

BIG SPRING HERALD

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TUESDAY
April 16, 1996

50 cents

Council votes 4-1 to issue letter-of-intent to Midtex

Negotiating team for possible prison sale to be appointed at April 23 meeting

By CARLTON JOHNSON
Staff Writer

More than 200 people turned out for Monday's public hearing on the sale of the city's interests in the Big Spring Correctional Center facilities, which resulted in two City Council members changing their previous votes and agreeing to issue a letter of intent to Midtex and Cornell Corrections to negotiate the purchase of the city's interests.

Councilwoman Stephanie Horton and Councilman Chuck Cawthon, after Monday's presentation, changed their minds and voted with Mayor Tim Blackshear and Councilman John Paul Anderson to negotiate the Midtex/Cornell proposal.

The council's vote was 4-1, with Pat DeAnda and Jimmy Campbell abstaining for personal reasons, to issue the letter of intent to negotiate with Midtex and Cornell Corrections.

The lone vote against issuing a letter of intent was that of Councilman Tom Guess, who said he was not satisfied that there had not been a detailed credit check conducted of Cornell Corrections.

Midtex President Johnny Rutherford responded to Guess by saying Midtex would not enter into a multi-million dollar deal without knowing who they were dealing with.

"Mr. (David) Cornell will pass any smell test you want to give him," Rutherford said.

City Manager Gary Fuqua also responded to Guess, who first posed the credit check



Johnny Rutherford (right), president of Midtex Detention of Big Spring, addresses the Big Spring City Council during Monday night's special meeting to discuss the possible sale of the city's interests in Big Spring Correctional Centers to Midtex and Cornell Corrections. Council voted 4-1 to issue a letter-of-intent to negotiate a possible sale.

question to him.

Fuqua said he was waiting on a decision from the council so he and the city staff would know how to proceed.

"We're waiting on you to give us some direction ... to tell us what you want us to do," Fuqua said.

Guess had a Dun & Bradstreet report at the council's April 9 meeting, which Blackshear pointed out to him, but Guess responded that the D&B wasn't good enough.

Following Monday's council vote to issue the letter of intent, Blackshear urged everyone in attendance to attend the council

next regular meeting on April 23 at which time the council will select a negotiating team.

Anderson's motion to issue the letter of intent, which was seconded by Horton, included the stipulation that Fuqua be a member of the negotiating team.

Fuqua addressed the audience at Blackshear's request because one member of the audience said he didn't know what the city staff's position was on the issue.

"When Mayor Blackshear called for a public hearing, I felt like the door was opened. I've had the chance to meet with

a lot of the people involved. I see some merit in the proposal, but some of it I don't agree with," Fuqua said.

He added he would change the wording in some places, but it was his recommendation to the council that the city be allowed to begin negotiations with Midtex and Cornell Corrections.

"We're waiting for your instructions," he said, "but we'd really like to get into this."

Several council members, as well as members of the audience, seemed to relax somewhat when Ed Davenport, the entrepreneur who brought the idea of a prison to Big Spring in

1988, was introduced and spoke. "When we first started, we had many meetings like this," Davenport said.

He added there has been a lot of misinformation communicated about the sale of the city's interests, but that misinformation was being explained at the meeting.

"I think David Cornell is a lot like I've always been and is truthful about what he says. I think he'll be good for the city of Big Spring," Davenport said.

Although the Bureau of Prisons has to approve the deal, Davenport said he didn't really care what was said by the gov-

ernment and the he would personally give the city the \$3.7 million mentioned in the Midtex/Cornell proposal.

"I think that's the way to go," Davenport said.

Rutherford and Midtex attorney Dew Mouton opened the meeting by explaining the history of the prison business in Big Spring, which they said if residents understood, they could understand the reasoning for selling the city's interests in the three facilities.

Rutherford said to try to understand the deal being offered, resident should take profit completely out of the picture because of federal procurement guidelines.

He also told the audience that Midtex has gone through three expansions in seven years with

the full support and backing of Davenport and now Davenport is at a point where he ready to explore his options, which is why Cornell Corrections is in the picture.

"It's our belief that we have the only potential proposal you can entertain," Rutherford said.

He added because it addresses Davenport's interests, as well as the Bureau of Prisons, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Midtex, Cornell Corrections and the city of Big Spring.

"This is not a purchase, but a long-term restructuring if leases (a 30 year to 35 year deal). The proposal would eliminate tax concerns in the city of Big Spring for several years," Rutherford said.

Man stable after crash that closed Gregg, FM 700 intersection

By SARA SOLIS
Staff Writer

A Big Spring resident is in stable condition at Scenic Mountain Medical Center after a vehicle collision with a number of curbs, traffic signs, and guardrails at the intersection of U.S. Highway 87 and FM 700 early this morning.

Sgt. Stan Parker, of the Big Spring Police Department, said police officers were dispatched to the scene of the accident shortly after 3 a.m. this morning. A heavily damaged crew-cab pickup, was found lying

upside down in the westbound lanes in the 200 block of West FM 700, he said. Parker said the driver of the vehicle, a male in his 40's, was found unconscious and partially ejected from the vehicle. "He didn't have a lot of blood (showing)," Parker said. He was subsequently taken to Scenic Mountain Medical Center by ambulance.

The subject, who was thought to be traveling northbound on U.S. Highway 87 based on evidence at the scene, veered off the road near the west entrance to the Wal-Mart shopping center. Parker said the vehicle's

first point of impact was the curb by the Wal-Mart entrance. From there the vehicle traveled an approximate 250 to 300 yards, striking five to six signs and a light pole. The vehicle then crossed a median, went through a guardrail and down the FM 700 embankment, coming to rest on its top in the westbound lanes, he said.

Parker said both eastbound and westbound lanes of FM 700, from the Gregg Street exit to the Veterans Administration Hospital, were closed to traffic from 3:30 a.m. to 8 a.m. this morning, to enable police officers to clear

accident debris and conduct an investigation. Because of the severity of the accident, it was necessary to close the road to conduct the investigation, Parker said. He said the investigation included constructing a scale diagram of the accident and trying to estimate the victim's rate of speed.

Alcohol is suspected as a contributing factor in the accident and the vehicle's speed, which is still undetermined, was a major factor, Parker said. The driver's identity is being withheld, pending the notification of family members.

McQueary: SB 1 fails to address local concerns

DIRK FILLPOT
Staff Writer

Recent modifications to the educational system in Texas as a result of the implementation of Senate Bill 1 provides for more local control of public education, but fails to address all of the concerns in Big Spring, said W.A. "Bill" McQueary, superintendent of the Big Spring Independent School District.

The bill limited the powers of the State Board of Education to those specifically mandated by law, allows for granting and revoking district and campus charters, modified the salary schedule for classroom teachers, enhanced use of technology in classrooms, established an alternative education setting,

modified the no-pass no-play program and reduced bid specifications for textbook material.

Teachers employed more recently than others benefit the most from the newer salary structure, McQueary said. He said no one loses salary under this system, but teachers employed for longer periods of time received lower bonuses than normal.

The legislation was aimed at giving entry-level teachers a better salary, and McQueary said that was successful.

The salary structure is more expensive and the budget is currently around \$7,500 more costly than in past, he said.

The alternative education setting for students who commit felonies has been intact under

the dropout recovery program in Big Spring ISD before required by the state. McQueary said the difference between the new and old policies is that now students cannot be expelled for minor offenses, although they can be disciplined.

He said Big Spring ISD is in the middle of a \$3 million plan to put computers, fiberoptic equipment, and CD-ROM hardware in district schools.

Big Spring ISD is above the state level in achievement test scores which he attributes to the technology in the schools and quality educators, he said.

The district will need to renovate schools which lack refrigerated air conditioning as well as some facilities.

