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1,000 B-CS residents participate in National Night Out festivities

By Yvonne DeGraw
Staff Writer

At first it seemed police officers and members of the local media near Olsen Field would outnumber the participants.

But organizers of Bryan-College Station's National Night Out activities put on a happy face and said they weren't disappointed with the 1,000 or so people who participated.

"We raised quite a ruckus tonight," said Officer Tony Taylor of the Bryan Police Department. He said they estimated that 10,000 people would attend because they wanted to "shoot high" to show the importance of neighborhood watch programs.

Still, the people who came seemed to enjoy the festivities. These included a mass balloon release, free popsicles, noisemakers, sirens, cannon blasts supplied by members of Parson's Mounted Cavalry and a visit from McGruff the Crime Dog.

The balloons rising and drifting to the northwest made an impressive sight, even if only a fraction of the number planned were released.

Cheryl Restivo, who works in the Academic Computing Center at Texas A&M, said she and her family attended National Night Out because their neighborhood wasn't planning anything.

Others seemed anxious to return to their neighborhoods for ice cream parties, barbecues and block parties.

It looked like a game of pick-up sticks as the line of people moved and stretched to lay as many popsicle sticks as possible end-to-end.

"Don't be afraid of running your stick out," someone said over the loudspeaker system. "We've got 80,000 of those things."

Taylor estimated the completed string was about one mile long. Whether this makes it the "World's Longest Popsicle Stick" or not remains to be seen. The sticks were collected and will be mailed to Philadelphia.

The home of the Constitution is also the home of the National Town Watch Association, the group that sponsors National Night Out. This group will evaluate the activities and participation in each city and award the National Night Out Cup, for which Brazos County was supposed to be a top contender.

Taylor said he felt there was a very good turnout for the area. "You're looking at about 1 percent of the local population," he said.

Another local statistic was less than expected.

Taylor said Bryan's burglary rate declined 7 percent from last July to this July. Traditionally, the area has more burglaries during summer months.

Bryan has 20 qualified neighborhood watch programs, Taylor said. Another 20 groups are



Photo by Sarah Cowan

Katie Scott, 9, ties balloons to a fence in preparation for Tuesday night's festivities across the

tracks. About 1,000 balloons were released during the National Night Out celebration.

working toward that status.

To qualify, 50 percent of the homes in the area must participate by identifying their property and attending a seminar.

Officer David Luedke of the College Station Police Department said there are 25 qualified programs in College Station. This

number is increasing by two to three per week, he said.

Taylor and Luedke both have plans to increase involvement in neighborhood watch programs by apartment dwellers.

Mockingbird Run in Bryan was a major crime spot until it started

a watch program, Taylor said.

Luedke said College Station police contacted apartment associations just before the spring semester let out. They receive many positive responses, but he said they decided to establish the apartment watch programs when students return this fall.

U.S. officials: Iranian jet ignored warnings

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Navy Tomcat that fired two missiles at an Iranian jet over the weekend did so after the Iranian plane repeatedly ignored radio messages to change course, Pentagon sources said Tuesday.

The sources, providing more details about the incident over the Strait of Hormuz, said the Iranian F-4 Phantom that was fired upon was one of several monitored by radar on Saturday as it took off from the Iranian naval base at Bandar Abbas. A Navy Aegis-class cruiser, the Valley Forge, and a Navy P-3 Orion surveillance plane both tracked the Iranian jet throughout its flight, the sources said. The confrontation occurred when the Iranian jet began flying directly toward the armed P-3 aircraft, they said.

The Valley Forge was steaming through the

strait at the time, helping to protect a convoy of three Kuwaiti tankers and three other Navy warships. That convoy went through the strait on Saturday and arrived safely in Kuwait on Tuesday, Pentagon officials said.

Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, in a meeting with reporters, refused to discuss the incident on Tuesday.

The Pentagon sources, commenting only on condition they not be named, said it was only after the Iranian pilot ignored radio warnings from the Valley Forge and from the F-14 Tomcats flying with the P-3 that two American jets moved to intercept him.

According to one official, the Navy had four F-14's in the air near the P-3 Orion.

The Iranian jet was on a course taking it di-

rectly toward the four-engine, propeller-driven P-3, and was judged to be making "hostile moves" because it was moving within missile range, another source said.

The sources said one F-14 fired two Sparrow missiles at the Iranian. Although the American and Iranian jets were at least 50 miles apart, "that is well within the Sparrow's range and he was shooting to kill," one official said.

The sources said the Iranian jet banked hard after the missiles were fired and managed to evade both of them before quickly reversing course and flying back to Iran.

"We didn't just go off half-cocked and open fire," one official said. "The ship and our planes broadcast warnings repeatedly and he didn't heed them."

Weinberger cites Central American peace plan problems

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger said Tuesday the peace plan put forward by five Central American presidents has "some problems," faulting lack of a deadline for democratic reforms and the removal of Soviet advisers from Nicaragua.

Weinberger, in an interview with Pentagon correspondents, gave his detailed comments about the

peace plan signed last Friday in Guatemala at a summit that included Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega.

The White House has voiced no

criticism of the regional plan, citing the recent agreement with House Speaker Jim Wright of Texas to avoid rhetoric while the peace process plays out. On Saturday, President Reagan issued a statement saying he welcomed the regional plan,

but sidestepped a clear-cut endorsement of it.

In the interview, Weinberger praised the peace proposal put forward by Reagan and Wright, contending it "made a start" towards democratic reforms.

Weinberger also argued that any proposal should allow the Contras to be kept as a military force in the field, to provide "leverage" on the Sandinistas.

