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Mandatory seat belt law now in effect

By TRENT LEOPOLD
Senior Staff Writer

If you got into your car and drove to school or work today without fastening your seatbelt, you broke the law.

Texas' mandatory seat belt law officially went into effect Sunday.

Under the law, everyone riding in the front seat of a car, truck or van must be wearing a seat belt.

But the law does exempt some people, including those driving or riding in trucks weighing three-quarters of a ton or more, those with medical conditions that prevent them from wearing a seat belt and rural mail carriers on their mail route.

Until Dec. 1 law enforcement officers will give verbal warnings to those who don't comply with the law. But tickets won't be given until after Dec.

Jim Adams, director of the Texas Department of Public Safety, says the three-month transition time is designed to give motorists a chance to get into the habit of buckling up.

"After that three-month transition time our troopers will be issuing citations to those who choose not to obey the law," he says.

Both passengers and drivers will be ticketed. However, if the front-seat passenger is between the ages of 4 and 15 and not wearing a seat belt, then the driver — not the passenger — will be ticketed.

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W-a-t-e-r Spells Relief

John Roper, Texas A&M's freshman lineman from Houston, receives a drink to help combat the 104 degree heat Saturday. Roper, who was

recruited from Yates High School in Houston, participated in a scrimmage on Kyle Field. Turf temperature rose to 147 degrees.

Photo by Anthony S. Casper

Elena may hit New Orleans noon today

Associated Press

Unpredictable Elena, after being stalled at sea for two days, strengthened to a major hurricane with sustained winds of 125 mph Sunday and headed toward the Gulf Coast, where the second evacuation in four days was ordered.

More than 400,000 people in Florida's Panhandle and coastal areas of Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana were told to flee the storm.

By late Sunday, Elena had picked up speed and was heading toward the New Orleans area, according to the National Hurricane Center. The storm had spent much of the day heading for the western end of the Panhandle.

At midnight EDT, the hurricane center estimated Elena's eye was near latitude 29.6 north and longitude 86.7 west, or about 125 miles southeast of Mobile, Ala., with winds remaining near 125 mph.

Hurricane warnings were extended westward from Yankeetown, below Florida's Panhandle, to Grand Isle, La., about 50 miles south of New Orleans. The warnings, which covered New Orleans, included more than 500 miles of coast.

The storm, blamed for at least one death, was moving west-northwest at 12 to 15 mph late Sunday, after moving north-northwest at about 10 mph for much of the day, the center said.

"It's moving right along on a track

that would bring it in very near New Orleans around midday tomorrow (today)," a forecaster said. Elena was about 225 miles east-southeast of New Orleans shortly before midnight, the center reported.

In central Florida, which was battered by the storm Saturday, officials Sunday lifted evacuation orders around Tampa, letting some 500,000 people return home. National Guard troops called out earlier Sunday to keep restless evacuees from returning to the coast were then told to check identifications of those returning.

Flooding continued Sunday along Florida's west coast, Panhandle and low-lying areas across the state, but Steve Hull, a spokesman for Gov. Bob Graham, said the extent of the damage would be impossible to determine until the storm had moved on.

In the Tampa Bay area, strong winds and storm-surgid tides six feet above normal had caused extensive flooding.

Elena on Thursday had forced evacuations in the Panhandle, Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi before veering toward Florida's west-central coast, where an estimated 1 million people were evacuated late Friday and Saturday.

Residents of the areas farther north who were evacuated earlier returned home Saturday as the storm wobbled 80 miles west-southwest of Cedar Key in the Gulf of Mexico.

AIDS

B-C-S homosexuals disclose their fears about disease

By AMY NETTERVILLE
Reporter

"Most say it's not a fear you live with every day, but I have changed my lifestyle because of it. It shook me for a second; I thought I really ought to take it seriously because he was somebody I had been with before. . . . It made me think."

These are the reflections of a Texas A&M student talking about how he felt when a friend died of acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

AIDS is a newly documented disorder in which part of the body's immune system is damaged in varying degrees of severity. People with AIDS are more vulnerable than other people to a large number of serious, often fatal, diseases.

Alan Noah, public health representative for the Brazos County Health Department, says the virus is not transmitted by casual contact, but primarily through intimate sexual contact.

Nationally, about 12,300 cases of AIDS have been reported since 1981 when it was first reported. Texas is ranked fifth in the number of AIDS cases reported.

"Totals for Texas alone from August 1980 to August 1985 show there have been 633 cases reported," says Charles Wallace, a Texas Department of Health official. "There have been 340 deaths, which is a mortality rate of 55 percent."

Seven cases of AIDS were reported in Brazos County between January 1984 and March 1985. Five of those

died and two are still living in Brazos County.

