

Search on  
for armed  
escapees

AINESVILLE (AP) — Authorities searched Tuesday for prisoners who sawed through bars across a dayroom sky at the Cooke County Jail and escaped.

Lawrence Byrom, 56, Thomas McKelfield, 25, Steven Dooley, 22, Jack Lewis, 17 and Ismail No. 17, escaped from the jail Monday night, Sheriff John Asaid.

The men were believed to be heading south and were armed and dangerous, officials said.

The incident brings to seven the number of prisoners to escape from the jail in the past year, Asaid said.

Asaid said the jailer discovered the escape while on hourly rounds. The five men escaped through a skylight in the center dayroom, cutting through bars and climbing through a hole about 19 inches wide.

# Reagan administration studies filling oil reserve

WASHINGTON (AP) — Plunging crude oil prices are causing the Reagan administration to rethink its opposition to continued filling of the nation's Strategic Petroleum Reserve, Energy Secretary John Herrington said Tuesday.

"The time is now to re-examine," Herrington told the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

Herrington said he instructed his staff on Monday to study the impact of the price decrease on filling the petroleum reserve that was created to lessen the impact of a shutoff of foreign crude.

"I don't want to signal with this testimony that the administration has changed its position" about halting the filling process when the underground reserves reach 500 million barrels, he testified.

Congress and the administration have been locked in a battle over the reserves. Lawmakers have repeatedly passed legislation requiring 750 million barrels, but the administration says 500 million is enough to carry the nation through about 120 days of an embargo.

The agitation on Capitol Hill for taking the reserves past 500 million has increased as world oil prices dropped from the \$27 a barrel range in January to the current level of between \$12 and \$15.

Much of the hearing focused on the administration's opposition to a fee on imported oil, which some lawmakers say is needed to ensure economically viable production and exploration of domestic oil and natural gas.

Citing the administration's reliance on a free-market policies, Herrington said an import tax would damage the U.S. economy by raising energy costs and would invite retaliation by other nations.

He said that although the oil price plunge has had serious and adverse consequences for domestic energy producers, an import fee would reverse five years of free-market policies that have produced more adequate oil supplies and cheaper energy.

Herrington called for alternative steps: continued tax breaks for pe-

roleum companies, price decontrol for all natural gas, simpler licensing procedures for nuclear power plants, more coal production on federal lands and increased oil exploration off the U.S. coast.

Members of the committee challenged the free-market approach.

Chairman James McClure, R-Idaho, said Saudi Arabia was manipulating the world market by increasing production in a strategy to force lower oil prices in the short-term in order to achieve higher prices in the long term.

He said that because of lower prices, U.S. oil and gas producers, the producing state and banks with large energy portfolios are now fighting for their lives.

The lawmakers said continued loss of marginally productive U.S. oil wells and cutbacks in domestic exploration will leave this nation even more dependent in the future on Middle Eastern petroleum.

## Chiefs of Pennzoil, Texaco will continue talks

HOUSTON (AP) — The chiefs of Texaco and Pennzoil Co. met Tuesday in an attempt to settle their multibillion-dollar dispute out of court, but they agreed only to continue their talks, Pennzoil attorney Joe Jamail said.

Tuesday's meeting in New York was scheduled after Pennzoil Chairman Hugh Liedtke after Texaco chief executive officer John McKinley wrote suggesting the two sit down and talk face to face, Jamail said from his Houston office.

Jamail said the meeting ended after about two hours and that "they have agreed to hold further talks, but we haven't set any dates."

Both Texaco and other Houston-based Pennspokesmen have declined to comment on the meeting, citing an agreement of confidentiality involving negotiations between the companies.

Earlier, Jamail said that although Texaco suggested the meeting, he didn't expect any agreement for an out-of-court settlement following Tuesday's discussions since previous talks have collapsed.


"Texaco has been trying to work the media, but the problem is that they keep saying things about settling and they don't," Jamail said. "I'm not optimistic any more since there have been previous meetings and nothing has come out of them."

A Houston jury ruled Nov. 19 that Texaco wrongly interfered with a merger agreement between Pennzoil and Getty Oil Co. and then acquired Getty itself. The jury awarded Pennzoil \$10.53 billion in damages.