Under the Reagan-Wright proposal, the administration has delayed seeking renewed aid for the Contras from Congress, as long as the Sandinistas accept a cease-fire and certain democratic reforms by Sept. 30. The administration had been expected to seek some \$150 million to fund the rebels after the U.S. aid expired at the end of next month.

Speaking of the regional plan,

Kuwaiti ships leave escorts, start for home

KUWAIT (AP) — Three Kuwaiti ships left their U.S. escorts and entered the emirate's waters Tuesday. Helicopters, meanwhile, searched an anchorage south of the Persian Gulf where a mine damaged a tanker and others have been found.

Britain and France ordered minesweepers to the region but said they would not be used in combined operations with the United States. Washington said it was seeking support for an international mine-sweeping force in the gulf, where Iran and Iraq have been at war since September 1980.

The Kuwaiti tankers, flying American flags, "are now in Kuwait territorial waters and under escort by Kuwaiti ships," Defense Department spokesman Robert Sims said in Washington.

He said they had left the four U.S. Navy warships guarding them by 4:35 p.m. and headed for Kuwait's main Al-Ahmedi oil terminal to load cargoes for the return trip down the gulf.

Arrival of the 46,723-ton Gas King, 81,283-ton Sea Isle City and 79,999-ton Ocean City ended the second Navy-escorted trip up the gulf by Kuwaiti vessels and the first without trouble. On the inaugural trip last month, the supertanker Bridgeton hit a mine near a fortified Iranian island 120 miles from Kuwait.

Witnesses at the crowded anchorage off Fujairah, a United Arab Emirates port in the Gulf of Oman, said four U.S. and Omani helicopters swept back and forth at low altitude looking for mines.

An American-operated supertanker, the 274,347-ton Texaco Caribbean, was damaged there Monday and four more mines were found Tuesday, one of them close to a tanker.

Iran has been accused of laying

mines in and around the Persian Gulf. Iranian leaders have said they are planted by "invisible hands" but also that the gulf will remain "full of mines" until the superpowers leave the region.

Tehran radio quoted Hashemi Rafsanjani, speaker of Iran's parliament, as saying the Iranian navy would be sent to the Gulf of Oman to clear mines, but there was no elaboration. Rafsanjani said the United States may have planted the mine that damaged the Texaco Caribbean.

One mine spotted by an Omani helicopter was about 100 yards from an anchored tanker and two others were in the vicinity, a shipping source reported.

U.S. Navy helicopters joined the search at Oman's request, a diplomat said privately.

"There's a little bit of panic" among tanker crews at the anchorage, said a shipping source. Another added: "It's a bad situation. The other tankers are now afraid to move." Both spoke on condition of anonymity.

Fujairah's anchorage is one of the main points for transferring oil from one tanker to another. Up to 50 vessels are there on a given day.

The Texaco Caribbean, which had just arrived with a load of crude from Iran's Larak Island terminal in the Persian Gulf, was holed about a yard below the waterline.

Informants said about 10,000 barrels of oil leaked, forming a slick about eight miles off the coast.

An important current use of the anchorage is as a staging point for convoys of U.S. warships and empty Kuwaiti tankers for the 550-mile trip through the Strait of Hormuz and up the gulf to the emirate. Hormuz is about 30 miles away.

Eleven of Kuwait's 21 tankers are being registered as American ships so the Navy can protect them.

Loose bricks fall off top of library; cause not known

By Kirsten Dietz
Senior Staff Writer

Three loose sections of brick and concrete around the top of the Sterling C. Evans Library were removed Tuesday by physical plant employees after one section unexpectedly fell Monday night and shattered on the ground.

The section fell from the northeast corner of the building about 7:15 p.m. and landed near the side of the library, University Police Chief Elmer Schneider said. No one was injured.

Certain areas around the library will be roped off until the cause of the loose sections is determined, said Joe Estill, director of A&M's physical plant.

Workers used a crane Tuesday to check the rest of the library overhang for additional loose pieces. Two loose sections were knocked down on the south side of the library and one section was knocked from the east side of the library, Estill said. He said the three pieces measured about 4 to 5 feet by 18 inches. The piece that fell Monday measured about 6 feet by 18 inches, he said.

The bricks were laid in a horizontal direction, so the panels had to be constructed on the ground then raised and secured, he said. This places stress on the joint and suspension system, he said. The loose sections were due to a failure of this sys-

tem, but Estill said he's not sure why it failed.

He said his department is trying to determine how the pieces became loose and what corrective action should be taken. The library is the only building on campus with any bricks that have been laid horizontally, Estill said.

Estill said he doubts any legal action can be taken against the construction company unless negligence is proven. The addition was built in 1979.

Estill said he doesn't know if the sections will be replaced. After the investigation is finished, a consultant will be called in and the alternatives will be discussed, he said.

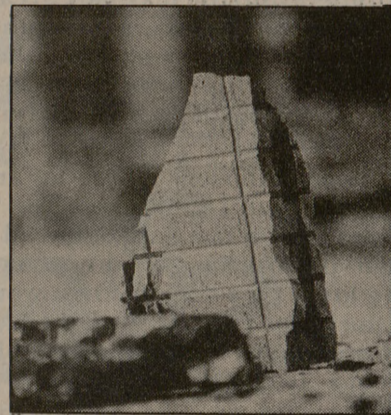


Photo by Robert Rizzo

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keep the Contra force in being as a military force."

"There was no timetable for elections, there is no timetable for democratization," he said. "All of these things are important to get into."

The Central American pact calls for an end of aid to the U.S.-backed Contra rebels, but makes no demand for cutbacks in the Sandinista military forces, their Soviet support or removal of Soviet or Cuban advisers.