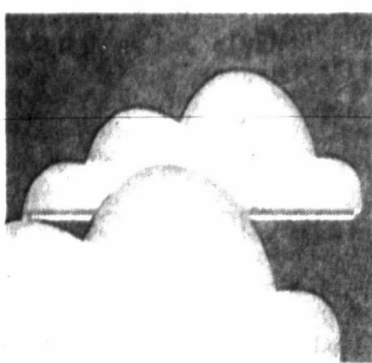


# THE PAMPA NEWS

VOL: 89 NO: 142

Pampa, Texas

50c DAILY/SUNDAY.\$1



Low tonight in upper 50s, high tomorrow in mid 70s. See Page 2 for weather details.

## LOCAL

**PAMPA** — The Pampa Independent School District will meet in regular session Thursday at 6 p.m. at Carver Center.

Items on the agenda include consideration of athletic program fund raisers, bids, second appraisers and teacher appraisal calendar, Internet policy and a resolution to reimburse the general operating fund for expenditures made prior to the issuance of bonds.

Administrative reports are expected to include special education inclusion program at Woodrow Wilson Elementary School, ESL/bilingual report, statewide teacher evaluation plan update, elementary facilities/architectural report construction timeline and Pampa High School telephone system.

Meetings are open to the public.

**BALTIMORE (AP)** — At night, lines of drug users form on city streets, ready to trade for drugs with unusual currency: packages of steak and ground beef.

In a growing trend in Baltimore, drug users shoplift meat from supermarkets, then give it to low-level dealers in exchange for drugs.

"Meat is becoming another kind of cash," said Southern District Lt. Barry Baker.

Law enforcement officials don't have statistics on how much meat moves through the drug trade, but police, community activists and grocers have noticed the trend.

Rylow Williams, a sheet metal worker, videotaped some of the meat-for-drugs deals on the street. He said some of the dealers take \$50 worth of steak for \$10 worth of crack.

The trend is particularly hard on supermarkets that sell large packages of ground beef, steak, or roast, retailing for \$25 or more.

**ATLANTIC CITY, N.J.** (AP) — Dial-a-beauty could not rescue the Miss America Pageant from its lowest television ratings in history.

The 2 1/2-hour NBC telecast drew a 13.1 rating, Nielsen Media Research reported Tuesday, meaning about 12.7 million homes tuned in for the 76th anniversary pageant, which featured a call-in poll for viewers.

In 1994, 13.6 million households tuned in, which to that point was the fewest since television began broadcasting the pageant in 1954.

NBC declined to comment on the showing. The pageant's chief executive officer was unfazed. "I'm pleased with the ratings," said Leonard Horn. "You wish they were higher, but you always wish that."

Classified .....10  
Comics .....8  
Editorial .....4  
Sports .....9

## High winds blow McLean stadium press box away

McLEAN — High winds are being blamed for the loss of a press box at the local high school football stadium early this morning.

"We still kind of have a hull of sorts ... [but] most of it we don't know where it is," Superintendent John Griffin said.

"It was something besides just a straight wind," Griffin said.

"I thought we were going to be blown away," Assistant City Secretary Toni Bohlar said. "Leaves blew plumb off all over town."

The National Weather Service in Amarillo reported three to four inches of rain in the McLean area and into northeast Wheeler County.

The Shamrock Police Department and storm spotters reported one-inch hail in the area, an NWS spokesman said.

Griffin and Bohlar reported broken windows around town, as well as rain-covered streets.

A concessionaire at Lake McClellan said golf-ball size hail and 2.75 inches of rain fell in the lake park area before midnight Tuesday.

"The creeks are running wide and fast this morning, at least 15 to 20 miles per hour, and because of the hail and high wind, the leaves have covered everything. I haven't found any major damage to anything I've seen this morning," Venita Roland said.

She said the boat ramp on the south side of the lake is about 20 feet under water this morning, and that the lake is filling up fast.

Roland said there were a few campers in the park area, one at the hook-up site, and one man was camping out on the island.

"But all are safe. ... The man on the island decided to come in last night because of the lightning," she said.

About six inches of rain was

recorded in west central Ochiltree County, and roads were covered in water, the NWS spokesman said.

The rains left portions of US Highway 83 at Wolf Creek Bridge under water and damaged.

"The Wolf Creek Bridge north of FM 281 is still standing, but the approaches to the bridge are under water and washed out," said Brice Nipp, assistant director of operations for the Amarillo District of the Texas Department of Transportation.

Because of the water damage to the roadway, US 83 was closed this morning between FM 281 and FM 2711. Traffic was detoured onto US 70 south of Perryton via FM 281. The road was expected to be closed for a few weeks.

"Heavy rains in the northeastern Panhandle counties left some roadways under water for hours last night," Nipp said. "Drivers should watch for water in low-lying areas, especially if we get some additional rain this week."

Scattered showers and thunderstorms danced across the Texas Panhandle region Tuesday night, with some strong storm warnings and flash flood watches issued.

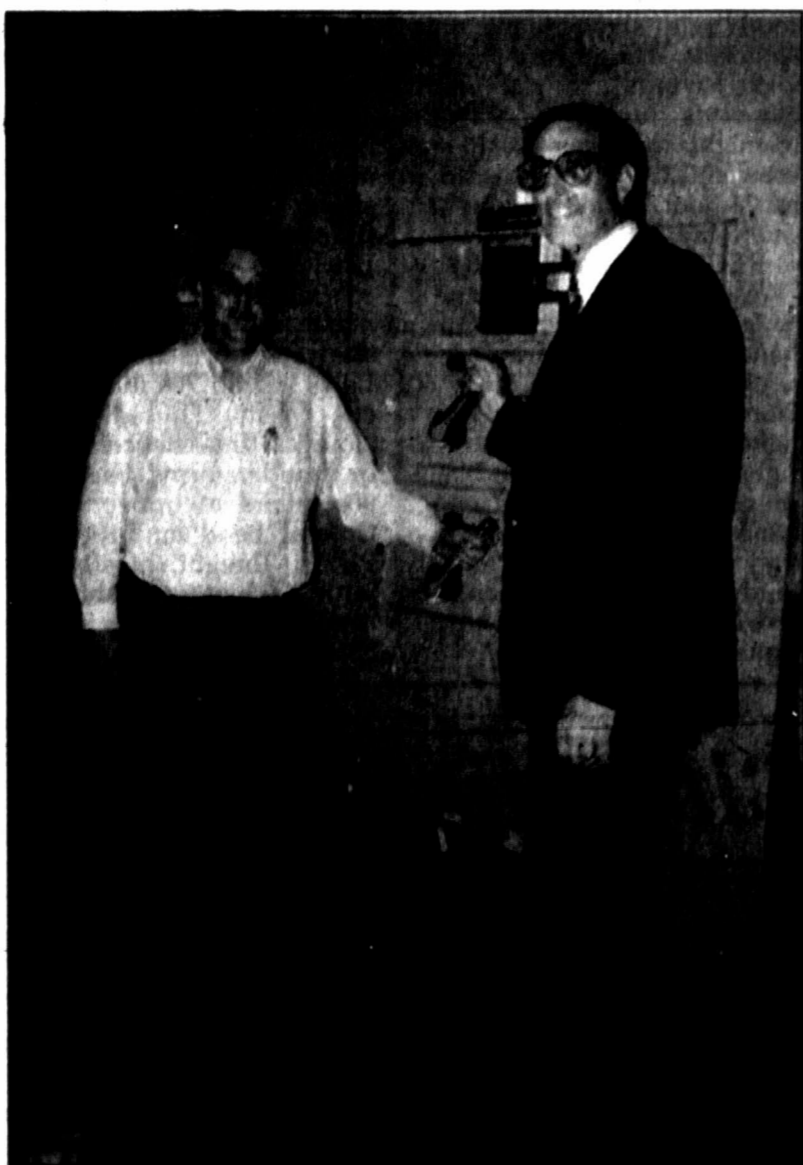
Pampa received 0.22 inch of rain in the 24-hour period ending at 6 a.m. today after a high Tuesday of 75.

Tonight's forecast calls for skies to become increasingly cloudy with another chance of showers and thunderstorms across the Panhandle area, some possibly severe.

Thursday will see mostly cloudy skies, with a slight chance for more showers.

The chance for showers and thunderstorms are in the forecast across most of Texas tonight through Thursday as moist air continues to dominate the skies.

## Cooling the school



(Pampa News photo by Darlene Holmes)

Pampa Middle School Principal Tim Powers and Pampa Independent School District Denver Bruner officially turn on the new air conditioning system at PMS Tuesday afternoon. The system was installed months ahead of schedule, Bruner said, adding that the high school's system should be working in about two weeks.

## See You at the Pole



(Pampa News photo by Cheryl Barzanaki)

Students gathered on two Pampa public school campuses today to pray for their schools, faculty and administrators as part of a nationwide "See You at the Pole" day of prayer. More than 350 youths gathered at Pampa High School (as seen in above photo) and Pampa Middle School for the event. "It's a big day for everyone through the world to come out and pray," said PHS 10th grader Ashleigh McWilliams. "I wanted to show I wasn't ashamed to pray and stand up for God." A youth rally "See You at the Pole" is set for 7 p.m. today at M.K. Brown Auditorium Heritage Room. Jeff Knowles, youth pastor at First United Methodist Church, is to speak.

