

Friday, June 16, 1989

A&M researchers optimistic about Texas helmet law

By Holly Beeson

STAFF WRITER

Texas A&M researchers estimate 115 lives will be saved annually in Texas because of the mandatory motorcycle helmet law that will go into effect Sept. 1.

This law will include riders of mopeds and scooters, or any two-wheeled motorized vehicles.

A 15-member Public Administration Research group, headed by political scientist Dr. Kim Hill, examined the two prior changes in the helmet law Texas made in the past 20 years.

They found that the 1968 mandatory helmet law saved 650 lives until

1977, at which time the law was relaxed, requiring only riders 18 and under to wear helmets.

From 1977 to 1988, the group estimated that as many as 1,450 Texans died because of the weaker version of the law.

"Perhaps what's most remarkable is that when the state dropped the comprehensive helmet law in 1977, the death rate increased by 68 percent and the injury rate increased by 20 percent annually," Hill said.

Unlike the new law, the previous mandatory helmet law was enacted because of pressure from the federal government.

"The first law (in 1968) was controversial because most motorcycle riders didn't want the law, but Uncle

"It returns the benefit to the public. The average motorcycle rider is relatively young and we can expect them to be important contributors to the economy and tax-paying citizens."

— Dr. Kim Hill, political scientist

Sam really forced it on the states," Hill said. "There was a provision in federal law that if a state didn't require all motorcycle riders to wear helmets, they'd lose certain federal funds."

The federal law was changed in 1977 so states wouldn't lose funds if they required riders under 18 to

wear helmets.

Hill said the change in federal law induced the biker community to pressure the Texas Legislature to relax the state law — and it worked.

"The law stayed enforced that way until this year," he said. "The strong commitment of a handful of state legislators this year to the public

health benefits of having a comprehensive helmet requirement was what finally brought about the current change that we see now."

Hill said the new mandatory helmet law will impact society in at least three ways.

First, he said, the new law should reduce or at least hold down future increases of motorcycle insurance.

Second, people should expect to see lower public costs, Hill said.

"Other research has shown that an unusually high percentage of motorcycle riders who did not wear helmets but who were injured in accidents didn't have sufficient insurance to cover the cost of their hospitalization and care," he said. "A large number of these people ended

up on public welfare because the state had to cover the cost of part of their hospitalization and rehabilitation treatment."

The third thing is the fact that lives will be saved, Hill said.

"It returns the benefit to the public," he said. "The average motorcycle rider is relatively young and we can expect them to be important contributors to the economy and tax-paying citizens."

"A young Aggie that stays alive might do great things for the economy."

The fine for not wearing a helmet will be \$45 in College Station and \$44 in Bryan.

A&M's prevention unit offers new line on crime

UPD gives information, asks students to help solve cases by dialing 845-6500

By Alan Sembera

SENIOR STAFF WRITER

The University Police Department's new crime prevention unit has a line on crime. Crimeline, the unit's recorded phone message, gives a report of the previous day's crimes and asks for help in solving them.

Crimeline, which began operating this week at 845-6500, also gives tips on preventing crime.

In addition to running Crimeline, the crime prevention unit, which began about a month ago, will devote its time to educating the public on how to protect itself from crime.

"Our goal is to make A&M a safe place to

work and go to school," said Officer Betty LeMay, one of two full-time crime prevention officers working in the unit.

The officers in the unit will attempt to prevent crime by giving lectures and speeches as well as by conducting building security surveys, LeMay said.

Lt. Bert Kretzschmar, the other crime prevention officer, said crime prevention surveys consist of going to a building and examining its doors, lighting, shrubbery and other factors to determine how safe and secure the place is.

"We look at it from a criminal's point of view," he said. "How would we do it? We see it done all the time."

Kretzschmar said stressing crime prevention isn't new for UPD, but it hasn't been anyone's specific responsibility. Now crime prevention will be his and LeMay's full-time job.

Kretzschmar and LeMay are not new at A&M. Kretzschmar has worked at UPD for five years, and LeMay has worked there for four years.

"We know the problems," Kretzschmar said. "We know what people have to put up with at A&M."

Property crime has been high at A&M in the past, and Kretzschmar said there has been a slight increase in violent crimes. Educating students, faculty and workers at A&M is one way to help decrease crime, he said, because

many people are unaware of what goes on here.

"Females go jogging alone at night," he said. "Then when we stop and tell them it's dangerous, they're like, 'Not here at A&M — that stuff doesn't happen here.'"

Bob Wiatt, director of security and campus police, said he is happy to have gotten the crime prevention unit approved by the University. He said he sees a need to make students aware of crime on campus.

"We've been trying to get this established for some time," Wiatt said. "A&M is not Alice in Wonderland, it's part of the real world."

"Anyone can become a victim on this campus, just as they can in any metropolitan city."

Clements works to wrap up business from 1989 regular session

AUSTIN (AP) — Gov. Bill Clements signed more than 800 bills into law by Thursday night, highlighted by measures to build more prison cells, overhaul the criminal justice system and bring water and sewer systems to substandard "colonias."

