

BIG SPRING HERALD

Reflecting A Proud Community

MONDAY
April 14, 1997

50 cents

Bill would relieve judges of open meetings requirements

LUBBOCK (AP) — Meetings of district judges overseeing the state's county probation departments would become closed under a little-known piece of proposed Senate legislation. Sponsoring Sen. Robert Duncan, R-Lubbock, said the bill relieves judges of entangling requirements the open meetings law carries.

"There's a concern that, especially in the rural areas, it's difficult to comply with the routine sort of things," said Duncan, who said complaints from rural jurists in his far-flung West

Texas district prompted the bill. Probation departments are unusual in that their oversight comes from local district judges rather than state or local governmental bodies, like county commissioners' courts.

The Texas open meetings law doesn't apply to the judiciary, but an attorney general's ruling stated that judges are subject to the law in their administrative gatherings.

"I think it's bad public policy to allow a probation department to be governed by judges meeting in pri-

rate," said Dallas attorney and freedom of information advocate Paul Watler. "Open government is not always the most efficient way of doing business, but the public has an interest beyond mere efficiency in seeing that provisions for spending taxpayer money in public policy is open to public inspection and participation."

Senior District Judge Larry Gist countered that records from judges' administrative activity are public and would continue to be under the bill.

"It's caused a ton of problems," said

Gist, who coincidentally was once Watler's scoutmaster. "Every time I talk to my probation chief, does that have to be an open meeting?"

Since the attorney general is loathe to issue advisory opinions, Gist said he and other judges are afraid to conduct any private meetings for fear that they'll commit a criminal offense.

Neither Gist nor Watler was familiar with Duncan's bill until contacted by The Associated Press.

Gatherings with particular importance, such as annual budget meetings,

should be held in the sunlight, Gist said. However, he added, a law similar to Duncan's merely would clear up the confusion many judges face.

While conceding that Gist has the "best interests of the state of Texas in mind," Watler disagreed.

"District judges in Texas are all lawyers, and they're well-versed in the law," Watler said. "I don't think it's imposing too much of a burden that we ask of them the same things we ask of school boards and city councils, many of which are made up of non lawyers."

County library starting National Library Week activities with puppets

By CARLTON JOHNSON
Staff Writer

National Library Week kicks off today and runs through Friday and the Dora Roberts Howard County Library will celebrate National Library Week by adding the children's puppet stage to the line-up of features and services.

During National Library Week, Librarian Loraine Redman said there will be two puppet shows each day beginning at 4 p.m.

According to Redman, popcorn will be served during the shows, which will include "Man's Best Friend" featuring puppets Harold and Bernadette, and "The Bear's Toothache," featuring Boris the Bear.

Puppet Carlton will emcee the shows, according to Redman.

The children's puppet stage, which Redman promised would be a part of "Fantasy Land," was built by local resident Wilson Money, who built the stage for the library.

Redman is pleased with the interest in the library from the general public, especially young people.

Friends of the Library and the Big Spring Rotary Club.

The sale will be from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the old Howard County Library (library annex)

Fantasy Land has received overwhelming support and approval, according to Redman, and the puppet stage is just a feather in the cap of everyone who worked so hard to make it happen.

Redman added, the library staff and the Friends of the Library wanted the children's section to be a place where children will enjoy coming to learn, read and explore.

Some of the items that are a part of Fantasy Land include bean bags, a shelf for big books, little square cushions in primary colors, a globe of the world and posters with all of the flags of the world.

The children's summer reading program at the library will continue, but will be at the library annex (old Scurry Street location).

The summer reading program is again approaching and will be once a week. Children will set a goal to read so many books and if they reach their goal, they will receive a certificate as well as prizes from local merchants.

Also as part of the week-long celebration, the library will have a community book sale Saturday, sponsored by across from the courthouse, and will continue on April 26 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. as well.

