

TUESDAY

Snyder Daily News

May 1
1990
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Ask Us



IN PROTEST — West Elementary Classroom Teacher's Association members were among those wearing armbands today in protest of the state lawmakers' inability to work out a school finance plan. Pictured left to right are Sherry

Patterson, third grade; Judy Brown and Irene Masters, fourth grade; and Francene Allen, resource instructor and president of the local CTA. (SDN Staff Photo)

120 people expected for joint civic club luncheon Wednesday

More than 120 people are expected Wednesday for a joint civic club luncheon featuring the chairman of the Texas State Chamber of Commerce at the Snyder Country Club.

Farrington will address members of the Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis and Jaycees in the noon meeting. Among the topics will be industrial development and community attrition.

In addition to duties with the state chamber of commerce, Farrington serves on the boards of Children's Health Services of Texas, Circle Ten Council of Boy Scouts, Presbyterian Healthcare Systems, Southwestern Medical Foundation, State Fair of Texas, Texas Association of Taxpayers and Texas Research League.

He is a graduate of the University of North Texas, where he is chairman of the board of regents. He is also a member of the Southwestern University board of trustees and serves on the Engineering Foundation Advisory Council for the University of Texas.

The native of Kermit is past president of Texas Utilities and chairman and CEO of its principal subsidiary, TU Electric. He also served as president of TU's Dallas Power and Light Division.

His professional involvement includes being chairman of the U.S. Council for Energy Awareness. He is a member of the Edison Electric Institute board and chairman of the EEI policy committee on governmental affairs.

CTA dons armbands in protest

Members of the Snyder Classroom Teachers Association were wearing black armbands today to protest the failure of lawmakers to resolve the state's school finance crisis.

"Our children shouldn't have to worry if their schools will be open and educators should not have to fear they won't be paid," said Francene Allen, local CTA president and a learning resource instructor at West Elementary.

"It's time we let our elected leaders know that we're not going to just stand by while a hardship is inflicted on us and our schools. We ask all Texans to join us in protesting how long this has been prolonged," she said in a prepared statement.

Some 185 armbands were handed out to local CTA members. There are approximately 235 classroom teachers in the local district.

Allen is urging other educators and the public to join teachers in wearing black armbands and in "calling the governor and our



JERRY FARRINGTON

Absentee voter turnout light in 5 county board elections

Today is the final day to vote absentee in the three local and two area board elections, but voting clerks weren't anticipating a rush at the polls.

The elections are set this Saturday for the Snyder, Hermleigh and Ira school district boards, Western Texas College board and Snyder City Council.

"I guess you could say that it's been kinda light," grinned Hermleigh Superintendent Jerry Church, who reported that only four people had voted absentee in the Hermleigh board election as of this morning.

Snyder ISD has had only 15 absentee voters while Ira reported 23. The Ira board features two contested races and school officials there said that 23 absentee voters represented a good turnout.

On Saturday, voters will cast their ballots at city hall, Ira Community Center and the Hermleigh School.

The race generating the most interest in the county is Place 2

on the Western Texas College board, which is being sought by Carl Williams and William R. "Bill" Hibbs. Some 78 people had voted absentee at the college as of this morning.

Snyder City Hall reported only 11 people had voted absentee in the city council elections.

Absentee voting began April 16. There had been some confusion over whether the final date for absentee voting is today, May 1, or Wednesday. However all the boards indicated this morning that they now plan to cut off absentee voting at the end of regular business hours today.

Williams and Hibbs are seeking to replace incumbent Roy Baze, who is not seeking another term.

The only other position up for election on the college board is Place 1 and incumbent Bill

(see SCHOOLS, page 9)

(see CTA, page 9)

(see ABSENTEE, page 9)

County schools brace for lack of state funds

From local, wire reports School districts within Scurry County — caught in a freeze of state education aid due public schools — say they can continue operating without state funding, but only for a matter of a few months.

District Judge Scott McCown ruled today that nearly \$500 million in state aid can't be paid to local school districts as scheduled on May 25. The judge said, however, he would hear arguments later in the day on delaying his order.

State officials asked for a 50-day delay to give lawmakers and Gov. Bill Clements more time to work out a school finance reform program.

No other school spending — including local funds and federal aid — is affected by McCown's ruling, who also said the state can pay the \$2.7 million payroll for Texas Education Agency employees that had been held up.

The high court, in a ruling last

year, said the \$13.5 billion-a-year system is unfair to property-poor school districts and ordered that a reform plan be enacted by today.

