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UPD recovers missing Aggie rings with help from Crime Stoppers tip



Margaret Rudder examines her late husband's Aggie ring that was recovered in Smith Park Wednesday. Six other rings were found.

By Stephen Masters
Senior Staff Writer

A Crime Stoppers tip and old-fashioned legwork resulted in the recovery of seven Aggie rings taken in a July 6 burglary at the Clayton Williams Alumni Center, the University Police director said.

One of the stolen rings was donated by Gen. Earl Rudder, a former president of Texas A&M.

An anonymous caller to Crime Stoppers reported overhearing two teens in a convenience store saying they had left some rings in a park, UPD Director Bob Wiatt said.

After receiving the tip, UPD criminal investigation detectives Bert Kretzschmar, Will Scott and John Phillips searched Smith Park in College Station, near the convenience store where the conversation was overheard.

Tuesday's search turned up a purse stolen on the A&M campus, Wiatt said, so the detectives' suspicions that the park is a dumping ground for stolen goods were confirmed.

On Wednesday, Kretzschmar, Scott and Phillips returned with metal detectors and located the rings in deep grass just off a path following a search that lasted almost three hours, Wiatt said.

Even though no park was named by the caller, Wiatt said Smith Park was suspected and searched because it is near the convenience store, and because the UPD has had "problems" with nearby Southgate Village Apartments.

Wiatt said although the rings were found off campus, College Station police have not been involved in the investigation.

Wiatt and the three detectives

Wednesday presented Earl Rudder's ring to Margaret Rudder, although the ring will be returned to the collection in the Glitch library in Alumni Center, Wiatt said.

No formal report has been filed by the UPD, but Ray Martin, facilities manager for the center, told *The Battalion* after the theft there were no signs of forced entry. However, Martin said, a custodial worker reported hearing glass breaking around 6:30 a.m. on July 7.

Martin said a party was held at the center July 6 for incoming freshmen and their parents, and it was possible that someone stayed in the center overnight then took the rings and left.

Several clear, defined fingerprints were found on the case, he said. Martin said earlier plans had been made to fingerprint the center's staff and all custodial and food service workers who worked in the building, but Martin was unavailable Wednesday to confirm whether any action was taken.

In addition to Rudder's ring, other rings taken in the theft were donated by James Moore, Class of '26, William R. Taylor, Class of '39, R.L. Fambro, Class of '47, James Uptmore, Class of '53, Charles Jameler, Class of '65, and Jere Swartzell, Class of '79. All diamonds were removed except part of the stone in Fambro's ring.

Ron Spies, the controller of the Association of Former Students, said no fund has been set up to replace the diamonds, but he was confident that donations would more than meet the need.

"We aren't sure how much it will cost to replace the stones, but I'm sure we will have many dona-

tions," he said. "Most of the work was done by jewelers and since some of the rings are so old, they were probably done before there was any standard set up for cutting the stones. We'll just have to wait and see."

Martin said the alarm system on the ring cases was not active at the time of the burglary. Spies said Wednesday no plans have been made to install an alarm in the near future.

"There just is no easy way to hook one up without making it obvious," he said. "There is the building security system that is operational each night."

Wiatt said he thinks the recovery of the rings is evidence that the department does more than issue parking citations.

"We've received a lot of heat in the past weeks for ticketing too much," he said. "I think this proves that we do a whole lot more than that."

Rudder thinks the UPD did a good job finding her late husband's ring considering she thought it was gone for good.

"I didn't expect to ever see the ring again, other than in a portrait I had made," she said. "I had several rings stolen a few years ago, including my wedding ring, and I never saw them again, so I figured it was the same kind of situation."

"I don't think he (Gen. Rudder) ever took that ring off. He wore it through World War II, and when we got married he said he didn't need a wedding band because he already had his ring."

"When they started collecting the rings and asked Earl for his, he told them, 'There are two things of mine you can't have. My ring and my wife, in that order.'"

More women test positive for AIDS virus

HOUSTON (AP) — A greater percentage of women have tested positive for the AIDS virus at a local clinic this year than in 1987, and some experts believe the increase suggests that women aren't taking the deadly disease seriously.

In the first five months of 1988, AIDS virus antibodies were found in 3.4 percent of women tested at the Montrose clinic, nearly triple the 1.3 percent who tested positive last year.

Health officials said the increase indicates a need for women to exercise greater care in their sexual practices.

"If someone looks good enough for you to take to bed, he looks good enough for any of a number of others to have done so, male or female," said Dr. Richard Grimes, the clinic's chairman of the board.

Of the 25 women who tested positive, 13 probably acquired the virus from sexual partners who were either bisexual or used drugs, said Grimes, who is also a member of the faculty at the University of Texas School of Public Health.

"Young women who are still going to swinging singles bars have got to start thinking twice about that," Dr. Robert Awe, director of the AIDS clinic at Jefferson Davis Hospital, said.