Redman will give daily library tours at 10 a.m. during



HERALD photo/Jonathan Garrett
Dora Roberts Howard County Library employee Debra Askew lines bricks along the bottom of the library's new puppet stage in preparation for National Library Week observances slated to start today.

National Library Week.

Since the library opened, one of the most enjoyed features of the new facility is the improved access.

"Because we have so much more room, people have space to browse, sit, read or just

Please see LIBRARY, page 2

Early voting begins today in local races

By JOHN H. WALKER
Managing Editor

Early voting in three Big Spring City Council and three Big Spring Independent School District (BSISD) races got underway at 8 this morning and continues through 5 p.m. Tuesday, April 29. The election is Saturday, May 3.

Voters in city council districts 2, 4 and 6 may cast early ballots at City Hall while voters in BSISD districts 2 and 4, as well as the at large district, will vote on the first floor of the Howard County Courthouse.

Mail ballots may be requested up to April 29 by calling the county clerk's office, but they must be received in the clerk's office by 6 p.m. on election day.

A total of eight candidates are seeking the three city council seats, while six candidates are vying for the three school board seats.

In council District 2, incumbent Pat DeAnda is being challenged by federal prison employee Oscar Garcia and local businessman Bob Taylor, while in District 4, incumbent Tom Guess is being challenged by Howard College instructor Tommy Tume.

In District 6, three candidates are seeking to claim the seat

currently held by John Paul Anderson including local businessman Randy Mason and Greg Biddison and Fina employee Ray Rinard.

In the school district race, incumbent Larry Hollar is being challenged for Place 2 by Steve Jeter. Both candidates are in the insurance business. In Place 1, incumbent Don Baker is being challenged by Frank A. Long while at large incumbent Steve Frasier is being challenged by Mike Robinson.

Voters in the city council races will have an opportunity to hear the candidates respond to questions at a candidates forum at 7 p.m. next Monday at the Dora Roberts Community Center.

The eight candidates for three seats on the Big Spring City Council have been invited to participate in the forum and all but one, who has been out of town, has agreed.

The forum is being sponsored by the Big Spring Herald, Big Spring Cable TV and the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce.

A second forum featuring the candidates for the BSISD board had been planned, but scheduling conflicts among the incumbents have forced the cancellation of that forum.

Howard County pioneer family recognized as a 'Texas First Family'

Special to the HERALD

A Howard County pioneer family was recently recognized as a "Texas First Family". The descendants of the first local policeman, the late John M. Choate, received the certificates to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Texas statehood.

The family found out about the honor at its reunion last summer but the certificates and plaques were recently received.

What is so interesting about this honor is that both sides of the family, Choate's and his wife's, Cora Zaid Gibbs Choate, families were honored as being first families.

The certificates were issued in the names of Jonathan Bird and Richard C. Choat who are ancestors of Cora and John. Bird and Choat were citizens of the Republic of Texas before Texas received statehood in

1846.

One of their grandsons, Wade Choate, said the family name was originally spelled without the "e" on the end but he's not sure when it was added. Wade Choate is a former mayor of Big Spring and his first cousin, John Marshall "Sonny" Choate is currently a Howard County Commissioner.

Wade Choate said, "It's a great honor, especially since both sides of the family were recognized. It's a real nice honor."

Other local recipients of the certificates were Robert Choate Hill, Clela Hill Britton, Carroll Choate, the children of the late Joyce Choate Phillips, Dene Choate Sheppard as well as families of the only living J.M. Choate child, Merle Grace Choate Haygood of Valrico, Fla.

Dr. Jay T. Shurley, a grandson of the Choates, said the knowledge of their ancestry wasn't known by the children

and grandchildren until research was started by Mrs. Reuben Choate, a daughter-in-law from Phoenix. After she died, the project was picked up by Shurley and Dene Sheppard.

John Melton and Cora Gibbs were married Oct. 20, 1895, in Menard. She was the daughter of H.B. Gibbs, a sheriff and tax assessor of Mason County. He was the father of Mrs. Earl (Mame) Talbot and her husband was a mayor of Big Spring.

