

The Battalion



WEATHER

FORECAST for SATURDAY:
Partly cloudy and significantly warmer. Southeast winds.

HIGH:68 LOW:45

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College Station, Texas

Friday, February 24, 1989

Fire guts dance hall; cause remains unknown



Photo by Dean Saito



Photo by Frederick D. Joe

The Texas Hall of Fame, left, was gutted by flames Thursday evening. Above, a College Station firefighter, from a unit called in to back up the Bryan Fire Department, takes a quick air and water break before attacking the blaze again.

By Fiona Soltes

STAFF WRITER

The interior of the Texas Hall of Fame, a country and western dance hall on FM 2818, was gutted Thursday night by a fire that burned for about an hour before firefighters brought it under control. The cause of the fire, which started near the front of the building, is unknown.

Mike Donoho, assistant fire chief of the Bryan Fire Department, said the department was notified of the fire at about 5:30 p.m. The department responded with four pumper trucks and one ladder truck. The College Station Fire Department sent one ladder truck and one pumper truck for back-up.

"Upon arriving at the scene, the first units reported that the front portion of the building was fully engulfed in flames," Donoho said.

Donoho said the firefighters had trouble entering the building because the doors were locked, but the worst problems came with the heat built up within the building.

"In this type of building, the heat generally stays inside," he said. "It's very difficult for the firefighters to work for a long period of time. They have to come out and refresh themselves often because the heat takes away a lot of their energy. We had to rotate crews pretty rapidly."

The roof of the building was sagging from the flame and heat damage, he said. Firefighters had to cut a hole in the roof of the building to vent some of the heat from the interior of the building.

Chuck Norman, the owner's brother-in-law and the last person to

be inside the building before the fire, said he left the club at about 4:30 to run an errand. Upon returning at about 5:30, Norman said, he found the building on fire.

"I started to go inside the building, but I just couldn't because of the fire," Norman, an employee, said. "There wasn't anything to see but a solid sheet of flames."

He saw a woman in the parking lot who told him she called the fire department, he said. At about that time, he said, the door blew off the popcorn machine inside the building.

Norman said he and other employees are planning to rebuild the hall, starting the clean-up today if possible. But Donoho said the area would have to be investigated first. Investigators from the city of Bryan and the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission are looking into the cause of the fire, he said.

"It's up to the investigators whether or not they let people get in there and move things around," he said. "They really need daylight to get in there and see things as they are. There's a lot of heat damage, a lot of smoke damage and a lot of fire damage."

He said the investigations will focus on the area near the front of the building, where the offices and ticket window are located.

Paul Emola, owner of the hall, said he has no insurance on the building.

"Hopefully, we'll re-open before too long," Emola said. "But it will take a lot of work and lots of help from friends."

Senate committee votes against Tower, Bush

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate Armed Services Committee voted Thursday to reject John Tower's nomination as defense secretary, splitting 11-9 along party lines as it handed President Bush the first major defeat of his administration.

The full Senate is expected to make a final decision on the nomination next week.

During two and one-half hours of debate — mostly in the form of speeches — before the vote, majority Democrats said they felt no joy in opposing Tower but were compelled to do so. Some cited allegations over the past month of excessive drinking and of womanizing.

Republicans alleged partisanship

and suggested Tower was held to too high a standard.

Sen. Malcolm Wallop of Wyoming said, "The majority believes we are confirming a defense god, not a defense secretary."

In Tokyo, where Bush was attending the funeral of Japanese Emperor Hirohito, White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said the president was sticking by Tower and "there's no consideration of any change."

If the full Senate should turn down Tower, it would be the first time in history a newly elected president had suffered a rejection of a nominee to his first Cabinet.

Texas, other countries pitch in for collider

WASHINGTON (AP) — Non-federal sources can provide a "substantial" chunk of the \$5.9 billion bill to build the super collider, Rep. Joe Barton testified Thursday as Congress begins wrestling with how much to budget for the giant atom smasher.

India has already agreed to put \$50 million into the high-energy physics project, Texas has committed \$1 billion, and officials of Japan, Taiwan, Korea and several Western European nations have held preliminary cost-sharing discussions with U.S. officials, Barton told the House subcommittee on energy research and development.

President Bush has endorsed the superconducting super collider and recommended \$250 million be appropriated in next year's budget toward initial construction of what would be the largest scientific instrument ever built.

The Department of Energy has chosen a site in Ellis County for the 53-mile underground tunnel, but Congress last year agreed only to spend \$100 million on the project and decreed none of the money could be used for construction.

