

News briefs



Ben DeSoto/Chronicle

Rallying round the flag

Phil Owens, an aide of state Rep. Gary Elkins, R-Houston, heralds his support for his country by waving and distributing U.S. flags at the intersection of FM 1960 and Texas 249 after Tuesday's terrorist acts in New York and Washington, D.C.

Area

Man charged in death of girlfriend's 1-year-old

A man has been charged with capital murder after his girlfriend's year-old baby was found dead in a water-filled ditch in northeast Houston.

Caleb Johnson may have been drowned, police said. An autopsy will be performed today.

The boyfriend, Robert Green Walker, 34, beat the mother during a violent argument in a house in the 5800 block of Clement just after midnight Monday, police said. She ran outside and was chased for two blocks before she got away and called 911 from a pay phone.

Police met with her, went to the home and found the baby missing at 12:30 a.m.

Walker was found a short time later by an officer and led authorities to the baby's body in a ditch under the 3500 block of North Loop East. He was held without bail.

Grand jury to get case in man's shooting death

The killing of a man during an argument in northeast Houston has been referred to a Harris County grand jury without charges.

Terrance Jones, 26, of the 7000 block of Larkstone was shot at 6 a.m. Sunday when he and a 33-year-old man drew pistols during an argument in the 600 block of

Berry Road. Jones died in Memorial Hermann Hospital.

Brazoria OKs budget, maintains tax rate

ANGLETON — Brazoria County Commissioners Court on Tuesday approved a \$53 million budget that maintains the property tax rate of 39 cents per \$100 valuation.

The county will collect about \$1.8 million more in tax revenue than last year because of new buildings added to the tax rolls, County Judge John Willy said.

The budget provides a 3 1/2 percent cost-of-living adjustment and a 1 1/2 percent merit raise for county employees.

State

Crews move in to clear site of train collision

HALLSVILLE — Cleanup efforts were under way Tuesday at the scene of a train collision in East Texas.

The accident involved a Union Pacific freight train and an Amtrak Texas Eagle passenger train.

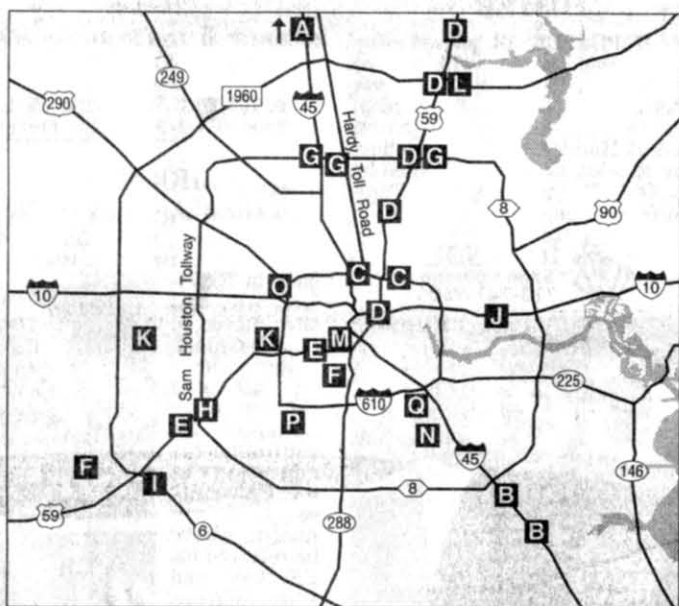
More than 50 people were on the Eagle, and six were hospitalized and treated in Marshall for minor injuries.

The cause of the wreck remained under investigation.

UP officials said it could take two days to clear the tracks.

From staff and wire reports

Getting around Houston



This column provides information about activities affecting travel in the Houston area. For more information, call the Texas Department of Transportation at 713-802-5074. Information is also available on the department's Web site at www.dot.state.tx.us.

