

STATE AND LOCAL

State legislator accuses FAA of dragging its feet

Associated Press

GRAPEVINE — The chairman of a House oversight panel accused the federal government Monday of "dragging its feet" in recommending funding to install advanced airport equipment that could detect hazardous weather conditions.

Rep. Norman Mineta, D-Calif., head of the House Public Works and Transportation Subcommittee, is chairing an Oct. 2 hearing.

Installation of an advanced Doppler radar system called NEXRAD that can detect wind shears will be discussed at the hearing, Mineta said.

Mineta said he also wants to discuss the possibility of using a more advanced terminal Doppler radar system and on-board aircraft wind shear and microburst warning detection systems.

"We'll ask the FAA the status of research and the schedules for implementing" Doppler radar equipment, he said.

Mineta said there is about \$3 billion in uncommitted funds in a national airport trust fund that derives its money from taxes levied on airline passengers.

"I'm trying to say 'don't keep holding back these funds,'" Mineta said. "Let's deploy what we've got right now because we've got the money to do it."

Mineta accused the Office of Management and Budget of "dragging its feet" in recommending funding for advanced radar detection equipment at airports, and he questioned the Reagan administration's commitment to airline safety.

House Majority Leader Jim Wright of Fort Worth said there appears to be "a disturbing tendency to compromise safety for the sake of saving money." Wright said not using the trust fund money to improve airline safety "is callous disregard for the public's rights."

Wright attributed the OMB's reluctance in recommending funding for additional equipment at airports to its efforts to "save money everywhere."

Mineta said it would cost about \$900 million to deploy 134 Doppler radar systems at airports, and between \$500 million and \$600 million to implement 100 terminal Doppler radar systems.



Groomsmen

Photo by PATRICIA CAMPBELL

Cadet freshmen from Company D-1 give the statue of Lawrence Sullivan Ross its first shine of the year.

A&M's Silver Taps to be held tonight in honor of 8 dead

By TAMMY KIRK
Staff Writer

The flags on campus are flying at half-mast today to honor eight Texas A&M students who have died since Spring 1985.

The campus will be hushed and the lights extinguished for the Silver Taps ceremony to be held tonight at 10:30 in front of the Academic Building.

Silver Taps is a tradition that dates back almost a century to pay final tribute to an Aggie who, at the time of his death, was enrolled in graduate or undergraduate courses at A&M. A notice of the deaths is posted at the base of the flagpole in front of the Academic Building.

The ceremony begins as the Ross Volunteer Firing Squad marches in slow cadence to the statue of Lawrence Sullivan Ross. Three volleys are fired in a 21-gun salute:

"First order... ready... aim... fire!"

All is quiet after the third volley and buglers begin to play "Taps." Three times it sounds — once to the north, once to the west, and once to the south.

If the deceased was a cadet, his cadet unit will be formed in company front, standing at attention and saluting while "Taps" is played.

Although its complete history is unknown, Silver Taps is said to have been performed first in honor of Lawrence Sullivan Ross in 1898. Ross was governor of Texas from 1886 to 1890 and president of A&M from 1891 to 1898.

The A&M students being honored tonight are:

- Abdelaziz Gaaloul, 38, a graduate student in food science and technology from Bekalta, Tunisia, who died April 18.

- Joseph W. Swinney, 21, a junior sociology major from Garland who died June 13. Swinney was a band member of B Battery in the A&M Corps of Cadets. His freshman year, Swinney was named outstanding freshman in his outfit. He went on to become first sergeant in his junior year. Swinney was also a Ross Volunteer.

- Dale R. Bark, 28, a graduate student in animal science from La-Crosse, Wis., who died June 17.

- Javier A. Gutierrez, 24, a senior petroleum engineering major from Laredo who died July 13.

- David W. Bradberry, 19, a freshman pre-med major from Euless who died July 13.

