



WEATHER

TOMORROW'S FORECAST:
Partly sunny.
HIGH: 94 LOW: 72

Sept. 16, 89

Hungary gives East Germans freedom

HEGYESHALOM, Hungary (AP) — Thousands of East Germans, crying, laughing and shouting with happiness, poured into Austria from Hungary early Monday en route to freedom in West Germany.

They began driving across the border at midnight as Hungary removed the frontier barriers to allow more than 7,000 East German refugees to escape to the West.

It is the largest mass emigration of East Germans to West Germany since the Berlin Wall was built in 1961 to stem the flow across the border.

Hungary, in a decision announced Sunday, was the first East bloc government to help the citizens of another Communist country freely leave their homeland.

East Germany promptly attacked the Hungarian decision, saying Budapest had "directly interfered" in East Germany's internal affairs.

"The Hungarian government has chosen

to illegally allow East German citizens to travel to West Germany in violation of international treaty," the state news agency ADN said.

It said that Hungary, "under the guise of humanitarianism, has engaged in the organized smuggling of human beings."

West Germany said Hungary made a "humanitarian" decision.

At this frontier town 120 miles northwest of the Hungarian capital, border guards gave only cursory checks to East Germans.

As the first groups crossed, hundreds of others waited in their cars, forming growing lines at the main border crossings.

Eight of 18 lanes at the Hegyeshalom crossing were open as the jubilant East Germans drove through.

They honked their horns, cheered and whistled, releasing emotions pent up by days and weeks of waiting for a decision by Hungarian authorities. Some refugees

waved bottles of foaming champagne from the car windows.

"It's wonderful, it's terrific," they

"The Hungarian government has chosen to illegally allow East German citizens to travel to West Germany in violation of international treaty."

— ADN, East German news agency.

shouted to reporters and border guards. One man, overcome with emotion, tried to smile as tears rolled down his cheeks and he

couldn't speak.

Dozens of people who had taken taxis from Budapest waited to cross into Austria on foot.

A group of youths among them held up a sign saying, "Give it up Erich!" referring to East German Communist leader Erich Honecker.

Once on the Austrian side of the massive border barrier, many East Germans jumped from their cars and danced with joy.

A statement Sunday by the official Hungarian news agency MTI said: "Hungary has decided to make it possible for the East German citizens staying in Hungary and refusing to return home to leave to any country which is prepared to let them through or receive them."

"Interior Minister Istvan Horvath instructed the police and border guards to let

East German citizens leave Hungary with their East German travel documents" at any border point.

The Hungarian foreign minister, Gyula Horn, suggested on Hungarian TV that tens of thousands of other East Germans now vacationing in Hungary also may choose to leave for the West along with those in the refugee camps.

To make the exodus possible, he said, Hungary decided to suspend a 1969 agreement with East Germany, a Warsaw Pact ally, saying Hungary should not take into account West Germany's claim to East Germans.

The fate of the refugees had been discussed for weeks by East and West Germany, with Hungary insisting it was a bystander interested in a solution.

The communique said, "The talks between East Germany and West Germany ended in failure." It did not elaborate.

A&M hosts presentation by astronaut Jerry Ross

By Todd Swearingen

A NASA astronaut said he has absolutely no doubt that today's students will see human beings walk on the surface of Mars within their lifetimes.

Saturday, Sept. 9, the Texas A&M student chapter of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics hosted a presentation by astronaut Jerry Ross on his experiences in space. Ross showed a film of the December 1985 Atlantis shuttle flight 61-B, on which he performed experiments involving construction in space.

The space shuttle is approximately 180 feet tall, weighs nearly 4.5 million pounds and produces nearly seven million pounds of thrust at takeoff. Ross described the trip into space as very shaky, rough, and loud.

"We make sure that all three engines are at 100 percent power and functioning properly before we do the next thing — which is light the solid rocket motors," Ross said. "After you've lit the solid rocket motors there's no turning around — you're along for a real ride."

"This beats any E-ticket ride Disneyland has ever created," Ross said. "In 45 seconds you're already going faster than the speed of sound."