He said these are challenging

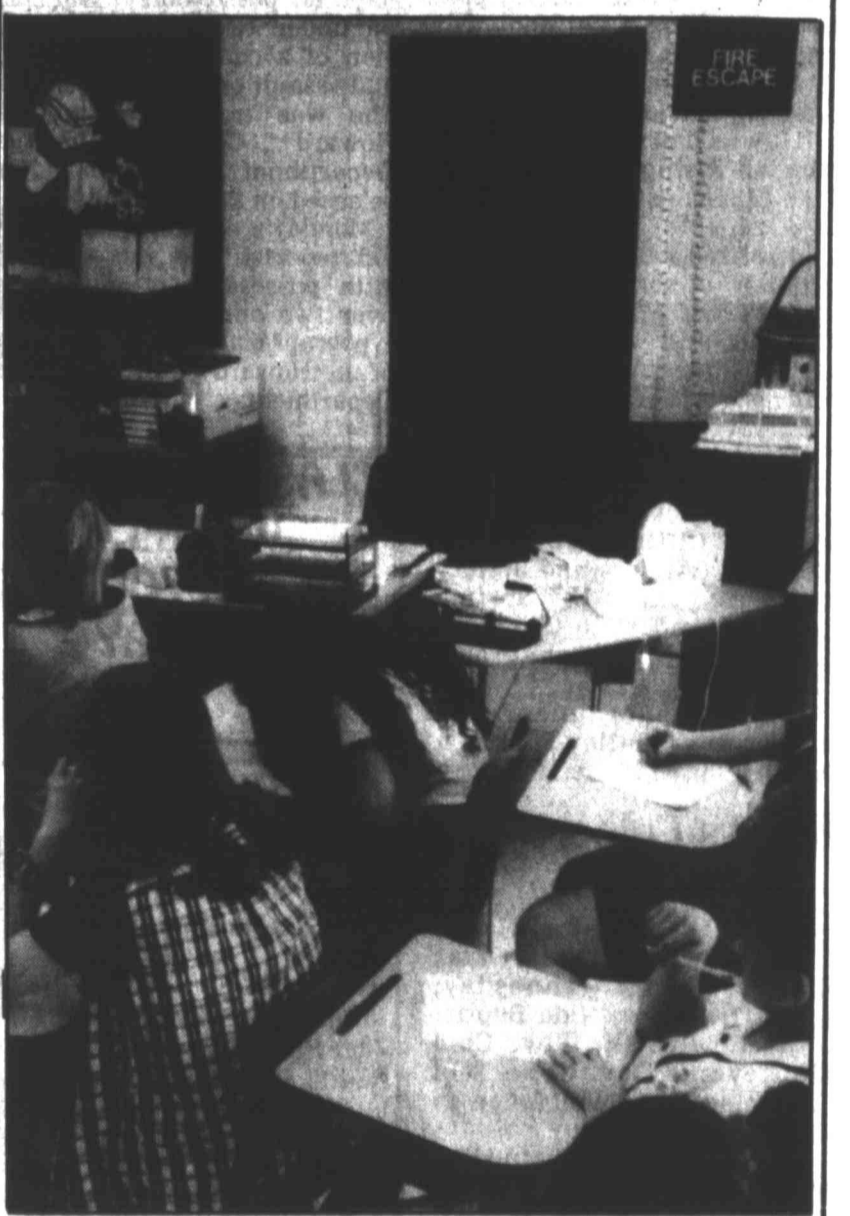
obstacles with a dwindling budget, which he attributes to decline in property values because of lowered oil interests in the area.

Nearby Forsan ISD has experienced similar problems during the past five years, said George White, superintendent at Forsan.

With an average of \$50 million losses during five consecutive years, White said the district went from a balanced-budget operation to a foundational school, subsisting on allocations from the state.

White attributed the declining tax base to the drop in oil production and interests in the area—a problem for which he said there is no remedy when the district taxes the maximum-allowed, \$1.50.

DISTANT FIRE ESCAPE



Though signs throughout the third floor of Runnels Junior High point to the location of the only fire escape on the floor, students in this classroom would have to go around a desk and through a storage room before getting to the exit door.

Texas Trivia

What is average sentence length of inmates in Texas prisons?

23 years

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NATION / WORLD

Israelis attack
Israeli helicopter gunships and jets launch dual attacks against Palestinian villages, Beirut. Page 5.

Post cutting cereal prices
In an effort to boost lagging cereal sales, Post Cereal cuts prices an average of 20 percent. Page 5.

TEXAS

TU buys Enserch
Texas Utilities buys Enserch in multi-billion dollar deal announced Monday afternoon. Page 3.

Rare disease kills Angelo teen
A rare blood disease killed a San Angelo teen, going from a measles-like appearance to death in just six days. Page 8.

TODAY'S WEATHER

Today **79** ▲ Highs **45**
Lows ▼

Today
Mostly sunny. High around 80 and low in the mid 40s. Some wind during the day and fair in the evening.

Tonight
Permian Basin Forecast
Wednesday: Mostly sunny, high near 80.
Thursday: Mostly sunny, high near 80, lows in mid 50s.

Texas Utilities to buy Enserch, Lone Star Gas in \$1.7 billion deal

DALLAS (AP) — Texas Utilities Co. agreed Monday to buy natural gas company Enserch Corp., creating a giant power utility serving much of North Texas in a deal that could foreshadow similar mergers across the country.

Pending approval by federal regulators and Enserch stockholders, Texas Utilities will spend \$1.7 billion to acquire most of Enserch, including Lone Star Gas, Texas' biggest gas company which serves the northeast quadrant of the state.

Enserch Exploration will be spun off as before the merger.

"A combination of these companies is a natural one," said Eric Nye, president and chief executive officer of Texas Utilities. "In addition, the operational efficiencies of the new organization will mean rates for gas and electric service will

remain low and competitive."

Rates won't necessarily go down, Nye said, but increases should be less frequent.

"Rates will not be as high as they otherwise would have been," he said. "We don't expect any (major increases) for a number of years, barring some exceptional international economic development."

Under the terms of the agreement, Texas Utilities will buy Enserch common stock for \$550 million and pay \$1.15 billion for its debt and preferred shares.

Enserch stock climbed nearly 27 percent on the news, up \$4.37 to close at \$20.75. TU dipped by 25 cents to a \$39.37 close.

Texas Utilities, the parent of TU Electric and Southwestern Electric Service, will pay each shareholder the equivalent of \$23.68 per share, including \$8 worth of Texas Utilities com-

mon stock. Enserch stockholders will retain interest in the soon-to-be independent Enserch Exploration.

The boards of both Dallas-based companies have approved the deal, which has been in the works since January.

"This probably will be held up as an example of where the industry is going," said Janet E. Dzwierzynski, analyst for Phoenix Duff & Phelps in Chicago. "The energy business is becoming more wide open, where customers dictate what energy they want. To be able to do that, companies need to have expertise on all sides of the business."

Unavoidable duplication of effort exists between the companies, especially in the customer service and accounting departments, Nye said.

"We anticipate handling as

many of those as possible through attrition and job retraining," Nye said.

Any job losses involving two of Dallas' largest employers should be absorbed by the area without much difficulty, said Bud Weinstein of the University of North Texas.

The idea of merging a huge gas network with the electric utility, combined with an undervalued Enserch stock, makes this the right time for Texas Utilities to make such a move, another analyst said.

Dzwierzynski said Enserch stock actually has been a little pricey for short-term investors, but long-term buyers banking on an anticipated exploration payoff by the end of this decade likely thought the price was attractive.

The greater efficiency created by having a single power

provider drew praise from consumer activist Tom Smith, who wants to see similar efficiency in the regulatory process.

"But this could force us to ask for a consolidation of energy regulation functions into one agency," said Smith, Texas director of Public Citizen, a consumer watchdog group.

Enserch Exploration will retain its name but become an entirely separate entity because Texas Utilities wants to keep its focus on Enserch's gas transmission and distribution activities, Nye said.

"Enserch Exploration had its growth potential somewhat stifled lately by the balance sheet," said Enserch chairman David Biegler, who will continue leading Enserch Corp., which will become a wholly owned subsidiary of Texas Utilities.

The names of the companies

involved will remain intact for now, Nye said. Only the ownership changes.

