

State and Local

U.S. Forest Service starts 'Camp Stamp'

By Suzie Brawley
Reporter

There's no place like home, and with the rise in terrorism around the world many Americans have decided to spend their vacation time in the United States this year.

For those who enjoy camping, the United States Forest Service has just the ticket — or rather the stamp.

The forest service has developed a program, called Camp Stamp, to provide discounts and other benefits to campers using any national campgrounds.

Hal Glassman, public affairs

officer for the U.S. Forest Service in Texas, said in a recent interview that campers buy the stamps before entering the campgrounds and can use them to pay the campground entrance fee.

He said there aren't enough rangers to station one at every campground entrance, so campers are on the honor system to pay the entrance fee.

Every campground has envelopes and a drop-safe at each entrance for campers to place their payment, he said.

Glassman said the stamps also provide safety for campers. Campers don't have to put cash in

the envelopes and they don't have to carry as much cash, he said.

Cash and checks are still accepted by the U.S. Forest Service, but the use of the stamps provides another major benefit: Glassman said campers pay only 15 percent of the face value of each stamp and the stamps are available in denominations of 50 cents, \$1, \$2, and \$3.

The program has been used on a trial basis in some western states for almost a year and has proven successful, he said.

Jim Morphew, staff officer of recreation services for the U.S. Forest Service in Texas, said the

Camp Stamp program was initiated in Texas in early June.

"We just put the word out last week," Morphew said, "and there's an early indication that the public is seeing the media efforts and we are having people buy the stamps."

Stamps can be purchased in Texas at the U.S. Forest Service District Ranger offices in Lufkin, Crockett, Apple Springs, San Augustine, Hemphill, Cleveland and New Waverly.

Glassman said the stamps have no expiration date and can also be used to pay for recreational activities that require a fee.

U.S. Court ruling will force closing of two programs

AUSTIN (AP) — The Texas Youth Commission announced Tuesday it will shut down two programs for juvenile delinquents because of a recent ruling that forces the commission to pay overtime.

The Fairfield camp in Freestone County, which can house up to 40 youths in structures they help build, will close Aug. 15. The commission's Wilderness Challenge program will be abolished Aug. 31.

"It is most unfortunate that conditions beyond the agency's control have resulted in the phase out of the programs," said Jerry Day, TYC director of community services.

The U.S. Supreme Court recently ruled that overtime payments must be made to state employees who work more than 40 hours a week in child care positions.

Overtime payments would add about \$150,000 more to the cost of the Fairfield camp, according to Joan Timmons, TYC spokeswoman. The camp's annual budget is now \$821,400.

The camp has 32 employees and facilities for 40 children, ages 11-14. It has been in operation for about 10

years, serving youths who engaged in minor criminal behavior or had drug or family problems. The average length of stay is about eight months, according to Mike Sebastian, director of support services at the camp, which is on state prison property.

Timmons said the agency is confident it can find suitable programs for the youths now at Fairfield.

"It doesn't affect us as much as you might think," she said. "We contract with more than 100 different programs. We have a lot of options out there."

The youths will be transferred to programs with which the TYC has contracts for similar services, Timmons said.

Wilderness Challenge is a "diversionary" program in which counselors take groups of up to 10 youths on 30-day wilderness trips in the Big Bend area of Texas, and into New Mexico and Colorado.

The counselors are with the youths 24 hours a day. The overtime pay would add up to \$70,000 a year for a program that now costs \$220,000, according to Timmons.

Polish student tells of her Chernobyl fallout experience

FORT WORTH (AP) — The usually unclogged streets of Joanne Swic's tiny college town in Poland were filled with families trying to prevent radiation side effects shortly after the Chernobyl nuclear accident, the woman said.

Swic, a student, said she didn't know it at the time, but learned the next day of the accident at the nuclear power plant and that radioactive fallout was drifting through the air.

Some of it was landing in Bi-

alystok, Poland, where Swic was staying.

"I am a Christian, so I started praying," she said Monday from Fort Worth, where she is visiting friends.

The families she had seen in the street were on their way to receive potassium-iodide pills, a safeguard against Iodine 131, which was present in the Chernobyl cloud. The element can cause thyroid cancer or abnormal functioning of the thyroid gland.

Although Polish officials did not officially recommend that pregnant women get abortions, several doctors believed it was a good idea, Swic said.

"I have a friend who is pregnant . . . and she was very frightened," she said. "But she was five months pregnant. Doctors were advising women four months along, or less, get the abortions."

"My friend decided against it. She's probably still frightened."

Swic was in Bialystok to complete

a one-week teaching internship, one of the final requirements for her teaching degree.

"I had to stay," she said. She normally lives in Warsaw, which is further west and received less fallout. She stayed and followed all recommendations made by Polish media, such as avoiding dairy products and carefully scrubbing all vegetables.

Swic, who plans to return to Warsaw on July 13, said she's not afraid to go back.

Prof will study chemical warfare at Lake Texoma

PRESTON PENINSULA (AP) — Dr. Ann Thomas, a legal scholar and visiting professor at Southern Methodist University's School of Law, has chosen the serenity of Lake Texoma to conduct her research into biological and chemical warfare.

This project is only the latest in her lifelong search to understand the past and to contribute something of value to the future.

At the age of 7, she became an American citizen and settled on the choice of law as a career.

"I was so impressed with the judge that day that I decided to become a

lawyer," she recalls. Born in Middleburg, Holland, Thomas and her parents moved to New York City when she was 2 years old.

She taught herself to read at age 4, enrolled in college at 16, law school at 20 and earned her law degree at 22.

Holding a doctorate in constitutional and international law, she has written "Semantics of International Law," which has been published in at least five different languages.

