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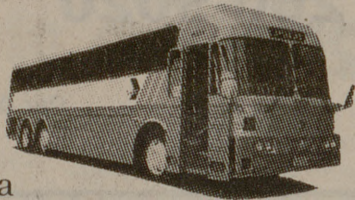
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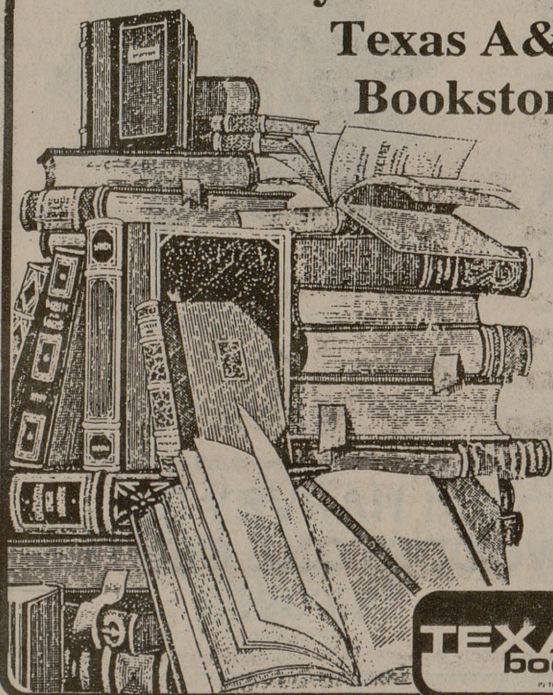
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Officials probe crash involving police officers

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Police temporarily closed a section of busy highway Thursday to investigate the site of a fiery crash that injured four patrolmen who were off duty, authorities said.

Three of the four officers have been disciplined for rule violations in the past.

The police department's internal affairs office has taken over the investigation, officials said.

Witnesses told police the officers' super-cab pickup truck and another car were weaving across the highway at speeds nearing 100 mph before the truck slammed into a concrete wall on Interstate Loop 410, overturned and caught fire early Wednesday.

Police spokesman Romana Lopez said a patrolman filed the initial accident report because special traffic investigators only report to fatal accidents.

The speciality unit closed part of the road while it conducted the investigation Thursday.

"The reason they closed part of the road was because of the seriousness of the accident and because Internal Affairs is investigating the incident to see if any rules or regulations were violated," Lopez said.

The driver of the truck, William Williams, 26, was in critical condition Thursday after undergoing surgery at Medical Center Hospital, hospital spokesman Lynn Blanco said.

Patrolman Clarence Mize, 27, also was in critical condition with multiple injuries, she said.

Gary Simpkins, 28, was released Thursday and Wayne Ramey, 26, was treated and released late Wednesday, Blanco said.

Williams' 25-year-old wife, Margaret, was in serious condition at Brooke Army Medical Center, hospital spokesman Bob Clark said.

He declined to elaborate on her injuries.

Witness William C. Garrison Jr. of San Antonio said the pickup truck was going about 100 mph while it tried to pass a car.

"It looked like they were horsing around," he said.

"They would change from the left lane all the way over to the right," he said.

Joe Constantino, secretary of the Police and Fire Civil Service Commission, said Thursday that Williams, Mize and Ramey had been suspended for rule violations that are unrelated to the patrolmen's accident.

Williams was suspended in January 1986 after he was accused of repeatedly harassing a female store clerk and having women inside of his patrol car while he was on duty.

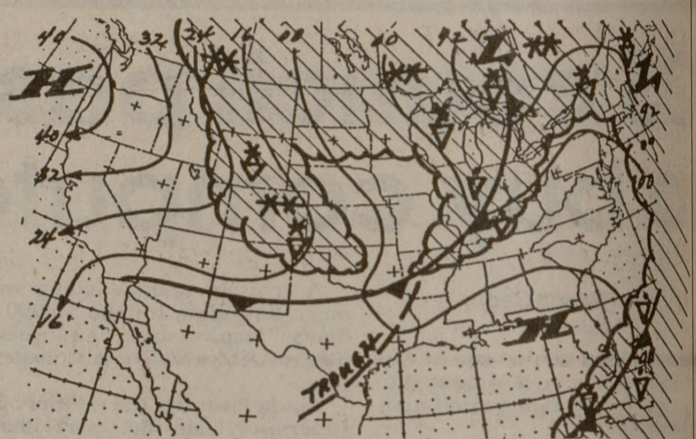
He was reinstated two months later after an arbitration panel overturned the action.

He also had a one-day suspension in December 1984 for getting into a fight while off duty, Constantino said.

Mize was suspended for 20 days in October 1986 after he admitted to being away from an assignment and to having alcoholic beverages inside of his patrol car, Constantino reported.

Ramey twice was suspended in 1983 for failing to thoroughly search his prisoners, who later were examined when they reached police station and were disarmed of knives, Constantino said.

Weather Watch



Key:

- Lightning
- Rain
- Ice Pellets
- Fog
- Snow
- Rain Shower
- Thunderstorms
- Drizzle
- Freezing Rain

Sunset Today: 5:24 p.m.

