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Death wish refused by court

United Press International
SAN FRANCISCO — Quadruple Elizabeth Bouvia cannot carry out her starvation death wish at Riverside General Hospital, the California Supreme Court said Thursday in the first court ruling in the case.

In a one-line order, the court refused to hear the 26-year-old cerebral palsy victim's arguments that forcing her to eat violated her constitutionally guaranteed right to privacy.

The court agreed with deputy county counsel Barbara Milliken who maintained the constitution does not give citizens the right to commit suicide.

"It is self-evident that the right to privacy does not include the right to commit suicide," Milliken said in papers filed with the court. "To characterize a person's self-destructive acts as entitled to that constitutional protection would be ludicrous."

She said asking doctors and nurses to let Bouvia starve herself would be the same as asking them to help her commit a crime.

"Killing of the petitioner would be either excusable nor justifiable," Milliken said.

Hospital officials have said she should be discharged from the center if she acutely ill since she no longer requires hospital care.



"Don't drop it"

Physical plant workers Don Garrett (on ladder) and Harold Gregory (below), both of Bryan, carefully replace a burned-out light in the Langford Architecture Building. Both are electricians for the physical plant.

Photo by DEAN SAITO

'High alert' issued ships off Lebanon

United Press International
BEIRUT — U.S. warships off Lebanon were reported on "high alert" Thursday with warplanes on patrol against possible kamikaze attacks by Islamic terrorists.

The report by Israel Television came amid stepped-up security precautions after vows of new attacks against U.S. and French targets by the Moslem extremist group that claimed responsibility for killing American educator Malcolm Kerr.

Kerr, the president of the American University of Beirut, was assassinated outside his campus office Wednesday by gunmen using silencer-equipped pistols. Lebanese universities and the Roman Catholic school system closed to protest the murder.

Israel Television reporter Michael Gurdus, who monitors radio transmissions, said U.S. warplanes were checking all flights entering Lebanese and Israeli airspace in search of suicide planes that might be flying near civilian airliners to escape radar detection.

The reporter said 6th Fleet ships were on "high alert" against suicide air attacks but did not disclose what prompted the reported precautions.

Israel Radio said the U.S. air patrols were being coordinated with

Israeli civilian aviation controllers. There was no immediate comment from U.S. officials.

Defense Department officials in the past have warned against possible attempts to fly bomb-laden planes into U.S. warships in suicide attacks like those carried out by Japanese pilots at the end of World War II.

U.S. Marines, wary of any repeat of the suicide truck bombing that killed 241 Marines in October, opened fire Thursday on a jeep that approached their base at "an excessive rate of speed," about 15 mph.

Marine spokesman Maj. Dennis Brooks said the Marines "showed great restraint" by disabling the vehicle carrying two Lebanese airport technicians instead of shooting to kill when six warnings to halt were ignored. The technicians were coming to repair a radar installation.

The U.S. Marines, victims of an October suicide bombing by the same group that claimed to have killed Kerr, opened fire on a Jeep when it approached their base at "an excessive rate of speed," about 15 mph.

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Gas bills rise with cold weather

By KELLEY SMITH
Senior staff writer

While most effects of the December freeze were immediately noticeable in the form of broken pipes, flooded homes and dead plants, consumers will see another effect soon when they receive their utility bills this month.

"The cold weather has had a dramatic effect on bills, there's no doubt about that," Dan Weber, district manager with Lone Star Gas, said Thursday.

Gas meter readings for December have shown an average usage increase of two-and-a-half to three times as much over November, Weber said.

Linda Piwonka, utility office manager with College Station, said electric bills for December will be higher also. Even though many people were gone during the cold weather, Piwonka said, heat had to stay on to protect water pipes from bursting. If someone left their home and turned the thermostat down to 50 degrees, the heat was still running because of the low temperatures, she said.

The Public Utility Commission of Texas has asked electric utilities to place a moratorium on service disconnections for customers unable to pay their December bill.

However, A.E. Vandever, assistant city manager and director of finance

Amy Godfrey, citizen information coordinator with Bryan utilities, also said the December bills are higher, but not substantially. Godfrey said that for the two areas that have received their December bills, there have only been a few calls from people with unusually high bills. But it was found in most of those cases that the customer's billing period was longer than the normal 30 days, she said.

As a result of the increases in the bills due to the weather, the Railroad Commission has requested that all of the state's gas utilities give customers extra time to pay their bill if they ask for it.

Weber said Lone Star will comply with the commission's request for customers with a good payment record. Lone Star will work individually with those customers that have had reliable credit to develop a payment plan, he said.

