

PAGE 2

BROWNSVILLE AND THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY

- COMMUNITY A4
- LAGUNA MADRE A5
- TEXAS A6
- NATION A7

AROUND THE VALLEY

Harlingen man faces child porn charges

► BROWNSVILLE — A Harlingen man has been indicted by a federal grand jury with production and possession of child pornography. Eugene Daniel Atwood, 37, 1325 Cottonwood Blvd., was charged with two counts of production of child pornography in a Tuesday indictment. Atwood was arrested on Sept. 28 by Harlingen police after employees at an EZ Pawn store near the police station discovered lewd photos of Atwood with a young boy in a laptop computer. Atwood had pawned, but not redeemed. No date has been set for Atwood's appearance in a federal court in Brownsville, the Justice Department said. At that appearance, a trial date will be announced. Each of the first two counts which accuse Atwood of receiving child pornography and possessing with intent to distribute obscene material carries a statutory penalty of a maximum of 5 year to 20 years imprisonment upon conviction.

Causeway down to one lane

► SOUTH PADRE ISLAND — The Texas Department of Transportation has reduced the westbound lanes to one lane on the Queen Isabella Memorial Bridge through Dec. 20 to perform maintenance work on the right lane. Traffic will be detoured to one lane. Motorists should expect delays and are advised to observe all posted warnings, construction, detour and speed limit signs. For more information, call Ricardo Gallaga at (956) 399-5102 or (956) 357-0290.

Nature group protects endangered cacti

► RIO GRANDE CITY — Two thousand federally endangered star-cactus plants have been found on a 415-acre piece of land purchased Wednesday by the Nature Conservancy of Texas. The new Las Estrellas Preserve is the first protected area for the plant, which is found only in Starr County and parts of Mexico extending to Monterrey, said Lisa Williams, the conservancy's project director. The spineless, round star-cactus has eight sections and white tufts that make it look like a "spineless sea urchin," Williams said. The organization paid the landowners \$228,000, a grant funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and 3M. U.S. Fish and Wildlife has developed a \$160,000 recovery plan to repopulate the species, Williams said. The plan includes hand-pollination of the star-cactus, as well as a study into the impact of poaching and habitat destruction.

LOTTO

► TEXAS LOTTERY RESULTS

Winning numbers, Wednesday, December 1:

Lotto Texas: 12-22-29-36-42 BB 20

Cash Five: 1-4-11-16-17

Pick Three: (day) 9-5-0 (night) 6-2-2

Find past winning numbers at www.txlottery.org

GETTING IT RIGHT

► CORRECTIONS/CLARIFICATIONS

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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Casino owner dies hours after leaving jail

Death: Family blames police for handling of arrest.

BY SERGIO CHAPA
THE BROWNSVILLE HERALD

Family members of video casino owner Jose Luis Bazan said they blame police for his sudden death Tuesday — hours after he surrendered on three gambling charges.

The family's attorney Ernesto Gamez said Bazan, 53, began to have severe respiratory problems shortly after his release the same morning.

Gamez said Bazan later died from an apparent heart attack

while he was receiving treatment for the respiratory problems at a Matamoros hospital.



BAZAN

had never been in trouble before." Brownsville Police Chief Carlos Garcia said police did not do anything out of the ordinary with Bazan's case.

On Monday, police seized 92 video casino machines from Palace Arcade, 2921 Boca Chica

Blvd. A probable cause affidavit said the arcade was making illegal payouts and identified Bazan as the owner.

Bazan was then charged with keeping a gambling place, gambling promotion and possession of gambling devices.

All three charges are Class A misdemeanors punishable up to one year in jail and/or a \$4,000 fine.

"We did not encourage him (to) engage in any criminal activity," Garcia said. "The family needs to reflect on this. Our continuing investigation will show that he made a lot of money through his illegal activities."

Under state law, police are required to provide medical treatment to prisoners, but a Brownsville City Jail log said Bazan only spent 27 minutes in custody Tuesday morning — from

10:53 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. Gamez said Bazan died late Tuesday afternoon.

Garcia said Bazan did not even set foot inside a jail cell.

"We gave him the red carpet treatment," he said. "We allowed him to turn himself in the company of his lawyer. He was processed and arraigned quickly."

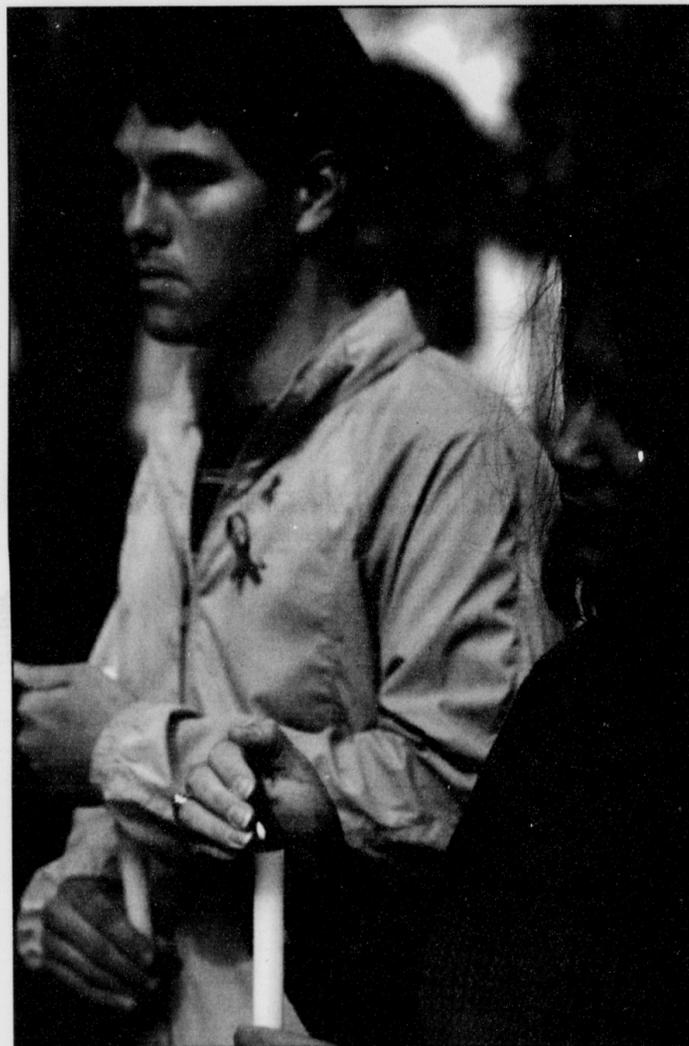
Gamez said the night before a deputy constable tried to arrest Bazan for the warrants and threatened to arrest a family member at his home.