- Barbara Jean Kurrus, 19, a freshman general studies major from Argyle who died Aug. 5. Kurrus was district diving champion at Denton High School. She was an honor society member, an honorable thespian and an honor graduate before coming to A&M.

- Bobby Joe Adams, 20, a sophomore computer science major from Bryan who died Aug. 29. Adams was in the National Honor Society at Bryan High School where he also received the President's Academic Achievement Award. He was a top social studies and history student before coming to the University to continue his studies.

- Lisa LaRocca, 23, was a December 1984 graduate in elementary education who died June 14. LaRocca was involved with Memorial Student Center Hospitality and the Baptist Student Union while she attended A&M.

Silver Taps is a ceremony dedicated to deceased Aggies, and these observances should be remembered:

- The area between statue of Lawrence Sullivan Ross and the Academic Building is reserved for the friends and family of the deceased.

- Observers should not stand or sit on the benches lining the walkway between the flagpole and the statue.

- The darkness and quiet that will be observed on campus emphasize the mood for Silver Taps. Observers should help to retain this tranquility by covering windows, keeping noise to a minimum, and walking to and from the ceremony without talking.

Lawyer claims toxic fumes killed hotel patrons

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Toxic gases emitted from plastic furnishings during fires at Las Vegas' MGM Grand Hotel in 1980 and the Beverly Hills Supper Club in Kentucky in 1977 were responsible for the deaths of 249 people, a lawyer representing the victims said Monday.

Cincinnati lawyer Stan Chesley said 84 of the 85 people killed in the hotel fire and the 165 who died in the Covington, Kentucky fire were

the victims of toxic and corrosive gases from vinyl wall coverings.

During a news conference at the International Association of Fire Fighters Symposium, Chesley said the victims "died as a result of toxic and corrosive fire hazards from thermal degrading polymeric plastics and other synthetic products."

Although the cause of the fires were electrical, Chesley said, the interior made the fire spread at a rate of about 17 to 24 feet a second. The interiors of both buildings contained

no wood but had synthetic furnishings, he said.

Chesley criticized medical examiners in both cities for not performing autopsies on all the fire victims. Only 17 randomly selected autopsies were performed in Las Vegas and six in Kentucky.

Chesley said research shows the final cause of death was due to acute pulmonary edema and the blistering and erosion of the trachea and bronchi, both caused by the toxic and corrosive gases.

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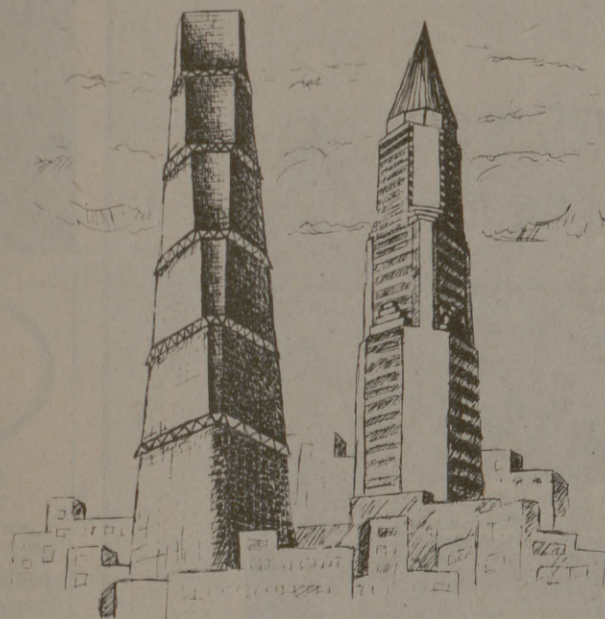
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SCHEDULED EVENTS:

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|---------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Wednesday 11: | 9:00 am - 12:00 pm | Student Interaction |
| | 1:30 pm - 5:00 pm | Student Interaction |
| | 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm | Reception (at the Hilton) |
| Thursday 12: | 9:00 am - 12:00 pm | Student Interaction |
| | 1:30 pm - 5:00 pm | Student Interaction |



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