

SAA shanty torn down by vandals

By Richard Tijerina

STAFF WRITER

The shanty that Students Against Apartheid built on campus between the Academic Building and Harrington Tower on Sunday was torn down Wednesday night, and the organization's president said he thought representatives from a dormitory may have been responsible.

Organization members discovered the shanty in a pile Thursday morning. Kevin Shive, president of SAA, said it had been vandalized two nights before it was destroyed.

Shive said it was only hypothetical that the halls were involved in the shanty's destruction.

Three letters, "E.S.L.," had been spray painted on the wall of the shanty on Wednesday by someone that Shive said was not related to the organization. He said it was possible the letters were a derogatory slogan written by one hall toward another.

Shive said the two halls are involved in a competition, and destroying the shanty with the letters on it could have been a possible motive because the structure was in a high visibility area.

"The saying on there meant nothing to me," Shive said. "There are two dorms that are in big time competition with each other on campus right now. The words meant nothing to me but apparently everyone who lives in dorms on campus knows what it is."

The organization's permit allows them to keep the shanty up until March 8. Shive said the SAA plans to rebuild the shanty this weekend and keep it up until the permit expires.

This was the fourth shanty the SAA had put up since the spring of 1988. One shanty last semester was vandalized by two students who pinned a dead bird on the structure's wall.

The University Police is investigating both the tearing down of the shanty and the possible competition between the two halls.

Emergency service gives advice for tornado season

By Juliette Rizzo

STAFF WRITER

Because of the possibility of an increase in severe weather in Brazos County during the spring, emergency planning officials want citizens to be aware of safety precautions.

As part of "Severe Weather Awareness Week," the Brazos County Office of Civil Defense & Emergency Planning is offering helpful tips for citizens in case of tornado-producing thunderstorms, hail, high winds or flooding.

Jake Canglose, Brazos County emergency management and civil defense coordinator, said people need to be reminded that severe weather is a possibility during this time of year so they can be prepared ahead of time.

The peak season for severe weather in Texas is March through July, he said. The severe weather tapers off after the spring and then picks up again in the months of November and December. Severe thunderstorms that may produce tornadoes are caused by weather fronts moving through the area, he said.

The Brazos Valley usually has a lot of these thunderstorms often accompanied by high winds, hail and flash flooding.

Canglose said that when such storms occur, the creation of tornadoes is a possibility.

A severe tornado blew through Caldwell in November 1987, causing several deaths and severe property damage.

In November 1983, a tornado struck Allen Farms in the southern portion of Brazos County, hurting several people and causing substantial damage, and in Decem-

ber 1984, Feathercrest Farms, located east of Bryan on Highway 21, also was hit by a tornado.

Canglose said the loss of life and property damage can be reduced by being knowledgeable of safety precautions and aware of severe weather bulletins.

Knowing the difference between a tornado watch and a warning could save your life, he said.

A watch means conditions are favorable for tornadoes to form. A warning means a tornado has been sighted in the area and precautionary safety measures should be taken immediately.

Other safety measures to follow in the case of a tornado include:

- If a tornado warning is issued or a tornado is sighted, take shelter away from windows, in an interior bathroom, hallway or closet on the ground floor — do not stay in a mobile home or a car since both are easily moved by a tornado.

- If inside, take along blankets and sleeping bags for protection from falling debris and shattering glass.

- If outside, lie flat in a ditch or ravine and cover your head with your arms — do not try to outrun a tornado or drive away from it in your car.

- Have a portable radio, batteries, flashlights, prescription medicine and bottled water readily available, because if a tornado strikes, electricity, gas, water and sewer service may be temporarily disrupted.

- If you experience damaging weather or tornado activity, call your local law enforcement agency.

Additional information on severe weather safety precautions is available at the Brazos County Emergency Management/Civil Defense Office.

Woman sues officials, MHMR after 51 years of confinement

AUSTIN (AP) — A woman who spent 51 years in Texas mental institutions received "pathetic and abysmal" care, and is entitled to \$2.2 million because her unnecessary commitment robbed her of normal abilities, her lawyer says.

But an attorney for the state told a district court jury that Opal Petty, 70, is owed "not one dime" because she legally was committed for treatment of schizophrenia and received the best available care after being abandoned by her family.

Petty spent 37 years in the Austin State Hospital for the mentally ill after being committed at age 16 in 1934. She later was transferred to San Angelo State School for the mentally retarded, where she spent

14 years before being released to a foster home in 1985.

Her attorneys contend that Petty is not, and never has been, schizophrenic or mentally retarded.

The suit filed by Petty against the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation and four current or former officials alleges that her half-century confinement illegally deprived her of "liberty, privacy, and other fundamental rights."

It also alleges the state did not provide proper services and failed to release her to a community home after her psychiatric problem subsided within months of her 1934 commitment.

"Because of 51 years of involuntary confinement, Ms. Petty retreated to stereotyped behavior typically found in a person institutionalized in a prison-like environment," the suit states. "Ms. Petty was denied the ability to learn the basic skills necessary to function independently."

Since 1986, Petty has been living in San Angelo with her nephew, Clint Denson, and his family.

Denson and his wife, Linda Kaufman, located Ms. Petty in the state school after learning about her for the first time at a 1985 family reunion.

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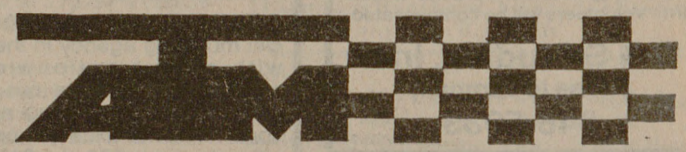
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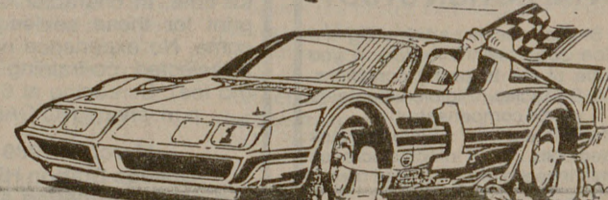
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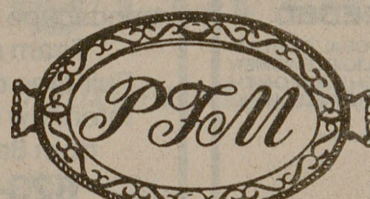
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