During the mission, construction experiments were repeatedly performed to gather information on problems such as fatigue, and to discover how quickly an astronaut could adapt to working in space. The astronauts found that it was very tiring and difficult to assemble a structure while free-floating.

One experiment showed that an astronaut using foot restraints could assemble a 45-foot-long truss structure in approximately 30 minutes.

Ross explained that engineering for applications in space involves many trade-offs in design.

"Every time you make a trade for weight or volume or anything — strength — you're always making the ultimate in trades because it costs so much to get up there," Ross said. "Everything has to operate 100 percent of the time, or else you're going to have failures of some sort."

Ross stated that many of the problems with working in space are caused by the cumbersome space suits. He explained that the suits are pressurized to four pounds per square inch, making the suit very stiff and difficult to manipulate.

"I liken working in a space suit to putting on the heaviest winter coat you can think of, some welder's gloves, and a fish bowl; and then going out into a dimly lit garage and trying to change your spark plugs," Ross said.

"The bottom line of the experiment was — the space station originally was designed to be an accordion type of structure that when you got into orbit, you pull this pin and stand back and the springs would throw the thing out," Ross explained. "That was going to be very complicated, it was going to be very expensive, it was going to weigh a lot more than what we now intend to do — which is to do a hand assembly of the structure piece by piece."

The assembly of the space station Ross described is expected to begin in early 1995; however, it must repeatedly survive congressional budget cuts. Ross said that the public has the misconception that NASA receives a large portion of the national budget; actually, NASA funds amount to only four tenths of one percent, he said.

Another experiment concerned separating the various constituents of human blood to isolate the particular enzyme that regulates red blood cell production. Ross stated that this could lead to a new 'wonder drug' useful in treating anemia and decreasing the need for blood transfusions during major surgery. Other highlights of the mission were the deployment of three communication satellites and the second night launch of a space shuttle.

Ross was a member of the December 1988 classified shuttle mission and said he will be returning to space in the near future. His upcoming mission will explore a means of transporting astronauts and equipment along the space station truss structure, proposed to be about 500 feet long. The experiment will test a 'monorail' system devised by Ross. The mission also is scheduled to deploy a gamma-ray space observatory.

Ross concluded his presentation by explaining that environmental pollution and damage is vividly evident from space. Smog, rain forest depletion, and soil erosion are only a few examples cited by Ross. Ross said that although companies are in the business of making money, resources are limited and we must be able to live in the resulting environment.

Political leaders cheer plant's arrival despite problems of pollution

AUSTIN (AP) — A Taiwanese firm that has fouled parts of its island homeland, Texas and Louisiana with releases of cancer-causing chemicals is getting \$225 million in tax breaks and direct subsidies to build a chemical plant in Texas.

Texas political leaders cheered when Formosa Plastics Corp. Chairman Y.C. Wang picked Point Comfort, 100 miles southwest of Houston, last fall to locate a \$1.3 billion plant. The state beat out Louisiana.

To lure the company, Democratic and Republican legislative leaders agreed to phase out some sales taxes, dedicate state money and support tax abatements.

Political leaders cited the economic benefits, but they didn't discuss Formosa's pollution problems.

In Taiwan, Wang had to face an angry crowd of farmers as they protested his expansion plans there be-

cause of environmental problems.

And in Louisiana, Formosa's plant is one of 205 nationwide where the EPA calculated the cancer risk as greatest: 1 in 100. Formosa's other choice was a southern Louisiana parish where air already was too polluted — partly from Formosa's current discharge — for the plant to expand.

