

State and Local

Federal officials alert centers after recent Cuban inmate riots

HOUSTON (AP) — Federal immigration officials in Houston, reacting to riots involving Cuban inmates in Louisiana and Georgia, alerted officers on alert Monday, suspending vacations and beefing up security at four Houston-area detention centers housing Cuban inmates. About 50 Cubans are imprisoned in the Houston facilities, including a recently run detention center that witnessed the scene of a disturbance last year's Eve involving Cuban inmates, Ron Parra, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service district director, said.

"We have curtailed information to the facilities and we have postponed all visits," Parra said. "Our concern is to preserve the buildings and the property and to make sure no lives are in jeopardy." No problems were reported. Except for a detention center near Houston Intercontinental Airport, federal authorities declined to identify other facilities housing Cuban inmates.

Deputy Director Michael McMahon said, "We're operating as far as they can see in a normal situation."

Besides cancelled vacations, INS officers already on leave were told to remain in the Houston area. In addition, riot gear — shields, batons and helmets with faceguards — were placed in areas where they quickly would become available to officers, he said.

Parra said Cuban inmates who had access to telephones knew of the uprising Saturday among fellow Cubans at a federal facility in Oakdale, La., before word of the disturbance was publicly known.

"They have a very sophisticated network throughout the prison system," he said. For that reason, Parra said inmates now were being denied telephone privileges.

"It's one of those things we'd rather be well prepared than react later," he said.

Parra said it was likely the alert status would continue until the problems in Georgia and Louisiana were resolved and stabilized.

Parra said INS intelligence agents were trying to determine if the outbreaks were an orchestrated campaign or random incidents.

Visits between inmates and their lawyers would be continued in Houston but any visitors would be subject to body searches, he said.

"We're not going to deny them any due process," Parra said.

Last New Year's Eve a disturbance at the INS processing center near the Houston airport left a dormitory destroyed. Several of the inmates had to be transferred to Atlanta, where a riot broke out Monday.

Nineteen Cuban inmates had es-

caped from the Houston facility earlier. A dozen were captured quickly while four others were found in Louisiana. The remaining escapees remain at large and were believed in Florida, Parra said.

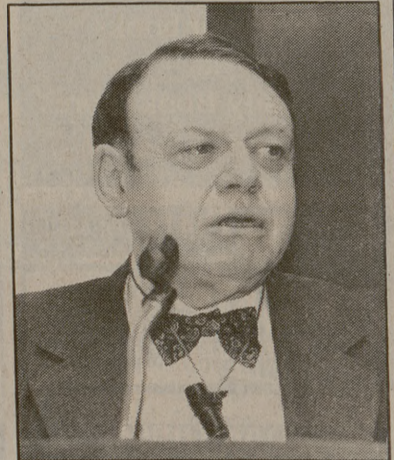
The Cubans were among the 125,000 who left Cuba in the 1980 Mariel boatlift. The State Department announced Friday that Cuba had agreed to accept the return of 2,500 refugees from the boatlift, most of them criminals and mentally ill, officials said.

In Laredo, 17 Cuban inmates broke out of a medium-security detention center early Sunday by climbing through a steel roof grating. Authorities captured all but six of them within hours.

Parra and McMahon said they did not know if any of the Cuban inmates incarcerated in Houston were slated for return to Cuba.

Professor explains effects of alcoholism in biological systems

By Cindy Milton
Staff Writer



Dr. Bert L. Vallee

Alcoholism hasn't been put in the proper perspective in the recent political gambit to reveal the disease, a Harvard Medical School professor said Monday.

Dr. Bert L. Vallee, director of Harvard's Center for Biochemical and Biophysical Sciences and Medicine, explained the biological effects of alcoholism during the University Lecture Series, "Toward a Biological Understanding of Alcoholism."

He said 15 percent of the U.S. population is afflicted with alcoholism, which he defined as "excessive ethanol consumption exceeding dietary and caloric needs or norms and detrimental to interpersonal, economic and professional effectiveness."

He said 80 percent to 85 percent of the population falls into the category of "occasional and ill-timed drunkenness."

Vallee attributed alcoholism to biological makeup and said studies show inherited alcoholic tendencies, but he said the pattern of inheritance is not clear.

Vallee's interest in biological factors involved in alcoholism began in 1964 after the discovery of alcohol dehydrogenases — enzymes found in human liver. These enzymes, he said, take and detoxify alcohol in the body.

He said he was asked to treat several children who drank ethylene glycol, or antifreeze. After trying several enzymes in the treatment, he said the extract from the human liver helped with the detoxification.

