

Wednesday, March 6, 1991

The Battalion

Vacation binges

Surgeon General asks brewers to halt underage promotions

WASHINGTON (AP) — Surgeon General Antonia Novello took aim Tuesday at binge drinking by college students, complaining at a news conference that "spring break used to be where the boys are — now it's where the booze is."

Novello called on brewers to stop running promotions that appeal to underage drinkers.

"Unfortunately, spring break has become synonymous with excessive and binge drinking by our young people," Novello said.

Novello began her news conference by showing a videotape of throngs of drunken students clogging the streets of Palm Springs, Calif., during spring break three years ago.

"I want to say to our young people that it is time to put on the brakes with regard to their drinking," she said. Novello expressed hope the message would carry far beyond this spring's vacations.

"This is the wave of the future," she said.

Novello said young people have been bombarded with advertisements that lead them to believe drinking is "an acceptable rite of passage, a necessary path for them to follow."

She appealed to alcohol manufacturers and retailers to "take a more responsible posture" in their marketing and promotion tactics during this year's spring break.

She said the Beer Institute "re-

sponded favorably" to her appeal and had indicated that brewers would not "take their tents, their hats, umbrellas and other promotional materials to spring break this year."

James Sanders, president of the Beer Institute, said manufacturers in the past had provided "diversionary recreational opportunities" during spring break such as contests and games to take the emphasis away from drinking. He said the brewers were unfairly blamed for the unruly behavior of students who lost control and that most brewers would stay away altogether this year.

"They just decided there's no way they can win," Sanders said. "The real activities they were sponsoring never came through."

He said alcohol manufacturers abide by an advertising code that tries to avoid targeting people under age 21.

Novello said:

- The average student spends "more money on booze than on books."

- Alcohol is one of the leading causes of death among young adults.

- Alcohol is a factor in 21 percent of all college dropouts.

- Among those currently in college, between 240,000 and 360,000 eventually will lose their lives due to drinking.

- Most college students drink more beer than anything else.



MIKE C. MULVEY/The Battalion

Spending the day in bed

Texas A&M graduate student Tim Williams enjoys the warm weather Tuesday afternoon while lounging in the bed of his

Toyota pickup at Research Park. Williams managed to catch up on some accounting while taking a break from classes.

Highway agency risks losing \$900 million

AUSTIN (AP) — The Texas highway department must stop discriminating against minorities and women or risk losing \$900 million annually in federal funds, U.S. Department of Transportation officials said Tuesday.

William Hudson, civil rights director for the federal department, sent a letter to the state agency giving it 30 days to devise a plan to correct the inequities.

The federal investigation, carried out during the last three months of 1989, was prompted by a discrimination complaint filed by the Austin

branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in March 1989 on behalf of several minority employees.

Gary Bledsoe, who filed the complaint for the NAACP, said he was pleased with the action.

"We'll be pressing for the withholding of the federal funds and some other legislative changes if they do not come into compliance," Bledsoe said. "We're going to be working to bring it into the 20th century, because they're way, way behind time."

Hudson said the investigation

showed that not enough blacks are hired, and that too few blacks, Hispanics and women hold top agency positions.

The federal report said that Hispanics and women had made recent gains at the department. However, it said the progress of black workers has been less impressive.

The State Department of Highways and Public Transportation disputed the findings.

"We do not discriminate in hiring. We do not discriminate in promotions. We remain diligent in seeking out qualified candidates for hiring

and promotion, especially blacks, Hispanics and women," said Byron Blaschke, deputy engineer-director for the department.

Blaschke said most of the report's recommendations already had been instituted during the past three years, although Bledsoe discounted the changes as "window dressing."

Blaschke said the department would consider what Bledsoe and others said was perhaps the most needed change: advertising administrative jobs, instead of solely promoting from within the agency.

In Advance

Counterterrorism expert to speak tonight

Kenneth Bergquist, the associate director for counterterrorism at the U.S. State Department, will discuss U.S. policy concerning counterterrorism at 7 tonight in 701 Rudder.

MSC Political Forum is sponsoring the lecture. For more information, contact Student Programs at 845-1515.

MICHAEL J. FOX

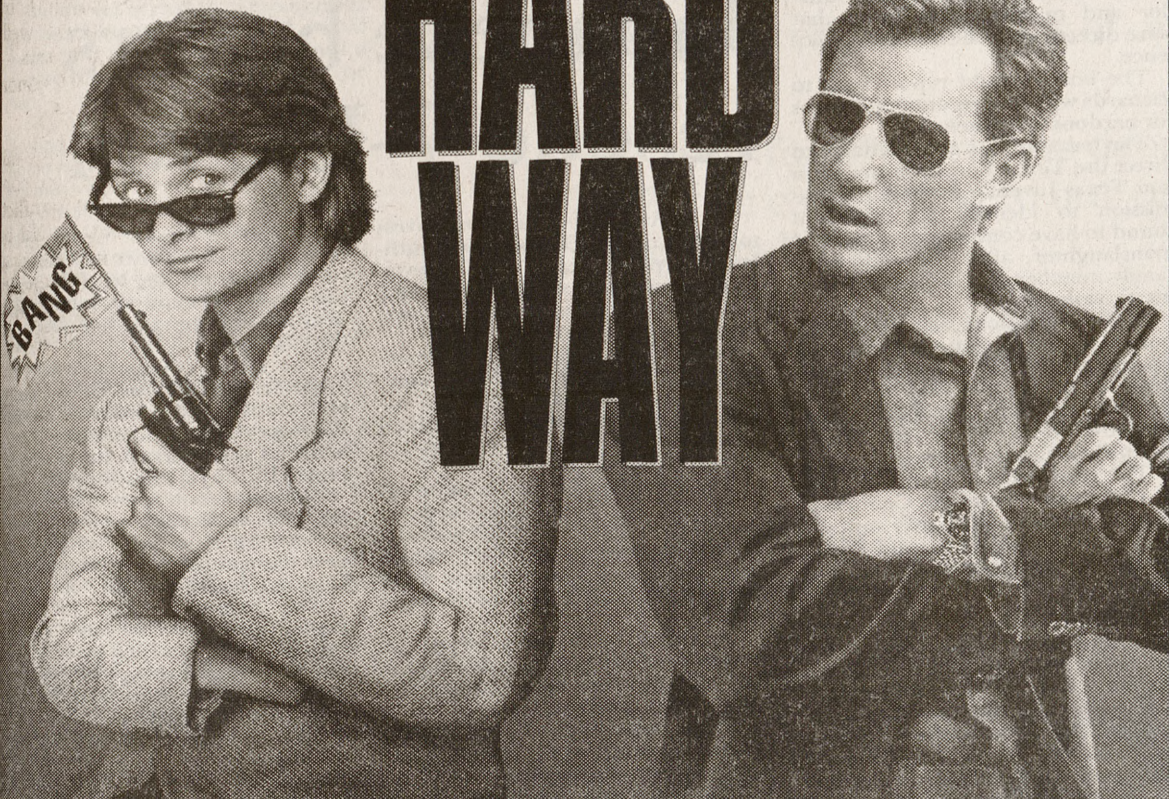
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