## Rival Kurdish groups renew attacks; Iraqi radar still tracks U.S. warplanes

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Renewed attacks by rival Kurdish groups were reported today near the Iran-Iraq border, and the leader of one of those groups crossed into Turkey for talks with U.S. and Turkish officials.

A U.S. military spokesman in Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, said that Iraqi air defense systems have been tracking U.S. and allied warplanes patrolling "no-fly" zones, but that Baghdad has kept its promise not to fire on them.

Iraq has said it would stop firing on warplanes patrolling over northern and southern Iraq. However, they have continued to turn their radar systems on and off, said Lt. Col. Andrew Bourland.

"We merely picked up an indication that their systems were turned on," Bourland told the Associated Press from the Saudi capital, Riyadh. "We only experienced minor indications from Iraqi surface-to-air encampments which we don't consider

any significant threat."

Bourland refused to say when this had happened.

Iran claimed today that the Iraqi army and the allied Kurdistan Democratic Party shelled a refugee camp from the Iraqi side of the border, killing four Iraqi Kurdish refugees.

Three children were among those killed in the Siran Band refugee camp in northwestern Iran, according to Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency. Ten people were wounded, it said.

The report could not be independently confirmed. Journalists on the Iraqi side of the border have not seen any Iraqi forces in the area.

On the Iraqi side, residents said they came under attack Tuesday by Iran and its ally, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

Some residents fled shelling in the village of Qal'at Dizah near Raniyah, said Anwar Hadi Osman, the KDP commander in the area. They returned today.

Meanwhile, Kurdistan Democratic Party leader Massoud Barzani has declared his deal with Saddam Hussein was temporary and that it was now over. Barzani said he was forced to turn to the Iraqi leader after his rival, Jalal Talabani, allied with Iran in the power struggle for control of Kurdistan northern Iraq.

The crisis in Iraq began Aug. 31, when Saddam sent troops to help Barzani rout Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan from the de facto Kurdish state created in northern Iraq after the 1991 Persian Gulf War under the protection of a U.S.-led allied coalition force.

Washington responded by firing cruise missiles on military targets in southern Iraq on Sept. 3 and 4.

Turkey, fearful the power vacuum in northern Iraq will help its own autonomy-seeking Kurdish rebels, declared a security zone inside neighboring northern Iraq.

## No licenses revoked in area for child support

Though child support collections in Carson, Gray, Hemphill, and Wheeler counties were boosted by the threat of license suspension, not a single license was revoked in the four counties.

Alicia Terry, spokesman for the Office of Attorney General, said non-custodial parents in the counties apparently decided to catch up child support after receiving letters threatening them with license suspension if they failed to do so.

Collections in each county as a result of the license suspension program are:

• Carson - \$2,418.40

• Gray - \$35,566.56  
• Hemphill - \$811.93  
• Wheeler - \$5,175.21

Roberts County showed no child support collected under threat of license suspension, according to the AG's office.

According to Karen McGahen of the Gray County district clerk's office, January to August collections total \$1,216,739.40, compared to the first eight months of 1995 with collections totaling \$1,127,778.15.

However, McGahen said she could not determine if the \$88,961.25 increase was due to threat of license suspension because her records do not

show what portion of the increase is due to cases where the attorney general intervenes and which are simply new court orders for child support payments.

The child enforcement program of the Attorney General's office claimed \$33.2 million in collections during the first year of its license suspension program, surpassing its projected goal of \$20 million.

Morales suspended 208 licenses of 204 non-custodial parents who do not pay child support payments, according to his office. The majority of suspensions were driver's licenses.

## First troop contingent departs Fort Hood for Kuwait

FORT HOOD (AP) — Air Force Tech Sgt. Joe Wyatt spent the weekend waiting to join the troops in Kuwait.

"It's been emotional, being on-again, off-again, but we're always ready," said Wyatt, who was given final deployment orders Tuesday night, four days after 1st Cavalry Division soldiers were first told they would be sent overseas.

Wyatt was among some 3,000 Fort Hood troops poised for deployment to Kuwait as the Clinton administration contin-

ued its pressure on Iraq.

A chartered commercial jet carrying 219 1st Cavalry Division soldiers departed Fort Hood at 10 a.m. today as the first contingent to ship out.

Hundreds more troops were scheduled to leave later today; more departures were expected for the next several days.

The troops were scheduled to join 1,200 soldiers from Fort Hood already conducting exercises in Kuwait.

"I am sure the politicians are sending a message. But this is

just training for us," Wyatt said. Soldiers spent most of Tuesday getting last-minute briefings about their missions. Family members were to be allowed a final visit today.

Rebecca Phillips, of Murfreesboro, Tenn., said early today that she was anxious about the departure of her husband, Pfc. Fred Phillips.

"This is just training, but training usually lasts three months," she said. "Everything going on over there scares me real bad."



## Local cancer support group announces guest speaker

The Pampa Area Cancer Support Group will be having Phil Young, administrator of Columbia Medical Center of Pampa, as the guest speaker at its regular monthly meeting Thursday, Sept. 19.

The meeting will be from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the Columbia Medical Center's cafeteria. Kathy Gist, support group moderator, notes that this is not the regular meeting room the group has been using.

Columbia Medical Center of Pampa provides a meeting room each month, she said. In the past, meetings have been held in the Medical Building conference room, but this month's meeting will be in the cafeteria, she advised members.

"Health care is a primary concern for many of us. Now we will have a chance to learn first hand about the future directions for the hospital under the new administration," Gist said.

Following the program, a brief reception will be held to give people a chance to meet Young and also to get acquainted with each other. Refreshments will be served, Gist said.



Phil Young

"The public is always welcome and each person is encouraged to bring guests," said Emily W. Washington, vice moderator for the support group.

Anyone needing more information on the support group may call Washington at 669-7619 or Gist at 665-4742.

## State senator says tax relief a thorny issue to overcome

AUSTIN (AP) — There's a "good chance" the 1997 Legislature will seek to provide relief from local school property taxes. But replacing the \$10 billion a year they now raise will be tough, a top lawmaker says.

"I don't know what the odds are that we can totally replace the local school property tax. I think that is a huge undertaking," said Sen. Bill Ratliff, R-Mount Pleasant. Ratliff, the newly appointed chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, said Tuesday that there's no simple answer to Gov. George W. Bush's call for replacing school property taxes.

"When you shift a tax burden from one set of payers to another, you can call it reform. The people whose taxes go up don't consider that reform," he said.

The Republican governor has said he believes property taxes have reached a crisis. A Bush-appointed study committee this week will wrap up a series of statewide public hearings on possible alternatives.

Ratliff said those hearings had "generated more heat than light" because "we're not getting a lot of truly constructive suggestions, other than a few people who are brave enough to suggest an income tax."

Bush already has ruled out creating a personal income tax.

An earlier group of gubernatorial and legislative experts suggested three possible options:

— Widening or raising the state's 6.25 percent sales tax.

— Implementing a gross receipts tax that would require businesses to pay a tax on all the money they take in.

— Creating a business activity tax, which would be levied on the difference between a business's sales and its costs.

Each option creates problems, Ratliff said.

While businesses so far have favored raising the sales tax, the senator said that's "not a good prospect." With local sales taxes

are added on, some Texans already pay 8.25 percent, among the nation's highest sales tax rates.

To replace local school property taxes, the sales tax rate would have to go up to 14.5 percent, Ratliff said in a speech to the Austin Rotary Club.

Do that, he said, and many Texas businesses would fail because "anybody within 100 miles of a border ... would be driving 100 miles to buy durable goods or anything that costs anything."

Some suggest expanding the sales levy, but Ratliff said that's not very practical, either. Items not now taxed include groceries, medicine, medical services and agricultural products.

"While Texas is not quite as agrarian a state as it once was, when we start talking about a sales tax when a person sells a bull ... Texas is still a pretty agrarian state."

Ratliff said the trouble with the proposed business taxes is that each would fall too heavily on some businesses while letting others off the hook.

"Every business ought to carry its fair share of the load," he said. "If you just go with one of these options ... you're going to literally crush some businesses. A wholesale grocer has a margin, it's my understanding, of about 1 (percent) to 1.5 percent. If you levy a gross receipts tax of 1.75 percent, he's in pretty bad shape."

## Locke, Craswell champs of gubernatorial primary

SEATTLE (AP) — Democrat Gary Locke, son of Chinese immigrants and head of Washington's largest county, faces Republican Ellen Craswell, leader of the state's Christian conservatives, in the race to become governor.

Locke was the top vote-getter Tuesday in a crowded primary in which voters, regardless of party, could choose any of the 15 candidates on the ballot.

Locke won the Democratic nomination with 24 percent of the vote to defeat Seattle Mayor Norm Rice, who finished second with 18 percent.