H.B. Gibbs was the son by previous marriage, of Mary Melinda Gibbs Earnest (Mrs. William T.) Patterson, pioneer ranchers in Howard County in the 1880s. The Pattersons were also parents of Zorah (Mrs. Pete) Johnson, an early day citizen of Big Spring. Shurley said before "Uncle Billy" Patterson died in 1926, five generations of this family were all living in Big Spring at the same time.

Mary Earnest was the daugh-

ter of Rachel Bird (Mrs. William F.) Earnest, who was, in turn, the daughter of Maj. Jonathan Bird, a Texas Ranger who led a company of soldiers and settlers who built Bird's fort in August 1841. This was the first white settlement in what is now the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, and for whom Birdville, the first county seat of Tarrant County, was named.

The Choate lineage through John Melton was from his father, John R. Choate, a Waco cowboy. John was the son of Richard C. Choat who entered Texas from Tennessee in 1839 with his father, John, settling in Shelby County with his wife, Rebecca Parmer. He later moved to Nacogdoches where John R. and four sisters were born.

Information about the Choate family was written by Dr. Jay T. Shurley. Features Editor Kellie Jones contributed to the report.



Courtesy photo
Cora Zaid Choate and John Melton Choate pose in front of their home in 1947. Their home was located at FM 700 and Gollad where Golden Corral is now located. The Choate family was recently recognized as being one of the "Texas First Families." Mr. Choate's family moved to Big Spring in the 1920s.

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TODAY'S WEATHER

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Today: Sunny and fair. High in the lower 70s. Low in the lower 40s.

Tuesday: Sunny, becoming partly cloudy in the evening. High around 75. Low in the 40s.

Extended outlook: Wednesday, partly cloudy. High in the 70s. Low in the 40s. Thursday and Friday, continued partly cloudy and warmer. Highs in the 80s. Lows each night in the 40s.

TABC officers praise local students after prom

By JOHN A. MOSELEY
News Editor

Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC) officers lived up to their promise to take part in the TABC's statewide program dubbed "Operation Safe Prom-Safe Graduation 1997," keeping a close eye on students attending the Big Spring High School prom Saturday.

However, increased scrutiny by TABC and other law enforcement officers did not result in

increased minor in possession arrests.

Instead, local TABC agent James White said there were "absolutely no violations by kids at the prom ... none that I detected, none spotted by school officials and none by police officers."

White said TABC officers have always kept a relatively close eye on not only prom night, but several days prior to the events.

"Generally we don't go inside the building and spot check the

kids, but we did this year," White said. "But there weren't any problems. That's something that the students and their parents should be commended for. This was a very calm and orderly prom and I'm proud of these kids ... the whole community should be."

White said officers normally increase scrutiny of liquor stores and others that sell alcoholic beverages about a week before the prom.

"The kids that plan to drink usually don't go out and try to

get their liquor or beer the night of the prom," he said. "Historically, our problems have been with the kids drinking before or after the prom. That wasn't the case this year."

"We even made a late sweep of the beer stores that evening and didn't run into any violations," White added.

White is one of about 200 TABC agents who will be making prom night inspections this spring. Most of them targeting smaller schools that don't hire police officers for security

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MONDAY

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Table with 33 columns (stations) and 12 rows (timeslots) listing various TV programs and their corresponding channels.

