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BROWNSVILLE AND THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY

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AROUND THE VALLEY

Guatemalan boy dies in brush near King Ranch

► **KLEBERG COUNTY** — A young Guatemalan boy is the 44th undocumented immigrant to die from dehydration in the U.S. Border Patrol's Rio Grande Valley Sector during fiscal year 2005. Earlier this week, agents searched for the 15-year-old left behind by his smuggler in the brush near King Ranch, said U.S. Customs and Border Protection Border Patrol sector spokesman Roy Cervantes.

A 22-year-old Guatemalan woman, who had been waiting with him, even as he trailed the 25 others in the group, flagged down a rancher on the side of the road. The rancher then contacted the U.S. Border Patrol.

Agents found the boy's body about seven miles west of U.S. Highway 77, apparently dead from dehydration. The woman traveling with the boy said he had been complaining of intense stomach pains in the days leading up to his death.

Contractor pleads guilty in school bribery case

► **McALLEN** — A contractor charged in an alleged bribery scheme involving multimillion dollar projects in the Pharr-San Juan-Alamo school district pleaded guilty to conspiracy Wednesday.

Alonso Cardenas Jr., 58, admitted to paying bribes to school trustee Guadalupe Jaime Santa Maria, 54, in exchange for influence and votes on school construction contracts, prosecutors said.

Cardenas also acknowledged using his construction company to make improvements and repairs to Santa Maria's home.

Another admission involved Cardenas paying Santa Maria bribes in exchange for awarding one of Cardenas' companies federally mandated work under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

County to discuss counsel's legal troubles

BY SERGIO CHAPA
THE BROWNSVILLE HERALD

County commissioners will meet Tuesday to discuss whether to take action against their legal counsel Douglas Wright who was arrested this weekend for public intoxication and exposing himself.

According to reports, the 55-year-old lawyer was arrested by South Padre Island police over

the weekend after he was found intoxicated and exposing his genitals on a local beach.

Cameron County Judge Gilberto Hinojosa said commissioners are meeting today but would not discuss Wright's arrest until an executive session planned for next week.

"We're going to discuss what the charges are and what action the commissioners court wishes to take," Hinojosa said.

Wright is an at-will, appointed county employee who started working as the commissioner's court legal counsel under former county judge Tony Garza, who is now the U.S. ambassador to Mexico.

Court records show that Wright is currently serving probation for a Nov. 20 auto accident at the foot of the Queen Isabella Memorial Bridge in which South Padre Island police originally

charged him with DWI and unlawfully carrying a weapon after they found a handgun in his SUV.

District Attorney Armando Villalobos said his office has filed an appeal to re-file the weapons charge and authorities could file a motion to revoke Wright's deferred adjudication.

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Upside down



THERESA NAJERA/THE BROWNSVILLE HERALD

Police temporarily closed the southbound lanes of U.S. Expressway 77/83 Wednesday afternoon after a heavy-duty forklift making a U-turn at an elevated construction site fell over

the edge and landed on its side. No auto accidents were caused by the forklift, but paramedics took the forklift's driver to the Valley Baptist Medical Center with minor injuries, police said.

Compensation questions remain in Lucio Blanco

BY TONY VINDELL
VALLEY MORNING STAR

MATAMOROS — Officials are trying to piece together the events of last week's explosion in the small town about 30 miles west of here.

At stake are who will pay for the damaged and destroyed property

and what kind of compensation the families of the victims will receive from the trucking company.

A southbound truck hauling two butane gas-filled tankers failed to stop at a railroad crossing Aug. 11, as a train was heading east, police said.

The train ran between the two tankers, causing one of them to

burst into flames and the other to explode more than 30 minutes later, a police officer with the town of Control/Ramirez said.

The flames caused extensive damage, claiming the lives of six people who worked nearby.

Many others are recovering at hospital here, in Valley Hermoso and in Monterrey.

LOTTO

► TEXAS LOTTERY RESULTS

Winning numbers, Wednesday, August 17:

Lotto Texas: 2-6-23-30-36 BB 43

Cash Five: 6-12-29-30-34

Pick Three: 5-8-1(day)1-3-1(night)

Find past winning numbers at www.txlottery.org

GETTING IT RIGHT

► CORRECTIONS/CLARIFICATIONS

Due to a newspaper error, a story on page A1 of Wednesday's *The Brownsville Herald* misidentified a federal agency. The correct name of the agency is the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and Ramon Bazan is the ATF assistant attache in Mexico City.

