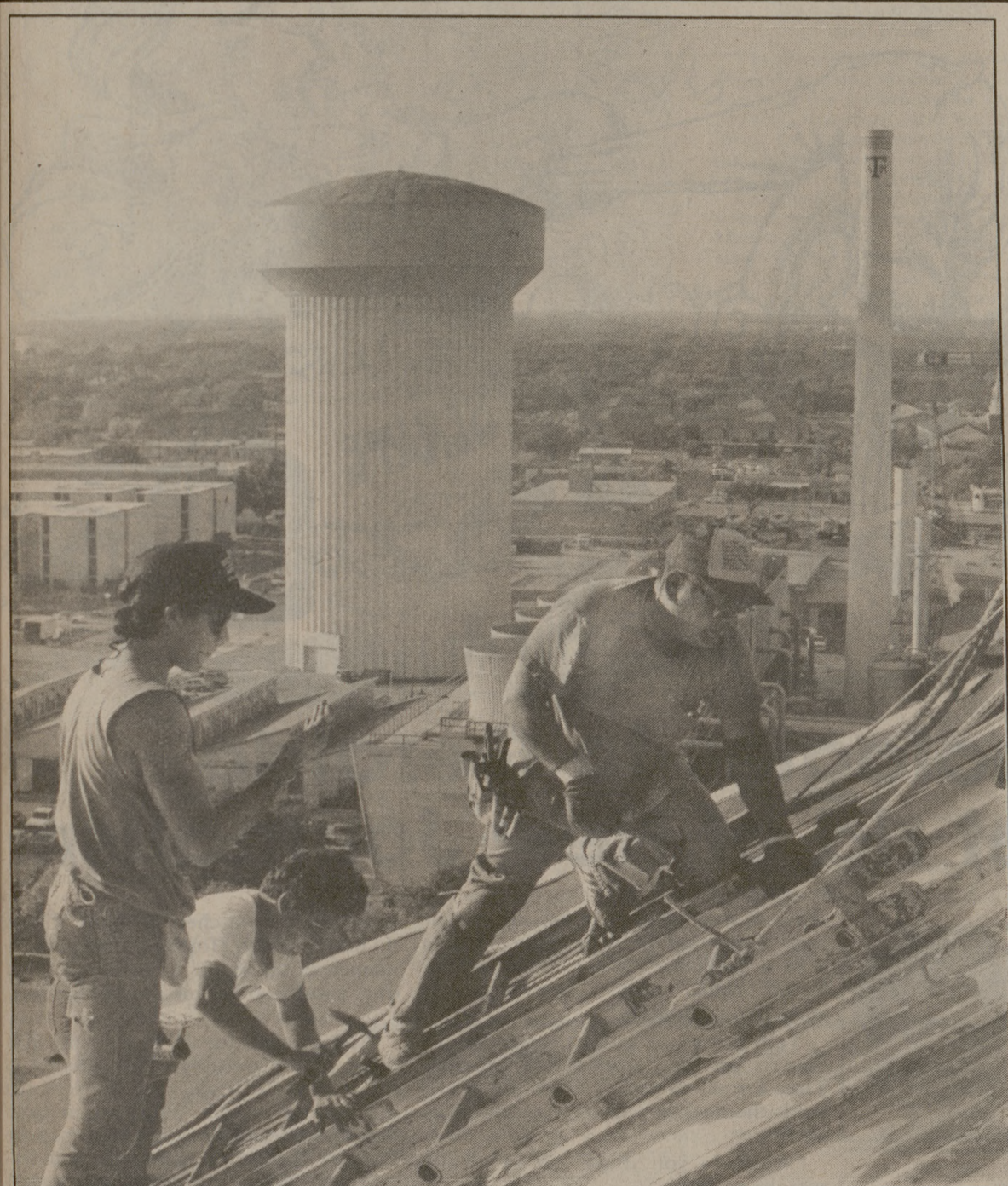


Texas A&M The Battalion

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Top job

Workers for Elco Roofing Company use copper sheets to repair the wind-damaged roof of Harrington Tower Thursday. The roofing was torn

from the tower last summer during a storm. The repairs took three days to complete and cost about \$10,000.

Photo by Sam B. Myers

Critics: Dole to face lingering questions

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Republican leader Bob Dole is launching his campaign for the 1988 presidential nomination as the clear runner-up to Vice President George Bush in the polls, but critics and supporters say he faces lingering questions about personal style and political contradictions.

As Dole embarks on his campaign from his hometown of Russell, Kan., there is general agreement on the impressive steps he has taken in the last 12 months as he has emerged

from the pack of Bush's pursuers.

"I think we're ready to go one on one" with Bush, Bill Lacy, a key campaign aide said. "The thing that pleases me most is organizationally, we've made dramatic strides." He referred to strong fundraising and paid political operatives in 35 states.

