

# Texas A&M The Battalion

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## Tornado in Lancaster kills 3, destroys 200 homes

The Associated Press

LANCASTER — Residents picked through debris and desperately sought out loved ones Tuesday following a tornado that destroyed most of the business district and as many as 200 homes.

Three people were killed in the Monday night twister that tore through this one-time cotton farming country, which has developed into one of Dallas' fastest-developing suburbs.

"I think there's a lot of hard days ahead, a lot of them," said Lancaster Police Chief Mac McGuire.

A mattress hung from a tree in front of the 119-year-old Odd Fellows Hall, which lost much of its second floor. A building which once housed a bank robbed by Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker lost all of its second floor except for a corner facade.

The business district, which dates back to the years just after

the Civil War, was left in ruins. A 20-foot clock in the middle of the town square showed 9:38 on its shattered face, testimony to when the tornado ended its destructive trek.

Rebekka Henderson, 19, was at home with her mother and younger brother when the tornado tore through her neighborhood on the edge of the square.

"We saw what was coming, so we closed ourselves off in an inside hall with the dog. Sirens went

off. We were sitting with the dog, covering our heads. The house fell all around the hall. We could feel the wind through the floor," she said.

Ronnie Mitschke was at home with his family, planning a night of baseball and movies on the television.

The tornado intervened, forcing the family to take refuge in a master bedroom closet. "A 1,400-square-foot house is now 2-feet tall," he said. "The more I think

about it the more I figure I should be dead."

Early estimates of insured losses from the powerful storm may reach \$250 million, said Jerry Johns, president of the Southwestern Insurance Information Service.

The smell of broken creosote-treated wooden frames filled the square and the silence was interrupted by the bulldozers clearing mounds of 120-year-old bricks from the streets.

The fatalities occurred in the

residential area west and northwest of the square. As many as six blocks of homes were destroyed and another five blocks suffered severe damage along the path that is 6 miles long and a half-mile wide, said trooper Robert White of the Texas Department of Public Safety.

"I think we had one cardiac arrest. The rest died in their homes" of injuries, White said.

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## How now brown cow?



Tim Moog/The Battalion

A kindergarten student from Navasota Elementary School reaches out to pet a cow at the Dairy Cattle Center of Texas A&M's Animal

Science Department. The children were on a field trip Tuesday morning to see the various animals housed at A&M.

## Taiwanese jet kills 259 during crash in Japan

The Associated Press

NAGOYA, Japan — A Taiwanese jetliner crashed and burned while trying to land at an airport in central Japan on Tuesday night, killing at least 259 people and narrowly missing a nearby housing area.

The China Airlines A300-600R Airbus had 271 people on board. Airport officials said 10 were being treated in hospitals and two were unaccounted for.

Minutes before the crash, pilot Wang Lo-chi radioed that he would abandon his landing attempt and try again, the Transport Ministry said. The pilot did not give a reason or indicate any trouble.

In his last transmission, he simply said: "Going around."

The plane, flying to Nagoya from Taipei, Taiwan, crashed several hundred yards to the right of the runway. Had it gone another 200 yards straight ahead, it would have hit houses.

It ended up just short of several hangars of an air force base at the airport, and the quick response by airmen was credited with saving some lives.

A Transport Ministry official said the fire was put out about 40 minutes after the crash, the second worst in Japanese aviation history.

"When I got to the plane, it looked so bad that I thought everyone must have died."

— Takahide Miyagi, a Nagoya district assistant fire chief

Hours later, some 3,000 police, firefighters and troops were gingerly lifting wreckage with cranes and by hand in the search for the remaining victims.

The plane, Flight 140, was carrying 256 passengers and 15 crew members when it crashed at 8:18 p.m., officials said.

"When I got to the plane, it looked so bad that I thought everyone must have died," said Takahide Miyagi, a Nagoya district assistant fire chief.

"But then I heard a woman calling in pain for help and I called for a stretcher and we rescued her," he said.

Yoshihito Horiba, another fire official, said many of the bodies were too badly mangled to identify even by age or gender. Some were

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## Classes still on schedule despite Nixon funeral

By Jennifer Smith  
The Battalion

Texas A&M University students will have classes today although Gov. Ann Richards declared Wednesday a state day of mourning out of respect for former president Richard Nixon, who died Friday.

In response to Richards' announcement, A&M System Chancellor William Mobley decided Tuesday morning to let the chief executive officers of System universities and agencies be responsible for developing and implementing a plan that keeps offices open which are required to conduct official state business.

Texas A&M Interim President E. Dean Gage announced Tuesday that College Station and Galveston

classes will be held as scheduled, but employees not directly involved in providing classroom support or other key services necessary for planned or special events will be given the day off.

Employees who work Wednesday may observe the day of mourning as a compensatory day off between now and August 31, 1994 with the approval of their immediate supervisor.

