

# The Battalion

Friday, September 6, 1985

## New program giving kids a ride home

Associated Press

AUSTIN — Beginning this weekend, there will be an option to driving home for Austin teen-agers who think they are too drunk to drive or fear riding with someone who is.

A dial-a-ride program modeled after one offered to adults during the Christmas and New Year's holidays will offer high school and junior high students a free, confidential ride home on weekends.

Austin Police Explorer Post No. 26, a group sponsored by the city police department and affiliated with the Boy Scouts, will conduct the program.

"We're not encouraging people to go out and drink. What we are trying to do is save a few lives. We are not going to arrest anybody or give them a lecture," said Pete Morin, a senior police officer and adviser to the group.

The National Council on Alcoholism says alcohol-related traffic accidents are the leading cause of death among 15- to 19-year-olds.

## James Avery

Craftsman loves his work as jeweler of the hill country

Associated Press

KERRVILLE — James Avery sits in his orange leather desk chair, reminiscing and philosophizing.

He can talk for hours about his life and his love — the 31-year-old James Avery Craftsman jewelry company.

"I didn't start this business to make money," he says, leaning back behind his slab-wood desk at his headquarters north of Kerrville. "I started it because I thought what I had to say and do was important."

White-haired and red-faced, the 63-year-old Avery is the quintessential artist. And he has turned his creativity into a multi-million-dollar jewelry business with widespread appeal in Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana.

Emphasizing the less expensive silver, brass and copper metals, all of Avery's jewelry is hand-crafted, with few stones.

Sales hit \$15 million last year, but Avery says his eye isn't on the bottom line.

"The only thing that counts for me is the top line," he says. "Making something worthwhile — giving people the opportunity to work."

Avery likes to think his jewelry has a childlike quality.

"It's somewhat understated, simple. It takes a more direct approach. We stay away from all the cutesy things. It has a formality about it," he said.

He hasn't pushed diamonds and other precious gems in his jewelry because he says he doesn't want to "foist something on the market" just to sell stones.

"It ought to have more meaning to it," he explains.

Avery has a somewhat unique marketing plan. His jewelry is sold only in stores his company owns, in some Christian bookstores and on some wholesale markets.

There are 23 James Avery Craftsman shops — 19 in Texas, two in Oklahoma, one in Louisiana and one in California.

Avery's jewelry has a heavy religious accent, with many crosses, doves and other Christian symbols

adorning his array of merchandise. "I feel very strongly about it," he says of his faith. "I know it's important to others and I'm going to say something in my jewelry about it."

It was a religious experience Avery says he had more than 30 years ago that sparked the idea for the jewelry business.

"I was a bohemian, a born iconoclast," he said of his youthful days.

But he said he eventually "came back to the church — reset my values. I realized I wasn't going to be another Da Vinci."

After the experience, Avery married a woman from Kerrville and moved here. Wanting to keep his life simple, he started making a few crosses and other jewelry pieces in his garage. He sold his wares to girls attending summer camps near Kerrville, many of whom would write him after returning home and order more jewelry.

"Slowly and very surely, I started to grow," he said.

His first year — 1954 — Avery grossed \$5,500. The second year, he earned \$7,500.

Working alone for the first three years, Avery said he made all kinds of knickknacks. But eventually he eliminated all but jewelry from his production line.

In 1957, he hired his first employee and since then, his payroll has grown to 500 workers. Of those, 169 are at the Kerrville headquarters, doing design, finishing and refinery work. There also is a casting plant in nearby Fredricksburg.

The business probably never will go nationwide. Avery doesn't want it to.

"We don't have the artisans that can hammer out the jewelry," he said. "I can't see us getting real big and keeping the quality."

He also reads letters written to him from customers asking him to create jewelry for them, and handwritten letters with crude drawings of jewelry litter his desk.

## Brenham has oldest state bank

Associated Press

BRENHAM — Washington County State Bank hardly resembles its original small two-story office, where employees neatly hand-printed each transaction in a ledger.

But patrons say some things have not changed at Texas' oldest existing state bank, which recently celebrated its 80th birthday.

The bank has grown from a few employees to 60 and from \$100,000 in deposits to \$110 million.

But senior vice president Billy Sohns, 70, still finds time to chat with longtime customers and is often spotted shaking hands in the lobby with regular patrons.

Sohns started as the bank's bookkeeper in 1939, back when most of its customers were farmers.

"When I first started, we did notary work, wrote wills and did affidavits," Sohns said. "We were just like lawyers. We were the main institution in the community."

In addition to bookkeeping, Sohns also spent mornings peddling cotton for bank patrons.

"These cotton buyers out in the fields did business with us," he said. "They'd buy some cotton and would come into town at night and dump some samples of the cotton on the front door."

"My job was to take the samples to the mills in town and sell 'em," he recalled. "We'd then credit the money to the buyers' accounts. That way, they could afford to buy more cotton."

Sohns said he tried to retire last year, but he was talked into coming back to work two days a week.

Last week, an official state historical marker was dedicated at Washington State Bank, proclaiming its historical significance.

Sohns recalled when he would record every transaction in a ledger at the end of each day. The bank had no account numbers or personalized checks then, he said. Only names were necessary.

"Things were simple in those days," he said. "When a man came up and cashed a check, you didn't worry if it was hot. You knew it was good."

