

# OBSERVER

*A Journal of Free Voices*

*A Window to the South*

July 26, 1974

50¢



## A primer on water



# The coming fortnight

By Suzanne Shelton

## JULY GRAB BAG

**TEXAS' FINEST** — Your chance to survey Texas art, during Texas Fine Arts Association's State Citation Show, with entries from artists throughout Texas, judged by artist William Lester; through Aug. 18, Laguna Gloria Art Museum, Austin.

**FOR FILM FANATICS** — Alley Theatre's Cinemafest '74 continues with comedy week featuring "Schlock," recently filmed monster movie satire, July 23-24; W. C. Fields in unforgettable "It's A Gift," July 25-26; and the Marxes immortalized in "Monkey Business," July 27-28; week of "Famous Duos of the Cinema," including Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy crooning in "Maytime," July 30-31; "Gold Diggers of 1933" with Ruby Keeler and Dick Powell in Busby Berkeley musical (with bit by Ginger Rogers, who sings "We're in the Money" in pig-latin), August 1-2; Bogart and Bacall smoking up the screen in "The Big Sleep," August 3-4; plus weekend matinee of "Little Miss Marker" with Shirley Temple, August 3-4; next up is "Bad Guys and the Cinema," led by Sir Laurence Olivier's "Othello," August 6-7; Jean Paul Belmondo in Godard's "Breathless," August 8-9; Boris Karloff in 1932 "The Mask of Fu Manchu," August 10-11; weekend matinee "Ma and Pa Kettle," August 10-11; Alley Theatre, Houston.

**BIG SHEEP COUNTRY** — Ranch life in Montana Territory in the 1870s-90s, captured in "The Photographs of Laton Alton Huffman"; through Sept. 1, Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, Fort Worth.

**PHOTOGRAPHS BY WESTON** — The late Edward Weston, renowned for his nature-study photographs, in retrospective exhibition including 200-plus works; through Aug. 25, Art Museum, University of Texas, Austin.

**ACRYLICS** — Terry Gardner's acrylic paintings; July 29-Aug. 2, Union Gallery, Texas Union, University of Texas, Austin.

**ARTS ON FILM** — Laguna Gloria summer film series continues with: "Why Man Creates" and "Koestler on Creativity" July 25; Martha Graham's "A Dancer's World" and "Dance: In Search of Lovers" by Glen Tetley, Aug. 1; "Daguerrre: The Birth of Photography" and "Walker Evans: His Time, His Presence, His Silence" Aug. 8; "19th Century European Art" quartet of films on Constable, Gauguin, Degas and Atget, Aug. 15; amphitheatre, Laguna Gloria Art Museum, Austin.

**COVERLETS** — American coverlet exhibition, including jacquard patterns and wool designs plus coverlet depicting Lafayette's 1824 visit to America; through July 31, Andrews Gallery, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

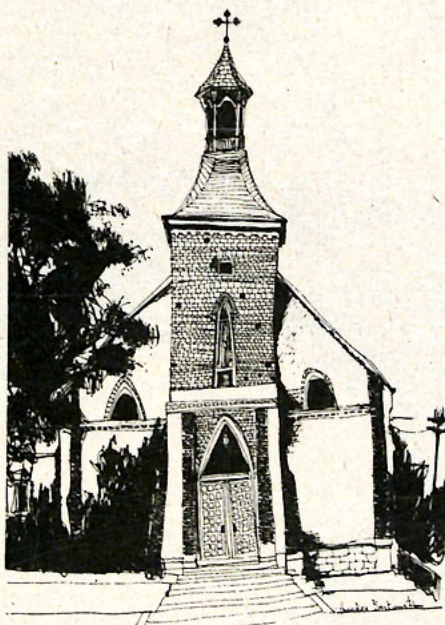
## JULY 19

**BLOWING THEIR COOL** — Third Annual Astrodome Jazz Festival featuring Tower of Power, Gladys Knight & the Pips plus the O'Jays, B. B. King, Kool & the Gang, Stanley Turrentine, 8 p.m., July 19; Al Green and Miss Sarah Vaughan, Chick Corea and Return to Forever, Jimmy Smith Trio, Gene Ammons, Sonny Stitt, the Crusaders, 8 p.m. June 20, Astrodome, Houston.

**OPERETTA** — Gilbert and Sullivan Society present "Princess Ida," love story with women's lib twist; through July 20, Jones Hall, Houston.

## JULY 20

**NOSTALGIA NITE** — Oompahpah, schnapps, polka and wurst for "A Night in Old Fredericksburg," Munich-style celebration; after dark, fairgrounds, Fredericksburg.



## JULY 21

**TWILIGHT BRASS** — Outdoor concert by Texas Brass Choir; 6 p.m., amphitheatre, Laguna Gloria Art Museum, Austin.

## JULY 23

**GIGI** — It won't be the same without Chevalier, but Dallas Summer Musical's "Gigi" sports original Broadway sets by Oliver Smith, French actress Loni Zoe Ackerman in title role, plus strong supporting cast; through Aug. 4, Music Hall Fair Park, Dallas.

**TOPPER** — I've got to go see if the vanishing ghosts are as magic as they used to be in "Topper" (and besides, it's free); Texas Union, University of Texas, Austin.

## JULY 24

**BAND CONCERT OUTDOORS** — UT Longhorn Band concludes its "Festival of Music" series with outdoor concert titled "The Music Men;" 8 p.m., Nursing Bldg. Patio, University of Texas, Austin.

## JULY 25

**SOUNDS INTERESTING** — Don't know them, but they're called Ecumenical Service Wind Ensemble, in free outdoor concert; 8:45 p.m., Zilker Hillside Theatre, Zilker Park, Austin.

**BORGE ENDURES** — He's still making the concert rounds with his comic renditions of piano classics, Victor Borge, in concert; 8:30 p.m., Jones Hall, Houston.

**MITZI & VEGAS** — Direct from Las Vegas, Mitzi Gaynor Show with tinsel intact; through July 28, Houston Music Theatre, Houston.

**FUNNIN WITH ED** — Edgar Winter Group and Foghat, in concert; Coliseum, Houston.

## JULY 28

**YOU'RE IN BETWEEN** — Free outdoor folk rock concert featuring Earth and Sky; 7 p.m., Zilker Hillside Theatre, Zilker Park, Austin.

**ALL TOGETHER NOW** — Crosby/Stills/Nash & Young, in concert with Beach Boys and Jesse Colin Young; Jeppesen Stadium, Houston.

## AUGUST 1

**LAS VEGAS SOUTH** — It's, becoming a regular dumping ground for Vegas acts; Houston Music Theatre presents Jack Cassidy (David's dad) and Shirley Jones (the Partridge), direct from Neon City; through Aug. 4, Houston Music Theatre, Houston.

**BARD AFTER DARK** — "Comedy of Errors," Shakespeare's gem, with local cast in free outdoor performances; through Aug. 3, 8:45 p.m., Zilker Hillside Theatre, Zilker Park, Austin.

## AUGUST 2

**RIVER FESTIVAL** — San Antonio's Fiesta Noche Del Rio features Spanish and Mexican dances, music, songs, boatrides, walking along banks of San Antonio River; Arneson River Theatre and river banks, San Antonio.

## AUGUST 4

**BANGING BEFORE DARK** — UT Percussion and Mallet Ensemble performs in free outdoor concert; 6 p.m., amphitheatre, Laguna Gloria Art Museum, Austin.

## AUGUST 5

**POP MUSIC** — Austin Civic Chorus performs, gratis; 8:45 p.m., Zilker Hillside Theatre, Zilker Park, Austin.

**PIANO DUO** — Gregory Allen and Danielle Martin perform music for two pianos; 8 p.m., Music Bldg. Recital Hall, University of Texas, Austin.

## AUGUST 6

**OUR GIRL, GINGER** — No need to catch a late-night Rogers-Astaire movie; Ginger's onstage in Dallas Summer Musicals' "No, No, Nanette"; through Aug. 18, Music Hall, Fair Park, Dallas.

## AUGUST 8

**HIGH-POWERED PROWSE** — Juliet Prowse, with special guest Vic Damone; through Aug. 11, Houston Music Theatre, Houston.

**SPELLER SOLOES** — Faculty organist Frank Speller performs with Texas Brass Choir, directed by Wayne Barrington; 8 p.m., Music Bldg. Recital Hall, University of Texas, Austin.



# A primer on water

Austin

"You can tell a Texan who is out of the old rock," according to J. Frank Dobie,<sup>1</sup> "by what he brags on. He does not brag on how many million miles of barbed wire stretch across Texas, how many millions of barrels of brains operate in the oil business, or anything like that. He brags on the weather, and for his purposes the worst is the best."

An old rock Texan, Dobie said, "wishes for rain but is fortified in spirit and inspired in imagination by droughts. He sings about a home on the range where 'the skies are not cloudy all day,' spends — if he is a country man — a large part of his life looking for clouds, and brags of living in a country where six months are dry and six months without rain. He quotes a jingle about 'the silvery Rio Grande,' and blows about having the dustiest rivers in the world. He goes somewhere else in the summer and regales the company with General Sherman's remark that if he owned Texas and Hell, he'd rent out Texas and live in the other place . . ."

People from East Texas brag on the floods and tornadoes and Texans from the Coast talk about the hurricanes. Texas weather is about as passive as a bag full of tom cats. In 1970, for example, Texas qualified for federal disaster relief in Corpus Christi for Hurricane Celia, for flooding of the San Marcos River in Central Texas, for a major tornado in Lubbock and for a West Texas winter drought.

**A**N AVERAGE of 413 million acre-feet\* of water fall in the state each year: it just doesn't arrive in a very civilized manner. Texarkana, in extreme northeast Texas, averages 49 inches of rainfall a year, while Lubbock, up in the western Panhandle, gets about 18 inches annually. Of the little rain that falls in the western portion of the state, a goodly percentage of it evaporates before it seeps down into the ground where it can do some good.

