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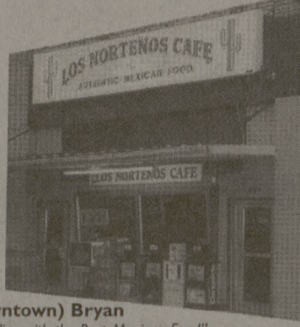
Featured in the October 2002 edition of Texas Monthly as the best tacos in the Brazos Valley.

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Texas executes 300th prisoner

By Michael Graczyk
 THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HUNTSVILLE, Texas — An apologetic Keith Clay was executed Thursday night, becoming the 300th inmate put to death in Texas since the state resumed the death penalty 20 years ago.

In a brief statement, Clay asked God to "forgive me of every single solitary sin I have committed these 35 years I have lived upon this Earth."

Then Clay looked at three members of his victim's family, who were watching through a nearby window, and asked them for forgiveness. "I know you have suffered a great loss and I am truly, truly sorry. ...There is not a day that I have not prayed for you," he said.

Clay then turned to his mother, watching through an adjacent window. He told her he loved her and said "The Lord is my shepherd. Let everyone know that I love them. This is not goodbye. I will see you later."

His mother, Cynthia Smith, smiled and flashed two thumbs up to him.

He began praying softly to himself as the drugs began taking effect. He gasped three times. His eyes briefly widened and rolled back before his eyes closed. Eight minutes later at 6:23 p.m., he was pronounced dead.

Clay's execution, the 11th this year in the nation's most active execution state, came a week after another inmate, Delma Banks, avoided lethal injection and the notoriety of No. 300 when he won a last-minute reprieve from the U.S. Supreme Court.

Clay, 35, was condemned for fatally shooting a convenience store clerk during a 1994 robbery in Baytown, just east of Houston. The Supreme Court last week refused to review his case and the state parole board refused to consider a clemency petition because it was filed 15 days too late.

"Whatever God's will is for my life I'm going to accept,"

"I know you have suffered a great loss and I am truly, truly sorry. There is not a day that I have not prayed for you."

— Keith Clay
 executed inmate

Clay said from death row last week. "I refer to my faith. Lord Jesus, he was wrongly convicted for something he didn't do and paid the price."

Clay's injection keeps Texas on a pace to surpass the record 40 lethal injections carried out in 2000. Another is scheduled for next week and three more are scheduled for April.

Texas accounts for more than one-third of the now 839 executions in the United States since 1976 when the death penalty resumed under a Supreme Court ruling. Virginia is second with 87.

It took nearly 13 years for Texas to reach 100 executions, four years get to No. 200 and now, as the appeals process has become more streamlined, just over three to reach the 300th.

Clay's case failed to generate the kind of attention paid last week to Banks, who contended he was wrongly convicted of a 1980 slaying near Texarkana. Banks' appeals were bolstered by the backing of three former federal judges, including former FBI director William Sessions.

Clay, an acknowledged former drug dealer who authorities said also was involved in a triple slaying in 1993, attracted no similar support.

Clay was convicted of killing

Killing machine

More inmates have been executed in Texas than in any other state. Thursday, Keith Clay became the state's 300th inmate to die since reinstating the death penalty in 1982.

U.S. executions since 1976

With 300 dead, 36 percent of all U.S. executions take place in Texas.

The next closest state is Virginia with 87 executions or 10 percent of the national total.

There have been 836 executions since the 1976 Supreme Court ruled to resume capital punishment.

SOURCE: National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty

store clerk Melathelil Varughese, who came to the United States from India a year earlier, in a \$2,000 robbery.

"I'm not happy to see someone put to death, but I know the trial was a fair trial, he was represented by good counsel and it was a horrible crime," said Marie Munier, the Harris County district attorney who prosecuted Clay.

"I think it's justice," she said.

Enders

Continued from page 3

doesn't have anything to do with it," she said. "It's the practice and attitude that makes you good, not if you're a boy or a girl."