BULLETIN

AUSTIN (AP) — A state district judge today gave state lawmakers another month to reform school finance, but said he also was appointing a special master to draw up an alternate plan in case legislators again fail.

Earlier today, Judge Scott McCown ruled that nearly \$500 million in state education aid can't be paid to local school districts as scheduled on May 25.

In a second hearing to hear arguments on delaying his order, McCown gave the state an extension until June 1 to develop a new school finance plan.

But lawmakers and Clements are stalemated. The Legislature proposed a \$555 million reform plan and a half-cent sales tax increase to fund it. Clements says money is available elsewhere in the current budget to fund a less expensive plan, and he has vowed to veto the tax increase as soon as it reaches his desk, possibly today.

Snyder Independent School District's monthly budget is approximately \$1 million, but the district can keep going for several months by reaching into

(see SCHOOLS, page 9)

WTC's Lancaster selected for Piper Professor award

Marilyn J. Lancaster, assistant professor of English/developmental studies at Western Texas College, has become the second WTC faculty member to be selected for the prestigious Piper Professor award.

Ray Robbins, professor of criminal justice, was honored as a Piper Professor in 1986.

The Piper Foundation has selected Piper Professors since 1958 to bring recognition to outstanding achievement in the teaching profession in Texas colleges and universities. Each award includes an honorarium of \$2,500, a gold pin and a certificate of merit. Lancaster's awards will be presented formally at the WTC commencement program on May 11, when she will be a speaker.

"Western Texas College is pleased that Mrs. Lancaster has been chosen for this select



MARILYN J. LANCASTER

group," said Dr. Harry Krennek, college president. "We are doubly pleased that she is the second of our faculty members to be so honored. Nominations for the awards are requested annually from all accredited institutions of higher learning in the state and from these nominations 10 are selected to be named Piper Professors.

Lancaster joined the WTC

(see LANCASTER, page 9)

Pair arrested Monday for burglary of local residence

Two Snyder people, apprehended for burglary of a residence Monday, are free on \$5,000 bond each.

At 2:57 p.m., city police were called to 2401 24th St. where a burglary of a mobil home was reported to be in progress.

At the scene, police arrested 28-year-old Maribel Gutierrez and 30-year-old Andres Gutierrez and charged them with burglary of a habitat. They were taken to

the Scurry County jail. A six-year-old female was turned over to the Child Protective Service.

Items recovered included a heater, lawn mower and miscellaneous items.

Police also made two other arrests Monday. At 7:48 p.m., Rudy Ornelas Martinez, 25, was arrested at 4400 Ave. U on a warrant for failure to display court order. He was released on a \$500

(see ARRESTS, page 9)

The SDN Column

By Roy McQueen

The feller on Deep Creek says, "Happiness is like perfume. Spray it on others and you are bound to get some on yourself."

The "can-do" attitude of Scurry County citizens was in evidence again last Saturday when more than 300 volunteers answered the call for assistance.

There was no crisis, but yet residents were eager to do their part. Starting at 7 a.m. on a day which typically calls for sleeping-in, locals were primed for a full day of paint-up, clean-up and fix-up during Snyder Neighbors Sharing.

Designed to assist senior citizens and handicapped in repair, 25 homes were targeted for work in 1990. The volunteer workers more than doubled since last year's project.

Tommy Aishman is president of the SNS, and the organization has expanded and developed the idea that Sam Robertson got from Midland's Christmas in April project.

Snyder's willingness to pitch in and help is the kind of community spirit which will make a difference in the future.

Like all of petroleum-dependent West Texas, Snyder is in a period of transition. The economy must transform into a more diversified one with less dependency on one economic force.

There are those who seem resigned or even willing to write the community's obit, but Saturday's spirit again is a clear indication that people are willing to join hands and solve problems.

Collective problem solving has been done before. A recent example is the 1987 effort to secure the Price Daniel unit and its 300 jobs.

It's true you can't ignore the negative, but we're gonna' try and ignore negative people.

Colonial Hill minister Miller Robinson learned two lessons during a recent revival at his church.

In introducing guest evangelist Claude Cone, Miller had a lapse and instead introduced him as Clyde Cain, a Lubbock friend of the Snyder preacher.

Based on numerous snickers both Sunday and Monday, Miller learned: 1. His congregation pays attention and 2. people really do watch the service on cable TV.

Q—Is there anywhere we can purchase tickets locally for the dedication of O.H. Ivie Reservoir being held May 19?

A—Yes, tickets may be purchased at the local chamber office. The price of \$7.50 includes lunch.