Robert O. Hunter Jr., director of the office of energy research at the Energy Department, said "several hundred million" is a minimum estimate of the foreign contributions to the project, but the exact sum won't be known for another year or two.

The project is expected to face tough funding challenges this year as Congress grapples with budget cuts to a host of programs as well as funding requests from other high-energy physics and basic research projects.

Burton Richter, director of the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center, the world's highest energy electron accelerator, said there is a "real dilemma" in juggling funds between existing high-energy projects and construction of the super collider.

If those programs are not supported in the

termin, by the time the SSC is built there won't be the scientists around to run it, Richter said.

Leon M. Lederman, director of the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory in Illinois, also urged the panel not to abandon other high-energy projects during construction of the SSC.

Barton, a Republican whose district includes the SSC site, argued the project is vital to the country's world leadership in high energy physics.

"If we ultimately lose our leadership position in high-energy physics, we will lose our leading edge in world economics," Barton testified. He said he had seen estimates that show with construction of the SSC, superconductivity projects would generate a market of more than \$10 billion annually by the year 2000.

"Currently, fully one-third of the production making up our gross national product is based on knowledge of the atom," Barton testified.

Senate OKs Ramirez for UT regent board with unanimous vote

AUSTIN (AP) — The Senate on Thursday confirmed Dr. Mario Ramirez, a Starr County physician, as a University of Texas regent. The vote was 30-0.

Ramirez is the only non-Anglo on the nine-member board, and replaced Chester Upham Jr., Mineral Wells, who withdrew shortly after being nominated by Gov. Bill Clements.

Upham, a former state Republican chairman, withdrew two weeks ago after black and Hispanic senators complained that Clements' appointment of Upham and two other Anglo males had ignored women and minorities.

Critics of the appointments said they had the votes to block all three nominees if a change was not made.

Ramirez, a former member of the college coordinating board, had no opposition and received the rare tribute of seven senators rising Thursday to say he was an excellent choice for regent.

Sen. Chet Edwards, chairman of the committee that reviewed Ramirez's appointment, said, "I think the fight was worth fighting, I can think of no principle more important than that of all citizens of this state ought to have a right to the governing of our major institutions within Texas."

"I think perhaps the governor saved his best appointment for last," Edwards, D-Duncanville, said.

Black Sen. Eddie Bernice Johnson, D-Dallas, said, "I'm convinced, I think, that we have made an impact with our message."

She said 71 percent of Texas' population is made up of females, blacks and Hispanics, and added, "I believe we will see a great deal more sensitivity" on appointments.

Sen. Judith Zathiri, D-Laredo, said Ramirez's five children include two physicians, two lawyers — one a state district judge — and a teacher.

"Dr. Ramirez will serve as a role model for all of our children to show our children no matter who you are, or how poor, or where you are born, that you will have the opportunity to rise to the highest levels," she said.

Sen. Hector Uribe, D-Brownsville, said Ramirez "is already a legend in his own lifetime in Starr County and in the Rio Grande Valley."

Other nominees confirmed 30-0 Thursday included:

Texas Board on Aging — Dr. Carl Westbrock, Smith.

Public Safety Commission — Albert Alkek, Victoria.

State Bar of Texas Directors — Dr. Joseph Beneke, Harris; Earl Chapman, Travis.

Texas Motor Vehicle Commission — William Collins Jr., Tarrant; Norman Jones, Harris.

Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse — J. Coley Cowden, Midland; Jerry Deere, Brazoria; Randall Schmidt, Tarrant.

Gulf Coast Waste Disposal Authority — Dr. Charles Ladoulis, Harris; Kathleen Vaughn, Chambers; Philip Werner, Galveston.

Texas Housing Agency Directors — Margie Bingham, Fort Bend; Edmund Carrera, El Paso.

State Property Tax Board — George Bobbitt, Harris; Marvin Jones, Hutchinson; Arthur White, Dallas.

Texas Water Commission — Buck Wynne III, Dallas.

Prof. urges education leaders to prepare for world of future

By Alan Sembera

SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Education leaders must change their ways of thinking to meet the changing needs of a growing population, Texas A&M architecture professor George J. Mann said Thursday night at the 1989 Faculty Lecture.

"We're going to have to become more aware of global issues," Mann said. "The world's not going to get bigger to accommodate the 9 billion people we're expecting by the year 2040."

This rapid increase from the present population of about 5 billion people means research and education programs must focus more attention on population planning, Mann said.