Enders said the criticism from competitors just pushes her harder to beat them. Michael Sambursky, Enders' boyfriend, said it's odd having a professional girlfriend in a male-dominated sport.

"It's pretty weird," he said, "but I think it's good."

Sambursky, a Cypress Springs High School senior, said his girlfriend travels at high speeds, but it doesn't concern him.

"Right now, I'm not worried about Erica," he said. "But I may get a little more

worried when she gets into faster speeds at the Top Fuel level."

Enders said her mom worried at first, but always supported her.

"When I first started, my mom could only watch me through her video camera lens," Enders said. "I think it may scare her that soon I will be racing at faster speeds."

Top Fuel competitors exceed 330 mph on a quarter-mile drag. Enders said she always feels safe at any speed.

Both of Enders' cars have won awards for being well engineered. She wears a five-layer fire suit, helmet, gloves, arm restraints and special shoes when she races.

"We just pray every time we get on the track," Enders said.

Enders said now that she's in college, balancing her racing career with school, family and friends is harder than before.

"I go to school here during the week, but I leave on the weekends to race or visit my boyfriend," she said. "It's a lot harder than I thought it would be, but I'm getting the hang of it."

Enders said her father gave her an incentive to make good grades in high school, and that it's helped to push herself in college. In high school, Enders' father would only let her race if she got a B. Her car was parked for six weeks if she got a C.

"It was a lot of pressure, but it was worth it," she said. "My dad's my hero. I want to be like him."

Enders doesn't want to take time off from college to race. She plans to graduate in 2006 to manage Enders Racing, LLC, while being one of the team's professional drivers. For more information about Enders, visit www.enders.com.


Texas A&M Veteran's Association
SERVICE FLAGS DEDICATION

Monday, March 24, 2003
 Ceremony begins at 11:00 am in the MSC Flag Room

The 5 Armed Service Flags will be dedicated in the MSC Flag Room honoring all service members coming from and to Texas A&M University

Speakers include Lt. Gen. John Van Alstyne, Veteran Association President Noel Bowman and a keynote address by Col. Craig Carter

For more information about the dedication, please refer to our web site at <http://tamuveterans.tamu.edu>



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Security beefed up at Houston Port, channel

By Pam Easton
 THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HOUSTON — U.S. Coast Guard boats are patrolling the Houston Ship Channel around the clock, checking for anything and everything which might look out of place.

During a Thursday morning patrol, it was John Stinson's new recreational boat that didn't fit among the large barges and tugs which travel the channel. More than 6,000 vessels transverse the narrow channel annually.

"This is our first trip out," Stinson told Coast Guardsman Josh Reagan, who pulled the small white boat over by sounding a siren. "We're just cruising around."

Reagan quickly told Stinson he was in a secure area and would have to be escorted out. Reagan took Stinson's license and registration and led the white-haired boater out away from the channel, which is lined by petrochemical plants. Once removed from the secure area, Stinson's documents

were returned and he was instructed about the limits of where he could travel.

"We had no idea," Stinson said as his license was returned and he was sent on his way.

"Most of the people who live around here know about the security zones," Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. Todd Hall said. "Even now and then you get someone with a new boat who doesn't know about them."

Besides the use of boats and helicopters, the Coast Guard keeps an eye on vessels using a series of cameras, which line the 25-mile channel.

Hall said about 19 strategically placed cameras are atop light towers along the waterway.

"We communicate with them and watch them all the way up the ship channel," Hall said of the vessels traveling the passage. "At any given time we know where these people are and what they are doing."

The agency also has shore patrols during which guardsmen visit sites along the shore to make sure everything checks out.

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Volume 109

SCAT (Small C) Burham, 19, bulletproof vest, 23, 2003 in th

Uni pun

By Rolando THE BATTALION

University of declining any fu ment from the yell ing investigation, the students in they received sa not reporting ha dents they had of.

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By S THE

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