

Alcohol, drug use down among Texas teens

AUSTIN (AP) — Alcohol and drug use has declined among Texas teen-agers, according to results of a state survey released Monday, but the drop isn't enough to satisfy a coalition of groups battling teen drinking.

"Parents have to understand that (alcohol) is not the lesser of two evils," said Jay Kimbrough, director of the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse. "This is a killer."

More than 200,000 students in grades 4-12 completed surveys this year issued by the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, which has done the survey every two years since 1988.

Among secondary students, there was a 15-percent decline in the number of students who had used tobacco in the month before

the survey in 2000, compared with the 1998 survey. Past-month use of marijuana fell 10 percent among secondary students from 1998 to 2000, and past-month alcohol use dropped 6 percent.

Declines also were noted over the past decade. According to the survey, 51.1 percent of students in grades 7-12 reported this year that they had used tobacco at least once, down from 56.2 percent in the 1990 survey.

Another question asked the same students if they had used tobacco in the past month.

The rate was 22.9 percent in 1990 and 22.4 percent this year.

The 1990 figures were the latest available for those two questions.

"Why is tobacco down? Because that message has

been very concentrated in the past year," Kimbrough said.

The percentage of secondary students reporting that they had drunk alcohol at least once fell from 75.5 percent in 1988 to 70.7 percent in 2000. Students who said they had used alcohol in the past month fell from 42.8 percent in 1988 to 36.1 percent in 2000.

Ellen Ward, executive director of Texans Standing Tall, a coalition dedicated to preventing underage drinking, noted the rates of students in lower grades who have drunk alcohol are decreasing, but the rates are getting higher in grades 9-12.

The students still feel drinking is a "rite of passage" and nobody is stopping them from drinking, Ward said.

Illicit drug use also fell for

secondary students, according to the study. Past-month use fell from 17.1 percent in 1988 to 15.4 percent in 2000.

But the number of students who said they had only used marijuana, but no other drugs, in the past month climbed from 4.2 percent in 1988 to 5.5 percent in 2000. Past-month cocaine and crack cocaine use also rose from 2.3 percent to 3.1 percent in those survey years.

Keeping young people focused on prevention is the way to cut drug and alcohol use even further, Ward said.

Also at the news conference, the Alliance Against Underage Drinking, which involves more than 40 public and private organizations launched a new web site that provides information, statistics, a media kit, youth activities and links to other resources.

Guard union asking state for pay increase

HOUSTON (AP) — A union representing Texas correctional officers is rallying the guards to lobby the Legislature next year for pay raises and changes in their job status to make them more like the state's other state law enforcement officers.

The Correction Council 7 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees is urging guards to contact state lawmakers in support of changes like including improved training, increased salaries and a taller career ladder.

"We're underpaid, underappreciated and stretched too thin," said Council 7 spokesman Brian Olsen. "If we're

going to recruit and keep good officers, we need to change not just the amount we pay our (guards) but the way we think of them."

Texas Department of Criminal Justice officials said they are on the same page as Council 7 when it comes to guard pay, training and professional development.

"We support all of that," said TDCJ spokesman Glen Castlebury, who vowed his department would push for legislative changes. "We believe in it. We think it's needed. We fought for it in the past."

Texas, which has the second-largest state prison system behind California, ranks 46th in the nation in pay.

Tommy Sells convicted on capital murder charge

DEL RIO (AP) — The father of a slain 13-year-old girl said he hopes Tommy Lynn Sells gets the death penalty instead of a life prison sentence when the punishment phase of his murder trial begins.

"He took my baby. It's hard to explain the rage," said Terry Harris, the father of Kaylene Harris, who was killed in their home on New Year's Eve. "Hopefully he'll get what's coming to him."

A jury convicted Sells of capital murder and attempted murder after 70 minutes of deliberating Monday.

Sells, a 36-year-old former carnival worker, was accused of breaking into the Harris family's mobile home near Del Rio around 4:30 a.m. on Dec. 31 and slitting the necks of Kaylene and a young friend, who survived the attack and testified against Sells.

Sells' court-appointed attorney urged the jury to convict him of murder

rather than capital murder. They said the state did not prove that Sells broke in specifically to sexually assault the girl, a component that could make the crime punishable by death.

Defense attorney Victor Garcia said the verdict was not a surprise.

"It's very difficult because of the evidence and the photographs," he said. "In this case, we have a victim who testified and it's hard for the jury to get past that."

Sells had pleaded guilty to attempted murder for the attack on Kaylene's friend Krystal Surles.

"I think that's what he deserved," said 11-year-old Krystal after the verdict. "I think I can sleep and not have nightmares, and maybe do better in my own bed."

Garcia told jurors during closing arguments that they had every right to be angry at Sells for "the most brutal, heinous, senseless murder."