The increasing population will put enormous burdens on natural resources such as water, air, energy and food, he said, and these pressures will pose a threat to peace and security around the world.

Instead of spending enormous amounts of money on nuclear and chemical weapons, he said, governments should direct efforts towards solving people problems.

Educators and researchers must work in multi-disciplinary teams if they want to be effective in solving global problems, the professor said.

The faculty at A&M has a wide scope of available information, Mann said, because the campus contains experts in a wide variety of fields.

He said his field of architecture will play a large role in planning for the growth of the Earth's population in the 21st Century. Architects must think in wider

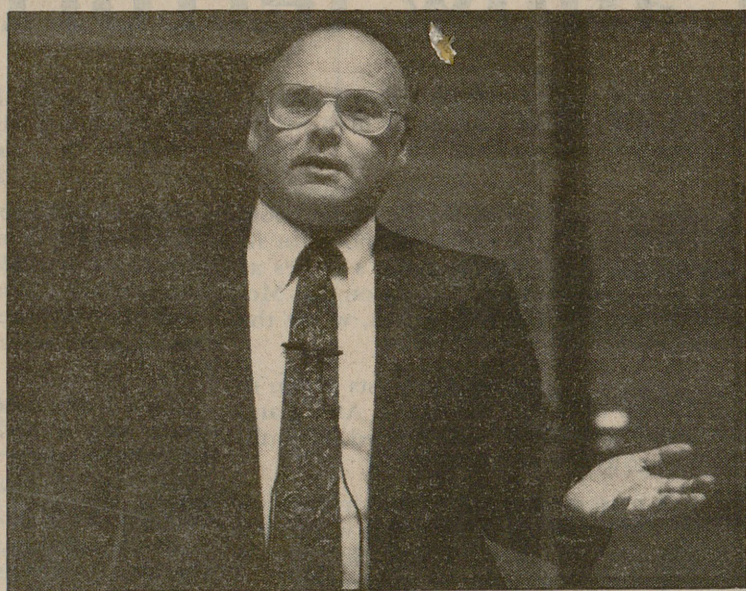


Photo by Kathy Haveman

George J. Mann

terms of environment, beauty, people and solving world problems, Mann said.

"As (Henry David) Thoreau said, 'What is the use of a house if you haven't got a habitable planet to put it on?'" Mann said.

"Urban planning, architecture, landscaping architecture and construction science have to work together if we're going to be effective in a global setting," he said.

One example of a trend in architecture that must change, Mann said, is the construction of complex buildings that have un-openable windows and can't be naturally ventilated.

"When our grandchildren ultimately run out of fuel as a

source, they'll be stuck with a lot of buildings that won't be operable or inhabitable," he said.

Another change that architecture must adapt to is the increasing percentage of elderly people, Mann said.

Most architecture currently emphasizes isolating old people, he said, but in the future it will need to stress interaction of all ages.

In addition to teaching, Mann is a practicing architect and has undertaken numerous research, technical assistance and consulting projects throughout the United States and in numerous other countries.

Bush, Baker use Japan trip to pursue peace

TOKYO (AP) — President Bush used the occasion of Friday's imperial Japanese funeral to pursue a Middle East peace, while his secretary of state challenged the Soviet Union to pitch in with deeds instead of "simply rhetorical exercises."

On the eve of the services for the late Emperor Hirohito, Bush engaged in a round of fast-paced diplomacy, meeting with a succession of world leaders including Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Israeli President Chaim Herzog and Jordan's King Hussein.

After Bush's round of meetings on Thursday, Secretary of State James A. Baker III suggested the Soviets should contribute to the peace process in a "concrete way" by establishing full diplomatic relations with Israel, using its influence in Syria and denouncing "radical countries" such as Libya.

Baker said a "new dynamic" for peace existed in the area and that Bush hoped to nurture it. The president's sessions with Mideast leaders provided a counterpoint to Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze's 10-day tour through the region, where he attempted to advance Moscow's role.

A cold drizzle fell Friday as Bush and other leaders from 163 nations prepared to pay their final respect to Hirohito. An estimated 10,000 official guests were to fill two large tents at the funeral site and hundreds of thousands more to line the streets to witness the funeral procession.

The 13-hour funeral began in the early morning with a private ceremony at the Imperial palace, to be followed later by a solemn ceremony in two giant, open-sided tents at Tokyo's Shinjuku Imperial Gardens. The park in downtown Tokyo once served as the garden for the imperial household.