Seventy-five percent of the water consumed in the state comes from ground water. It's stored in seven major aquifers (see map #1). The use of this ground water is not regulated, except in certain cases by underground water conservation districts. Land owners are free to pump their aquifers dry if they so desire, and that's

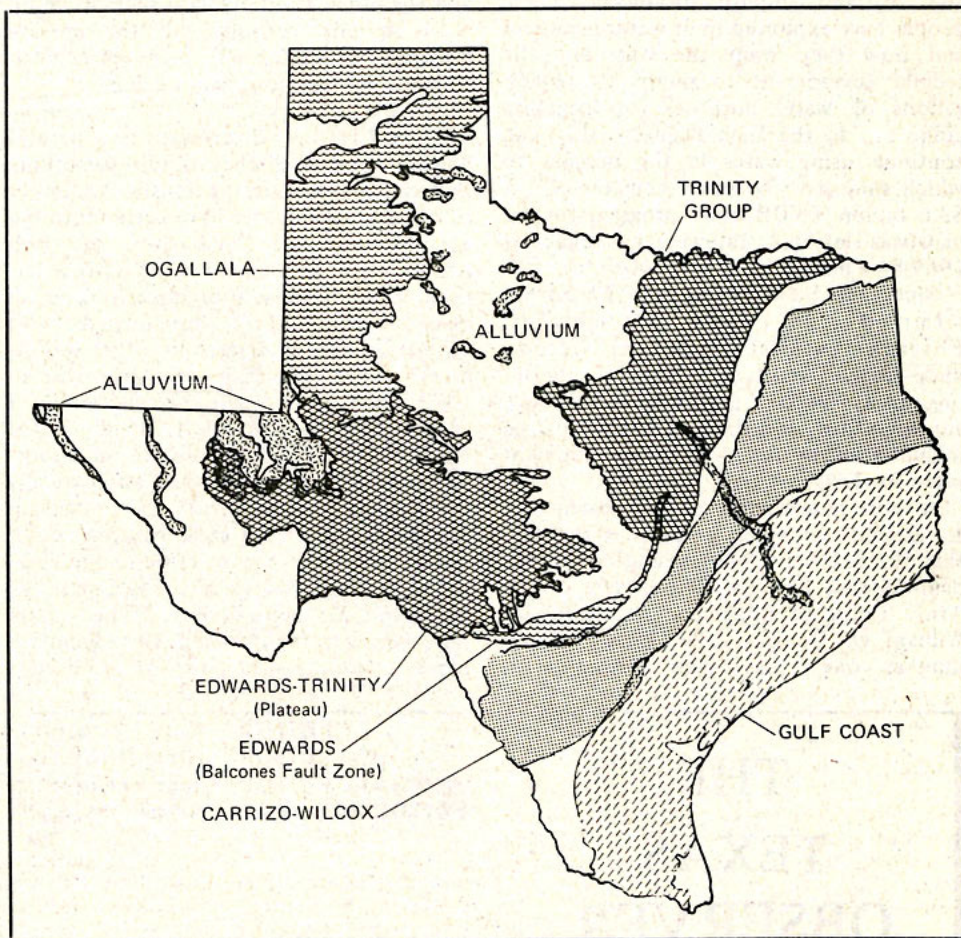
exactly what the irrigation farmers on the High Plains of West Texas are doing.

The use of ground water for municipal, industrial and irrigation purposes swelled from 670,000 acre-feet annually in 1937 to more than 10 million acre-feet in 1969. The tremendous expansion of irrigation farming is the primary factor in this increase.

During the past 50 years, more than 100 major storage reservoirs and thousands of small reservoirs and ponds have been dug

was elected governor and Texas water planning took on an Olympian scale. The water plan devised during Connally's tenure, according to John Graves,<sup>2</sup> was "big enough to scare off dragons."

**T**HE TEXAS Water Development Board (TWDB) estimated that by the year 2020 Texas water needs would exceed its in-state supply by 12 to 13 million acre-feet annually. The water, the planners said, would have to be imported,



Map 1: major aquifers

to trap additional surface water. The Army Corps of Engineers alone has built 24 dams and lakes in the state, not counting the partially completed ones that are now tied up in environmental litigation. This extra surface water is more than a drop in the bucket, but it's nowhere near enough to bail the drier part of Texas out of its climatic predicament.

State bureaucrats decided the situation called for a hefty dose of good ol' American know-how. Texas officially got into the water business in 1957 with the Texas Water Planning Act. A relatively short-termed water plan was unveiled in 1961. It proposed building enough new reservoirs and such to provide an adequate municipal and industrial water supply through the Seventies. Then John Connally

preferably 800 miles from the Mississippi River (see map #2). An Eastern Division canal was to deliver the Mississippi water 2,500 feet uphill to the Trans-Texas canals stretching west across the Dallas/Fort Worth area, on out to the High Plains and El Paso and then into New Mexico. Water would also be diverted to Coastal Division canals which would loop along the Coastal Bend from the Orange/Beaumont/Port Arthur industrial area, past Houston, down to Corpus Christi, then through King Ranch country right down to the Rio Grande Valley.

The ditches and diverted riverbeds to carry the water would interfere with 3,000 miles of rivers and creeks, usurping water

\*An acre-foot is the amount of water it takes to cover an acre of land with a foot of water. That's 325,851 gallons of water. If you tote up the amount of water used in the state for all purposes — for drinking and industry and irrigation and flushing toilets and fighting fires and all — then divide the total by the number of people in the state you come up with an average of 100 gallons of water used by each Texan daily.



destined for the Texas coast's rich and delicate estuarine system (see map #3). Delbert Weniger, a biologist writing in the *Observer*, called the plan "ecological Russian roulette ... a fantastic, earth-shaking, major overhaul of the geography, topography and ecology of the whole region" (see *Obs.*, Aug. 1, 1969).

The *Observer* devoted its Aug. 1, 1969 issue to opposing the water plan. "The 'plan' is not really a plan at all," we wrote, "but a highly speculative, sometimes dishonest and always optimistic scheme for spending a monumental hunk of Texans' money, mainly to replenish the water supplies of West and South Texas irrigators and oil and sulphur producers. These people have exploited their water resources and now they want the state and the federal government to pump six trillion gallons of water purposes for irrigation alone ... to the High Plains so they can continue using water in the manner to which they have become accustomed." A \$3.6 billion TWDB bond program for the plan was defeated statewide in August of 1969 by a margin of only 6,000 votes.

Since the bond defeat, the TWDB has trimmed its sails somewhat. Environmentalists have become increasingly militant. They're better organized, better financed and better educated now, and their concerns must be included in any future water development plans for Texas.

A more immediately potent obstruction to gargantuan water projects is the fact that the feds have been easing out of the dam-building business. The budget of the Army Corps of Engineers, which Justice William O. Douglas calls "public enemy number one," has been severely cut.

Meantime, inflation has launched estimates on the '68 water plan beyond the stratosphere.

The planners on the Water Development Board are bloodied but unbowed. TWDB Executive Director Harry P. Burleigh emphasizes that the '68 plan was to be a "flexible guide."<sup>3</sup> "Experiences have been gained and circumstances have changed which bear on state water policy and water use," he wrote recently. Environmentalists and bureaucrats from other state agencies watch the TWDB the way Henry Kissinger watches the court of King Faisal. The handwriting on the palace wall is not always legible, but what Harry P. Burleigh and the other water planners seem to be up to is quietly carrying out the in-state portions of the '68 plan piecemeal, reservoir by reservoir, dam by dam.

**S**TILL, diverting rivers and digging massive ditches is not something that can be done surreptitiously. A number of other state agencies have gotten into the act. Under the leadership of Bob Armstrong, the General Land Office has been taking a very protective look at all plans that affect state-owned and submerged lands. Armstrong's first serious breach of bureaucratic etiquette was in 1972 when he opposed construction of a shallow reservoir at Palmetto Bend near the Gulf of Mexico. The land commissioner allowed as how the project was basically unnecessary since there was sufficient ground water in the area. And he voiced fears that a reservoir so close to the coast might endanger the estuarine system in the area of Matagorda Bay. The water bureaucrats were infuriated. Until Palmetto Bend, the idea of one state agency

objecting to another state agency's pet project was unthinkable (a little subtle subversion now and then was understandable, but no head-on collisions, please).

The citizens of rural Jackson County and the surrounding Coastal Bend region approved a bond issue in 1967 to get proposals for the reservoir started. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the TWDB had argued that the reservoir would be "a catalyst to stimulate economic development of the area." Congress approved the \$54.7 million project and it should have been easy digging from there on out. But then Armstrong and the environmentalists started sounding alarms concerning what a reservoir so close to the bay might mean to the area's fishing and tourist industry. A recent Texas A&M study indicates that Matagorda County alone earned more than \$4 million from fish and shell fish harvests in 1970. And another study estimates that the four adjacent coastal counties pull in \$54.6 million in tourist dollars annually. The plight of the state's aquatic nurseries and breeding grounds became a hot topic not only to the Audobon types but to the Jaycees as well.

Earlier this year, the principal engineer for the TWDB let slip that the Palmetto Bend reservoir might well become the origination point for a canal to pump water to the Rio Grande Valley and intermittent needy communities along the coastal water plan route.<sup>4</sup> Burleigh quickly countered that his chief engineer was in error. "We have firmed up a more westerly water source for the Valley. It will be the Guadalupe River, not Palmetto Bend,"<sup>5</sup> he told *The Houston Post*.

# THE TEXAS OBSERVER

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Ronnie Dugger, Publisher

A window to the South  
A journal of free voices

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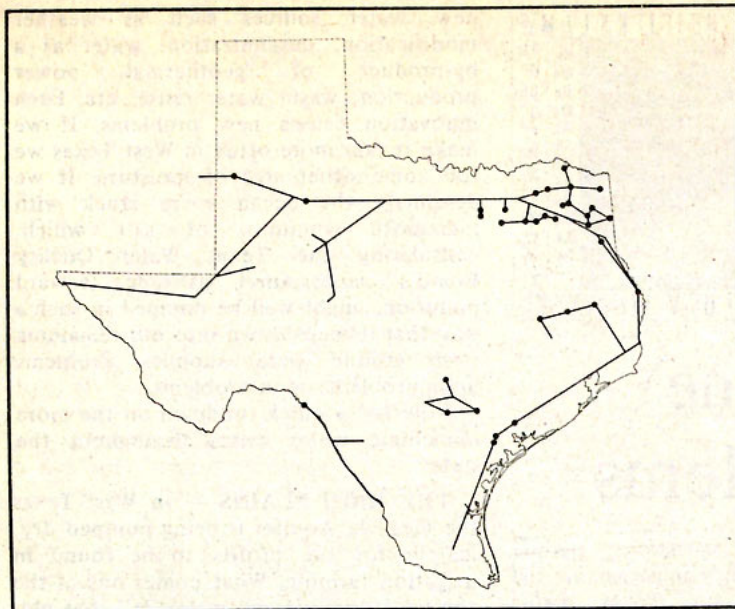
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Map 2: the Texas Water Plan

Jackson County citizens are no longer all that sure they want to help foot the bill for a reservoir that might rob their estuaries of fresh water, especially if the fresh water ends up irrigating coastal bermuda grass on the King Ranch or orange groves in the Winter Garden area or the Valley. Early this month there was a public hearing in Edna on the project. The four-hour line-up of speakers went 26 against Palmetto Bend, zero for.

