State & Local

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The Battalion

Friday, April

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Commission: Explosion's cause not yet determined

AUSTIN (AP) - A deadly explosion near Brenham may have resulted from a salt dome storage facility being overfilled with natural gas liquids and leaking, but other possibilities haven't been ruled out, the Texas Railroad Commission said Thursday.

This is only one possible explanation," based on preliminary test results, Commission Chair Lena Guerrero told a news conference.

She emphasized, "The investigation is continuing. We cannot say for sure at this time what the cause of this accident was."

The commission hopes to complete its work within 45 days, she said.

The April 7 blast killed three people, injured 18 others and caused at least \$6.6 million in

Railroad Commission spokes-men told The (Brenham) Bannermen told The (Brenham) Banner-Press on Wednesday they had made a preliminary finding that Seminole Pipeline Co.'s storage facility was overfilled, and that a check valve failed, resulting in a release of liquified petroleum gas product from the cavern that touched off the fiery explosion. "We want to ensure that no false impressions have been left

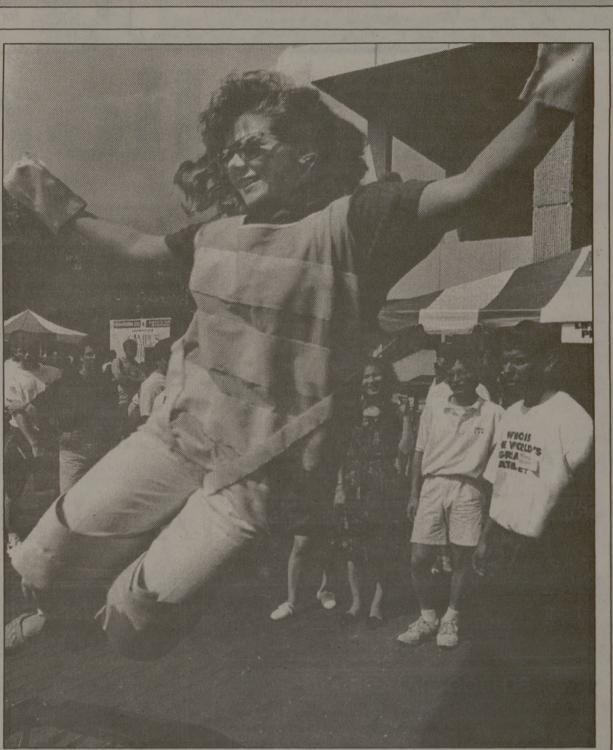
false impressions have been left by statements made," Guerrero said

The commission's investigation first focused on an aboveground pipeline loop and valve that remained on fire for days after the explosion, Guerrero said.

The loop is in an area where two, 6-inch pipelines join, one owned by Seminole and one by Coastline Gas Pipeline Co. The commission as yet has

found no evidence to indicate a drop in pressure, a leak, or a malfunction in either of those pipelines before the explosion, Guerrero said.

The commission also has no data on any damage to a 14-inch Seminole pipeline that runs near the storage cavern, she said.



ORTRUN GINGERICH/The Battalion

Human fly

Vanessa Armenteros, a freshman education "velcro wall" with the help of a trampoline outside major from Houstom fings herself onto the the MSC Thursday afternoon .

Texans collected \$247,000 as informants for IRS

AUSTIN (AP) — If you missed this week's Internal Revenue Service filing deadline, don't let too many people know. They could turn

you in — and turn a profit. Forty-six Texans took advantage of the snitcher's reward and collected a total of \$247,000 last year.

Call it a finder's fee considering the IRS col-lected \$7.4 million from those who were turned in.

Of course, the IRS has a kinder word for snitches — informants.

"Informants are often citizens who see their neighbors with a boat or a couple of expensive

cars and suspect that they aren't paying what they owe," said Jackie Antweiler, a public affairs officer for the IRS in Austin.

In the business world, companies have been known to turn in their competitors and employees have even ratted on their tax-dodging bosses.