In Brief

Sale possible

HOUSTON (AP) — Union Texas Petroleum Holdings Inc., the nation's second largest independent oil company, may be going on the block and analysts say it could sell for as much as \$2.25 billion.

The Houston-based company's board of directors, meeting Sunday in a telephone conference call, authorized company officials to explore a sale or other alternatives to enhance the value of the company's shares.

If it decides to sell the company, Union Texas said it does not expect the sale to be consummated before November.

Depot layoffs

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas (AP) — Officials at the Corpus Christi Army Depot have announced that as many as 200 permanent and 357 temporary employees may lose their jobs because of dwindling defense dollars.

The job losses for permanent employees would come in October and the temporary employees would be out of work as their one-year contracts expire, officials said Monday.

The estimate is an increase in possible cuts announced two weeks ago when it was estimated that 30-45 permanent jobs might be cut from the depot's workforce of about 4,300.

Local

Sr. committee

The Snyder senior class steak supper committee will meet at 7 p.m. today in the high school student center.

NAACP meets

The local NAACP chapter will meet at 7:30 p.m. today at Mt. Olive Baptist Church. All members are encouraged to attend.

Appraisal

Scurry County Appraisal District board of directors will meet today at 7:30 p.m. at The Shack.

Routine business and informational items are the only agenda topics.

Anxiety 4th

A spring female sale will be hosted Monday by the National Anxiety 4th Association, to be held in the Scurry County Coliseum. The show begins at 9 a.m. with the sale to follow at 12:30 p.m.

Weather

Snyder Temperatures: High Monday, 59 degrees; low, 50 degrees; reading at 7 a.m. Tuesday, 47 degrees; trace precipitation; total precipitation for 1990 to date, 10.35 inches.

Snyder Area Forecast: Tonight, mostly cloudy with a 40 percent chance of showers or thunderstorms. Low near 50. East wind 10 to 15 mph. Wednesday, mostly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of showers or thunderstorms. High near 70. Southeast wind 10 to 20 mph.



BETHEL RECITAL—Students of Bethel Studio of Music presented a night of "Classics n' Jazz" April 21 at Martha Ann Woman's Club. Pictured from the left front row are Paul O'Conner, Mark Marshal of Rotan, Stephanie Hoyle of Colorado City, Allison Harvey of Jayton, Sarah Bryant, Ruth Ann Riddel of Rotan, Temple Latimer of Colorado City, Brandi Mruphree of Rotan and

Kristen Lelek. Middle row: Brook Baldrige of Jayton, Jenifer Petty of Colorado City, Jenise Judah, Tia Bassham, Cole Latimer and Carrie Perkins, all three of Colorado City. Back row: Barbi Baldrige and Melissa Harris, both of Jayton, Cynthia Stansell, Amy Armstrong and Andrea Helm of Colorado City. (SDN Staff Photo)



MUSIC STUDENTS—Featured on the program for the Bethel recital were four pupils at two pianos, solos, duets and Paul Michael "The Illusionist." Special guest star was Jerry Lee Who?, pop idol imitator. Pictured from the left front row are Blanden and Jim Chisum, Deborah Zeck, Sterling Cave, Shelley Jones, Mandy Strain

of Colorado City, Leigh Aune Fowler and Emily Zeck. Middle row: Robin Cave, Karomy Drum, Michelle Banta, Amber Kelley of Colorado City, and Angela Riggs of Colorado City. Back row: Nicki Riggs of Colorado City, Alicia Kubena, Laura Hamby, Brook Kubena and Jason Warren. (SDN Staff Photo)

Community Calendar

TUESDAY

Ladies Golf Association; tee time 9 a.m.
Alpha Study Club Brunch; MAWC; 11:30 a.m.
Sparklers—Chamber Volunteers; The Shack; noon.
Free blood pressure clinic; Ira Community Center; 1-2 p.m.
Twentieth Century Study Club; 3 p.m.
Tiger Shark Swim Club; WTC; 6-18 years of age; 4-5:30 p.m. For information, call Mike Harrison at 573-8511 ext. 283.
University Women; The Shack; 6 p.m.
Stanfield Parent Council; School Cafeteria; 7 p.m.
ACBL Open Pairs Duplicate Bridge; Snyder Country Club; 7 p.m.
TOPS TX56; weigh-in and meeting 7-8 p.m.; 2501 35th. For information, call Jean Yearwood at 573-9444 or Mae Cole at 573-8628.
Beta Sigma Phi; Snyder Country Club; 7:30 p.m.
Snyder Police Auxiliary; SNB Community Room; 7:30 p.m.
Scurry Lodge 706; AF and AM degree classes; 7:30 p.m.
New Horizon Alcoholics Anonymous; Park Club in Winston Park; 8 p.m. For more information, call 573-8110, 863-2348 or 573-6820.
Al-Anon; Park Club at Winston Park; 8 p.m. For more information, call 573-2101 or 573-8626.)