Lone Star Gas serves more than 1.3 million Texas customers, providing gas through more than 23,500 miles of distribution mains. Lone Star Pipeline is one of the largest pipelines in the United States, consisting of 9,200 miles of gathering and transmission lines.

Also included in the transaction are Enserch subsidiaries engaged in natural gas processing, natural gas marketing and independent power production.

Texas Utilities' two Texas subsidiaries serve nearly 2.4 million customers, mostly in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. In addition, the company is engaged in natural gas transmission and storage, lignite coal mining and other energy-related concerns.

TEXAS BRIEFS

The ASSOCIATED PRESS

Judge abides by appeals court directive, reduces ex-District Attorney's prison time

TYLER — Following an appeals court's directive, a federal judge has cut a year off the prison term of Ray Andrews, 55, former district attorney of Henderson County.

U.S. Circuit Court Judge Robert M. Parker reduced Andrews' sentence from 42 months to 30 months during a hearing Monday afternoon ordered by the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans.

Parker said Andrews availed himself of substance abuse treatment and educational opportunities since entering prison 18 months ago and appears to be rehabilitated.

Officials earlier gave Andrews one year credit toward completion of his sentence for participation in the substance abuse treatment program. With Parker's action Monday, Andrews' prison term has been cut to 18 months.

Andrews pleaded guilty Sept. 29, 1994, to violating the Hobbs Act after the FBI alleged he agreed to take a \$300,000 bribe to dismiss capital murder charges against Corsicana businessman Jerry Mack Watkins.

Three viruses strike facility in 1990s

ALICE — In the past decade, at least two other viruses have stricken a primate facility at which two monkeys died recently from the Ebola infection. One of the previous infections reportedly killed a veterinarian.

The viruses broke out at the Texas Primate Center, a privately owned primate breeding facility about 15 miles southeast of Alice, in South Texas.

The latest infection was made public Monday by state and national health officials. The Ebola virus claimed two monkeys of a shipment of 100 that arrived at the center March 21 from the Philippines, said Dr. Diane Simpson, an epidemiologist at the Texas Department of Health.

"The first one died; the second was euthanized," Simpson said, adding that the rest remain under quarantine. "We're watching any people who may have come in contact with them."

The virus is the third to occur at the facility since 1990, according to officials and previous news reports.

Charges could be kicked against Hidalgo officials

LAREDO — Prosecutors have disclosed a federal ruling that could result in the dismissal of most charges against five current and former Hidalgo County officials accused of rigging county purchases for bribes.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Greg Surovic revealed on Monday that the U.S. 5th Circuit Court of

Appeals in New Orleans ruled earlier this year that charges of mail fraud and conspiracy to commit mail fraud can be pursued in federal cases only when citizens are deprived of tangible property.

If U.S. District Judge George Kazen decides to apply the ruling in this case, many of the 102 counts could be thrown out.

"We had an obligation to bring this up whether it helps us or hurts us," Surovic said outside the courthouse.

The prosecution rested its case Monday in the trial, which is the second one for the defendants. After two months, the first trial ended in December with a hung jury.

Eight arrested for questioning in wave of slayings

CIUDAD JUAREZ, Mexico — Eight people suspected of belonging to a gang that kidnapped, raped and killed young women have been arrested in a wave of 17 slayings dating back to last year, authorities say.

Police staged a series of weekend raids at several Ciudad Juarez nightclubs to apprehend seven men and one woman for questioning. Several have confessed and a probe indicates all may have been involved, officials said Monday.

"So far, we believe these people are responsible," Chihuahua Gov. Francisco Barrio said during a news conference to announce the arrests.

Authorities would not comment on a possible motive for the killings, which had sparked speculation that a serial killer was stalking young women in Juarez, across the Rio Grande from El Paso, Texas.

Likewise, they declined to say whether investigators believe the group may have been responsible for all of the deaths, some of which have never been linked previously.

Three killed in Army helicopter crashes at Bliss

FORT BLISS — Army officials are releasing few details of two helicopter crashes that killed three paratroopers until an investigation is completed.

The OH-58 Kiowa helicopters from Fort Bragg, N.C., went down Sunday night at a training area on the northern portion of Fort Bliss. Three crew members died and a fourth was slightly injured, officials said Monday.

Little more information was coming from the Army post, where officials said they could not even immediately determine whether the aircraft had collided.

"We don't know that for a fact, it was dark ...," said post spokesman Capt. Thomas Collins. Besides the survivor, he said there were no other known eyewitnesses to the crash.

Accident investigators were en route to the crash site Monday from Fort Rucker, Ala., and they ultimately must determine what happened, Collins said.

San Angelo teen's swift, devastating fatal illness dazes schoolmates at Lee Junior High School

SAN ANGELO (AP) — Ten days ago, an otherwise healthy Jackie Rodriguez, the best female tennis player at San Angelo Lee Junior High School, broke out with what appeared to be a light case of the measles.

Six days later, the 14-year-old girl was dead — from a rare blood disorder known as ITP.

Her coach, Peggy Williams, said schoolmates were left dazed by Miss Rodriguez's sudden death on Friday.

"It's hit them, but it hasn't hit them," she said. "Reality hasn't set in."

Tennis players and members of Rebels Against Drugs and Drinking — a group the girl was involved with — planned to attend funeral services today, leaving behind yellow roses for their classmate, Ms. Williams said.

Jackie's mother, Mary Aguirre, was also trying to cope with the swift, devastating illness that claimed the teen-ager.

Aguirre said she took her daughter to the hospital the day before Easter because in addition to apparent measles she also had a blister and her gums would not stop bleeding.

"But she was feeling fine," Ms. Aguirre said. "As a matter of fact, she was mad at me for taking her to the hospital that night."

A pediatrician diagnosed Miss Rodriguez with ITP, or idiopathic thrombocytopenia purpura.

The disorder causes the body to produce antibodies which attack and coat blood platelets, sometimes destroying them faster than the body can make new ones.

If the platelet count goes low enough, bleeding can occur virtually anywhere in the body, San Angelo hematologist John Hunt said. The condition is rarely fatal, particularly in young people.

"It's not hereditary, it's not contagious," Hunt said. And although ITP is often associated with respiratory infections or uncommon cancers, it may strike for no apparent reason, he said.

Two days later, when the girl had shown no improvement, she was transferred to Children's Medical Center in Fort Worth.

Upon arrival, she complained of a slight headache, "but it was nothing major," her mother said.

But Miss Rodriguez woke up with another headache Wednesday that would not respond to pain pills.

"By the time they took her down for a CAT scan, they found out she did have a hemorrhage in her skull. It was in a very difficult position to remove," her mother said. Doctors ordered immediate surgery for the girl.

"When she did pull out of surgery we were very hopeful — we were ecstatic — but the doctors were not very optimistic," Aguirre said.

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EDITORIAL

Quote of the Day

"Only the shallow know themselves."

-Oscar Wilde

The opinion expressed is that of the Editorial Board of the *Big Spring Herald* unless otherwise noted. Other opinions are those of the respective columnist or writer.

Charles C. Williams
Publisher

John H. Walker
Managing Editor

OTHER VIEWS

Israel retaliates

Israel is a bold, determined land that faces destruction if it cannot find availing means of resisting its enemies in the Middle East, but the Reuter photograph of terror-stricken Lebanese civilians that ran in Sunday newspapers throughout America is a reminder that it's not just innocent Israelis who are suffering.

The picture was taken after an Israeli helicopter fired on a Lebanese ambulance, killing four children and two women. For almost a week now, Israel has been bombarding southern Lebanon. According to a recent count, at least 28 Lebanese have been killed and more than 100 injured. Some 400,000 refugees are streaming from their villages and Beirut suburbs into Beirut and northern Lebanon.

Israel's attacks have been in response to Katyusha rockets fired on northern Israeli villages and collective farms by Shiite Muslim guerrillas known as Hezbollah in Arabic, or Party of God in English. The Iranian-backed Hezbollah says it wants Israel to give up a security zone it established in southern Lebanon to protect itself against border attacks.