With this discovery, Vallee began to isolate the enzyme and examine its effects in relation to ethanol in the human body.

He said isoenzymes in the enzyme are specific in how they work with body systems.

"These isoenzymes are living proof of how the body deals with alcohol," he said. "Most likely when we talk about alcohol or an alcohol-related disease, it is due to an enzyme effect of some kind."

He said the isoenzymes cause different reactions among individuals and among people of different races.

Alcohol dehydrogenase, he said, does not protect the brain, placenta or testis — "things you would want to protect the most," he said.

He said racial distribution of the enzyme was revealed in a study that showed more than 50 percent of the Oriental population has inadequate enzymes to dehydrate alcohol.

"If there is one racial group with a considerable difference (in alcohol dehydrogenases), I can bet there are defects in other places — especially people with real alcohol problems," he said.

Vallee said a treatment to manage the enzyme defects will probably evolve, but he added the scientific community should make more efforts to put the problem of alcoholism in perspective.

MSC Council discusses putting end to 'partisan' programs offered at A&M

By Drew Leder
Staff Writer

The MSC Council Monday discussed putting an end to what members called partisan and sub-par programs that are being presented at A&M.

At the final meeting of the semester, Council President Linda Hartman told members that the MSC Council should be more involved in monitoring presentations at A&M and trying to ensure high-quality programs.

"We're concerned about quality control," Hartman said.

"We're not going to tell people that they can say at their presentations and we're not trying to limit people's ability for free speech,"

Hartman said, "but our fear is that they (programs) don't present both sides."

Mentioning a pari-mutuel betting presentation that was held at A&M this semester, Hartman said organizations putting on programs that only focus on one side of an issue should be induced to be more non-partisan.

These partisan programs reflect A&M in a poor manner and council members want to put an end to them, she said.

Aside from bad or partisan programs, Hartman said there is also a problem at A&M with repetitive programs.

Some organizations don't coordinate their programming plans with

other groups and the result is several presentations that cover the same topic, all being shown at about the same time, she said.

This repetition often will lead to lower turnouts for all of the presentations.

An example of this was evident last week when several programs concerning AIDS were presented on the same day, she said.

Hartman said that council members will monitor the programming activities of organizations at A&M and then brainstorm to determine if there is a way to upgrade the quality of the programs presented.

As it stands now, any organization that wants to put on a program can easily acquire a room in Rudder Tower, she said.

At Monday's meeting, the council also approved its own programming schedule for the Spring 1988 semester.

Some of the programs scheduled include:

- A concert by The Judy's, to be sponsored by MSC Town Hall.
- A presentation by presidential hopeful Bob Dole, sponsored by MSC Political Forum.
- A discussion by Wiley Lecture Series speakers Robert McNamara, Sir James Callaghan and Sen. John Tower.
- "I've Gotta Be Me," a presentation by MSC Variety Show.
- A presentation by MSC All Night Fair, titled "Bungle in the Jungle."

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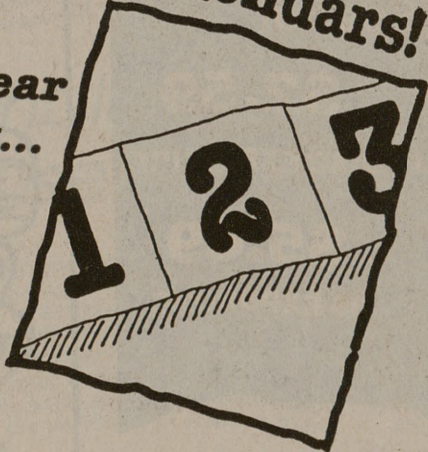
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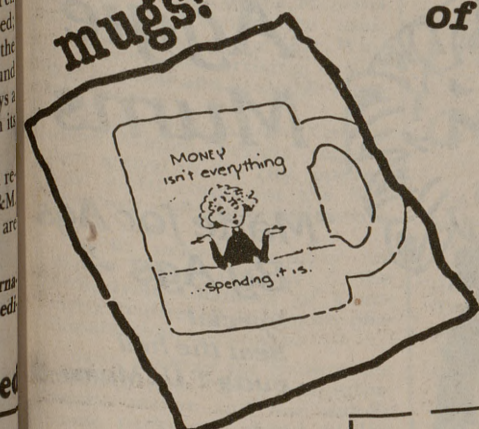
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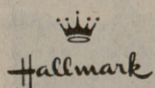
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