

Horses, burros starving

Adoption fees lower

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The government has abandoned transportation charges on wild horses and burros to encourage nationwide adoptions of the animals.

Bureau of Land Management officials said they hope to increase adoptions of the animals which trample Western rangelands and face starvation because of overpopulation.

"Transportation costs added to our nationwide adoption fee were discouraging adoptions," said BLM Director Robert Burford. "We want to do everything possible to find good homes for these excess wild horses and burros."

The government is under pressure to increase adoptions under the 10-year-old Adopt-A-Horse Program because 2,500 captured animals are waiting adoption at a daily cost of about \$5,000.

Congress ordered the removal of 17,000 animals from public lands during the fiscal year that began Oct. 1.

Many of the animals are corralled at centers near public lands in California, Nevada and Wyoming.

There are also centers near capture sites in Arizona, Idaho and Oregon.

The animals, captured for about \$400 each, are transported to Texas, Pennsylvania, Tennessee and other temporary sites where people can adopt them.

A government horse can be adopted for \$125 and a burro for \$75. Horses had previously cost up

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to \$215 and burros up to \$140.

"We are reducing the charges because the price wasn't competitive," said BLM spokesman Haywood Meeks. "Someone could go down the road and buy the animals cheaper."

Director Burford said, "We feel that dropping transportation costs will increase adoptions in the Midwest and East significantly so that

animals remain in our corrals for shorter periods of time."

Over 50,000 wild animals have been placed since the program began. BLM officials said they fear a third of the captured animals may never be adopted because they are unsuitable for training in riding, showing, farm work and packing.

The BLM estimates about 60,000 wild horses and burros roam Western public lands where forage and water resources can adequately support 24,000. When the program began, only about 17,000 wild horses and burros were on public lands.

The BLM is required to place healthy animals in private hands or destroy them. The Interior Department put a stop to killing the healthy horses in 1981, but the number of adoptions has declined, corrals are full, and Congress wants more horses removed.

People may adopt the animals by promising to care for them properly. There is a one-year waiting period for final custody, and during that time the animals can be reclaimed if they are mistreated.

Police facing lawsuit

United Press International
NEW ORLEANS — An Eastern Airlines stewardess, who says she was mistakenly arrested last year as a fugitive from Texas, has filed a \$800,000 lawsuit against Louisiana police and Houston officers.

Sheila Jackson Stossier of Alexandria, Va., spent two days in the Jefferson Parish jail after U.S. Customs agents arrested her at the New Orleans airport as she returned from Cancun, Mexico.

Her attorney, Theodore A. Mars, said Eastern convinced police it was a case of mistaken identity.

Stossier said in her suit she was "physically and mentally mistreated" while in jail and had to sleep on the floor. The experience hurt her back, caused her to miss work and required her to seek psychiatric help.

Police Chief Sal Lentini of Kenner said Stossier was arrested as a favor to Houston police and the Harris County sheriff, who have also been named in the suit.

New strangulation scares El Pasoans

United Press International
EL PASO - Residents of a quiet neighborhood have a special fear of Halloween this year following the strangulation of an 88-year-old widow Saturday and the similar murders of two other elderly women earlier this month.

Effie Gregory, 75, who lives near the trailer where Jewel Haygood was murdered last weekend, said she dreads Halloween and will not open her door to trick-or-treaters Wednesday night.

"The killer may still be out there, and we don't know who's going to be next," she said. "We're dreading Halloween even more this year. We're living in a lot of fear."

Herman Haygood said he could not understand why anyone would want to kill his stepmother.

Haygood found her body while paying her a routine visit. Police said they think she was strangled by someone who tried to burglarize her trailer. Officers said bruises on the victim's body indicated there was a struggle.

Police said they are looking for a possible link between the Haygood killing and the strangulation murder of two women Oct. 15 by an un-

known assailant or assailants who apparently tried to set them afire.

Crime Stoppers, an El Paso association which provides reward money for useful information leading to arrests, offered a \$1,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of whoever was responsible for the murders of the women.

Officers said Julia Fleenor, 75, and her daughter, Iona Dykes, were strangled to death by someone who broke into Fleenor's home, a few blocks from Haygood's home.

Detective Mickey Dunley said a person or persons who forced their way into Fleenor's home also broke in to the house, Sara Cass, 72, and Cora Dockstader, 70, were killed in the fire and are recovering at Thomason General Hospital.