WEDNESDAY

Snyder Christian Women's Club; Prayer Coffee; 10 a.m.
Al-Anon; Park Club at Winston Park; noon.
Free blood pressure clinic; Hermleigh Community Center; 1-2 p.m.
Tiger Shark Swim Club; WTC; 6-18 years of age; 4-5:30 p.m. For information, call Mike Harrison at 573-8511 ext. 283.
Iota Psi Chapter of Epsilon Sigma Alpha; home of Charlcie Roberson.
Sparkle City Square Dancers; clogging; old Athletic Center building; 7-8 p.m.
Sparkle City Square Dancers; workshop; old Athletic Center building; 8-10 p.m.
Narcotics Anonymous; Park Club in Winston Park; 8 p.m. For more information, call 573-8015 or 573-3956.

THURSDAY

Snyder Garden Club; MAWC; 9:30 a.m.
Al-Anon; Park Club at Winston Park; noon.
Free blood pressure clinic; Dunn Community Center; 1-2 p.m.
Knapp Extension Homemakers Club; 1:30 p.m.
Advanced Duplicate Bridge; Colorado City bridge room; 1:30 p.m.
Duplicate Bridge; Snyder Country Club; 1:30 p.m.
Tiger Shark Swim Club; WTC; 6-18 years of age; 4-5:30 p.m. For information, call Mike Harrison at 573-8511 ext. 283.
Boy Scout Roundtable; Boy's Club; 7 p.m.
Snyder Fire Department Auxiliary; West Fire Station; 7 p.m.
Scurry County Alcoholics Anonymous; Park Club in Winston Park; 8 p.m. For information, call 863-2348, 573-8110 or 573-6820.

FRIDAY

Snyder Jaycees; noon luncheon; Golden Corral.
Free blood pressure clinic; Cogdell Memorial Hospital emergency waiting room; 1-2:30 p.m.
ACBL Open Pairs Duplicate Bridge; Snyder Country Club; 1:30 p.m.
Oasis Overeaters Anonymous; 2-3 p.m.; Park Club at Winston Field; Newcomers Welcome! 573-8322 or 573-7705.
Cornelius-Dodson House; open by appointment; 573-9742 or 573-2763.
Tiger Shark Swim Club; WTC; 6-18 years of age; 4-5:30 p.m. For information, call Mike Harrison at 573-8511 ext. 283.

Pesticides impact eating habits

NEW YORK (AP)—The second annual Organic Index, a nationwide Louis Harris Poll conducted for Organic Gardening magazine, says reports from 1989 on pesticides in our food supply had an impact on Americans' eating habits.

According to the survey, 30 percent of the respondents said they have changed their eating habits in some way; 28 percent said they have sought out organic produce or produce grown with limited use of chemicals.

When asked if they had ever eaten organically grown fruits and vegetables, 57 percent said they had; a 19 percent increase over the previous year.

Almost 65 percent said the single most important reason for eating organic produce is the long-term health benefit, up from 56 percent the previous year.

The 1989 poll also showed that 84 percent indicated a preference for organically grown fruits and vegetables "if they cost the same as other fruits and vegetables." About half of these respondents said they would still buy organically grown fruits and vegetables "if they cost more or not."

During 1989, major food chains set aside store space for organic produce; Adweek, a leading trade weekly for advertising and marketing, named organic foods one of the year's hottest products; and 21 states had organic labeling laws, definitions or certification programs, up from 12 states at the start of 1989, Organic Gardening said.

Stevie Daniels, the magazine's executive editor, says the 1990s will be the "organic decade."

"Organic produce will no longer be tucked into a specialty corner as a secondary item," Daniels said.

Ted Bigham
PHOTOGRAPHY
573-3622

Bridge by James Jacoby

NORTH 5-1-90			
♦ A 10 6 2			
♥ - - -			
♦ K 8 4 3			
♦ A 9 8 7 3			
WEST			
♦ 8			
♥ Q 8 7 5			
♦ A Q J 10 9 6 2			
♦ J			
EAST			
♦ K Q J 9 7 4			
♥ J 10			
♦ 5			
♦ Q 10 4 2			
SOUTH			
♦ 5 3			
♥ A K 9 6 4 3 2			
♦ 7			
♦ K 6 5			
Vulnerable: Neither			
Dealer: West			
South	West	North	East
4♥	4♦	Pass	Pass
All pass			
Opening lead: ♦ 8			

Netherlands and in London. World-class pairs attended both tournaments. Remarkably the English pair of Tony Forrester and Andrew Robson was victorious in both.