State District Judge Solomon Casseb Jr. affirmed the award in December, adding \$600 million in interest and saying more interest would accumulate at the rate of 10 percent annually. Interest is accumulating on the award at a rate of \$3 million a day. Assuming Texaco's appeal takes about two years, the total accumulation would easily fill the gap between the reported bargaining positions.

At the same time, Pennzoil faces the chance that it could lose everything if Texaco wins its appeal.

Pennzoil is forbidden to file liens against Texaco properties under a federal court ruling handed down last month. Pennzoil is appealing that ruling.



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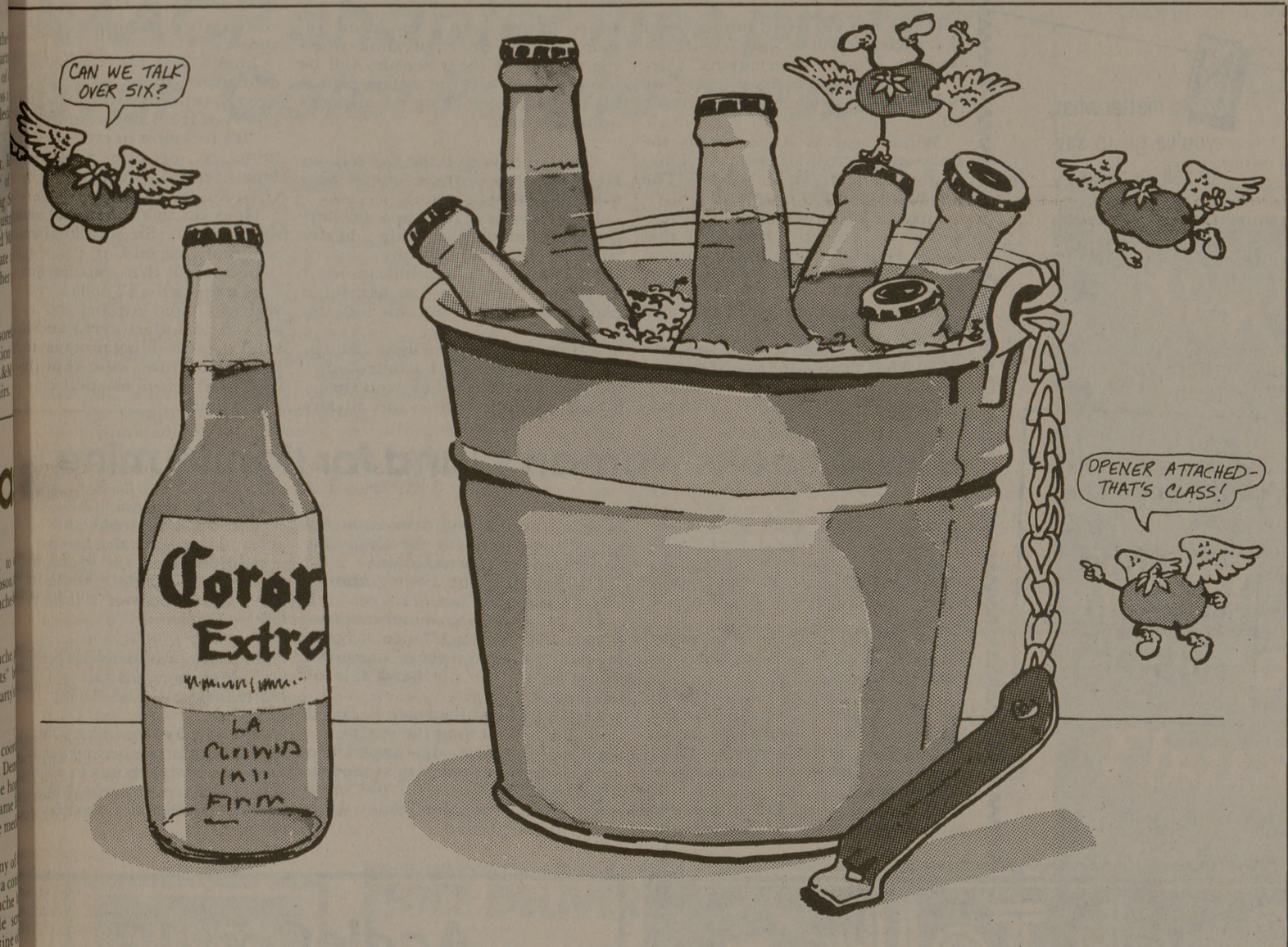

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