

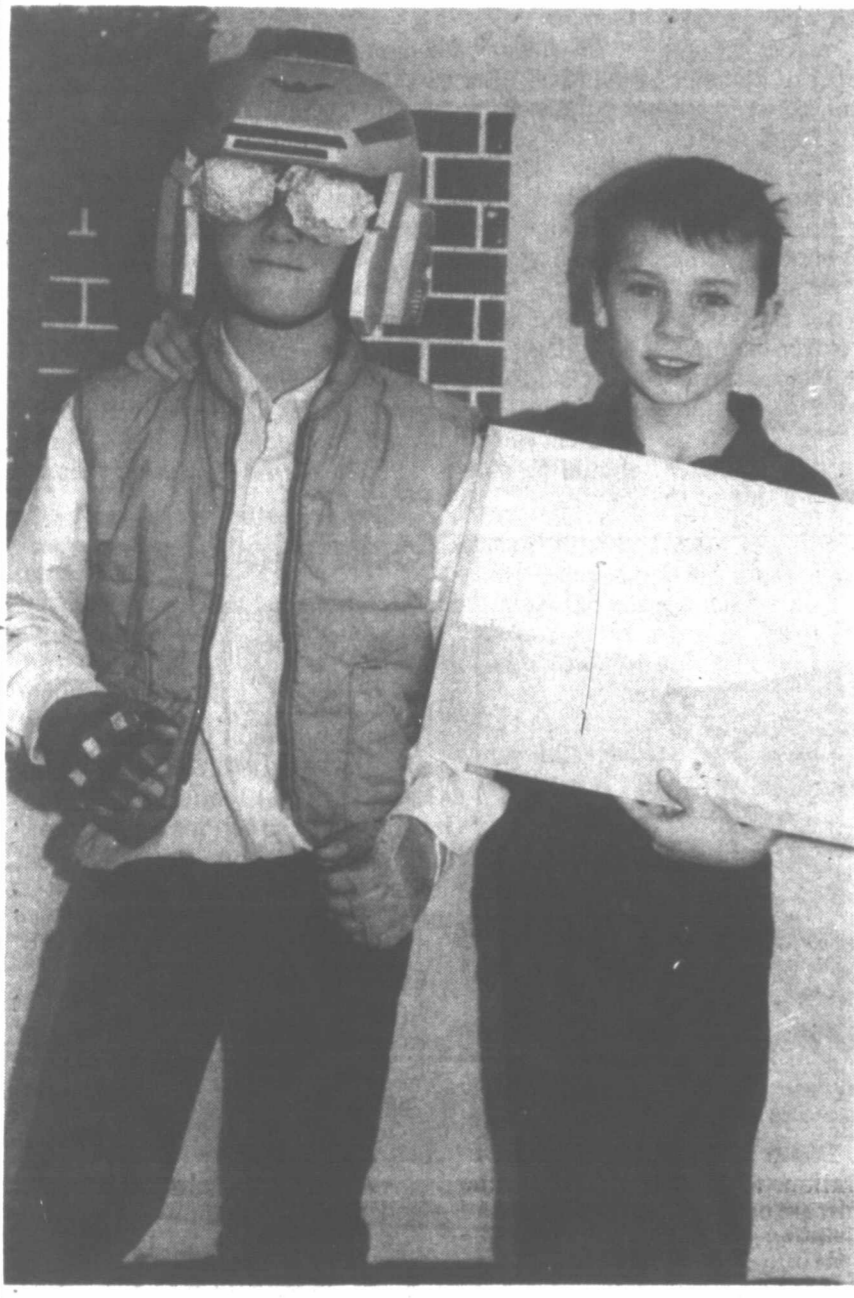




### Students' computers



(Staff photos by Beth Miller)



Catholic Schools Week is being celebrated this week at St. Vincent's School, with an open house set from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Friday. Recently, students in Elizabeth Almonte's third-, fourth- and fifth-grade computer classes at St. Vincent's developed designs and made computers of the future. The students were not allowed to spend any money on the materials for the computers. Shown above with their computer are from left, John Martin, Isaiah Nolte and Fabian Silva. Sarah Stockman also helped with the computer shown above. At left, Logan Stinnett is the computer, at left, with partner Joshua Cummings.