## Austin's mounted police popular with citizens

Associated Press

AUSTIN — Peculiar things happen there the City of Austin's mounted police swing into the saddle.

The officers find themselves surrounded by giggling kids, photographed by tourists, and given the thumbs-up gesture by downtown workers. Retirees fishing near the Town Lake hike-and-bike trail eyeball the officers and display their day's catch with broad grins.

Folks at Texas Commerce Bank supply the officer's thirsty steeds with a bucket of water. Avid runners wave. Even transients, who traditionally have a no-love-lost relationship with the police, take time to ask the horses' names.

It's taken awhile for the officers to get used to all this smiling and waving. After all, most of them are more

accustomed to gestures other than thumbs-up.

But after the initial shock of being so warmly received, the six mounted officers and their sergeant are rather enjoying basking in the reflected glory of the horses.

"It's super PR," said Officer Ron Blackmore as he rode his horse, Brandy, through a downtown alley. "Everybody likes 'em."

For their part, the horses handle the attention with aplomb. Some, like Brandy, are veterans of concerts, rodeos and football games. He is unruffled by crowds, sirens and gunfire.

Then there are the horses like Officer Darrell Walenta's Miss Pepe. She has had less exposure to crowds and excitement than Brandy, and at 4 years old is "just a baby," Walenta said. "But she got into being a cop in a hurry."

He laughed as he pulled in the reins of the frisky horse.

"She's into it today," he told Blackmore. "She thinks the sooner she makes the circle, the sooner she can go home." Blackmore guffawed.

"That's not the way it works, Horse-Breath," he told Pepe affectionately.

The mounted patrol is an experimental program that began three months ago. Police in the program furnish their own horses, trailers and trucks. The city pays mileage to transport the horses and an allowance for the horses' food and upkeep. Officers patrol Sixth Street and the hike-and-bike trail; near the University of Texas; and in the 11th Street area east of Congress Avenue.

The city will decide in October whether funding for the program will be renewed, and Blackmore and Walenta are keeping their fingers

crossed that the money will come through.

There's a saying that the Canadian Mounties "always get their man," while the Austin officers don't make that blanket claim. "You can see higher up and farther than a guy in a car," Blackmore said. "You can move a little quicker down the alleys, and go on the hike-and-bike trail and cut corners, where you couldn't in a car."

They don't write many speeding tickets, of course, and they can't engage in high-speed chases — "just a quick trot, maybe," said Senior Sgt. Harold Bilberry, who is in charge of the mounted patrol.

But the police on horseback do seem to be effective in fighting crime, Bilberry said. In May and June — during the daylight hours the mounted patrol works — the number of robberies, thefts, bur-

glaries and forgeries in the lower Congress Avenue-Sixth Street area dropped 55.8 percent from the same period a year ago.

"I don't know how much we can attribute that to being a slow time, but I do feel we've had some impact," Bilberry said.

There are a few logistical problems. While a horse is not a gas guzzler, it does require a parking place of sorts.

The decided dearth of hitching posts in Austin has led officers to hitch the horses to telephone poles, chain link fences and even parking meters.

But if none of those were available, and an officer needed to dismount in a hurry to chase someone into a building, "I'd have to recruit a willing citizen to control the horse," Blackmore said. "So far, we haven't had any problem."

"I'll applaud anyone who can make a living toe-dancing or pounding elephant teeth."



Mr. Twain admired few things more than a well-turned note or dance. His special brand of wit and satire highlights the 1985-86 season of the Opera & Performing Arts Society of Texas A&M.

Hal Holbrook's famous one-man presentation "Mark Twain Tonight" is just one of eight magical performances the Opera & Performing Arts Society (MSC OPAS) will bring to Bryan-College Station for the 1985-86 season. Several may be available only to season ticket holders.

Each brings its own magic to Texas A&M's Rudder Auditorium. Make this the year you experience the magic of MSC OPAS. This year make the magic yours.

**The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra** September 12, 1985  
"Leonard Slatkin and his Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra must be considered major forces on the American musical scene."—Karen Monson, CHICAGO MAGAZINE.

**The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center** October 8, 1985  
"The musical success story of the generation!"—Harold Schonberg, THE NEW YORK TIMES.

**Hubbard Street Dance Company** November 14, 1985  
"...the cat's pajamas, the bee's knees, the fastest gun in the West, the sexiest gal in town...groovy, dreamy, peachy, perfect..."—Richard Christiansen, CHICAGO TRIBUNE.

**Hal Holbrook as Mark Twain Tonight!** January 29, 1986  
Mr. Holbrook has breathed life into Mr. Twain in this one-man show for almost 30 years. His skill at becoming the beloved story-teller of America's youth is uncanny. He is Twain. Through him relive the wonder of one of America's great writers and humanists.

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**Young Uck Kim, Violinist** February 21, 1986  
"...Kim's real glory is the sound he produces: an individual voice, plangent and expressive."—LOS ANGELES TIMES.

**Katia and Marielle Labèque, Piano Duet** March 27, 1986  
"Far and away the most exciting two-piano team before the listening public today."—LOS ANGELES TIMES.

**The Houston Ballet performing "Peer Gynt"** April 9, 1986  
"...fine dancers, spirited, unashamedly popular, and very good at providing the sort of ballet a big public wants to see."—John Percival, THE LONDON TIMES.

### MSC OPAS 1985-86 TICKET ORDER

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