

Monday, September 17, 1990

Safety of Houston Ship Channel questioned

HOUSTON (AP) — A series of recent accidents is raising concerns about the safety of the narrow Houston Ship Channel and boosting a proposal that would use satellite technology to improve navigation along the nation's third busiest waterway.

The rash of marine accidents began July 25 when a tugboat sank in Galveston Bay after water poured through an unsecured hatch and swamped the boat.

Three days later, a tanker collided with two oil barges being pushed up the channel by a tugboat, spilling 700,000 gallons of oil into the bay. Then on Aug. 12, a barge buckled and cracked while being loaded at a dock, dumping another 21,000 gallons of crude.

But a study by the Houston Chronicle of U.S. Coast Guard records shows that overall, the number of accidents in the ship channel is on the decline. Yet the number of vessels being damaged in mishaps in all the waterways around the Houston-Galveston area is up sharply.

"I wouldn't say they (Houston and Galveston) have a reputation for being especially dangerous," Arthur McKenzie, president of the Tanker Advisory Center in New York, said. "I've been up and down that channel many times. I wouldn't say it doesn't have its problems, but so does every other port."

At least one pilot disagreed with that assessment.

"The Houston Ship Channel is notorious for being the hardest (channel) in the country — if not the world," said Harry Lydick, presiding officer for the Houston Pilots, an association representing 57 pilots who guide ships through the waterway.

But in the 52-mile-long ship channel, the number of significant accidents reported fell to 45 last year, from 87 in 1983, according to records. The number of vessels involved in mishaps dropped from 143 in 1983 to 69 last year.

Changes in the volume of traffic in the channel don't explain the declines. In 1983,

traffic was low, with only 88 million tons of cargo moving through the Port of Houston. Last year, the port set a record at 126 million tons.

The most common incidents were mechanical problems — stalled engines and steering system failures. Groundings accounted for nearly one in three incidents in the channel. While collisions were more rare at 16 percent, they accounted for more than a third of the damage.

Faulty vessel equipment caused the most accidents on the waterway between 1983 and 1989, at 43 percent. Another 39 percent of the accidents were caused by human error, the Coast Guard said.

A less-encouraging trend appears to be working in the broader Houston-Galveston region, which includes the Intracoastal Waterway, Freeport, Texas City, all parts of Galveston Bay not part of the ship channel and Gulf of Mexico waters.

In that area, 233 vessels were involved in

incidents in 1988 — the latest year for which complete data is available — more than double the 101 in 1986.

This Thursday, the Houston Pilots will present recommendations to port officials designed to improve safety in the channel. Lydick declined to reveal the full slate of suggestions.

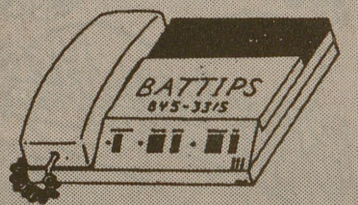
But he said one proposal will call for the use of military satellites to help position buoys and other navigational aids in the waterway.

As storms buffet the waterway, navigational markers like buoys and towers, which are critical in identifying a ship's position in the waterway, get knocked out of position.

When Coast Guard officials realign the navigational aids, they must use points on land to determine their positions. And that system is less than perfect.

"We need the position to be a little bit more accurate," Lydick said. "The men don't have the equipment to do that."

BATTIPS



Anyone with story suggestions can call BATTIPS, The Battalion's phone line designed to improve communication between the newspaper and its readers.

The BATTIPS number is 845-3315.

Ideas can include news stories, feature ideas, and personality profiles of interesting people.