Experts question Iou theory of oil's origitole

Researcher says unlimited supply ex

By Karen Praslicka The Battalion

Texas A&M petroleum experts are skeptical, but if Thomas Gold can prove his latest theory, the world's energy problem could be over

The Dallas Morning News re-ported Sunday that Gold has found proof that oil and gas are of non-biological — or abiotic origin

Gold, a former professor of as-tronomy at Cornell University, has said that all oil and gas on the planet was trapped in the Earth 4.5 billion years ago during the big bang, and there is an unlimited supply for the world to use if it can be extracted, he said.

Gold's theory has not been well accepted since he first pro-posed it about ten years ago. But during the past few years he has gained attention after claiming he has found oil where there should

has found oil where there should not have been any. Gold has persuaded the Swedish government and United States investors to drill a well in the Siljan Ring area of Sweden, the Morning News reported. The ring is the site of a meteor crash 350 million years ago, and is made of granite. Since the drilling began, Gold has found oil – the problem is, no one is convinced the oil came from non-organic rock.

from non-organic rock. The A&M Geochemical and Environmental Research Group (GERG) has analyzed Gold's research, but found no conclusive results.

Dr. Mahlon Kennicutt, a senior research scientist with GERG, said the actual drilling process could have created what Gold has found

There were some hydrocarbon gases found during the drilling in addition to the oil, which would add to Gold's theory, but the drilling bit on the rock can produce these same kinds of gases, Kennicutt said.

"Tommy Gold makes lots of claims, but the consensus is it hasn't been a successful experiment," he said. "They have produced some fluids that appear to be due to other things.

An additive - usually an oilbased mud – is pumped into the hole during the drilling process to control pressure or lubricate the drill bit if it gets stuck, which con-

vmakers taminates the hole. The Ch as release search concluded that then House S al pumped into the hole was eatedly to

Gold and his team discover, n the list "There was nothing pro rule of t by the hole that wasn't alreitives." Kennicutt said. lso accu

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for oil or gas. Holditch said, however, Foley h Holditch said, however, Democratic tons of oil that Gold claims Gephardt o tracted from the granite service with 28; De ly not that much. Therease E. Bonior ha

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some abiotic formation bers now in petroleum, but there is also Secretary R dence for its biological formation 25; Labor Secretary Secre One piece of evidence 16; Agricult volves the formation of oil R. Madigan Jrban Dev

"Through drilling and ev Jack F. Kem ration efforts, we've found of Former C comes more prevalent in thes now servin surface the deeper you go, i made the list the temperature getshotter,"Ke Coats of Ir mith of

Through stadies involving Hank Brown depth, the conversion of organic ry E. Craig of matter into petroleum because of M. Jeffords of the increasing heat can be ob The amon vere not pro The second piece of evidence involved laboratory experiment Some of t undreds

using sedimentary rocks. 'abuser'' sediments were heated in the a numbers of and they produced an oil-lik substance. This supports the first ed on the n account hole piece of evidence concerning the exceeded the formation of oil, Kennicutt said The third piece of evidence - Both part ads: Rep

See Oil/Page Democrats f the bank;

Kennicutt said there could

The Battalion

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Interested in Public Relations? The MSC **Public Relations** Committee

is now accepting applications for membership

Pick up an application at the information desks at either entrance to the Student Office (216 MSC). Programs Applications are due Monday, April 20, by 5 p.m.

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Individuals are being recruited for a research study on Generalized Anxiety Disorder. If you experience anxiety or would like to find out more about this study, call VIP Research. \$200.00 will be paid to qualified volunteers who enroll and complete this study.

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ULCERATIVE COLITIS

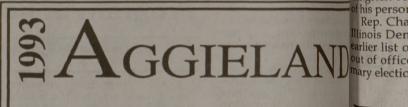
VIP Research is seeking individuals with ulcerative colitis. If you've been diagnosed with ulcerative colitis and you're 12 years of age or older, you may qualify for a five month study of a currently available medication. \$200.00 will be paid to those who complete this study.

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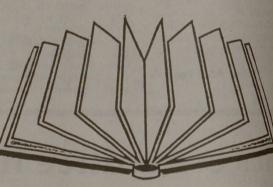
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Individuals with genital herpes infection are being recruited for a research study of an investigational antiviral medication. If you would like to find out more about this study, call VIP Research. A monetary incentive will be paid to gualified volunteers who enroll and complete this study.

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