Jean Mahnke, infectious control nurse at St. Joseph Hospital, says there have been two AIDS patients admitted to the hospital in the last year.

Many health officials believe there are many more cases of AIDS in Brazos County that haven't been reported.

Noah says, "What you have to consider is there's probably more cases out there in our area than are coming to light. A lot of that is because of the stigma surrounding the AIDS victim. I would be afraid to even speculate how many cases there are out there."

He says the disease is a major problem even in smaller areas such as Bryan-College Station.

"There are some things being done about the disease, but there's nothing concrete to say, 'everything is OK now, you can go back to being promiscuous,'" Noah says.

While only one has known anyone who has died of AIDS, three members of A&M's Gay Student Services agree that their lifestyles have been affected by the fear of contracting the disease.

"I think it must be scaring a lot of people," one says. "I know I've changed a little bit in the last year. I'm not as promiscuous as I used to be."

Another says, "There are still people who go out every night and take out a different trick, but I think it's much less than it used to be. I've been

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Holiday dreary for 1.2 million jobless people

Associated Press

For 1.2 million Americans, the Labor Day holiday honoring working people is little more than a dreary milestone marking at least six months of being unemployed and searching without success for a job.

The picture is particularly grim for blacks, who as a group are experiencing a 15 percent jobless rate — more than twice the national unemployment level. Also hard hit are Hispanic

ics, who are experiencing 11.2 percent unemployment.

But the decline of industries in the manufacturing sector, a development many blame largely on foreign imports, is hurting workers of all races in the steel-producing centers of the North and the textile mills of the South.

There are 40,000 laid-off steel-

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Texas Aggie Band preparing for untraditional beginning

By TAMMY KIRK
Staff Writer

The nationally famous Fightin' Texas Aggie Band is gearing up for a year that traditionally has been filled with football game performances, military reviews and parades.

But the band is no longer the traditionally all-male organization.

Andrea Abat, 18, of Houston, Carol Rockwell, 17, of Corpus Christi and Jennifer Peeler, 18, of Ennis, are the first women to join the A&M's marching band in the 91-year history of the organization.

The three female cadets, all freshmen, met the media for the first time Thursday and said their first days in the band had gone fine and they had received only encouragement from their male counterparts.

Tom Hale, student commanding officer of the band, said, "The male members of the Aggie band see no problems with girls being in the band, and we expect no problems."

Hale said the women are being treated just like the other 110



Andrea Abat



Jennifer Peeler



Carol Rockwell

freshmen in the 300 member band.

He said they march, drill and are expected to behave like other members.

Band officials announced earlier this summer that female band members would wear the same uniform as the men — khaki shirts and trousers — when marching on the field.

The only difference is in the living quarters.

The women are housed separately in Dorm 5 with Company W-1, a female unit. But, Hale added, they are under the jurisdiction of A Battery, a band outfit.

When asked about Melanie Zentgraf, the cadet whose lawsuit made it possible for the three women to join the band, all had no opinion.

They each said they became

members because they liked playing in a band.

"It's (the Aggie Band) the finest organization," said Abat, who plays the trombone.

She added that her decision to join the band was made before the case was settled.

Zentgraf, then a cadet, filed suit against A&M in 1979, charging that the Corps of Cadets denied women membership to organizations because of their sex.

Zentgraf had not attempted to join the band, but when her suit was settled by the consent decree in January, the University agreed to encourage women's participation in all Corps organizations, including the band.

The A&M Board of Regents is appealing that decree, but, in the meantime, A&M must obey it.

Peeler, who plays the flute, said she was scared before joining, but not because she would be one of the first women in the band.

"I was scared being a freshman, but all the fish are scared," Peeler said. "That's a universal feeling."

Rockwell, who plays the clarinet, stressed the equality of all freshman cadets and said, "All the other freshmen and band members are behind us."

The equality was further stressed by the three women's refusal to pose for photographs unless some of their fellow freshmen cadets, all male, could be included.

Hale said he didn't think band morale would be affected, despite the breaking of the all-male tradition.

"I've seen three freshmen orientations since I've been here, this is my fourth, and this is by far the most motivated," Hale said.

Lt. Col. Joe Haney, band director, said attrition for the band is about 33 percent over a four-year period.

But all three women said they are determined to finish.

"I started it," Peeler said, "and I'll finish it."

Abat added: "I want to be wearing those (senior) boots." Haney said not all freshmen perform for every game, but it would be unlikely to see a game when none of the female cadets was playing.

Haney also said that although several women inquired about the band, only three formally applied, and all three were admitted. But the three said they were not recruited for band membership.

The band will perform at 10 football games, Haney said. The first home game will be Sept. 21.

The band also will perform at three out-of-town parades.

"Hopefully a bowl game somewhere," Haney said. "We're counting on the Aggie foot