

POLICE BEAT

The following incidents were reported to the University Police Department from June 29 through Tuesday:

BURGLARY:
 • An Apple Macintosh computer was taken from an office in Sbis Dining Hall.

• A Compuadd computer, a hard disk, monitor and printer were stolen from an office in the Psychology Building. A video cassette recorder and a camcorder also were stolen.

• An upright welding machine was stolen from the utility plant on Olsen Road.

• A woman reported that a staff parking sticker was removed from her car.

MISDEMEANOR THEFT:
 • Nine bicycles, two bicycle tires and one backpack were reported stolen from various locations around campus.

• A Hobby Hall resident reported that someone entered his room and stole his compact disc player and one disc.

• A student reported that the rear license plate was taken from her car.

• A man reported that a radar detector was stolen from his motorcycle.

• A student reported that someone stole his wallet from his backpack, which he left unattended in the Sterling C. Evans Library.

CRIMINAL MISCHIEF:

• Several new campus markers were damaged.

• A man reported that someone tried to hotwire a utility vehicle.

• A window in the Reed McDonald Building was broken.

CREDIT CARD ABUSE:

• Someone rented a car at Eastwood Airport by using an expired American Express Card that he said was valid.

WEAPONS PROHIBITED:

• After stopping a vehicle for a traffic violation, an officer found that the driver and passenger had a firearm and a small amount of marijuana.

CRIMINAL TRESPASS:

• A student reported that someone entered her apartment at Married Student Housing twice.

• A student at Married Student Housing reported that someone entered her apartment and removed a flower from a vase and put it on the table. Investigation continues.

HARASSMENT:

• The Texas A&M Employment Office received three obscene phone calls.

• A Caldwell man reported that while he was in the third-floor restroom at the library, a male passed him a note with sexual connotations.

Florida governor OKs bill to help keep guns from children

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — Gun owners in Florida are required to take reasonable steps to keep loaded weapons out of the hands of children under a bill signed into law today by Gov. Bob Martinez.

The legislation doesn't take effect until October, but a national gun-control advocate says lives probably already are being saved.

"People in Florida and elsewhere have become more aware of the dangers of leaving loaded firearms where children can get access to them," said Bernard Horn, state legislative director for Handgun Control Inc.

Publicity on gun accidents involving children not only has increased public awareness but prompted more safety measures, Horn said in a telephone interview from his Washington office Tuesday.

Lawmakers from about two dozen states have contacted Horn's organization about the Florida bill, including California, New York, Illinois, Ohio, Wisconsin, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maryland and Virginia. "I think we're going to see some action in some of these states," said

Dennis Smith, director of public information for the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence, a nonprofit private research organization in Washington.

Florida lawmakers passed the legislation in June after three children were killed and two wounded in separate gun accidents around the state during a single week.

"I think the unfortunate tragic deaths speak for themselves," Sen. John Grant, a Republican who sponsored the bill, said.

The legislation requires gun owners to take reasonable precautions to keep loaded weapons in their homes and businesses out of the hands of children under 16 years old, such as using a trigger lock or keeping the weapon in a locked box.

If a child shoots someone as the result of a careless gun owner, the adult could be charged with a felony, punishable by up to five years in prison and a \$5,000 fine. A gun owner faces a misdemeanor and up to 60 days in jail and a \$500 fine if a minor threatens someone with the gun or displays it in public.

Clean-air proposals face criticism

Industry, environment groups battle over specifics of Bush plan

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Bush administration tried Wednesday to calm growing criticism of its draft clean-air legislation and urged opposing environmental and industry critics to stop "nitpicking this thing apart."

Officials said they were worried that intense criticism of the proposed legislation, before it even reached Congress, could lead to legislative gridlock similar to that which has prevented passage of a bill the past decade.

