

PROJECT EARTH / D1

**Decorations
can be gifts that
keep on giving**



SPORTS / C1

**NCAA benches
Cambridge for
rest of UT season**



**Landry backs
Mackovic for UT
football's top job**

WEATHER

**High: Low 70s
Low: Mid-50s
Partly cloudy,
breezy and mild.
Details, Back page**

Austin American-Statesman

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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1991

Gorbachev fights for survival of union

By Elizabeth Shogren
Los Angeles Times Service

MOSCOW — Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev lashed back at the leaders of Russia, Ukraine and Byelorussia on Monday, declaring that they had no right to dissolve the Soviet Union and denouncing their decision to terminate its laws as "illegal and dangerous."

"Without a doubt, each republic has the right to leave the union, but the fate of a multinational state cannot be determined by the will of the leaders of these republics," Gorbachev said one day after the leaders of the three republics announced the creation of a "Commonwealth of Independent States" and declared the Soviet Union dead.

The question can be decided only through constitutional means with the participation of all sovereign states and taking into account the will of the people," Gorbachev said.

Portraying Sunday's announcement as just another proposal to be debated alongside his union treaty, Gorbachev called for a meeting of the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies and said that he did not rule out a nationwide referendum.

Gorbachev's statement demonstrated that he does not intend to vanish quietly from the political stage. Instead, he set the stage for a major confrontation over the future of this fractious, but still nuclear-armed superpower.

Ukraine President Leonid Kravchuk and the late Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Byelorussian leader Stanislav Shushkevich were legally entitled to declare that the Soviet Union "is ceasing its existence" and to establish a three-republic commonwealth.

"The heads of the three independent republics have acted in accordance with the constitution of our state and within our power," Kravchuk said in Kiev, the Ukrainian capital.

In a joint communique Sunday, Gorbachev said, "We are not ready to see the end of the Soviet Union."



In the Lanier High School main office, some students volunteer to talk about their feelings concerning the weekend deaths of four teenagers at a report shop. They are, from front row from left, Bill Boyd, Tarkenton Turley, Shanna Kunkel and Amy Hertenstein; and, back row from left, Katherine Miller, Rachel Crowley, Bridgette Coleman, Isela Martinez and Amanda Lane. Everybody's still pretty much in shock, said Kunkel, student council president at Lanier, where three of the murdered teens went to school.

More than 1 raided shop, police say

**Ashes yield
clues where
4 teens died**

By Kerry Haglund
American-Statesman Staff

More than one person was involved in the slaying of four teenagers last Friday at a North Austin report shop, police said Monday.

Investigators said the killers apparently tried to cover their tracks by starting a fire, but the blaze failed to destroy all the evidence.

"Apparently, the offenders in this believed they would obliterate the evidence but they were not successful," Austin homicide Lt. Andrew Waters said.

A 15-year-old Burnett Middle School student and three Lanier High School students — two of whom were sisters — were found shot and burned at midnight after a police officer noticed flames coming from the establishment and called firefighters.

Police said Monday that evidence discovered in the shop led them to believe that the killings had occurred in the late afternoon or early evening.

Although Austin police were serving lunch in public, they were releasing some details to state law enforcement about Friday night's slayings at 1 Can't Believe It's Yogurt at 2949 W. Anderson Lane.

According to a Department of Public Safety dispatcher, the Austin police released a teletype that read:

■ Sexual assault has not been the murder reason went to school.

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**Classmates
try to cope
with slayings**

By Pamela Ward
American-Statesman Staff

Students returned to class Monday and to the bitter realization that four of their friends won't be coming back. Where Jennifer always sat, there was one empty desk — the same for Sarah and Rita and Amy.

As the school day began at Lanier High School and Burnett Middle School, teachers tenderly took up a topic that has no explanation: the shocking murders at a yogurt shop of four vibrant teenagers: Jennifer Harrison, 17; her sister Sarah Harrison, 16; Elise Thomas, 17; and Amy Ayres, 15.

"Everybody's still pretty much in shock," said Shanna Kunkel, Lanier student council president. "There's a lot of denial, nobody wants to think this happened. Everybody is hurting."

At Lanier, which lost three students, a dance committee huddled with students who asked for individual attention. PTA volunteers scurried about the hallways, helping where they could.

Said vice principal Georgia Johnson: "A death from sickness or an accident, we could understand, but this, we can't explain. Nobody has an answer."

See Shock, A6

GREAT TV DEBATE

**Not everyone happy
with Channel One**

By Debbie Graves
American-Statesman Staff

For 12 minutes every morning, class work stops at Burnett Middle School, and all eyes turn to television screens.

The students watch the Channel One network, which carries a daily current-events program produced by Knoxville, Tenn.-based Whittle Communications.

Each segment includes 10 minutes of news and features and two minutes of commercials. Because of the ads, some parents want the State Board of Education to ban the show. They say the program makes students "a captive audience" for commercials hawked candy bars and clothes.

"As parents, we haven't given the schools the right to sell access to our children," said Cynthia Ridgeway of Humble, north of Houston. She is a member of Citizens for Excellence in Education, one of several groups seeking to bar the program.

But some educators say students benefit educationally as well as socially. "I think the kids have the world every day right in the classroom" because of the TV programming, said James Wilson, principal of Burnett Middle School.

Besides bringing information to sixth- through 12th-graders, Channel One provides something else for schools: equipment. Harriet Hall, spokeswoman for Whittle, says the



Staff photo by Tami Jensen
Of the participating schools in Austin, Anderson High has had Channel One the longest — since early fall.

company has given 37,000 television sets, 1,061 satellite receivers and 2,127 video cassette recorders to participating schools in Texas. With the installation costs, the contribution totals \$60 million, she said.

Channel One is in 1,061 schools in 385 districts in Texas. In Austin, every middle, junior and senior high school (except 12th High School) has signed up, although some don't get the broadcast yet.

Anderson High School has had Channel One the longest — since early fall.

See Channel, A6

New transportation study suggests less expansion than 1986 report

By Stuart Ekanani
American-Statesman Staff

An assessment of Austin's transportation needs for the year 2020 calls for widening several east-west arterials to speed travel between McFar Boulevard (Loop 1) and Interstate 35, and for adding more lanes to north-south freeways.

But, the roadway expansion needs set out in an Austin Transportation Study draft report are scaled down from the previous plan adopted in 1986 because of curbed population forecasts and development restrictions in environmentally sensitive areas.

Highway expansion described in the plan is nevertheless significant. Highlights include:

■ Widening a new road south of Austin connecting Interstate 35 to McFar Boulevard.

■ Widening RM 2212, from McFar Boulevard to Airport Boulevard, from four to seven lanes.

■ Expanding McFar Boulevard, from U.S. 290 West to U.S. 181, to four lanes in each direction.

■ Expanding Interstate 35, from William Cannon Drive to U.S. 181, to five or six lanes in each direction.

■ Widening several other west-east arterials.

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