### Soft drink firm blames bus for student deaths

By JOEL WILLIAMS  
Associated Press Writer

EDINBURG (AP) — The soft drink company whose truck was involved in the worst school bus accident in Texas history is blaming the bus manufacturer for the deaths of 21 students.

McAllen-based Valley Coca-Cola Bottling Co. Inc., which is defending itself against potentially millions of dollars in lawsuits from the Sept. 21 accident, alleges that the bus was "a defective and unreasonably dangerous product."

Valley Coca-Cola filed a lawsuit Monday against Blue Bird Body Co. of Fort Valley, Ga., contending that if the students had been able to escape the bus, they would have survived.

The bus was knocked into a water-filled pit in the South Texas town of Alton, after a Dr Pepper truck from Valley Coca-Cola failed to stop at a stop sign.

According to Valley Coca-Cola's lawsuit, the soft drink truck "was suddenly and unexpectedly struck by a school bus ... Many of the individuals who were riding inside the school bus, which was manufactured by Blue Bird, were unable to escape from the bus in sufficient time to escape serious injury or death."

Soft drink truck driver Ruben Perez, 25, of Mission, faces trial in March on 21 counts of involuntary manslaughter.

Another 59 students on the bus suffered various injuries, but survived.

Dana Kirk, an attorney representing Valley Coca-Cola, said specific defects in the bus include windows too small to provide escape and the lack of an emergency exit in the roof.

Valley Coca-Cola filed suit against the bus manufacturer Monday in 275th District Court in Edinburg. The soft drink company's suit names Blue Bird as a third-party defendant in the case, which would share liability.

A Blue Bird executive said his company was not worried about liability in the case involving one of its 83-passenger school buses.

Herman Light, quality assurance director with Blue Bird, said Monday in a telephone interview, "You're always concerned when people start naming you in lawsuits, but we don't feel we have any exposure in this case, from everything we've heard about it."

Forty-four personal injury cases representing more than 50 children have been filed against Valley Coca-Cola since the accident.

At a hearing Monday, state District Judge Juan Partida agreed to a Coca-Cola request to consolidate the cases' discovery portion, in which witnesses make depositions and evidence is introduced. The judge said he would consider later whether to consolidate the trials.

But still unresolved were a few cases in which competing lawyers claim to represent the same families.

"All of us are fighting each other like sharks in a feeding frenzy," said San Antonio attorney Ruben Sandoval, who is in a dispute with McAllen attorney Mark Cantu over which law firm is authorized to represent one of the families suing Valley Coca-Cola.

### Brick for a soldier



(Staff photo by Beth Miller)

Steve Thurman, center, with the 82nd Airborne Division stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C., will have a brick placed at Memorial Park in his honor by the local Veterans of Foreign Wars. Thurman, son of Mr. and Mrs. Boyd Thurman of Pampa, has been in town on leave. He participated in the U.S. invasion of Panama recently. Members of the VFW attending a brief presentation ceremony in the park Monday are, from left, E.W. Totty, John Triplehorn, Don Emmons, Glen Fisher and C.F. Upton.

### Oil rig donated to start reef

AUSTIN (AP) — The Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission received its first offshore oil rig that will be used to create an artificial reef in the Gulf of Mexico, officials said.

Transco Exploration Parties Ltd. last week donated the first rig and platform — and checks totaling more than \$35,000 — as a contribution, and for maintenance of navigational buoys over the site, officials said.

Officials say they expect hundreds of rigs to be donated since the expense of moving the non-producing rigs is extremely high.

"Creation of this artificial reefs systems has tremendous potential," said state Sen. J.E. "Buster" Brown, R-Lake Jackson, who filed the bill establishing the system.

"These reefs along the Texas coast will give us some of the best fishing anywhere," he said.

### Battle plan prepared for killer bees

BROWNSVILLE (AP) — Representatives of agencies that will be called on to fight the spread of Africanized honey bees, the so-called "killer bees," were to meet today to draw up a battle plan.

The first Africanized bees will likely reach Texas this spring, officials at Texas A&M University say.

But the various agencies that will attempt to stop the spread of the Africanized bees have been hit with budget cuts.

Texas A&M, which handles both research and regulation of bees in Texas, asked the Texas Legislature for \$690,000 to deal with the Africanized bees, but the request was denied.

Money is so tight that one spokesman said the best thing for Texans to do is to pray.

