

# Car exhaust fumes kill Houston family of six

HOUSTON (AP) — A preliminary autopsy report indicates a family of six died from carbon monoxide poisoning after a car was left idling in an attached garage, police said Thursday.

Police are now trying to sort out if the deaths involved murder, suicide, an accident or a combination, homicide Sgt. Bill Stephens said.

A man, his wife and their four children were found dead Wednesday afternoon in their trash-strewn home in southwest Houston after the woman's co-workers went to the home and smelled foul odors, authorities said.

The body of Joann Robbins, 37, was found in the passenger seat of the family's car in a garage attached to the house. The car's ignition was on, but the engine was no longer running, investigators said.

The garage's door to the kitchen

was closed but traces of carbon monoxide were found in the home, Stephens said. The air conditioning had apparently circulated the gas throughout the house, he said.

"That's how it got to the back bedroom where the children were," he said. The bodies of the five other family members were found inside the house.

Police Sgt. J.C. Mosier said the woman may have committed suicide and inadvertently poisoned the rest of her family.

The 39-year-old husband, Thomas L. Robbins, was found in front of a television still on, Stephens said.

The children, ages 1 to 7, were dressed in nightwear and were found on mattresses or on the floor of one room, investigators said.

No suicide note has been found, Mosier said.

## Finance plan gives company new life

# Navasota business 'has it covered'

NAVASOTA (AP) — When two Beaumont entrepreneurs say they have everything covered, they are probably talking about the furniture in your living room.

Tom Combs and Ben Walker have just bought Sorrell Manufacturing, a Navasota furniture company they hope to turn into a statewide business, using a unique public-private partnership for financing.

Now called Sorrell of Texas, the company makes new furniture for retail stores such as Star and Gallery in Houston and Howell's in Beaumont and Port Arthur.

"We deal strictly in new furniture, sofas, loveseats and chairs and ottomans with no reupholstery or factory sales," Combs said. The two partners drew on business and government experience to combine the

public-private funding with their investment to buy the company.

Combs, 36, had been a Beaumont city councilman from 1978-82 and had worked with the Beaumont Chamber of Commerce and as an associate with the John Gray Institute. Walker, 23, was a business major at Baylor University who returned to Beaumont after graduation.

When Walker spoke to Combs about finding a job, they decided to combine their talents to start a business.

"I said to myself 'This guy is going to make somebody some money,' and it might as well be me," Combs said.

When they became partners last September, Sorrell was for sale.

The men talked about the purchase but did not work on it until

January when they contacted the owner, Jack Waldman.

Waldman provided seller financing for the \$750,000 project while Combs and Walker contributed a \$50,000 down payment. The two received a loan from the First National Bank of Navasota and a \$290,000 loan from the city. The city got the \$290,000 from an Economic Development Grant from the Texas Department of Community Affairs.

Combs said they had to make the deal fit the state grant program because the financing had to work or the purchase could not go through.

Both men said they were impressed with the enthusiasm and helpfulness of the city and bankers in Navasota. "They were really helpful because it looked like we would come in and create jobs for

the people," Combs said. "They were concerned about the general welfare of the community."

Since closing the deal Sept. 2, they have added seven employees, including three salesmen, for a total of 30 workers. Combs also is working as a salesman while Walker is trying to revamp the factory. They believe they could add 50 more workers.

This year, they expect the sales to be \$1.5 million, an increase of 50 percent over last year. In the past, Sorrell was a statewide company with 125 employees, Combs said.

But five years ago, illness forced Waldman to cut back the business.

"There wasn't a big marketing effort and that is what we are working on," Combs said. "Now we have a new marketing plan that seems to be working."

# BUSINESS EDGE

## DEAN'S WELCOME



Welcome! On behalf of the faculty and staff, I am pleased to welcome each of you to campus. We hope you are enthusiastic and committed to having a good semester academically.

With so many social options available, it is all too easy to slack off on the academic side of your student life these first weeks of the semester. If you have not done so, you might develop a weekly plan of study and stick to it. Your learning and end-of-semester grades will benefit.

The College of Business Administration has a long tradition of outstanding student groups and societies. They provide excellent opportunities for the blending of your professional development with your social interests. Get involved with at least one of these

student groups. You will reap the reward! Information on the student groups and how to get involved with them is posted on the tack boards outside of Blocker 102.

Dr. William H. Mobley served with distinction as Dean of the College of Business Administration until August, 1986. Although the College will sorely miss Dr. Mobley's outstanding talents, we are pleased that his splendid leadership will be available to the entire Texas A&M University System in his new position as Deputy Chancellor.

The faculty and staff join me in wishing each of you a personally and professionally rewarding semester.

Sincerely  
Don Hellriegel, Interim Dean

Should students be allowed to see the results of course evaluation? The College of Business currently maintains a policy of keeping these evaluation results behind closed doors - allowing only faculty and administration to view the results. This process is beneficial to faculty since they can spot potential areas for improvement within their courses, and the administration is able to evaluate the courses from the students' viewpoints. There is however, one glaring weakness in this current system; the very students who take their time to fill out the evaluations are denied the opportunity to benefit from the results. To overcome this flaw in the system, a committee has been formed this semester whose goal is to make available both current and past course evaluations to all business students. The grade point distribution, which has been previously available, will now be combined with the course evaluations for easy access and higher quality information. The Course Evaluation Committee is cochaired by Dr. Sam Gillespie and Allen Arnold. Also on this committee is a professor and student from each business major. This information should be available by preregistration, giving students an alternative to "street-talk" for course/profession information.