The GOP nomination went to Craswell, who got 15 percent of the vote, edging out state House Majority Leader Dale Foreman, who received 14 percent.

The winner in November succeeds Gov. Mike Lowry, who abandoned his re-election bid after a female aide accused him of sexual harassment.

Locke, 46, is seeking to become the country's first Asian-American governor outside of Hawaii. After growing up poor in a Seattle housing project, he went to Yale University on a scholarship and then spent eleven years in the state Legislature before taking over leadership of King County, which covers Seattle and its suburbs, three years ago.

He drew headlines for demanding that the owners of the NFL's Seattle Seahawks honor their long-term Kingdome lease.

Washington state, which is 89 percent white and has an Asian population of about six percent, has never elected a minority to statewide office. Rice was seeking to become the state's first black governor.

Craswell, 64, is bidding to become the state's second woman governor. The first was Dixy Lee Ray in 1976; Ray lost a bid for a second term four years later.

Craswell, a former state senator

who has vowed to hire only "wise and godly" people, is an outspoken foe of abortion and big government. She has proposed deep spending cuts and a rollback of the state's business and property taxes.

She rejected claims that she's too conservative to win in November.

"We are seeing where the mainstream of this party is," Craswell said after her victory.

All the candidates spent a total of nearly \$5.1 million on the primary, which is one of the latest of the season and gives nominees just seven weeks to campaign in the general election.

In other voting Tuesday:

—In Massachusetts, former federal and state human services official Philip W. Johnston and Norfolk County District Attorney William D. Delahunt appeared headed for a recount in the Democratic primary to succeed retiring U.S. Rep. Gerry Studds.

Johnston led Delahunt by just 204 votes with 99 percent of precincts reporting.

Only the town of Oak Bluffs on Martha's Vineyard had not reported its vote. The town clerk, Diane R. Kenney, went to bed Tuesday night and would not be available until today, her son said.

State House Minority Leader Edward B. Teague III won the GOP nomination with 69 percent of the vote, defeating Francis W. Sargent Jr., son of former Gov. Frank Sargent.

Studds, the first openly gay congressman in the country, announced last fall that he would not seek re-election after 12 terms.

—In Oklahoma, state Sen. Darryl Roberts easily won the Democratic primary runoff in the 3rd Congressional District, setting up a battle with ex-Congressman Wes Watkins, who represented the district for 14 years as a Democrat but is now running as a Republican.

## Samples reveal aflatoxin in grain sorghum crops

COLLEGE STATION — Officials figured there would be aflatoxin in corn this year, they just didn't know how much. Now routine samples have discovered the toxin in another feed crop — grain sorghum.

"I didn't believe it," said Dr. George Latimer, Texas state chemist, after his lab found sorghum with as high as 400 parts per billion. "But the levels have been confirmed by independent labs."

"We're finding that the sorghum crop has a fair amount of aflatoxin, enough that people can't blindly substitute sorghum for corn," he said. "Everyone should be testing sorghum as well as cottonseed and corn."

Weather is a major determining

factor in causing the buildup of aflatoxin, a carcinogen, in grain. Aflatoxin is produced by a fungus which, in addition to corn and sorghum, also may attack peanuts and cottonseed. It often takes up residence in kernels of corn that have suffered through a droughty growing season.

Ironically, the drought this year started the problem, but it has been recent rains, Latimer said, that led to the problem in sorghum because new shoots are producing immature grains that are being harvested with the rest of the field.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration set maximum levels for aflatoxin contamination according to these guidelines: 20

parts per billion for food for humans and feed for some animal species; 0.5 ppb in milk; 300 ppb for feedlot cattle; 200 ppb for market hogs; and 100 ppb for breeding cattle, breeding hogs and mature poultry.

Latimer, whose state chemist office is a part of the Texas Agriculture Experiment Station, said corn and sorghum from 11 countries have been analyzed. Results on corn have found aflatoxin as expected but not in as high levels as agricultural officials had suspected.

"We aren't finding terrific levels (in corn) but large number of the samples have more than 20 ppb — more so than in recent years," Latimer said.

The state chemist office has

found about 80 percent of the corn samples thus far have 20-300 ppb, but few have more than 300 ppb, so most of the corn can find come markets.

One of the sorghum samples, however, already has tested 400 ppb, Latimer noted, whereas normally Texas sorghum is 30-50 ppb in a bad year. Much of this year's sorghum is testing out 70-80 ppb, he said.

The state chemist's office in the past has sampled only about 50 units a year — compared to 600 samples of corn — and normally only one of those samples may have an aflatoxin problem.

Latimer said his office plans to increase the level of sorghum testing as the harvest season moves northward.

## Texas A&M showing promise in solving aflatoxin problem

COLLEGE STATION — Aflatoxin research at Texas A&M University is showing promise in solving this age-old problem.

A biotechnological approach may be the answer that researchers have been looking for, according to Dr. Nancy Keller, plant pathologist with the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station.

Aflatoxin is a fungus that infects corn, cotton, peanuts and other crops. About a third of the Texas corn crop was lost to it last year, Keller said.

Texas A&M researchers have identified the genes in the fungus that are responsible for making aflatoxin. The next step is locating the genes that turn the fungus off, Keller said.

"We'll now be able to clone the aflatoxin genes in the fungus itself and ask, 'How do

these genes turn on and off?' By understanding how they turn on and off, we should be able to develop a rational control strategy to permanently keep them off," she said.

Now she'll take that gene and breed into aflatoxin-susceptible plants.

"That takes some time itself in transforming these crops, but it's an eventuality and we've had success, so we'll know it will work," Keller said.

If eaten in large doses, aflatoxin can cause liver cancer in humans and animals.

For the past 30 years, control strategies for the fungus have included finding resistant lines of corn and crops while also changing cultural practices such as irrigation.

"We know that aflatoxin is associated with drought and stress, so it's a very warm-lov-

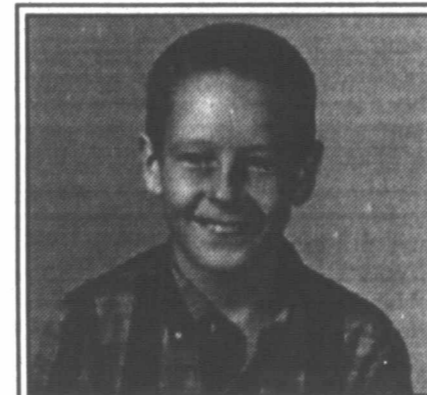
ing fungus," she said.

If there is too much aflatoxin found in a crop in the United States, it is either destroyed or it is detoxified with ammonia. "That's a big economic loss to the producer," she said.

"If an animal should get it, then of course, you'd have the losses due to sickness and/or death," Keller said.

In developing countries, it's a greater problem because they don't have the means to destroy the crops that have it. There is strong evidence that aflatoxin is the leading cause of liver cancer in Africa and China.

Additionally, aflatoxin is a trade barrier as well. "It's the only micro-toxin in the world on which every country has levied international sanctions," she said.



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## New releases debut in top five, box office attendance continues to slump

By LYNN ELBER  
AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) - Two Columbia Pictures films debuted in the No. 1 and No. 2 spots at the box office, but success came too late to save the studio's chief.

The Jean-Claude Van Damme thriller *Maximum Risk* opened in first place with \$5.6 million. *Fly Away Home*, starring young Oscar-winner Anna Paquin as surrogate mom to a flock of orphaned geese, was second with \$4.7 million.

Columbia TriStar Motion Pictures' Cos. Chairman Mark Canton was fired on Friday after a string of summer flops, including *The Cable Guy*.

Also debuting in the top ten was *The Rich Man's Wife*, a thriller starring Halle Berry, which landed in the No. 5 spot with \$3.1 million. Another newcomer, the Keanu Reeves film *Feeling Minnesota*, finished 12th with \$1.6 million.

Rounding out the top five were *Bulletproof*, which earned \$4.1 million for third place, followed by *Tin Cup* (\$3.3 million).

The low grosses were typical of the post-Labor Day period, said John Krier of Exhibitor Relations Co., which tracks receipts. He cited such factors as the start of school and the new TV season.

Warner Bros. had no complaints about the weekend or the summer: *A Time to Kill* became the third Warner release in a row to pass \$100 million, following *Twister* and *Eraser*.

