

B2 Austin American-Statesman

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# Investigator goes to Mexico to help in kidnapping case

By Kimberly Garcia  
Austin-Statesman Staff

An Austin area crimes investigator has gone to Mexico City to give the Mexican attorney general a deposition about three men charged with abducting an Austin woman, senior area crimes Sgt. Mike Lumina said.

The men, who are believed to be living in Mexico City, also are wanted for questioning in the Dec. 6, 1991, slaying of four teenagers at a Northwest Austin report shop, said John Jones, lead investigator in that case. One of the men fits the description of a man seen in a car outside the shop that night and may be a witness.

The Mexican constitution prohibits extradition, but if the three men are found they will be charged in Mexico in the abduction and will be questioned in the report shop case, said Armando Ortiz Baez, Mexican consul in Austin.

"Mexican authorities are going to cooperate fully," he said. "If suspects are in Mexico, they will be arrested. They will be charged (in the abduction) and they will be sent to Mexico. It will remain in the hands of Mexican authorities with the help of Austin investigators."

Ortiz said he hopes cooperation between U.S. and Mexican police on these two cases will smooth a rough spot between the two countries created when U.S. officials in 1990 kidnapped a Mexican doctor wanted in connection with the 1985 death of a U.S. drug agent.

In the Austin kidnapping case, an Austin investigator, Jay Moore, was left Monday for Mexico City to give a statement about Alberto Cortes, 22, Ricardo A. Hernandez, 25, and Carlos Saez, 23. A warrant had been issued charging them with aggravated kidnapping, but they were never arrested.

A Travis County grand jury on March 23 indicted Cortes, Hernandez and Saez in an abduction Nov. 17, 1991, at the County Club, 615 Red River St. The investigation was aided until Aug. 6, because police thought they knew where the men were. When police did not find the suspects, they issued the indictment to seek help from America's Most Wanted.

A television show that reports about fugitives, Cortes, Hernandez and Saez are accused of sexually assaulting a woman at gunpoint during a drive from the County Club to San Antonio, where she was released.

Jennifer Harbison, 17, her sister, Sarah, 15, Eliza Thomas, 17, and Amy Ayers, 15, were shot to death at a Canyon Belvoir 85 Yc-

## Justices hear appeal on funding for colleges

By Phillip Brooks  
Austin-Statesman Capitol Staff

The Texas Supreme Court heard arguments Tuesday in an appeal that could lead to sweeping changes in the state's higher education system.



Texas Supreme Court Justice Lind Oggett, left, and Robert Garman hear arguments from Albert Kauff...

The court did not immediately rule, but the case could pressure the 1993 Legislature to increase funding for universities in South Texas, some lawmakers said.

At Tuesday's one-hour hearing, attorneys for Hispanics in South Texas asked the justices to uphold a lower court decision and declare Texas higher education systems unconstitutional. They contended that the system discriminates against Hispanics living along the border with Mexico.

"There's no place in the whole United States where an equal people live as far away from first-class education" as Al Kaufman of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund said after the hearing.

His colleague, Nomas Cantu, told the court that South Texas lacks adequate programs and law and medical schools. "We're 12 million (population) in the border area, but we are 10 percent away from access to a first-class system."

However, lawyers for the state said the Texas Constitution does not guarantee people the right to education beyond high school or equal access to a first-class university like Texas A&M at the University of Texas.

By declining in favor of MALDEF, the lawyers said, the court would set a new standard requiring the state to provide a quality college education to all Texans — not only along the border but in the rest and west Texas.

"The question becomes, is college education mandatory under our constitution?" said Austin lawyer Rick Gray. "If so, does it have to be free?"

## Local briefs

### County offers permits for disabled parking

American-Statesman Staff

Parking permits for disabled drivers are available at county tax offices. A new state law, which goes into effect Jan. 1, requires anyone parking in spaces reserved for disabled people to have a disabled person's license plate or to display a placard placed from the rear-view mirror.

### Police seek link in robberies

American-Statesman Staff

Georgetown police are investigating a Monday afternoon robbery at the Georgetown Inn that may be related to a hotel robbery early Tuesday in Bullock. The proprietor of the Georgetown Inn, 209 North Interstate 35, told police a man entered the lobby at 3:45 p.m. Monday and demanded money, saying he had a gun, said Georgetown police Lt. James Finocchia. He said the suspect escaped with about \$110. Bullock police reported that a man robbed the Best Western Motel, at East Sixth Street and I-35, about 3 a.m. Tuesday.

### Refuge dedication set for Friday

American-Statesman Staff

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Balcones Cynovianah National Wildlife Refuge will be dedicated in ceremonies at 11 a.m. Friday. U.S. Rep. Jake Pickle, D-Austin, will be the keynote speaker at the ceremony for the refuge — which is now a 41,000-acre haven for endangered species.

## County hopes move to auditorium relieves jurors' parking headaches

By Roland S. Martin  
Austin-Statesman Staff

Not a jury summons? Having forgotten about finding a parking spot near the Travis County Courthouse?

Well, you can now get some sleep. The Commissioners Court approved a contract with the City of Austin on Tuesday that will allow jury processing to be conducted in that space and more conveniently located — Palmer Auditorium.

County officials say the move was necessary to handle about 1,200 jurors in one location every other week and to cut down on the jangling of quarters for parking meters in the pockets of jurors.

"They will go through exactly all the steps they went through before. It's just that it will be easy to park. They will all be handled in one large group and given one set of instructions," said County Clerk Dana DeBevoise.

The move is expected to cost the county about \$24,000, an item already included in the budget's general administration fund.

It is expected to save the county time and money because so many parking tickets won't have to be issued, DeBevoise said.

## Buda church destroyed in fire

American-Statesman Staff

HUDA — A Buda church burned down early Tuesday from what fire officials believe may have been faulty wiring in an air conditioning unit. The Rev. Barry Thiering, pastor of St. Elizabeth Episcopal Church, said the fire was spotted by a neighbor at 6:30 a.m. Thiering said the church was destroyed. Marjorie George, communications director for the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas, said Episcopal was established in 1985 in the portable building that burned Tuesday. Thiering said an open-air service will be conducted 10 a.m.

## Owner pledges no repeat of chimp episode

By Debbie Holt  
Austin-Statesman Staff

GLASS, who owns the exotic ranch with her husband, Frank, "Everything is just under control now," Glass said. "Everything is doing fine and it won't happen again."

Rachel Vangert, spokeswoman for the Hays County sheriff's office, said no charges are being filed in the case.

"He just lost the hare and got out, and there weren't any major injuries," Glass said.

The boy was treated for a laceration to the hand at a minor emergency clinic, and his grandmother received facial injuries from being pulled to the ground.

## 2nd man charged in fatal drive-by shooting

American-Statesman Staff

Rotterdam — "Denny" Moncada, 25, Moncada was fatally shot as he stood in the doorway of his East Austin home Monday morning. Spagnola was not in custody.

A 15-year-old who is in police custody told police that Spagnola was driving the car used in the drive-by shooting, the affidavit states.

Police believe the shooting was in retaliation for a drive-by shooting Saturday at Crispin's home. Police have said they believe the incident was gang-related.

Spagnola was charged with capital murder in the death of the 15-year-old on Monday.

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## THE AUSTIN AREA BRANCH OF THE ORTIN DYSLLEXIA SOCIETY PRESENTS:

### HOW TO PREPARE FOR LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

BY JEANNE BREWER, M.S.  
WED. OCTOBER 14, AT THE HOWSON PUBLIC LIBRARY  
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Effective October 12, 1992

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