



Torch ability

Photo by MICHAEL PIWONKA

It's just another class assignment at A&M. Angela Rivera, a junior engineering technology major from Houston, uses an acetylene torch to help

construct a balcony addition for J.R. Thompson Hall. Rivera and her classmates were working Monday on the balcony as part of their ET 313 class.

Listen to heart trouble signs

United Press International
DALLAS — Every year in this country about 1.5 million people feel a sudden tightness in the chest, a crick in the neck or arm, a queasy, rolling stomach, lightheadedness or an abrupt drench of sweat. Many wait to see what will happen next.

For 350,000, it will be their funeral. "People don't want to cause trouble to others, and that's a big mistake," says Chicago cardiologist Dr. Gary Wilner. "Believe me, there's no reason to be overly courteous if you're having a heart attack."

Wilner, in Dallas to open a heart study exhibit at the Southwest Museum of Science and Technology, said people should consider heart attack symptoms for what they are: screams of distress from their bodies. He said chances of recovery hinge on speed of medical assistance.

"Things have improved since Leonardo da Vinci," Wilner said. "Leonardo said, 'The heart ... is a vessel formed of thick muscle ... it moves of itself, and does not stop unless forever.'"

In fact, says Wilner, who is president of the Chicago Heart Association, five million Americans are enjoying life today despite their hearts' best efforts to wheeze and stop.

"Half the deaths from heart attacks occur within four hours after the symptoms begin," Wilner said. "People are making it to the hospital sooner than they used to, so more are being saved."

But as with so many things, Wilner said, when it comes to keeping a healthy heart, the best defense is a good offense, or, as Irish physician Sir William Stokes put it in the mid-1800s:

"We must train the patient gradually but steadily to the giving up of all luxurious habits. He must adopt early hours and pursue a system of gradual muscular exercise."

Wilner said certain factors bearing on coronary health — heredity, age, race and sex — can't be changed, but others can.

"What we're talking about here is self-help," Wilner said. "Smoking? Stop. High blood pressure? Reduce salt, or talk to your doctor about beta blockers (a group of heart drugs). Diet? Cut back saturated fats. They plug up the veins and arteries. Weight? Get rid of the excess

before it wafts you off on a pillow of lard."

Under stress, the body starts pumping out adrenalin-like hormones that head for receptors in the heart, prepping it for "fight or flight" by spurring it to work harder, beat faster. The stress may be physical, like shoveling snow, or mental, like stage fright.

People with hard-driving personalities have snap reactions to stress and hyperadrena-

lize repeatedly each day, Wilner said, soaking their long-suffering hearts with stimulants. He said over time, the toll shows up as coronary disease.

Starting in 1978, Wilner headed a research group studying heart attack victims to see if beta blockers improved their survival odds. One drug, propranolol HCL, reduced the death rate from heart attack recurrences by 26 percent.

Beta blockers pre-empt the

same sites on the heart targeted by adrenalizing hormones, blocking their action, he said, so the heart continues ticking along at a normal pace.

Propranolol is given now to people with the highest risk of heart attack, he said.

Exercise increases the strength and efficiency of the heart and circulatory system. Diet can reduce cholesterol content of the blood and burn off excess pounds.

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Bank reports record earnings

United Press International
HOUSTON — Texas Commerce Bancshares Inc. Tuesday reported earnings of \$45.8 million for the first quarter of 1984, a 2 percent increase from the \$44.8 million earned in the first quarter of 1983.

On a per share basis, earnings were \$1.41, up 1 percent from the 1.39 earned in the first quarter of 1983.

The board of directors Tuesday declared a regular quarterly dividend of 35 1/2 cents per share for common stock and 45 cents per share on preferred stock.

Loans averaged \$11.8 billion during the first quarter, an in-

crease of 21 percent from the first quarter of 1983. Compared with the fourth quarter of 1983, average loans increased \$696 million, the highest level of linked-quarter loan growth in Texas Commerce's history.

At March 31, the 65 member banks of Texas Commerce had consolidated total assets of \$19 billion, total deposits of \$12.7 billion, total loans and leases of \$12.2 billion and stockholders' equity of \$1.1 billion.

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