Today's deal illustrates a neat fencing match at the table between Robson, South, and long-time Brazilian celebrity Gabriel Chagas, West. Chagas led his singleton spade. Declarer Robson won the ace in dummy, came to his hand with the club king, and played A-K and a heart, shedding a card from each suit in dummy. Chagas won the heart eight and cashed the heart queen, declarer throwing another spade from dummy.

At this point, Chagas could see that playing ace and another diamond would be to no avail. Declarer would pitch a club on the king of diamonds, ruff a diamond and then play out all his trumps, coming down to A-9 of clubs in dummy. East would be

squeezed in clubs and spades, and the contract would make.

But Chagas saw an out. He played the queen of diamonds, hoping that South would play East for the lone ace. But Robson went up with the king. Even so, if Robson now ruffed a diamond and played out trumps, the squeeze would not quite operate. Instead, declarer, having won dummy's diamond king, played a second diamond and discarded a club. West had nothing left but diamonds, and Robson was able to ruff and execute the squeeze as described above.

James Jacoby's books "Jacoby on Bridge" and "Jacoby on Card Games" (written with his father, the late Oswald Jacoby) are now available at bookstores. Both are published by Pharos Books. © 1990, NEWSPAPER ENTERPRISE ASSN.

By James Jacoby

In consecutive weeks in January, invitational events were held in the

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NEA PUZZLES

ACROSS

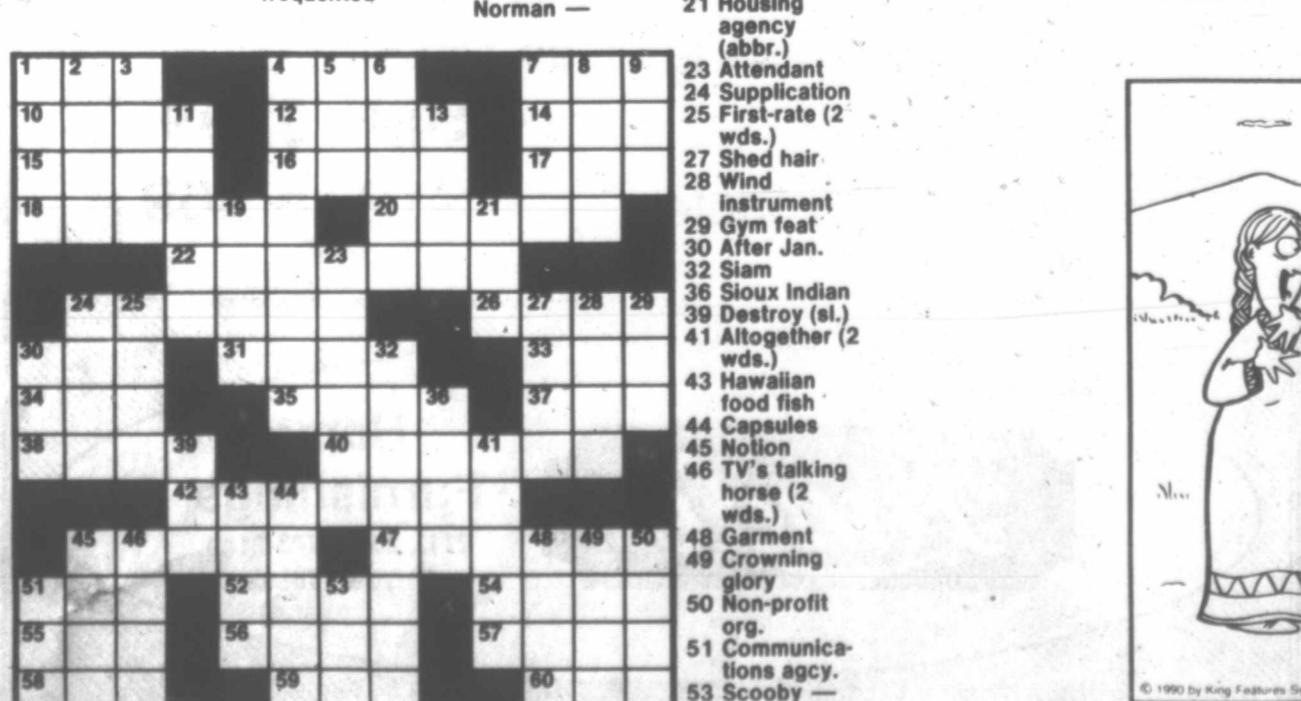
- 1 South of Ga.
- 4 Common ailment
- 7 Go by plane
- 10 Mrs. Charles Chaplin
- 12 Member of Parliament
- 14 Shelter
- 15 Small bills
- 16 Sloth
- 17 Car assemblers' org.
- 18 Tie
- 20 Allude
- 22 Monsterlike
- 24 Jargon
- 26 In a frenzied state
- 30 Mr. Ziegfeld
- 31 Religious denomination
- 33 Sash
- 34 Poetic contraction
- 35 London district