What's Up

Monday

- TAMU ROADRUNNERS:** will have a free pizza party for all paid members at 7 p.m. at the Flying Tomato. Call Ron at 693-8071 for more information.
- LUTHERAN STUDENT FELLOWSHIP:** will have Bible study at 8:30 p.m. in 507AB Rudder.
- TEXAS A&M STUDENT CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN METEOROLOGICAL SOCIETY:** will have a meeting and presentation at 7 p.m. in 1209 Eller (O&M). Call Greg at 823-0632 for more information.
- NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS:** will have a general discussion at 8:30 p.m. Call the C.D.P.E. at 845-0280 for more information.
- ACCOUNTING SOCIETY:** will have a general information meeting at 7 p.m. in 158 Blocker. Call Aimee at 823-6743 for more information.
- BETA ALPHA PSI:** will have an officer meeting at 7:30 p.m. Meet at the Blocker elevators.
- CUBAN CULTURAL SOCIETY:** will have a meeting at 8 p.m. in 123 Academic Bldg. Call Elena at 693-2745 for more information.
- CLASS OF '91 COUNCIL:** Ring Dance committee applications are due in Student Programs Office. For more information, call Jannine at 846-0208.
- BOLIVIAN STUDENT ASSOCIATION:** will have a meeting to sign up for ISA Mini-Olympics at 7:30 p.m. in 026 MSC. Call Mauricio at 693-9193 for more information.
- ST. MARY'S:** will have a class at 7:30 p.m. at the Student Center for all those desiring to become Catholic or just curious about Catholicism. Call 846-5717 for more information.
- HONORS STUDENT COUNCIL:** will have a meeting for selection of committees at 7:30 p.m. in 124 Blocker.
- AG & LIFE SCIENCES COUNCIL:** will have a meeting & hamburger cook out at 7 p.m. at the Olsen Park Pavilion. Call Deborah at 693-7503 for more information.
- MSC RECREATION:** will have Sega games tournament all day Monday and Tuesday in 224 MSC. The winner goes to the national competition and there will be prizes. Open to all students.
- DEPARTMENT OF RECREATIONAL SPORTS:** registration begins for intramural co-rec two pitch softball, intramural innertube water basketball and intramural badminton doubles at 8 a.m. in 159 Read. Entry fee is \$20 per team for basketball and softball. Call 845-7826 for more information.

- AGGIES AGAINST BONFIRE:** will have a general meeting at 6 p.m. at the Academic Building, behind Sul Ross statue.
- WOMEN IN COMMUNICATIONS:** will have Dr. Foxworth as speaker and discussion of semester events at 8 p.m. in 229 MSC. Call Suzanne at 693-1420 for more information.
- CAMPUS MINISTRY INTERNATIONAL:** will meet prior to Billy Crockett concert at 6:30 p.m. in the MSC flag room. Call Scott Goodman at 696-7928 for more information.
- STUDENTS AGAINST APARTHEID:** will have a general meeting at 8:30 p.m. in 230 Rudder. Call Paul at 764-8110 for more information.

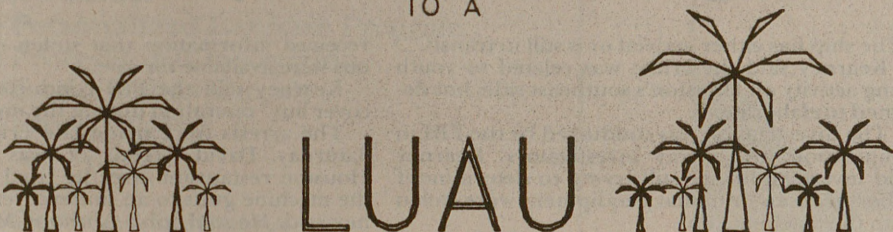
Tuesday

- THE MEDICINE TRIBE:** will discuss the racial unity rally, Crop Walk and styrofoam boycott at 5:30 p.m. in front of the Academic Building, behind Sul Ross statue. Call Irwin at 268-7471 for more information.
- AGGIES FOR BARTON:** come help work in a national campaign at 6 p.m. in 352 MSC. Call Suzie at 846-1574 for more information.
- DEPARTMENT OF RECREATIONAL SPORTS:** registration ends today for intramural triathlon and intramural horseshoe doubles at 5:30 p.m. in 159 Read. Call Mark Ritter at 845-7826 for more information.
- ORTHODOX STUDENT ORGANIZATION:** will have group gathering at 6 p.m. at 311 A Spruce St. in College Station.
- PSI CHI:** will have first meeting at 7 p.m. in 338 Psychology Building. Call Kelley at 846-2482 for more information.
- NATIONAL RESIDENCE HALL HONORARY:** will have a formal meeting at 7 p.m. in 305 Rudder.
- TAMU SURF CLUB:** will show the 1989 O.P. Pro featuring Tom Currer at 8:30 p.m. in 308 Rudder. Free to members; \$2 for nonmembers. Call Greg Knowles at 696-1113 for more information.
- CATHOLIC STUDENT ASSOCIATION:** will have an organizational meeting for the new Bible study; all those interested attend at 7 p.m. in St. Mary's Student Center. Call 846-5717 for more information.
- ANTHROPOLOGY SOCIETY:** Dr. Dickson will talk about ecology and human prehistory in Kenya at 8:30 p.m. in 231 MSC. Call MaryAnn at 847-1309 for more information.