Although Richards declared that state offices, agencies and departments would be closed "as an appropriate tribute to our 37th president," A&M officials said classes were not canceled because it is so late in the semester.

Mary Jo Powell, associate di-

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## Officials investigate illegal gambling racket

By Jan Higginbotham  
The Battalion

Texas A&M University officials are investigating a get-rich-quick scheme involving a number of unidentified individuals who have been participating in an illegal gambling operation.

According to reports from the Student Conflict Resolution Center, these individuals ask students to invest \$100 in a pyramid scheme. The investors recruit students to buy spots on

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the pyramid, and once 10 more participants are found, they earn a \$900 return. The other students also help to recruit so they can work their way up the pyramid with hopes of getting the same \$900 return.

Gene Zdziarski, coordinator for the Student Conflict Resolution Center, said the center is

now working to inform the public of the dangers of getting involved in the pyramid scheme.

"Our biggest concern now is getting the word out," Zdziarski said. "Our standpoint as a University is to address the needs of the student body. The solution is to get this thing stopped."

The center has received a dozen calls concerning the scheme, which Zdziarski said appears to be very widespread.

One student, who asked not to be identified because of his involvement in the scheme, said pyramid activities are over.

"It spread so fast that everybody is in it, so it's at a standstill," he said. "It's over. Everybody is either in or everybody is scared to get in. The people who have already gotten in and gotten out don't want back in."

"For about three days, it was like wildfire. All of the sudden, just within one night, it was at a standstill."

Zdziarski said it is important for students to realize there is no direct benefit or product from the investment. He said students also need to be aware that participation in such an activity is a crime.

"The issue of criminal charges depends on the individuals," he said. "The county attorney's office may decide to take action."

James Lindholm, investigating officer for the University Police Department, said the case is currently at a standstill because no complaints have been received.

"If someone has been taken in by the pyramid scheme, we are asking them to call in," Lindholm said. "Until we get a complainant, we can't do anything. All we can do now is try to warn the public."

Lindholm said such endless chain schemes are a Class B misdemeanor, punishable by a fine

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## Black South Africans get vote after 342 years

The Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — Black South Africans made history Tuesday, voting by the tens of thousands to take control of their country for the first time since whites arrived 342 years ago.

"We need freedom," said 72-year-old Florence Ndimangele, voting with other elderly people near Cape Town. "We are tired of being slaves."

Despite late-arriving ballots and lines so long in some places that people collapsed, the mood among blacks casting the first vote of their lives was jubilant.

Tuesday's voting was reserved for the aged, invalids, people in hospitals and the military. General voting begins Wednesday, when African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela and President F.W. de Klerk will cast their ballots.

"Today marks the dawn of our freedom," Mandela said.

For Gladys Shabalala, a 62-year-old retired nurse voting near Durban, it was a day of immeasurable significance.

"There have been so many white elections," she said. "I used to pass the posters on the road and dream about whether I would be able to vote. That's why I came so early, to see if this is really happening."

Her seven daughters, she said, will see "a real new South Africa."

After two days of bombings by suspected right-wingers that killed 21

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## Ceremony encourages employees to earn GED

By Nicole Cloutier  
The Battalion

Eight Texas A&M employees who earned their General Equivalency Diplomas were honored at a special commencement ceremony Tuesday.

The graduates were part of a program sponsored by the University to encourage A&M employees to gain their GED, which is the equivalent of a high school diploma.

The program, which has been offered since 1988 through A&M's Human Resources Department, allows employees paid time off to study for and take the GED examination.

The program has commenced more than 100 employees since its beginning and currently enrolls 22 employees.

Maria Magallanes, one of Tuesday's honorees, said she was glad she participated in the program.

"It was definitely worth it," she said.

Many were appreciative of the opportunity and plan to continue their education.

Hugh McElroy, associate director of Human Resources, said this can be the stepping stone to long-term

goals. "Many of these graduates go on to Blinn and even Texas A&M," he said.

McElroy said graduates get more than just a certificate when they complete this program.

"Some of these graduates already have their own families, some even have grandchildren, and it is really strong reinforcement for their children to see momma or poppa, or even grandma studying," he said.

Head football coach R.C. Slocum, the guest speaker at the event, commended the graduates for taking advantage of their power to choose and taking responsibility for the direction of their lives.

Slocum said they have taken successful steps in a game more important than football, the game of life.

Slocum's father dropped out of school at the age of 15 to help contribute to the family income.

"It was a noble cause when you think about it, sacrificing his own education for his family," Slocum said.

"But he eventually reached a plateau with the education he had gained in the military. Then, when



Stew Milne/The Battalion

Some Texas A&M University employees earned their General Equivalency Diplomas (GED) through a program sponsored by the University.

he stopped and realized that he was not happy with his lifestyle, instead of sitting back and making a bunch of excuses, he did something about it."

Slocum said he was in first grade

when his father went back to get his GED, and he could remember his father sitting and studying with him.

"And he was struggling with it too," Slocum said.