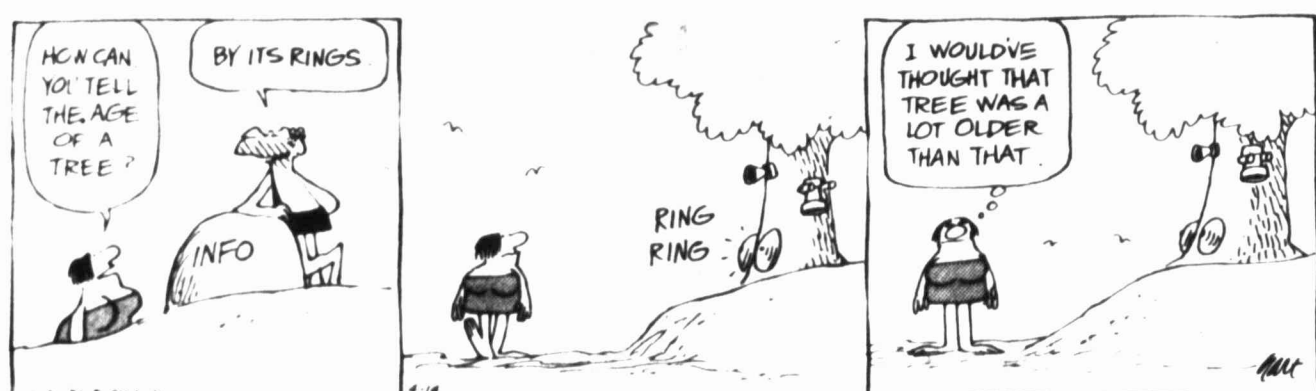
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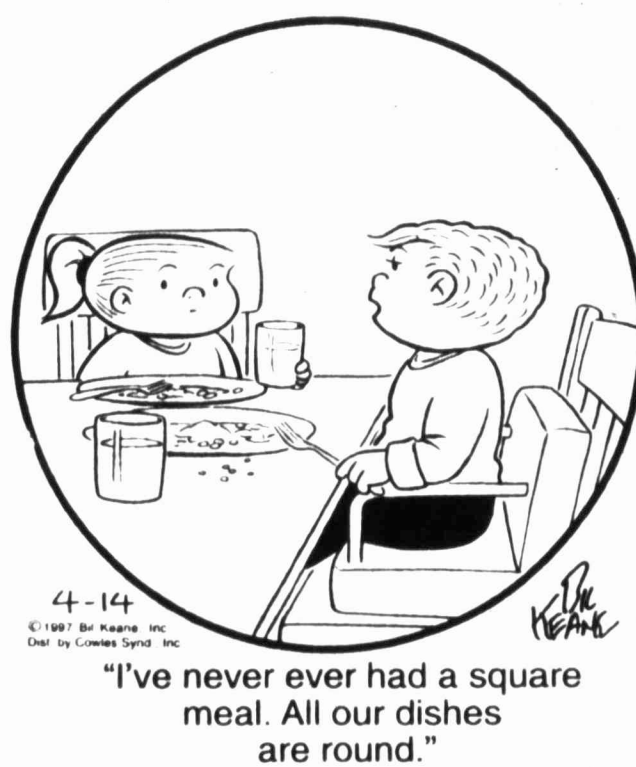
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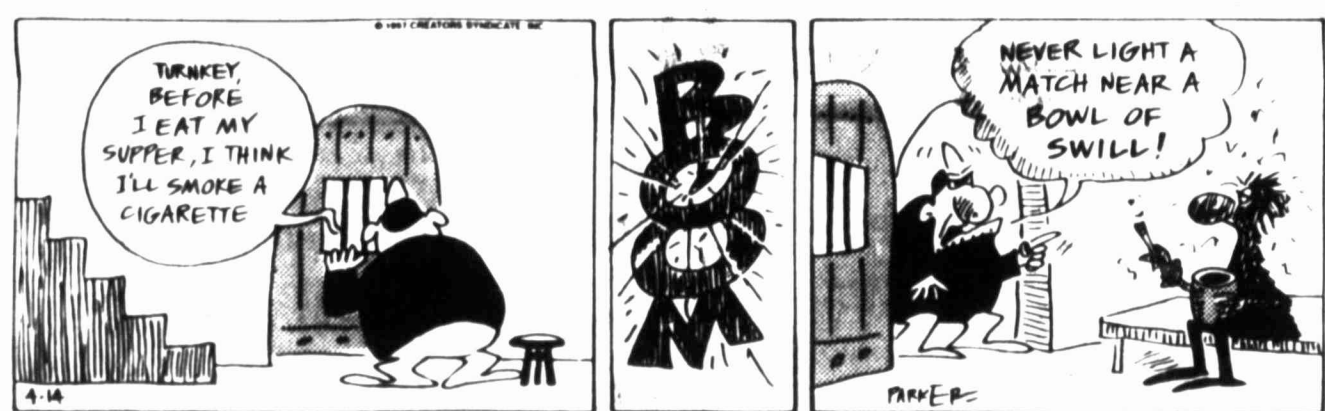