Africanized bees got their start in the Americas in 1957 when 23 queen bees were imported to Brazil as part of an experiment to strengthen local European honey bees. Some of the Africanized bees escaped, and they have been reproducing and buzzing northward ever since.

Slightly smaller than regular European honey bees, they put more energy into making new swarms and defending hives than in making honey. They have taken over every area they've invaded, causing honey production to fall by 60 percent.

They got the killer name not because their individual stings are any worse than those of regular bees, but because thousands of the overprotective bees sometimes sting people or animals who get too near hives.

The bees will be a hazard in urban areas and that they may cost \$3 million to \$4 million a year in lower honey production, experts say.

The northernmost hive was found last November in central Tamaulipas, the Mexican state just south of Texas' Lower Rio Grande Valley.

The same December freeze that destroyed much of the Texas citrus crop reached deep into Mexico, destroying much of the bees' food. A drought also has made things tough in Mexico.

"There's two schools of thought about what effect the freeze and drought will have," said Anita Collins, head of a U.S. Agricultural Research Service bee lab in Weslaco.

"One is that the bees will be slowed down, and the other is that it will make the ones that are there pick up and move on," she said.

Agricultural agents already are working with beekeepers to teach them the importance of trying to maintain healthy European queen bees in hives, and thus keep the hives from becoming Africanized.

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### Waste

"We can make landfills where they protect the environment," Sheward said, "but it is not without cost."

Pampa, that cost could mean tipping fees would go from a cost of \$9 a ton to \$16 a ton. While that seems high, already the tipping fees in New York City are between \$167 and \$195 a ton.

The reason, Sheward said, is because eastern cities waited until they were out of landfill space to address the problem. In 30 years, Pampa will be facing the same problem if something is not done soon, local officials say.

Luken is adamant about federal legislation where garbage is concerned.

"We are no longer going to allow our garbage to pollute our ground and water," Luken said. He added he is proposing EPA regulations that would remove any toxic substance from the waste stream to prevent leaching into the ground.

Luken believes it is up to the federal government to be forceful where pollution is involved because a new "Civil War" is developing over trash.

This month's Congressional Quarterly calls the conflict "Garbage Wars" and points out that states running out of landfill space are seeking new places in other states to bury their trash.

Edward Byers, a senior analyst for Cambridge Reports, said, "Even

though the great majority of Americans have consistently ranked solid waste disposal among the top local priorities, there has been strong public opposition to placing facilities in one's own community."

Within five years the Panhandle could see this problem firsthand.

Researchers from Texas A&M are predicting that eastern cities will be approaching landowners in this area with multi-million dollar offers to bury trash in what they perceive to be a "vast wilderness."

The downside of such offers, said Nathan Hopson, director of public works in Pampa, is that it takes years to get a landfill certified, and once it is full, those states move on seeking new places to bury garbage and the landowner is left with acre upon acre of useless trash-filled ground.

Decomposition of such land-filled waste will take about 1,000 years.

In Pennsylvania, the state Department of Environmental Resources is battling out-of-state dumpers who are turning that state into a giant "garbage dump," said Susan Woods of the DER.

Ohio's Dennis Muchnicki, chief of environmental enforcement, said the anti-out-of-state trash sentiment in his area has reached "social movement" proportions.

However, the Supreme Court recently ruled that prohibiting garbage from one state to another is an infringement on interstate shipping and, therefore, illegal.

Congressman Luken said the

only answer to growing trash and having nowhere to bury it is recycling. Period.

"This means that individuals will have to be responsible for recycling materials such as newspapers, yard waste, glass, metal and plastics," Luken said. He added that "changing the ethic of Americans who indulge themselves in disposable habits" must be a top priority of governments in order to curb the problem.

Luken has gone so far as to insist on federal regulations for the management of oil and gas wastes, which currently are pumped back into the ground like trash to a landfill, but at much deeper levels.

Congressman Bill Sarpalius is opposing Luken's proposals because, in typical NIMEY fashion - Sarpalius will face Dick Waterfield or Bob Price in the November general elections - such management of the environment is too expensive.

"With regard to ground water contamination by the solid waste sites, ground water depths, rainfall amounts and soil compaction vary greatly throughout Texas and the nation, and therefore the guidelines should be flexible with respect to each area of the country or states," Sarpalius said.

He also testified before Luken that rising solid waste costs are unfair to people on fixed incomes.

Sarpalius said any new environmental protection regulations should be left to states to impose.

