

Jury selection begins in Allman child abuse trial

United Press International
JEFFERSON — Attorneys Monday began the tedious process of selecting a jury to hear the trial of a woman accused of fatally beating her 3-month-old daughter.

Questioning of the 63 potential jurors began after Judge Ben Z. Grant denied a defense motion to exclude from evidence a confession by Sherry

Allman in the Nov. 10, 1982, slaying of her daughter, Sherry Lynn.

Grant ruled without comment in denying the motion that contended the woman was mentally incompetent when she confessed to police shortly after her arrest.

Investigators said Allman, 25, told them shortly after her arrest that she began hitting her daughter when the infant would

not stop crying. At a pretrial hearing last week she said she did not remember giving oral and written statements.

Only 10 of the 63 potential jurors called Monday had heard nothing at out the case. Attorneys were scheduled to resume questioning of jurors Tuesday afternoon.

A psychiatrist testified during the pretrial hearing last week that Allman, who spent three months undergoing treatment at Rusk State Hospital before she was ruled competent to stand trial, suffers severe depression, was mildly retarded and has multiple personality defects.

Police initially attributed the infant's death to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, but further investigation revealed the child had been battered throughout her life and beaten to death.

A Kansas City, Mo., grand jury indicted her for second-degree murder in the 1976 death of 4-month-old Marvin Neal Allman, who was smothered with a pillow.

No indictment was returned in the 1978 death of 1-month-old Joseph, who Allman claimed accidentally smothered when she rolled over him in her sleep.

The grand jury did not investigate the death of another Allman baby who died following a premature birth.

Warped

by Scott McO



Continental requests approval of cancelled labor contracts

United Press International

HOUSTON — Continental Airlines, in the latest round of its fight to keep flying under bankruptcy court protection, Monday asked a judge to approve cancellation of union contracts it says are out of line with the marketplace.

"The labor contracts at issue, both individually and collectively, are burdensome upon the debtor," Continental lawyer John Gallagher told Bankruptcy Judge R.F. Wheelless Jr. "They are products of a bygone era."

Gallagher argued Civil Aeronautics Board regulation of the airlines guaranteed profits and resulted in high labor costs until

1978 when Congress eliminated regulation and forced new competitive efficiency on airlines.

"Continental is a victim of regulation, of prior regulatory structures, of economic inefficiency and the higher expectations that regulation built into the airline industry, in both management and labor groups," Gallagher said.

Continental already has unilaterally voided the contracts, laid off more than half its work force and imposed 50 percent pay cuts and longer hours on those who remain.

But the airline needs bank-

ruptcy court approval of that action to go forward with its reorganization.

The Air Line Pilots Association, the Union of Flight Attendants and the International Association of Machinists, all of whom are on strike, and the Transport Workers Union, who are not on strike, oppose the move.

Union lawyers argue Continental's unilateral voiding of labor contracts immediately after it filed for Chapter 11 reorganization Sept. 24 has no basis in law.

"What it is really seeking to

do is to use the bankruptcy to achieve a competitive edge, eliminating future obligations to employees," IAM lawyer Clarke argued.

Clarke said improving competitive position is not a legitimate purpose for bankruptcy rejection of contracts, and questioned the constitutionality of court action voiding individual property rights.

The union lawyers also cited the Railway Labor Act, which prohibits unions and forbids cancellation of union contracts.

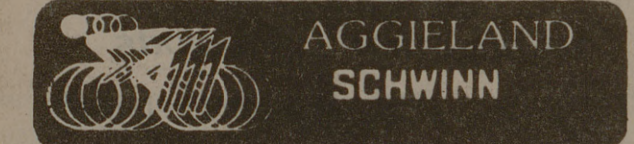
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Vines ignite 2-alarm fire

United Press International

SAN ANTONIO — One resident was injured Monday in a two-alarm apartment house fire

that apparently started from the ignition of dry vines, officials said.

An unidentified resident was taken to Medical Center Hospital

for treatment of smoke inhalation, but no other injuries were reported, officials said.

The fire damaged from eight units of the three-story High Ridge Apartments at the intersection of Fredericksburg and Callaghan roads, officials said.

Arson investigator Ramon Trevino said a maintenance man and an eye witness reported seeing vines burning the exterior of the building.