Israel has hit Hezbollah offices, but its strategy is chiefly to get the attention of Syria, which controls Lebanon with the 35,000 troops it has there. Israeli officials believe Syria could end Hezbollah rocket attacks if it tried, and that it might try if Lebanon is sufficiently destabilized.

Israel, which in addition to enduring the Hezbollah attacks has lost 59 of its citizens this year to bombs planted by Palestinian guerrillas, has fired warning shots to encourage the evacuation of Lebanese villages before blasting them out of existence. The nation is not on a mission to kill the innocent.

The innocent are nevertheless dying and having their lives torn to tatters. It would be unfair to condemn Israel, which is desperate to protect itself from terrorism, but it is also human to have sympathy for their Lebanese victims and reasonable to wonder whether time will prove Israeli policies lastingly effective or show them to have been fruitless at a great and tragic cost.

-SCRIPPS HOWARD NEWS SERVICE

OTHER VIEWS

Pollster-quizzed Americans and their education views

Pollster-quizzed Americans give national Democrats better marks than Republicans for "supporting education." But what might surprise some is that only 8 cents of every school dollar comes from Washington — public education is overwhelmingly a local and state affair — while federal programs are often candy pills for what ails the scholastic patient. Consider reading.

Depressingly, the latest National Assessment of Educational Progress, administered by the U.S. Department of Education, found that between 1992 and 1994 the proportion of 12th graders demonstrating at least basic (minimal) reading performance fell from 80 percent to 75 percent. In 1994, only 36 percent of these high-schoolers could read "proficiently." Just 12 percent could write cogently on a topic such as mandatory community service. Fourth- and eighth-graders also posted literacy declines.

But students targeted by the Federal Education for the Disadvantaged Program — which sharpshoots tax dollars at high-poverty districts — read and wrote worst of all. For example, while 25 percent of 12th graders outside the program failed to achieve basic reading competence, 59 percent of program enrollees tested below-basic.

Without Uncle Sam's ministrations, might even more poor youngsters have remained functionally illiterate? Maybe. But surely a scheme that leaves almost six of every 10 participants without a prayer of decent employment is nothing for the public to enshrine.

The proper site of school reform must be the local level, where one can get within lance range of the twin dragons of ignorance — low standards and low expectations. "Education in America will not improve significantly until states and communities decide they want better schools." Newt Gingrich didn't say that. Alice Rivlin did, before she became Bill Clinton's budget chief.

Brave educators who have slain the dragons — and have avoided the career dungeon central-office bureaucrats reserve for innovators — have worked academic wonders. The party that would empower such heroes deserves the support of Americans who esteem education.

-SCRIPPS HOWARD NEWS SERVICE

LETTER POLICY

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- Sign your letter.

- Provide daytime phone number and street address.
- We reserve the right to edit for style and clarity.
- We reserve the right to limit publication to one letter per 30-day period per author.

A ROOKIE MISTAKE IN THE BIG MEDIA NEWSROOM



Voters may opt for checks and balances

By PHILIP D. DUNCAN
Congressional Quarterly

WASHINGTON — Toward the end of last month's House debate on repealing the ban on semiautomatic assault-style weapons, Rep. Carrie P. Meek, D-Fla., delivered a brief and angry speech.

Shouting to be heard over catcalls, Meek said that retaining the assault weapons ban was the very least Congress should do to deter gun violence.

"I want to see every gun controlled," she fumed, "because some of these people do not even need to have a gun in their hands, they are already bad enough without that."

Remarks like that help explain why some advocates of gun owners' rights resist even limited regulatory measures such as the assault weapons ban: They see any concession to the gun-control lobby as encouraging liberals who do not believe that the Second Amendment confers a broad right to keep and bear arms.

Meek, of course, lost when the House roll was called: The tally for repealing the assault weapons ban was 239-173. Among the 74 freshman Republicans, 66 voted for repeal.

But while the National Rifle Association was pleased, the popularity of the measure in the broader public was most succinctly assessed by Senate Republican leader Bob Dole,

the likely GOP presidential nominee, who said, "I haven't considered it. It's not a priority."

So repeal of the assault weapons ban joins a lengthy list of items that are wished for by the House's most fervent conservatives, but have little prospect for passage in the 104th Congress and some potential for negative electoral impact in November.

Repealing the weapons ban, reducing Medicare spending while giving tax breaks to high-income people, revising an array of environmental regulations, closing the federal government to force a budget deal on GOP terms — all these conservative initiatives have enabled President Clinton to argue that the country needs him in the White House to brake the excesses of GOP ideologies.

Remembering how dour and chastened Clinton looked after the Republicans' sweeping success in the November 1994 election, and how confident and exultant was Congress' new GOP majority, one marvels at the standing of Clinton and Congress in this spring's public opinion polls? Surveys conducted in late March and early April by Harris, Time/CNN and the Pew Center found Clinton's lead over Dole in a two-way presidential race at 16, 14 and 12 points, respectively.

And the enthusiasm for Congress' Republican majority

is remarkably diminished. When Pew asked the "generic" House ballot question — which party's candidate would you support in November? — 49 percent picked Democratic, and 44 percent Republican. Last August, the GOP led 50-43 in Pew's generic House test.

All those surveys were wrapping up just as members of Congress left Washington for a two-week spring break. House GOP leader Dick Army of Texas sent his troops home with a "talking points" memorandum to help them press their case. It said that "House Republicans spent the month of March getting back on track" and were "incredibly successful" moving "America's agenda" — items such as the "freedom to farm" agriculture bill, the line-item veto bill, the product-liability bill and the bill banning "partial-birth" abortions.

Also in his memo, Army set out an ambitious spring schedule, including work on bills to provide tax relief, deliver "common sense environmental reforms" and eliminate the Commerce Department.

After Army's memo, the airplane crash that killed Commerce Secretary Ron Brown and his economic development delegation underscored how challenging it will be for the GOP to "manage" events to their advantage. After the crash, Clinton was in his finest form as "national preacher,"

eloquently eulogizing the government officials and businessmen who lost their lives in service to the cause of improving living conditions in the war-torn Balkans.

That same week, the cameras caught Clinton in a similarly poignant role: crouching to help toddlers lay flowers at a memorial to the victims of the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing. Juxtaposed against those TV images was the spectacle in Montana of taxpayer dollars being spent on federal agents obliged to babysit the anti-government "Freemen" holed up in their remote ranch house.

In some contests next November, Republican candidates will mobilize their base with hard-edged conservative rhetoric. But Clinton may benefit if Oklahoma City and Montana remind the public of the violent urges of elements on the extreme right.

Certainly no one in the GOP mainstream condones these elements. But if an undecided voter strongly desires to repudiate their philosophy and tactics, it may not be easy to cast a Republican ballot both for Congress and the presidency, giving the conservatives nearly free rein.

(Phil Duncan is a senior writer for Congressional Quarterly and editor of CQ's "Politics in America" book, which profiles every member of Congress and the districts they represent.)

Moral causes and the practical results they bring

By JAY AMBROSE
Scripps Howard News Service

You get the idea that Mario Cuomo, in his wildest imaginings, could never conceive that he might have missed the point on an important question, that he might have veered too sharply in one direction, that he might have stumbled into an intellectual cul-de-sac.

Nevertheless, there he was on TV recently, discussing how a religion-inspired morality might appropriately operate in government, and sharing his view with thousands that it would be a fundamental transgression of decency for Congress to deny funding to a program for disabled children.

The former New York governor, who also stipulated that only the federal government had sufficient funds to address the cause, apparently meant his cited instance to serve as a model of how the people of the United States should respond to unobjectionable moral purposes. When compassion knocks and the need is great, big government doing big things is the best way to open the door, he seemed to be telling us.

And in fact few of us would deny, on the face of it, that Cuomo's example is compelling. After all, why would anyone turn his back on disabled children? Well, one problem is that society is full of people in difficult circumstances, and every time money is spent on one cause, there is that much less money to be spent on another. The solution of recent decades has been deficit spending, which damages the economy (perhaps

making it more difficult for the parents of those children to find good jobs.) And paying interest on the debt ultimately could consume so much of the federal budget that little would be left for even the most central social programs. The federal government cannot set everything aright; if the program for children is a priority, it might be incumbent on its supporters to make compensating cuts in some other program that just might have its own morally persuaded adherents.