Answer to Previous Puzzle

B	B	C	K	R	I	S	S	B	B	L
Y	E	A	N	I	S	E	I	O	A	S
T	E	A	E	N	T	E	R	A	S	A
E	R	N	I	E		E	G	R	E	T
O	D	A	O	D	E					
B	A	T	T	E	R	E	D	L	A	C
A	L	G	A	E	C	I	D	E	T	A
E	L	I	P	A	R	E	N	T	A	G
R	I	F	T	D	E	S	T	I	N	E
O	L	E	T	I	L					
K	R	A	A	L	T	E	P	I	D	
O	A	R	A	D	E	A	L	Y	M	A
K	E	Y	M	O	O	S	E	R	I	M
K	E	Y	A	S	S	E	S	E	N	E

DOWN

- 1 — the bill
- 2 Un-frequented
- 3 Dill seed
- 4 Snow showers
- 5 — Chaney
- 6 Arrow poison
- 7 Organ pipe
- 8 Producer Norman
- 9 Evergreen tree
- 11 — in the dark
- 13 Club fees
- 19 Selvas
- 21 Housing agency (abbr.)
- 23 Attendant
- 24 Supplication
- 25 First-rate (2 wds.)
- 27 Shed hair
- 28 Wind instrument
- 29 Gym feat
- 30 After Jan.
- 32 Siam
- 36 Sioux Indian
- 39 Destroy (sl.)
- 41 Altogether (2 wds.)
- 43 Hawaiian food fish
- 44 Capsules
- 45 Notion
- 46 TV's talking horse (2 wds.)
- 48 Garment
- 49 Crowning glory
- 50 Non-profit org.
- 51 Communica-tions agcy.
- 53 Scooby —



LAFF-A-DAY



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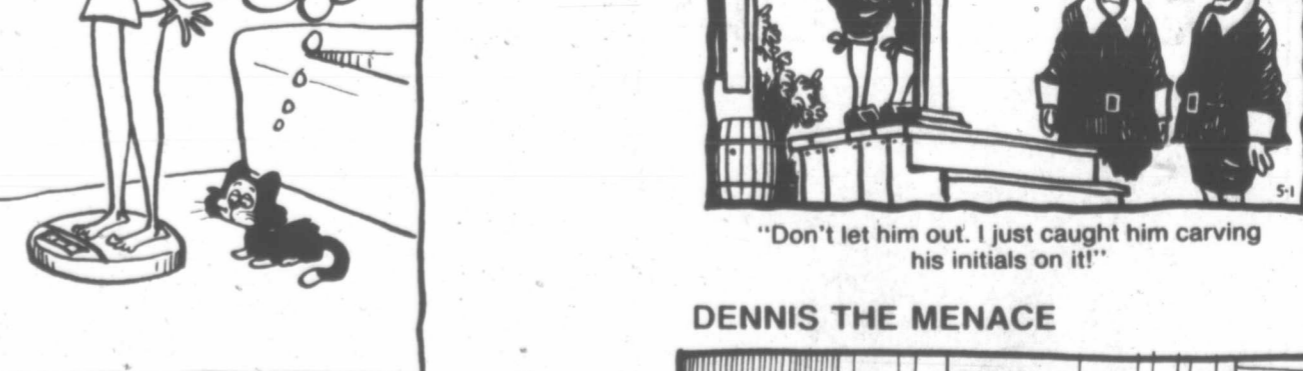
ALLEY OOP® by Dave Graue



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DENNIS THE MENACE



DENNIS THE MENACE

"THE TV STARTED SMOKIN'. DAD THINKS IT'S A SHIRT SOCKET!"



Avalanche of Birthday Cards Still Raining Down on Gorbys

By Abigail Van Buren

DEARABBY: Last February, you published a letter from David C. Graham of San Diego, suggesting that your readers send President Gorbachev a card to wish him well on his 59th birthday, March 2. (He even provided Gorbachev's address in Moscow.)