As a lawyer, Thomas has been in the Foreign Service with stints in

South Africa, Holland, England and Spain.

In Johannesburg, South Africa, she served as vice consul of labor. Although times then were untroubled, Thomas says she understands why that nation now suffers so much turmoil.

"I enjoyed South Africa," she recalls. "At that time, before the nationalists got in, (Prime Minister Christian) Smutz was working to totally integrate society. After he died, the nationalists took control . . . The nationalists are ultra, ultra conservative and that's why they (the South

African nation) are the way they are today.

"It's so very, very hard for these people who are so fanatical . . . old testamentally. They are more dangerous than the nuclear bomb."

During World War II, Thomas served at The Hague in Holland. It was a "sad job," she recalls, notifying Dutch families when their relatives were combat casualties.

"When I came in, everything was stripped," she recalls. The Germans had even confiscated wiring, leaving the country without electricity.

"Dead children were laying on the

street . . . they died of starvation," Thomas says. "Americans dropped a lot of food but the Germans said they would kill the people if they took it."

Eventually, Thomas moved back to the U.S. "The Foreign Service is an almost rootless existence," she said.

And, after nine years of separation, she and her college sweetheart, A.J. Thomas, married and joined the faculty at SMU. He eventually became dean of the law school, and their happy visits to Lake Texoma convinced her to retire here.

During their 34 years of marriage, the couple wrote 13 books together and helped organize an international lawyers program now recognized as second only to Harvard.

Now widowed, she isn't ready for the rocking chair at age 66. She's merely changing course. She intends to write a cookbook with recipes for preparing striper filets and leeks. She also will lecture SMU law students in October on the Texas constitution, and deliver introductory lectures in August to a new class of foreign lawyers arriving in Dallas.



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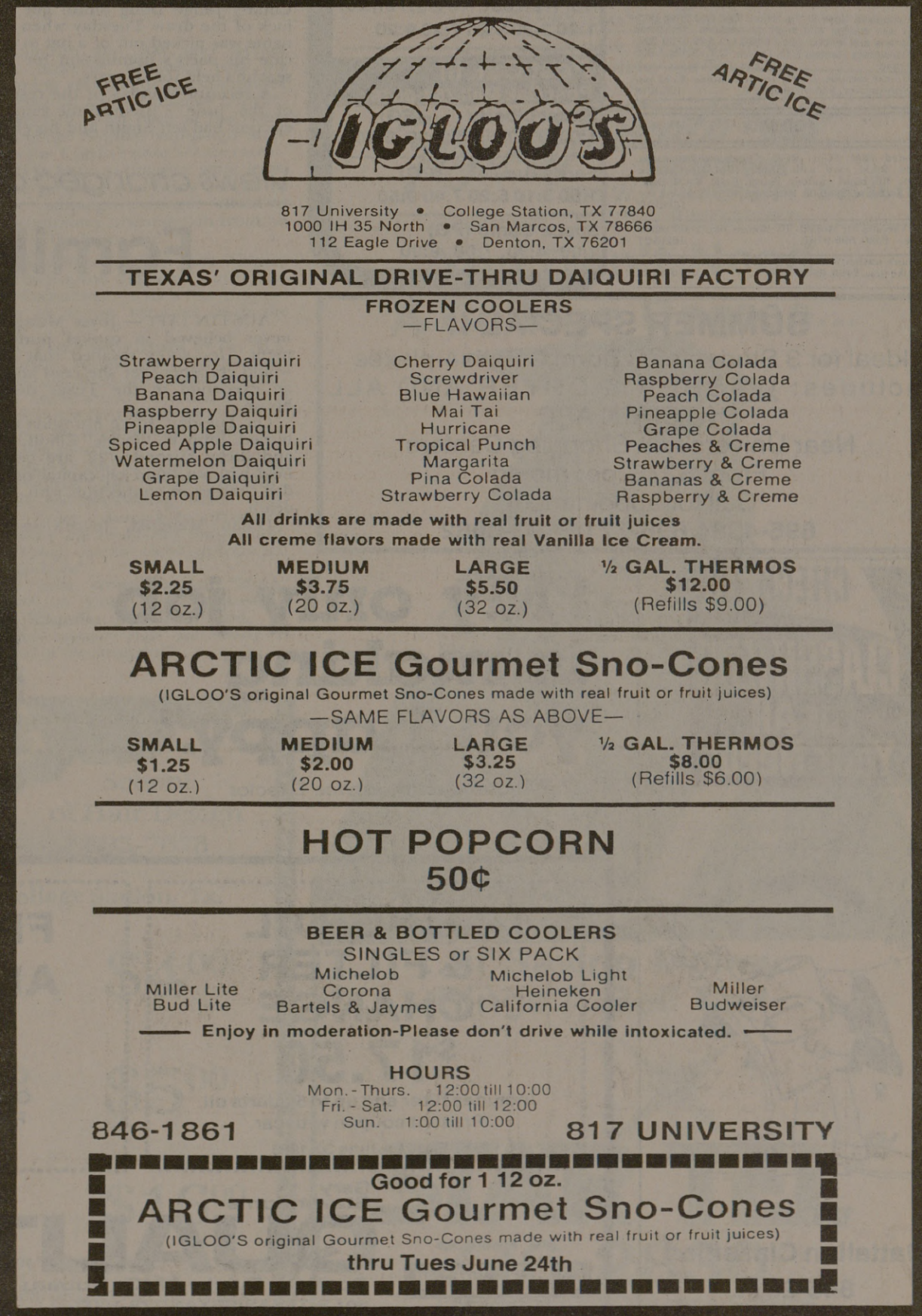
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