Although Cuomo insisted only the federal government had the wherewithal to help the children, that might be partly the case because, over the years, the federal government has taken so much in taxes that the states don't dare add too much more to the taxpayer's load. In any event, people trying to solve social problems should not leave states, cities and private resources out of their thinking. In deciding where to turn, it helps to have a set of clarifying political principles, which the founders gave us in the form of the Constitution. We ignore that

document at the risk of considerable confusion.

There's the question, too, of whether any given program will actually accomplish its intended results without having any number of other, unintended and perhaps detrimental consequences. Most members of Congress are now agreed that the nation's welfare system has bred a demoralizing dependency because of the way it was structured. Some think elements of Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty actually increased poverty. The best of intentions can sometimes subvert the social good.

For that matter, the forever perplexing issue in governance is how to achieve a purpose, how to make sure that laws have some effect similar to what you had hoped for. Even when the moral case has been convincingly made, it's necessary to show how you will get from here to there. Governance has a practical as well as a moral side, and moral principles derived from religion give us little guidance, in and of themselves, on the best means of accomplishing our objectives.

All of which brings me to my chief criticism of Cuomo's position. He seems to assume that valid moral concern for the unfortunate can be sufficient justification for a government program if in his estimation there is no other source of help. If not hedged in by a host of other considerations, that sort of thinking has the potential of causing more harm than good.

While some liberals appear to think they have a lock on compassion, as few conservatives as liberals are probably immune to caring, and the possibility is that conservatives may do more for human happiness through their sense of constraint than liberals through their sense of moral outrage.

Perhaps Cuomo is right about funding the program for disabled children. Certainly his tone was one of absolute self-assurance. But in neglecting to underline how moral compulsion must be circumscribed by practical wisdom, he instructed the rest of us on one of the significant fallacies of liberalism.

(Jay Ambrose is chief editorial writer for Scripps Howard.)

MALLARD FILMORE



Israeli helicopter gunships strike Palestinian refugee camp, Beirut

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP) — Israeli helicopter gunships struck a Palestinian refugee camp in southern Lebanon today, widening the 6-day-old onslaught against Lebanese guerrillas and their allies. Aircraft also bombarded Beirut for a sixth time since Thursday, killing a 2-year-old girl and wounding two other people, after Hezbollah guerrillas fired rockets on northern Israel.

escaped unhurt. The attack on the Ein el-Hilweh camp near the port city of Sidon was the first on a Palestinian target since Israel began its offensive. Police said three Cobra gunships fired six rockets, hitting the house of Col. Munir Makdah. Two of his bodyguards and the wife of one them were wounded, police said. Makdah opposed the 1993 peace accord between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel, and broke from the group to form his own militia. He later allied with the Iranian-backed Hezbollah, whose Katyusha rocket attacks on Israel triggered the latest series of Israeli attacks. Israel hopes its raids, which have forced 400,000 refugees to flee north toward Beirut, will pressure Lebanon and Syria, the dominant power in the country, to disarm Hezbollah. For years, Hezbollah has attacked Israeli troops and fired rockets at northern Israel to

drive Israeli troops from a zone they control in southern Lebanon to curb cross-border attacks. Hezbollah guerrillas fired a barrage of Katyusha rockets on Israel's northern Galilee panhandle again this morning. Israeli army radio said the projectiles crashed in northern Israel, causing damage but no casualties. Hours later, three Israeli helicopter gunships swooped down on Hezbollah targets near Beirut's international airport. They fired four rockets, damaging several buildings in the densely populated Shiite residential area of Hay Sullom, just east of the airport. Hezbollah guerrillas sealed off the area, roughed up journalists and tried to confiscate cameras and film. A 2-year-old girl was rushed to Ghadir Hospital with a severe head wound and later died. Two other civilians also were injured, said Hezbollah guerril-

las at the scene. An Israeli military statement said the aircraft attacked "a regional headquarters" of the Iranian-backed Hezbollah and pilots "reported good hits." Long lines formed in front of Beirut bakeries and gas stations today in a sign of increasing panic among the city's 1.2 million people. Israel's air force and artillery also struck villages in southern Lebanon and suspected guerrilla bases and infiltration trails on the edge of the Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley in the east. Three people were killed and 10 wounded when a house was destroyed by a direct artillery shell in the village of Jmetjme southeast of Tyre in southern Lebanon, U.N. officials said. The village is in an area policed by United Nations peacekeepers. Two 155-mm shells severely damaged the headquarters of Fijian troops serving with U.N. peacekeepers in Lebanon. No

casualties were reported in the attack on the southern Lebanese village of Qana, U.N. spokesman Timor Goksel said. Hezbollah today announced its first fatality of the offensive, saying a guerrilla was killed Monday. The Red Cross estimated today that 10,000 Israelis have left their homes in northern Israel since Thursday, including hundreds of children who were evacuated to safety in central Israel. Some 500 more youngsters were to be bused out of the coastal town of Nahariya today, Israeli radio said. Despite a rush of diplomatic activity, prospects seemed dim for a cease-fire. Prime Minister Shimon Peres of Israel said his country was prepared to discuss peace but would not initiate talks. The intensity of the Israeli campaign has been colored in part by Peres' desire to prove to Israeli voters that he is not soft on security.

Lebanon warned the U.N. Security Council that Middle East peace process was at risk, and the 15-member council discussed the fighting Monday. No formal action was taken. The United States, which opposes any clear U.N. condemnation of Israel, was trying to arrange a truce based on a 1993 arrangement under which Israel and Hezbollah refrain from targeting civilians. Israel radio said Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharaa of Syria told U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher that his country was ready to help arrange a truce. There was no confirmation of the report. France's foreign minister, Herve de Charette, also was trying to mediate a cease-fire. He met with Israeli leaders, then flew to Syria later today. On arrival in Damascus, de Charette characterized the situation as "difficult" and said he saw "no signs of improvement on the horizon."

Prosecutors urge stiff sentence for ex-Congressman

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Former Congressman Walter Tucker III should spend nearly five years in jail for selling out his constituency by taking bribes and then refusing to admit it, a prosecutor told a judge. Tucker's "personal philoso-

phy was to lie and extort and line your own pocket and your families' and never take responsibility," special assistant U.S. attorney Steven Madison said Monday at a sentencing hearing. The prosecutor recommended

a 46-month to 57-month prison term for Tucker, convicted last year of extortion and tax fraud after a trial that featured secretly recorded tapes capturing Tucker taking bribes from an FBI informant. Judge Consuelo B. Marshall still had to hear from Tucker's attorney, Robert Ramsey Jr., who is seeking a sentence of no more than 16 months. Tucker, 38, was convicted on Dec. 8 of seven counts of extortion and two counts of tax fraud for extorting \$30,000 in bribes and cheating on his income

taxes while mayor of Compton in 1991 and 1992. Prosecutors accused him of selling his vote to support a \$250 million waste-to-energy project. Tucker, a Democrat and ordained minister, said he was a victim of government entrapment. He came to court Monday clutching two Bibles. "I'll just keep praying and we'll see what happens," he said. Tucker, who was elected to Congress in 1992, resigned a week after his conviction rather than face possible expulsion.

Post Cereal cutting prices 20 percent in effort to boost sales

NEW YORK (AP) — Post Cereal is cutting prices for brands such as Spoon Size Shredded Wheat and Raisin Bran an average of 20 percent and making its coupons good for any Post cereal. Post is betting that the price cuts will give a boost to the cereal business, which shrank slightly last year and has been flat so far this year. Post's own cereal sales have been declining, analysts said.

The company is taking aim at high prices and the frustration of cruising the crowded cereal aisle comparing a clutch of coupons to the more than 200 brands in a typical grocery store. "We expect this will reignite growth in the ready-to-eat cereal market," said Mark Leckie, executive vice president and general manager of the Post Cereal division of Kraft Foods, Inc.