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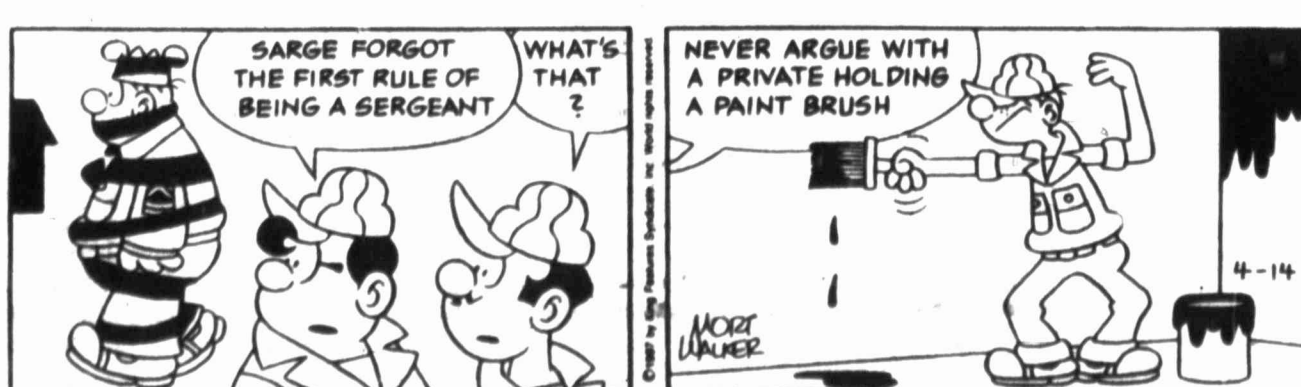
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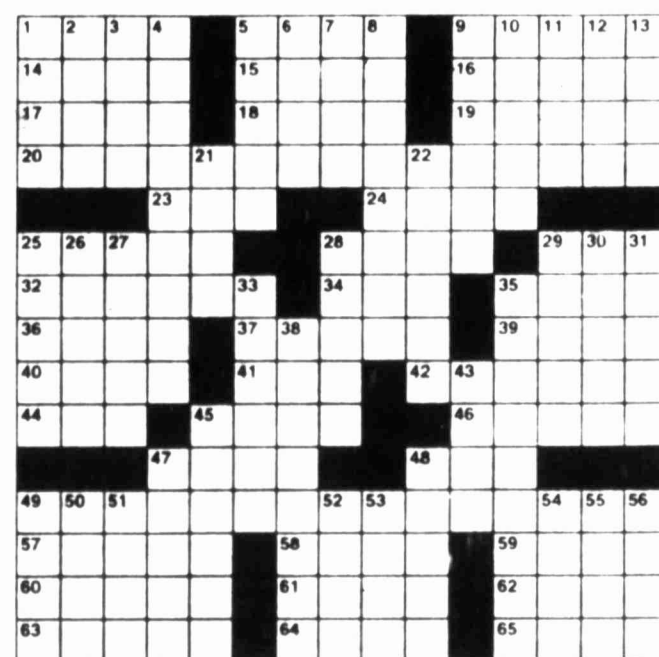