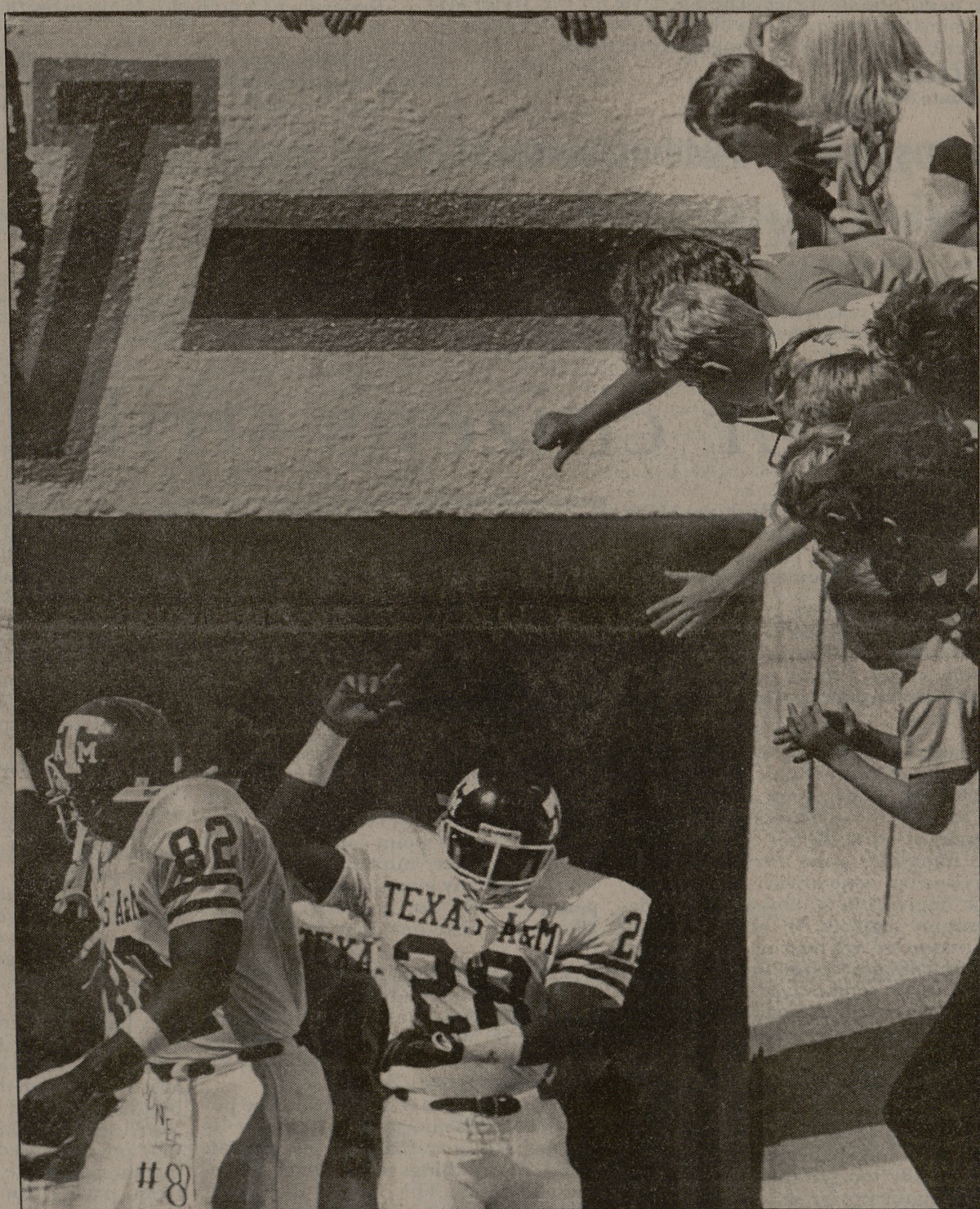
An EPA consultant's report found reason to believe that in Texas, Formosa has put cancer-causing and toxic materials into Cox Creek, which runs directly into Lavaca Bay and feeds the Matagorda Bay system, which produces 8 million pounds of commercial seafood and \$120 million in recreational fishing each year.

Texas negotiators say the only environmental issue raised was how fast state and federal authorities could expedite Formosa's discharge permits, the *Houston Chronicle* reported Sunday.

"That's usually the case," Willie Fontenot, an environmental coordinator with the Louisiana Attorney General's Office said. "You don't think about all those things when something like this is up. You just see the dollar sign. You can't put groundwater in the bank, but you can put \$1.7 billion in a bank and it goes a long way."

Doug Lynch, coordinator of the Texas Formosa campaign as the director of Calhoun County Economic Development Corp., said county people were lured by growth.