The Palmetto controversy has brought a very thorny economic question into focus. Mr. Burleigh is of the opinion that no one should get any water from a Texas reservoir without paying for it. Armstrong points out that the water is naturally destined for Matagorda Bay. Just because the TWDB traps it upstream doesn't mean that the TWDB necessarily owns the rights to it.

Now, a number of state agencies are charged with taking care of the bays and estuaries. The TWDB itself is required to make continuing evaluations of the fresh-water inflow needed for bays and estuaries and to provide ways of meeting these water demands. Armstrong says that, if necessary, the State of Texas can appropriate money to pay for fresh water to be released into the bays. The important thing is to make sure that the necessary volume of water gets to the coast. Some bureaucrats believe that the Water Rights Commission should be empowered to "withhold from further appropriations those waters deemed necessary to protect and maintain the ecological health of the estuaries." The Parks and Wildlife Department, the TWDB and a number of other state and federal agencies are years into a multi-million dollar study of the fresh water and nutrient needs of the creatures who hatch and spawn in Texas salt waters. Armstrong says that the state may eventually determine that in drought years extra water should be released at certain times of year, when, for example,

the eggs of the brine shrimp wash into the estuaries.

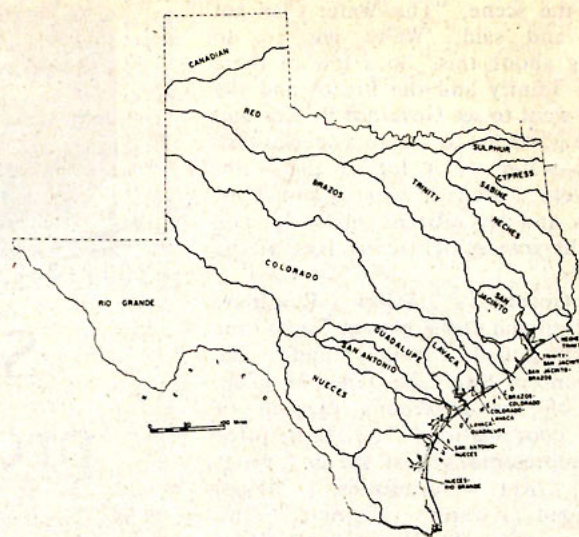
**JURISDICTION** over water quality, water rights, water distribution, etc., is Balkanized into a myriad of fiefdoms in Texas. In addition to the TWDB and the Land Office, all of the following have some statutory role in water policy on the state-wide level: the Texas Water Rights Commission, the Texas Water Quality Board, the State Department of Health, the Parks and Wildlife Department, the State Soil and Water Conservation Board, the Gulf States Marine Commission, the Texas Council on Marine Related Affairs, the Texas Submerged Lands Advisory Committee, the Texas Conservation Foundation, the Water Well Drillers Board and the Texas Railroad Commission.

A state agency head who prefers not to be quoted for attribution told the *Observer*, "Water agencies in Texas spend a lot of their time feuding with each other and other agencies and making sure that each of them doesn't infringe on the other one's business. As usual, when the bureaucracy fights the public goes to hell in a handbasket."

On the inter-state level, the governor appoints commissioners who attend conferences concerning the rivers that flow through states other than Texas. These include the Canadian, the Pecos, the Red, the Rio Grande and the Sabine.

Then come the intra-state river authorities empowered by the state constitution with regulation, conservation, and land and water resource development of the watershed of a particular river and its tributary streams. All but the Lower Colorado River Authority are under the supervision of the Texas Water Rights Commission.

The TWRC also has designated 22 conservation and reclamation districts as river authorities. The districts are involved



Map 3: river and coastal basins

in (1) water supply and distribution, (2) flood control and (3) water quality control. Some also are empowered to develop navigation and some to generate hydroelectric and thermal power. All the authorities can issue bonds.

**T**HE DIRECTORS of the river authorities as well as some river districts not under TWRC jurisdiction form the Texas Water Conservation Association, a potent water lobby, which is often referred to in H<sub>2</sub>O circles as the "Water Clan." Our anonymous agency head said, "The river authorities are the principal kingpins in the development of water resources in the State of Texas. They usually act as the constructing agent in each river basin. They are also the principal political power, water-wise, in the state."

Counties and cities, naturally, have considerable control of water policies within their territories. Finally, the lowest common denominators in water administration in Texas are the Water Control and Improvement Districts, the Water Improvement Districts, the Municipal Utility Districts, the Fresh Water Supply Districts, the Levee and Flood Control Districts, the Drainage Districts and the Navigation Districts. Whole books could be written on the machinations of these little empires.\*

Water policy is a sizzling topic right now and there's lots of studying going on around the Capitol. Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby first got the issue simmering in May of '73 when he set up a series of regional citizens' advisory councils on water resources. Each council contains a couple of state senators and a group of area business, civic and political leaders. Hobby's action unsettled

\* For a good look at how the fiscal authority of such districts has been abused in the past see "The Water District Conspiracies," a chapter from Harvey Katz' *Shadow on the Alamo*, Doubleday & Co., 1972.



the water administrators. Says one observer close to the scene, "The Water Clan got together and said, 'We've got to do something about this.' So a few of them from the Trinity and the Brazos and the Colorado went to see Governor Briscoe and urged the governor to create a special task force on water... A lot of the water people were scared of what a bunch of legislators and lay citizens might do, i.e., they might gore some sacred oxes of the water boys."

The Governor's Water Resource, Conservation and Development Task Force was soon pulled together under the chairmanship of Brig. Gen. James M. Rose, director of the governor's division of planning coordination. The task force includes representatives of the city water utilities, river authorities, MUDs, underground water districts and conservation districts. Harry Burleigh of the TWBD and Joe Carter, chairman of the Texas Water Rights Commission, are also on the governor's committee.

Both the governor's and the lieutenant governor's groups are supposed to come up with a state water policy and make recommendations to the next Legislature. It's anybody's guess as to what the groups might come up with. The governor's committee, being composed of the people who earn their livings via water projects, will probably make a strong pitch for the state to take up where the federal government has left off financing water development schemes. The task force might well recommend raising the Water Development Fund from its current \$600 to \$800 million level to a couple of billion dollars. The authorization of such bonds, of course, would take a public referendum, just like the Texas Water Plan required in 1968.

### SAN ANTONIO AREA STUDENTS

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## Some problems

The most basic questions people interested in water policy must ask are (a) do solutions exist for Texas water problems and (b) which of the problems is it in the public interest to try to solve. Obviously, the Water Clan, being into dam building and flood control and inter-basin transfers and the like, believe in using a whole lot of money and tons of heavy machinery to try to get the upper hand on nature. Among the Water Clan one finds an alarming number of planners with what John Graves calls the "nineteenth-century conviction that growth and expansion are of themselves high goals." The population and consumption projections used in the '68 water plan reflected such outdated expansionary convictions. "The trouble with them folks," as one farmer told Graves, "is they're all eat up with the big ass."<sup>7</sup>

Environmentalists generally believe that people should go to the water rather than water to the people. They usually are not adverse to the idea of cutting back on consumption and simply doing without once in a while. But there is a lot of money to be made in water projects, and you don't find many land developers or chambers of commerce opposing grandiose water schemes. Still, even the U.S. of A. is beginning to come to grips with the reality of scarcity. And inflation is putting a crimp in a lot of ambitious projects. Even liberals are starting to ask, "Is this the best investment for the very very limited public dollar?"

One thing that is slowing down attempts to define Texas water goals is the absence of a firm national policy for meeting food and fiber needs. Texas can't really decide which irrigation projects are feasible until the federal government starts making hard estimates as to how much food America needs and how much of our supply we are willing to export. Meantime, talk about water projects for irrigation is just whistling in the dark.

We'll soon have to cope with the feasibility and advisability of innovative

new water sources such as weather modification, desalinization, water as a by-product of geothermal power production, waste water reuse, etc. Each innovation causes new problems. If we make it rain more often in West Texas we rob some other area of moisture. If we desalinate the ocean we're stuck with mammoth amounts of salt which, considering the Texas Water Quality Board's *laissez-faire* attitude toward pollution, might well be dumped in such a way that it seeps down into our remaining fresh ground water supplies. Problems upon problems upon problems.

Now for a quick rundown on the more immediate water crises throughout the state:

**THE HIGH PLAINS** — In West Texas the Ogallala Aquifer is being pumped dry, mainly for the profits to be found in irrigation farming. What comes out of the aquifer is really fossil water. It's that old. Recharge in the Ogallala is very, very slow — on the order of thousands of years. Like our oil and gas supplies, when it's gone it's gone, at least for the purposes of this civilization. The High Plains irrigators have been the strongest lobbying group for importing millions of acre-feet of water into Texas. During the late Sixties and early Seventies, when the state had a governor from Lubbock and a lieutenant governor from DeLeon, West Texas' pending economic problems were taken very seriously in Austin. But, with money so dear today and with the feds no longer interested in funding giant water projects, the West Texans have fallen on hard political times.

Now, it is true that Gov. Dolph Briscoe has been making some off-the-cuff statements that indicate he is quite concerned about the plight of the High Plains. He says that if the energy crisis has taught us anything it's the fact that shortages can and should be avoided by good planning. It's also true that his task force has listened to presentations from entrepreneurs who want to pipe water to Texas from Central Alaska or Canada. But the task force is said to be a tad disconcerted by the governor's comments about water for the High Plains. Even the Water Clan seems resigned to letting West Texas irrigation ditches dry up.

U.S. Rep. Bob Price of Pampa, who has been a very strong promoter of water importation for West Texas, recently asked the Corps of Engineers to review the economic feasibility of bringing water from the Mississippi. The corps was unhappy to relate that it's still economically out of the question.

"I am disappointed by this finding," Price wrote in a weekly newsletter to his constituents. "I had hoped the review would be more encouraging, but I realize the import proposal is expensive. In fact, it would cost more than \$16 billion for construction, plus another \$4 billion to build the six power generating plants which



would be required to pump the water the required distance... But," the congressman added, "water is precious. The importance of food production to feed our growing population and to export to the world is increasing rapidly; and many areas in Texas could be used to produce food if more irrigation water is available. If we are wise, we shall keep a watchful eye on this situation. There may soon come a time when we will be willing to spend the money necessary to do whatever we must to get more water. I intend to continue a vigorous search for increased future water supplies, not only through importation, but also through underground storage, desalinization, weather modification and any other possibility which seems to offer potential."

State Rep. Bill Clayton of Springlake used to be a water lobbyist of national significance. But he recently bailed out of his interest group, Water, Inc., with the excuse that he needed to spend his full resources on running for speaker of the Texas House of Representatives. A speaker candidate could not be expected to get any pledges from East Texas legislators while simultaneously pushing for a water plan that would significantly decrease East Texas' water supply and ruin the natural flow of the area's abundant rivers. With Clayton gone, probably for good, Water, Inc., is generally considered to be sunk.

