

Former EPA chief
withdraws — again

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for 'Best Defense'

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U.S. medal total
climbs; 26 to date

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Texas A&M

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Hijackers threaten French hostages

United Press International

BEIRUT, Lebanon — Three Arab hijackers holding 56 people on an Air France jetliner in Tehran Wednesday threatened to kill their French hostages unless France agrees to a prisoner release, French television reported.

French television and radio stations in Paris reported the hijackers said they would kill one French passenger each hour starting at 9 a.m. Tehran time (1:30 a.m. EDT) Thursday if their demands were ignored.

The French media and the British British Corp. said initial reports of the threat were broadcast by official Tehran radio.

"I have nothing to say on this matter," a French Foreign Ministry spokesman said in Paris. "We are active in this matter and our efforts are aimed at protecting the lives of those threatened."

Three Arab hijackers, reportedly armed with knives and hand grenades, seized the Air France Boeing 737 Tuesday on a flight from Frankfurt to Paris with 64 people aboard. One crewman escaped during a refueling stop and four female passengers were freed Wednesday.

Groups called "Guards of Islam" and the "Indian Branch of the Islamic Jihad" claimed responsibility for the hijacking, which took the jetliner from Frankfurt, West Germany to Geneva, Beirut, Cyprus and finally Tehran. It was not immediately clear whether they were separate organizations.

They said they wanted the release of five or six prisoners jailed in France for a botched 1980 attempt on the life of Shapour Bakhtiar, a former Iranian prime minister and opponent of the fundamentalist Iranian regime of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

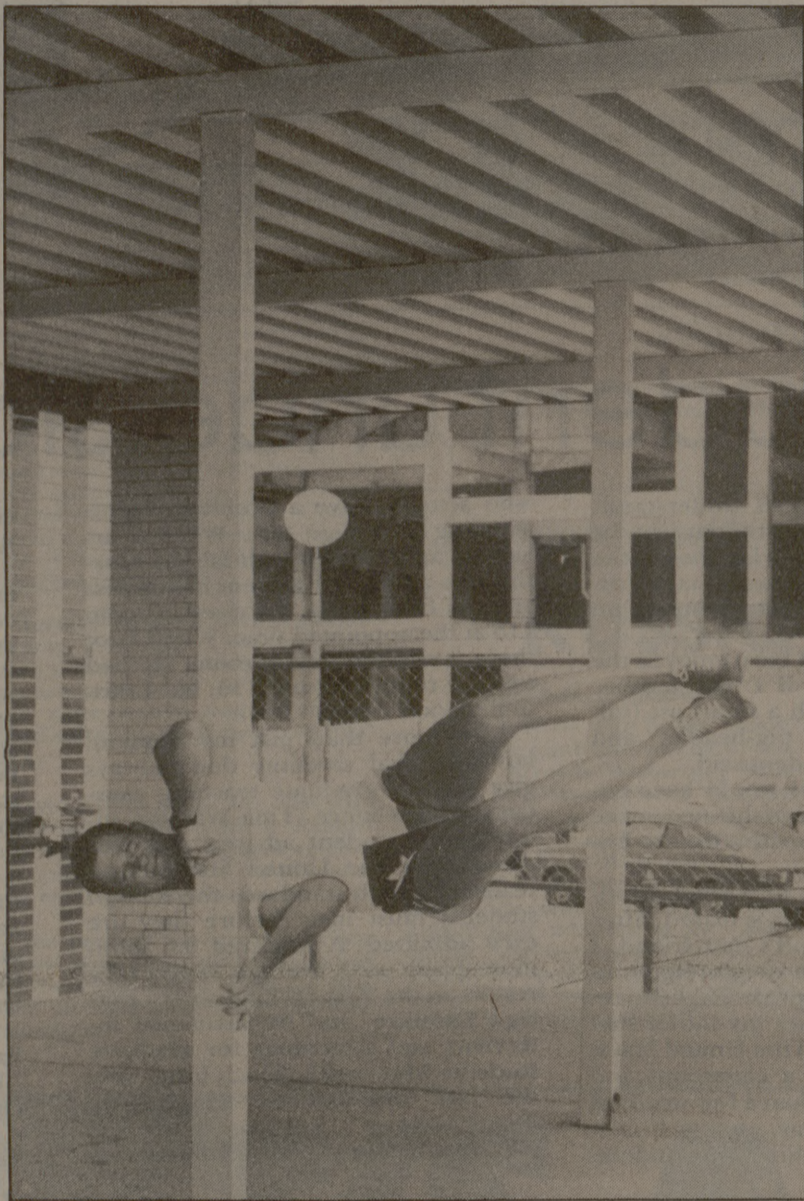


Photo by Kaye Pahmeier

Define the law of gravity

Bart Barden, a 51-year-old Health and Physical Education graduate student from College Station practices a horizontal handstand at Wofford Cain Pool. Barden said his record for the handstand is 51 seconds. He likes to do this type of handstand because it's "just hard to do," and works out his upper arm muscles.