"I'm not trying to justify what Tommy Lynn Sells did," Garcia said. "I hate him too, more than you can imagine."

But, he said, "there was no evidence of any sexual assault."

Although Sells admitted to sexually assaulting the girl in a confession made Jan. 7, a week after the slaying, he denied it on Jan. 2, the day of his arrest, Garcia said. He told jurors that an investigator pressured Sells into making the admission in order to charge him with capital murder.

In his closing argument, assistant district attorney Fred Hernandez referred to the testimony of a medical examiner who said that Kaylene had a bruise and redness in her genital area.

Hernandez told jurors that the girl's shorts and underwear were cut, and he recounted the Jan. 7 written confession, in which Sells graphically described a sex-

ual assault on the girl.

"He knew exactly what he was doing," Hernandez said.

Waving the long kitchen knife that investigators found in a field near Sells' trailer, Hernandez asked jurors to imagine what the girl must have gone through.

He held up 8-by-10 photographs of a happy, vibrant girl and close-ups of her broken, bloody body after the attack.

"This is what Tommy Lynn Sells did to Kaylene Harris," Hernandez said. "This is what he reduced her to."

Hernandez recalled the testimony of Krystal, who had been sleeping above Kaylene on a bunk bed. Krystal said she saw Sells slash the neck of her friend before coming after her.

Since Sells' arrest in January, authorities say he has confessed to murders in seven states dating back to the 1980s.

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Judge reduces Davidian survivors sentences

A federal judge overstepped his authority by exceeding federal sentencing guidelines for five Branch Davidians, the same judge cut those prison terms by several years on Monday.

U.S. District Judge Walter S. Smith's sentence reductions apply to six Davidians convicted in 1994.

Smith's order reduces from 40 years to 15 years the sentences he imposed on Kevin Whitecliff, Jaime Castillo, Renos Avvaam and Brad Branch in 1994 for using a weapon during a crime of violence, according to the Waco Tribune-Herald.

Graeme Craddock, who was sentenced to 10 years for possession of a grenade, and 10 years for using a firearm, had his sentence reduced to 15 years.

Although he didn't appeal, Livingstone Fagan also earned a reduced sentence — from 40 to 15 years — after Smith said it would be "manifestly unfair" not to cut Fagan's sentence.

The Supreme Court on June 5 set aside the lengthy

prison sentences given to the five Branch Davidians who survived a 1993 siege at the sect's Mount Carmel compound. The court ruled that Smith misused an anti-gun law to increase their punishment.

After Monday ruling, Davidians attorneys said they were "blown away" by the reduced sentences and the possibility their clients could earn early releases or be transferred to a lower security prison.

"We are very happy for our clients," Waco attorney Richard Ferguson told the Tribune-Herald.

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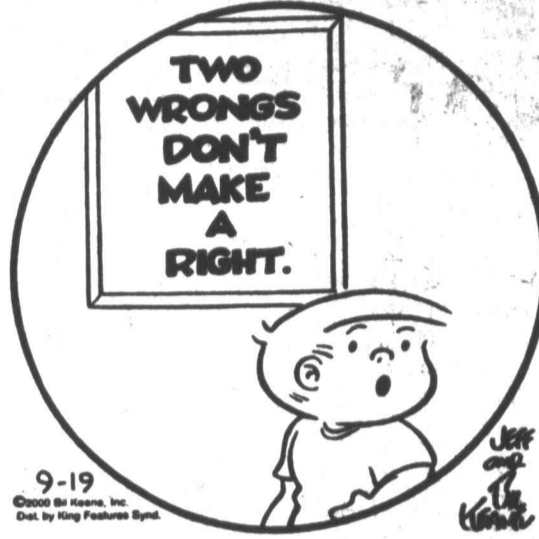
Table with 24 columns representing different TV channels and their respective programming for Tuesday, Sept 19. Columns include KNSD, KPEA, KERA, FAM, KOSA, WFAA, KWES, WTBS, UPR, DISN, NASH, TMC, SHOW, HBO, KMLN, A&E, DISC, TNT, and TLC.

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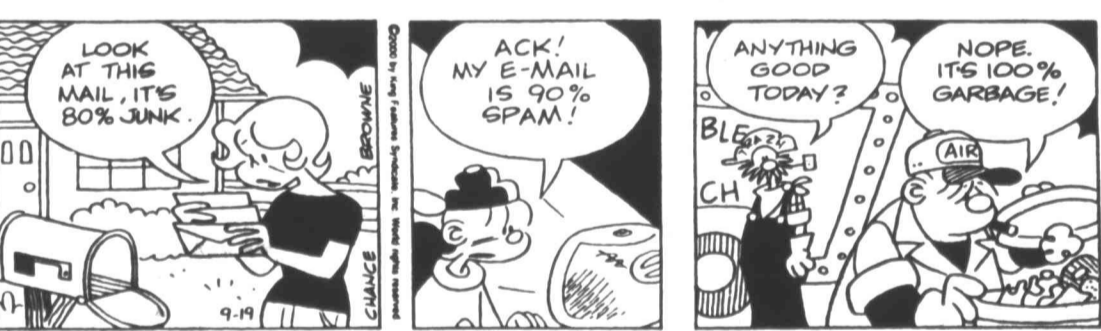
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THIS DATE IN HISTORY