One environmental engineer told the *Observer*, "The people on the High Plains are going to have to resign themselves to less water in the future. Undoubtedly it will hurt the area's economy and it will cause a certain amount of readjustment." The engineer pointed out that a majority of the farming in West Texas is still dry land farming and that the irrigators *could* make a living the old way. It's just not nearly as profitable as irrigating. And, as Graves points out in *The Water Hustlers*, many irrigation farmers are not about to return to the lower yields of the dry land methods. "I grew up on that dry-land stuff," one farmer said with two cars in the garage of a good new house and a pickup and a \$7,000 tractor parked outside. "I watched my daddy fight it and I fought it with him. A little old cloud comes over and everybody sort of holds their breath and grunts, and it don't drop nothing and you just keep on watching the crops dry up. Uh-uh. When the water's gone I'm leaving too."\*

**EL PASO** — This is another area running out of water and our engineer says, "There's damned little that can be done about it." El Paso's main water source, the Rio Grande River, is tied up in agreements by the International Boundary and Water Commission. There is considerable argument over whether Texas is getting the portion of water it is supposed to get out of the international agreement. The squabble should keep a covey of hydrologists and water lawyers profitably negotiating for the remainder of the

century.

Meanwhile, El Paso mainly has to rely on ground water. Engineers are exploring the possibility of digging ground water wells several hundred miles away from the city, but the water is very salty and getting the salt out of the water would be very expensive.

**SAN ANTONIO AND THE EDWARDS AQUIFER** — The Edwards is a rich underground river running through the porous limestone north of the city of San Antonio. Unlike the Ogallala, the Edwards recharges very fast. What rains one week in the upper end of the Frio River may be pumped out of the ground for drinking in San Antonio a week later.

Ranch Town, a federal new-town housing project, is being constructed north of San Antonio and it stretches over a portion of the recharge zone of the aquifer. Environmentalists challenged the new town last year and lost the battle in court, but not before strict guidelines were laid down. The guidelines are supposed to ensure that the housing project does not pollute the underground water supply (see *Obs.*, May 25, June 29 and July 13, 1973). The main danger seems to be that the Ranch Town development will encourage more and more housing and commercial construction over the aquifer, which could easily result in a polluted water supply for the area. If Texas had a land use bill, San Antonio's growth probably would be directed southward, away from the precious aquifer. If Texas regulated its ground water supplies, the state could make sure no pollution reached those watery limestone caves. But there is strong opposition to both kinds of regulation.

**THE HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA** — Fact is, it's sinking right into Galveston Bay. Most people seem to think that subsidence is a purely localized phenomenon affecting the San Jacinto Monument and parts of Pasadena and Clear Lake, but such is not the case. Houston's ground water supply is being depleted at such a clip that the land in some parts of Harris County has sunk as much as seven feet. At present, hundreds of millions of gallons of water per day are being pumped out along the Houston Ship Channel for industrial purposes. The pumping creates a big dishpan effect, with the center of the dishpan being in Pasadena. But as far away as Freeport there is subsidence of up to 12 inches.

"Sooner or later when we have a hurricane down there," says the chief administrator of a state water-related agency, "it's going to wipe out a few thousand homes that were high and dry during the last hurricane. I'm convinced it will create a scandal of the first order. By allowing this subsidence to happen the Legislature has in the aggregate been grossly negligent in its duties to the people of this area."

Houston/Galveston legislators, especially

Sens. Babe Schwartz and Chet Brooks and Rep. Joe Allen, have tried to pass legislation aimed at stopping the withdrawal of ground water from the area along the west side of Galveston Bay and along the Ship Channel. They've run up against a brick wall, a wall primarily constructed by the West Texans who oppose regulation of ground water in any part of the state for fear that the regulation will spread all the way to the Ogallala.

**CORPUS CHRISTI AND SOUTH TEXAS** — Corpus has a little subsidence problem, but the city is in the process of setting up a new water supply via the Choke Canyon reservoir to be constructed on the Frio River. Unfortunately, the water supply from Choke Canyon probably won't provide much water for areas farther down the coast. And, next to the High Plains, the lower Rio Grande Valley is most in need of additional water to keep up its irrigation farming.

Like the El Paso area, the Valley is having trouble getting the quantities of water it hoped to get through the international agreements and cooperative reservoirs along the Rio Grande. The in-state water rights are messed up as well. The Water Rights Commission has had a water master adjudicating tangled rights in the area for several years now, but there are still lots of thorny rights questions remaining to be answered.

As mentioned earlier Harry Burleigh and the TWDB currently are thinking about delivering 150,000 acre-feet of water a year to South Texas from the Guadalupe River or thereabouts. But the water would only be sufficient for municipal and industrial uses. For the purpose of continued irrigation, the Valley would need an estimated half million to a million acre-feet a year.

Looking north, beyond Choke Canyon and the Frio River, you get to the Gaudalupe-San Antonio River Basin, which may supply the TWBD's 150,000 acre-feet, presuming the state goes for inter-basin transfer of water. For irrigation water, one would have to look even farther north. There's a lot of water in the Colorado River Basin, but most of the rights are already owned, particularly by the rice farmers in the Matagorda County area. Some of the rights might be bought, but the price would be high and the cost of getting the water down to the Valley would be even higher.

Farther up the coast is the Brazos River, where the water is naturally very salty. Some state bureaucrats and valley water promoters are thinking of looking as far east as the Trinity, the Neches and the Sabine Rivers for water. The costs, of course, would be astronomical and could only be justified if the country were in dire need of the fruits and vegetables grown in the Valley.

The irrigators are in competition with



the environmentalists who want to keep the estuaries productive and the wild rivers flowing; with the heavy industrial water users; with the municipalities with the utility companies; with the growing legions of owners of second homes; and with many other categories of water users.

Some utility companies are going so far as to finance their own water projects. Any method of energy production uses lots of water, but nuclear power plants are especially demanding. The South Texas Nuclear Project, for example, is currently seeking permission to divert 102,000 acre-feet annually from the Colorado for its cooling towers.

All these needs have to be sorted out and clarified into an equitable public

policy. In the near future, the state will need land use regulation, strict pollution control, ground water regulation and well-organized, well-funded grouping of water and land related agencies that operate for the good of the majority rather than the economic benefit of the few. K.N.

#### NOTES

1. J. Frank Dobie, *Tales of Old Time Texas*, Little, Brown and Co., 1955, p. 93.
2. John Graves, *The Water Hustlers*, Sierra Club, 1971.
3. "The Executive Director's Report," *Water for Texas*, January-February, 1974.
4. Harold Scarlett, "Swirling water plan," *The Houston Post*, May 5, 1974.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Graves, p. 66.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

## Texanize it!

• Bob Bullock, the Democratic nominee for comptroller, let loose with a press release recently suggesting that the state demand royalties from its oil and gas leases "in kind" rather than in money. Then, Bullock said, the gas could be sold "at lower rates" to the utilities whose supplies from Lo-Vaca Gathering Co., the Coastal states subsidiary, have been curtailed.

It sounded like a great idea to the *Observer* and conversations with Land Commissioner Bob Armstrong and Asst. Atty. Gen. Frank Cooksey indicated they thought it was a pretty good scheme too. So good, in fact, that legislation was passed some time ago to allow the state to take its royalties in kind. The General Land Office has been collecting the oil and gas for two years now. But since the revenue from leases is constitutionally dedicated to the school children of Texas, Armstrong says he asks "top dollar" for it. The commissioner said that if he started selling it "at give-away prices" he would have a number of educational lobbyists righteously out for his hide.

• The state's share of the oil and gas is certainly not enough to solve anybody's energy crisis. Armstrong recently has managed to jack the state's royalty share on leases from one-sixth to one-fifth, but he estimates that if Texas gathered every possible drop of oil and gas from its leasing operations, the amount "would just barely meet the needs of Austin and San Antonio and maybe the Lower Colorado River Authority." Meanwhile, he says, the single Alcoa plant at Point Comfort uses as much gas daily as Austin does.

• In recent years, both Sissy Farenthold and Ronnie Dugger have argued that the state should produce its own oil and gas rather than lease its productive property to entrepreneurs. And

### Political Intelligence



Bob Bullock

now U.S. Rep. Henry Gonzalez of San Antonio seems to be thinking along the same lines. Gonzalez, who is Coastal States' most outspoken critic, said recently, "Maybe it's time that we 'Texanize' our natural gas resources. He insists that the Texas Legislature "can do more than stand on the bench while the energy pirates play their games."

Gonzalez also speculates that the reason federal authorities haven't cracked down

on Coastal States for not living up to its contracts is because the company's founder, Oscar Wyatt, coughed up a \$50,000 contribution to Richard Nixon in 1972. "I can see the fine hand of Oscar Wyatt's political contribution playing a role there," the congressman says.

• The Associated Press reports from Indianapolis, Ind., that U.S. Rep. Barbara Jordan says House Judiciary Committee Chairman Peter Rodino has never asked her how she would vote on an impeachment resolution. Jordan was in Indianapolis to address the Indiana Black Expo when a reporter asked her to comment on Rodino's alleged statement that all 21 Democrats on the committee were ready to vote for impeachment. According to the AP, Jordan said Rodino "has never talked to me about it and I have never said how I was going to vote . . . I don't feel that black people have become too focused on the matter of impeachment. Whether Richard Nixon is in office or out, you are still going to be black."

Jordan has previously declined to comment on how she might vote. When the *Observer* asked her the question, as part of its impeachment poll (see *Obs.*, May 10), she replied, "As a member of the House Judiciary Committee . . . [I] should not respond."

### Bank and trust

• Sen. Lee Metcalf (D-Mont.) has asked the Federal Trade Commission to investigate a Houston bank holding company because, he says, its directors' ties to energy-producing and -consuming corporations comprise an "institutional interlock" between banks and their customers. Along with Metcalf's letter went a list of some of First City Bancorporation's directors and their other affiliations, including:

— John Connally, a partner in Vinson, Elkins, Searls, Connally and Smith (which represents several oil and gas clients) and a director of Pan American World Airways (a major consumer of jet fuel);

— George R. Brown, Brown & Root's board chairman, a director and executive committee chairman of Texas Eastern Transmission and a director of or partner in seven smaller O&G firms;

— M. A. Wright, chairman of the board and chief executive officer of Exxon U.S.A. and a director of the Exxon Corp.;

— George F. Kirby, president, chief executive officer and a director of Texas Eastern and a director of the Ethyl Corp.;

— Herbert J. Frensky, vice chairman of Brown & Root and a director of Texas Eastern;

— Other directors with ties to Eastern Airlines, Armco Steel, El Paso Natural Gas, United Gas and 20 oil, pipeline and oil-field service companies.