'Free' cable TV isn't

By LESLIE HEFFNER
Reporter

It's been happening around the country and now it's happening here. It's a controversy over the legality of the use of satellite dishes.

Huntington apartments, managed by Sypon Corporation, advertise that because they own a satellite dish they provide free cable for their tenants, but lately questions have been raised about the legality of that move.

But a problem has arisen. When the complex installed the dish in July, Community Cablevision disconnected it. For about a week it was like a flickering light: on...off...on...off and, finally, it flickered off indefinitely. Unless legal questions between Sypon and Community can be worked out, it will probably be off for good.

Joseph Di Bacco, midwest region vice president of McCaw Midwest Communications Companies, Inc., says he is not familiar with the Huntington problem because Community Cablevision and McCaw Midwest Communications have not merged yet. The companies need approval from the federal justice department before they can merge.

Di Bacco says the probable cause of the controversy is that the complex is using the cable company's wires to distribute cable service to its residents. The complex's general manager declined comment on the matter, saying she didn't have time to discuss it.

DiBacco says that cable companies usually wire new buildings with their own wires, not the builders' wires.

Tuesday afternoon a Community Cablevision representative knocked on Huntington resident Lisa

Miinch's door and informed her that her cable would be disconnected on Aug. 2. Miinch says that although she is supposed to receive free cable, she would not mind paying for next month's service to prevent the disconnection, but the representative told her she would also have to pay for July's service.

"There is no way that I'm about to pay for July cable services when it is already August," Miinch says. "It is just like paying for a magazine subscription that's been discontinued. I do sympathize with the cable company, but Huntington should have paid for July and I should not be liable."

Jim Wright, a spokesman for the Sypon Construction company, says the problem stems from a break-

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State's GOP chairman: liberals won't win Texas

By ROBIN BLACK
Senior Staff Writer

Recent polls which showed Walter Mondale with a slight lead over President Ronald Reagan may have hidden value for Texas Republicans, state Republican party leader George Strake said Wednesday.

"I think it's good," he said. "It should wake the voters up to what's going on, and the only way we can lose the election is through complacency."

Strake was in Bryan Wednesday to give a \$5,000 check to the Joe Barton campaign. Barton is running on the Republican ticket for the 6th congressional district seat vacated by Phil Gramm.

Strake said he thinks Reagan will have little trouble taking Texas in the November election. Texas, though largely Democratic, is basically a conservative state, he said, and he just can't picture Texans voting for two Northern liberals like Walter Mondale and his running mate Geraldine Ferraro.

"I was so delighted that they (the Democrats) did not choose a Texan to be Mondale's running mate," Strake said.

There was some concern in the past among state Republicans that a Texas running mate for Mondale might hurt Reagan's chances in the state in November.

He said it is highly unlikely that Texans will vote for Ferraro.

"I think voters will see her for the Northern liberal that she really is after all the dust clears from the Ferraro hoopla," he said.

Because of the results of past elections, Strake and other party leaders are confident that many conservative Democrats will cross party lines to vote for Reagan in November. Reagan carried Democratic Texas in the 1980 general election and Democrat-turned-Republican Phil Gramm won a special election for the 6th congressional district seat that he vacated after a falling-out with Democratic party leaders.

This, Strake said, is indicative of a

switch in a lot of Texans who were conservative Democrats "come hell or high water," but who found no place in their party for conservatism.

In this way, he said, the 6th district — which encompasses the Brazos Valley — is a microcosm of the state of Texas and therefore very important to the Republicans in the November election.

"Gramm proved that the people of this district will vote for the person and the philosophy more than the party," he said.

"The people in the Brazos Valley are much more in tune with the Republican platform than they are with the more liberal Democratic platform."

Strake said Texas is undergoing a complete political trauma in dealing with its own conservatism.

In the May primaries, liberal democrat Lloyd Doggett defeated the more conservative Kent Hance to win the Democratic ticket for the U.S. Senate race.

Mondale, Ferraro court Texans' support in Austin

United Press International

AUSTIN — Democratic vice presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro told a yellow ribbon-waving crowd of about 8,000 Wednesday that "anybody who thinks Texas won't vote for women don't know anything about Texas."

The New York Congresswoman said once Texas voters get to know her she is confident they will support the Democratic ticket in the Novem-

ber election.

"Just wait a little while until they get to know me," she said, responding to a Texas poll that showed the Democratic ticket running further behind President Ronald Reagan with her on the ticket.

Presidential nominee Walter Mondale and Ferraro appeared earlier in the day at another rally in Jackson, Miss.