But Mike Graeber of the Texas

Department of Health solid waste enforcement division said, during a telephone interview, "We're not going to make any changes in our regulations unless the EPA forces us to. Right now, the EPA is forcing stricter rules."

Graeber made his comments from Austin, unaware of Sarpalius' remarks the same day at a Capitol Hill hearing. While both statements were made independently, taken together they reflect the problems of politics and waste.

Taken together, the comments also reflect why the EPA has adopted its tough stance regarding tougher regulations on landfills.

While Pampa officials are estimating that solid waste costs could triple in the '90s, Sarpalius testified he is being told by city officials throughout the Panhandle that the costs could go up ten-fold.

While the effects of NIMBY and NIMEY can nearly cripple a responsible waste management program, a more common sentiment in the Pampa area is identified as YIMBYism - Yes In My Backyard (for a price).

At least three plans for regional recycling and composting facilities are being considered in the Panhandle, one by Pampa, one by Dumas and a third by the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission.

But, even with such benevolent attitudes toward dealing with waste prevalent, problems still arise.

For instance, if the region has three landfills, city managers from the other 50-plus municipalities are

uniformly insistent they want the right to go to whichever landfill, in-state or out, that has the least expensive tipping fees that day.

While that is good for those cities, it is bad for the landfills, which need at least 200 tons of waste a day to maintain a composting/recycling operation. If the landfills don't get their minimum requirements of trash, they will be forced to close, and those cities looking for the best deal may be faced with nowhere to go.

Luken said complications in dealing with the politics of waste are so complex, he is even aware of companies looking to export waste, dumping it in other countries whose financial hard times make them easy prey for a lucrative deal, no matter its long term effects on their environment.

White Deer businessman Marvin Urbanczyk of Scarab Manufacturing said he is currently considering a deal to compost 24,000 tons of trash

a day in Mexico, shipped in from the northeastern United States.

While that plan appears not only profitable but ecologically responsible, Luken's intimation is that there are a lot of companies that are considering only the profit while unconcerned about the worldwide environmental impact.

"If there are shysters out there, they haven't come to our doorstep," Sheward said. "But that may be because we (National Solid Waste Management Association) are the original foot-soldiers in calling for the environmentally sound thing to be done. They probably know better than to come here."

Whatever the eventual solution to the nationwide problem, if it is found, it is certain it won't be cheap. From all appearances, unless NIMBY and NIMEY are conquered, it is possible no solution will ever come.

Next: Underground water pollution problems.

## Budget will keep Congress busy for months

By ALAN FRAM  
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - President Bush's unveiling of his 1991 budget proposal Monday sets off a legislative process that is outlined in law but still allows for months of political wrangling before the figures are finalized.

Deadlines will be missed, and lawmakers and the White House will blame each other for it. Virtually every committee in Congress will get involved, often working in opposing directions. Each side will accuse the other of using unrealistic numbers, and at year's end a growing dynamic will be everybody's desire to simply go home.

The budget year is already getting off to a late start with Monday's presentation of the spending plan. It is supposed to be released on the first Monday after Jan. 3, but the

White House and Congress agreed to an extension.

Between now and the Oct. 1 start of fiscal 1991, a host of other deadlines will be missed as well. The reason: the budget is an extremely important political document, and lawmakers see the fiscal choices they must make as primary. There are no consequences for missing the deadlines anyway.

"This is one of the most difficult budget years we've had in terms of trying to make ends meet with this process," Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., ranking Republican on the Senate Budget Committee, said late last week.

Domenici's prediction was founded on the expectation that there will be several time-consuming, partisan budget battles this year.

Should easing tensions with the Soviet Union translate into Pentagon spending cuts, and where

should those savings go? How will the Republicans thwart Sen. Daniel Moynihan's efforts to cut Social Security taxes?

Will Bush finally get his capital gains tax cut, and if so what will the Democrats demand in return? And where will Congress and the administration find the \$36.5 billion in savings they need to pare the deficit to \$64 billion, as required by the Gramm-Rudman deficit-reduction law?

The law calls for the House and Senate to approve a budget blueprint by April 15, a document that does not require the president's signature.

A measure imposing new taxes and fees and spending cuts must be completed by June 15. Thirteen separate spending bills, providing money for federal agencies and programs, are supposed to be enacted by Oct. 1, an event that has occurred

only once since 1976.