The FTC's chairman, Lewis Engman, has previously testified before Metcalf's



subcommittee that the agency is investigating interlocks among bank and corporation directorates. Such connections do not necessarily violate anti-trust laws: the FTC is attempting to determine whether they have anti-competitive effects. The agency has not disclosed whether First City is one of the financial institutions already being studied.

It's the time of year when *Texas Parade* magazine and *Fortune* release their rankings of corporations. The *creme de la creme* in both lists — the top 50 of *Fortune's* 500 industrials and the top 20 of *Texas Parade's* 100 Texas companies — are rated about the same as they were last year (two entries, into 49th and 50th places, into *Fortune's* elite; one, into 19th, in *Texas Parade's*). Both magazines call last year the best ever for their rated companies. Both noted the exceptional-even-in-an-exceptional-year performance of oil, gas and related companies. *Fortune's* fabulous 50 includes 17 oil or petrochemical firms — four of them (Exxon, Texaco, Mobil and Gulf) in the top ten. Ten of *Texas Parade's* 20 are O&G-related, and 30 of the top 100, the magazine notes, "derive the majority of their sales and net income from petroleum-related operations." The median increase in profits for all oil companies in *Fortune's* list was 53.3 percent, as against a 39 percent jump for the 500 as a whole and a 32.4 percent increase for all U.S. industrials.

## New radio

An interesting agglomeration of San Antonio minority honchos, artists, architects, environmentalists and community organizers has applied for an FCC license to operate an FM non-profit community radio station. This indigenous group apparently has gotten the upper hand on the UT broadcasting empire, which earlier had expressed interest in acquiring FM frequency 89.9 to augment its Austin radio station.

Pleas McNeel, former editor and publisher of the *Eagle Bone Whistle*, and prime mover behind the project, says the station's broadcasts will be "bilingual . . . focusing on the unique cultural heritage of San Antonio, the interests of its varied ethnic groups and the specific educational needs of all segments of our society."

The concept for this non-profit station is similar to that of the Pacifica Foundation. McNeel has plans for a network of neighborhood studios and a roving van, plus open telephone lines "to promote intensive local coverage and communications between individual citizens and the agencies designed to serve them."

The group is in the process of hustling federal grants and matching funds to finance the station. Contributions would be welcomed at San Antonio Community

Radio Corp., 225 W. Castano, San Antonio, Tex.

The on-again, off-again San Antonio Expressway may be on again for good. Construction on the freeway has been halted since before the flood by objections to its proposed route, which cuts through Brackenridge Park. Last year, Congress ended all federal funding for the project, at the request of the Texas Highway Department, so that environmental restrictions in federal law would no longer apply. Environmentalists insisted in court that such action was an obvious mechanism for taking away their legal recourse against the project, but the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has upheld the legislative switcheroo and ruled that construction may resume.

## Shut down again

Where's the Civil Liberties Union when you really need it? Censorship! First Amendment freedoms infringed upon! The Fourth of July parade in Round Top is one of the state's more traditional celebrations of the nation's birthday. The annual festivities there sometimes border on a parody of a small-town Fourth, but their charm is such that folks come from as far as Houston to enjoy the patriotic oratory, floats and fireworks.

This year a cheery group of local folks, a few beers to the wind, decided it would be great fun to have a float commemorating the area's most famous business establishment — the very popular but now-defunct Chicken Ranch. Said idea was greeted with general applause and arrangements were made. A spangled float and the means to pull it were found. Ronnie Klump, a noted local thespian, was cast as Marvin Zindler, the Houston TV type who played a key role in getting the celebrated whorehouse closed. There were to have been chickens, a large brass bed and some putative ladies of ill repute on the float. Then, alas, the float was censored.

Fayette County Sheriff Jim Flournoy got wind of the project, called the float's sponsors and strongly suggested that the float be pulled from the parade. He feared bad publicity, going so far as to suggest, according to one reliable source, that the appearance of a Chicken Ranch float could ruin Round Top. The float's sponsors chickened out, as it were.

There were rumors that Zindler himself had threatened to bring a camera crew to the parade and raise hell about the float, but Zindler says that although he did get a tip about the float, he wasn't quite clear on what the tip was about and certainly didn't plan to do anything about it. Zindler told the *Observer* that he would be happy to address the Rotary Club or other such groups in the area in defense of his Chicken Ranch reportage. When told that he was more likely to be lynched than listened to

if he ventured into that part of the state again, he said reflectively, "They do have a lot of good ol' trees around there."

The first Texas Gay Conference was held in Fort Worth in late June. During a workshop on "Dealing with Public Officials," a Houston group called Integrity released the results of a poll it had sent to members of the Legislature. To the question, "Do you favor the imposition of religious or moral convictions on one group by another?" 15 percent of those who responded answered, "yes."

We realize that State Treasurer Jesse James' numerous detractors keep insisting he's never made it into the twentieth century, but this is ridiculous. In a treasurer's report on Investment Funds as of May 31, there is an item listed for \$159,500: The Lunatic Asylum Fund.

Yankee Doodle was born on July 4th on South Padre Island. Yankee may have been the first Atlantic Ridley turtle to hatch in this country in the last 25 years. Yankee's mom was one of some 1,200 Atlantic Riddleys hatched on the island between 1963 and 1967 in a re-turtleization project sponsored by the Valley Sportsmen's Club. The sportsmen brought Ridley eggs up to Padre from Tampico, Mexico, and Yankee's mom was the first Mexican-import hatchling to return to Padre to lay her own eggs. Over a hundred little Riddleys have popped out since the Fourth and all the girl Riddleys are expected to come home again when they get ready to have their own little Riddleys.

Dimmie Johnson, 19, of Houston, was elected Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan in early July. He is the youngest Grand Dragon ever elected. Johnson explained to reporters that he owed it all to a Dale Carnegie personality improvement course. He said the course had really helped him with his Klan work.

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# Anti-trust and Texas medicine

By Jackee Cox

Washington, D.C.

On July 10, a panel of witnesses representing the Texas Medical Association appeared before U.S. Sen. Philip Hart's Senate Anti-trust and Monopoly Subcommittee to respond to allegations made before the subcommittee last May 15 that the TMA has a "monopolistic stranglehold" over the planning, organization, delivery and financing of Texas health care services. On hand to testify were TMA lobbyists Ace Pickens, Phil Overton and Sam Stone of Austin, along with Drs. John Smith and Max

Morales of San Antonio. The subcommittee spent more than five and a half hours hearing testimony from and questioning the witnesses.

Dr. Morales told the subcommittee, "Any previous statements you may have heard that the Blues [Blue Cross-Blue Shield] and the insurance industry in Texas were in cahoots with the Medical Society to control the delivery of health care is nothing more than a tissue of lies."

Stone insisted that State Insurance Board Chairman Joe Christie's HMO guidelines (see *Obs.*, Feb. 19) constitute the major obstacle to formation of Health Maintenance Organizations in Texas.\* According to Stone, who serves both the TMA and the State Board of Medical Examiners as legal counsel, any non-profit group may contract with physicians to provide staffing for an HMO. This varies significantly from the medical examiners' stance two years ago, when they insisted that only physicians could form corporations to deliver health care. A federal suit testing the board's position on that issue will be heard in San Antonio later this year.

At the earlier hearing, the subcommittee had heard charges that Stone's dual employment might be in violation of state law. Stone testified that his position is "authorized by statute, audited and certified by the state auditor's office as to its propriety and acknowledged by the attorney general of Texas, with whose office I work closely in the performance of my duties."

Overton told the subcommittee with obvious pride that he has served both Blue Cross and the TMA as legal counsel for over 38 years. He assured Senator Hart that during that time there has never been a conflict of interest between the two groups.

Overton also took pride in the fact that Blue Cross' operational costs for administration run about 6 percent. Data supplied by the Department of Public Welfare show that over the past three years Blue Cross has charged the state as much as 11 percent for administration of certain portions of the Medicaid program. Over the six-year period from September, 1967, to August, 1973, Blue Cross collected more than \$29 million in administrative charges for handling Medicaid and more than \$5

million in risk-factor payments. An audit by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, obtained by Senator Hart's staff, indicates that Blue Cross controlled over \$58 million in reserve funds for the Medicaid program as of the fall of 1973.

Questions were also raised concerning the fiscal relationship between the TMA and the Texas Medical Foundation. The TMF is a non-profit corporation created by the TMA. Dr. Smith, a director of the TMF, denied that the foundation receives financial support from the TMA. He said that TMF activities are financed mainly through grant funds received from Texas regional medical programs. Dr. Smith serves on the advisory council for Texas regional medical programs.

The TMF recently entered into a developmental contract with the DPW and Blue Cross to conduct a utilization review program for all in-hospital Medicaid procedures (see *Obs.*, July 5). Should that program become operational, its estimated cost for the first year would be \$1.6 million. That amount will be paid to the TMF for its administrative costs. Stone admitted that he wrote the TMF drafts of that contract.

In May of this year, the TMA House of Delegates voted to assess every TMA member \$100 to fight for the repeal of the federal law which mandates review over physicians' services rendered outside of hospitals.\* With nearly 12,000 physicians to draw on, the TMA could amass \$1.2 million. When asked how much of that money had been collected, Overton said he didn't know. When the subcommittee staff asked him to supply the information for the record, he refused. Senator Hart may decide to require a response. Dr. Smith, director of the TMA Political Action Committee (TEXPAC), stated that the funds collected from the assessment would not be funnelled through TEXPAC and would not be used for campaign contributions.

At the May 15 hearing, witnesses questioned the legality of the means by which funds are transferred from the American Medical Association Political Action Committee (AMPAC) to TEXPAC. At issue was the question of whether the sources of a \$16,000 contribution by

\*Such review would be implemented by Professional Standards Review Organizations (PSRO's), which are required to be in place by 1976. The PSRO idea is more than a little unpopular with the medical establishment. Almost 100 congressmen are already listed as co-sponsors of bills to repeal the PSRO requirement, and at least 25 others have gone on record as favoring amendments to the original law. Among those who have introduced repealers are U.S. Reps. Ray Roberts and Jim Collins of Texas; U.S. Rep. Omar Bureson has introduced amending legislation.

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\*Whether or not Stone's interpretation is correct, Christie's guidelines would seem to have been voided by Atty. Gen. John Hill's opinion that "the State Board of Insurance has no regulatory power over prepaid health care delivery systems." Hill's opinion, which had been sought by Sen. Babe Schwartz, was released two days after the Hart subcommittee hearing.



AMPAC to TEXPAC were properly disclosed. Hart's staff asked that AMPAC submit for the record a sworn statement indicating that the entire sum came from donations of \$100 or less (\$100 is the threshold amount for requiring source disclosure).