But others say that won't be enough. "Dole has a marvelous sense of humor, but it's like a two-edged sword," said one campaign aide, speaking on condition of anonymity.

This aide said Dole must be careful to use his humor on himself and not use it for "undermining and deprecating an opponent."

In public he has accomplished that thus far, but in private Dole is still capable of cutting, acidic remarks. According to one aide, when Dole was musing about how to answer a debate question on which portraits he would hang in the White House, he said he would put up pictures of the men he has defeated in past campaigns.

Railroad panel to study safety of A&M crossings

By Lee Schexnaider
Reporter

The Texas Railroad Commission is investigating the problems concerning automobile accidents on the Union Pacific/Southern Pacific rail line, Railroad Commissioner John Sharp said on Friday.

The concern is over the 11 automobile-train collisions at crossings in College Station since 1977. In these accidents, three people died and four were injured.

Sharp said part of the impetus to move the project along might have come from the fact that the latest fatality happened just before the September meeting of the Texas A&M Board of Regents. In that accident, Martin Joseph Bottoms, an A&M student, was killed near the intersection of Wellborn Road and FM 2818.

Sharp said Board of Regents chairman David Eller brought the matter of College Station's crossing safety to his attention. At Eller's request, Railroad Commission representatives had a press conference at Easterwood Airport Friday to set up a public hearing later this month.

Sharp said a public hearing on the matter will be held Nov. 24. The meeting tentatively is scheduled for 9 a.m. at the University Center.

"We want public testimony from anybody that can tell us what the situation is," he said. "This is the first step in what could turn out to be a longer proceeding."

James Bond, deputy chancellor for legal and external affairs, said A&M is trying to remedy a loss of momentum in solving the issue of railroad-crossing accidents.

"I believe this one is not going to go away," Bond said. "It is time to fix it."

A report from the Texas Highway Department given to the Board of Regents office outlined possible approaches to the combined problem of the railroad track and Wellborn Road cutting through the A&M campus. The report discussed three main options and provided preliminary costs for each:

- Depress Wellborn and relocate the railroad tracks — \$44.3 million.
- Elevate Wellborn and relocate the tracks — \$39.7 million.

• Depress both the road and the tracks — \$32.5 million.

The report said a problem with the third option is that it wouldn't remove the potential problem of transporting hazardous cargo near the campus.

Where the money would come from to pay for any renovations isn't clear, but the report suggested part of it might come from the highway department.

William McKenzie, an A&M regent, said in a telephone interview Friday that the discussion of the problems has been going on for quite some time.

"Literally, we have been discussing it for a number of years," he said.

A resolution proposed by McKenzie and passed at the Sept. 21 regents' meeting urged the College Station City Council to limit the speed of trains to 15 mph between the Holleman Street and University Drive intersections at Wellborn Road.

McKenzie said he would like to see Wellborn itself moved to form a continuous campus.

Officials: Program releases violent inmates early

HOUSTON (AP) — Violent offenders are being freed under a special early release program intended only for non-violent inmates in the state's prisons, the *Houston Chronicle* reported Sunday.

"The problem (the state) administration has is that it preaches law and order, of locking all the inmates up and throwing away the key," said John Byrd, executive director of the state parole board.

"Then it turns around and announces 150 will be let out in a day," he said. "You can't have it both ways. It just doesn't work."

On Sept. 24, Gov. Bill Clements, State Board of Corrections Chairman Al Hughes and Paroles Chairman Henry Keene announced the early release program as a stopgap measure to release 150 inmates

each day to make room for 150 more.

But Keene emphasized only "non-assaultive" inmates, such as those serving time for bad checks, theft, credit-card abuse, drug possession and burglary, would be eligible for the early release program.

The *Chronicle* said an informal study of the plan showed 15 percent to 20 percent of the inmates being released under the pro-

gram were serving time for aggravated assault, aggravated robbery and other violent crimes, including murder.

The *Chronicle* said 125, or 17 percent, of the 730 inmates approved for parole in the program's first week (Sept. 28 - Oct. 2) had been convicted of violent crimes.

Parole board Vice Chairman Chris Mealy said, "To tell the public we are not letting out violent people is inaccurate."

Last week, Texas voters approved a constitutional amendment that will provide an estimated \$200 million in bond funds for new prison construction.

However, Clements and other officials have warned that the new construction will allow the state only to catch up with the current overflow, not anticipate future growth.

Delay may prevent placing conservative on high court

WASHINGTON (AP) — A key Republican on the Senate Judiciary Committee said Sunday that a delay in the selection of a new Supreme Court nominee might prevent President Reagan from placing a conservative choice on the high court.

Judge Douglas H. Ginsburg, the president's second choice for the high court seat vacated by retired Justice Lewis F. Powell, announced Saturday that he had asked Reagan to withdraw his nomination. Ginsburg said his views on law had been "drowned out in the clamor" over his use of marijuana in the 1960s and 1970s.

Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., praised

Ginsburg's fall raises questions concerning Meese's role

WASHINGTON (AP) — The fall of Supreme Court nominee Douglas H. Ginsburg raises questions about Attorney General Edwin Meese III's role in White House decision-making, given the failure of the judicial review process to expose Ginsburg's past use of marijuana. Both friends

Ginsburg for acting quickly in requesting that his name be withdrawn and said he would like to see the committee adhere to the same hearing schedule on a new nominee as

and critics of Meese said Sunday they doubted that his influence with President Reagan would suffer in the wake of the Ginsburg incident, which unfolded in the midst of a much-ballyhooed rivalry with White House chief of staff Howard Baker for presidential attention.

The chairman of the Senate panel, Sen. Joseph Biden, D-Del., had decided to begin hearings on

"I don't see this as diminishing his influence at all," said A.R. "Pete" Giesen, a Republican member of the Virginia House of Delegates and onetime Meese roommate at Yale University. "Ed just doesn't buckle under to pressure. I think he's going

to continue to tell it to the president as he sees it."

But some other Meese associates said they believed the failure of the Justice Department's judicial candidate selection process to turn up Ginsburg's marijuana smoking reflected poorly on Meese.

ABC-TV's "This Week With David Brinkley."

"I think we can get along with the work, and I think we ought to take the time that is necessary, but I have

A&M student stays in intensive care after surviving weekend plane crash

By Tracy Staton
Staff Writer

A plane crash in Bryan Saturday night left one Texas A&M student in intensive care but in stable condition and another with no apparent injuries, a spokesman from St. Joseph Hospital said late Sunday.

Mark Clark, a sophomore general studies major, sustained a mild concussion and two broken ankles when the 1946 Cessna 140 he was piloting crashed at Coulter Field on Hwy. 21. His brother, Travis Clark, a sophomore general studies major who was the plane's only passenger, was released from the hospital Sunday morning after examination, the spokesman said.

At 8:45 p.m. Saturday, the two-seater plane hit a utility line parallel

to Hwy. 21, flipped onto the highway and landed in a ditch adjacent to the road, Bob Dickens, air safety investigator, said. There was no evidence of a fire, but the plane snapped a utility line and sheared a telephone pole. The plane was destroyed, Dickens said.

"We are looking at the pilot's experience level and the mechanical condition of the aircraft as possible causes for the crash," Dickens said. "We haven't found anything at this point to make the aircraft suspect."

Tom Taylor, Mark Clark's flight instructor and owner of the plane, said Clark had a student license and was almost ready to apply for his private pilot's license. But two airport employees said Clark told them he had passed his check ride, the flying test for a private license.

"He told us he had his private pilot's license and that he had passed his check ride," said Chris Largent, a sophomore electrical engineering major. "A check ride is the very last thing in getting your license. It involves your instructor signing you out and you go to a Federal Aviation Administration official who checks you out."

Taylor said misrepresentation isn't a direct violation of Federal Aviation Regulations but isn't acceptable behavior.

"They shouldn't say something that they're not," he said. "But there's not a regulation saying 'thou shalt not lie.'"

Nick Altizer, a junior finance major who also works at the airport, said as a student pilot, Clark

shouldn't have taken his brother in the plane with him.

"If you're a student pilot, the way you're set up you can go solo, but you're not allowed to take a passenger," Altizer said.

Part 61, Section 89 of the Federal Aviation Regulations states, "A student pilot may not act as pilot in command of an aircraft that is carrying a passenger."

Dickens said the FAA's report of probable cause won't be released for six to eight months. As an investigator for the National Transportation Safety Board, Dickens' responsibility is to gather the facts about the crash and make a field factual report. He said his report won't be ready for about three months.

See Plane crash, page 8

Texas A&M student dies as car collides with 2 other vehicles

By Lee Schexnaider
Staff Writer

A Texas A&M student was killed in an accident involving three vehicles in College Station Sunday evening.

Gena Lynn Thornton, 20, a junior animal science major from Houston, was pronounced dead at the scene of the accident by Justice of the Peace Carolyn Hensarling.

Thornton was driving north on FM 2818 near the intersection of FM 2818 and F&B Road when her car collided with a 1984 Chevrolet pickup truck, Patrolman Joe Eldredge of the

College Station Police Department said.

The pickup truck had swerved into the northbound lane of FM 2818, Eldredge said.

A motor home traveling south in the southbound lane then hit the car, he said.

The driver of the truck, James Michael Hicks, 23, a senior biomedical science major at A&M, was treated and released from Humana Hospital in College Station with minor injuries, Eldredge said.

The driver of the motor home, Kelly Wayne Marbach of

See Collision, page 8