

Mentally ill inmate executed Wednesday

By Michael Graczyk
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HUNTSVILLE, Texas—A mentally ill murderer spared from execution five months ago by a last-minute reprieve was executed Wednesday for fatally stabbing a woman during an attempted rape.

"None of this should have happened and now that I'm dying there is nothing left to worry about," James Colburn said in a brief final statement as he was strapped to the death chamber gurney. "I know it was a mistake. I have no one to blame but myself," he said.

Colburn added that it was "no big deal" about whether he knew the difference between right and wrong, which was an element of his appeal. He prayed "that everyone involved overlooks the stupidity. Everybody has prob-

lems and I won't be part of the problem any more. I can quit worrying now."

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— James Colburn
executed inmate

He then said he could feel the drugs in his system. "It's going to be like passing out on drugs," he said. Colburn gasped slightly and his eyes closed. He was pronounced dead at 6:21 p.m., eight minutes after the flow of drugs began.

Colburn, 43, didn't deny killing the woman at his Conroe-area home in 1994, but his attorneys contended it would be barbaric to execute the ninth-grade dropout because he suffers from paranoid schizophrenia.

The execution was the 12th this year and third this month in Texas, the nation's most active death penalty state. With three more set for next month, Texas remains on a pace that would top the record 40 carried out in 2000.

"The state we fought so hard to help with his illness just killed my brother," a bitter Tina Morris, Colburn's sister, said after watching him die. "The state has killed a very mentally ill man."

Prosecutors didn't dispute Colburn's mental illness but contended the repeat offender who was on parole when arrested for capital murder was competent and understood why he was facing lethal injection.

Stricter curriculum for automatic admissions tentatively approved

AUSTIN (AP) — High school students would have to take a tougher curriculum to be eligible for a program that guarantees automatic admission to a Texas college under legislation that won final approval in the Senate on Wednesday.

High schools now offer three levels of curriculum: minimum, recommended and advanced. Students can take any level to qualify for a program that requires Texas public universities to admit students who rank in the top 10 percent of their graduating class.

The bill would require students who want to be eligible for the program to take at least the recommended curriculum level, which includes more foreign language, science and math classes.

"Kids are smart and they've learned that if

they take the easier courses, the minimum curriculum, they improve their chances of graduating in the top 10 percent of their class," said bill sponsor Sen. Jeff Wentworth, R-San Antonio.

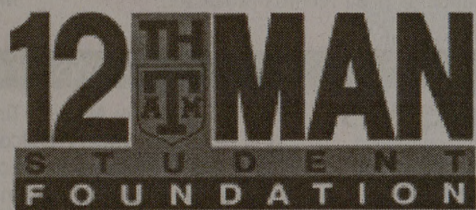
The bill would apply to students who will be freshmen next fall.

Wentworth said that for the summer/fall 2001 school year, 12.4 percent of the students who had qualified for the top 10 percent rule took the minimum level of curriculum in high school.

All schools in Texas offer the recommended curriculum level, he said, but the bill makes an exception for students who are not able to take all of the courses under the curriculum level because necessary courses were not available at appropriate times during their high school career.

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...nterpol puts former president of Peru on most-wanted list

PARIS (AP) — Interpol's disgraced former president, Alberto Fujimori, on most-wanted list Wednesday, following a "red notice" calling for the exiled leader's arrest in extradition on murder and kidnapping charges in Peru.

The move by the international police agency does not carry force of an arrest warrant. But it could put further pressure on Fujimori, who fled Peru to escape a corruption scandal in 2000 and is protected by tradition by his Japanese citizenship.

Fujimori, who as president posed down Congress and police army sweeping powers in a successful campaign against leftist guerrillas, faces murder charges for allegedly authorizing death squads who massacred suspected rebel sympathizers in the 1990s.

...rst woman chosen to lead Judaism's liberal Reform branch

NEW YORK (AP) — California's first woman to lead the Reform branch of Judaism's liberal Reform movement.

...s president of the Conference of American Rabbis beginning Saturday, he leads an organization of 100 members, 7 of them are women.

...he Reform branch has gained women rabbis since 1972; today, half of those studying to become Reform rabbis are female.

...arder has led Congregation Shalom in Los Altos Hills, Calif., since 1999. Nearly 1,300 members belong to the Silicon Valley congregation near Stanford University.

...he was previously regional director for Reform's synagogue and rabbi of Beth Chabadashim in Los Angeles. The synagogue with an outreach to gays and lesbians to be accepted by the Reform movement.

...rdiologist wants to help build new qi democracy

AUSTON (AP) — If Saddam Hussein is toppled, a Houston cardiologist who was born in Iraq wants to help build a democracy in Iraq.

...hdi Al-Bassam, 58, is a leading member of the Iraqi National Congress, a coalition of opposition groups dedicated to ousting Saddam and helping establish a democratic Iraq. He has drafted a constitution and wants to develop a bill of rights similar to the one in the United States.

...U.S. State Department and East political experts say the IC will play a role in a transitional government if Saddam is ousted.

...Iraqi-American born in the United States said he would lead the INC would be upon Iraq by outsiders.

...people outside of Iraq have the right to decide the fate of Iraq," Nebeil Al-Obaidi said.

...If they want to decide whether they should go there and help Iraqis.