I sent a birthday card to President Gorbachev, as did many of my friends, and I'm interested in knowing approximately how many cards "Gorby" (as you called him) received. Please keep your readers informed.

A FAITHFUL FAN,
DULUTH, MINN.

DEAR FAN: I, too, was interested, so I contacted my friend, Dr. Armand Hammer, who probably has more influential friends in the Soviet Union than any American in or out of government.

I asked Dr. Hammer if he could use his good offices to find out approximately how many birthday cards and letters President Gorbachev received from the United States and Canada.

I received the following message (by fax) from Dr. Hammer:

"Dear Abby: On receiving your letter, I immediately contacted Gennady Gerasimov, spokesman for President Gorbachev, inquiring if President Gorbachev had received many birthday cards following the publicity you gave his 59th birthday in your column. Mr. Gerasimov explained that the delay in getting back to you was due to the fact that they are still receiving so many birthday greetings that they have been unable to tabulate them all as yet.

"Congratulations to you and David Graham for a splendid idea. I am enclosing a copy of Mr. Gerasimov's letter, which speaks for itself. With warm regards, Armand"

And now, Mr. Gerasimov's letter, written in his own hand:

"Dear Dr. Hammer: You asked me about the response to Dear Abby's column in which she asks her readers to send birthday greetings to Mikhail Gorbachev. President Gorbachev's birthday was deliberately unpub-

licized; nevertheless he was flooded with birthday cards and letters from all over the world.

"The American portion of these letters were especially overwhelming, thanks to the letter from David C. Graham of San Diego, which Dear Abby published in her nationally syndicated newspaper column.

"I conferred with President Gorbachev's assistant concerning this matter, and he confirmed that birthday greetings had arrived by the thousands and were still coming in.

"I wonder, when is Dear Abby's birthday? Warmest wishes, Gennady Gerasimov"

DEARABBY: Have other readers complained that letters they have sent out have come back marked "Returned For Postage"? This has happened to me half a dozen times in the past year. Maybe I failed to affix the postage once — but never six times!

I think they are using inferior glue. What does the Postal Service recommend? Should I reinforce the stamps by using my own glue pot? Or must I staple the postage stamps onto the envelopes? Maybe I should write across the envelope, "Postmaster: This letter bore postage when I mailed it."

MAD AT THE MAIL

DEAR MAD: Move over. I'm also mad. I, too, have noticed recently that I am stuck with stamps that don't stick. As you can well imagine, I don't have a lot of space to spare on my desk, but I had to make room for a glue pot.

So — CONFIDENTIAL TO POSTMASTER ANTHONY M. FRANK: If you are economizing by using inferior glue — people are starting to notice!

People are eating them up! To order your copy of Abby's favorite recipes, send a long, business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$3.95 (\$4.50 in Canada) to: Dear Abby, Cookbooklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, Ill. 61054. (Postage is included.)

Texan nominated for Florida post

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — The nominee for New Jersey education commissioner got an unexpectedly rough introduction to the state capital.

John Ellis, nominated Monday by Gov. Jim Florio, had his car rear-ended Monday morning about two miles from the Statehouse. But he dusted himself off and announced he was ready to take on New Jersey's education challenges.

"I look forward to an exciting, dynamic and productive tenure," Ellis said.

Ellis, 60, is credited with desegregating the Austin schools without major incident. He will replace Saul Cooperman in July if his nomination is approved by state Senate.

Florio called Ellis, head of the Austin district since 1980, one of the nation's top educators.

"This selection bodes well for the children of New Jersey," Florio said at a news conference.

Ellis called New Jersey a leadership state in education, but acknowledged that his job won't be easy in light of some tight school funding budget proposals made by Florio.

Florio said he and Ellis share a common philosophy of education, adding that they both believe local community involvement is crucial to a successful school system.

The governor has proposed that New Jersey's system of funding education be changed, saying it is too burdensome for property taxpayers and does not provide enough help to poorer districts. The system of funding is also being reviewed by the state Supreme Court in response to a challenge that says it discriminates against students in less affluent areas.

Ellis agrees change is due. "I clearly favor equity (in school funding)," he said. "To

achieve equity, it is necessary to revise the (school funding) formula."

Ellis also said he favors state takeovers of school districts that have failed, a hallmark of former Gov. Thomas H. Kean's administration. The state is currently operating the Jersey City schools under this policy.

"Takeovers are simply one part of what one has to do. It's not a first approach, but a last resort," he said. "But that may have to be followed to protect our students."