Also, a story on page A3 *The Herald* incorrectly states that Monica Tamara Fraga Ibarra and Juana Maria de la Torre Quintero were reportedly friends. The women's bodies were discovered Monday in a canal southwest of Matamoros. There is no evidence that they knew each other prior to the killings. The story also reports that Fraga's family did not have news of her until Monday. They received a phone call alleging her kidnapping on Friday.

The Herald apologizes for the errors.

It is the policy of *The Brownsville Herald* to correct errors in a timely manner. Corrections and clarifications will be published in this space. To inquire about corrections, readers may call an editor.

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THE BROWNSVILLE HERALD

An aggravated assault case filed against three former Cameron County jailers for allegedly beating a federal inmate in May could be handed over to federal prosecutors.

POLICE BRIEFS

federal prosecutors on Wednesday to discuss the prisoner abuse case.

According to *Brownsville Herald* archives, Carrizalez-Rucker Detention Center jailers John Roy Harris, 23, Cosme Martinez, 43, and Michael David Saavedra, 23, were arrested in May for allegedly beating federal inmate Javier Alejandro Garza, 20.

The three men and four other jailers were fired over the incident.

Although Harris, Martinez and Saavedra were originally charged with aggravated assault, Villalobos said those charges would most likely be changed to misdemeanor official oppression because Garza was not seriously injured.

But the district attorney said discussions with federal prosecu-

tors could lead to federal civil rights or oppression charges.

"We just want to sure that they can be charged with everything possible," Villalobos said. "We can't have people working on behalf of the public abusing their capacity in this manner."

Suspicious bulge results in arrest

Customs agents at the Gateway International Bridge arrested a Houston man on Tuesday after they discovered he had hidden 3.2 pounds of methamphetamines in his pant leg.

According to federal court records, Eduardo Ramirez on Tuesday walked from Matamoros on the Gateway International Bridge but was referred to a secondary inspection.

A pat-down revealed a bulge in his left leg that turned out to be 3.2 pounds of methamphetamines. Ramirez was arrested and charged with federal drug trafficking and possession offenses.

The Hidalgo-born man, who now lives in Houston, appeared before U.S. Magistrate Judge John William Black on Wednesday but remains in custody after the federal judge denied Ramirez bond.

Ramirez is expected to appear again in court for an Aug. 22 hearing.

Man faces false representation charge

A 42-year-old man is expected to head to trial after a grand jury met Wednesday and formally charged him with falsely representing himself as an attorney.

Cameron County Precinct 2 Constable Abel Gomez said Daniel Garcia is believed to have represented himself as an attorney to several people who had been arrested in the area.

Gomez said Garcia took money and told his "clients" that he would get them out of trouble by talking to various judges and bondsmen.

But Gomez said the promises were just an act.

"He really wasn't talking to anybody, he just took their money," Gomez said.

According to Wednesday's indictment, the charge against Garcia stems from an Aug. 2 incident where he allegedly took money to represent a Cameron County man accused of an undisclosed crime in court.

Gomez said that an investigation into the incident led Precinct 2 deputy constables to arrest Garcia in February, but court records show that he was released from custody after posting a \$10,000 bond.

State Bar of Texas records show two men with the same or

similar names as Garcia practicing law in this state, but their personal information do match his.

Man charged with drug possession

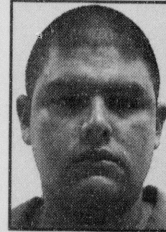
Customs agents at the Free Trade Bridge at Los Indios arrested a 20-year-old man on Monday after they found 102 pounds of marijuana in the bed of his truck.

Court records show that Juan Marco Cepeda drove his 1993 Ford Ranger across the bridge from Mexico and was referred to secondary inspection.

Customs agents arrested Cepeda and charged him with drug possession charges after they found 102 pounds of marijuana in the bed of his truck.

Cepeda remained in custody Wednesday under a \$20,000 bond set by Cameron County Precinct 2-1 Justice of the Peace Linda Salazar.

Police briefs compiled by Herald reporter Sergio Chapa



CEPEDA

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DON PEDRO SAYS

"Let's hope the support Cindy Sheehan is receiving across the country gets the president's attention," Don Pedro said as he walked into the newsroom.

"Oh, think she's gotten his attention," the city editor said. "Her and the growing number of anti-war protesters."

"I know," Don Pedro said. "But I mean getting him to listen."

And out he went.

The Herald

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