

# The Texas A&M Battalion

Vol. 87 No. 105 USPS 045360 12 Pages

College Station, Texas

Monday, February 29, 1988

## Panama ruler still in hiding, in good spirits

PANAMA CITY, Panama (AP) — Deposed president Eric Arturo Delvalle stayed in hiding Sunday and defied Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega, the military strongman who ousted him and ordered him out of the country.

The ex-president's whereabouts were a closely guarded secret, but family members said he was in a safe and secure place in Panama, in "good spirits" and determined to regain his job.

"I am going to stay here (and) stick it out," Delvalle told ABC television Saturday night. "I'm going to fight it all the way."

Delvalle did not reveal his hiding place.

Roderic Esquivel, Delvalle's vice president, was also in hiding.

Both men were ousted early Friday in an action by the National Legislative Assembly orchestrated by Noriega, the Defense Forces chief.

Delvalle ignited the latest crisis in eight months of continuing civil un-

rest in Panama on Thursday when he tried to fire Noriega, who is charged in Florida with corruption and narcotics trafficking. The United States also has urged Noriega to step down as military chief.

On Friday, Delvalle returned to his home in an upper-class neighborhood. Police surrounded the house Friday evening and Delvalle's telephones were cut, leaving him incommunicado and under an undeclared house arrest.

Sometime that night, he reportedly climbed over a patio wall at the rear of the house and escaped through a neighbor's yard, avoiding the policemen who had been posted on the street in front of his home.

Raul Diaz, a brother-in-law, and other family members said military officials had warned Delvalle that if he didn't leave the country voluntarily, he would be arrested and forcibly deported.

The Panamanian government Sunday claimed U.S. officials were hiding Delvalle at an American military installation in Panama.

But Gabriel Lewis, a former Panamanian ambassador to Washington, said Sunday he was under the protection of a good Panamanian family and they will never find him.

Cynthia Farrell, a spokesman for the U.S. Embassy in Panama City, said she could not confirm or deny anything. She said the embassy was under orders from Washington not to discuss the situation.

Delvalle's hopes of regaining the presidency suffered a setback Saturday night when the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States, meeting in Washington, declined to take any action on Panama.

Delvalle and the Reagan administration would agree to impose trade sanctions against Panama, or at least approve a resolution condemning the president's ouster by the military.

On the eve of a planned nationwide protest strike, priests in Roman Catholic churches throughout the country read a communique on the spread of corruption to parishioners from Archbishop Marcos G. McGrath.



### Hullaballooning

The Flying Tomato hot-air balloon flies over Spence Park Sunday afternoon while students enjoy the sunny weather and play baseball.

The balloon came down and landed near the MSC for a short while before taking off again.

## A&M student files report for assault

A 22-year-old Texas A&M student was assaulted and robbed early Saturday morning, according to a report filed with the College Station Police Department.

A woman was walking in the 500 block of Holleman Drive in College Station at 1:45 a.m. when a man hit her in the eye and pushed her down, the report said.

The man took an unknown amount of money.

The woman had a slightly swollen left eye and a bruised knee, according to police reports.

## Officials fail to find cause behind death

A Texas A&M student died Wednesday evening in his College Station residence.

John James "Riggins" Benziger, 20, of Georgetown was a junior business major at A&M. Prayer services were held Sunday in Georgetown and funeral services were held at 10 a.m. today in Granger.

Benziger worked with the Department of Human Resources foster home program.

A College Station Police Department spokesman said the cause of death was not known and an autopsy would not be completed until later this week.

Benziger is survived by his parents, John and Carol Benziger, and four younger sisters, Michelle, Julie, Melinda and Angel.

## Governor declares awareness week for sexual assault

By Mary-Lynne Rice  
Staff Writer

To attract public attention to the pervasive problem of sexual assault, the College Station City Council approved a proclamation declaring March 6 through March 12 "Sexual Assault Awareness Week."

Gov. Bill Clements issued the annual statewide proclamation to increase awareness of sexual crimes and their victims.

"We're trying to attract media attention to get assistance from the community, and we hope to get more interest in getting volunteers by promoting awareness of sexual crimes," said Linda Castoria, executive director of the College Station Rape Crisis Center.

"It's also important to make as many people in the community as possible aware of our center's services," she said.

The Crisis Center has mailed pamphlets to area churches and community organizations, Castoria said, with offers to make presentations about sexual assault and information to be included in newsletters and bulletins.

In 1987, 12 cases of sexual assault were reported in College Station, said Stephanie George, College Station police department records supervisor. By contrast, Castoria said the rape crisis center handles an average of 10 to 15 cases each month.

Castoria said many sexual assault cases aren't reported.

"A lot of people don't know we (the crisis center) exist until, unfortunately, they need us," she

said. "But when they need our help, we're available."

"We work with people who don't report (sexual assault) also. Only one in 10 cases is reported — for many, many reasons, some victims cannot report the crime."

The center offers free support counseling, a 24-hour hotline and 24-hour escort service. Two support groups meet each Thursday at 7 p.m. in the Brazos Valley Rehabilitation Center on Memorial Drive — one meeting for adult female survivors of sexual assault, the other for their family and friends to teach them how to help and support the victims.

"We're trying to ease the burden of what happened," Castoria said. "It's very important in recovering to know that they're not the only ones, and to get rid of myths."

The center works not only with recent assault victims, but with those molested many years ago or in childhood.

Despite widespread awareness campaigns and the work of rape crisis centers, Castoria said, the rate of sexual assault is not noticeably reduced.