The increase among women is not yet reflected in the cases reported by the Houston Health Department. Only 2 percent of the city's 2,210 adult AIDS cases are women.

But Robert Falletti, acting director of the bureau of epidemiology, said that does not mean the rate of infection is not increasing because the progression from exposure to the virus to the actual disease can take years.

Falletti said tests begun recently of women in the city's prenatal care and family planning clinics will help determine the extent of the problem.

State schools for retarded unsatisfactory

DALLAS (AP) — Eleven months after the state averted massive court-ordered fines by promising to improve conditions at schools for the retarded, the number of deaths at the facilities has risen, a newspaper reported Wednesday.

The *Dallas Morning News* said in a copyright story that 21 people have died in area schools since the state was found in contempt of court last Aug. 13 and agreed to improve the conditions for nearly 8,000 retarded Texans.

The lawyer for plaintiffs in a 14-year-old suit against the state has filed a motion to find the state in contempt again, saying the facilities are no safer now than they were before the first citation.

In the three quarterly reports issued since the settlement agreement was signed, 21 deaths were reported at schools in Denton, Fort Worth and Austin. This compares with 15 deaths at the same three schools in the nine months just before the agreement.

Lawyer David Ferleger's motion alleges that the state has failed to comply with an April 15 deadline to hire a doctor specializing in disabilities.

"It's an outrage," Ferleger said. "They've had months to do something, and conditions really haven't changed. People are still dying."

In addition to the deaths, the state has reported 37 confirmed cases of abuse in the three schools since the agreement was signed. This compares with 40 cases confirmed in the nine months just before the settlement.

And confirmed cases of neglect rose from four to 20 in the same period, the newspaper reported.

An official of the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation said there is no reason for the state to be forced back into U.S. District Judge Barefoot Sanders' court to reply to the motion filed by Ferleger on Tuesday.

"It's unfortunate for the court to be told we're not doing what we said we'd do," Jaylon Fincannon, deputy director of state services, said. "We've worked night and day for eight and nine months, and a lot of things have improved."

He said it was inappropriate to compare deaths on a quarterly basis instead of looking at them individually.

Group plans justice agencies reorganization

AUSTIN (AP) — A sweeping reorganization of the state's criminal justice agencies, involving a major increase in drug-enforcement operations, has been proposed by a group studying law enforcement in Texas.

A legislative subcommittee headed by state Sen. John Montford, D-Lubbock, has recommended that 10 state agencies be merged into two superagencies — the Department of Criminal Justice and the Department of Law Enforcement.

It also suggested that the Texas Department of Public Safety hire 750 additional narcotics officers to beef up its efforts in the war against drugs.

"If we have any hope of getting a handle on the problems we face in our criminal justice system, more emphasis must be placed on, and more resources must be allocated for, drug eradication," the subcommittee concluded in a written report.

Records show that 70 percent of all crimes

committed in Texas are drug-related or drug-influenced, the *Austin American-Statesman* reported in a Wednesday story. DPS has 191 narcotics officers and 1,554 highway patrol officers.

The subcommittee recommended the agency hire, at a minimum, 500 new DPS narcotics officers and 250 additional Texas Rangers for drug enforcement duty. The Rangers are a branch of the DPS.

DPS figures show it would cost about \$44.5 million to add the recommended number of narcotics officers to the payroll in 1990, the newspaper reported. The figure does not include the cost of support services, such as secretaries, office space and utilities.

Montford said the subcommittee is not trying to belittle DPS traffic enforcement operations, but members believe drug enforcement must become the agency's top priority. The committee does not recommend a reduction in patrol officers.

The subcommittee's recommendations about the proposed staff increases and agency mergers have been forwarded to its parent committee, the Special Committee on the Organization of State Agencies. The special committee — which is examining ways state agencies can be merged, reorganized or eliminated — will issue recommendations to the Legislature in January.

Col. Joe Milner, assistant director of DPS, said it was too early in the process for his agency to comment on the mergers. But he said the DPS was "delighted" with the recommendation calling for more narcotics officers.

"With the number (of narcotics officers) we have now, there are many, many requests for investigations that we never get around to," he said. A dramatic increase in drug enforcement officers "would have a major impact on the crime rate," Milner said.

The Montford subcommittee called for the creation of the Department of Law Enforcement, a superagency including the DPS, Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission's enforcement division, Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education, Commission on Fire Protection Personnel Standards and Education, and Private Investigators and Private Security Agencies Board.

Another new agency, called the Department of Criminal Justice, also was proposed. It would include the Department of Corrections, Board of Pardons and Paroles, Adult Probation Commission, Commission on Jail Standards and Criminal Justice Council.

Rep. Mark Stiles, D-Beaumont, sponsored the legislation creating the study panel. He said he will try to pass legislation mandating the mergers during the 1989 legislative session.

Gulf conflict continues; sessions useful to both

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — Iranian rebels said Wednesday they held two cities well inside Iran and had killed or wounded thousands of Iranian soldiers. Iran claimed Iraqi planes dropped chemical bombs on a provincial capital.