Man of letters feels lost in 'modern' communication

DEAR ABBY: What has happened to communication in America? When I write to someone, I discuss what is going on in my life, inquire about the health, happiness, and what is going on in the lives of mutual friends. I generally try to carry on a written conversation that would delight the reader. If I receive a reply, it is usually on a scrap of paper, or written to be mailed to 20 other people, and starts out, "Hi, just a short note to keep in touch..." Maybe they should just say, "Hi, just a short note to say I can't be bothered to formulate a real letter. I am too lazy, illiterate, insensitive, or all of the above." Abby, are people's lives so shallow they have nothing to say? Or are they so busy that they have nothing to give of themselves in simple written language? Is it possible in this modern age that communication has been disconnected or is no longer in service? — KYLE

disagreement with a friend and we have decided to let you be the judge. If a couple is engaged to be married, and the woman decides to end the engagement, should she return the engagement ring? — B.A. HEITKAMP, CINCINNATI DEAR B.A.: The ring goes back. When a woman accepts an engagement ring, she is also making a promise to marry the man who gave it to her. If she changes her mind, the ring should be returned. Occasionally, when the man breaks the engagement, he may offer to let the woman keep the ring, but he is not obligated to do so. Easy rule: The ring belongs to the person who paid for it, until the marriage has taken place. DEAR ABBY: I had to chuckle when I heard your comment about "sex" on the first date. (You had misheard the question on the "Larry King Live" show.) I had an experience in my younger days with a girl I wasn't particularly enamored with. When I asked her for a kiss on our first date, she said, "No, not on our first date!" I answered quickly, "Well, how about on the last date?" — PHIL FROM JERSEY DEAR ABBY: In response to the letter you had some time ago about sleeping in the nude: In the late '40s, I worked for Dr. Karl Menninger at the well-known clinic in Topeka, Kan. He always recommended sleeping in an extra-large gown or nothing. His theory was tight nightwear (pajamas included) tends to nudge one's nerves, making for a restless night. My husband always said, "Nightgowns should be on the floor near the bed in case of fire." We have been married for 46 years. — MRS. ROSE SPICER, REELSVILLE, IND.



Abigail Van Buren Columnist

DEAR ABBY: I am having a

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HOROSCOPE

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17: This is a most unusual year, when you make big, important changes. You need not always jump at the first offer, but entertain all options in career matters. If you are a man, you might consider your identity and your role in the world and make suitable adjustments. If you are a woman, you might revise your point of view about the man in your life and about your work as well. If you are single, your status could change. If attached, make sure to consult one another about significant decisions. TAURUS helps you make money. The Stars Show: The Kind of Day You'll Have: 5-Dynamic; 4-Positive; 3-Average; 2-So-so; 1-Difficult. ARIES (March 21-April 19) What was clear before may leave you scratching your head now. A change in plans is professionally strategic. Communicate directly. Great ideas come if you brainstorm. Look for solutions with a boss. Humor plays a significant role. Tonight: Burn the midnight oil. *** TAURUS (April 20-May 20) Maintain a low profile in the face of gossip and changeability. Solutions come naturally if you listen. Do not take another's statement as definitive. Make resolutions about your boundaries. Good news comes late in the day. Tonight: Take a nap, and then head out. *** GEMINI (May 21-June 20) Take the initiative with a friendship or a long-term goal. State your limitations and needs in making them realities. No question about it, a partner is confused. This person may be overly idealistic. Make new resolutions for yourself. Tonight: Strut your stuff. *** CANCER (June 21-July 22) Maintain a high profile, and

check out what is going on with a partner. There may be a lack of clarity. Patient discussion brings out this person's strengths. Consider a new professional beginning. You get what you want in due time. Tonight: Zero in on what you want. *** LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) Debate before making any decisions. Verify information at least twice. Review a situation with a friend so that you can detach your emotions and gain insights. Make long distance calls, spread news and open up to a new beginning. Tonight: Out to the movies. *** VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) You are thrown off by a child's response or attitude. Gain perspective, and think through a change involving a partnership. The more you contemplate, the more logical you become. News is exciting and involves distant elements. Tonight: Be with a favorite person. *** LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) Defer to another, and consider where he is coming from. It might be difficult to discern what is going on with you as well as with him. You might be projecting a lot. Communications on a one-to-one level with a trusted friend is illuminating. Tonight: Out on the town. *** SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) Work continues to be challenging. You are forced to redo a project or a key piece of work. Realize your constraints when dealing with a co-worker who might be in the business of creating confusion, not order. A partner gives you important feedback. Tonight: Work late. *** SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) Though you are full of frolic and bounce, don't let this attitude affect your finances. Understand what is motivating a financial enterprise. Being creative and taking risk are

tied together. Eye the long term and not the immediate. Tonight: Out and about. *** CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) You might be more confused than is necessary. Stop creating mystic fluff and try to get down to the realities. Romance blends and opens new doors if you allow it. Family matters dominate in a decision. Delay your verdict until later in the day. Tonight: Take a night off. *** AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) Pinch yourself, and take off your rose-colored glasses. You see life in a dynamic way. Be careful though you make decisions from a solid point of view. Be open to discussions and a surprise invitation. Consider a new purchase for your daily life. Tonight: Yipping away. *** PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) Your ability to see both sides of a story or problem comes into play. A friend badly needs your insight. You might feel you aren't getting through to them. Not so. Communications become more grounded later in the day. Use caution with money. Tonight: Your treat. *** For America's best extended horoscope, recorded by Jacqueline Bigar, call (900) 000-

0000, 99 cents per minute. Also featured are The Spoken Tarot and The Runes, which answer your yes-or-no questions. Callers must be 18 or older. A service of InterMedia Inc., Jenkintown, Pa. ©1996 by King Features Syndicate, Inc.

Spirit of the West Boutique & Salon. Blouses & Skirts by Karen McCarty. Rayon & Ultra Suede Fabrics with Detailed Applique. Creative Cuts, Colors & Perms by Randy. Layaway - Gift Certificate. Prec. Gift Wrapping. 1900 Gregg, 263-1515, M-S 9:30-6:00.

Big Spring Specialty Clinic of ORH ODESSA REGIONAL HOSPITAL. Dr. Norman Harris Obstetrician - Gynecologist will be at the clinic on Thursday, April 18th. for appointment call (915) 267-8226 616 S. Gregg St., Big Spring, Texas

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SCOREBOARD

Oakland 8, Texas 3
Cleveland 6, Boston 0
Toronto 6, Detroit 2
Chicago 11, Kansas City 10
Seattle 11, California 10

St. Louis 6, Pittsburgh 4
Cincinnati 3, Chicago 2, 10 innings
Colorado 11, San Diego 9

Portland 121, San Antonio 97
Seattle 112, Houston 108
Miami 110, New Jersey 93
Indiana 80, Charlotte 67
Sacramento 80, Denver 65

Got an item?

Do you have an interesting story idea?
Call Steve Reagan, 263-7331, Ext 113.

Report: Perot to buy Mavs

DALLAS (AP) — The Dallas Mavericks have been sold to a group led by Ross Perot Jr., a Dallas radio station reported today.

KLIF-AM quoted sources close to the negotiations who said Mavericks owner Don Carter closed the deal Monday night.

Perot is the son of Dallas billionaire Ross Perot.