The top 20 movies at North American theaters Friday through Monday, followed by studio, gross, number of theater locations, receipts per location, total gross and number of weeks in release, as compiled by

BOX OFFICE	
Top weekend movies	
Weekend of Sept. 13-15, 1996	
All dollar figures in millions	
Gross to date, weeks in release, number of screens	Weekend gross
1. <b>Maximum Risk</b> \$5.6, one week, 2,358 screens	\$5.6
2. <b>Fly Away Home</b> \$4.7, one week, 1,320 screens	\$4.7
3. <b>Bulletproof</b> \$4.1, two weeks, 2,242 screens	\$4.1
4. <b>Tin Cup</b> \$3.3, five weeks, 1,930 screens	\$3.3
5. <b>The Rich Man's Wife</b> \$3.1, one week, 1,006 screens	\$3.13
6. <b>First Kid</b> \$3.1, three weeks, 1,873 screens	\$3.11
7. <b>A Time to Kill</b> \$2.8, eight weeks, 1,836 screens	\$2.8
8. <b>The Spitfire Grill</b> \$2.4, one week, 1,247 screens	\$2.4
9. <b>Independence Day</b> \$2.1, 11 weeks, 1,511 screens	\$2.1
10. <b>Jack</b> \$2.0, six weeks, 1,879 screens	\$2.0

Source: Exhibitor Relations Co., Inc. AP

Exhibitor Relations Co. Inc.:

1. *Maximum Risk*, Columbia, \$5.6 million, 2,358 locations, \$2,380 average, \$5.6 million, one week.
2. *Fly Away Home*, Columbia, \$4.7 million, 1,320 locations, \$3,567 average, \$4.7 million, one week.
3. *Bulletproof*, Universal, \$4.1 million, 2,242 locations, \$1,830 average, \$11.9 million, two weeks.
4. *Tin Cup*, Warner Bros., \$3.3 million, 1,930 locations, \$1,724 average, \$46.7 million, five weeks.
5. *The Rich Man's Wife*, Buena Vista, \$3.1 million, 1,006 locations, \$3,113 average, \$3.1 million, one week.
6. *First Kid*, Buena Vista, \$3.1 million, 1,873 locations, \$1,662

average, \$17.4 million, three weeks.

7. *A Time to Kill*, Warner Bros., \$2.8 million, 1,836 locations, \$1,546 average, \$101 million, eight weeks.

8. *The Spitfire Grill*, Columbia, \$2.4 million, 1,247 locations, \$1,951 average, \$7.5 million, three weeks.

9. *Independence Day*, Fox, \$2.1 million, 1,511 locations, \$1,366 average, \$288 million, 11 weeks.

10. *Jack*, Buena Vista, \$2 million, 1,879 locations, \$1,070 average, \$52 million, six weeks.

11. *A Very Brady Sequel*, Paramount, \$1.9 million, 1,710 locations, \$1,122 average, \$20 million, four weeks.

12. *Feeling Minnesota*, Fine Line, \$1.6 million, 869 locations, \$1,839 average, \$1.6 million, one week.

13. *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, New Line, \$1.5 million, 1,697 locations, \$874 average, \$24.7 million, four weeks.

14. *Emma*, Miramax, \$1.5 million, 848 locations, \$1,742 average, \$18 million, seven weeks.

15. *The Nutty Professor*, Universal, \$1.1 million, 853 locations, \$1,325 average, \$122.6 million, 12 weeks.

16. *Bogus*, Warner Bros., \$1 million, 1,209 locations, \$831 average, \$3.4 million, two weeks.

17. *She's the One*, Fox, \$908,000, 447 locations, \$2,032 average, \$7.6 million, four weeks.

18. *The Crow: City of Angels*, Miramax, \$898,000, 1,469 locations, \$611 average, \$15.8 million, three weeks.

19. *Mission: Impossible*, Paramount, \$710,000, 598 locations, \$1,188 average, \$180 million, 17 weeks.

20. *Trainspotting*, Miramax, \$617,000, 332 locations, \$1,859 average, \$13 million, nine weeks.

## Twelfth Texas Tech president stresses necessity of funds to higher education

LUBBOCK (AP) - Texas Tech President Donald R. Haragan has turned an eye toward the future now that the "interim" part of his title is a thing of the past.

"Our No. 1 priority has to be the capital campaign and getting it off to a good start," said Haragan, whose expected appointment as 12th president of the 24,000-student university came Monday.

Chancellor John T. Montford also tapped Dr. David R. Smith, the state's health commissioner, as the president of Tech's medical school.

Haragan stressed that university officials, particularly Montford, are concerned with stimulating the school's endowment fund. For Texas Tech to continue to compete, he said, the school roughly needs to quadruple its current \$125 million fund by the turn of the century.

Endowment money would pay for new academic chairs and professorships, but Haragan said his focus will be on scholarship gifts.

"We've done a really good job for scholarships for the very highest level," he said. "We haven't done as good a job for the group right below that."

Sentiment for a plump endowment appears universally favorable on the Lubbock campus.

"Obviously, the faculty is hopeful and cautiously optimistic," said Faculty Senate President John Howe said, adding that he and other professors

supported hiring Haragan from within after Haragan came to Tech in 1969 as an assistant professor of geosciences. He had held a number of posts, including executive vice president and provost of Texas Tech since 1988. He was named interim president after his predecessor, Robert W. Lawless, became president of the University of Tulsa in February.

"My wife and I made a decision a long time ago that this was the place we wanted to be," Haragan said. "Many academics' loyalties lie with their disciplines rather than their university, but that's not the case with me."

The Texas Tech board of regents created the chancellorship in April in a rearrangement of the school's hierarchy. Haragan and Smith will handle the day-to-day operations of their schools and report to Montford, a former state senator who was hired last month.

Student Association President Geoff Wayne described Haragan's interim tenure as being more open to student concerns than Lawless' reign, and Wayne said he expects that will continue.

"I think it's a great step, and I think it's what most of the faculty and staff wanted," Wayne said. "It brings something to the office we haven't had in awhile."

## September designated as Destination Dignity Month

AMARILLO - Gov. George W. Bush has designated September as Destination Dignity Month.

Destination Dignity Month is an initiative of the Texas Council of Community Mental Health and Mental Retardation Centers Inc., a statewide association of community MHMR centers. The purpose is to promote dignity and quality of life for persons with mental disabilities and to increase public awareness of the services provided by local community MHMR centers.

There are 37 MHMR centers in Texas.

Texas Panhandle Mental Health Authority is sponsoring an Art Exhibition and Reception on Thursday, Sept. 19, from 3-5 p.m. to celebrate Destination Dignity Month at Casa Manana Clubhouse, 1501 S. Polk, Amarillo.

TPHMA serves the upper 21 counties of the Texas Panhandle with mental health services for adults and children. Artists from each of TPHMA's Panhandle Centers will be participating in this exhibit. The public is invited to attend this event.

TPHMA's Mission is to respond to the diverse needs of

all people with mental illness by creating an accessible system of services which supports individual choices and results in lives of dignity and independence.

For additional information on the Art Exhibition and Destination Dignity Month, contact Sara Northrup or Gary Fox at 806-374-4892.



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## Exhibition highlights blind foundation's heritage

DALLAS (AP) - Retired Dallas banker Harold Shannon exemplifies the determined spirit of the museum exhibition where he is a volunteer guide.

Despite the mists growing thicker each day over his already limited vision, Shannon, 68, continues to golf, fix things around the house by touch and live pretty much as he did before macular degeneration began destroying his sight 13 years ago.

He brings perhaps the ideal perspective to "Inspiration and Innovation," the American Foundation for the Blind's traveling exhibition highlighting its 75 anniversary and alliance with Helen Keller.

"I thought she was remarkable,

just absolutely remarkable, that anybody could do this," said Shannon, who was 27 when Miss Keller won an Academy Award for best documentary on the story of her life in 1955.

Keller's golden Oscar - along with a volume of her well-loved Braille Bible, a bronze cast of her famous hands, her presidential Medal of Freedom and other mementos - are on view through Oct. 27 at The Science Place in Dallas.

Also on display are examples of the technology that blind and deaf-and-blind people like Keller have used for decades to ease their integration in a seeing world. Keller traveled worldwide as a representative for the

American Foundation for the Blind for 44 years before her death in 1968.

Shannon shows visitors an electronic reader that scans documents and reads them aloud in a robot-like voice adjustable to different speeds.

"A friend of mine listens to it like this," Shannon says, turning the dial to garble speed. "Really, he's used to it."


Large-print panels describe how life for the blind has evolved since the foundation's early years: "Not All Blind People Sell Pencils," states one sign, next to photographs of vision-impaired professionals in law, computers, academia and sportscasting.

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# Researchers: Millions of Americans don't cultivate habit of washing hands after visiting the restroom

By DANIEL Q. HANEY  
AP Medical Editor

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A group of researchers has discovered a dirty little secret: Millions of Americans routinely don't wash their hands after using the john.

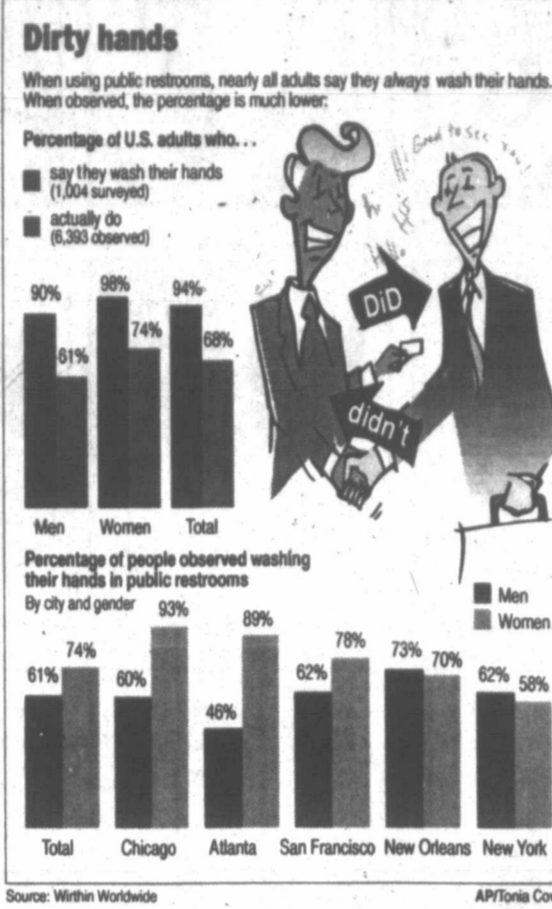
The situation has gotten so bad, contends the American Society for Microbiology, that it has teamed up with a drug company to teach people how and when to wash.

