

Task force investigates alcohol law violations

By Mark Smith

THE BATTALION

Because of an increase in cases of minors in possession of alcoholic beverages, the Texas Alcoholic Beverages Commission (TABC) and law enforcement officials are conducting a joint investigation of local businesses.

"We saw the numbers increasing," said Lt. Ron Stone of the TABC. "We did it to identify problem areas where minors were getting alcohol."

The investigation has found that of 117 businesses examined, 41 sold alcohol to a minor at some point.

The TABC, Bryan Police Department, College Station Police Department, Bra-

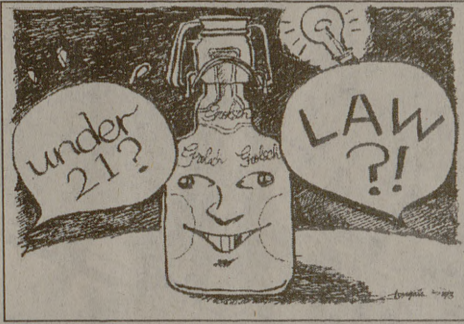
zos County Sheriff's Department, and the Brazos County Attorney's Office helped conduct the investigation.

Investigators sent minors into businesses to try to buy alcohol, while police maintained visual, audio and video surveillance during the procedure. A valid Texas driver's license, which indicated his age was under 21, was the only piece of identification the undercover official had.

The task force targeted businesses that carry a permit or license authorizing the sale of alcohol for off-premises consumption.

Officials said they hoped the investigation would increase awareness among retailers and employees about the problem of selling alcohol to minors.

"We would like to think that the retail-



Angel Kan/THE BATTALION

er would make sure the employees are more aware about the sale of alcohol to minors," Stone said.

Stone said the employees should check the age and physical description on the person's identification to make sure there are no discrepancies.

One retailer said he takes precautions with his employees to prevent the sale of alcohol to minors.

"We've sent employees to TABC's Alcohol Certification Class to learn the regulations," said Mitchell Leavell, a manager for one of the area Kroger's stores.

"We also have in-house training for our checkers and teaching them the rules is all done at orientation."

TABC officials said they hope they can educate the employees who sell to minors.

"There should be a lot of follow-up work," Stone said.

"I hope we get the opportunity to talk to each of the employees."

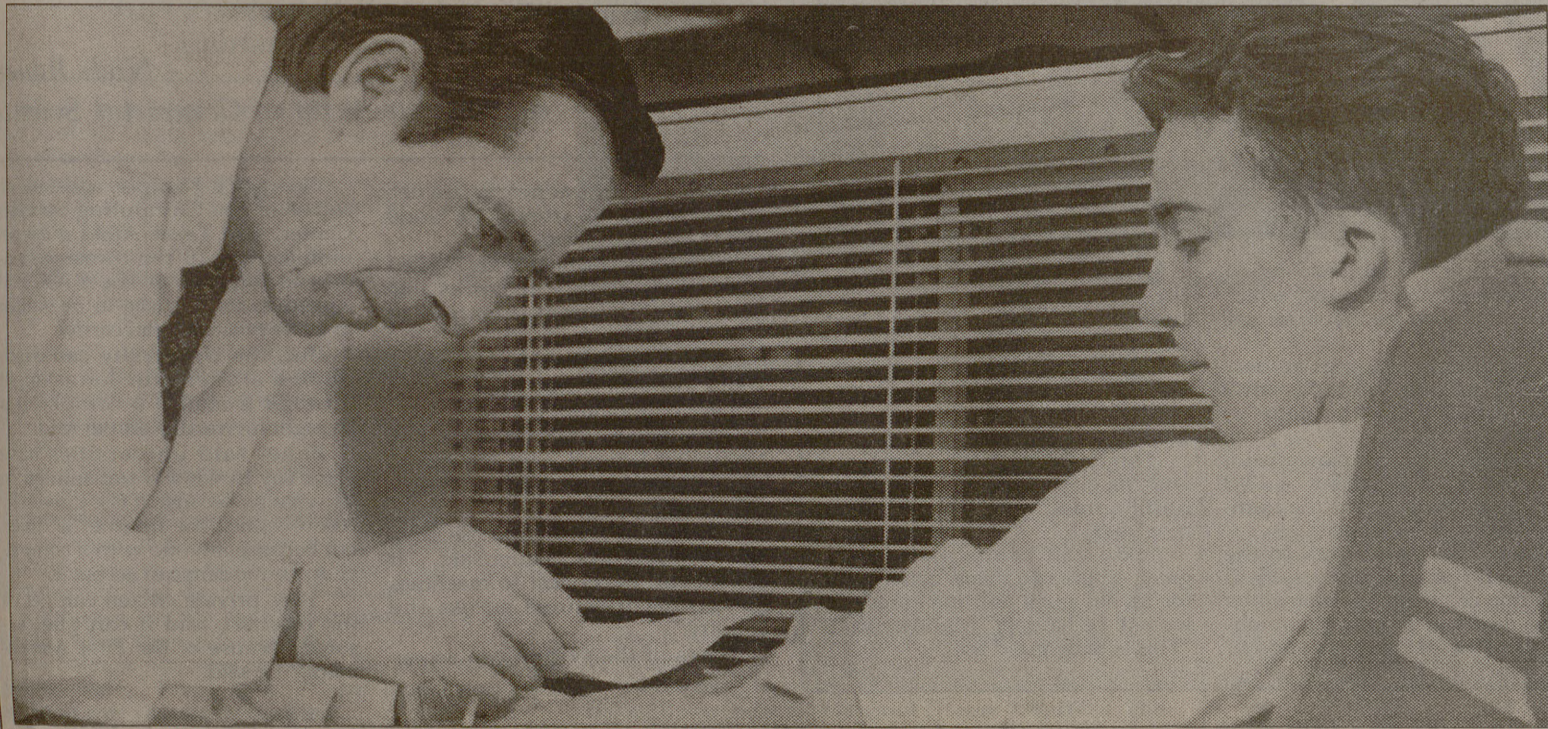
"Education is not merely the fact that we caught you. We need to tell them what they did wrong so it won't happen again."