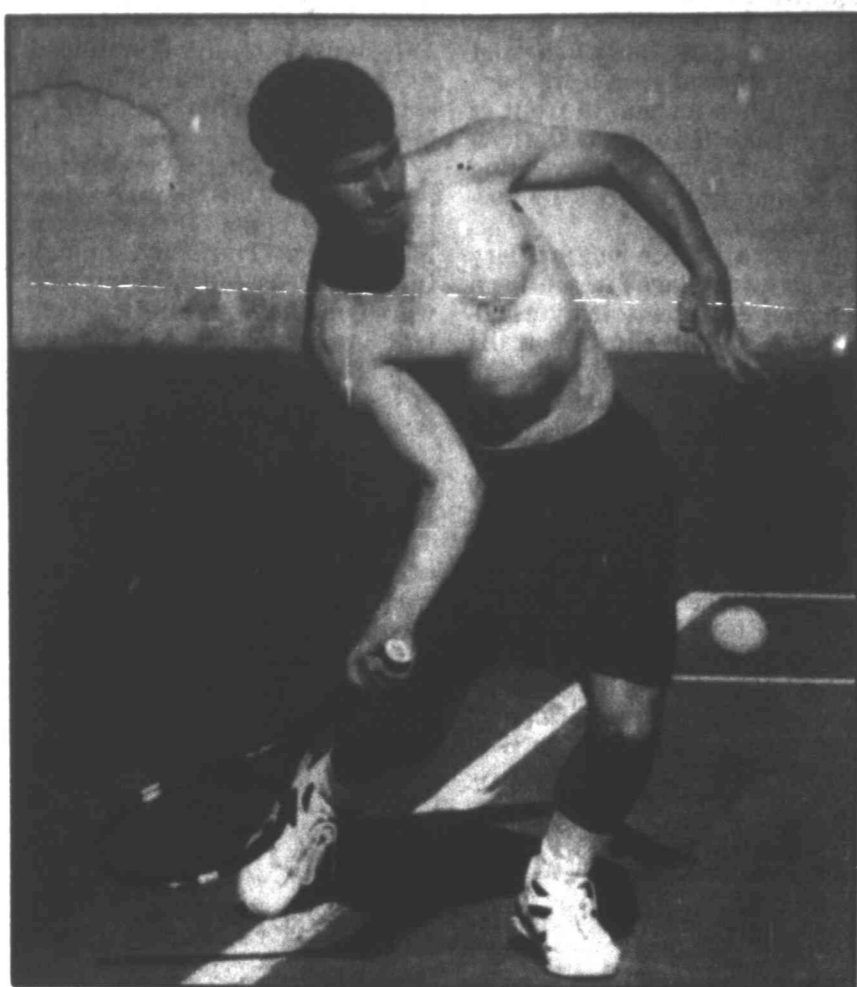
Carter recently announced his intention to sell the NBA club, although he said he wanted to keep a piece of the franchise.

The Mavericks and their co-tenants of Reunion Arena, the Dallas Stars of the NHL, have been negotiating with the city of Dallas for several months to build a new facility that would be owned by the teams.

Carter paid \$12 million to found the franchise in 1979. It is now valued at more than \$125 million.

Carter had high expectations for his club this season after their rebound last season under coach Dick Motta and young stars Jim Jackson, Jamal Mashburn and Jason Kidd.

Mashburn went down early in the season with an injury, and Jackson and Kidd have feuded for most of the year. The Mavericks failed to make the playoffs. Going into tonight's games, the Mavericks were 24-54 with four games remaining, tied with Milwaukee for the fourth-worst. Please see MAVS, page 7



Forsan tennis player Brian Fielder prepares to return a shot during team practice Monday at Forsan High School.

Traditionally strong Forsan finding strength in numbers

By STEVE REAGAN
Sports Editor

FORSAN — Forsan tennis players definitely won't be lonely at the upcoming regional tennis tournament. Almost the entire team will be there.

Six players — two in singles and four in doubles — will represent Forsan High School when the Region 1-2A tennis tournament is held April 24-25 at Abilene Christian University.

Strong regional representation is nothing new to Forsan.

"The tennis team has been strong here for 20 years," first-year coach Doug Parker said. "The people who we expected to win — the doubles teams — did. To say that doubles is a team strength is an accurate statement. But we got good play out of the others, too."

The doubles teams — Josh



Hedges and Rusty Rutledge in boys doubles and Candra Beeson and Jessie Ann Perez in girls doubles — both lived up to their No. 1 seeding at the recent District 6-2A tournament, winning their respective divisions.

The two doubles teams are similar in that they are both making a return trip to the regional tournament. Knowing what to expect should help,

Beeson said.

"It'll help, knowing what to look forward to, and knowing the type of competition we'll face," the senior said. "I think regional is going to be very hard, but both Jessie Ann and I are a lot stronger this year, and if we play our best tennis, we could do very well at regional."

Both teams also are helped by their familiarity with each other.

"Josh and Rusty (both seniors) have been playing together since they were freshmen," Parker said. "Rusty is the quicker of the two, and Josh is the more powerful of the two. They play off each other strengths very well ... and the girls are basically the same way."

Rutledge and Hedges don't hesitate when asked their goal at regional.

Please see FORSAN, page 7

Baseball imitates golf as Rangers fall to Athletics

ARLINGTON (AP) — The Texas Rangers had the bases loaded with one out and didn't score. The Oakland Athletics had none on and two out and scored five runs.

The opposing scenarios reminded Will Clark of the Masters.

"We had the same shot placements as (loser Greg) Norman. They had the same shot placements as (winner Nick) Faldo," Clark said Monday night after Oakland's big seventh inning carried it to an 8-3 victory over Texas.

The A's didn't get a green jacket. They did, however, win for the fourth time in five games to improve to 6-6,

putting them at .500 for the first time since last July 14.

It's a pretty good start, especially considering they've yet to play in Oakland.

"If we can continue to do well, maybe we won't go home; we'll just stay on the road," A's manager Art Howe said, laughing.

The Rangers had been doing a pretty good job of protecting their home turf. They had an eight-game winning streak at The Ballpark in Arlington including last season and, at 6-0, they were the last team in the majors not to lose at home this season.

But Texas blew the bases-loaded threat in the sixth,

imploded with two outs in the seventh and never again challenged as they lost for the fourth time in five games after beginning the year 7-0.

"That's baseball," Clark said.

The lead seasawed from 1-0 Oakland to 2-1 Texas to 3-2 Oakland after the first inning and half. Mickey Tettleton tied it at 3 with a solo homer in the third.

Things remained calm until the bottom of the sixth, when Ivan Rodriguez doubled with one out off reliever Aaron Small. Mike Mohler replaced him and walked the first two batters he saw to load the bases.

But Mohler (1-0) worked out

of the jam by getting Mark McLemore and Kevin Elster to pop out.

Texas' Gil Heredia (0-1) got two quick outs to open the seventh and had two strikes on Geronimo Berroa when, as Clark said, the shot placements changed.

Berroa bounced a single through the left side of the infield. Pedro Munoz doubled off the top of the left-center field wall. Terry Steinbach, who had homered earlier, walked. Singles by Jason Giambi, Scott Brosius and Mike Bordick put the game firmly in Oakland's grasp.

"I was sitting in the dugout thinking we were going to

score two or three runs," Heredia said. "Then I get two outs and they start hitting. It just shows that in this game, you can't take anything for granted."

Both teams had starters who were in the minors on Sunday, but neither was around when the game was decided.

Oakland's Steve Wojciechowski was lost with two out in the second after taking a line drive off his pitching hand. Texas' Darren Oliver, who had been sidelined since last June 26, gave up three runs and six hits in 6 1/3 innings.

"It could've been a lot worse than it was," Oates said.

Stars have long, hot summer to find out just what went wrong with season

DALLAS (AP) — If the Stars have learned anything living in Dallas, it's that Texas summers are long and hot. This one, however, probably will be the biggest scorcher since leaving Minnesota three years ago.

For starters, it's only mid-April and their season is over. The Stars made the postseason their first two seasons here, leaving their new fans believing the axiom that everyone in the NHL makes the playoffs.

Reality hit hard this year as Dallas went 26-42-14 to finish 11th among 13 Western Conference teams. The Stars were among 10 teams not advancing to the postseason.

Inconsistency was a big problem for Dallas. The Stars never won more than three straight, had losing streaks of five and six games, and won only twice between Dec. 5 and Jan. 17.

A big reason was players didn't know their teammates. Dallas set a franchise record by using 44 different players, yet still never found the right combination.

