San Antonio townhouse the morning of May 29, 1979 — the first federal judge killed in this century. El Paso gambler Jimmy Chagra, who faced a drug trial in Wood's court, and four others have been indicted in the death.



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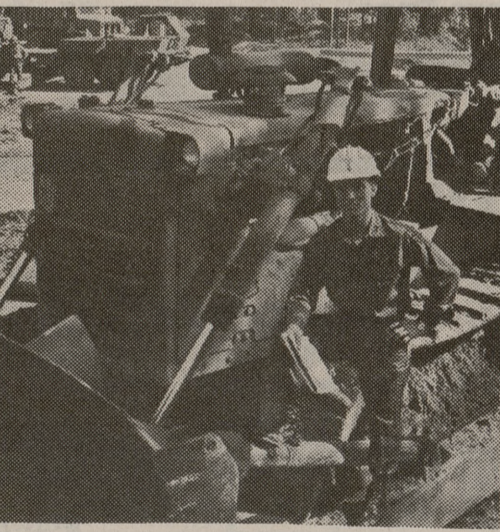
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