

Lock and load...



John Smith from Aransas Pass learns to shoot a .22 rifle at the Corps Youth Camp. The youth camp shows kids from around the state what life in the Corps of Cadets is like. It is a week-long camp that will last until Saturday.

MARY MACMANUS/The Battalion

Cop killer defense blames rap

Attorney claims lyrics 'brainwashed' Howard into shooting

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN — A defense attorney who played several anti-police rap music songs for a jury Monday said his client was "brainwashed" by the songs and driven by their lyrics to shoot and kill a state trooper.

Attorney Allen Tanner is attempting to keep Ronald Ray Howard of Houston from the death penalty.

Howard, 19, was convicted of capital murder June 8 for the April 1992 shooting death of Department of Public Safety trooper Bill Davidson. The punishment phase of the trial is expected to last two to three weeks.

Tanner has said that Howard was listening to anti-cop rap music just before he shot Davidson in the neck at close range. Davidson had pulled Howard over near Victoria because of a missing headlight.

Howard, who has confessed to the killing on several occasions, could be sentenced to life in prison or death by lethal injection.

Jurors studied printed lyrics as they listened to seven songs known as "gansta rap," including

"The Trigger-Happy Police" by O.C.U. and "City Under Siege" by the Geto Boys.

"Ask yourself if you think it could impact the kids who are listening to this music," Tanner said to the jury between songs.

"I think this music brainwashed Ronald Howard," Tanner said. "I'm not just blaming it on that. I'm saying it's a combination of an individual and society."

"I think this music brainwashed Ronald Howard, I'm not just blaming it on that. I'm saying it's a combination of an individual and society."

—Allen Tanner, defense attorney

But prosecutor Bobby Bell said it shouldn't matter if rap music influenced Howard or not.

"Whether or not that rap music caused him to shoot that trooper is an issue that I don't even think is relevant in the jury's consideration of the death penalty," Bell said.

Bell said he will call as witnesses two Houston rap artists, Scarface and Ganksta N.I.P., to try to link Howard to gang activity. Bell

also said he will present evidence which proves that Howard had been a cop and worked as a drug dealer.

"I'm bringing Scarface in because the evidence is going to show that Scarface and Ganksta N.I.P. are members of the same gang, (and) the same neighborhood, South Park, that Ronald Ray Howard is," Bell said.

"I want to show the jury that very people (who are) his fellow gang members, how they operate, what they believe in, what their code is and how they treat cops and want to kill cops," he said.

Bell said in his opening statements he will attempt to prove that Howard was a cocaine dealer and a car thief who could not keep a job. Bell said

will call at least two of Howard's ex-girlfriends who claim the defendant was violent with them and made death threats.

Bell also said he will call trooper's wife, Linda Davidson.

Tanner said he will show Howard was an abused child with little self-esteem who had trouble learning to read.

The punishment phase of the trial is expected to last two to three weeks.

Court halts execution of Texas inmate

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HUNTSVILLE — A stay was granted Monday for Denton Crank, a Texas death row inmate who had been scheduled to die after midnight for a 1984 murder.

The 5th Circuit Court of Appeals stayed the execution for 37-year-old Crank, who was sentenced to death for killing a Houston man during a store robbery.

Last week, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals in Austin had rejected an appeal to halt Crank's execution.

Houston attorney Dan Wannamaker said he raised a couple of issues in Crank's appeal, including a claim that jurors in his trial were not allowed to consider evidence that the defendant was abused as a child when determining his punishment.

Crank, a construction worker from Harris County, was convicted of capital murder in the January 1984 slaying of Terry Oringderff, an employee of Rice Food Markets.

Oringderff, 31, was shot six or seven times after the store was robbed of more than \$39,000 in cash. Before he was killed, Oringderff was held prisoner by the gunman and forced to carry the stolen money to the getaway car.

Crank was scheduled to die in 1989, but he won a stay from Supreme Court Justice Byron White.

Five Texas inmates have been executed this year, the last being John Christopher Sawyers, who was put to death May 18 for a 1983 murder.

Insurance bill angers homeowners

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN — A group of homeowners, private insurance adjusters and general contractors made a plea Monday for Gov. Ann Richards to veto insurance legislation that would alter coverage of house foundations damaged by water.

The bill, if signed into law by Richards, would require owners of homes 10 years and older to buy separate coverage to protect against water damage to the foundation of their house.

Currently, the water damage provision is included in homeowners' policies.

"This is economic racism," said Ed Benjamin, a representative of The Peoples' Insurance Adjuster in Austin.