While all this is going on, Congress will be grumbling about the administration's economic forecast, which by law is used in the budget process.

Those projections - prepared by the Office of Management and Budget - are generally believed by lawmakers to be too rosy.

The healthier the economy, the more revenue the government can estimate it will collect, and the easier its deficit-reduction job seems.

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| ROSARITA MILD/MED./HOT PICANTE SAUCE        | 16 OZ. JAR     | \$1.19 |
| ROSARITA TACO SHELLS                        | 12 CT. PKG.    | 99¢    |
| ORVILLE REDENBACHER ASSTD. MICRO. POPCORN   | 3 CT. PKG.     | \$1.69 |
| LIBBY'S VIENNA SAUSAGE                      | 2 5 OZ. CAN    | 99¢    |
| LIBBY'S POTTED MEAT                         | 3 3 OZ. CANS   | 89¢    |
| LIBBY CORNED BEEF HASH                      | 15 OZ. CAN     | \$1.39 |
| MILKY WAY, 3 MUSKETEERS CR SNICKERS BARS    | 6 CT. PKG.     | \$1.89 |
| OLD EL PASO REFRIED BEANS                   | 16 OZ. CAN     | 59¢    |
| OLD EL PASO WHOLE/CHOPPED GREEN CHILIES     | 4 OZ. CAN      | 79¢    |
| AMERICAN BEAUTY ELBO RONI OR THIN SPAGHETTI | 2 10 OZ. PKGS. | 99¢    |
| COMSTOCK REG./LITE CHERRY PIE FILLING       | 20 OZ. CAN     | 99¢    |

- |                                    |                 |        |
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| VLASIC SMALL PITTED RIPE OLIVES    | 6 OZ. CAN       | \$1.29 |
| VLASIC STUFFED QUEEN OLIVES        | 7 OZ. JAR       | \$1.59 |
| VLASIC ASSORTED DILL SNACK CHUNKS  | 24 OZ. JAR      | \$1.19 |
| KRAFT ASSORTED DRESSINGS           | 16 OZ. BTL.     | \$1.89 |
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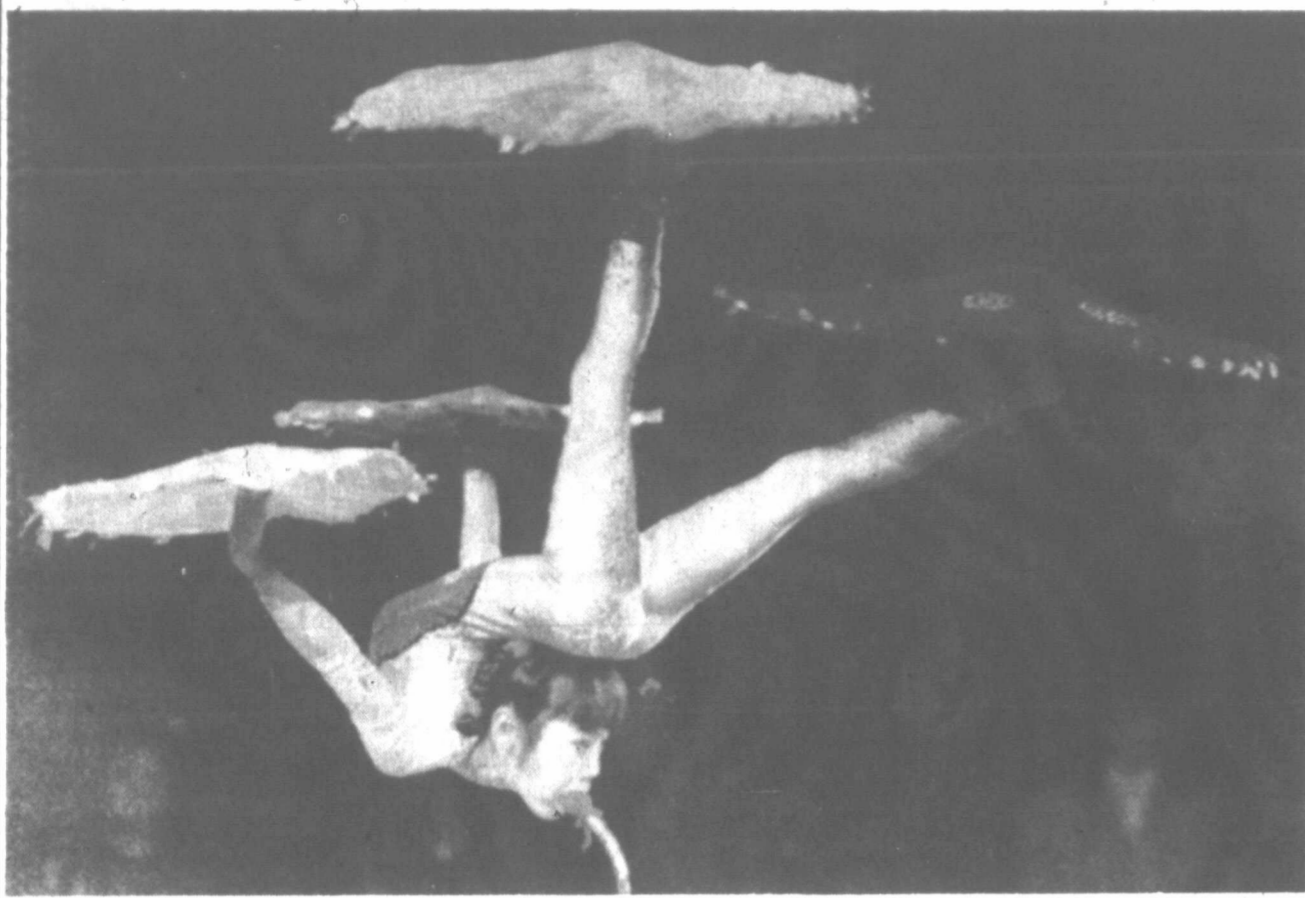
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(AP Laserphoto)