Today

A. North Freeway: Southbound, Tamina to Rayford-Sawdust, alternate lane closed 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

B. Gulf Freeway: Northbound frontage road, Clear Creek to FM 1959, alternate lane closed 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; north-and southbound frontage road at FM 1959, alternate lane including northbound exit ramp to FM 1959 and southbound entry ramp from Scarsdale closed 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; northbound exit ramp to NASA Road 1, closed 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

C. North Loop: East- and westbound, Lockwood to North Freeway, two alternate lanes closed 8 p.m.-5 a.m. Thursday.

D. Eastex Freeway: Southbound exit ramp to Sorters-McClellan closed; southbound frontage road U-turn at Saunders closed; northbound frontage road entry ramp from Saunders closed 7 a.m.-6 p.m.; northbound frontage road, Saunders to Little York, one inside lane closed; northbound ramps to East Freeway east- and westbound closed (detour to Gulf Freeway and North Loop); north- and southbound U-turns at San Jacinto River closed; north- and southbound at Humble-Westfield, U-turns closed; northbound FM 1960 to Townsen, one inside lane closed 7 a.m.-3 p.m.; northbound, Beltway 8 North to Greens, one outside lane including exit ramp to Greens closed 7 a.m.-3 p.m.

Franklin: East- and westbound at Eastex Freeway, one outside lane closed. **Runnels:** Westbound entry ramp to Eastex Freeway northbound closed (detour to Travis and to North Freeway northbound).

E. Southwest Freeway: Northbound entrance ramp from Greenbriar to Shepherd closed (detour to Kirby entry ramp); northbound entrance ramp from Kirkwood closed; southbound frontage road, Sugar Creek to Commerce Green, one inside lane closed 7 a.m.-3 p.m.

F. U.S. 90A: Southbound at Old Spanish Trail, two alternate lanes closed 7:30 a.m.-5 p.m.; each direction at all intersections from Texas 6 to Texas 99, alternate lanes closed 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

G. Beltway 8 North: Eastbound frontage road, Spence to West Hardy, one inside lane closed 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; eastbound, Spence to West Hardy, one outside lane including shoulder closed 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; eastbound entry ramp from Imperial Valley closed 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; eastbound, Greens crossing to North Freeway frontage road, closed 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; eastbound, Eastex Freeway to Old Humble road, alternate lanes closed 9 p.m.-5 a.m. Thursday.

H. Beltway 8 West: Northbound frontage road at Southwest Freeway, one outside lane closed 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

I. Texas 6: Northbound, Williams Trace to Lexington, one outside lane closed 7 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

J. FM 526: North- and southbound, East Freeway to Crosby Freeway, alternate lane closed 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

K. FM 1093 (Westheimer): Westbound, McCue at the Galleria, left-turn lane closed (detour to Alabama to access lower garage at Galleria II); westbound, Fondren to Texas 6, one outside lane closed 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

L. FM 1960: East- and westbound, Eastex Freeway to North Houston Avenue in Humble, one inside lane closed.

M. Spur 527: Southbound, Hawthorne to Southwest Freeway, one inside lane closed.

N. Airport: East- and westbound, Gulf Freeway to Mykawa, alternate lane closed 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

O. Hempstead Road: East- and westbound, 11th to W. 18th, alternate lane closed 7 a.m.-5 p.m.

P. Holmes: Westbound at U.S. 90A, closed (detour to Kirby to South Loop)

Q. Telephone Road: North- and southbound, Airport to South Loop, alternate lane closed 6 p.m.-6 a.m. Thursday.

Prison not responsible for slaying, lawyers say

Associated Press



Jayne Hawkins

FORT WORTH — Lawyers for the Texas attorney general's office are rejecting claims that the state prison system was responsible for a police officer's death that followed a high-profile escape by seven inmates.

Relatives of Irving police officer Aubrey Hawkins filed a lawsuit accusing the Texas Department of Criminal Justice of negligence and wrongful death. It states that inadequate staffing, lack of training and security gaps led to his shooting death on Christmas Eve.

The Criminal Justice Department is protected by sovereign immunity, a legal doctrine that prevents the government from being sued, Texas Assistant Attorney General Lori Erwin wrote in the response filed Monday.

Erwin also wrote that prison employees cannot be sued individually because they were working "in good faith while acting within the scope of their authority."

Hawkins was killed by "parties ... over whom defendant had no control at the time of the incident," wrote Erwin.

The prison escapees' avowed ringleader, George Rivas, was sentenced to death last month in the slaying of Hawkins, who was repeatedly shot and then run over with his squad car. Five more former escapees are facing capital murder charges and eventually could join Rivas in the Polunsky Unit just outside Livingston, home of Texas' death row.

The inmates, armed with guns stolen Dec. 13 from the Connally Unit in South Texas, were accused of shooting Hawkins 11 times during the robbery at Oshman's SuperSports USA in Irving.