"Hand washing in this country has become all but a lost art," said Dr. Michael T. Osterholm, the Minnesota state epidemiologist and head of the society's public health committee.

The unsettling news was gathered by watching people in public restrooms. The researchers hid in stalls or pretended to comb their hair while observing 6,333 men and women do their business in five cities last month.

The public health campaign, dubbed "Operation Clean Hands," includes such tips as: Use warm running water and rub your hands together for at least ten to 15 seconds — about how long it takes to sing one chorus of *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, Osterholm notes.

Another hint: use soap. The survey was sponsored by the microbiology society, the country's largest organization of microbe experts, and Bayer Corp., the aspirin maker. The figures were gathered by Wirthlin Worldwide, a survey



firm, and released Monday at the society's annual infectious-disease conference.

Among the results:  
— The country's dirtiest hands may be in New York City. Just 60 percent of those

using restrooms in Penn Station washed up afterwards.

— In Chicago, hands are reasonably clean, relatively speaking. The watchers saw 78 percent take the time to wash after using the bathroom at the Navy Pier.

— Seventy-one percent washed up at a casino in New Orleans, 69 percent at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco and 64 percent at a Braves game in Atlanta.

— Women are cleaner than men. The survey found 74 percent wash after using the toilet, compared with 61 percent of men. Only in New York and New Orleans did men use soap and water slightly more often than women.

— The most slovenly men were at the Braves game. Just 46 percent of the guys stopped to wash, compared with 89 percent of female fans.

Dirty hands are an extremely common way to spread diseases, ranging from common colds to a variety of bugs that cause diarrhea and other digestive unpleasantness. In restaurants, one food handler with dirty hands can make dozens of patrons sick.

People probably know better. Wirthlin also did a telephone survey last month of what people had to say about their hand-washing habits. Of 1,004 adults, 94 percent claimed they always wash up after using public restrooms.

The survey, which had a margin of error of plus or minus five percent, also found that about 80 percent contend they wash after changing a diaper and before eating or handling food.

# Nixon vice president Spiro T. Agnew dies at seventy-seven

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (AP) — Spiro T. Agnew, a nationally obscure governor who rose to become Richard Nixon's vice president on the strength of his die-hard conservatism before resigning in disgrace in 1973, died at age 77.

Agnew was taken Tuesday afternoon to Atlantic General Hospital in Berlin, where he died. Hospital officials refused to release details of his death.

Picked by Nixon as his running mate in 1968, Agnew established himself as a national political force by employing a colorful phraseology in criticizing anti-war protesters, liberals and the media.

"We speak of the Ronald Reagan revolution. ... Spiro Agnew was the John the Baptist for that revolution," said Victor Gold, who was Agnew's campaign press secretary in 1972.

His most famous lines came in a 1970 speech, when he attacked the news media as "nattering nabobs of negativism" and "the hopeless, hysterical hypochondriacs of history."

But Agnew's meteoric six-year rise from county government to Maryland governor to vice president came to abrupt halt in October 1973, when he pleaded no contest to a single count of income-tax evasion and resigned.

He served President Nixon well. And the misfortunes that came his way should be allowed to die with him," said Helen Bentley, a former Republican congresswoman from Maryland and Agnew's friend.

Feeling that Nixon had sacrificed him in order to mollify Watergate critics, Agnew withdrew from political life, working as a businessman and splitting time between homes in Ocean City, Md., and Rancho Mirage, Calif.

In May 1995, he made a rare public appearance, attending a ceremony at the U.S. Senate chamber as his bust was installed among the likenesses of other former vice presidents.

"I'm not blind or deaf to the fact that there are those who feel this is a ceremony that should not take place," Agnew said at the time.

Only one other vice president — John C. Calhoun, who had a political split with President Andrew Jackson — was forced to resign from office. Agnew's was the first resignation stemming from legal problems.

In court, Agnew did not contest the government's charge that he "willfully" evaded paying \$13,551.47 in federal income taxes in 1967. Judge Walter E. Hoffman fined him \$10,000 and sentenced him to three years' unsupervised probation.

## Two prisoners shot by police while escaping

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Police shot to death two of nine prisoners who tried to flee a prison in southern Mexico City, the attorney general's office for the capital said Tuesday.

The office said one policeman, a jailer and the driver of the cab in which the prisoners had hoped to escape were wounded in the Tuesday morning break.

The government news agency Notimex said the prisoners had a submachine gun and four pistols.

One of the captured escapees told authorities that a man identified as Juan Velazquez Ortiz smuggled the weapons into the prison in the Xochimilco area on the southern edge of the capital last Thursday on family visiting day.

One of the nine, Jose Luis Ixtolique, who was captured, had escaped twice before from the same prison, Notimex said.

Of the nine, two failed to get outside the compound, two were killed, two wounded and three were captured nearby.

## World briefs

Lisbon Port Authority officials were trying to decide Tuesday how to dispose of the huge mammal.

"Burying it on land would be very complicated," said Port Cmdr. Dias Cruz. "It could be given to a museum, which could use its skeleton."

The last time a whale entered the Tagus River estuary was 16 years ago.

## Russian President Yeltsin to remain hospitalized

MOSCOW (AP) — Boris Yeltsin's stay in the Kremlin hospital has been extended, possibly until the end of the week, while he undergoes tests in preparation for heart surgery.

Yeltsin, 65, has been in the Central Clinical Hospital since Friday night, when he was admitted without public announcement.

He met there Tuesday with Prime Minister Viktor

Chernomyrdin. In brief footage shown without sound on Russian television, a smiling Yeltsin shook the prime minister's hand and gestured as they sat talking.

Presidential spokesman Sergei Yastrzhembsky insisted Tuesday that Yeltsin was only undergoing routine tests ahead of bypass surgery. The date of the operation has not been set.

"I don't see any big problem here at all because a checkup is going on, along with some precise analysis," Yastrzhembsky

said at a Kremlin news conference.

"As far as his health is concerned, according to doctors, there's been progress," the spokesman said.

The Kremlin initially said Yeltsin would be in the hospital through last weekend, and the stay already had been extended once. Yastrzhembsky said Tuesday the president would remain at least two more days and perhaps through the end of the week.

## Whale dies after being dragged by luxury liner

LISBON, Portugal (AP) — A 54-foot fin whale became stuck in the bulbous bow of a luxury liner, was dragged into an estuary and died, port officials said Tuesday.

The Cunard Queen Elizabeth II docked in Lisbon early Monday with the 15-ton whale jammed into its bow. By the time port officials lifted it out of the water with a crane late Monday, the whale had died from its wounds.

"This is a very rare occurrence indeed," Bill Spears, a spokesman for Cunard, said Tuesday from New York.

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With cooler temperatures just around the corner, here are a few reminders from your friends at Energas Company on the safe and responsible use of natural gas where you live.

**Your furnace needs an annual check-up.**  
Your natural gas furnace has been sitting quietly all summer, waiting for the time it's really needed. And like anything that's been idle a while, your furnace needs a check-up before it starts back to work. You may want to check with your landlord or apartment manager about arranging for an annual inspection by a qualified professional heating contractor. Once it's been inspected, your furnace should require very little attention the rest of the winter.

**A closet isn't always a closet.**  
Your water heater or furnace is probably in a closet all by itself. And that's the way it should stay. As tempting as it may be, don't use the space around a water heater or furnace for storage. Even if these major appliances sit in the open, the space around them should be kept clear to insure adequate air circulation.

**If you smell gas.**  
We hope that you will never have to deal with a gas leak. If you do smell gas, day or night, exit the building then call your local Energas office immediately. Do not flip light switches or use any other electrical equipment. Do not light a match or a candle. Do not try to find the leak yourself.

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## Straightforward Declaration Helps Teens Say No To Sex

**DEAR READERS:** Last Wednesday I devoted my column to a third in a series of responses I received from readers when I asked them to tell me how they successfully say no to sex. Today we'll hear from the teen-agers:



**Abigail Van Buren**  
SYNDICATED COLUMNIST

**DEAR ABBY:** I'm a 13-year-old girl, and I, too, am being pressured to have sex. The boy has been my best friend for as long as I can remember. I know I should wait, but it's hard to say no. I tell him, "Being a teen-ager is tough enough. I don't want to risk STDs or getting pregnant." Girls shouldn't have sex until they're ready to commit. It makes life too complicated. I'm signing my name, but please don't print it.

