

City official says EPA ignored high lead level

United Press International
PORT ARTHUR — A city health official says the Environmental Protection Agency last year failed to take effective action against high lead levels in a drainage ditch near an oil drum refurbishing plant.

Port Arthur Chief Sanitarian Theodore Jefferson said Monday lead levels as high as 32,600 parts per million, 160 times higher than the safe level of 200 ppm, were found in soil in a ditch outside Port Drum Co. in 1981.

Jefferson said the EPA in 1981 and early 1982 ordered Port Drum to draw up plans for

more testing, but a staff reorganization in Dallas apparently caused the agency not to follow through. Jefferson said that when the EPA did not send orders to clean up the ditch, Port Drum officials considered the case closed.

When complaints surfaced about the plant, Jefferson said the EPA was contacted but had no information on Port Drum. Officials learned of the 2-year-old EPA tests from the Texas Department of Water Resources.

EPA officials were not immediately available for comment.

Jefferson said city officials have given the company a June 24 deadline for correction of 15 health violations, and it is responding well. City and state officials took air, water and soil samples from the site May 17.

"So far they seem to be doing everything we have asked them to do," Jefferson said.

Officials said EPA testers also found 27.9 parts per million of polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, at the site. The official safe level of PCBs, considered cancer-causers, is 50 parts per million.

Use of drug questioned

Jury investigates coverup

United Press International
SAN ANTONIO — A San Antonio newspaper Tuesday reported a grand jury is investigating the possibility that administrators and staff personnel covered up an abnormally high infant mortality rate at the Medical Center Hospital.

The San Antonio Light quoted several sources, including one "high level source close to the probe," that said some officials within the hospital district may have known about the deaths as early as the fall of 1981 and did nothing.

Dr. William Thornton,

chairman of the Bexar County Hospital District Board of Trustees, Monday denied charges of a coverup.

"In looking back, I think that (possible coverup) is a question that needs to be answered. We're going to do what it takes to find out," he said.

The newspaper reported that a source familiar with the Bexar County grand jury investigation said the panel had expanded its probe to consider the possibility of a coverup. The sources also said the investigation is centering on the drug Heparin as the agent in-

volved in the deaths of Medical Center patients.

Heparin is an anti-coagulant which if administered in overdoses can cause fatal internal bleeding.

A Kerr County grand jury has already indicted vocational nurse Genevieve Jones for the murder of 15-month-old Chelsea Ann McClellan, alleging that McClellan and other babies who did not die were injected with a muscle relaxant at the office of a Kerrville doctor.

Jones left the Medical Center's pediatric intensive care unit and went to work for Dr.

Kathleen Holland in 1982.

Dr. Thornton said the hospital district has cooperated fully with the Bexar County grand jury and prior criminal investigations, doing everything possible to determine the reason for the high number of deaths in the pediatric care unit between 1979 and 1982.

Jeff Duffield, a spokesman for Medical Center, said three in-house investigations have been conducted between late 1981 and late 1982 into infant deaths at the facility.

Rangers criticized in search

United Press International
ST. LOUIS — The father of a young man who disappeared three weeks ago in Big Bend National Park is critical of the search conducted by park rangers.

"I want to find my son," said Dr. Valgard Jonsson, "and I have run up against callousness and indifference, especially by the rangers in the park."

Jonsson, in an interview Tuesday with the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, said the rangers did not exercise good judgment in

the way they handled the search for his son.

"I think that their hands are tied by a bureaucracy they cannot control," said Jonsson. "They told me they were understaffed and underbudgeted."

Craig Jonsson, 20, disappeared from a campsite in the Chisos Basin area of the park about 8 p.m., May 16. He had arrived that day on a desert ecology field trip with a professor and other students from the St. Louis Community College.

Dr. Jonsson, who took part in

the earlier searches for his son, said he planned to return to the park Saturday. He said he will return in July if necessary.

Benjamin E. Liles, chief ranger at the park in west Texas, said the 740,000 acres of park are well staffed. He said Dr. Jonsson was very distraught and the family was desperate for a clue to their son's whereabouts.

Liles said several aerial searches and a grid search were made. Even a local psychic was consulted.

Incriminating letter from son used in mother's murder trial

United Press International
ANNISTON, Ala. — The defense in the Audrey Marie Hilley murder trial, shaken by the introduction of a letter in which her son accused her of poisoning her husband and daughter, continues its case Tuesday.

Defense attorneys called Hilley's son, Mike, to testify Monday about death threats made against his mother after her arrest for the attempted murder of her daughter, Carol, in 1979.