"The vines are so dry they spread real quickly," Trevino said. "It (fire) quickly tore the roof and attic."

It was not known if the vines were intentionally set on fire, he said.

The first fire alarm sounded at about 3:30 p.m. with fire and a district chief responding, said Capt. Bob Squires.

A second alarm was issued 15 minutes later. Squires said firefighting units responded to the blaze.

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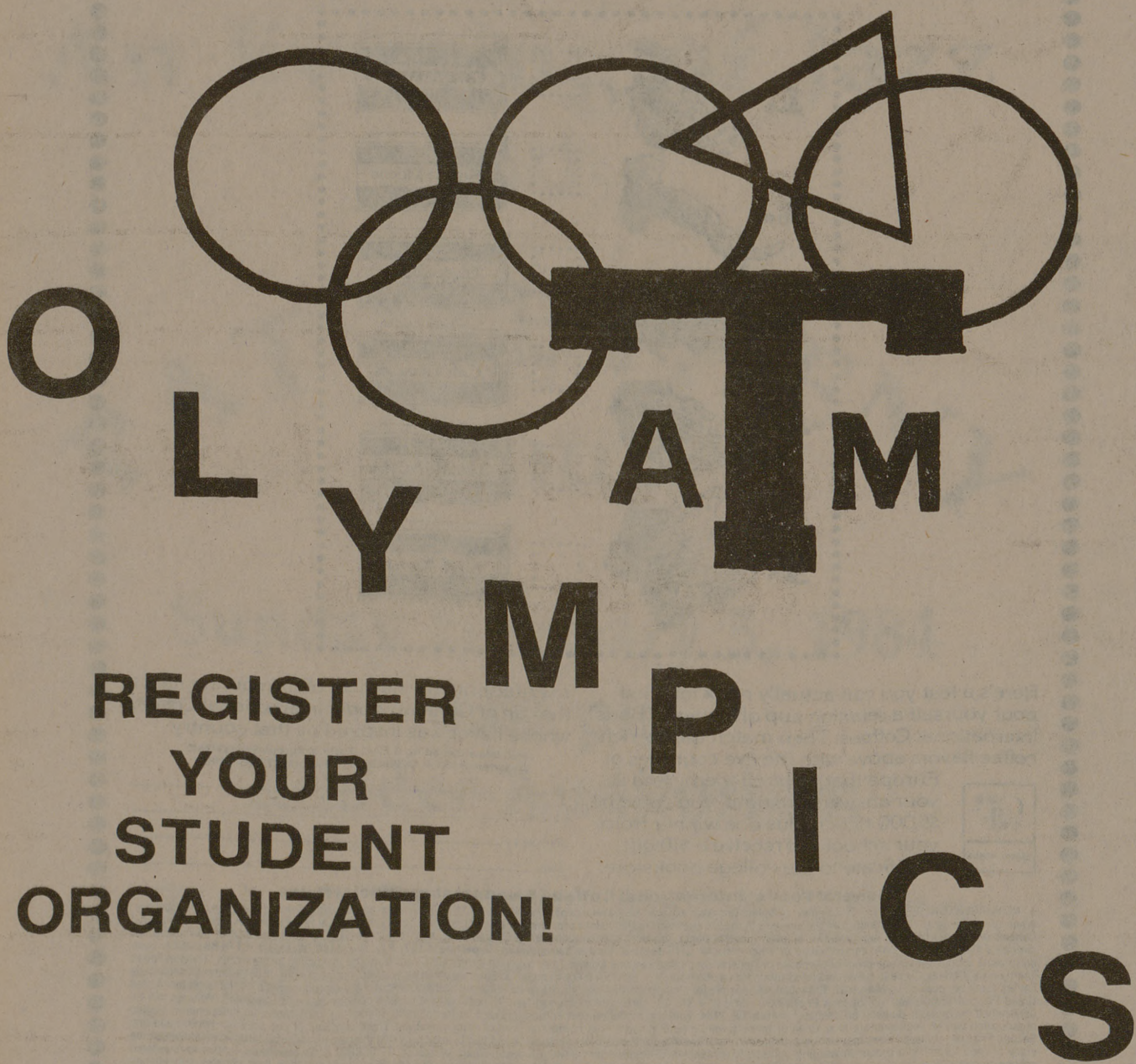
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