Mainland Chinese contortionist Sun Jiayin, 8, spins four colorful carpet squares on her hands and feet as she balances in a supple position on a flexible pole held between her teeth in Paris recently. Jiayin's act was one of many at the 13th World Festival of the Circus of Tomorrow held at the Winter Circus in the French capital.

Gender gap showing up in state political polls

By The Associated Press

The difference in voting by men and women is playing a role in the March gubernatorial primary, a poll found.

The gender gap is largely responsible for giving Ann Richards an early lead in the Democratic race, analysts say.

A poll for *Houston Chronicle* and *The Dallas Morning News* found that among likely Democratic primary voters, almost half of the women support Ms. Richards — far outpacing her chief rivals, former Gov. Mark White and Attorney General Jim Mattox.

The poll shows Richards is favored by 43 percent of the Democratic women voters and 27 percent

of the men. White has 25 percent of the women and 33 percent of the men. Mattox has 6 percent of the women and 14 percent of the men.

Richards, seeking to become the first women governor of Texas since Miriam "Ma" Ferguson a half-century ago, has tended to play down gender-based politics.

Voters will "judge us as people, not whether we're male or female," she said last summer.

But her campaign staff, mindful that women make up at least 54 percent of the Democratic primary vote, has made direct appeals to that bloc.

Millie Bruner of Dallas, political director for the Mattox campaign, conceded that the attorney general has an uphill battle with some

women voters.

"Jim Mattox has probably the best voting record on women's rights of any statewide elected official," Bruner said.

Gary Rasp, a spokesman for the White campaign, said the former governor will emphasize his record of naming women and minorities to important posts in state government.

"Governor White doesn't view this race as man-against-woman. The issue is who can best lead Texas into the 1990s," Rasp said.

The gender gap is less distinct in the GOP primary race, said poll director Richard Murray.

But frontrunners Clayton Williams and Kent Hance "are a hell of a lot more popular with men than women," Murray said.

Defense secretary lists eight Texas military bases for proposed closings

By SUSANNE M. SCHAFER  
AP Military Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defense Secretary Dick Cheney Monday proposed closing or realigning eight military installations in Texas, among more than 60 bases in the United States and 12 installations overseas, in a cost-saving effort.

Cheney said changes in the Soviet bloc that have diminished the likelihood of a major land war in Europe would allow the cuts to ease budget constraints.

"We've seen phenomenal changes," Cheney said, noting that many of the Warsaw Pact's leadership has been swept from power in a pro-democracy tidal wave in the past year.

He also noted reductions in Soviet military spending.

But Cheney said any attempt to reduce U.S. military strength because of the budget squeeze "has to be done carefully, cautiously, it has to be done deliberately."