The Course Evaluation Committee is just one example of the positive changes occurring in the College Of Business. Another major example is the Business Edge. More than a name change, the Business Edge represents an improvement in quality and a more focused direction. By keeping you informed of major events within the College, this publication is designed to give you the much-needed edge in today's business world. Should students be allowed to see results of course evaluations? The Bottom Line says yes and will be backing the course evaluation committee as they work to accomplish this goal. Until next month...

Allen Arnold and B.J. Cohen  
Co-editors

## OPPORTUNITIES IN THE COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Below is a sample of the many student organizations within the College of Business. We encourage everyone to become actively involved in these professional organizations. Each one offers unique and challenging opportunities. Find a group that interests you and GET INVOLVED!

**MANAGEMENT SOCIETY** — Allows students the opportunity to hear speakers from top management positions, attend recruitment receptions, and meet people with similar career interests. Check bulletin board in Blocker.  
Kim VanBuskirk, President - 693-1260

**MARKETING SOCIETY** — A professional organization committed to the interaction of students interested in marketing and in the total business environment.  
Brad Bebell, President - 693-1260

**FINANCE ASSOCIATION** — A professional association for those interested in a career in finance.  
Brenda Blaha, President - 696-0236

**DATA PROCESSING MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION** — A professional society open to Business Analysis majors and all others interested in careers in data processing.  
Paul Meister, President - 846-1933

**SPEECH COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION** — Committed to promotion of communications as a viable career option by offering students an opportunity to meet faculty, make business contacts and discover just how marketable a liberal arts degree is in the business world.  
Gwen Guseman, President - 846-1179

## Get Involved! AN INVITATION FROM THE BUSINESS STUDENT COUNCIL

Howdy Aggies!

On behalf of the Business Student Council, I would like to welcome everyone back to Aggieland!

The Business Student Council serves as the coordinating body for the many student organizations involving business students. The BSC was formed November 18, 1968 to serve as a liaison between the students and faculty of the College of Business Administration. The Council began with a mere handful of students representing only four major departments within the College. Last year we had some fifty or so students representing fifteen student organizations with seven new organizations becoming involved within recent months. Our meetings are open to all students, and if anyone has a complaint, suggestion, or would just like to know what is going on, please feel free to attend. We always appreciate your input and suggestions.

We have many plans for the upcoming year, and we hope to see everyone become involved, whether it is serving on a Business Career Committee, joining one of our member organizations, or simply offering a suggestion at a Council meeting. Your involvement will bring personal benefit as well as contribute to the College of Business Administration as a whole.

Yours Sincerely  
Jodi Savoie, President, Business Student Council

**THE BUSINESS STUDENT COUNCIL** provides a service desk for students and visitors in room 101 of the Blocker building, open 8-5 daily. Scantrons, pens and pencils are on sale. Information is offered on student activities and interests.

## Bottom Line

Should students be allowed to see the results of course evaluation? The College of Business currently maintains a policy of keeping these evaluation results behind closed doors - allowing only faculty and administration to view the results. This process is beneficial to faculty since they can spot potential areas for improvement within their courses, and the administration is able to evaluate the courses from the students' viewpoints. There is however, one glaring weakness in this current system; the very students who take their time to fill out the evaluations are denied the opportunity to benefit from the results. To overcome this flaw in the system, a committee has been formed this semester whose goal is to make available both current and past course evaluations to all business students. The grade point distribution, which has been previously available, will now be combined with the course evaluations for easy access and higher quality information. The Course Evaluation Committee is cochaired by Dr. Sam Gillespie and Allen Arnold. Also on this committee is a professor and student from each business major. This information should be available by preregistration, giving students an alternative to "street-talk" for course/profession information.

The Course Evaluation Committee is just one example of the positive changes occurring in the College Of Business. Another major example is the Business Edge. More than a name change, the Business Edge represents an improvement in quality and a more focused direction. By keeping you informed of major events within the College, this publication is designed to give you the much-needed edge in today's business world. Should students be allowed to see results of course evaluations? The Bottom Line says yes and will be backing the course evaluation committee as they work to accomplish this goal. Until next month...

Allen Arnold and B.J. Cohen  
Co-editors

**ADVERTISING ASSOCIATION** — A new organization formed to provide students with advertising opportunities — such as working on accounts for school organizations and local business. No previous experience required. Next meeting Oct. 14 at 7:00 p.m.  
Katie Hamitz, President - 846-4218

**INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS ASSOCIATION** — Purpose of the I.B.A. is to foster a greater awareness and interest in the area of international business. Guest speakers will play a large role in the group's activities. Cultural barriers, getting a job in international business, and how students should prepare themselves for working abroad are topics that will be discussed.  
First Meeting Oct. 8 7:00 p.m. 150 Blocker (Speaker: John Adams, President, Meiler Research)  
Darrel Bastian, President - 268-3109

**BETA ALPHA PSI** — National accounting fraternity. Applicants must have completed Acct. 229, 230 and be currently enrolled in or have completed Acct. 327. Minimum 3.0 GPA in both Accounting courses required.  
Jennifer Rankin, President - 693-1964

**BUSINESS EDGE**, September 26, 1986. Vol. 1, No. 1. Published by the Business Student Council as a monthly newsletter for students and organizations in the College of Business Administration. Office in 101 Blocker, Tel. 409/845-1320. President, Jodi Savoie. Vice Presidents, Rona Davis and Susan Zimmerman. Treasurer, Nathan McClellan. Secretary, Patricia Leech. Editors, B.J. Cohen and Allen Arnold. Advisor, Lynn Zimmermann. Dean of the College, Dr. Don Hellriegel.