"This is the best hope we've had in a long time to break the 10-year logjam," said EPA chief spokesman David

Cohen. "We are being absolutely faithful to the president's commitments. To start nitpicking this thing apart may pave the way to the gridlock that has prevented re-authorization of the Clean Air Act."

After eight years of inaction on air pollution by the Reagan administration, Bush promised on June 12 to "curb three major threats to the nation's environment and to the health of millions of Americans: acid rain, urban air pollution, and toxic air emissions."

But he only had available then a 14-page outline for the first major presidential proposal for cleaning

the nation's air since 1977. As legislative drafters worked to fill in details of the bill, copies of their working language have leaked out and the opposing sides have begun reacting.

This week, environmental groups and the chairman of the House environment subcommittee contended the latest draft, dated June 30, weakened the president's promise for a strong pollution-fighting campaign. Industry groups said the Environmental Protection Agency was trying to make the language tougher than Bush wants.

The environmental side said

Bush's proposal was weakened in sections on auto pollution, emission of toxic chemicals and reduction of the substances causing acid rain.

An industry coalition said the draft was tougher than Bush promised on auto emissions, took away the flexibility of states to deal with their particular pollution problems, and unnecessarily increased requirements on industry to reduce acid rain.

William Rosenberg, assistant EPA administrator for air and radiation, said, "It's unfair to say we're deviating" from Bush's wishes, adding that the proposal would "get the job done in a cost-effective way. You have a bill that's 286 pages. The fact sheet was 14 pages. When you get to the specifics it's much more complicated."

"The legislative language is a far cry from what the president said he wanted to do: achieve clean air for every American," said Rep. Henry A. Waxman, D-Calif., chairman of the House Energy and Commerce environment subcommittee. "In the area of smog, they seem to be willing to give in (to the auto industry) rather than assisting breathing Americans to give them a break."

William Fay, head of an industry coalition called the Clean Air Working Group, said, "We think exactly the opposite. My response is that someone got carried away in drafting this thing. There are things in the staff draft that go far beyond what the president suggested."

One of the most crucial disputes is over motor vehicle pollution. The draft language would reduce the exhaust standard for unburned fuel from 0.41 grams per mile to 0.25 grams. But while the current law requires that each car meet the standard, the draft legislation would permit automakers to achieve the reduction by averaging all their autos.

Shooting in crowded restaurant leaves 3 Vietnamese men dead

PORT ARTHUR (AP) — Two gunmen apparently seeking revenge entered a crowded Vietnamese restaurant Wednesday morning and shot three men to death as frightened diners fled, authorities and witnesses said.

Within four hours police had arrested Phuc Dinh Tran and Dac Van Tran at their Port Arthur home and recovered a 12-gauge pump shotgun, authorities said.

The suspects were arraigned on murder charges Wednesday afternoon by Jefferson County Justice of the Peace Barbara Dorman and jailed in lieu of \$500,000 bond each.

The shooting occurred around 10:45 a.m. when two men entered the Tau Bay Vietnamese Restaurant with a shotgun and fired at the three men, who were seated at a table, said Capt. J.E. Huebel of the criminal investigations division.

Two men were dead at the scene when police arrived, and a third man died at St. Mary's Hospital, authorities said.

The names of the victims were being withheld pending notification of relatives.

"It appears, from what we understand, that this was a

spill-over from a fight at a tavern last night," Huebel said.

"I guess these were the losers who came back and shot the others while they were in this little Vietnamese cafe," he said. "The two of them just came in with a shotgun and blew them away."

The owner of a next-door grocery store said he noticed a large crowd of diners in the restaurant when he walked to his Vietnam Market this morning, and later was startled by the sound of shotgun blasts.

"I heard two shots, but the people told me there were three," said Khoi Tran. "It was real loud. I didn't think it was shooting at first, but I came to the front and I saw some people running out and they said it was shooting."

"I closed the store and called the police," he said, adding that witnesses told him most of the customers fled through a back door.

