

The Battalion

Vol. 92 No. 6 (14 pages)

"Serving Texas A&M Since 1893"

Monday, September 7, 1992

SLIP SLIDIN' AWAY



KARL STOLLEIS/The Battalion

Greg Hill during the opening drive of the A&M vs. LSU game in "Death Valley" Saturday afternoon.

Neo-Nazis riot in Germany, politicians look for solutions

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BERLIN — While police used riot gear to fight one of the worst weekends of rightist violence yet, Germany's leaders searched their own arsenal Sunday for weapons to halt the wave of hate.

In more than 20 cities, neo-Nazi youths tossed firebombs at refugee homes, smashed windows, burned cars and fought street battles with increasingly larger, more aggressive contingents of riot police. At least 42 people were arrested.

In the city of Schwedt, police late Saturday turned back 80 neo-Nazis bent on storming a small apartment housing a frightened family that had fled what was left of Yugoslavia.

Though only minor injuries were reported, the scope and intensity of the attacks showed that the belligerent neo-Nazi movement had not slowed down after two weeks of violence that began in the Baltic port city of Rostock.

Politicians are alarmed not only by the mayhem but by the ghastly image it was giving a nation trying to overcome its Nazi past. They took to the airwaves, newspaper columns and streets to offer ideas for stopping the violence.

Officials are considering toughening laws to crack down on the violence. Berlin police made a pre-emptive strike late Saturday night by uncharacteristically

swooping down on about 600 people near a refugee home, dispersing the crowd and making 11 arrests on weapons charges.

One political suggestion: stem the flow of refugees to former East Germany, the economically depressed ideologically underdeveloped former nation where most of the recent attacks have taken place.

That idea has been proposed before, most recently on Sunday by Hans-Joachim Jentsch, the justice minister in east Germany's Thuringia state.

"It would be in the interest of peace in the new federal states," he said.

Even Wolfgang Thierse, the top east German in the opposition Social Democrats, which champions refugee rights, said reducing east Germany's intake of refugees was worth thinking about.

Germany has been struggling with rightist violence for the past two years, when refugees began flooding the nation after the East bloc collapsed in 1989. So far this year, 274,000 foreigners have applied for asylum, already eclipsing last year's record.

Most refugees hope to go to west Germany, which many believe is safer than the relatively chaotic, working-class east. But the federal government last year began apportioning asylum-seekers to each German state.

See Germany/Page 14

Departments cancel classes for math teacher's funeral

By SUSAN OWEN

Asst. Arts & Entertainment Editor of THE BATTALION

Afternoon classes in the departments of Mathematics and Modern Languages will be canceled today to allow faculty, staff and students to attend the funeral of Dr. Ilya Bakelmann, the Texas A&M math professor who died in an automobile accident on Aug. 30.

All modern language classes after noon and math classes that meet between 12:40 and 3 p.m. are canceled. Math classes after

3 p.m. will meet as usual.

Bakelmann's wife Irene, a lecturer in the modern languages department, was injured in the accident and is recuperating at home from a concussion and internal bruises.

Dr. and Mrs. Bakelmann were returning to College Station after visiting their son Alex, a junior at the University of Texas, when the accident occurred.

Bakelmann, 63, was a professor of mathematics in A&M's math department since 1982. He held degrees in mathematics and physics from the University of

Leningrad and the Leningrad Pedagogical Institute.

He was born in St. Petersburg (formerly Leningrad), in the former Soviet Union, and came to the United States in 1979.

Mathematics Department Head Dr. William Rundell described Bakelmann as a "distinguished mathematician" who specialized in studying the geometry of global differential equations.

Bakelmann's funeral will be held at 1 p.m. at the Hillier Funeral Home, 502 W. 26th St., Bryan.

Austin killer nears end of prison term

'Good time' policies allow for early release of rapist

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HUNTSVILLE — One of Texas' most notorious killers, James C. Cross, who was accused of killing two University of Texas students 27 years ago, will walk out of prison Sept. 30.

Cross was sentenced to 80 years in prison for the July 1965 rape-slaying of Susan Rigsby. He also led police to the raped and strangled body of Rigsby's friend and his former girlfriend, Shirley Stark.

He was never tried for that murder. The state's "good time" policies have reduced Cross' time behind bars by more than 50 years, allowing him to join a small group of Texas inmates who actually serve their sentences before being discharged from prison.

"It's none of our business," said Raven Kazen, spokesman for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice's parole division. "In a sense he has paid his debt, he's done his time, whether we like it or not."

Cross, who will be 50 next week, was denied parole 14 times since 1975. Ironically, if he had been granted parole, "we would have had the authority to help him get settled," Kazen told the Houston Chronicle.

"But the parole board is in a damned-if-you-do, damned-if-you-don't situation in a case like this, where there's not a life sentence and, at some point, the prisoner is going to get out."

