

Money-changers thrive on border

United Press International
EL PASO — Many merchants are facing financial de-stabilization because of the peso devaluation, but business is booming for Jesus Perez, one of about a dozen enterprising money exchangers operating along the streets on the southern edge of the city near the Texas-Mexico border.

Money exchangers, like Perez, wheel and deal in dollars and pesos.

"It was one way to make a living," explained Perez, who had his compact car parked less than one block from the International Bridge leading into Mexico for the third straight day.

Patiently, Perez stood on the sidewalk Wednesday while a large sign atop his car proclaimed his intent: "Buy and sell dollars!"

Perez who used to barter and sell at flea markets before turning to the field of finance, said he had taken in about \$800,000 pesos so far.

"A lot of the Mexicans come to town and want to get a

better exchange rate," said Perez, who like other small money exchangers Wednesday had been buying at 95 pesos for \$1 and selling at 85 for \$1.

"It's better than the 70 to 1 exchange rate they have in Juarez. I kind of think of it as a community service," he said with a slight smile.

Perhaps it could be the long lines at the banks that encourage people to go to money exchangers, said Irving Rubin, manager of Star Jewelry, who also deals in money exchanging.

Rubin estimated the money exchange business at his store has increased about 50 percent since Mexico nationalized its banks.

He said his exchange can often alter its exchange rate depending on the amount of money involved.

"Sometimes a give a better exchange rate if there is a higher amount of money to exchange. I don't know if the banks can do that," he said.

Travel committee plans ski trips

by David Tharp
Battalion Reporter
With only two weeks of the fall semester over the Memorial Student Center Travel Committee is already making plans for its Christmas break ski trips.

Plans are being made for two five-day ski trips: one to Winter Park, Colo. from Jan. 4 to 9 and another to Purgatory, Colo., Jan. 8 to 15, said Theresa Chiang, the committee's adviser. The cost of the trips will be

between \$399 and \$499, depending on choice of lodging facilities. The price includes round-trip transportation from College Station to Colorado, five nights' lodging, two meals per day, five days of lift tickets, full

use of lodge facilities including indoor swimming, hot tubs, tennis courts, saunas and daily maid service.

Students, faculty and staff can sign up for the trips in 216 MSC beginning Monday.

Space is limited to 46 persons per trip. A \$150 deposit is due upon registration and another \$150 payment is due before Oct. 15. The balance is due by Nov. 10.

Woman ticketed despite handicap

United Press International
GARLAND — Nearly two years since she helped convince the city council to pass an ordinance reserving parking for handicapped drivers such as herself, Melba Spence, 31, faces a court date for allegedly violating the law.

"It's been kind of a pain," she said of her efforts to convince authorities she really is handicapped, and that she did not violate the ordinance she helped bring into being.

Polio, Guillain-Barre Syndrome and a pinched nerve have paralyzed her legs.

The trouble began shortly after Garland passed its ordinance when state law makers passed a similar statute. Texas requires a Department of Motor Vehicles

sticker to show the driver as a handicapped person.

The Eastfield College handicapped parking sticker on Spence's car was valid on school parking lots only. She was accused of violating the law after she parked her car in a reserved area at a department store on Sept. 2.

Although the city ordered a Sept. 29 court date, City Attorney Charles Hinton is not putting on a tough face.

"She may be in violation of the strict letter of the law, but I can't see any gain in prosecuting someone who is indeed handicapped," he said. "It would be ridiculous to prosecute someone who was handicapped for using handicapped parking."

Plant owners deny faulty pipe designs

United Press International
FORT WORTH — Owners of the Comanche Peak nuclear power plant, plagued by cost overruns, denied any knowledge of design flaws that critics contend could render as many as 5,000 pipe supports unsafe.

Witnesses for the Texas Utilities Co. testified Tuesday that a review had not uncovered the alleged flaws that an anti-nuclear group claims hampers the 2,300 mega-watt facility under construction since 1974 in Glen Rose, southwest of Fort Worth.

Further testimony on licensing the facility continued Wednesday before the U.S. Atomic Safety and Licensing Board.

The Citizens Association for Sound Energy said replacing the allegedly faulty supports could cost as much as \$1.5 billion.

An earlier program to redesign thousands of pipe supports added more than \$300 million to the cost of the facility.

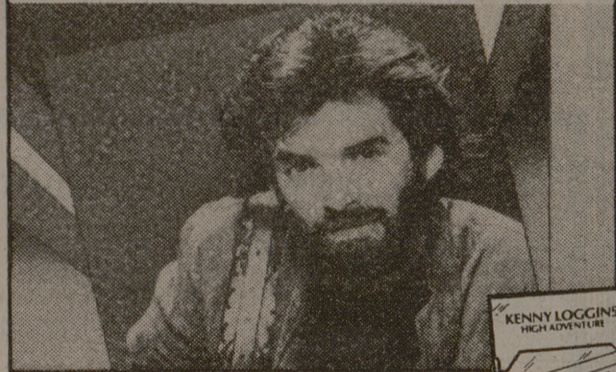
Texas Utilities officials originally estimated Comanche Peak would cost \$779 million and now estimate the cost to be at least \$3.44 billion.

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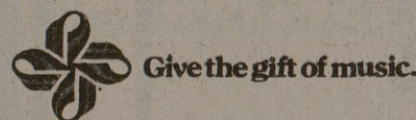
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