"There's always concern with the environment," Lynch said. "Sometimes it may be subordinated to other concerns." The county, with 16 percent unemployment at the time, badly needed Formosa, he added.



Outscored in Seattle

Photo by Phelan M. Ebenhack

The Aggies emerge from the locker room for the second half of Saturday's game as some

Washington Husky fans greet them with thumbs down. See game story/Page 10

Czar Bennett fights against drugs, pessimism

WASHINGTON (AP) — When Congress decided that there should be a drug czar, the Democrats may not have bargained on getting Czar Bennett. After the war on drugs, William J. Bennett could be a formidable figure in the political wars of the 1990s.

Bennett, now 46, will come away from his current assignment as one of the most visible figures in the Republican lineup. His ample ambitions are directed at government service, as he demonstrated by volunteering for the drug job after a brief, lucrative season away from the federal payroll.

This might have been a million-dollar year for Bennett as a writer and speechmaker. He was heading in that direction at \$14,000 a speech, plus book advances. As director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, he makes \$99,500.

And, as he once observed, the hours are bad, the subject depressing.

Add the fact that there's anything but a guarantee of success. Critics are saying President Bush's drug strategy is old stuff, underfinanced and unlikely to succeed. Bennett denies the first two complaints and dismisses the third as political pessimism.

The voters want something done about drugs. They probably will punish failure, if they can figure out whom to blame. So far that hasn't happened, but now there is a yardstick: the goals Bennett set for the Bush drug strategy. It calls for a 10 percent reduction in drug use by Labor

Day, 1991. The administration also seeks to cut crack use by addicts in half.

Those clear and specific goals come due one year before the next presidential election campaign. The Bennett blueprint does provide a line of political insurance, saying that the goals are realistically achievable only with full federal, state and local implementation of the Bush plan. Should they come up short, the Republicans can argue that they didn't get that kind of top-to-bottom action.

The drug job is at best a risky political assignment.

But Bennett has dealt with risks before. He made his national reputation as Ronald Reagan's secretary of education, running an agency the president once said he would eliminate. Near the end of his tour there, Bennett told a congressional critic that "largely because of me" it was likely the education slot would stay in the Cabinet.

"I made a hell of a commitment," he said at a Senate hearing, storming back at a liberal Republican who complained about budget cuts. "You just didn't like the direction. I was damn successful."

So far, the debate over the Bush drug program has been restrained and polite. But there will be some shouting before it's over.

Bennett is not given to low-profile operations. He made a point and angered a Democrat last spring by refusing to show up for a Senate hearing called by Sen. John Glenn. Bennett's explanation: with 74 congressional committees claiming some piece of the drug program, he couldn't spend his time at their hearings or he'd never get the plan finished.

Now that it's done, he will be the chief salesman, in speeches, television appearances, and at hearing after hearing before Congress. Bennett has more than a dozen dates for congressional testimony this month, before panels run by Democrats who complain that there's not enough money in the Bush program. He has a script ready for them: "I'm just not going to be all that receptive to criticism of \$8 billion from people whose current mark is \$6 billion. They're just not going to get away with that."

By Bennett's reckoning, nobody should be surprised at the political side of the drug program debate. "You can't get politics out of politics," he said. In mock surprise, he said that since Bush's drug speech, "political acts have been committed in this city."

Bennett committed some himself.

"For a couple of months, I have been criticized by some for emphasizing law enforcement and judges and prosecutors," he said in one of three almost simultaneous and almost identical television interviews the morning after the drug speech. "This goes on for quite some time. And then I go to bed last night, realizing that Joe Biden, speaking for the Democrats, has moved to my right, saying that we need more prosecutors, more law enforcement."

Degree requests due by Friday

Seniors and graduate students expecting to graduate this semester must make a formal application for their degrees by Friday.

Undergraduate degree applicants should take their paid fee slip or diploma fee receipt to room 105 Heaton Hall and complete a degree application.

Graduate degree applicants should take their paid fee slip or diploma fee receipt to the Office of Graduate Studies in room 125 Teague and complete a degree application.