"Rape is repeat offenders," she said, "and until there is some increased intervention, they will continue to commit the crimes."

"Unfortunately, the crime is not decreasing at all. But we still hope that one day we will have a rape-free rather than rape-prone society."

part in an OAS debate Saturday night voiced their support for Delvalle.

Noriega's representative, Roberto Leyton, protested that the OAS discussion violated the organization's charter.

The permanent council was an inappropriate forum for an airing of his country's "internal affairs," he said.

Over the course of the session, the OAS ambassadors heard bitter recriminations about promises the Nicaraguan Sandinistas failed to keep, allegations the United States seeks to destabilize Panama, invocation of the name of the late Panamanian strong man Gen. Omar Torrijos, and questions concerning America renegeing on its commitment in two 1979 treaties to completely transfer the control of the Panama Canal to Panama by the turn of the century.

Just for good measure, Gabriel Lewis, a former Panamanian ambassador to the United States who is now part of Noriega's political opposition, had OAS technicians play a tape-recording of his telephone conversation earlier in the day with a

distressed Mariela Delvalle, wife of the deposed president.

In the conversation, she told Lewis what she had told military officers who had come in search of Delvalle:

"My husband is not here, nor are you going to find him."

But the council failed to come to grips with the question of whether or not to recognize the portfolio of Leyton or Lawrence Cheurning Fabrege, Delvalle's choice to sit on the council.

Representatives of several non-OAS countries, seated in a section for official observers, gave Cheurning an ovation when he briefly entered into the mahogany-walled council chamber and conferred with Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., who came to the meeting as an observer.

But from the time the council meeting was supposed to start, at 4 p.m. EST, until shortly after 9 p.m., the action was away from the council chamber, as the roughly 30 ambassadors wrangled in private over whether to seat Leyton or Cheurning.

A carnival atmosphere developed

as Lewis, Cheurning and Kennedy alternately met with reporters in the ornate lobby of the OAS building, while musicians, waiters and waitresses prepared one floor above for a dinner-dance.

At one point, the U.S. ambassador to the OAS, Richard T. McCormack, shrugged his shoulders, and explained to a reporter, "I'm supposed to be up there. I'm the host for that thing."

This was just moments before the formal debate began — and just after a rumored deal to settle the credentials problem had totally collapsed.

A member of the U.S. mission, talking on grounds of anonymity, said the OAS council members had seriously discussed seating neither Leyton nor Cheurning.

This official said they came close to giving the council seat to Soraya Cano, a career Panamanian diplomat.

But Paraguay's Juan Alberto Llanes, chairman of the OAS permanent council, ruled that Leyton must be seated for the purposes of the debate.

## Hard work brings student crown, title of Miss TAMU

By Tracy Staton  
Senior Staff Writer

Stephanie Smith reached a two-year goal Saturday night when she was crowned Miss Texas A&M University.

"It was a dream come true," Smith said Sunday. "Last night was an absolute dream come true."

But pageant life is not over for the junior biomedical science major from Richardson.

"The work has just started," Smith said. "I now have one notch in my belt, but the big gusto is still ahead, and I've got to work for it. I'll be here this summer getting ready for the Miss Texas pageant so I can represent the University as best I can. I'm very honored to represent the school."

Smith has had her eye on the Miss TAMU title since she entered the 1987 pageant, she said.

"When I entered last year's pageant, I didn't know anything about pageants," she said. "I had only seen them on television. But after last year's pageant, I got the bug and decided I wanted to win Miss Texas A&M."

She then dedicated herself to the task of preparing for 1988's pageant. Smith entered seven other pageants — including Miss Tyler and Miss Commerce — for experience.

"I dieted and exercised really



File photo

Miss TAMU Stephanie Smith

hard," she said. "I worked harder than I ever have before. I practiced and practiced my singing."

Smith performed as a vocalist in the talent phase of the competition, which was won by Jana Fuhrman, a dancer. In the swimsuit division Saturday, Smith successfully defended her 1987 title.

Miss TAMU will receive a \$1,000 scholarship to the University and a \$1,000 wardrobe allowance for the Miss Texas pageant, which will be held July 9 in Fort Worth. Smith also

won prizes from local businesses.

The rewards of participating in the pageant are not limited to the material gains, Smith said.

"It's the greatest experience," she said. "You can't lose even if you don't take home the crown. The people I met and the friends I made were a really important part of the pageant. I have some great friends from participating in this."

Smith is a member of Zeta Tau Alpha sorority and is involved in A&M intramurals. She has been involved in student government as a Fish Aide and a member of the Big Event committee.

She plans to attend Southwestern Medical School after graduation in December 1989. She is on Dean's Honor Roll and has received the Most Distinguished Student award.

The first runner-up in the pageant, Beth Brenkman, will receive a \$500 scholarship to A&M. Brenkman is a senior business major from Fort Worth. Fuhrman, a junior psychology major from Kilgore, was second runner-up, and will receive a \$400 scholarship. Third runner-up and recipient of a \$300 scholarship was Paris North, a freshman speech communications major from DeSoto. Also from DeSoto was fourth runner-up Jennifer Melton, a sophomore economics major who will receive a \$250 scholarship.

## Police look for suspect in assault



The College Station Police Department released this sketch of a suspect in the sexual assault of an 18-year-old College Station woman Feb. 20.

The white male is described as 5 feet 11 inches tall and about 40 years old. The police said the man may have a short, well-groomed beard.