Benjamin said because a majority of people who own houses 10 years old or older are often retired, living on fixed income or reside in low-income neighborhoods, they won't be able to afford the additional coverage and won't buy it.

"The white middle class doesn't buy 30-year-old

houses," Benjamin said. "There are a lot of senior citizens who are reluctant to go into debt because of this."

The problem of water damage to home foundations should be of grave concern to Texans because about 300,000 homes across the state are built on top of volatile soils and clays that expand when mixed with water, Benjamin said.

He said the expanding soils and clays are predominantly located in a stretch from Fort Worth to Corpus Christi.

A few Austin homeowners say they were shocked to see their houses literally ripping apart due to broken water pipes that had caused the clay beneath their dwelling to expand several feet and crack concrete foundations.

"The walls began cracking, the rafters holding up the ceiling began pulling apart, eventually the roof would have fallen in," said Geraldine Nash, a retired Austin resident, who is having her home rebuilt at a cost of \$55,000 because of the water damage.

"I would not have been able to afford the repairs if I didn't have insurance."

ROACH!!!! There's money in them thar critters

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GALVESTON — Wait! Before you step on that roach! There's money in them thar critters.

At least that's what Karen Brandreth thought one time back in 1985 as she reached for her can of Raid for the umpteenth time.

Being a creative person, a person who sees opportunity knocking (or scurrying across the floor, in this case), Ms. Brandreth decided to go where no person had gone before. At least no person over the age of 2.

She sprayed that bug, then she played with that bug. She dressed him up and put him in a tiny toy car. Then she gathered a few more

dead cockroaches, dressed them up and glued them at a tiny table playing cards. The more bugs she collected, the more bizarre the scenarios became.

Soon Ms. Brandreth was elbow-deep in dead bugs and a new hobby — cockroach art under glass. Under a small glass box, she would create a stage and various scenarios for her insects which were hardened in resin and glued into place.

"I had a hard time finding really large ones," she said. "So I used to go to exterminating companies to get them."

Ms. Brandreth found miniature doll furniture came in handy, but often she had to make her own special accessories.

Living in Houston at the time,

she set up a display at the Houston International Festival and word spread like roaches in a sugar factory. Local television and news media did features on her. Then the national media started calling. The National Enquirer did a story. Ripley's Believe It or Not, USA Today and National Public Radio all came calling.

In the meantime, the commissions came rolling in for one-of-a-kind custom cockroach art. Kenny Rogers wanted roaches in a Western. Lionel Richie wanted roaches "Dancing on the Ceiling."

Ms. Brandreth turned roaches into teachers, attorneys in court and doctors in surgery. For the Houston Ballet director, she dressed roaches in tutus and ballet slippers in a tiny dance studio.

Health Tips

Satisfy cravings with cool ice cream in low-fat flavors

By KRISTIN OGRODOWICZ

Special to The Battalion

If those hot summer days are getting you down, then cool off with a smooth refreshing dip of ice cream. Sometimes there is nothing that will satisfy that summertime craving for relief from the heat, than some good old-fashioned ice cream.

Americans indulge themselves with over 800 million gallons of ice cream and related products annually. Topping the charts for the number one flavor is vanilla, and running a close second is chocolate. Other flavors that seem to be popular favorites are butter pecan, strawberry, Neapolitan and chocolate chip.

Cold ice cream is such a hot item in the summer because it comes in a variety of flavors to please all. It may also be because it is a relatively inexpensive dessert, but whatever the reason, people seem to be scooping it onto cones and bowls and mixing it into shakes and various other creamy creations.

What many people don't realize is that ice cream is a good source of calcium. Eating one cup of ice cream has the same amount of calcium (176 mgs) as eating one ounce of American pasteurized cheese, three ounces of pink salmon, half a cup of collard greens or drinking almost two-thirds of a cup of milk.

However, if people are watching their weight or cholesterol, ice cream can be high in fat. But there are alternatives to high fat ice cream deserts. Ice cream clones such as fat-frees, lights and ice milks give much of the same enjoyment as ice cream with less fat and cholesterol. For an even more reduced diet, choose sherberts, sorbets and yogurts.

Also, watch ice cream toppings. Calories and fat can surely add up in a hurry when toppings are added to ice cream or even yogurt. Choose fruit toppings for less fat.

The key to eating the healthy amount of ice cream is enjoying it in moderation. Stick to this rule to enjoy that rich, creamy taste and still help keep those extra unwanted pounds off. Just remember, keep portion sizes small and indulgences occasional.

For more information on ice cream and cool summer choices, come by the Health Education Center, located in the basement of the Health Center, Room 16. Ask about a handout that lists calories and fat and various cool summer choices.

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