Huebel said both the victims and the assailants are Vietnamese natives, and that the shooting occurred in an area populated with numerous Vietnamese businesses.

Religious groups react to Supreme Court rulings

NEW YORK (AP) — A potpourri of reactions to recent Supreme Court decisions on abortion, executions, holiday displays and the flag has swirled through religious circles.

Views were about as mixed in the religious household as in society at large.

One odd situation found Jewish leaders upset because the court had approved displaying a Jewish symbol. Regarding the flag, President Bush ignited conflicting religious reactions for wanting new laws to shield it.

Such a constitutional amendment or legislation is needed, said the Knights of Columbus, to remove the court's inference that burning or otherwise abusing the flag is an "acceptable form of protest."

The Roman Catholic fraternal order noted its stress on patriotism education in backing measures to "save the flag from desecration."

On the other hand, the general synod last week of the United Church of Christ said such legislation would "exalt" the flag beyond a "treasured symbol" of America and restrict the very freedom the flag symbolizes.

Similarly, the American Jewish Committee said such legislation would erode the First Amendment which "protects the freedom of all of us," including "even crazy people who see fit to burn the American flag."

The court's upholding of the death penalty for 16- and 17-year-olds and the moderately retarded was denounced by Protestant, Jewish and Roman Catholic leaders.

It is "an outrage" that must be changed, said the Rev. Thom White Wolf Fassett, head of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society. It called the decision "reprehensible" to "people of faith."

Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of Chicago, terming capital punishment a poor way to deter

crime, said he is "disappointed and saddened" by the court decision allowing that penalty for minors and the retarded.

The AJC said it "is appalled" by the decision, adding that capital punishment "degrades and brutalizes" society and becomes a "mockery of justice" in executing the young and retarded.

A total of 30 youths, all younger than 18 when they committed murders, now are on death row, and the courts have estimated about a fifth of nearly 2,200 others awaiting execution are retarded to some degree.

The abortion decision evoked the most voluminous and diverse reactions, far more sweeping than the decision itself.

Explicitly it held only that Missouri could prohibit state-based hospitals and personnel from performing abortions. Other aspects remained ambiguous. Previously, Congress itself had barred federal funds for abortion.

Nevertheless, the impact was thunderous, on both sides, one denouncing the decision as an assault on women's rights, and the other saying it signaled a turn toward protecting the unborn.

It is "the beginning of the opportunity to end this dark night of our nation's soul in which so terribly many of the most defenseless among us, our unborn, have been denied the right to life," said the Rev. Richard D. Land, head of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

The decision is "a victory for life" and the biggest winners "are the tiniest people of all — children within the womb," said Archbishop John L. May of St. Louis, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

However, some Jewish and Protestant leaders decried the decision as threatening women's rights.

"The ruling is a deplorable attack on the religious freedom of all Americans," said officials of

the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, vowing to oppose any state attempts to limit free choice in abortion.

Fassett said the court had turned the clock back 20 years on women's right to choose abortion and the rulings "are highly discriminatory," putting the heaviest burden on the poor.

However, the Rev. James Heidinger, executive of the denomination's evangelical caucus, hailed

"The (Supreme Court's abortion) ruling is a deplorable attack on the religious freedom of all Americans."

— Union of American Hebrew Congregations

the decision as "a clearly positive one."

Thus, within denominations, as within the nation, feelings were divided on an issue which remained about as unsettled as ever.

The court's curiously two-way ruling on religious displays in Pittsburgh, banned a Christmas creche (cradle scene) in a courthouse lobby, but approved a Hanukkah menorah (candelabrum) on the outside.

Remarkably, Jewish leaders deplored the decision favoring their own symbol, which the court said was acceptable because it was religiously neutral and stood near a secular Christmas tree.

The decision "will further hasten the transformation of Hanukkah from a religious to a cultural event," said Phil Baum, associate director of the American Jewish Congress.

"This is the inevitable price paid for seeking to enlist official endorsement for religious practices."

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