Ellis, a native of Ohio, was cited as a "national leader" by the National Education Associa-

Poor school district improves scores

TORNILLO, Texas (AP) — As Texas wrangles over how to pay for a more equitable funding system for public schools, one educator says lack of money is too often used as a crutch for students' poor performances.

The Tornillo School Independent School District students vastly improved their basic skills test scores and the school regained accreditation with little funding. Most of the district's \$1.6 million budget goes for salaries.

"I'm convinced that you don't

use money as a crutch to explain the reason that students don't get an education," high school principal Mike Dickson said. "If you do, the crutch becomes a reason for not teaching."

Superintendent David Marcum said the tiny district's 380 children needed someone to tell them they could succeed and they needed an atmosphere that would let them do it.

"There's education research to support the theory that if you believe the kids will perform well and tell the kids they can do it, they'll perform well," Marcum said.

The Tornillo school board hired Marcum two years ago to strengthen faltering scores on the standardized Texas Educational Assessment Minimum Skills Test.

"My goal is to take one of the poorest school districts in the state and prove that we can do fascinating things with the kids," Marcum said.

Marcum said two new principals with high expectations for

students are helping reach that goal.

The district fully instituted bilingual education programs for the children of immigrants in kindergarten and first grade and it is beginning to extend English-as-a-second-language classes through the 12th grade.

Educators also changed the elementary school's class schedule, did some inexpensive refurbishing to both schools, made minor curriculum changes and received a lot of support from teachers.

Next year, the high school will get a new computer lab and a satellite education program.

Parents say their children definitely are learning more and liking it.

"They enjoy school more than they did before," said head custodian Leopoldo Escalante, who has two children that attend the school. "Sometimes they even claimed they were sick so they didn't have to go to school, but they don't do that anymore."

Still, without money, the school

is missing a few things. There's no guidance counselor, not much science lab equipment and a library without a magazine collection.

"Maybe our kids aren't getting everything they need, but I'm convinced they are getting a quality education," Dickson said.

Moisture is crumbling courthouse

ANGLETON, Texas (AP) — The walls of the nearly-century-old Brazoria County courthouse are threatening to come down despite a recent extensive renovation.

Moisture is eating away and cracking bricks that hold up the structure. Frail bricks are all over the building, although it's uncertain how many are crumbling.

"We tried to hang some drapes and found the bricks were so crumbly that they couldn't support them," says Margaret Kelly, director of the historical museum that now uses the building.

County courthouse functions were moved to a new courthouse in the 1970s and the old building — in use since 1897 — became a museum in 1983 after residents pledged to restore its beauty to save it from a wrecking ball.

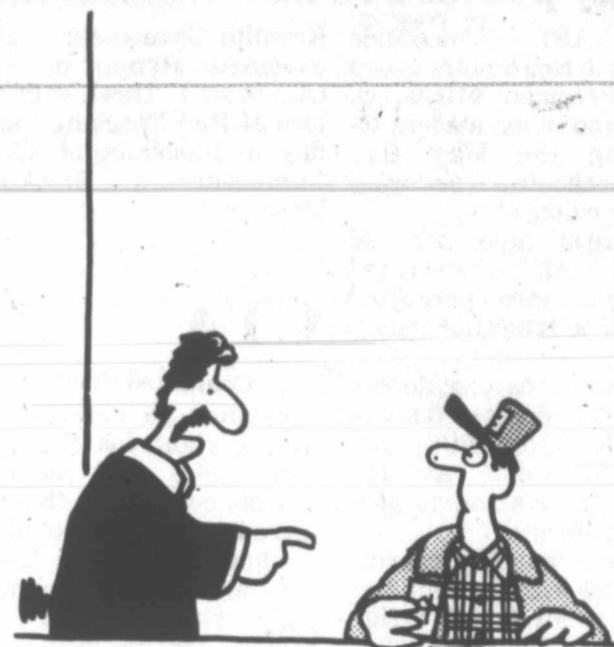
Ms. Kelly says the museum is considered one of the best in the state for preserving local history. The museum also houses remains from the Acadia, a Confederate blockade runner sunk by Union guns near Surfside in 1865.

Part of the problem with the crumbling bricks is the fact that bricks of the era were not furnace fired, and moisture speeds up the rotting.

Over the years, volunteers have spent thousands of hours working on the building while an estimated \$500,000 has been donated for preservation efforts.

"We tried to see if they (the bricks) could be X-rayed, but that wouldn't tell us how strong they are," retired mechanical engineer George Kramig said.

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