THIS DATE IN HISTORY

The ASSOCIATED PRESS

Today is Monday, April 14, the 104th day of 1997. There are 261 days left in the year.

THE Daily Crossword by Alvin Becker



- ACROSS: 1 Baby bed, 5 Training place for athletes, 9 Afghan city, 14 Fabric with twisted yarn, 15 Melody, 16 Coeur d'Alene, 17 Hair style, 18 Poly, 19 Cowboy rope, 20 Cavalry call, 23 Nick, 24 Depressed, 25 Get lost!, 28 Insect feeler, 29 Tub, 32 Give a cue to, 34 Mil. inst., 35 Hard to find, 36 Win easily, 37 Similar, 39 Yale students, 40 Bleaters, 41 Legal thing, 42 In addition, 44 Old name for Tokyo, 45 Cleaving tool, 46 Main artery, 47 Drop, 48 Egyptian god, 49 Erred at 3rd, perhaps, 57 Clad, 58 Eaves site, 59 Place for heroes, 60 Old-womanish, 61 Info, 62 Actor Jannings of old films, 63 Alma, 64 Play a leading part, 65 A Kennedy, DOWN: 1 Weapon for smiting, 2 Certain property, 3 China, 4 Training sites, 5 Gem weight, 6 Elvis' middle name, 7 Temperate, 8 Retailies, 9 In great need, 10 Slur over, 11 Not phoney, 12 Part of A.M., 13 Social functions, 14 Drainage pit, 22 Primed, 25 Tool, 26 Large group, 27 Lover, 28 Composure, 29 Bravery, 30 In profession, 31 Seed cover, 33 Prepped a roof, 35 Olajuwon, e.g., 38 Big cats, 43 Pacific isle, 45 Tributary stream, 47 Stone pillar, 48 Until now, 49 Author Stoker, 50 A Chaplin, 51 News item, 52 Patsy, 53 Church tribunal, 54 Show sample, 55 Yalies, 56 Upset

Advertisement for Big Spring Herald, including contact information (915-263-7331), staff list (Chuck Williams, John H. Walker, etc.), and office hours.

Frideric Handel died in London. In 1775, the first American society for the abolition of slavery was organized by Benjamin Franklin and Benjamin Rush. In 1828, the first edition of Noah Webster's 'American Dictionary of the English Language' was published. In 1902, J.C. Penney opened his first store, in Kemmerer, Wyo. In 1912, the British liner Titanic collided with an iceberg in the North Atlantic and began sinking. In 1931, King Alfonso XIII of Spain went into exile, and the Spanish Republic was proclaimed. In 1939, the John Steinbeck novel 'The Grapes of Wrath' was first published. In 1981, the first test flight of America's first operational space shuttle, the Columbia, ended successfully with a landing at Edwards Air Force Base in California. In 1986, Americans got first word of the U.S. air raid on Libya (because of the time difference, it was the early morning of April 15th where the attack occurred). In 1994, two American F-15 warplanes inadvertently shot down two U.S. helicopters over northern Iraq, killing 26 people, including 15 Americans. Ten years ago: Secretary of State George P. Shultz met at the Kremlin with Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev, who proposed the elimination of short-range nuclear missiles in East Germany and Czechoslovakia as part of an arms control agreement with the United States. Five years ago: Libya cut itself off from the world for 24 hours to mark the sixth anniversary of the U.S. air raid, the same day the World Court rejected Libya's appeal to prevent sanctions against it for refusing to turn over suspects in the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103. One year ago: Israel's four-day-old military campaign against Hezbollah guerrillas continued, with aircraft bombing guerrilla strongholds in Beirut and southern Lebanon, provoking guerrilla vows to turn northern Israel into a 'fiery hell.' Today's Birthdays: Actor Sir John Gielgud is 93. Actor Rod Steiger is 72. Actor Bradford Dillman is 67. Country singer Loretta Lynn is 62. Actress Julie Christie is 57. Thought for Today: 'History repeats itself and history never repeats itself are about equally true... We never know enough about the infinitely complex circumstances of any past event to prophesy the future by analogy.' - George Macaulay Trevelyan, English historian (1876-1962).