Some families may be eligible for assistance in paying the unusually high heating bills through the Home Energy Assistance Program sponsored by the Texas Department of Human Resources. The one-time payment is available to families who receive food stamps, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Sup-

plemental Security Income or need-tested Veterans Administration benefits.

Eligibility is limited by gross income along the following guidelines: a one-person household with a gross monthly income of less than \$355.49; \$581.49 for two-persons; \$798.49 for three-persons; \$985.49 for four persons; \$1,162.49 for five; and \$1,359.49 for six.

Applications for assistance can be obtained through the local office of the Department of Human Resources.

During the unusually cold weather, there are some steps a consumer can take to keep the heating bills down.

Weber said consumers can save by wearing more clothing in the house so the heat can be kept down. People should resist the temptation to turn the heat up when they walk into a house, he said.

Tim Layne, energy specialist with the city of College Station, said information on energy efficiency is available free at the city hall.

Graduation deadlines nearing

By MIKE DAVIS
Reporter

Seniors hoping to graduate this May are beginning to pack their trunks for their journey into the jungles of the "real world."

But before any traveler flies off to that exotic dreamland of success, he must first pass through several stages to make sure nothing was left undone and everything is secure.

Graduating seniors at Texas A&M begin their journey by applying for their passport, the coveted diploma.

All graduating seniors must apply for their degree at the degree check window in Heaton Hall before Feb. 3. "They need to apply for graduation and that requires a fee," Assistant Registrar Don Gardner said. "They are not officially a degree candidate until they do."

Gardner said the registrar's office included the fee on some graduating seniors' fee slips, but were unable to bill them all.

"We tried to catch them during registration and get a card in their packages," Gardner said. "If we did, their

card was automatically assessed. Now all they have to do is bring their paid fee slip by here (105 Heaton)."

Gardner says all seniors should check their spring semester fee slip for "Diploma Fee-\$15." Seniors without this should pay the fee in the Coke Building.

After the fee is paid and our traveler has applied for his passport, he begins the next step toward his journey, notice of change-of-address.

Spring-time travelers can order their announcements until Feb. 8 at the Student Finance Center, 217 Memorial Student Center.

Announcements can be ordered in various quantities and qualities, depending on the senior's tastes and wealth.

With announcements arriving around mid-April, the traveler can begin his search for the proper traveling attire.

For this special occasion a simple cap and gown will do. Commencement fashions will cost about \$13 at the MSC Bookstore.

Now for the final check. "Around the first week in April they (seniors) will get a letter from us

and in this letter it will tell them exactly what they need to graduate," Gardner said.

The letter includes information such as the number of hours the senior is currently enrolled in, the number of hours the senior must pass, other hours which must be passed, petitioned, or transferred in, and grade points needed. The letters should be signed and returned to 105 Heaton Hall.

"This is where a lot of times we pick up transfer work that a student thought had been transferred in that didn't get on his transcript," he said. "Maybe incompletes or grade changes that they thought had gone through but didn't go through, so maybe their grade point average is lower than they thought, and these sorts of things."

Seniors have about one month to clear up any problems before commencement.

"If they don't get that letter then they need to get excited," Gardner said. "If they don't get that letter two weeks before commencement, they need to get themselves over here."

Gardner says it is not uncommon for letters to be returned despite

efforts to get accurate mailing addresses.

"We do everything in the world we can do to try to get phone numbers and correct addresses so that we can reach them," he said.

After travel confirmations are made there is only one more step before the traveler boards the plane, the final check list.

"The clear list will be posted at 8 a.m. on Wednesday before commencement," he said. "That is the last thing they need to do."

"That list is posted after all of the grades have come in and we've checked their final grades against what we were hoping for, they're cleared academically and the police or the fiscal office doesn't have a block on them, then there will be no problem.

"If they do have a problem then there will be a red dot by their name and out beside it telling them what they need to do and who they need to go see to clear the dot. Then they have until 12 noon on the Thursday before commencement to get everything cleared up."

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In Today's Battalion

Local

• For the second time this week, pilots landing at Easterwood Airport reported instrument readings that meant the landing gear on their planes were not functioning properly. See story page 3.

State

• A Houston apartment complex has decided to make clothing optional. See story page 4.
• Maj. Gen. Robert G. Ownby bound and hanged himself in a bizarre effort to convince authorities he was executed by terrorists, the medical examiner. See story page 5.
• Significant residues of the cancer-causing chemical EDB remained food products, even after they were cooked. See story page 9.

National

• Police investigators tracing the steps of confessed mass killers Henry Lee Lucas and Otis Elwood Toole linked the men to a pair of previously unsolved slayings. See story page 4.