

# Big Bird' still soars in Valley

**United Press International**  
**HARLINGEN** — Eight years after police first reported a large feathered creature gliding through the darkened streets of neighboring San Benito, sightings of the legendary "big bird" are continuing in the Rio Grande Valley.

Residents have reported seeing a flying creature described alternately as an ex-

tremely large feathered bird or a shadowy pterodactyl-like silhouette.

Wildlife biologists say they are puzzled at the prolonged reports and would like to get a first-hand look themselves.

"Big birds" have also been spotted during the past four years in the Big Bend area of Texas, 650 miles northwest of

where the first sighting occurred.

In a recent sighting, Harlingen Emergency Medical Service technician James Thompson reported seeing a pterodactyl-like bird 10 feet long glide like a model airplane across the road four miles east of Los Fresnos.

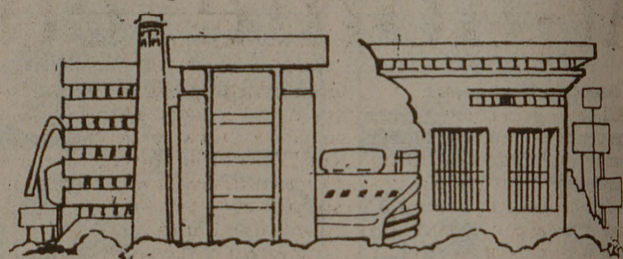
Thompson's description was similar to that given by three San Antonio school teachers in 1976

during a flurry of sightings. The three teachers said they were driving from one campus to another and spotted two large birds circling some cattle south of San Antonio.

But the birds spotted in the Big Bend area all have feathers, said Lucille Muchmore, a correspondent for the Alpine Avalanche who wrote about a sight-

ing earlier this month near the remote mining ghost town of Terlingua near the Texas-Mexico border.

Al Schriver, assistant manager of the Laguna-Atascosa Wildlife Refuge near the Texas Coast, said he and other biologists have pondered the reports in an effort to determine what people have been seeing.



## Around town

A&M vet to discuss human-pet bond

**Dr. William McCulloch**, director of the Center for Comparative Medicine in the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine, will discuss the bond between people and their animal companions in a speech at 7 p.m. McCulloch will address the relationship between people and their pets, including the health benefits possible from owning a pet. The free lecture will be held in 164 E. Kyle. McCulloch is a leader in the field of human-companion relationship.

### Visiting executive is former student

**J. Wesley Rogers**, chairman of one of the largest underwriter service companies in the country and a Class of '69 Texas A&M graduate, will speak Friday to a management class as a part of the **Visiting Executive Series**. Rogers will discuss with students the operations of the Oceanering Company and his duties as its chief executive. The Visiting Executive Series is sponsored by the Center for Executive Development and the Department of Management. The series brings business executives to the classroom to talk with seniors about the business world.

### Law student scholarships established

Three scholarships honoring **Joseph Milton Nance**, professor emeritus at Texas A&M, have been established at Baylor University for Texas A&M students entering law school. The scholarships, which pay from half to full tuition, will be for one year and renewable for the second and third year as long as the student maintains a C+ average. Students who have done most or all of their pre-law study at Texas A&M are eligible to receive the scholarships. Recipients will be chosen by Nance and five members of the Texas A&M faculty. Selection will be based on grades and test scores, interest in legal education, and character. Nance has been a long-time advisor of the Pre-Law Society at Texas A&M.

### College of Medicine holds art exhibit

The **College of Medicine** is sponsoring an exhibit of 16 watercolor, collage and fiber works by **Texas A&M student Rudy Vavra**. The exhibit will run through Nov. 25 in the lobby of the Medical Sciences Building, and is open to the public from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays. Vavra, who also created a work in the Rudder Exhibit Hall this month, is a student in the Department of Environmental Design. He has exhibited works in Houston, Dallas, College Station and Florence, Italy.

### Individual Aggeland photos taken

**Juniors, seniors, veterinary and medical school students** can have individual pictures for the 1984 Aggeland taken today and Friday and Nov. 28-Dec. 2 at the Yearbook Associates office at 1700 S. Kyle behind Culpepper Plaza; and Dec. 5-9 at the Pavilion on campus.

To submit an item for this column, come by The Battalion office in 216 Reed McDonald.

# Toxic fire still rages following derailment

**United Press International**  
**LATEX, La.** — One person was missing as four engines and one rail car, which was filled with a toxic chemical, burned out of control Wednesday in a train derailment near the Louisiana-Texas border.

One man was missing and six others were injured when the Kansas City-Southern Railroad freight train was mistakenly diverted into a lumber yard where it crashed into parked flat cars loaded with logs.

Richard Bunn, head of the hazardous material response team of the Caddo Parish Sheriff's Office, said the missing man could be at a hospital.

Residents in the sparsely populated area 10 miles west of Blanchard were evacuated after the train derailed and exploded. Four engines and at least one boxcar loaded with 55-gallon drums of the toxic chemical cypermethren burst into flames. Officials said another chemical-laden boxcar also could be

ablaze. An estimated 9,000 gallons of diesel fuel that spilled from the locomotives was burning, Bunn said. "It's a terrible mess," he said. "It could have been much worse had the train been traveling at a higher rate of speed."

*"When I looked back, all I could see was a big ball of fire."*

Bunn said authorities had determined that five locomotives and up to four boxcars had derailed, but the number could be higher. Officials were held back from scene by intense heat and smoke.

"We've got a piggy-back car behind a rear locomotive that we believe contains cypermethren, a flammable, and the piggy back has ruptured and the barrels were on the ground and have been on fire for some time," he said.

"We don't believe there's a great danger, but we're approaching it cautiously," Bunn said.

He said officials were unsure of what caused the 75-car train to reel into the lumber yard about 3 p.m.

"Somehow that train got switched onto a spur line that goes into this pulpwood plant and the train slammed into cars loaded with wood," Bunn said. "We don't know if it was premeditated or if it was a mechanical failure."

Tony Shomeker, a foreman at the Houghton Lumber Co., said he saw the train come rolling into the yard.

"I turned around and saw two of my men falling off the (log) car. I just ran for the telephone and called for help. When I looked back, all I could see was a big ball of fire," he said.

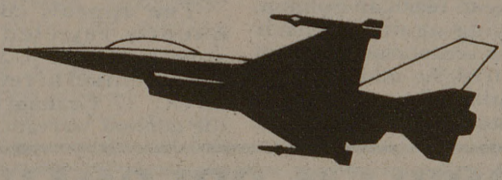
Shomeker said the train erupted in a massive explosion. Ester Lee, who lives about a half mile from the scene, said the accident sounded like a bomb.

Bunn said cypermethren is a toxic liquid with poisonous vapors. He did not know the use of the chemical, but officials said they did not believe there was an immediate danger from the chemical.

Most of the other freight cars that contained hazardous chemicals were not affected by the wreck, he said.

Fire departments from several communities in east Texas and northwest Louisiana rushed to the scene.

The derailment was about 25 miles from the scene of an Amtrak derailment in Texas Saturday which killed four people. The cause of that derailment is still under investigation by the National Transportation Safety Board.



## HEALTH CARE

The Air Force presently has positions available for Clinical Psychology Internships. To qualify, individuals must be presently enrolled in their last year of a program leading to a PHD in Psychology. Applications must be in by 2 Jan 1984. Interested applicants should contact Capt Ellis or MSgt Thompson (out-of-town, call collect) at (713) 954-6762 or 6763.

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