WANTS TO WAIT,  
PUYALLUP, WASH.

**DEAR ABBY:** I'm only 13, and I said no before the guy even asked me. I told him, "I'm too young and I'm not planning on having sex until I'm married." With AIDS out there, that's a good plan to me, and I encourage other teen-agers to wait.

13-YEAR-OLD IN MILWAUKEE

**DEAR ABBY:** I'm a 16-year-old virgin. I have been asked several times if I would have sex. I asked each boy, "If I was to get pregnant, how would you deal with it? Would you drop everything to support the baby?"

A lot of girls I know think they'll

lose their guy if they say no. I say, if that's how it is, what do they think he'll do when he hears they're pregnant or have a disease? My position is: When I know my baby will be brought up in a loving home with the help of a good father; that's the day I'll take that leap — and not before.

CARRIE FROM  
KNOXVILLE, TENN.

**DEAR ABBY:** I'm a teen-aged girl getting ready to enter college, and I've had plenty of experience saying no. The most important thing to remember when you say no is to really mean it. Be completely serious, and if you have to, leave the location. You'd be surprised how many guys understand when you say no.

This is probably what your parents and teachers have already told you. It's all true; it really works. But only if you speak plainly. At the risk of sounding like a mother: If a guy doesn't stick

around after you say no, he was probably only after sex in the first place.

SAYING NO IN HAMPTON, VA.

**DEAR ABBY:** My ex-boyfriend asked me for sex on many occasions, and every time I had the same answer: "No." How did I do it? By sticking up for myself and what I believe in; by knowing I didn't have to if I didn't want to; by realizing I was not prepared for such an intimate relationship; and by asking myself, "Do I really want this?"

Some advice for other teens like me: If you're doing it for him, because he supposedly wants to show his love for you, don't even think about it. Don't sacrifice yourself for his satisfaction. It's not worth it.

Now some advice for parents: Please, talk to your daughters about sex. Tell them they don't need to do it with a guy to prove their love. We need your assurance more than anything. You may use my name.

DAISY YOKLEY

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more attractive person, order "How to Be Popular." Send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$3.95 (\$4.50 in Canada) to: Dear Abby Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, Ill. 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)

## Horoscope



Thursday Sept 19, 1996

In the year ahead, try to join organizations which are related to your career. You might make important contacts which will help you at work and in social circles.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)** You will have a mental aptitude for solving perplexing problems today, but you might not utilize your ideas as promptly as you should. Know where to look for romance and you'll find it. The Astro-Graph Matchmaker instantly reveals which signs are romantically perfect for you. Mail \$2.75 to Matchmaker, c/o this newspaper, P.O. Box 1758, Murray Hill Station,

New York, NY 10156

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)** Money-making tips from insiders should be taken with a grain of salt today. Some of what they say might have value, but the rest could be just talk.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22)** Involve yourself in enjoyable diversions today, but don't blow your whole allowance just to have one fun day or one brief fling.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21)** Guard against the inclination to dominate conversations with friends today. Even though you will have a lot to say, try to give others a chance.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)** An ambitious objective will have a better chance of being fulfilled today if you reveal your intentions to people who are involved directly.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 19)** Strive to be an attentive listener today, especially with a friend who frequently bores you to tears. This person may want to share important information.

**PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20)** When discussing a serious matter with another

today, keep the conversation on track. If you veer off toward irrelevant issues, you will not accomplish your objective.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19)** Anyone who works for you today must be provided with concise, clear-cut instructions. Unclear directives will result in a poor performance.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20)** An associate might suggest making a revision to your present plans. Consider his or her suggestions, because these ideas could be superior to yours.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20)** Keep a tight lid on abrasive family topics today. Try to steer the discussion in a direction that will please everyone.

**CANCER (June 21-July 22)** This will be a good day to make an unplanned visit to friends you haven't seen recently. You will be received warmly, but take care not to overstay your welcome.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)** Today, it could be little things that will put you in the profit or loss column, so make sure to pay attention to every detail.

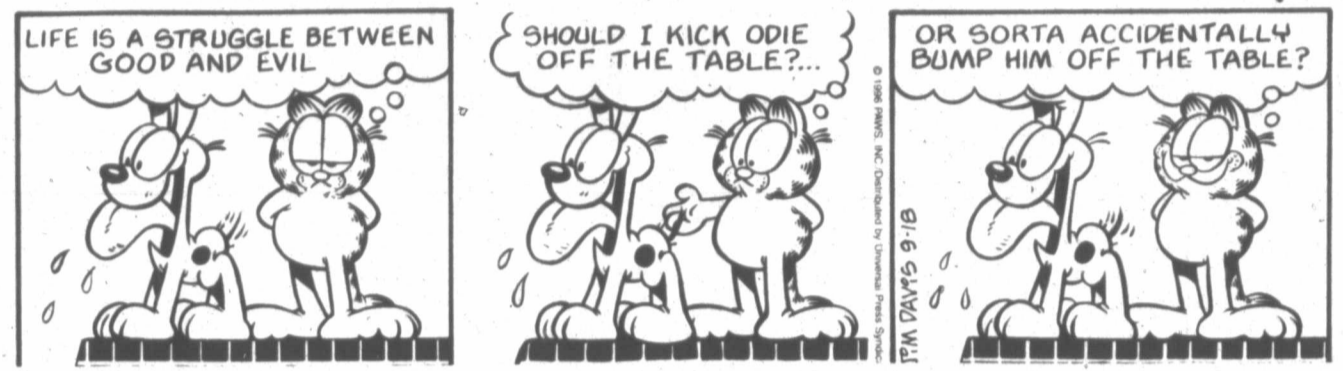
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For Better or For Worse



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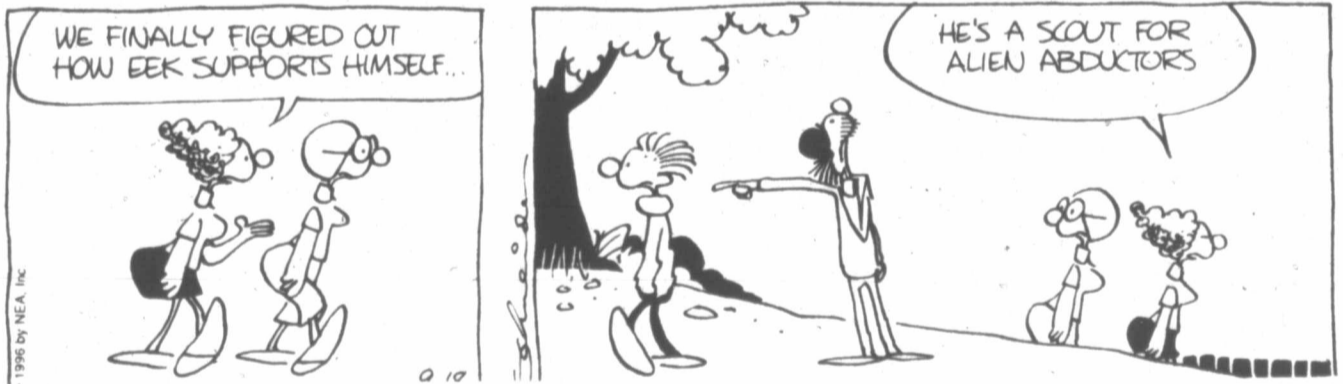
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Marvin



