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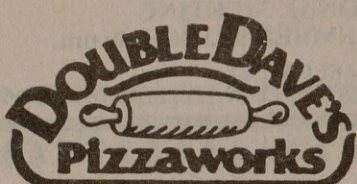
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Fender bender

The driver of this Mercury Cougar is consoled by a friend after she was involved in a collision with a Chevrolet pickup at the corner of Wellborn Road

and Old Main Monday afternoon. There were no apparent injuries in the accident.

Photo by Phelan M. Ebenha

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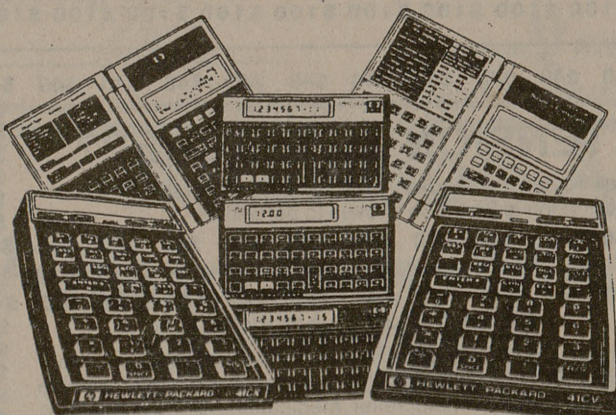
MBA/Law Symposium Memorial Student Center Wednesday, November 9

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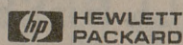
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TDC slow to punish guards accused of abuse, report says

HUNTSVILLE (AP) — Guards within the Texas Department of Corrections accused of inmate abuse cases are being disciplined as long as two years after the alleged incidents, a report filed with the federal court says.

The explanations are contained in court documents filed last month in response to allegations by federal prison monitors last January that prison officials had failed to deal swiftly or harshly enough with guards who abuse prisoners, the *Houston Chronicle* reported Monday.

The monitors, who oversee the prison's compliance with court-ordered reforms under the landmark Ruiz lawsuit, documented three cases of inmate abuse at the Wynne Unit in Huntsville that they said were three of the more blatant examples of how employee discipline for use of force violations is not always prompt, effective and adequate.

In one case, guard Michael Eubanks urinated in inmate's Shannon Davis' food. It took the department more than 15 months to decide to fire Eubanks, but he resigned before he was fired. The incident occurred Jan. 22, 1986, but Eubanks was not notified of his pending dismissal until July 13, 1987.

The delay was attributed to a backlog of cases that needed polygraph tests given to witnesses, a shortage of investigators and a five-month delay while prison attorneys determined whether urinating in an inmate's food tray should be considered as a use of force issue or some other form of misconduct.

The monitor's report, however, said the guard first slammed the inmate's head into a metal windowsill because he refused to turn and face a wall. The guard later urinated in the food tray.

U.S. District Judge William Wayne

Justice of Tyler ordered prison officials in September to explain why it had taken so long to discipline employees and to document what steps had been taken to ensure that such delays do not occur.

Kirk Brown, the prison system's general counsel, said he believes changes the department made in employee disciplinary cases have corrected problems that the monitors identified. Those changes include eliminating some of the time-consuming regional review committees and requirements that deputy di-

rectors approve disciplinary actions. Most of the responsibility for disciplining employees rests with unit wardens, Brown said.

In other incidents documented by monitors, inmate Lazano Beltran, was pinned to his bunk Oct. 2, 1985, while Lt. Robert Adams held a pillow over his face and struck him with his fists and riot baton. Adams was fired seven months later for an unrelated inmate abuse incident.

Beltran, 35, was released on manda-

tory supervision Jan. 12. He had been serving a five-year sentence for theft in Kaufman County.

A third abuse incident occurred Oct. 20, 1986, when inmate James Ferguson was slammed to the floor and handcuffed inmate turned around quickly during a cell search.

The guard accused in that case, Darryl Richardson, (no relation to inmate) received a three-month disciplinary probation, but the action was taken until 19 months later.

Report: Texas's economy could withstand hard times

AUSTIN (AP) — The Texas economy is more diversified and better able to withstand blows to any one industry, according to the November edition of Fiscal Notes released Monday by the state comptroller.

The state's regions shared good economic news in fiscal year 1988, although they didn't benefit equally, an article in publication, which is put out by Comptroller Bob Bullock's office, said.

Each region has found a base of industries to give economic strength, the report said, adding, "Problems in one industry — such as oil and gas — no longer sink the entire economy of a region."

The Texas region along the Mexican border continued strong growth, spurred by twin-plant expansion in Mexico, the article said.

Twin plants involve factories in Mex-

ico that assemble parts made in Texas, it said.

The McAllen area gained 3,600 new non-farm jobs by August 1988, a 4.1 percent increase from the previous August.

During the same period, Laredo's work force grew by 2,100 jobs, or 5.9 percent, the article said.

Gulf Coast manufacturing — especially petrochemicals — grew mostly because of increased exports that benefited from the falling dollar, according to the comptroller's office.

Petrochemical industry growth stimulated plant expansions, which generated construction and engineering activity.

From August 1987 to August 1988, Houston non-farm employment rose by 2.6 percent, or 36,300 jobs.

All other major Gulf Coast cities also had job gains, including 2,300 in Corpus

Christi and 1,700 in Brazoria.

Among events helping the East economy were the dollar's lower value and a trade agreement on Canadian beer imports, the article said.

The Longview-Marshall area had the most jobs in East Texas, with employment up by 1,700, or 2.6 percent.

The Plains region's economy also helped by a manufacturing resurgence. The falling value of the U.S. dollar helped apparel, electronics and other manufacturers, the report said.

Farmers also received good prices for cotton and beef, and the region's increase in oilfield equipment manufacturing because of oil prices holding relatively steady.

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