

THE BATTALION

107 YEARS AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

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News in Brief State

Suspect charged in 11-hour standoff

DALLAS (AP) — A man arrested after he barricaded himself inside a hotel suite with a hostage was charged Wednesday with robbing a Plano toy store.

Willet Thomas Murdoff, 42, was charged with aggravated robbery for the holdup of a Toys 'R Us in Plano last week. Murdoff was in the Collin County Jail in lieu of \$100,000 bond.

Police arrested Murdoff after an 11-hour standoff at a hotel suite where Murdoff had barricaded himself and refused to leave.

Police were in negotiations with the suspect throughout the night, who refused to come out of his third floor hotel suite. The third floor of the hotel had been evacuated.

Two other women were in the suite with the suspect, but were released, Gilliam said.

El Paso ISD votes to raise teacher's pay

EL PASO, Texas (AP) — El Paso Independent School District teachers will receive a 4.1 percent pay raise as part of a \$10.3 million compensation package approved by the school board.

The package, approved Tuesday, also will increase pay for first-year teachers to \$30,000 from \$28,600.

Jim Damm, a financial adviser to the El Paso district, said the package could contribute to the need for a district tax increase.

The El Paso district's tax rate is \$1.56 per \$100 in property valuation. The board is scheduled to adopt a new tax rate by September.

Nation

Man sentenced for infant's overdose

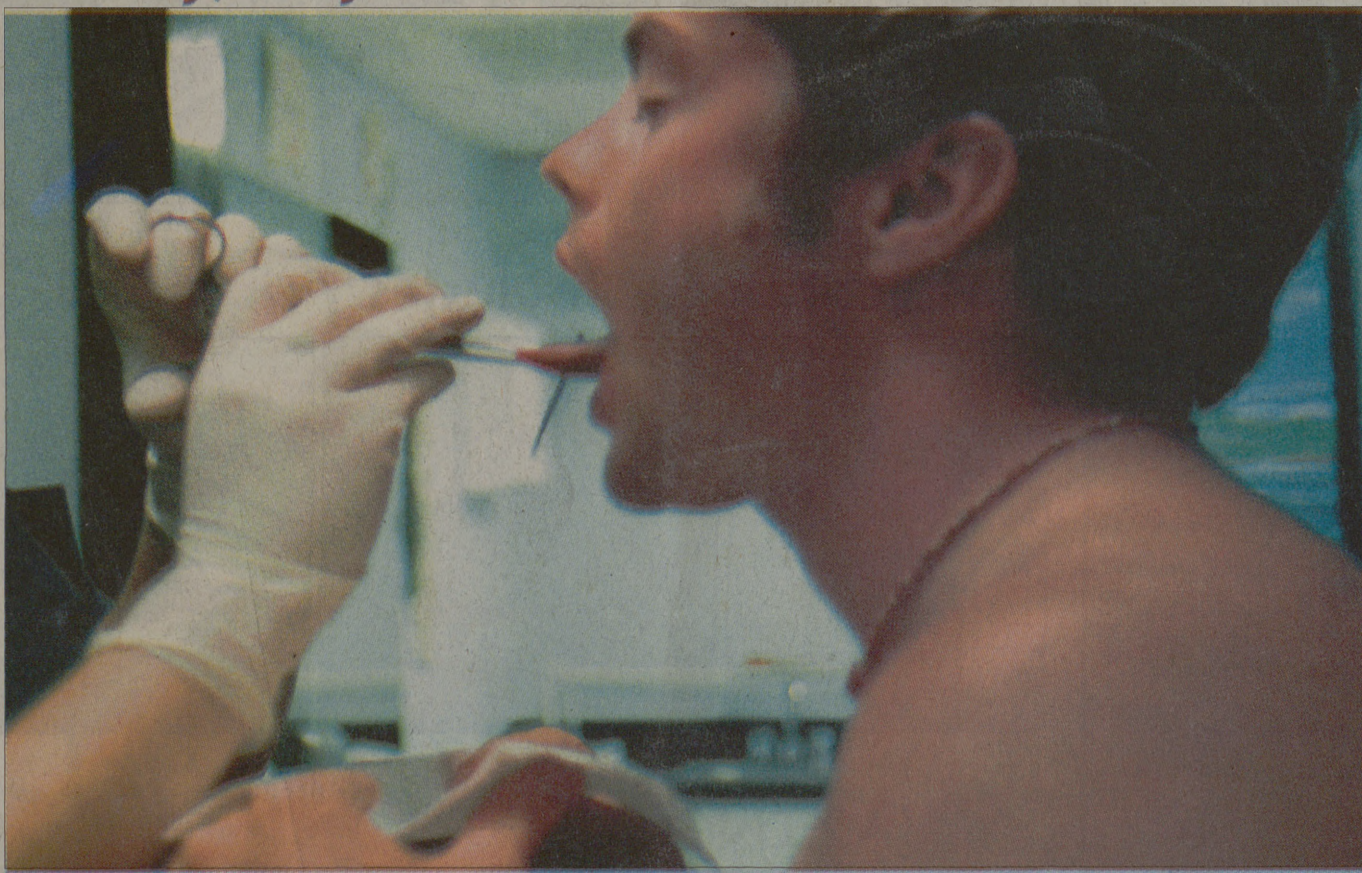
PHILADELPHIA (AP) — A former Ivy League medical resident who fed cocaine to a 4-month-old boy to keep him quiet has been sentenced to five to 10 years in prison for the child's death.