Ali Riza Jafer Zada, spokesman for the Mujahedeen Khalq rebels based in Iraq, also claimed its fighters shot down two Iranian warplanes and a helicopter gunship in the central sector of the 730-mile border warfront.

Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz of Iraq met in New York with Javier Perez de Cuellar, the U.N. secretary-general, still insisting on direct negotiations with Iran for a cease-fire in the 8-year-old war.

Perez de Cuellar also favors direct talks, but Iran has refused since announcing July 18 that it would accept a year-old U.N. peace resolution.

Aziz said before the meeting with Perez de Cuellar that Iraq, which accepted the resolution soon after it was passed, "shall not be stampeded into making a hasty step."

The secretary-general met Tuesday with Ali Akbar Velayati, foreign minister of Iran. After talking with Aziz, he said the sessions had been useful and both countries "are interested in putting an end to the conflict."

Tehran's media said Tuesday that Iranian soldiers had regained Esfahabad and killed 1,100 rebels, but did not mention the Mujahedeen Khalq on Wednesday.

Dispatches reported events on the southern front, however, and said Iranian forces killed 1,500 enemy soldiers in driving Iraqi units back across the border at Khorramshahr.

At the central front, the rebels claimed to have "crushed" an Iranian offensive and recaptured Esfahabad, 60 miles inside Iran. The National Liberation Army claimed its soldiers had killed or wounded 30,000 Iranian soldiers in this week's offensive.

Jafer Zada, the rebel spokesman, said Mujahedeen Khalq fighters also controlled the nearby city of Karad.

None of the claims could be verified because foreign reporters are allowed into battle areas only on rare guided tours. Military analysts have been skeptical of rebel casualty reports in the past.

Iraq said its jet fighters flew 205 sorties, including an attack on a Hawk missile battery east of the Karun River in southern Iraq, and helicopter gunships flew 73 sorties.

A Baghdad military communique said 15 armed Iranian boats tried to approach an Iraqi naval ship and three were sunk in the ensuing battle, but it did not say where the encounter took place. Iraqi warships are not known to have operated in the Persian Gulf for years.

Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency, monitored in Cyprus, said Iraqi warplanes dropped chemical bombs near Bakhtaran, a provincial capital in the central. It said civilians in the Chahar-Zebar district were wounded but did not give figures.

The Iraqis frequently accuse Iraq of using chemical weapons, which are banned under the 1925 Geneva Convention. Iraq has acknowledged their use, but claims Iran introduced chemical weapons to the war.

Iraqi war communiques said anti-aircraft gunners shot down an Iranian F-5 fighter in the south. Iraq did not comment on the claim, but said Iranian forces shot down two Iraqi warplanes.

In its report on air operations, the Iraqi command said all planes returned safely.

Tehran dispatches said Iranian gunships flew 120 sorties, helping push Iraqi troops back, and jet fighters flew 13.

Iraq claimed to have captured 12,207 Iranian soldiers since Iran announced acceptance of the cease-fire resolution, part of its strategy to balance the numbers of prisoners before peace talks.

That would bring the number held by Iraq to about 25,000, nearly double the previous figure given by the International Committee of the Red Cross. The Red Cross says Iran has about 50,000 prisoners.

Justice officials say department has no 'malaise'

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two acting Justice Department officials on Wednesday insisted the agency is running smoothly, with no hint of the "deep malaise" portrayed by two of their predecessors who quit in protest earlier this year.

At their confirmation hearing for permanent positions, Francis A. Keating II and Edward S.G. Dennis Jr. painted a rosy picture of department operations under outgoing Attorney General Edwin Meese III.

Sen. Howell Heflin, D-Ala., who presided at the Senate Judiciary Committee session, warned Keating and Dennis that "removal of clouds is essential."

Since May, Keating has served as acting associate attorney general, the department's No. 3 position. A month later, Dennis took over the top spot in the criminal division on an acting basis. President Reagan has nominated both men to hold those jobs permanently for the remaining half-year of his administration.

On Tuesday, former Deputy Attorney General Arnold Burns testified that when he resigned March 29 a "deep malaise" had set in at the department in the face of Meese's legal problems.

William E. Weld, who preceded Dennis as criminal division chief, told the committee that if Meese were an ordinary citizen, he probably would have been prosecuted for taking gratuities from E. Robert Wallach, a long-time friend of the attorney general.

Keating told the committee that when he went to the department from a top Treasury Department position, "I was under the impression there was a black hole, that morale was shattered. I found that was not the case. Morale was not on the floor."

"I don't think morale was as serious a problem as portrayed by Mr. Burns and Mr. Weld, at least since April. At this time I think the department is functioning well."

"Have you seen an instance where Meese acted improperly?" asked Sen. Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah and a Meese supporter.

Keating: "All of my professional associations with the attorney general have been correct and proper." He called Burns and Weld "professionals, men of integrity and decency," who simply had a different view of department morale.