The deputy constable was not identified Wednesday night.

Gamez said there are no plans for a lawsuit at this time, but he said he plans to discuss the incident further with Garcia.

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AIDS remembrance



BRAD DOHERTY/THE BROWNSVILLE HERALD

Students, faculty and staff at the University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College gather in the Free Speech Area Wednesday to light candles in remembrance of people who have lost their lives to AIDS. From the Free Speech Area, a quilt was carried along the Paseo to the Science, Engineering and Technology Building, where a variety of quilts commemorating those who lost their lives to the AIDS epidemic and literature about the disease were distributed.

County's attorney faces DWI charge

THE BROWNSVILLE HERALD

Cameron County Commissioners Court Counsel Doug Wright was arrested for DWI last week but escaped disciplinary action from the county.

South Padre Island Police Chief Robert Rodriguez said Wright, 55, was arrested and released on bond after an auto accident in the early morning hours of Nov. 20.

A police report said Wright swerved out of the left lane and hit a median divider pole and a street sign while driving to the Island at the entrance of the Queen Isabella Memorial Bridge at 3:35 a.m.

Police charged Wright with driving while intoxicated and striking a fixed object. Rodriguez said he was released after posting \$1,000 in bonds.

Cameron County Judge Gilberto Hinojosa said the court has not taken any "significant" action against Wright.

County records said Wright has been a county employee since February 1992.

"We can't do anything until this works its way through the system," Hinojosa said.

Los Fresnos police review casino tape

Los Fresnos police said they are investigating the activities of two video casinos after they received a videotape Wednesday.

The videotape's makers told police they documented illegal cash payouts at two casinos inside Los Fresnos city limits.

Under state law, it is illegal for video gambling machines

to pay cash or prizes worth more than 10 times the value of a bid.

POLICE BRIEFS

Police Chief James Harris said the tape's makers did not file a formal complaint or provide written statements, but he said investigators would review the four-hour long tape.

Man charged with DWI after wreck

Police arrested a 48-year-old man after he allegedly caused another car to crash into a fence in a Sunday morning auto accident.

According to a Brownsville police report, Onesimo Muniz Calderon was traveling south on the 400 block of West 16th Street at 11:30 a.m. Sunday.

The report said Calderon failed to yield the right of way and hit a white 1996 Pontiac Sunfire traveling west on the 1500 block of West Elizabeth Street.

The impact of the accident caused the Pontiac and its three passengers to crash into a chainlink fence of a home at the southwest corner of West Elizabeth and 16th streets.

Nobody was injured in the accident, but the report said Calderon was cited for no insurance, failing yield the right of way to the Pontiac and running a stop sign.

He was also arrested for driving while intoxicated.

The driver of the Pontiac, Miguel A. Martinez, 19, was cited for no insurance.

Calderon was released Sunday night after posting a \$2,000 bond.

UT law school dean visits UTB-TSC campus

BY ILDEFONSO ORTIZ
THE BROWNSVILLE HERALD

Three years ago, Trey Mendez sat in the Gorgas Hall board room of the University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College contemplating law school.

At the time, William Powers, dean of the University of Texas law school, was visiting UTB-TSC promoting the law school.

On Wednesday, Mendez, a UTB-TSC graduate, sat in the same room with Powers and other students, as a UT law student promoting the law program.

But he said, the program isn't a walk in the park. Still, he'll be graduating in May and plans to return to Brownsville to practice law.



POWERS

work involved."

Powers addressed the con-

cerns of about 20 students Wednesday morning at the university.

"There is no reason why any of you shouldn't be outstanding scholars at UT Austin," he said. "Law is a noble and significant way to spend the rest of your life."

This is Powers' fourth visit to the campus.

"When I became dean we had very few students from the area, and we wanted more," Powers said. "We said we will take 15 people from these schools (Brownsville, Edinburg, Kingsville, Corpus Christi and

Laredo) every year. The first year we had 23 or 24."

Accompanying Powers were Mendez and other UT law students.

Frankie Muñoz, a UTB-TSC senior government major, said he was impressed that Powers and the group visited the campus.

"Other schools just send you a letter, but here you get to have a one-on-one with the individual, and it showed me a more in-depth look at law," he said.

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The Herald

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DON PEDRO SAYS

"Ah, Washington Park's aglow once more," Don Pedro said as he entered the newsroom. "It's good to see."

"You've got a point; a lot of the events that used to be at that park have been moved," the city editor said. "Hanging the lights up again really livens up the area."

The Don's eyes started to glisten. "The old heart of Brownsville beats once more. I think I'm getting verklempt," he said. "Talk amongst yourselves."

And out he went.