Because of new laws governing alcohol sale, employees who sell alcohol to minors could face a fine of up to \$500 and a jail term of up to one year.

And, Stone said, it is much easier to get a conviction with the new laws.

"Before you had to prove that the employee had prior knowledge of the person's age," he said, "now all you have to do is prove the employee committed criminal negligence. That means they could or should have known that the person was a minor."

All for a good cause



Amy Browning/THE BATTALION

Russell Jennings (right), a sophomore business administration major from Pflugerville, has second thoughts about giving blood as he watches Edward Alsobrooke (left) stick a needle in his arm. The Wadley Blood Drive will continue through Friday around campus.

NAFTA will benefit Texas, economist says

By Lisa Elliott

THE BATTALION

With the North American Free Trade Agreement going to a vote in Congress today, one Texas A&M University economist is saying if it passes, Texas could gain 29,000 energy-related jobs and the output of goods in the state could increase by \$2 billion a year.

Dr. Jared Hazleton, head of Texas A&M's Center for Business and Economic Analysis, recently released the results of a study he conducted to examine the effects of NAFTA on Texas.

Although the focus of Hazle-

See Related Story, Page 3

ton's research was the energy industry, he said it would benefit most other industries in Texas.

"It's hard to find a sector of Texas economy that won't benefit," he said.

Hazleton used the energy industry as an example of a typical

Texas industry, but, he said, the electronics industry and the agricultural industry will also benefit.

NAFTA will have a major impact on the Texas energy industry by increasing opportunities for exporting energy-related equipment, Hazleton said.

"By giving U.S. natural gas companies direct access to Mexican gas consumers, NAFTA could expand Texas exports of natural gas by an estimated 200 billion cubic feet a year over the next seven years," he said.

The study showed that this would generate \$1 billion annually.

Hazleton said the export opportunities produced by NAFTA



Hazleton

See NAFTA/Page 3

Houston twister wreaks havoc, injures 4 people

The Associated Press

HOUSTON — A tornado struck the west side of downtown Houston on Tuesday, injuring four people, damaging several buildings and scaring thousands of workers in their office towers.

The morning twister struck as heavy rains pounded much of the Houston-Galveston area.

The storms ripped off sections of roofs, shattered windows, damaged cars and downed power lines and trees in parts of downtown and an adjoining neighborhood.

National Weather Service officials said the tornado hit around 10 a.m.

There were no other reports of other twisters touching down, but a tornado watch remained in effect until Tuesday evening.

In other parts of Texas, heavy thunderstorms moved through East Texas, dropping nearly three inches of rain at Longview and Karnack. Earlier, snow and rain fell across parts of the Texas Panhandle.

Four people were injured at the Enron Corp. building in downtown Houston and taken to nearby St. Joseph's Hospital.

Three were treated and released, but the fourth person was still undergoing treatment for a deep hand cut Tuesday afternoon, said hospital spokeswoman Ellen Durckel.

Of the four injured, two were inside the Enron building and the other two were outside it, Ms. Durckel said.

The 36-story building sustained some of the worst storm damage with more than 30 windows shattered or blown out. Houston Fire Department officials evacuated the skyscraper because of the damage.

