

Tent city donors say residents want handouts

United Press International
HOUSTON — Men and women who have given time and money to help about 300 homeless and unemployed residents of "Tent City USA" say they are disgusted with the camp because they feel many residents are looking for free handouts and are unwilling to help themselves.

Tent City USA has gained nationwide publicity in recent weeks through news stories about the poor, homeless and unemployed who have set up makeshift tents and campgrounds along the muddy banks of the San Jacinto River, about 30 miles east of Houston.

Food, clothing and money donations have flooded the

camp, but supporters say recipients are taking advantage of good samaritans and refusing to help themselves.

"There are jobs in Houston to be had. But the people out there are simply exploiting the people who are giving them goods," said Ray E. Meyer, who founded a church primarily to provide tax write-offs to businesses that contribute to Tent City and other charitable causes.

Meyer, a missionary in Europe for 10 years, and a group of businessmen are looking for 15 acres of land to establish a permanent Tent City and permanent buildings for the site.

But he said he's disgusted at the people's lack of motivation

and the rampant drinking at the camp.

Houston businessmen John Shelton and W.D. Emmons also deplore the drinking at the camp and they question the ambitions of Tent City residents.

Emmons recently donated 12 tents, portable stoves and lanterns to the residents, while Shelton said he spent about \$1,200 of his own money paying for portable toilets for two months.

Shelton also persuaded a friend to temporarily donate a generator to light the camp at night and run refrigerators for food. Although he provided the generator and all the equipment to hook it up, Shelton said the generator has not

been used.

Lou Thorpe, who has an automobile junkyard across the road from Tent City, said he has advertised for several minimum wage jobs but he had few takers. Those who have come to work, have stayed only hours before quitting, he said.

"Yeah, I need a job, but I'm not going to take one that doesn't pay what I'm worth. I'm holding out for something (that pays more)," said Herb "Lobo" Shondel.

Shondel said he moved to Tent City about six or seven weeks ago after he quit a \$25,000 a year job as a data entry supervisor in St. Paul, Minn.

New drug 'sniffer' nabs man at Houston airport

United Press International
HOUSTON — A Venezuelan national remained jailed Saturday on charges of possession of cocaine in what officials said was the first arrest of a drug suspect through the use of a mechanical drug "sniffer."

Carlos Humberto Garcia, 36, was charged with possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance following his arrest at Intercontinental Air-

port late Thursday by U.S. Customs Service agents.

Customs spokesman Charles Conroy said the suspect was nabbed as he walked through a newly installed mechanical drug "sniffer" at the airport.

The \$19,000 device, designed and built by Customs Service technicians in Washington, D.C., alerted agents to the contents of the man's luggage, Conroy said.

Agents found more than two pounds of cocaine worth about \$358,000 packed in the false sides of the suspect's suitcase, Conroy said.

Conroy said the "sniffer," which looks similar to walk-through metal detectors at airports, was installed about six weeks ago to help Customs agents detect smuggled narcotics.

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Arrest made in refinery threats

United Press International
HOUSTON — A former Amoco Oil Co. refinery worker was arrested and charged with sending extortion letters to Amoco's Texas City refinery, an FBI spokesman said Saturday.

Alton S. Edwards, 38, of Houston, was arrested by FBI agents late Friday and charged with transmitting a threatening communication through the mails, said Amoco spokesman John Vesey.

The FBI said Edwards would remain in federal custody until today, when he will be charged formally during a hearing before a U.S. magistrate in Houston.

Don Wilson, assistant director of security for Standard Oil Co. of Indiana, Amoco's parent company, said Edwards was discharged from his job at the Texas City refinery in October.

Vesey refused to release further information regarding Edwards' employment record with the company. However, the spokesman said he believed Edwards was the only suspect being sought in the case.

Amoco earlier this month received two letters signed by

"The People's Worker Revolutionary (sic) Committee for Worker Justice." The letters, which also bore the name M.H. Brown, contained unspecified threats of violence against Amoco if the company failed to rehire employees who had been terminated.

Wilson said a man identifying himself as Edwards contacted the company by telephone after Amoco issued a statement asking the sender of the letters for clarification of the demands.

The letters, dated Nov. 4 and Nov. 16, were sent to Amoco executives in Texas City and officials of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union Local 4-449 in Texas City. They did not outline specific threats or specific names of employees that should be rehired.

Vesey said security was increased at the refinery after the letters were received, but the plant continued to operate normally during the investigation.

"I think people were quite curious at the refinery, but it did not slow anything down. We did beef up our security and that will continue," Vesey said.

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Garfield escorts shuttle

United Press International
EL LAGO — Samantha Lenoir was in orbit Saturday over a sketch of her favorite cartoon character — Garfield — who made his first appearance in space with the help of her father, astronaut Bill Lenoir.

James Davis, the creator of the feline Garfield, sent the 14-year-old a hand-drawn drawing of her beloved comic strip character as thanks for getting Garfield into space.

Miss Lenoir, whose father recently flew in space aboard the fifth mission of the shuttle Columbia, had drawn her Dad a picture of Garfield that said "Hi, Houston."

During the mission, Lenoir held up to the picture during a television transmission from the spaceship.

"I didn't know he was going to take it up on the shuttle," Samantha said Friday. "When he held it up, I saw Garfield and said, 'Oh, my gosh, that was my picture.'"

But Samantha was not the only one who saw the picture.

"I just happened to see it and then even more people told me about the bit on TV and I was just so excited that Garfield had made it into space," Davis said.

"I just had to do something. That was one of the pleasant little surprises that happens in the business that you just have to acknowledge."

So, David drew Samantha an original Garfield, complete with a spare outfit.

"From one space cadet to another. Thanks, Jim Davis," read the inscription on the cartoon. Davis sent Samantha.

Samantha will treasure the drawing more than most. Despite her love for cats, she cannot own one.

"They make me sneeze up a storm," she said.

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