Dr. Phil Caper of U.S. Sen. Edward Kennedy's subcommittee on health expressed an interest in the relationship between Blue Cross-Blue Shield and the TMA. He requested that lists of all officers and directors of Blue Cross, Blue Shield, the TMA and the TMF over the past five years be supplied for the record. Pickens indicated that he would "try" to gather that information for the subcommittee.

Dean Sharp, a staffer for Hart's subcommittee, questioned the TMA representatives on fiscal aspects of the Medicaid program. Overton said that such matters were not within the knowledge of witnesses present. He suggested that Blue Cross officers Eugene Aune and Tom Beauchamp should be called to respond to Sharp's questions.

The subcommittee adjourned before Sharp could complete his questions. Hart and his staff apparently intend to follow up with written interrogatories to Blue Cross-Blue Shield. The witnesses present were also instructed that they will be required to provide written responses to further questions.

*Cox is an Austin freelance writer and researcher specializing in health care questions. Many of the charges Pickens, Overton and Stone were contesting were made by Cox, who testified (along with former Sen. Joe Bernal, Rep. Mickey Leland and others) at the earlier Hart subcommittee hearings. Cox has developed some of those charges in Observer articles.*



### A CLARIFICATION

In the April 12 *Observer* Jackie Cox wrote a story on the medical establishment in Texas entitled, "A little conflict of interest music, please." Our author's note explained that part of the material for the article was gathered while Ms. Cox was working for the Juarez-Lincoln Center and funded by a grant from the National Migrant Information Clearinghouse. The Juarez-Lincoln Center subsequently published a technical booklet by Ms. Cox, *HMOs in Texas*. The research grant did not in any way finance Ms. Cox' article in the *Observer*. She did it on her own time as a freelance assignment. — Ed.

# The \$3.80 victory

Austin

How to jack around several multi-million dollar corporations, hold 'em up, throw 'em up against the wall and generally get what you want for a grand, sum total of \$3.80.

In late June, the Austin Television Action Council and the Austin Black Media Coalition achieved significant and substantial agreements with Austin's three television stations concerning minority hiring and public affairs programming. The first thing that should be noted about this signal triumph for Right, Truth, Justice, Freedom, Good Guys and the American Way is that it's a damn good thing the other side never figured out who they were up against. 'Cause, folks, they wasn't up against nobody. At least, nobody who would ordinarily cause a large communications company to quake in its corporate boots. The Council and the Coalition are, in fact, largely paper organizations, comprising a motley assemblage of blacks, browns, students, feminists and miscellaneous activists.

The groups stayed maybe a half-step ahead of the managements of the three television stations throughout the month-long negotiations, leaving the managements with the impression that they knew what the hell they were talking about. They were actually learning as they went along. The stations also cove in on account of they were haunted by nightmare visions of having their FCC licenses held up and maybe revoked after extensive and expensive legal proceedings. In fact, the \$3.80 in Xeroxing fees that KTBC charged Rodney Griffin, a researcher for the citizens groups, about broke their collective budget.

The Austin Black Media Coalition is, for all practical purposes, composed of two women and a front man. Linda McGowan and Erna Smith, two of the funniest and most formidable black women in the state, were busy this spring helping get Wilhelmina Delco elected to the state legislature. But they took time off in April to attend a workshop on the media and license challenges run by Pluria Marshall, a Houston activist. What the hell, they thought, let's DO it. They enlisted Dr. John Warfield, chairman of the Afro-American studies department at the University of Texas. "Always helps to have a Ph.D. out in front for you," observed McGowan. They called a meeting to which all concerned black folks in East Austin were to come and all of 20 people showed up. McGowan thereafter, during the negotiations with the stations, grandly referred to these 20 as "my constituents." As in, "Don't give me that shit, man, I can't go back to my constituents with an offer like that. They'd kill me. I got to have more than that."

The chief negotiator for the Council was Bob Thompson, a senior law student who actually has some media credentials. He worked for KTBC as a newsman for a short spell and spent four months last summer at the FCC in Washington, D.C., learning at least a little about the licensing procedure.

"Austin was just such virgin territory," he said wonderingly. "We had people walking into those stations, asking to look at public documents the FCC requires the stations to keep and the stations didn't even know what we were talking about."

Thompson's Council included the Women's Equity Action League, some Brown Berets, UT students from both the law and communications schools, Father Joe Znotas of St. Julius Church in East Austin and a distinct lack of a cast of thousands. The best thing they had going for them was the dismal record of the town's three TV stations, which among them had once had one black reporter. A. V. Ludington, executive vice-president at KTVV, started things off briskly by observing that he would hire colored people, if he could just find some that were qualified. When asked how the station filled its vacancies, he allowed as how word

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went out on the grapevine. McGowan offered that the grapevine seemed to stop at I.H. 35 (the freeway that divides white Austin from black and brown Austin).

Rush Evans, who carried the ball for KTBC in the negotiations, was handicapped by the fact that he'd only been in Austin for eight months. He hopefully proffered the station's perennial license renewal statement, which asserts that the station has been working in concert with the University of Texas since 1952 to find qualified minority employees. "Shit!" said McGowan, bounding out of her chair. "We didn't have no niggers at the University 'til 1958 and then it was only one law student and even that took a f—in"

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lawsuit to get him in!" Actually, Sweatt v. Painter, the suit that integrated the University, was decided in 1950, but since Evans knew even less about it than McGowan, her point carried.

The final score for the coalition at KTBC included: hiring a black co-anchorperson by August 1: a weekly black community affairs program starting next January: expansion of the station's internship program to include Huston-Tillotson (a black college), Austin Community College and other schools in the area.

The Council, which negotiated exclusively with KTBC, got the station to agree to hire an additional black woman on its news staff, to do 10 local documentaries during the balance of 1974 and to do eight to 12 local documentaries annually thereafter. KTBC will also expand its local news program to one hour effective Aug. 26 and will have employment advisers on hiring women, blacks and *chicanos*.

KTVV settled for a new staff news position to be filled by a black: a minimum of six documentaries a year on local topics: an internship program at Huston-Tillotson and A.C.C.

KVUE also pledged to hire a black on-air newsperson, to put on a weekly black community affairs program, to begin an internship program, and to name a black advisory board to help with the production of documentaries.

Two radio stations, KLBJ and KNOW, agreed to try harder in their efforts to serve the city's minority communities and KLBJ pledged 30 minutes a week to community affairs programming.

McGowan, who is nothing if not brassy, remains unsatisfied. "KTBC said they was gonna do a documentary on alcoholism in East Austin. Shit, we just over there buyin' that Ripple 'cause we can't afford nothin' better. Hard to get drunk on that. Why don't they do a documentary on the alcoholics who drink scotch at the country club?" She's also determined to get that \$3.80 back.

Thompson said, "I don't think the stations here ever expected the community action on license renewals to get to middle-sized cities like Austin. Last time license renewals came up in Texas was in 1971 and I think the only action taken then was in San Antonio. I bet these guys just thought they were safe, so they didn't do anything. The next renewal round will be in 1977 and I hope there's a lot of action taken then. Boy, if we can do it, anyone can."

Another interesting license renewal challenge is underway in El Paso. Station KTSM has been challenged by one of its former reporters and newscasters Richard Wheatley. Wheatley is not challenging on lack of affirmative action in minority hiring or programming but accuses KTSM of news distortion, censorship and running a generally cruddy news operation. Wheatley was fired by KTSM in February

for taking an action that, at another kind of station, would have won him praise and a raise. In January, Wheatley three times reported that the El Paso city council was in at least potential violation of the state's new open meetings laws. He finally filed a misdemeanor complaint himself (the station apparently saw no reason to do so) against the mayor and an alderman. For his pains, he was fired for "making the news" rather than reporting it. Wheatley cites a series of distortions and incidents of censorship in the station's news coverage. One gem of an incident was when a KTSM reporter was allegedly fired for having said on the air that the University of Texas at El Paso's football team had played like "a high school team."

In Houston, the Black Citizens for Media Action, a group that was active under another name during the 1971 license renewal period, has again filed challenges. This time they are challenging 10 Houston radio stations and one television station, KHOU. One of the radio stations being challenged by the group is aimed at primarily black audiences and another aims much of its programming at *chicanos*. Eight of the stations are accused of discrimination in hiring and promotion practices and two are being challenged on essentially technical violations concerning amount of air time devoted to commercials. The group alleges that station KCOH, the black-oriented station, permits "insulting and disrespectful 'jive talk'" by its announcers, indiscriminate use of sexual and sensuous language and "vulgar and coarse programming." M.I.

From the transcript of an April 4, 1972 discussion concerning the political situation in Texas between President Nixon, John Mitchell and H. R. Haldeman:

M: Well, on the other side of the coin, of course, our Republican friends are getting itchy and I keep telling them to go out and write you some more Republicans — but they say, well, we're going to lose good people to the gubernatorial campaign, etc., etc.

P: Let 'em go.

H: So what?

P: Let them go. They don't — that doesn't make any difference. Hold it firm. We need Texas Democrats. We don't in Texas — we haven't won it yet — but you don't win with Republicans. We never have. And let's just face it, that's the way the score is. Tower has won once or twice but — accidents, pure accidents.

(Unintelligible) Any Democrat, believe me, by any Democrat (unintelligible) ... committee of that sort is better. Rather than that fellow who is finance chairman down there. What's his name?

H: Al Fay.

P: Al Fay.

M: You mean Peter? You mean Peter O'Donnell? Peter's left.

H: He's left?

M: Peter's quit. He's ... national committee...

H: I'll be darned.

M: Agnich is the new national committeeman.

P: Yeah.

H: O'Donnell was such a horrible whiner.



# Lincoln Steffens

By Steve Barthelme

Austin

Justin Kaplan's new biography of Lincoln Steffens is the sort of book that can't miss. Steffens, most famous of the turn of the century muckrakers, knew so many of the people, and touched so much history in the 40 years between 1890 and 1930, that his biography could hardly be dull. The current vogue of investigative reporting and "radicalism" doesn't hurt.

Steffens started as a rich boy in California, spent four all-expense paid years at Berkeley and three at a half dozen universities in Europe, returned to New York in 1892 and shortly became a journalist. Quickly he meets, among others, Theodore Roosevelt, who is in New York as a reform police commissioner. Steffens becomes involved in reform of the city government, which is distastefully corrupt. Tammany. And initially Steffens' feeling is just that, distaste. Bosses. No class. Gradually Steffens becomes more sophisticated. He sees bossism as a pattern, and as a system not without its advantages. A reform administration comes and goes without accomplishing much.