Officials continue investigation in Margraves case

By Jennifer Smith

THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M University System and the Texas Rangers are still investigating an anonymous letter sent to the Chairman of the A&M Board of Regents Ross Margraves that said he benefited from some of the System's business deals.

James Bond, interim general counsel for the A&M System, said Tuesday that A&M's internal investigation into the allegations is still being conducted.

Although the investigation has been going on for more than a month, Bond said this does not indicate that any of the allegations are correct.

"We have found nothing in the letter that is true," Bond said. "We have found

"We have found nothing in the letter that is true."

— James Bond, interim general counsel for the A&M System

nothing that would substantiate the allegations made in that anonymous letter."

Bond said he believes the letter was driven by malice, and therefore, it is important that the investigation be completed.

"I'm anxious for the investigation to be concluded," he said.

A&M System regent Mary Nan West said Margraves is a man of integrity who has been a good leader.

"He keeps us up to date on everything he does on this board, down to the minutiae," she said. "He reports in full."

Regent Billy Clayton, a former Texas

House speaker, said the letter has no merit because the person who wrote it has not come forward.

"Anyone who doesn't have the guts to come forward shouldn't be given the time of day," he said.

Bond said he could not comment on the investigation or when it might be completed.

An official with the Texas Rangers said their investigation is still being conducted, but she refused to comment on when it might be complete.

When Margraves received the anonymous

letter last month, he forwarded it to the Governor's office who then passed it on to the Texas Rangers.

The A&M System also began an internal investigation into the allegations made in the letter.

Margraves admitted that Barnes and Noble, the company managing the A&M bookstore, paid for him and Robert Smith, vice president for finance and administration, to travel to New York in July 1990 to finalize the deal for the operation of the bookstore.

These trips included stays in expensive hotels, meals, limousine service and tickets to Broadway shows.

Although this type of trip is illegal now under the Texas Government Code, it was legal in 1990 when Margraves said the trips were made.

Bloodshed threatens to torpedo Israeli-PLO peace accord

The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — A handover of authority in occupied lands appears increasingly unlikely by the Dec. 13 deadline set down in the Israel-PLO peace accord, Israeli and Palestinian officials said Tuesday.

A holdup in the Palestinian autonomy plan would delay the start of Israeli troop withdrawals from the territories, seriously undercutting the accord at a time when public support seems to be eroding because

of mounting bloodshed.

Two Palestinians died and two Israelis were wounded in the occupied lands Tuesday.

And Jewish settlers in the West Bank town of Hebron overturned market stalls, smashed cars and broke windshields to retaliate for a hatchet attack on an Israeli man on Monday.

In Israeli-controlled territory in southern Lebanon, Shiite Muslim guerrillas wounded two Israeli soldiers and two allied

Lebanese militiamen in a ground assault. Israeli warplanes struck Hezbollah guerrilla bases in retaliation.

The Hezbollah guerrillas and Palestinian radicals have vowed to escalate attacks against Israeli troops in Lebanon in an effort to torpedo the Sept. 13 peace accord between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

An Israeli official said PLO leader Yasser Arafat should be doing more to curb the violence in the territories, and one of Arafat's

own allies said he should be doing more to push the autonomy plan through.

A Palestinian source at the Israel-PLO talks in Cairo said the sides were so far apart that negotiations may go on longer than expected.

The major points of contention, the source said, are the scope of Israel's pullout from the Gaza Strip and Jericho on the West Bank and the fate of thousands of Palestinians held in Israeli jails.

12th Man fascinates VP candidate

Texas A&M just as he expected, Harmon says

By Michele Brinkmann

THE BATTALION

The latest candidate for the position of vice president for student services said he thinks students should learn how to create a life in college, and he wants to get the input of not just the student leaders, but also of those who are less involved.

"A university environment is

practice for what they will do for the rest of their lives," said Dr. William H. Harmon, current vice chancellor for student affairs at the University of Pittsburgh.

Harmon was on the Texas A&M University campus this week to interview for the position vacated in August by Dr. John Koldus.

Harmon said Texas A&M is just as he expected to find it.



Harmon

"There were no surprises, but I was amazed at the partnership that has developed between the student and the University," he said.

He said when he found out the position was available, he called a couple of colleagues to get their opinion of A&M.

"There is a perception out there that an A&M position is the best in the country," Harmon said. "I have always had a fascination with the 12th Man, and John Koldus is a legend."

He said he believes the most important part of the job is to gain

See Harmon/Page 4

Inside

CAMPUS

• Great American Smokeout begins Thursday Page 3

SPORTS

• Feature profile: Defensive lineman Eric England Page 5

OPINION

• Megliola: Midnight Yell becomes Midnight Jail Page 9