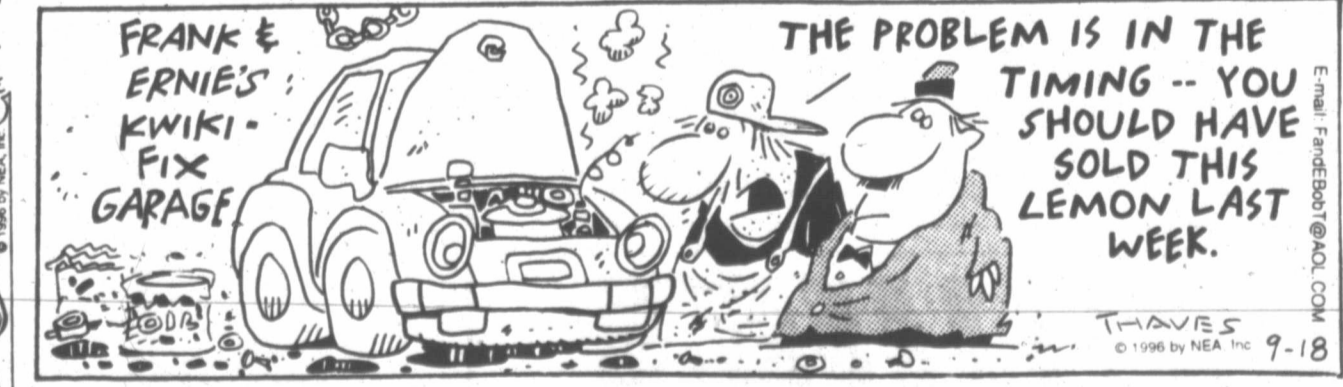
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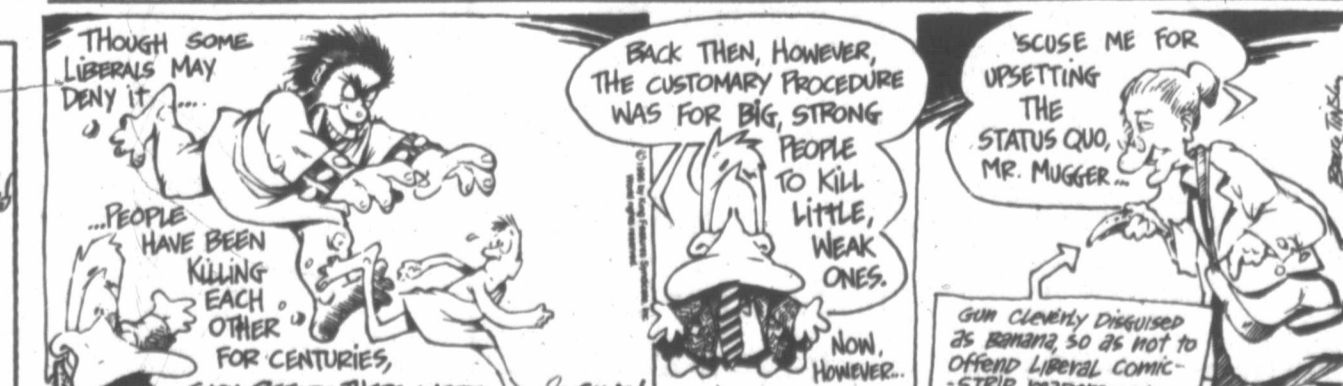
Eek & Meek



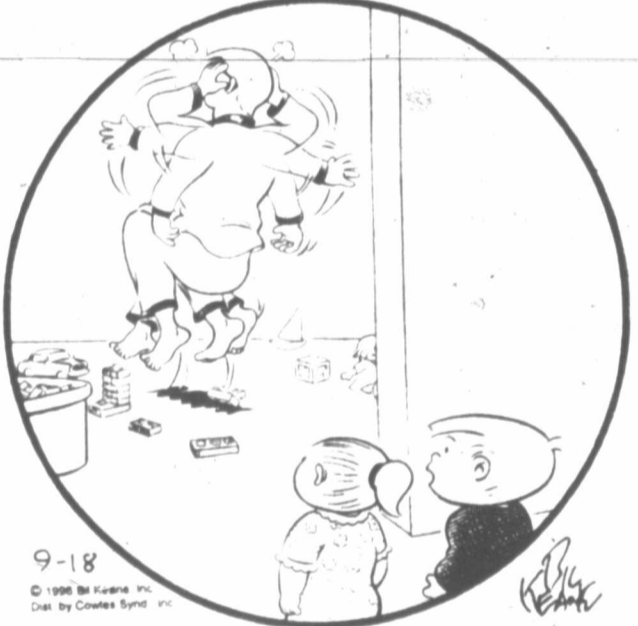
The Born Loser



Frank & Ernest



Mallard Filmore



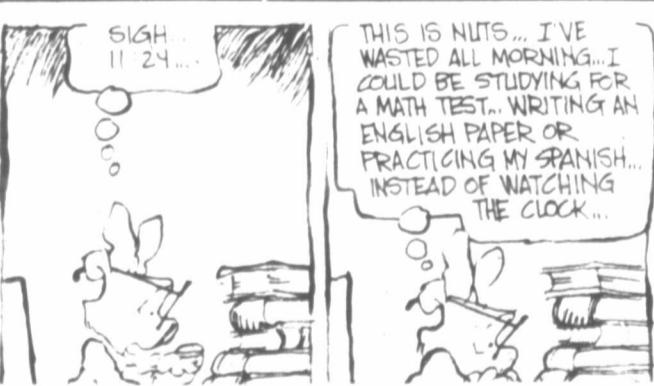
"He's not practicin' the macarena. He stepped on one of our Legos."



"He wants me to warm up his food in the microwave."

The Family Circus

Marmaduke



Grizzwells



Alley Oop



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# Republicans, Democrats wage pre-election duel over school funds

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Republicans are proposing \$2.3 billion more for schools in hopes of denying Democrats the high ground on education as a campaign issue.

The partisan duel over federal aid to schools is only the latest dispute slowing congressional work on spending bills for fiscal 1997, which begins Oct. 1. Congress has completed just five of the 13 annual measures, and about six of the remaining bills probably will be finished only during closed-door negotiations between lawmakers and Clinton administration officials.

On Tuesday, faced with the prospect of a parade of Democratic efforts to beef up social programs, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., halted his chamber's work on the spending measures — at least for now. He said fights over the Democratic proposals would accomplish little.

"We have a good shootout down there," Lott told reporters, referring to the Senate floor. "It might make good articles, but I don't think that contributes to the image leaders want. Somewhere we try to get our work done."

White House chief of staff Leon Panetta met with top lawmakers Monday to begin seeking compromise on the spending legislation, but there were no meetings Tuesday. Neither side wants the federal shutdowns that highlighted last year's budget battle.

"If there is trouble in these waters, I don't see it," House Majority Leader Dick Armey, R-Texas, told reporters. He added, "Obviously, there's a lot of negotiating to be done."

Unlike last year's GOP effort to force its budget priorities on President Clinton, Republicans right now seem mostly driven by a desire to hit the campaign trail.

"We want to complete our work and move out," Lott said.

The administration wants about \$6.5 billion more for education, anti-terrorism efforts, and other domestic programs. They want perhaps half to be paid for by shifting money from the Pentagon's proposed \$244 billion budget for 1997, which is nearly \$10 billion more than Clinton wants.

Armey warned that there might not be enough votes to move such a measure through the conservative House if more than \$500 million was sliced from the defense bill. But Democrats preferred to train their rhetorical fire on social programs.

"The Republicans again have emphasized to the American people their lack of prioritization, their lack of support for education, by the low level of funding," said Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle, D-S.D.

But conceding that "there is a role to federal education in key areas," Lott and other Republicans proposed adding \$2.3 billion to their own bill for student financial aid, poor and disabled students, and other education programs.

"As a Republican, I refuse to let Democrats try to claim education as their own issue. That is our issue," Lott said.

In other action on 1997 spending legislation: —Clinton signed two smaller bills Tuesday, \$10 billion for military construction and \$2.17 billion for the legislative branch, bringing to four the number of bills enacted into law.

—The Senate sent Clinton a fifth measure Tuesday, voting 93-7 for a \$20.4 billion bill to fund water and energy programs. The president is expected to sign the bill.

—Lott halted debate on a \$12.7 Interior bill because of the pile of Democratic amend-

ments. But before he did, the Senate failed to resolve a perennial battle, voting 50-50 to table, which effectively kills, an amendment to raise grazing fees for some Western ranchers leasing federal lands. The tie vote kept an amendment alive by Sens. Dale Bumpers, D-Ark., and Judd Gregg, R-N.H., that would require large-scale ranchers to pay the equivalent of state rates for some of their livestock grazing on federal lands.

—A House-Senate conference committee agreed late Tuesday to keep foreign aid funding at this year's level of \$12.1 billion, but voted to postpone final agreement on the spending bill until late Wednesday. All issues were resolved except funding for family planning abroad — which is plagued by abortion-related divisions. The Senate voted to spend \$410 million, while the House version, to which Clinton objects, ends or reduces most international family planning efforts.

## New fat substitute draws opposition



(AP photo)

Chris McCarthy demonstrates his opposition to the use of fat substitute olestra in Frito-Lay's new line of Max Chips in Dallas recently. Son of a former prominent Frito-Lay executive, McCarthy believes olestra is too dangerous for public consumption. Meanwhile, Gregory Allgood of Procter and Gamble, the maker of olestra, said there has been about one complaint for every 3,000 bags of chips sold since test marketing of the product began in April.

## House committee considers bill permitting levy of local taxes to build sports facilities

AUSTIN (AP) — An array of new local taxes could be used to build sports facilities, subject to voter approval and a review to ensure state finances aren't affected, under a proposal being considered by a House committee.

The proposed measure was discussed Tuesday by the Business and Industry Committee, which is headed by Rep. Kim Brimer, R-Arlington.

Brimer in the 1995 legislative session derailed a bill that would have allowed tax dollars to be used for professional sports facilities, citing its projected cost to state taxpayers of up to \$180 million over five years.

"Since I killed it, I thought I ought to come back and try to clean it up and see if I can do something with it," he said.

Brimer, who had called the 1995 measure "corporate welfare," said sports facilities are regional projects and so they should be financed regionally.

"We don't want to impact the people of San Angelo on something Houston's going to do," he said.

Sen. Royce West, D-Dallas, sponsor of the 1995 measure, didn't immediately return a telephone call from The Associated Press.

The proposal in Brimer's committee would allow a city, county or group of counties to put a resolution before local voters to acquire, build or renovate a sports venue with specific taxes.