Donald P. Ford, 43, was convicted of third-degree murder and reckless endangerment in the 1997 death of Sigmund Porter Jr. He was also sentenced Tuesday to one to two years in prison on drug distribution charges.

Ford and the child's mother, Andrea Blue, 39, were on a two-day drug binge at Ford's apartment when the child died. The cocaine was found in a baby bottle.

Ford graduated from Brown University and was a former psychiatry resident at the University of Pennsylvania Medical School. Blue, a former nurse supervisor, was convicted of charges that included reckless endangerment. She was sentenced to 11 1/2 months to 23 1/2 months in prison.

Be very, very still ...



Moments after getting his left nipple pierced, Cameron Turner, a senior agriculture economics major, prepares to have a barbell inserted into his tongue. The piercer first clamped his tongue and pierced it with a needle. This is the second time Turner has pierced his tongue.

JP BEATO/THE BATTALION

Michigan wins solar race

Only 28 teams complete race, Texas A&M team finishes 27th

CLAREMONT, Calif. (AP) — Using a \$1 million car, a University of Michigan team completed a 2,247-mile sprint down America's Main Street on Wednesday to win what was billed as the most arduous solar car race in the world.

The student-built M-Pulse took first place in the American Solar Challenge, traveling Route 66 from Chicago to this college town in 56 hours, 10 minutes and 46 seconds. The race started July 15 and was divided into 14 stages.

"We just won the longest solar car race in the world," said Jason Kramb, 23, who recently received his master's in aerospace engineering.

The win was a welcome comeback for the team, which spent 20 frantic days repairing the car after it was severely damaged in a June crash in a practice run before the race.

The sleek winner beat out 27 challengers to clinch the title. Second place finisher was the University of Missouri-Rolla team, which actually crossed the finish line first but ended with a cumulative time 80 minutes slower than Michigan's.

The Missouri team led the race, but fell behind in New Mexico. "We got caught in the clouds," said Eric Pieper, 19, one of the team's four drivers.

The entry from Canada's University of Waterloo finished third, with a time of 62

hours and 18 seconds.

The cars were powered solely by the sun's rays, which beat down on the arrays of photovoltaic cells that covered the surfaces of the exotic, single-passenger machines.

At peak, the arrays produced 1,600 watts of power. "The solar cars put out as much power as a hair dryer," said Bob Mitchell, dean of engineering at Missouri.

Each day, the cars raced from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. And each morning, the teams would pick up where they had left off the night before. The team with the best cumulative time won.

"As long as there is sun, it is a great race," said race director Dan Eberle.

On sunny days, and on flat stretches of highway, the cars, which resemble airplane wings, hit speeds as high as 70 mph.

"They're electric race cars," said Richard King of the Department of Energy.

Thirty cars began the race; 28 were expected to finish. The cumulative time of the last place finisher was expected to

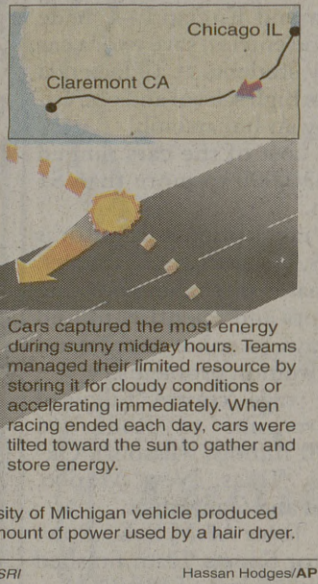
Sol of a car

In the most challenging event of its kind, 30 cars raced 2,247 miles over 10 days, powered only by the sun.

Because efficiency is crucial, light weight materials and aerodynamic shapes are the key to a solar car's design.