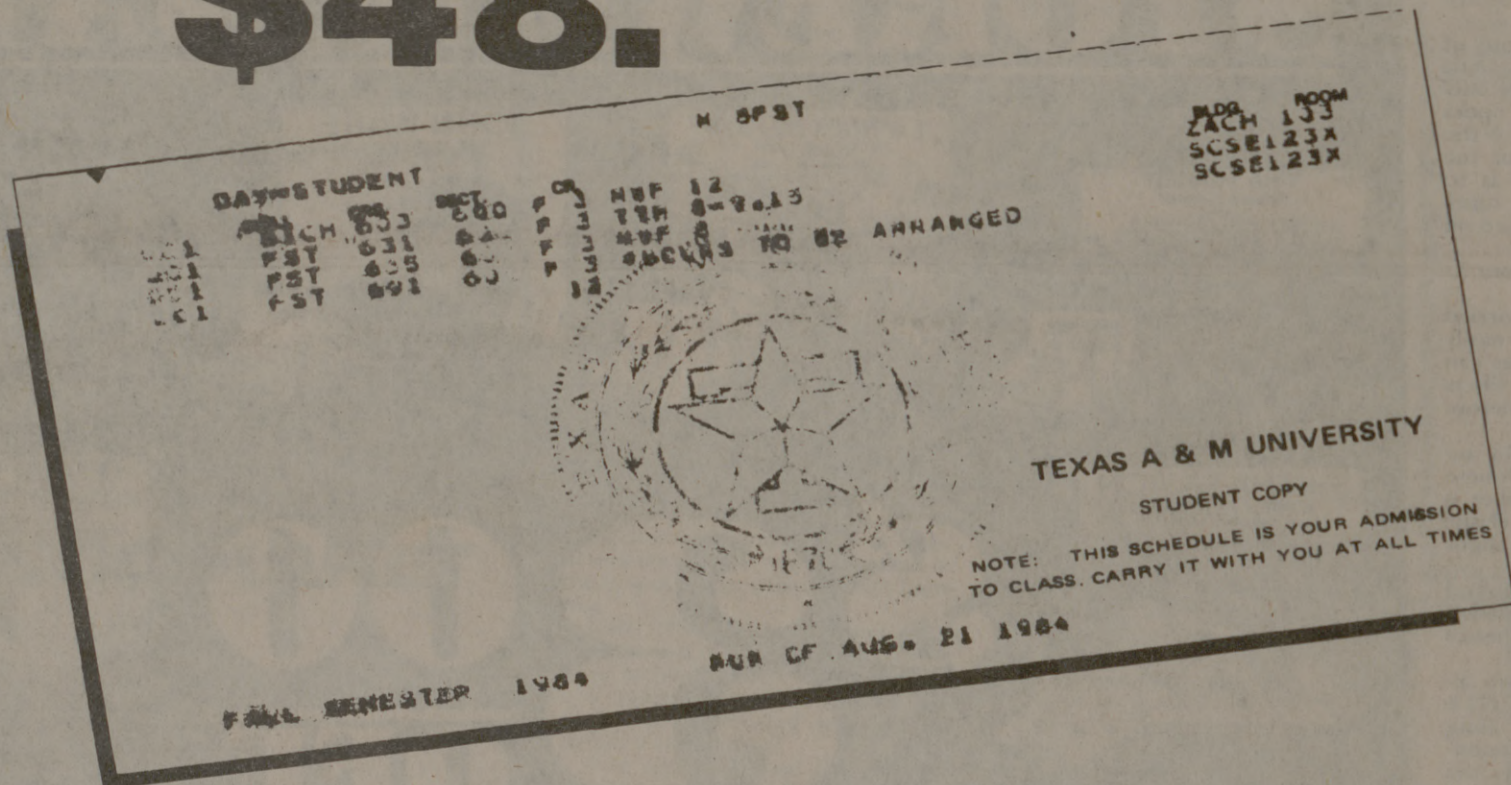
"All of this has happened so suddenly," Gregory said. "I haven't had a night's sleep since Saturday. I never used to have these problems in this neighborhood."

She said residents of the El Paso neighborhood are keeping themselves in Wednesday and not opening the door for anyone.

"We're scared," she said.

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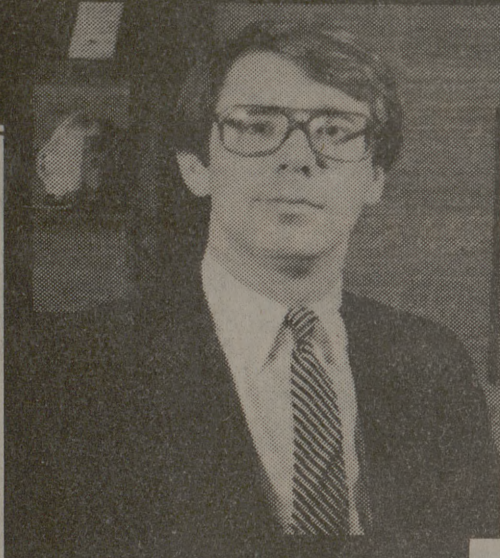
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