The ASSOCIATED PRESS Today is Tuesday, Sept. 19, the 263rd day of 2000. There are 103 days left in the year. Today's Highlight in History: On Sept. 19, 1777, during the Revolutionary War, American soldiers won the first Battle of Saratoga. On this date: In 1796, President Washington's farewell address was published. In 1881, the 20th president of the United States, James A. Garfield, died of wounds inflicted by an assassin. In 1906, addressing the annual dinner of The Associated Press in New York, Mark Twain said

there were only two forces that can carry light to all the corners of the globe... the sun in the heavens and The Associated Press down here. In 1934, Bruno Hauptmann was arrested in New York and charged with the kidnap-murder of the Lindbergh infant. In 1956, President Juan Peron of Argentina was ousted after a revolt by the army and navy. In 1957, the United States conducted its first underground nuclear test, in the Nevada desert. In 1959, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev reacted angrily during a visit to Los Angeles upon being told that, for security reasons, he wouldn't be allowed to visit Disneyland. In 1960, Cuban leader Fidel Castro, in New York

to visit the United Nations, angrily checked out of the Shelburne Hotel in a dispute with the management. Today's Birthdays: Author Roger Angell is 80. Rhythm-and-blues musician Billy Ward is 79. Former Defense Secretary Harold Brown is 73. Actress Rosemary Harris is 70. Actor David McCallum is 67. Actor Adam West is 62. Singer-songwriter Paul Williams is 60. Singer Bill Medley is 60. Singer Sylvia Tyson (Ian and Sylvia) is 60. Golfer Jane Blalock is 55. Singer David Bromberg is 55. Singer Freda Payne is 55. Rock singer-musician Lol Creme (10cc) is 53. Actor Jeremy Irons is 52. Actress Twiggy Lawson is 51. TV personality Joan Lunden is 50. Singer-producer Daniel Lanois is 49. Actor Scott Colomby is 48.

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

Crossword puzzle grid with clues listed on the left. Clues include: 1 Profit's opposite, 5 Dumbfound, 9 Heathen, 14 Unsightly fruit?, 15 Yucatan people, 16 Musical set in the Depression, 17 Yogi's remains?, 19 Framework posts, 20 Med. printout, 21 Those feeling remorse, 22 Group seats, 23 The Swedish Nightingale, 24 Forum, 26 Language variation, 29 Long way off, 30 Org. of Flyers and Jets, 33 "True Grit" star, 34 Writer Pasternak, 35 Sentimental drive, 36 Jason's ship, 37 Wild, 38 Cudgel, 39 Lodging house, 40 Party-givers, 41 The ones here, 42 Three-way junction, 43 Type of code, 44 Reprimands, 45 Strikes to knockout, 47 Sulk, 48 Razor sharpener, 50 Deep crack, 52 Before: pref., 55 Get up, 56 Deer's escape?, 58 Cruise ship, 59 Ms. Bombek, 60 Usher follower?, 61 Roman robes, 62 Burn a bit, 63 Explot, 4 Knight's title, 5 Quantity, 6 Tapered off, 7 Ogler, 8 Root-bark flavoring, 9 Quarterbacks, at times, 10 Writer Chekhov, 11 Novel wildebeest?, 12 Opera set in Egypt, 13 Highland loch, 18 Picking solution, 23 Host after Carson, 25 Bahster, 26 Stand by, 27 Judy of "Laugh-in", 28 Circle of young swans?, 29 Main artery, 31 Confain, 32 Places for earrings, 34 Bags, 37 Goller's call, 38 Voucher, 40 Ferry, WV, 41 Opposable digit, 44 Share top billing, 46 Book before Joel, 47 Cleveland suburb, 48 Veteran sailor, 49 Threesome, 51 Tortoise's opponent, 52 Rose of baseball, 53 Evaluate, 54 Scraped (by), 57 as a beet

Monday's Puzzle Solved grid with words filled in: CROWN, PLOT, SCAM, RIGOR, HOSE, NADA, OPERAHOUSE, ODOR, WEED, INT, TAWDRY, LONE, REDEYES, FOMENT, SHREDS, AROSE, SPIES, HEP, LETS, GLAND, FATE, LOO, TRUCE, MICRO, REHIRE, DARKEN, ASHRAMS, GENT, GLORIA, ERA, RAMP, LIMA, CABIN, FEVER, OMEN, ETAS, REESE, WEST, SENT, ASCAP