Mondale also told the rally on the steps of the state Capitol that it was

wrong to assume Texans and Southerners would abandon the Democratic Party because a woman was on the ticket.

"To try and stigmatize Texas or the South as being any less willing to open the door that permits women to have the same opportunities as someone else is just wrong," he said.

Mondale and Ferraro shared the podium with prominent Texas Democrats at a Capitol rally that police estimated drew between 7,000 and

8,000 people. Other unofficial estimates ranged from 10,000 to 20,000.

A rally by President Reagan and Vice President George Bush in Austin a week ago attracted an estimated crowd of about 20,000.

Many of the women in the crowd waved yellow ribbons to show their support for Ferraro's history-making nomination.

The crowd, bolstered by labor union members and students, waved plac-

ards saying: "Fritz and Gerry, Y'all Are Welcome" and "Lone Star State Welcomes Two Stars."

"If she can win in Archie Bunker's district, she can win in Willie Nelson's district," Democratic Senate nominee Lloyd Doggett told the crowd, which was entertained by Gary P. Nunn's country western music.

Doggett, an Austin state senator, drew one of the largest cheers when he called Reagan the "ding dong

daddy of the deficits."

A small group, which called itself the "Pro Texas Family Coalition," staged a silent protest at the rally.

Greg Davidson, an Austin bookstore owner and chairman of the coalition, said Ferraro was not qualified to be vice president.

"I doubt she even cared where Texas was until she found out about our 29 electoral delegates," he said.

Davidson said the protestors did not attempt to disrupt the rally

Problem with foreign TA's 'overstated'

By REBECCA DIMEO
Reporter

(Editor's note: this is last in a three-part series on foreign teaching assistants.)

Texas A&M's math department received much publicity in 1981 when the Houston A&M mothers' club set its sights on foreign instructors who don't speak fluent English, because of the high percentage of foreign graduate students teaching in the department.

While foreign students constitute one-sixth of the university graduate students and one-third of those on teaching and research assistantships or fellowships, close to one-half of the graduate students on teaching assistantships in the math department are foreign.

"My feelings are the problem is overstated," says Vince Schielach, associate head of the math department. His duties involve the selection and supervision of the approximately 60 total TA's.

Just this past year, he says, one

foreign TA won the departmental teaching assistant of the year award.

He does, however, acknowledge the problem some students have with foreign TA's. He says the complaints about the foreign TA's stem from one of two kinds of language problems:

1. Those TA's who have only a slight accent but such poor grammar that they are hard to understand, and

2. Those with good grammar but such a thick accent that they are hard to understand.

Schielach stresses that the complaints are small in comparison to the number of students taking required math and are likely to decline. The majority of foreign students teaching the engineering-calculus series are graduate students hired from the College of Engineering.

But, the graduate program in math is expanding. In the next five years Schielach plans to hire all TA's from the math department. Since the graduate students in math gener-

ally aren't foreign, Schielach says the number of foreign TA's teaching math will drop.

Some of the labs to current courses have also been phased out, lowering the need for TA's. Again the foreign percentage may drop.

However, whether the TA is foreign really shouldn't make a difference, Schielach says.

"The critical information of the course is still being given by a professor," he says.

Bill Perry, associate professor of mathematics, coordinates the orientation program for all new math TA's every fall. Although he doesn't keep statistics on student complaints about foreign TA's, he says he doesn't think the math department receives any more complaints than some other ones.

"There's no clearinghouse for TA complaints for the whole university," Perry says.

Like Schielach, Perry sees a problem with foreign TA's, but only a small one. He says the complaints grow out of the difficulty of the

material.

"In high school you could do the math problems like this," he says snapping his fingers. "But in college the math problems are harder. People look for ways to make it easier, including changing instructors."

Perry says the complaints now focus more on fairness in grading and exams rather than on accent. He says he wants students to look beyond an instructor's accent.

"Can this person teach?" he asks. "Does this person care whether I learn? Those are the important questions."

Foreign TA's aren't the only ones students complain about. Perry remembers when a student came to him complaining about a foreign professor's English. It turned out that the professor was from Great Britain, educated at Oxford.

Premature complaints such as this form Perry's answer to student requests for a change in section.

"Stick with it another week," he says. "If you still can't understand, come back

In Today's Battalion

Local

- Texas A&M is planning to offer a new graduate degree program in urban land development. See story page 3.
- The new animal science pavilion has been named after Louis Pearce Jr., former president and chairman of the board of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. See story page 5.

State

- Former Austin state Rep. Sara Weddington is one of the candidates to replace John Fainter as Texas secretary of state. See story page 3.
- The weather Wednesday sent a massive oil slick toward the Texas coast. See story page 4.

National

- The stock market scored its biggest gain in six weeks. See story page 8.