But the strategy backfired when Calhoun County Assistant District Attorney Joe Hubbard used the opportunity to intro-

duce into evidence a letter from Mike Hilley written in 1979, saying he believed strange things were taking place.

"It is my belief that my mother injected my father with arsenic as she apparently has done to my sister," Hilley wrote Calhoun County Coroner Ralph Phillips.

Mrs. Hilley is charged with killing her husband, Frank, in 1975 and attempting to murder her daughter, Carol, in 1979 by putting arsenic in their food.

Hilley later told reporters he exaggerated in the letter to draw attention to the situation.

Defense attorneys attempted to prove Mrs. Hilley fled the state after her arrest for attempted murder in 1979 because she feared for her life.

Mrs. Hilley, 50, eluded authorities nearly three years after leaving the state. During her flight, she was charged with the murder of her husband.

He died in 1975, but police had his body exhumed after discovering the mysterious illness affecting Carol Hilley in 1979 was the result of arsenic poisoning. An autopsy then showed Hilley also had been given arsenic.

Authorities say Mrs. Hilley assumed an alias after Alabama, then married Fort Lauderdale, Fla., moved to New Hampshire, Mrs. Hilley is said to have dyed her brunettes hair and lost 20 pounds during her flight. When she returned to Texas, she was the twin sister of her husband, who she claimed had died.

The twin took up residence with the "dead" sister and began working in 1979 until her arrest Jan. 22, 1982, in Tisbury, Vt.

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Surplus police patches found

United Press International
MIAMI — Enough police and fire department shoulder patches to decorate the uniforms of an army — more than 100,000 — have been found near a canal in a remote section of the Everglades.

Dade County police say they're not sure how they got there.

"We're baffled," police

spokesman Kenneth Christopher said Monday. "I think somebody was littering."

More than 100,000 patches bearing the insignias of police and firefighters from Dade County, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Houston were found in the everglades Sunday.

There were even patches indicating the wearer was a member of the "U.S. Supreme Court

police" or an official of the Tennessee Department of Driver's Licenses.

"To us picking them up, it looked like a huge mountain of them," said Dade County police Officer Larry Neill, who found the patches on a dirt road near the canal.

Florida Highway Patrolmen and a game warden found 30,000 assorted patches last

Thursday spread in an area about six miles from the canal's site.

Recently, Dade County has been plagued by cases of impersonation, in which and drug dealers come while wearing official uniforms.

In one case last week, police impersonator was a surplus patrol car and a police radio.

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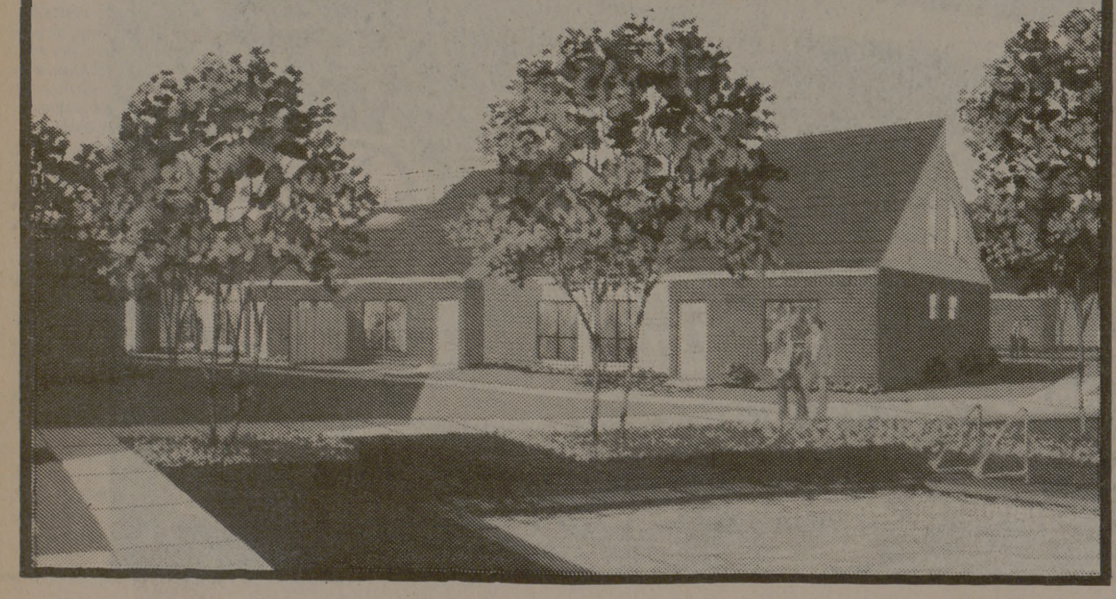
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