"These proposed actions are part of an ongoing effort to streamline Defense Department operations in keeping with changing requirements and future budget realities," Cheney said in a cover letter to the base closing list made available Monday to The Associated Press by congressional sources before his public announcement.

The Texas installations Cheney proposes to close are the Army ammunition plant at Karnack, Chase Field Naval Air Station at Beeville, Bergstrom Air Force Base at Austin, and the Defense Contract Administration regional office in Dallas.

Reductions were proposed for Fort Hood near Killeen, where the 2nd Armored Division is proposed for disbanding; Fort Sam Houston and Kelly Air Force Base in San Antonio, and the Red River Army Depot at Texarkana.

Among the other domestic bases affected are several in California, including Fort Ord, which played a major role in the recent invasion of Panama; Alameda Naval Aviation Depot, Oakland's Naval Supply Center, Moffett Field Naval Air Station and Long Beach Naval Shipyard.

The overseas bases include seven in Europe, four in Asia and a Naval Air Station in Bermuda.

The European bases include two in Greece — Hellenikon Air Base and NAVCOMMSTA in Makri; one in West Germany — Zweibrucken Air Base; three in England — RAF Fairford, Greenham Common and Wethersfield; and one in Italy — Comiso Air Base.

Comiso and Greenham Common are home to Air Force cruise missile installations that are being dismantled under the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty with the Soviet Union, signed in December 1987.

The Asian bases on Cheney's list are a Navy base in San Miguel, Philippines and three in South Korea — Kwang Ju, Suwon and Taeguak.

"No final decision has been made regarding closure, reduction or realignment of installations," the Navy documents on the closings said.

The Army cuts also apply to a number of reserve units, including some in Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland and Michigan.

Reports of Cheney's proposed closures have circulated for several days on Capitol Hill, where they set off heated protests from lawmakers and prompted a warning from Rep. Patricia Schroeder, D-Colo., a member of the House Armed Services Committee, that the shut-downs must not be partisan if the Pentagon hopes to achieve any cuts.

However, to discourage leaks, Pentagon officials waited until the weekend to print the entire base closure list, and the secretary was to discuss his reasoning behind the base erasures at a two-hour press conference today.

Cheney's list is only a suggestion, however. Since it costs money to shut bases down and legislation is necessary to accomplish the complex feat, the savings are not usually accrued until years later.

In actuality, Cheney's list is a proposal to study which bases should be eliminated.

Closing a base also requires a lengthy series of environmental impact statements which often lead to delays.

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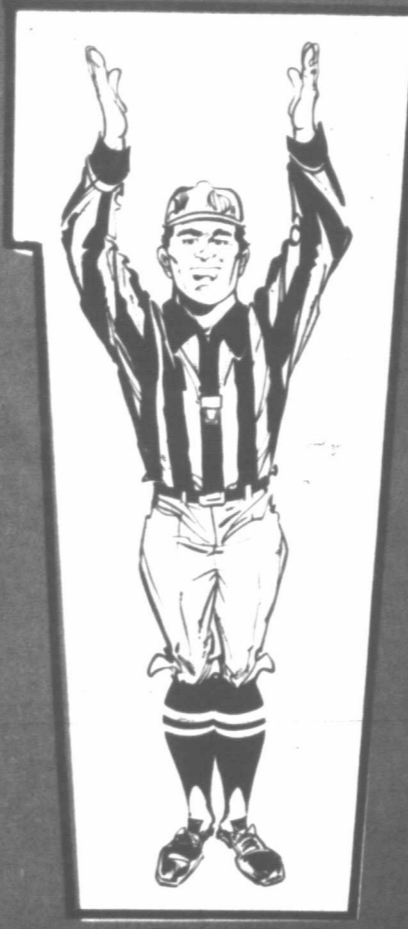
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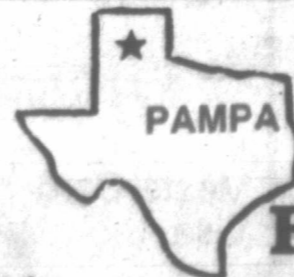
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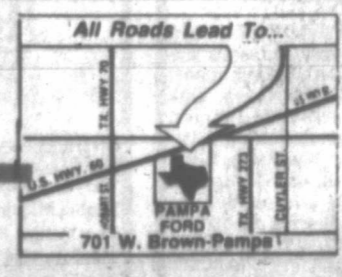
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