Bonds could be issued to pay for the sports facility and be paid off with the taxes.

The state comptroller would review the resolution to ensure its passage wouldn't cost the state money.

Local taxing options for the facilities would include:

- An increase of up to one-half of one percent in the sales and use tax. The current state sales tax rate is 6 1/4 percent, and local entities currently may add another two percent.
- A tax on short-term car rentals — 30 days or less

— of up to five percent. There currently is a state tax of ten percent on gross receipts on such rentals.

- An admissions tax of up to \$2 per person.
- A parking tax at the sports facility of up to \$1 per vehicle. The tax could be imposed beginning not more than two hours before and ending not more than two hours after the time a sports event is scheduled to begin.
- An increase in the hotel occupancy tax of up to two percent of the room price. A combination of state and local levies currently could bring the hotel tax up to 20 percent in some areas.

Brimer said the sports facilities proposal has opposition from car rental companies and the Texas Hotel & Motel Association.

"As it stands right now, we don't like it very much," said the hotel group's executive vice president, Don Hansen.

The proposal could take the hotel tax up to 17 percent in Houston and San Antonio, he said.

"That'll be revenue-negative to the city. They'll lose convention business," Hansen said. "It's outrageously bad now. That would just push us over the top."

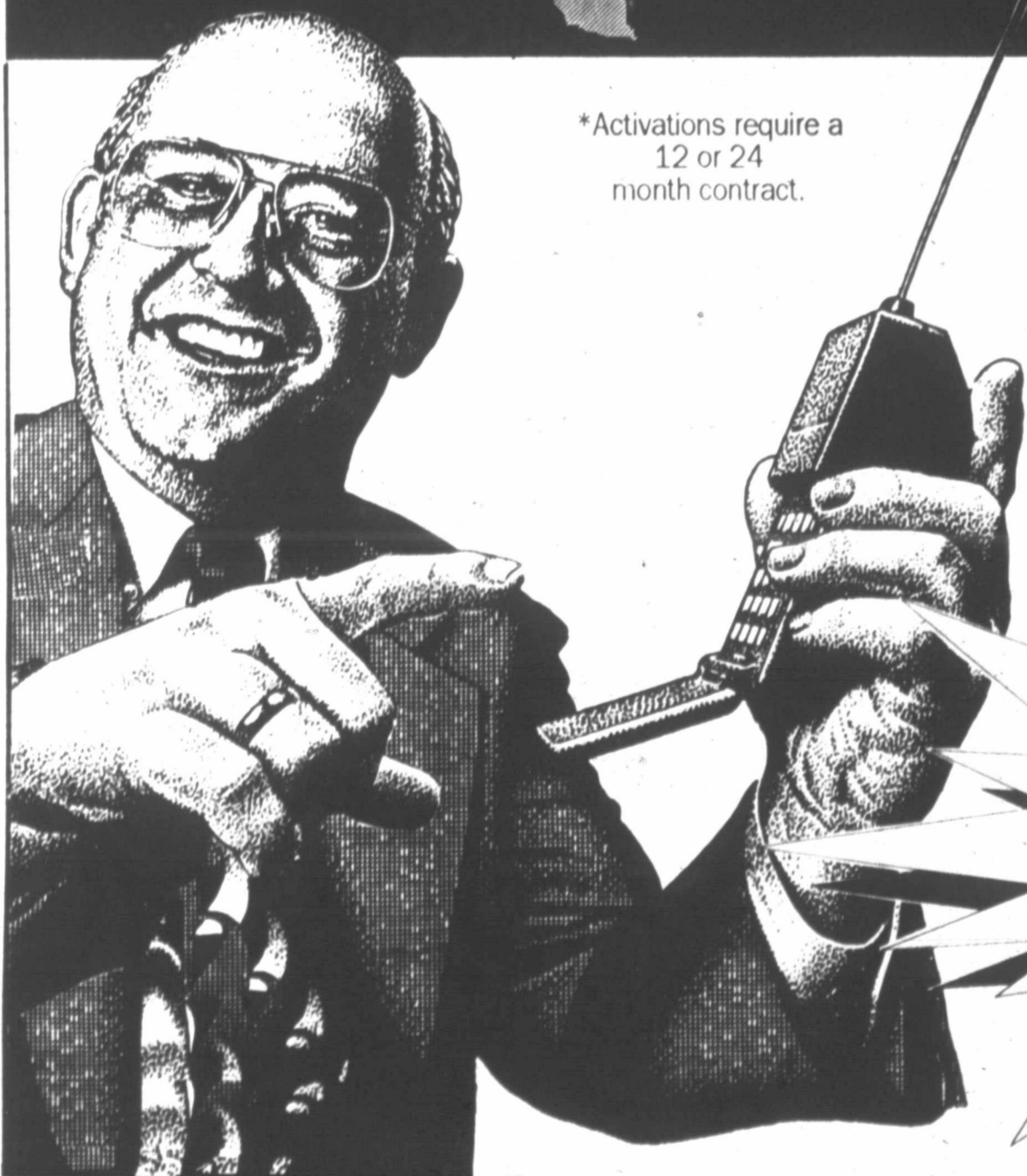
Brimer said the committee welcomes ideas, which could be considered in next year's legislative session. He said it wouldn't affect existing projects — including a proposal to build a \$265 million ballpark in downtown Houston, assuming a local referendum passes in November.

Houston and Harris County have signed a deal with the Astros to build the ballpark, which would be funded partly with public money. Besides county voter approval Nov. 5, the agreement still needs the OK of the 1997 Texas Legislature, Harris County commissioners and the Houston City Council.

Ray Sullivan, a spokesman for Gov. George W. Bush, said the governor would see how the legislation develops.

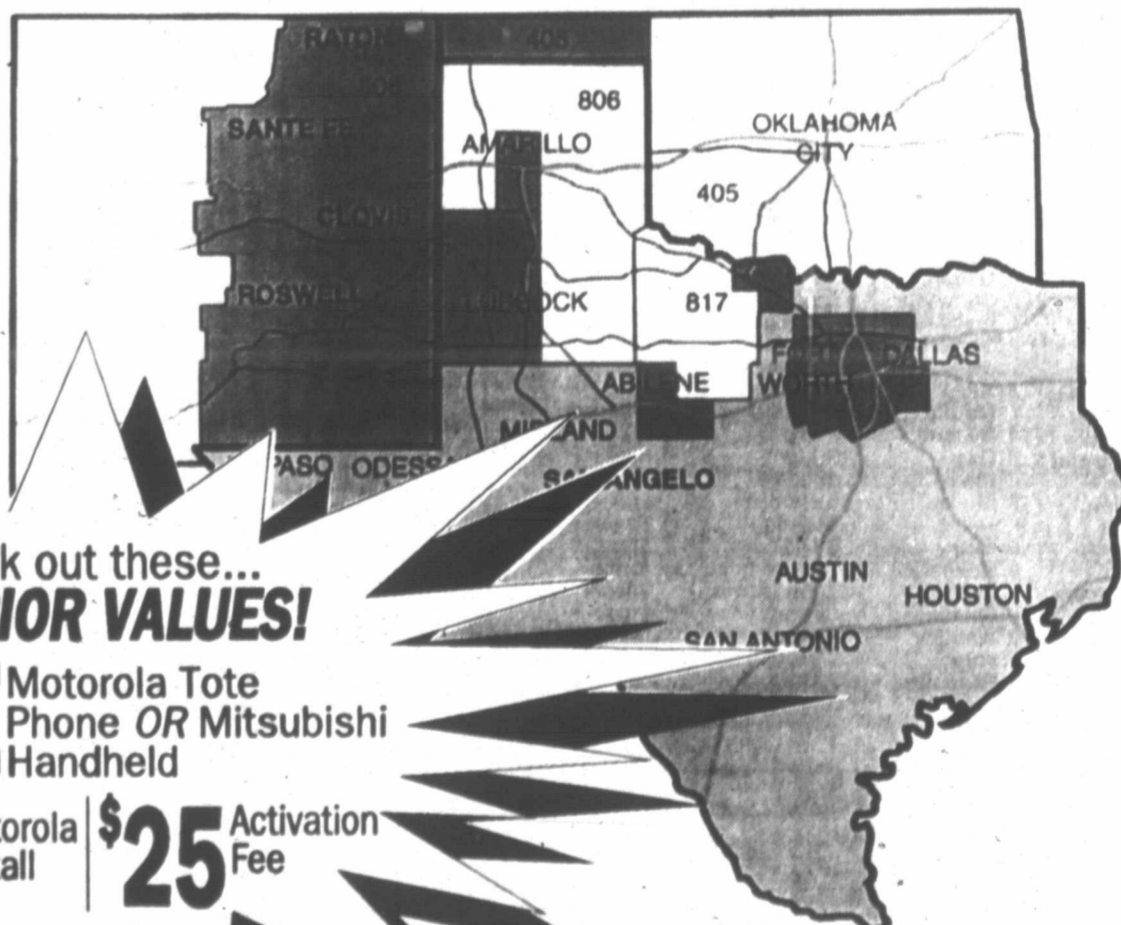
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