In-season additions Benoit Hogue and Joe Nieuwendyk were nice pickups, but not enough to fully complement Mike Modano, who led the

team with 81 points and 36 goals.

"It was a frustrating year," Modano said following Sunday's regular season finale, a 5-1 loss at home to Detroit.

"We lost the first game of the season, made a lot of mistakes and that dictated the rest of the season."

The turbulent season included changes in the front office.

Bob Galney stepped down as coach in January to concentrate on being strictly the general manager, and replaced himself with Ken Hitchcock.

About the same time, Norman Green sold the team to Dallas businessman Tom Hicks.

Hitchcock came in with great credentials and high praise. But his .407 winning percentage in 43 games wasn't much better than Galney's .395 in 38 games.

Hitchcock said he sees a decent foundation for success among the Stars, but additions are needed.

"There are people in that locker room who we need to get more out of," Hitchcock said. "We also need to figure out how to compete with teams in the higher echelons and what we need to do to become part of

that group."

Todd Harvey was probably one of the players Hitchcock was referring to playing below his potential. A big season was predicted for the rookie and he wound up spending time in the minors.

"We've got to think about what we did wrong and learn from our mistakes," Harvey said. "I think everybody has to have a better year. Obviously, we struggled and never got on track. A lot of guys didn't have the years they were supposed to have. It showed."

If signing free agents or trading for guys with big contracts is deemed the solution, then Hicks likely will pick up the tab. The multimillionaire and would-be Dallas Mavericks owner is dedicated to winning because he knows that is how to turn a profit.

Hicks paid \$84 million for the Stars and he didn't do it just for the notoriety.

Step one will be coming up with a solid roster, which is Galney's job. Step two will be luring back the roughly 1,200 fans per game who stopped coming out to games between last year and this year.

GIVE 'EM A HAND



Members of the Lil' Angels T-ball team applaud during opening ceremonies for the Big Spring United Girls Softball Association Monday evening.

BOTTOM of the ORDER	ON TAP Today Baseball Fort Stockton at Big Spring, 5 p.m. Howard College at Vernon (DH), 1 p.m. Coahoma at Winters, 5 p.m. Softball Snyder at Coahoma, 5 p.m.	STATE/NATION Blazers blast Spurs PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — The Portland Trail Blazers believe a 24-point victory over Midwest Division champion San Antonio ought to add some legitimacy to their late-season surge. Spurs coach Bob Hill isn't so sure. The Blazers took advantage of a San Antonio blowup at the end of the third quarter to blow out the Spurs 121-97 Monday night, San Antonio's worst loss of the season. It was Portland's 11th victory in 12 games and 17th in its last 19. The win clinched the No. 6 spot in the Western Conference and a probable first-round matchup against Utah. "Everybody's saying we've been doing this against teams we should be beating," Portland's Clifford Robinson said. "I wonder what they have to say now."	ON THE AIR (listings subject to change) Baseball MLB Florida at Atlanta, 6:35 p.m., TBS (ch. 11). Basketball NBA Houston at Phoenix, 8 p.m., TNT (ch. 28). Hockey NHL Playoffs First round game, 6:30 p.m., ESPN (ch. 30).
	Magic suspended NEW YORK (AP) — Magic Johnson was suspended for three games and fined \$10,000 by the NBA for bumping referee Scott Foster during the Los Angeles Lakers' game against Phoenix on Sunday. Johnson made contact with Foster when he was whistled for a technical after complaining about a non-call. He was then ejected, which carries an automatic \$1,000 fine. Pipplg wins marathon BOSTON (AP) — Germany's Uta Pipplg won her third consecutive Boston Marathon, turning a 30-second gap into a 75-second victory in the final three miles.		

TUESDAY

APR. 16

Table with 24 columns (KMD, KPEJ, KERA, FAM, KOSA, WFAA, KWES, WTBS, UNI, DISN, NASH, TMC, SHOW, HBO, KMLM, A&E, DISC, TNT, HSE, ESPN, AMC, BET) and 12 rows (6-12 PM) listing various TV programs and their channels.

HAGAR



BLONDIE



B.C.



FAMILY CIRCUS



DENNIS THE MENACE



GEECH



WIZARD OF ID



HI AND LOIS



GASOLINE ALLEY



SNUFFY SMITH



BEEBLE BAILY



THIS DATE IN HISTORY

The ASSOCIATED PRESS

Today is Tuesday, April 16,

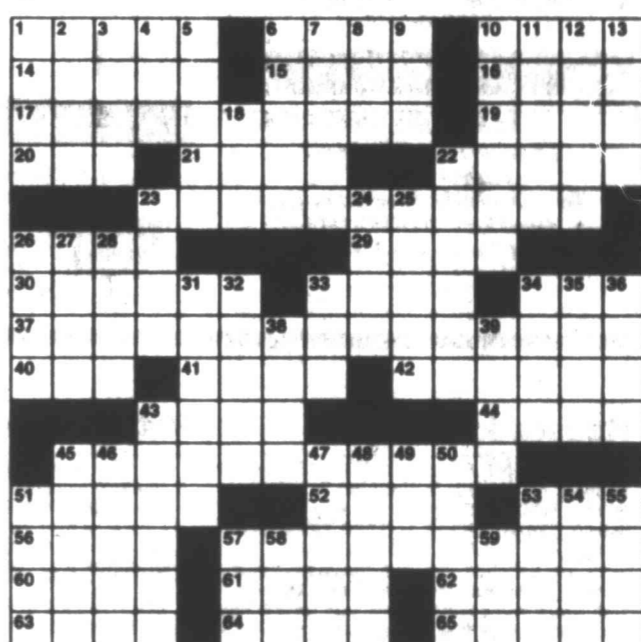
the 107th day of 1996. There are 259 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On April 16, 1789, President-elect Washington left Mount Vernon, Va., for his inauguration in New York.

On this date: In 1862, a bill ending slavery in the District of Columbia

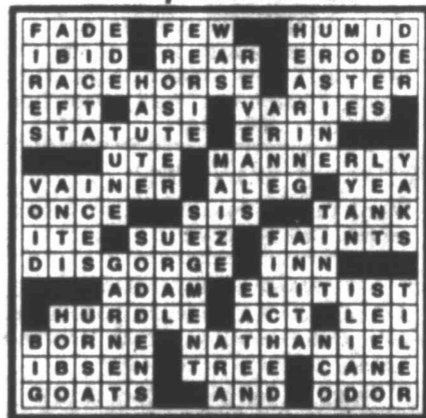
THE Daily Crossword by Chuck Deodens

- ACROSS 1 Mrs. Archie Bunker 6 Stagger 10 Witches 14 Arm bones 15 Give respite from 16 Heraldic border 17 TV sitcom 19 Lineage chart 20 "Man - String" (film) 21 Curse! 22 Fern leaf 23 TV sitcom 26 Cotton type 29 Parched 30 Concert venues 33 Pennant 34 Cassette abbr. 37 Invention central to this puzzle? 40 Explosive 41 - Jane 42 Texas oil town 43 New Delhi dress 44 Snivel 45 Sitcom (with "The") 51 Gymnast Cornacci 52 La Scala song 53 Exploit 56 Cartel acronym (with "The") 60 Allot 61 Subatomic particles 62 Sadness 63 Smell 64 Ram 65 Furniture set



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Monday's Puzzle solved:



- 47 Haggard 48 "my case" 49 Basketballer Smits 50 Alights 51 Dodger pitcher, Hideo 53 Citrus fruit 54 Ammo 55 To be, in Paree 57 Sloppy diner's need 58 Comic Costello 59 Debt letters

Big Spring Herald advertisement with contact information: (915) 263-7331, Fax #915-264-7205. Office hours: Monday thru Friday 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

RITZ advertisement: 491 E. Main St., 263-2478. All dogs go to heaven's gate. Unforgettable!

CINEMARK THEATRES advertisement: MOVIES 4 BIG SPRING, TX. 1901 E. FM 700. Shows: JAMES & THE GIANT PEACH, UP CLOSE & PERSONAL, PRIMAL FEAR, SGT. BILKO.