Working against a Sunday deadline to wrap up work from the 1989 Legislature's regular session, Clements said he had neither finished

analyzing the \$47.4 billion budget nor issued vetoes of bills he doesn't like.

"I'm saving those for last," he said of any possible vetoes.

The governor said he had worked until 1:30 a.m. Thursday and returned to his Capitol office later in the morning to wade through the total of 1,081 bills left by the Legislature when it adjourned on May 29.

"I've got about 200 to go," he said.

Under the Texas Constitution, Clements has until midnight Sunday to finish the job, although he said he expected to be wrapped up by Friday night. "I will, I guarantee you," he told news reporters while adding a warning: "It might be pretty late."

The governor said he was particularly pleased with the criminal justice overhaul.

That legislation calls for 11,000 new prison beds along with new sentencing options allowing judges to place inmates in new community facilities instead of state prisons.

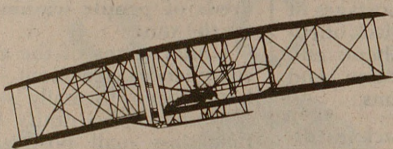
"By our action, we are putting the justice back into the criminal justice system in Texas," he said.

The prison reform package, written by Rep. Allen Hightower, D-Huntsville, and Sen. Bob McFar-

land, R-Arlington, is among the most important and far-reaching actions by the Legislature.

Texas is under a federal court order to keep the state prison population under 95 percent of capacity. Counties have complained that state inmates awaiting transfer are backed up in county jails, costing local governments and resulting in local crowding.

FAMOUS FIRSTS



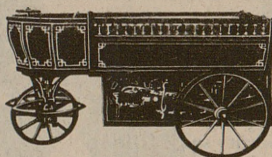
FIRST AIRPLANE

The Wright Brothers began experimenting with kites in the 1890's and in 1903 became the first to sustain flight for 852 feet over the beach at Kitty Hawk.



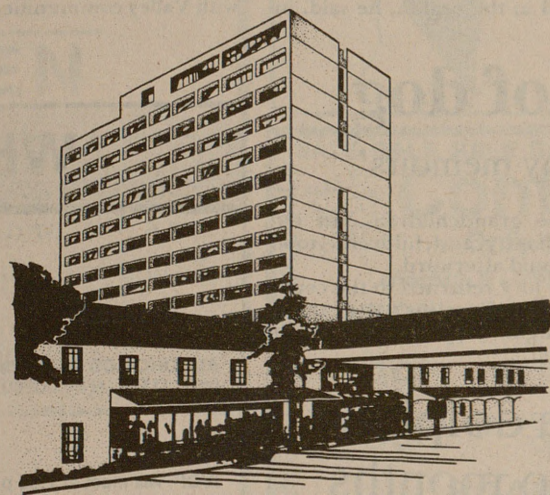
FIRST LOVE

She was the only one who didn't laugh when you fell off the jungle gym and broke your leg. She even let you win at checkers. What a woman!



FIRST CAR

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\$3.00 BARGAIN MATINEE DAILY ALL SHOWS BEFORE 6:00 PM AT SELECTED THEATRES-CHECK SHOWTIMES

POST OAK THREE 1500 Harvey Road 693-2796 NO HOLDS BARRED (PG-13) 2:25 4:35 7:25 9:35 FIELD OF DREAMS (PG) 2:15 4:25 7:15 9:25 ROADHOUSE (R) 2:00 4:20 7:00 9:20	CINEMA THREE 315 College Ave. 693-2796 INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE (PG-13) No Passes No Coupons No VIP tickets 1:30 4:10 7:00 9:45 Scandal (R) 2:00 4:00 7:30 9:30
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SCHULMAN THEATRES

\$3.00 BARGAIN MATINEE ALL SEATS BEFORE 6PM NO MATINEES BEFORE 6PM AT SCHULMAN SIX

SCHULMAN 6 2002 E. 29th 775-2463 SEE NO EVIL HEAR NO EVIL R 2:20 7:20 4:20 9:35 DREAM TEAM PG-13 2:15 7:00 4:45 9:35 SAY ANYTHING PG-13 2:10 7:00 4:40 9:30 FLETCH LIVES PG-13 2:20 7:10 4:45 9:35 CHANCES ARE PG-13 2:05 7:00 4:35 9:45	PLAZA 3 226 Southwest Blvd 693-2472 MAJOR LEAGUE R DOLBY 2:10 7:10 4:45 9:45 DEAD POETS SOCIETY PG DOLBY 2:05 7:15 4:40 9:30 STAR TREK V PG DOLBY 2:00 7:00 4:35 9:35 MANOR EAST 3 Manor East Mall 623-8700 PET SEMATARY R DOLBY 2:10 7:20 4:40 9:50 GHOSTBUSTERS II PG DOLBY 2:00 7:00 4:30 9:35 PINK CADILLAC PG-13 2:15 7:15 4:45 9:45
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\$50 \$50 \$50 \$50 \$50 \$50 \$50 \$50 \$50 \$50 \$50 \$50 \$50 \$50 \$50

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