

Woman gets life in jail

BROWNSVILLE — District Judge Darrell Hester Thursday sentenced a weeping Sherry Wolf to life in prison for the murder of her ex-husband, who taped her own death throes.

Bill Staton and his fiancée, Patricia Castro, both 27, were attacked at a farmhouse near La Graca on July 16, 1982, when Staton arrived to visit his daughter, Janie, over whose custody he was fighting with Mrs. Wolf.

Staton was beaten to death with a iron bar and Castro was beaten with a hammer and later shot in the head with a shotgun, according to key state witness Glenn Anderson, who pleaded guilty to the slaying and was sentenced to life in prison.

Mrs. Wolf's current husband, John Wolf, 21, was convicted by a jury of Castro's death and pleaded guilty to Staton's killing. Hester sentenced Wolf to a second life sentence after the guilty plea.

Mrs. Wolf, 21, collapsed into the arms of her attorney when the court spokesman said Mrs. Wolf wept during her sentencing on Monday. She was taken to jail to await transfer to the state penitentiary.

Because of the court fight with Mrs. Wolf, who did not want him to visit his 2-year-old daughter, Staton had concealed a tape recording of his body.

Prosecutors played the tape several times in both Wolf's trials, revealing the sickening sounds of Staton being pummeled into unconsciousness and choking on his own blood as he lay dying in the trunk of his car. The tape also recorded the sound of the shotgun blast that killed Castro after she was trapped in a canal.

Anderson testified that the slaying was planned and that he helped dispose of the bodies before Staton and Castro arrived for the visit with Melanie.

Resource proposal may pass

WASHINGTON — Six states share an \$11 million annual research grant from the federal government to study water conservation in the Ogallala Aquifer if Congress accepts a proposal approved by a Senate subcommittee.

Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., sponsored the amendment to the Omnibus Water Resources bill. He said the money was needed to research ways to reverse the "serious trend of depletion of the aquifer."

The amendment, adopted Wednesday by the Water Resources Subcommittee of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, would establish a High Plains Study Council composed of the governors of the states served by the Ogallala and representatives of the U.S. Agriculture and Interior departments.

It also would set up state committees to oversee in-state research and award grants to colleges for studies of water conservation and supplies.

The \$11 million annual grant would be equally divided among Mexico and the five other High Plains states served by the Ogallala Aquifer — Texas, Colorado, Oklahoma, Nebraska and Kansas.



The art of pigging out

staff photo by John Makely

Deborah Kahil, left, a senior elementary education major, and Susan Charanza, an agricultural economics major, pig out on banana splits by the Academic Building. Both are from Bryan.

Airline asks workers to accept pay cuts

HOUSTON — Continental Airlines has asked employees to accept a new cost restructuring plan that includes wage and benefit reductions and an employee stock ownership option designed to ensure the company's survival.

Continental Chairman Frank Lorenzo, concerned with an \$84 million loss during the first half of this year, preceeded by annual losses of \$54 million in 1982 and \$60 million in 1981, revealed a plan aimed at saving the airline \$150 million a year.

"Employees are being presented with a plan that makes a very sharp change in their compensation and productivity levels," Lorenzo said in a statement Wednesday.

"Therefore, we believe those employees should share significantly in the ownership of the company in order to participate with other investors in the rewards that come with a competitive cost structure," Lorenzo said.

The proposed plan offers employees a stock bonus feature involving four million shares of Continental common stock and the option to purchase eight million shares of the airline's common stock at 85 percent of the market price at the time the plan is implemented, said Continental spokesman Bruce Hicks.

If the plan is approved, Continental would become the largest employee-owned airline in the world with employees owning up to 35 percent of the company's common stock, Lorenzo said.

Lorenzo said employees would receive 25 percent of the company's profits.

Hicks said about 5,000 of the company's 12,000 employees, mostly non-union ticket agents and clerical workers, have approved the stock option plan. Pilots and flight attendants are expected to vote on the measure within a week.

The airline's economic plan includes an estimated annual savings of \$20 million from workers belonging to the International Association of Machinists, which struck the airline Aug. 13 in a dispute over wages and work rules.

"Most of the \$20 million in IAM savings has been achieved as a result of the new IAM wage and benefit policy implemented last month after a strike by IAM employees," an airline statement said.

'Big Bird' sightings reported in Valley

LOS FRESNOS — In a report reminiscent of the "big bird" sightings in 1975-76 in the Rio Grande Valley, an ambulance driver reported he saw a bird-like object "at least the width of an ambulance" and 8 to 10 feet long glide across a highway.

James Thompson, an Emergency Medical Services technician in Harlingen, said he spied the mystery bird about 3:55 p.m. Wednesday about 4 miles east of Los Fresnos as he returned from having his ambulance inspected at South Padre Island.

"I expected him to land like a model airplane. That's what I thought he was, but he flapped his wings enough to get above the grass," Thompson told The Valley Morning Star. He estimated the creature's wing span at 5 to 6 feet.

"It had (a) black or grayish (color and) rough texture. It wasn't feathers. I'm quite sure it was a hide-type covering. I just watched him fly away," the medical technician said.

During late 1975 and early 1976, from the Valley to Robstown and San Antonio, several people reported seeing a large bird gliding through the air. Men at Eagle Pass and Raymondville even reported they were attacked by bat-like creatures, but police discounted the reports as a mixture of alcohol and Mexican folklore.

Thompson said its head had a hump on the back and that the creature had "almost no neck at all" and "something like a pelican's pouch."

Scandals

4 for 1 DRINKS 4 p.m.-5 p.m.
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