Steffens runs into S. S. McClure, editor and publisher of what became the major muckraking magazine, *McClure's*, with Steffens, Ida Tarbell and Ray Stannard Baker as regular writers. Sells him an article about another friend, Teddy Roosevelt. Steffens quits his city editor job on a New York paper to join *McClure's*. Running into a crusading St. Louis circuit attorney named Folk who had exposed and prosecuted some of the local graft ("Recently St. Louis had been kept in darkness for weeks pending payment of \$175,000 in bribes." Sound familiar?), Steffens writes it up. Then in succession, Minneapolis, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, Chicago, New York. He also is evolving his theory: popular indifference and business evil make possible shadow governments of bosses in which corruption flourishes. Steffens becomes a hero by means of his exposés. Early in this period, McKinley is shot and Steffens' friend Roosevelt becomes President.

Results fail to come up to Steffens' expectations. The reform administration failures he had seen in New York are repeated in the other cities. Steffens expects too much and does not get it. His

## LINCOLN STEFFENS

Justin Kaplan

Simon & Schuster, 380 pp. \$10.00

political leanings slide further left. Luckily, around this time the Tsar is overthrown and before too long Lenin and Trotsky take power. Steffens is on the boat on which Trotsky sails from New York, returning from exile. Trotsky in second class.

(To facilitate the narrative, I have omitted some people Steffens knew: Bernard Baruch, Sylvia Beach, James Cagney, Mexican revolutionary President Venustiano Carranza, French Freud professor J. M. Charcot, Tammany Boss Richard Croker, Clarence Darrow, charter Socialist Eugene V. Debs, Henry Ford, Felix Frankfurter, William Randolph Hearst, Ernest Hemingway, Colonel House, James Joyce, Ezra Pound, newspaper magnate E. W. Scripps, Gertrude Stein, Upton Sinclair, Sinclair Lewis, Woodrow Wilson - etc.)

Does all this seem to be happening with remarkable ease? It seems that way in the book. With a few exceptions, Steffens' life until 1918 is an almost effortless process of arranging good fortune and high rolling in a line. Once he is depressed for three paragraphs. An attempt to intercede in an L.A. labor bombing trial goes badly. As for the rest - a piece of cake.

In 1911 two labor organizers, the McNamara brothers, are on trial for murder in the bombing of the L.A. *Times* building. Steffens helps negotiate a guilty plea from the brothers for a promise of leniency. Steffens expects to create the beginnings of harmony between capital and labor: it was, he said, "an experiment in good will." Also an incredible act of arrogance and naiveté. One brother gets life imprisonment and the other 15 years as the judge doublecrosses. Over the following 25 years, Steffens makes several unsuccessful attempts to gain their release by government officials.

Disappointed by what he considered the failure of reform and progressivism and impressed by a 1917 visit to revolutionary Russia, he comes back (after eight years in Europe) as an apologist for Bolshevism. Here he runs into a lot of trouble. The Americans, oversold on World War I, turn to Red-hating as an outlet for their enthusiasm after the war ends. George Creel's work in WW I and Mitchell Palmer's 1919-20 "Red Scare" are ad campaigns for

which we are still paying. Public enthusiasm for Red-hating doesn't do Steffens any good in his last years. But it gives him an element of seriousness both harvested and reinforced by publication of his *Autobiography* in 1931. The book becomes a bestseller and critical success. Steffens lectures, travels and lives his last five years in Carmel with his wife and son.

Kaplan's book provides a fascinating picture of the people and the time. Chicherin, a Bolshevik commissar, interrupts dinner at the Moscow lodgings of an American mission to score some canned goods. Mabel Dodge, rich and neurasthenic, holds "evenings" at her apartment in New York where the leading bohemians are introduced to the leading revolutionaries. Later she moves to New Mexico. Still later she arrives in Carmel in pursuit of the poet Robinson Jeffers:

She planned for him to fill the vacancy left in her life by D. H. Lawrence, who, Steffens remarked, had "unfeelingly died."

Teddy Roosevelt is described as having "essentially a boy's mind":

"You must always remember," said one of the Roosevelt's closest friends, "that the President is about six."

But it is an intellectual biography of an intellectual. You get the feeling Steffens never needed to bathe, or take a Rolaid. Kaplan does not avoid the problems (such as Steffens' exaggerated expectations for muckraking, or his justification of Bolshevik terror and repression), but still they seem inadequately dealt with. Conflicts are handled thoroughly in a historical and intellectual sense, but Kaplan fails (just as Steffens did) to deal with them in a personal sense. So that, after reading the book, one is left with a lot of questions.

Why, for instance, did Steffens choose his very curious position as an apologist for revolution who refuses to become a revolutionary? The book's answer, which amounts to Once a liberal, always a liberal, is not satisfactory. Why does Steffens repeatedly whip himself for his "un-Soviet values of freedom, ease, patience, skepticism?" How could he witness a year or so of the Mexican Revolution and write that it was not a revolution "according to Marx," as if he had expected to find it in a textbook? Why, finally, did he live in and for ideas and ideology to the point of justifying Stalinist slaughter? *Lincoln Steffens* leaves such questions unanswered.



# Our peculiar migration

The Texas Good Neighbor Commission's latest report to the governor is an eye-opener.

Farm workers in South Texas, says the report, "are among the very lowest paid in the nation," and consequently the statewide average wage for a farm worker is \$1.58 an hour.

The bracero program importing Mexican workers at legally regulated pay scales, and with attendant protections, is inoperative. Not a single Mexican has been legally admitted to the country for farm work since 1969. It does not take a political scientist to figure out why. Factory farmers in a position to control the Nixon Administration's farm policies knew very well that cutting off the bracero program would increase the flow of cheaper, unprotected wetbacks, and this is what has happened. In 1964, 42,000 Mexican wetbacks were expelled; in 1968, 151,700; but in 1973, 577,000. By the guesswork estimates, a million Mexicans enter the United States illegally every year to work on U.S. farms. This, says the Good Neighbor Commission, is "one of the largest uncontrolled migrations of modern times" and "the largest migration into the U.S. since the early years of this century."

Wetbacks now come north under package deals that can include advice on how to get across the border, transportation at pick-up points, temporary lodging, and fake papers. "So north they go, hidden in car trunks, concealed under false crates, crammed in campers, trucks, and rental vans of all sizes," sometimes fifty of them in a load.

With a candor that one is not accustomed to in state agency documents, the GNC says that "For American employers seeking low-skill and low-cost workers, hiring the illegal alien is a very effective way of assuring profits. To them the foreign migrant represents a faceless, non-union labor force which they can use whenever they want, as long as they want, and still feel free of any responsibility. At the present time there is no penalty for hiring illegal aliens in Texas nor is there any obligation for the employers to determine the citizenship of their workers."

The commission endorses the Rodino bill in Congress to make farmers who

## Observations

knowingly hire illegal alien workers liable for criminal penalties themselves. As it is now the hapless wetback bears the penalty: he is deported, and the farmer hires some more wetbacks, who can then be deported in their turn. Almost one out of three of the illegal aliens caught by the Border Patrol in 1973 (152,441 of the 503,936) had been "previously expelled."

Nor does Texas adequately protect even native migrant farm workers. The Good Neighbor Commission finds it necessary to recommend that Governor Briscoe get in touch with the governors of "migrant labor consuming states" to coordinate efforts for the benefit of legal migrants. The commission proposes that the Migrant Camp Law's standards be extended to camps for three or more workers, instead of being limited to camps for fifteen or more as at present. Workers in processing plants, canneries, and cotton gins may not be covered by the camp law's terms, and the commission says they should be. Even worse, the Labor Agency Law, regulating those who manage the migrant workers, is being enforced now in the Lower Valley by "one inspector and one secretary," and the commission is driven to ask:

"Is it any wonder that compliance has broken down completely, and that the required monthly reports from all labor agents are missing and that worker complaints go unresolved? Further, it should be mentioned that the [Texas Department of Labor] has not published its Report on Migratory Labor Movement since 1968."

This is an old story, a tale twice told. The estimated annual wetback invasion in the early 1950's was a million persons a year. I went down to the Valley in 1954 and worked on a radio/TV station all summer, watching the wetback thing. Bodies occasionally washed up on the banks of the Rio Grande — wetbacks who hadn't made it, young girls, mothers. You heard of a father holding onto his child's hand, losing his grip, losing his child to the waters. Wages were 20 and 30 cents an hour; disease and violence were commonplace. The Border Patrol rounded them up off the farms in great batches, put them in a high-wire detention camp in McAllen, and shipped them back to the interior by boat, by plane, and by train. I will remember the scenes at the camp and the train station in Reynosa as long as I live.

The bracero program was designed to let

some Mexicans improve their lot by coming in to work on U.S. farms legally at regulated wages and with other benefits that also protected American workers from dirt-cheap and victimized competition, but now the government and the big farmers who dominate government farm policy have returned us to the times of ruthless and unlimited exploitation.

## HBG on JFK

Cong. Henry Gonzalez said the other day, in the context of the arrogant behavior of Oscar Wyatt's Coastal States, that perhaps the time has come when we should "Texanize" what is already ours — our natural resources. Gonzalez also had an important statement on the John Kennedy assassination in his newsletter. I quote this *en toto*:

"Possible Restudy of JFK Assassination: Quite a bit of interest has been generated by persons throughout the nation and some of the international press in my interest in restudying the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. I didn't put any credence in the theory of some that the CIA was involved in the Kennedy assassination until the revelations last year about CIA-connected persons involved in the Watergate crimes. My suspicions have been revived and fortified and I feel we should look into it. However, it would not be possible to get a congressional investigation underway right away. The House Judiciary Committee would be the most appropriate committee to handle it, but of course, this committee is not in a position to take such a project on until the impeachment inquiry is over. I suppose at some point it may be possible to get a special committee appointed to restudy it, but in light of what the Congress has facing it this year, this is something I will have to think in terms of possibly urging during the 94th Congress. In the meanwhile I welcome any information or material that anyone has that is relevant to the matter."

## The larger problem

We are awash in corruption. The indictment of Senator Gurney on charges of shaking down contractors in exchange for influence for federal bounty is just one more sting for our already dazed political sensibilities. The whole top echelon of the executive branch, having quit under fire, fight for their freedom every day in the courts. The President, charged by a grand jury as a co-conspirator, claims he is beyond the reach of the courts on evidence in criminal cases. Jake Jacobsen, formerly Lyndon Johnson's White House assistant, is reportedly prepared to allege that he

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bribed John Connally, former governor of Texas and Secretary of the Treasury and until recently a leading presidential possibility in the Republican Party. The Senate Watergate committee now finds out that Nixon used \$50,000 in campaign funds for private enrichment, including a swimming pool and a \$5,000 bauble for his wife. Erstwhile candidates for president in 1976 frankly set forth to collect millions of dollars: our highest office is still being bought and sold on the auction block. The degradation of our public life is so thorough, we now see that this is not a matter of personal debasement: this is a systemic problem. Our political democracy has broken down. We can impeach Nixon and make significant corrections within the constitutional system, but this will not be an improvement of the fundamental situation, the collapse of government, itself, under the onslaught of concentrated private and corporate wealth. The President, of course, should be impeached, but we should not waste energy on the subject. Impeachment is the opiate of the masses.

