



Career-seeking crowds

Photo by KATHERINE HURT

Flocks of students crowded the Blocker building Wednesday for the Career Fair. The

fair featured displays from numerous companies and will run through Thursday.

## Texas Supreme Court allows \$1 million award

**United Press International**  
AUSTIN — A \$1 million award to a Port Neches woman for the mental anguish and loss of companionship she suffered because of the 1979 electrocution of her son was not excessive, the Texas Supreme Court ruled Wednesday.

The high court refused to overturn a judgment against Gulf State's Utilities and Southwestern Bell Telephone that resulted from the death of 13-year-old Vernon Lee Johnson.

The youth was electrocuted when he chased a Frisbee under a metal storage building while playing at his father's house.

According to court records, an electrical line owned by Gulf States had sagged and made contact with the building because it was suspended from a broken Southwestern Bell utility pole.

The award, which totalled \$1,020,000, was to be given entirely to the child's mother, Paula Reed. Reed and her husband, Vernon Lee Johnson, Sr., were separated.

According to court testimony, Reed subsequently suf-

fered a "severe depressive reaction," weight loss and had trouble sleeping.

A district court jury awarded her \$500,000 for mental anguish, \$500,000 and for loss of "society" with her son, \$20,000 for the loss of contributions her son would have made after reaching age 18 and \$60,000 for lost earnings and past and future medical expenses.

Gulf States and Bell had argued against the award saying the child's death was an unavoidable accident and that he should not have gone under the building.

They also argued the award was excessive and that at least a portion of Reed's anguish was caused by the fact she shot and killed a man "six or seven months" after her son's death.

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## Poison suspected in deaths

**United Press International**  
RAYMONDVILLE — Investigators speculated three people found dead Wednesday in a rural area of Willacy County in far south Texas were poisoned by a fertilizer residue found inside a nearby abandoned building.

Autopsies were performed on the bodies, but officials said it would take several days before toxicology tests showed whether the victims were poisoned.

Willacy County Sheriff's Department spokesman Larry Spence said a passerby spotted one of the bodies near a roadway 9 miles southwest of Raymondville about 7:30 a.m. Wednesday. Spence said investigators found the other two bodies near an abandoned out building where the trio apparently sought refuge from rain late Tuesday.

Spence said the three, a young man, a young woman and an older woman, appeared to be Salvadorans who had entered the United States illegally.

"We haven't been able to come up with anything that shows foul play," said Spence. "There are no marks on the bodies."

"Apparently they went in this building last night to get out of the rain and we think maybe

they ate some fertilizer in there and were poisoned," Spence said.

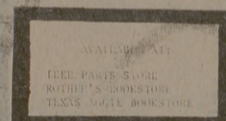
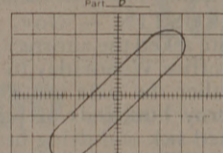
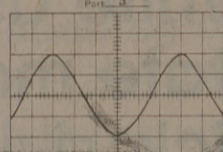
Dr. David Flory, who performed an autopsy on the older woman's body at Valley Baptist Hospital in Harlingen, said a chemical analysis and toxicology

tests will be done at Department of Public Safety labs in Austin to determine if the three were poisoned.

Flory confirmed there were no marks or signs of violence on the bodies.

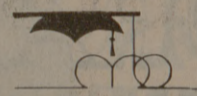
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