Hawkins' relatives, suing on behalf of his 9-year-old son, Andrew, are seeking \$500,000 and changes in the prison system.

The slain officer's mother, Jayne Hawkins, said the state is trying to delay the lawsuit to avoid making changes.

"Seven hardened criminals drive a state-owned truck out of a maximum-security prison, and I'm supposed to believe that they (prison officials) are not responsible," she told the Fort Worth Star-Telegram in Tuesday's editions. "Just this pile of paper right here — think what that cost in attorney's fees, cost the public, when that money could be spent to change the prison system."

Hawkins' relatives want the state to increase prison staffing and guard pay and to change the classification system so dangerous or long-term inmates do not have jobs that make it easier for them to escape.

But the slaying occurred too long after the escape for the prison system to be responsible, said Carl Reynolds, general counsel for the prison system.

Girl

Continued from Page 13A.

were under 3, and that pretty much fits the national profile of children killed by their parents. If she's 8, that will be very unusual to have died at the hands of her parents."

Hay said the girl was perhaps from Houston and hidden where nobody would know about her, or she may have been brought here from out of town.

Anyone who recognizes the child's face or knows her identity is asked to call homicide investigators Douglas, D.R. Shorten or Waymon Allen at 713-308-3600.

Cases

Continued from Page 13A.

the children in the bathtub along with siblings Paul, 3, and Luke, 2.

Harris County District Attorney Chuck Rosenthal is seeking the death penalty. He said the decision was made to allow for a full range of punishment options.

The jurors selected next week will not decide whether Yates is to be acquitted because she is insane, lives out her life in a prison cell or dies by lethal injection. That issue will be decided later if the case goes to trial.

The panel will determine only whether the mother, who has a history of hospitalizations for mental illness, is competent.

The jury in the capital murder trial of Joel Herrera also was excused Tuesday morning after state District Judge Caprice

Cosper heard news of the terrorist attacks.

Herrera was convicted Friday of taking part in a 1997 drive-by shooting that killed two persons and injured 11. However, the jury still has to decide whether to sentence the 21-year-old Houston man to death or some lesser penalty. The punishment phase of the trial began Monday, and closing arguments by both the prosecution and defense were set to begin Tuesday.

If the jury had begun deliberation Tuesday but had not finished, the 12 members would have had to be sequestered overnight. Cosper sent the jury home because she said she didn't know if any juror had family members directly affected by the disaster, a spokeswoman for the 339th state District Court said.

Closing arguments regarding sentencing will probably resume today, the spokeswoman said.

FROM OUR FILES

June 13, 1954



Lamar Fleming Jr., a tireless civic leader, has been named chairman of a committee that hopes to raise \$10,000,000 in endowment funds for Baylor University college of medicine, it was announced Saturday.

Fleming, chairman of the board of Anderson, Clayton and Company, will work with the following civic leaders: Paul Kayser, vice-chairman; and Earl C. Hankamer, E. E. Townes, Leon

Jaworski, Everton Kennerly, and Ray L. Dudley, committee members.

Fleming said if Baylor can get proper financial support, which he said he feels confident business and professional leaders and industry will give, the college will be able to maintain the high standing it has attained since it first moved to Houston in 1943.

From Our Files, taken verbatim from the pages of the Houston Chronicle, will run in this spot Monday through Saturday this year.

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PUBLIC NOTICE
The City of Houston's Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has completed the 2000 Consolidated Annual Performance Report (CAPER) on the 30th Program Year (the period beginning July 1, 2000 through June 30, 2001). The CAPER is an annual report to residents, local officials and HUD on the use of entitlement funds (Community Development Block Grant, Emergency Shelter Grants, HOME Investment Partnership, and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS) during the program year. A copy of the Consolidated Annual Performance Report is available for review at each of the following locations:

Multi-Service Centers	Location
Acres Homes	6719 West Montgomery
Fifth Ward	4014 Market
Kashmere	4802 Lockwood
Magnolia	7037 Capitol
Metropolitan	1475 West Gray
Sunnyside	4605 Wilmington
West End	170 Heights

A copy of the CAPER is also available for review at the office of DHCD, 601 Sawyer, Suite 400. The comment period for the CAPER extends from Wednesday, September 12, 2001 to Thursday, September 27, 2001. All comments must be submitted to DHCD in writing by September 27, 2001.
For more information, call Florence Jackson at (713) 868-8300.

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