Sunrise Saturday: 7:12 a.m.

Map Discussion: An intensifying ridge of high pressure over the eastern Pacific will build a surface high over the western United States, which will bring a broad cyclonic flow aloft over the remainder of the country. The cold front will push steadily southeastward, bringing cooler temperatures to southeast Texas. Expect snow and snow showers over the central Rockies, the upper Ohio valley, and from the Great Lakes to New England.

Forecast: Today: Partly cloudy and warm with a high temperature of 76 degrees and southerly winds of 12 mph gusting to 20 mph.

Tonight: Partly cloudy with the cold front passing Bryan-College Station near midnight to start the cooling trend. Winds will be southerly ahead of the front and northwesterly and gusty once the front passes. Low temperature Saturday morning will be 42 degrees.

Saturday: Mostly cloudy and cool. High temperature in the upper fifties with northerly winds of 10 mph to 16 mph.

Weather Fact: Cold front — Any non-occluded front, or portion thereof, that moves so that the colder air replaces the warmer air; i.e. the "leading edge" of a relatively cold air mass.

Prepared by: Charlie Brenton
Staff Meteorologist
A&M Department of Meteorology

A&M biochemist searches for clues to help solve emphysema mystery

By Todd Riemenschneider
Staff Writer

When Texas A&M professor Edgar F. Meyer Jr. works at his computer, he looks like he's playing a complicated video game.

However it may look, though, Meyer is not playing; he is doing serious research.

In his laboratory by the old creamery by the Pavilion — one of the most unlikely places on campus for research — Meyer uses biochemistry, X-ray crystallography and advanced computer graphics to study the structure of molecules.

"I've been working on this project for eight years, and we chose a project at the beginning that was promising and has held true as a good research project," he said.

Meyer, a biochemistry and biophysics professor, uses the computer to look at the molecular structure of an enzyme called elastase. While he examines the structure, the screen takes on the graphic characteristics of a video game. There are colored lines everywhere and they move in every direction.

"The enzyme is like Pac Man, and it actually has a wedge, a mouth piece," Meyer said.

Meyer studies an elastase found in the pancreas of swine. It is similar to the human leukocyte elastase, which is blamed for much of the damage done by emphysema, a condition in

which the walls of the lungs break down, leading to problems with respiratory functions and increasing trouble with normal breathing.

In emphysema, the human leukocyte elastase enzymes become chemically active and chew their way into the lung tissue needed to oxygenate the blood.

The action of the enzymes destroys lung tissue after they combine with or attach to the tissue.

Meyer said molecules have to interact for the enzyme process to be effective.

"The molecules must act as a lock and key," Meyer said, referring to the way certain molecules work with the larger structures.

The graphics capability of the computer provides a valuable tool for Meyer to watch how the molecules interact.

The three-dimensional picture created by the computer allows him to analyze the enzyme's structure in detail.

"With 60,000 individual measurements, if you had to do this by hand it just would not be done," Meyer said. "You have to have a computer. We are in a position to look at in great detail what the interactions of the molecules are."

Meyer said the goal of the research is to find keys to unlock the possibilities of new drugs to help mankind.

"Facilities like this are part of be-

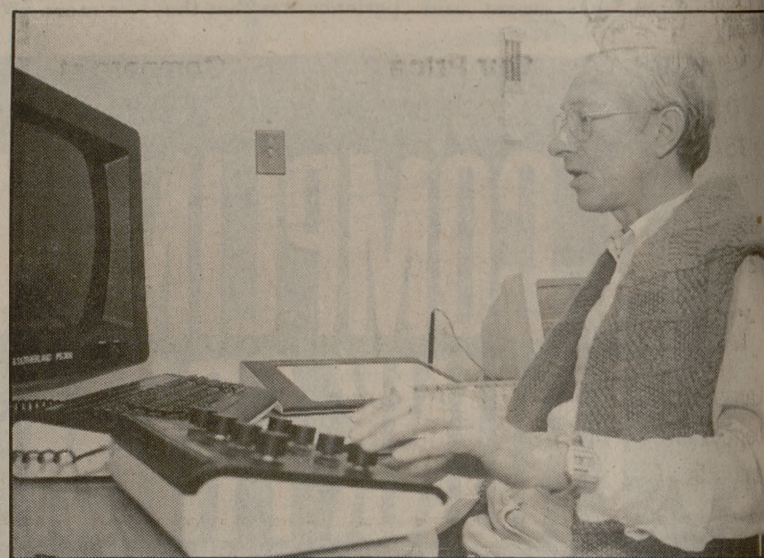


Photo by Jay Janney

Dr. Edgar F. Meyer Jr. studies the interactive graphics display.

ing a world-class university," Meyer said. "If we can address a highly significant problem and make contributions, it is helpful to mankind and makes A&M look good."

Meyer compared his research to the work of an artist.

"The biochemist with his palette of colors can change the color, the shape and the light and try to find out what effect it will have on the whole picture," he said.

However, Meyer said, conducting research to find new drugs involves a slow, ongoing process.

"Michelangelo didn't paint the Sistine Chapel over a few weeks' ends," he said.

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