## George Raborn

When I was a sports writer on *The San Antonio Express* a gentle, roly-poly guy named George Raborn used to drop around. He had won some high school shot put contest in 1946, and he was a sports writer, too, but his fetish was records and ratings of all kinds. He loved to rate athletes, movies, actresses and actors, the greatest movie kisses, restaurants, cities, everything, and finally he set out to make a record of his own for going to movies. Maybe he went to more movies in his life than anyone else. Sometimes, when he would drop by the sports room, he would be on a dangerous fast, two weeks or some such, during which he would be losing forty pounds, but he was just as likely to enter an eating contest and wolf down eight pounds of shortcake in a sitting. He was really something.

The stories are making the rounds about him now, because he has just died, at 50, of throat cancer. You can think, I guess, that he was obsessional and that these were

his ways of routinizing and controlling it in acceptable ways, or that he was carrying out to the logical conclusion the hypnotized interest in records and ratings that occupies the minds and times of thousands of sports writers and millions of sports fans. He was vulnerable to ridicule, but he was nevertheless a very special person. He would not harm a fly, and in his own way he was enamored of immortality, he was looking for heroes, the Best, the Most, the Best and the Most. There was something about him — something very elusive — that was fine.

Dan Cook related in the *Express-News*: "Just a few weeks ago I saw him in Austin at the national collegiate track meet. Bumped into him in a hotel lobby and he was a sad sight, 50 pounds lighter than usual and obviously in failing health. He couldn't talk but he waved me down and then had me wait as he scribbled a note on a pad he carried. The pencil moved furiously and for a long while it seemed that he was writing a two-part story. Finally he flashed his boyish grin and showed me the message. It said, 'Hi.' "

That was George.

R.D.

# Pros and cons on the *Cristal* story

## Dialogue

I would like to thank Molly Ivins for coming up with the first decent story about Crystal City by any journalist (see *Obs.*, July 5). As a former Crystal City resident I have read with interest all the recent news accounts about that community. All of them have either portrayed Jose Angel Gutierrez as a god or as an inhuman, merciless dictator. All have either painted *Raza Unida* as a salvation of the people or as the ruination of a fine community. The fact of the matter is that Crystal City (or *Cristal*, as we have always called it, even before *Raza Unida* was begun) is now no better or no worse than it was prior to *Raza Unida's* initial victories. Ivins did an excellent job of telling about Crystal City as it really is: neither a heaven nor a hell. (She does need to brush up on her spelling of *chicano* names, though — it's Garza, not Graza; Salas, not Solas; Amancio, not Armencio; Viola, not Diola.)

Even though I was not living in Crystal City at the time, I was a supporter of Gutierrez and *Raza Unida* from the early days of the "revolution", as Ivins calls it. I honestly felt that *Raza Unida* (and its leaders) meant what it said when it talked about justice and freedom and dignity. Since then, I have learned that Gutierrez cares no more about justice and freedom and dignity than the racists, such as Jackie Hooks, who were in power before.

The white racists cared about power and money, and that is precisely what

Gutierrez and Noe Gonzales care about. To commend *Raza Unida* for improving the school system would be like commending the *gringos* for improving the economy of Crystal City by bringing in Del Monte way back then. The only reason Del Monte came into Crystal City was to make money, not to help the poor Mexicans. And the Anglos who helped it locate there did so to line their pockets with money, not to help the poor Mexicans.

Likewise, *Raza Unida* has improved the school system only to have an excuse for its existence. If the people of Crystal City could not see some physical evidence of improvement in their school system they would probably not tolerate the \$41,000-a-year salaries of the Gonzaleses or *Raza Unida's* strong-arm tactics in dealing with dissidents. If Gutierrez and Gonzales are improving the institutions of Crystal City, it is to boost their wealth and their power, not to help the poor Mexicans.

I have to strongly disagree with Ivins' contention that if *Raza Unida* has made mistakes, "they have earned the right to do that." She says that the *chicanos* of Crystal City "are entitled" to make those mistakes.

That simply is not true. Why is it that when the whites were making their mistakes (and believe me, they made plenty — I would never, ever want Crystal City to go back to the days of *anglo* rule) it was racism and bigotry, but now that *chicanos* are making the mistakes it is "progress"?

If Ivins had been talking about 1963 when Juan Cornejo led a short-lived *chicano* revolution, it might have been okay to say that the *chicano* leaders were entitled to their mistakes because they were ignorant and politically naive. But Gutierrez is not ignorant and he is not naive. He should know better. But then, what can you expect from a person who did not discover he was *not* white until he entered college?

When I was growing up my parents taught us that because we were Mexican we had to be better than the *anglos*. What the *anglos* did they did because they did not know any better. I mean, *anglos* were expected to be everything they were! Though I have come to outgrow that primitive philosophy, I have not rejected totally the idea that we, as Mexicans, should not go around screwing other people, whether they be *anglos* or other Mexicans. Perhaps that is why I have lately become so disgusted with Gutierrez and his *Raza Unida* in Crystal City: because they will screw anybody who gets in the way of



their gaining more power and money.

Juan Ramon Palomo, *The Hays County Citizen*, P.O. Box 1068, San Marcos, Tex. 78666.

*The spelling of Garza was loused up by gremlins at the printers: Ivins takes the blame for messing up Amancio, Salas and Viola and regrets the errors. — Ed.*

## Superficial

Just a few quick comments about "After the revolution..." I realize that writing about González' white shoes and Cadillacs, Guttierrez' relative inexperience in crop-picking, and Sheriff Serna's former profession is more fun than writing about broad-based political participation, people fighting multi-national corporate extortion, and the struggle to better a seemingly impossible economic situation. However, I feel your article was unfair and superficial.

As one of those awakening giants that speaks in italics I was disappointed with your failure to assess the enormous pressure that the people of *Cristal* have come under since they took over their local government. The real story of *Cristal* is in the fact that people still control their city even after a legal barrage of the magnitude that would even make Nixon squirm. Del Monte refuses to pay taxes and hires Jaworski's firm to fight it. Election losers refuse to accept the fact and take the *Raza Unida* people into an \$80,000 legal contest (the scene is now being repeated in nearby Cotulla, incidentally. Good law-abiding

anglos refuse to pay taxes and refuse to notify police when crimes are committed and then bitch because nothing is done. Still, after all the Cadillacs, white shoes, professional salaries, meatcutters turned sheriffs and the like, the people still keep electing the *Raza Unida* candidates. Perhaps it is because they are also the same people that the majority nominated (check the nomination process if you want to see real democracy), and because the people are also financing the campaigns with small contributions. The system is far from perfect but I would compare *Cristal* with any other city on the basis of democratic participation because I know it is the best to be found in Texas!

Of course, there will always be those who will want preferential treatment, special privileges, government by politically experienced hacks, and tax breaks for those who least need them. Perhaps you could suggest some place outside of South Texas for them to go to and get what they want.

Oh, and finally, the reason I don't drink Lone Star is because it gives me diarrhea.

Carlos R. Guerra, International Bldg., #405, 318 Houston St., San Antonio, Tex. 78205.

*The Observer last treated Del Monte's relationship with Cristal in its April 12 article on South Texas members of the Texas Research League. — Ed.*

## Bless you

I am writing to congratulate the *Observer* and Molly Ivins on the two pieces concerning the situation in Crystal City published in the issue of July 5, 1974. I am not in a position to evaluate the accuracy of the facts as reported by Ms. Ivins, but both pieces seemed to me an exceptionally fine example of investigative reporting written with a charity and balance too often absent in journals of opinion. The only point to which I take exception was the conclusion which suggests an ethnic double standard in the evaluation of the efficiency and honesty of government. One may applaud the transfer of power to formerly powerless groups; one may accept that incompetence and rascality are not exclusively characteristic of any racial, religious or ethnic group; but one should not, for these reasons and in some distortion of *noblesse oblige*, measure some officials by a yardstick different from that applied to others.

Although, unlike many of your recent letter writers, I hesitate to invoke the Deity in support of my views, I do believe Texas is blessed in having the *Observer* to educate, to amuse and to chide. Keep up the good work.

M. Michael Sharlot, 403 Juniper, Austin, Tex. 78746.

## Unfriendly

Regarding your July 5, 1974, "After the revolution in *Cristal*," with friends like you, we sure do not need any enemies.

Each paragraph of your article was filled with double entendres, half-truths, biased rumors, outright lies and a complete lack of objectivity clothed in white liberal truisms.

I shall line my son's diaper pail with your latest issue.

! Viva La Causa!

Mercedes W. Peña, 7201 Wood Hollow #421, Austin, Tex. 78731.

## That statue

For your information and that of your readers, the statue of Popeye (see *Obs.*, July 5) antedated Del Monte Packing Co. by several years, and is not, as you stated under the picture on page 5, "in tribute to..."

My father, S. C. Freed, the first spinach canner in Crystal City and owner of the Freed Packing Co., had the idea to immortalize the famous spinach-eater and secured permission from Popeye's creator, E. C. Segar, to have the statue — not at the municipal building, but at the city park which was in front of the city hall.

Itta F. Lenowitz, Drawer 631, Seguin, Tex. 78155.

## Cox wrong

If you must persist in having Jackee Cox write about medicine in Texas, you really ought to have someone who is knowledgeable about what's going on look over her information just to help you avoid printing major errors of fact. Ms. Cox is certainly entitled to publication of her own errors of observation and interpretation.

Sam A. Nixon, M.D., 1303 Hospital Blvd., Floresville, Tex. 78114.

"Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby's career is probably ruined in the eyes of some people, but I admire the way he forthrightly confessed that not only had he been drinking but that he had taken an unmarried young woman out with him on a picnic. You think that is bad? I don't think it's half as bad as what Gov. Dolph Briscoe is doing. He sat on his butt and sold out to the utility companies. With his tacit approval they are raising rates right and left. Everybody knows that the state Railroad Commission is nothing but a front for Big Oil, but Briscoe could stop dumping chemical waste into the Gulf of Mexico by the big companies on the coast, but he won't. You have not heard a word from Briscoe on the lignite coal stripping going on in the Fairfield area... If going out and getting drunk with a woman and getting charged with DWI is the worst thing Bill Hobby will do while he is governor, then you haven't got a worry."

—Archer Fullingim, *The Kountze News*