

Capitol fire repairs start

United Press International
AUSTIN — Workmen turned the heat and the lights back on in fire-ravaged Senate side of the state capitol late Monday, and lawmakers took the first step toward providing the money to restore the historic structure.

Meanwhile, firefighters were recalled to the building about 2 p.m. Monday to investigate a report of smoke on the fourth floor. But they found no fire or smoke.

Members of the Senate, most of them wearing overcoats and gloves, shivered through a one hour meeting in 55-degree temperatures Monday morning as they tried to conduct business as usual in the wake of Sunday's pre-dawn fire.

A bill — granted emergency status by Gov. Mark White — was filed to appropriate \$7 million to rebuild portions of the Capitol's east side, which was blackened by the fire that

killed one person and injured seven.

"We're going to have to be patient," said Sen. Roy Blake, D-Nacogdoches. "We don't go through this every day. I think it's been about 100 years since we went through it."

Texas' previous Capitol burned down in November 1881 and prompted the construction of the present building, which was finished in 1888.

White, in an impromptu speech to the Senate, proposed a complete restoration of the 95-year-old building, saying the restoration could be a gift to the state on its 150th birthday in 1995.

The governor said that private funds could be raised "to restore this building to its former glory."

The Senate chamber had no heat or electricity early Monday, but it was virtually undamaged except for a blackened area around a back

door and scorched windows.

Since there was no electricity, the lawmakers had to rely on sunlight to illuminate the huge two-story chamber. And they had to speak louder than usual because microphones at their desks were disconnected.

Austin firefighters and Capitol police were commended by the Senate for leading three guests from the burning lieutenant governor's Capitol apartment and saving the building, which fire officials thought at one point was lost.

One man, Matthew Hansen, 23, of New Caney, a guest at the apartment, died in the fire. Six firefighters and one security guard were injured. Officials have not determined the cause of the fire, but believed it may have been ignited by a television set.

"We had a tragedy, but we have much to be grateful for," said Sen. Lloyd Doggett, D-

Austin. "There was a great deal of personal courage demonstrated."

When the Senate considered a commendation of the security officers, Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby said, "You can add the name of the lieutenant governor in capital letters on that one."

Hobby's daughter Kate, 18, was one of those rescued from the burning apartment. The fire damaged the offices of nine senators, but they were moved to temporary quarters in a nearby state office building.

Officials first estimated the damages to the Capitol at \$500,000, but Blake, chairman of the Senate Administration Committee, said, "It's going to be much more than that."

"We don't intend to spend that much, but we've got to have it there," said Blake, whose committee will oversee the repair and restoration.

Space food is behind in NASA's program

United Press International
HOUSTON — In two decades, the space program has gone from one-man suborbital flights to re-usable spacecrafts. But officials say that one aspect of the technical developments has not kept pace — the astronauts' meals.

On shuttle flights, meals include plastic packaged food that must be rehydrated.

"The appearance alone is enough to make the food less appetizing to astronauts simply because they are not used to it," said Charles Bourland, a food scientist who works for a NASA contractor refining the foods taken into space.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration has awarded a \$25,000 research grant to the University of Houston Hilton School of Hotel and Restaurant Management to recommend ways to improve space food and its consumption. Sandy Louvier, a graduate

student, and Ganesh Sivaraman, a doctoral candidate in business, have been working on the project since June and hope to present a final report to NASA in May.

Louvier said she and her co-worker are studying past space-flight menus and surveying past and present astronauts to determine which foods they liked and disliked and why.

"NASA prepared 112 chicken sandwiches for the Apollo Program and only seven were eaten," Sivaraman said.

For the extended space flights

of the 1990s, Sivaraman said that he is most concerned with the logistics of getting the proper amount of food into space and then developing some system of accounting for the food eaten so astronauts know how much to re-order.

"Taste is another problem," Louvier said. "Food loses some of its taste in space because there is no gravity to move molecules in the air so astronauts can't smell it. We will probably suggest adding more spices to space foods to enhance their flavor."

Now you know

United Press International
When a swarm of locusts invades an area, it devours every scrap of available food, leaving behind wasteland. To find these pests, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization is testing a

system of satellite surveillance of locust breeding grounds in Third World.

If satellite surveillance indicates that a locust plague is imminent, insecticides can be applied as an emergency measure.

Chair trip gets bonehead prize

United Press International
DALLAS — A North Hollywood, Calif., truck driver, 33, who took off from his girlfriend's front yard in a lawn chair suspended by a cluster of balloons, has received the annual Bonehead of the Year Award from the Bonehead Club of Dallas.

Larry Walters' flight last July was supposed to take him across the Mojave Desert. But he just went up about 16,000 feet until the cold got to him, and he shot out the balloons with a pellet gun. His descent was through power lines into a residential neighborhood in Long Beach, Calif., which was blacked out for 20 minutes.

"His 16,000-foot, no frills

flight of fancy has caught the attention of every Casper Milquetoast who has the dreams of a Walter Mitty," Bonehead Club spokesman Brad Angers said Monday.

The Bonehead Club, made up of leading Dallasites who search out the unusual and pay tribute to the hapless, each year presents an award to individuals or organizations that have titillated their sense of the bizarre.

"The Bonehead of the year award is the club's highest honor and is made each year to a person or group that has committed an act or participated in an event that, in the eyes of the Boneheads, is a monumental goof," Angers said.

Comedian admitted for heart checkup

United Press International
HOUSTON — Comedian Jerry Lewis was admitted to a Houston hospital Monday, seven weeks after undergoing double coronary bypass surgery.

Methodist Hospital spokeswoman Nan Bush confirmed that Lewis, 56, was admitted to the hospital Monday, but she said he was listed as a "no information" patient.

It was learned, however, that Lewis was admitted for a routine

checkup for the double bypass surgery he received in Las Vegas, Nev., on Dec. 21. He was reported to be a patient of famed heart surgeon Dr. Michael DeBakey while in Houston.

Lewis, who has starred in dozens of movies, is best known for his portrayal of a kindly moron caught in confusing situations. He also has raised millions of dollars to fight muscular dystrophy.



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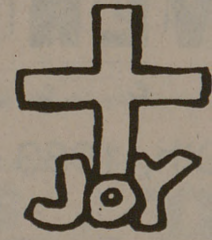
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