Cross was a 22-year-old University of Texas student when, on a hot Sunday afternoon in July 1965, he lived out what psychiatrists held was a recurring fantasy: raping and killing women.

Stark and Rigsby were headed for school in

Austin when they stopped to shower and change clothes at Cross' apartment.

Rigsby showered first. A few minutes later, while Stark showered, Cross confronted her friend in the bedroom where he raped and strangled her. Then he turned on Stark.

Minutes after the killings, Cross picked up his current girlfriend, took her on a date and then back to his apartment where they had sex a few feet from where the bodies of his victims lay heaped in a bedroom closet.

Two days later, he consoled the two women's anguished families, assuring them that no harm possibly could have befallen the pair. And, still later, he offered to help police find the women, giving them false clues.

Two weeks later, his conscience gnawing at him Cross went to authorities, confessed to both slayings and led police to their bodies.

During the second trial for Rigsby's death, police admitted they would never have had a case against Cross had he not come forward.

Jurors found Cross guilty of Rigsby's capital murder in 1966, but rejected pleas from Travis County Assistant District Attorney Phil Nelson to sentence him to death. Instead, he was sentenced to life.

He won a second trial after a U.S. Supreme Court ruling about determining whether a defendant is competent to stand trial became state law and retroactive.

Nelson retried Cross in 1986 and this time Travis County jurors convicted him of murder with malice and sentenced him to 80 years.

Texas A&M professors study Hurricane Andrew

Much of Florida's damage could have been prevented

By TODD STONE

Reporter of THE BATTALION

Much of the damage to South Florida caused by Hurricane Andrew could have been prevented despite the area having some of the most stringent construction codes in the country, a Texas A&M architecture professor said.

Dr. Dale Perry, leader of the Wind Engineering Research Council post-disaster team, said damage and loss of life from Hurricane Andrew would have been greater if Andrew had struck New Orleans or other gulf coast cities. Perry is president of WERC.

"It (Andrew) could have been more severe because they (gulf coast cities) don't have the building codes of South Florida," Perry said. "We're looking at an area where we had better preventative policy than anywhere in this country, and we still had all this damage."

According to the WERC report, the damage to South Florida was consistent with past storms such as hurricanes Hugo and Alicia.

Perry said building codes do not adequately treat roof coverings, and roof failures accounted for much of the damage caused by Andrew.

"Industry needs to develop some new roofing materials. We need stronger codes," Perry said. "Most (South Florida buildings) are well-engineered structures, but once you have roofing damage then you have problems."

Further, roofs for essential facilities — hospitals, fire stations, schools, evacuation shelters and airports — performed poorly as well.

The purpose of the (WERC) study was to examine wind conditions from an engineering perspective on various buildings and consider what construction practices could prevent future losses from intense wind storms.

Evidence did not support media reports that wind gusts reached 200 miles per hour. Andrew's wind speeds were between 110 and 125 miles per hour, according to the WERC report.

Current codes established by

the engineering profession for South Florida recommend structures should withstand winds up to 120 mph.

Texas A&M civil engineering professor Dr. W. Lynn Beason, who also participated in the study, said many assumed their homes survived wind speeds exceeding 125 mph.

"Some buildings withstood the storm," Beason said, "but they didn't withstand 200 mph winds like many believe."

Although storm-protection industries can protect against certain elements of severe weather, some people may falsely believe their homes are safe, Beason said.

"Certain special interest groups will try to bolster sales," he said. "They could address one element of the problem, but you have to address everything."

"Until someone addresses the whole construction problem from the ground up, I'm afraid we're wasting our time."

Perry said many will mistakenly rebuild structures to the same standards that failed before. There needs to be a national agenda for regulations calling for the construction of safe and affordable housing, he said.

"If someone's insurance policy will only support one way to rebuild, then historically, they will be built to the same faulty standards as before," he said.

According to the report, power outages extended well beyond the area of major damage. Perry said some residents may be left without power for one to two months.

"During every hurricane, we lose power," he said. "Almost all of Miami lost power after Andrew. Those people are trying to get their lives together, and they have no electricity. We have an obligation to help them."

"You need power for gasoline and clean water."

Perry said utility companies used the same insufficient standards for power line design that were used on buildings.

"Their philosophy is if one

(power line) goes down, no problem," he said, "but after Andrew, they all went down — and that's a problem."

Beason said the lack of power caused some helter skelter conditions.

"No traffic lights were working," Beason said. "Imagine trying to drive across Houston without a traffic light. It was free for all."

The WERC report will be received by its membership, all building codes organizations, congressional committees, government agencies and the National Science Foundation.

Beason's trip was funded by the Civil Engineering Department.

INSIDE



Aggies run by LSU Page 7

Campus/Page 2

State/Page 3

World & Nation/ Page 5

Opinion/Page 13

Cartoons/Page 14