



Photo by MIKE DAVIS

And he's off!!

Connie VanSchuyver, regional executive for the Sports Car Club of America, waves on drivers during the driving course held Sunday in the parking lot by Zachry Engineering

Center. The timed race was set up to promote safe driving. Drivers were timed, and the winner received a trip to Daytona, Fla., to compete for a national title.

Authorities say facts in DDT study 'suppressed'

United Press International
HARLINGEN — Authorities connected with a federally funded study of the Lower Rio Grande Valley have told UPI that vital facts showing continued DDT contamination were suppressed and the report was a "whitewash."

Study officials immediately denied the charges, and said the data were subject to various interpretations.

But the best federal data, and privately commissioned tests, indicate DDT contamination is worse than the local study indicated.

"The local (study) committee basically covered it up," claimed biologist Cyndy Chapman, a member of the study group's oversight committee, "and made it a whitewash."

"We ended up with an extremely wishy-washy summary that doesn't reflect the data we have," she said. "I think there was a major coverup by chemical, agricultural and industrial groups working together."

Study Chairman Ersel Lantz denied any important facts were suppressed, and said that factual discrepancies were due to a change in laboratories between the initial 1981 pesticide report and a final 1982 version.

He said some data which appeared in the first report, but disappeared in the second — showing mercury contamination, for instance — may have been erroneous.

Perhaps, he suggested, re-

searchers "inadvertently picked up a sample of water where someone had broken a thermometer."

Engineers at Dallas-based Black & Veatch, the study's consultants, said their client — the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council — requested they not comment. But other project workers confirmed the engineers were disturbed by the report's political overtones.

"You wouldn't believe the editing that went on," said biologist Linda Gardner, the project's research director who quit in a dispute over how to interpret the data. "They presented it in the best light."

Said Robin Alexander, a Texas Rural Legal Aid attorney who attended subcommittee sessions: "They just buried it (DDT data)."

She and former research director Gardner confirmed the panel refused to make public soil samples that indicated high concentrations of fresh DDT.

The attorney said data collected by Black & Veatch had to be "approved" by a 42-member Development Council committee, and that a subcommittee, which included no environmentalists, edited the final version.

The initial June 1981 report, obtained by UPI, indicated "there is apparently a significant source of DDT contamination located within the Arroyo Colorado drainage basin," which carries agriculture runoff into the ecologically sensitive Laguna Madre, spawning ground of shrimp, fish and other sealife.

The study also reported finding banned DDT in the Rio Grande itself, source of 95 percent of the Valley's drinking and irrigation water, and traces of the compound in municipal water supplies throughout the Valley.

Fifteen months later, in the September 1982 study, no traces of DDT or its residual components DDD and DDE were reported in drinking water.

Blackened 550 acres

Brush fire under control

United Press International
LOS ANGELES — Firefighters nearly had full control Sunday over a brush fire fanned last week by Santa Ana winds that killed four people and caused more than \$1 million in damage. Power remained out for 2,000 residents.

The Angeles fire north of Los Angeles blackened 550 acres and destroyed three homes before it was contained Friday night. About 100 firefighters were on the lines Sunday mopping up, said Mike Milosch, U.S. Forest Service spokesman.

He said that lower winds and higher humidity brought the fire, near suburban La Canada-Flintridge, to near control. "It looks real good right now," Milosch said. "We should have it controlled fully by 6 p.m."

The hurricane-force winds blowing from the desert last week also spurred a larger brush fire that charred 1,200 acres in eastern Orange County. It was fully controlled Saturday morning. No homes were damaged.

The hurricane-force winds that blew cars off highways Thursday and knocked down trees and power lines started to ease Friday afternoon and gave way by Saturday to mild breezes throughout most of Southern California.

The fierce winds blew a van over a mountain cliff, killing the driver, and knocked down a power line that electrocuted a man. In Yosemite National Park, about 300 miles to the north, a man was crushed to death by a falling tree.

A 19-year-old man who was blown off his motorbike Thursday and hurled against a tree died Saturday from internal injuries at Fountain Valley Trauma Center.

The property loss, including destruction of three homes and damage to four others, was estimated at \$1.25 million. Six firefighters suffered minor injuries.

About 2,000 customers of Southern California Edison Company were still without power Sunday. Most of them were in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains.

Bob Hull, an Edison spokesman, said crews worked non-stop and expected to have power fully restored late Sunday.

Continental seeks approval of scheme to 'slash' costs

United Press International
HOUSTON — Having beaten down a union challenge, Continental Airlines was scheduled to return to federal court Monday to ask a judge's approval to management's scheme to slash labor costs.

U.S. Bankruptcy Judge R.F. Wheeler Jr. ruled Jan. 17 against a challenge to Continental's bankruptcy from unions, which maintained the action was a bare attempt at union-busting.

Continental Monday will ask Wheeler to approve its plan to cut the work force, impose half pay and require longer work hours — all actions the airline has already taken.

Continental filed for bankruptcy reorganization Sept. 24 and suspended U.S. flights for two days. On Sept. 27, it resumed flying a drastically re-

duced schedule with fewer, cheaper workers.

The Air Line Pilots Association and the Union of Flight Attendants struck Oct. 1 in protest. The International Association of Machinists already had gone on strike when contract talks failed Aug. 13.

"What Continental is doing is, they are filing for court approval to do something that they did in violation of federal law in September," said Airline Pilots Association spokesman Dick Smith.

Continental, which has lost more than \$500 million since 1979, repeatedly has said it is not union-busting but is simply trying to reorganize itself into a viable business, thereby saving jobs for at least part of its work force.

"We will show the court that

keeping (labor) contracts in force would not allow this company to move into a profitable future but could force it to liquidate," said Continental spokesman Bruce Hicks.

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