- ACCOUNTING SOCIETY:** will have a casual party for Accounting Society members at 7:30 p.m. at Rita's. Call Aimee Baggett at 823-6743 for more information.
 - MINORITY ASSOCIATION OF PRE-HEALTH AGGIES:** will have a general meeting with important speaker. Check screen for room number.
 - PRO-CHOICE AGGIES:** will have a mandatory meeting, new members welcome, at 8:30 p.m. in 404 Rudder. Call Kelly Ann at 847-0162 for more information.
 - AGGIES AGAINST DRIVING DRUNK:** will meet at 7 p.m. in 203 MSC. Call Deborah at 845-0280 for more information.
 - METHODIST STUDENT CENTER:** will have men's Bible study and women's Bible study at 7 p.m. in the Methodist Student Center. Call Max or Judy at 846-4701 for more information. Breakfast and devotional at 7 a.m. in the Student Center. Call Judy at 846-4701 for more information.
 - SADDLE AND SIRLOIN CLUB:** will have a fall barbecue. Leon Locke, chairman of the Nation Livestock and Meat Board, will be speaker at 6:30 p.m. at the Sons of Hermann Hall (map in Kleberg). Tickets \$5. New members get in free with their leather B. Call 845-4433 for more information.
 - POLITICAL SCIENCE SOCIETY:** will have a student/faculty mixer with free pizza for members at 6:30 p.m. at the Flying Tomato. Call Melissa at 764-6586 for more information.
 - COLLEGE REPUBLICANS:** will meet at 8:30 p.m. in 201 MSC. Call Scot Kibbe at 764-1988 for more information.
 - MSC JORDON INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AWARENESS:** will have Chinese Cultural Arts Performance at 7 p.m. in Rudder Theater. \$3 per person. Call 845-1234 for more information.
 - MSC POLITICAL FORUM:** Election 1990: Lt. Governor's Race Rob Mosbacher Republican candidate at 7 p.m. in 226 MSC.
 - TAMU STUDENT SENATE:** will have a regular bi-monthly meeting at 7:30 p.m. in 204 Harrington.
 - TAMU PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB:** will have tips on successful glamour posing and lighting at 7 p.m. in 231 MSC. Call Amy at 845-1631 for more information.
- Items for What's Up should be submitted to The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, no later than three business days before the desired run date. We publish the name and phone number of the contact only if you ask us to do so. What's Up is a Battalion service that lists non-profit events and activities. Submissions are run on a first-come, first-served basis. There is no guarantee an entry will run. If you have questions, call the newsroom at 845-3316.*

AMOCO

INVITES ALL
ENGINEERING, BUSINESS AND GEOSCIENCE STUDENTS
TO A



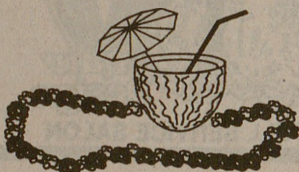
WHEN: Wednesday, September 19, 5:00 to 10:00pm

Where: Southwood Athletic Park Pavilion

Rock Prairie Road, Behind Humana Hospital

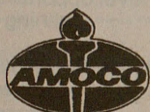
Social: 5:00 to 7:00

Buffet: 7:00



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National Professional Business Fraternity

Proudly announces its newly selected Pledge Class for Fall 1990.

- | | | | |
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| Kim Allen | Hector Elizondo | Marcie McCarter | Richard Stroup |
| David Bonsukan | Sean Fuquay | Adrienne Newman | Scott Ulrich |
| Mischell Briggs | Bryan Gaston | Kipp Ogden | Adam Vanek |
| Lisa Busker | Mindy Gill | Angie Pettit | Johnna Young |
| Robin Danford | Allison Gorman | Suzanne Scholz | Stacy Young |
| Tom Delaney | Anne Irvin | Julie Shiver | |

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- BANA
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- Economics
- Finance
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SIGN-UPS HAVE BEGUN

Register by
submitting your
resume to the
Placement Center.

ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWS

Wednesday
October 3rd

INFORMATION SHARING

Tuesday
September 18th
7:00 p.m.
Room 229
Memorial Student
Center