Cars captured the most energy during sunny midday hours. Teams managed their limited resource by storing it for cloudy conditions or accelerating immediately. When racing ended each day, cars were tilted toward the sun to gather and store energy.

At its peak, the winning University of Michigan vehicle produced 1,600 watts, about the same amount of power used by a hair dryer.



SOURCES: American Solar Challenge, ESRI

Hassan Hodges/AP

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Teenagers spreading no-smoking message

THE WOODLANDS (AP) — Armed with results that show a year-old campaign financed by proceeds from the state's tobacco settlement money has trimmed tobacco use by as much as 40 percent among some East Texas middle-school students, about 200 teen-agers headed home Wednesday from a three-day conference to spread their anti-smoking gospel.

"It is time to go out and show big tobacco we've taken back our choices, our future and our very lives," Trent Weaver said, a high school senior from DeKalb. "The tables are turned and we're in control."

The centerpiece of the state's youth anti-smoking campaign — the first to be paid for with some of the \$17.3 billion tobacco settlement money — is an animated hip-talking sunglasses-and-cap-wearing duck featured on a Website and in commercials and school presentations in East Texas, primarily on the Houston-Galveston, Beaumont-Port Arthur, Tyler-Longview and Bryan-College Station markets.

The target audience is young people between the ages of 11 and 18, with particular

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— Dr. Philip Huang
Texas Department of Health

emphasis on middle-school kids. Research shows sixth-graders are at the highest risk for starting to use tobacco.

According to research from the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston and Baylor College of Medicine, tobacco use plummeted

40 percent among sixth- and seventh-graders exposed to the campaign and other community programs.

"It's our own counter to Joe Camel and it's been really successful," said Dr. Philip Huang, chief of the Texas Department of Health's bureau of chronic disease and tobacco prevention. "The duck is working."

He said in Jefferson County, which includes Beaumont and Port Arthur, market research data showed cigarette sales down 21 percent, compared with 10.5 percent for the rest of the state.

"It's truly amazing," he said. The idea for the duck was spawned a year ago at a conference similar to the one this week by the Texas Statewide Tobacco Education Program at The Woodlands Resort and Conference Center, just north of Houston. After 2,000 suggestions, the group settled on

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Program blends science, teaching

Staff & Wire

At some point, every high school student is taught that Newton's second law states force is equal to mass times acceleration, but professors at A&M have taken the concept to a whole new level.

A new joint effort between the Colleges of Science and Education called Math and Science Scholars (MASS) is designed to accelerate the best and brightest science students to become a driving force behind secondary science and math education.

"The future of great scientific discoveries begins with an inspiring teacher," said Jane Close Conoley, dean of the College of Education. "The Colleges of Science and Education are committed to developing those inspiring teachers for the next generation of scientific discovery."

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The program will allow A&M science students to combine their normal course schedule with the opportunity to learn hands-on teaching strategies from some of the area's most distinguished secondary teachers. Students seeking teaching certification under MASS will graduate with the same number of hours as a regular science major and will receive a degree in one of four areas of specialization: biology, chemistry, mathematics or physics.

"The need for secondary teachers currently is at an all-time high, particularly in the areas of mathematics and science," said Timothy P. Scott, associate dean for undergraduate programs in the College of Science. "As teachers ourselves, we feel strongly that there is no higher calling than this highly esteemed and noble profession."

ClubCorp blames Bryan for delays

Staff & Wire

A representative of ClubCorp blamed the city of Bryan for delays that he said are killing the company's marketing program for the Traditions Golf and Country Club.

Ken Kasten, senior vice president of new business development at the company responsible for developing the Traditions Golf and Country Club, said at Tuesday's city council meeting that delays in the fulfillment of the city's obligations in the deal with ClubCorp have put the project behind schedule.

The city of Bryan has five obligations in its agreement with ClubCorp, chiefly to provide the land that the golf club will be built on.

So far, the city has met only two of its five obligations, and not all of the land has been acquired by the city.

Bryan Mayor Jay Don Watson said one reason for the con-

tinued debate on the golf course is that one of his primary concerns with the project has not been satisfied by ClubCorp.

Watson has requested a letter from ClubCorp stating that it would honor all of its agreement with the city.

"I have not seen anything signed by ClubCorp," Watson was quoted as saying by *The Bryan-College Station Eagle*. "All we have to look to is Tradition [Golf Club, Inc.] (the ClubCorp subsidiary directly responsible for building the club). We do not have anything if the city meets its requirement, and for whatever reason, Tradition changes its mind. We do not have ClubCorp anywhere saying it will honor all obligations."

Kasten responded by saying Traditions Golf Club, Inc. is the company responsible for building the club, but ClubCorp is committed to the project.

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