

# THE TEXAS OBSERVER

September 11, 1981

A Journal of Free Voices

75¢

## Battle of the Big Thicket Undercutting Conservation

By Pete Gunter

Denton

Given the present disarray of the Big Thicket Association and the many problems involved in conserving the remains of the once-mighty Big Thicket wilderness, it will help to back up a bit and gain some perspective.

The present Big Thicket Association (BTA) was founded in 1964 in Saratoga, Texas, by Southeast Texans disturbed by the increasingly rapid inroads of civilization into their once remote woodlands. An earlier Big Thicket Association of East Texas, founded in 1927, had died a slow death after the Second World War, having failed in its efforts to create a 430,000 acre Big Thicket National Park. The newer association sought to preserve the flora and fauna of the Big Thicket area, to help establish a sizable wilderness area there, and to maintain a historical and natural history museum. For a handful of local conservationists without financial backing or institutional support, those goals were a tall order, and it is entirely remarkable that they have been — at least in part — achieved.

Sandwiched into the moist subtropical pine-and-hardwood country south of Lufkin and north of Beaumont, and stretching west just past Interstate 45 around Conroe and Huntsville, the Big Thicket was a wild sanctuary for more than a century. Escaped slaves, Confederate draft evaders, outlaws, prison escapees, Indians, and backwoodsmen

found refuge in its tangled brush and pathless swamps. The lore of the Big Thicket (essentially the lore of isolated, recalcitrant people) spread out around it like ripples in a meandering swamp stream, coloring the public's image of a place where law had never been, where sudden disappearances and arcane violence were more common than exceptional.

More recently the Thicket's value as a biologically unique natural region has received increasing attention. The area has more than 1,000 species of flowering plants, including more than 30 kinds of orchids. There are also more than 100

species of "overstory" trees there, including some state and national champions. Besides botany there is zoology: alligators, wild razorback hogs, river otter, deer, a few bears wandering over from Louisiana's Atchafalaya Floodway, some rare snakes and, some rare, scarce, or endangered birds (including just possibly a few of the last ivory-billed woodpeckers, cleverly hiding from would-be photographers). And besides botany and zoology there are creeks, bayous, rivers for canoeing, higher rolling country for hiking, swamps, baygalls, marshes for exploring.

(Continued on Page 11)



Photo by Roy Hamric

### IN THIS ISSUE

- Background on Bishop Matthiessen . . . page 4
- Bonilla Brothers
- Energize LULAC . . . . . page 6
- Shoreacres Residents
- Protest Refinery . . . . . page 9



# Observer names co-editor

Austin

Joe Holley, editor of *The Texas Humanist*, the monthly newspaper of the Texas Committee for the Humanities, and a well-published journalist, became co-editor of the *Observer* Sept. 1.

Holley received his BA in English from Abilene Christian College in 1968, his MA in American literature with a history minor at UT-Austin in 1970, and his masters' degree in journalism from Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism in 1974, where his training emphasized urban reporting, magazine journalism, and critical writing.

His articles have appeared in the *Observer*, the *Dallas Times-Herald Sunday Magazine*, the *Dallas Morning News*, *D Magazine*, the *Lone Star Review*, and other magazines and newspapers. Recent articles of his are "Philosophy in the Fort Worth Schools," *Texas Monthly* last May; "Farmworkers Split in Texas," *TO* 5/17/81; "Walker Percy and the Novel of Ultimate Concern," *Southwest Review*, Summer, 1980; and "Cabin Fever," *Vision*, January, 1980.

As public information co-ordinator of the Texas Committee for the Humanities

(which is the state program of the National Endowment for the Humanities), apart from editing the *Humanist* Holley prepared TCH publications and represented the TCH at various public occasions.

He was a Dallas stringer for *Newsweek* from 1977 to 1980 and a contributing editor of *D Magazine*, 1976-1977. He is an associate of the National Humanities Faculty, a program sponsored in part by the American Council of Learned Societies and dedicated to improving teaching and learning in American schools and colleges. He has been an instructor at Richland College and Mountain View College in Dallas and taught on a part-time basis at SMU.

Now 35, Holley has two daughters and lives in Austin. R. D.

## The *Observer* and endorsements

The *Observer* has its most political influence on actual elections when we speak early. Let our ethicists unburden into our readership our endorsements a couple of weeks before the election, and we might as well cast a seashell far into the Gulf and wait for the shark to beach himself on the sand, dazed from the blow, as the victorious sailfish decorates the horizon in sportive triumph. But have our say early, a couple of months before the voting time, and our well-distributed and sapient readers, respected in their circles and active in the

advancement of their views, will to the extent of their agreement with us shape the season's whole discourse, with better result in view. Now it is, then, for the second time in as many weeks, that we agitate our typewriter keys to arouse our citizens to defeat a constitutional amendment proposed for adoption in November.

The voters will be asked to let the legislature authorize a committee of seven that is as of now the Clements-Hobby-Clayton power structure in state government to "manage" the state's

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— A journal of free voices —

*We will serve no group or party but will hew hard to the truth as we find it and the right as we see it. We are dedicated to the whole truth, to human values above all interests, to the rights of humankind as the foundation of democracy; we will take orders from none but our own conscience, and never will we overlook or misrepresent the truth to serve the interests of the powerful or cater to the ignoble in the human spirit.*

*Writers are responsible for their own work, but not for anything they have not themselves written, and in publishing them we do not necessarily imply that we agree with them because this is a journal of free voices.*

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spending when the legislature is not in session.

Last year the voters refused, 56% to 44%, to entrust more discretionary budgetary authority to the Governor. What we need, of course, is annual sessions of the legislature; the lobby doesn't want that. The voters this November should refuse to trust this super-conservative committee of seven with vital appropriations decisions that are far better left to the legislature, itself. At least from the legislature a howl can go

## DIALOGUE

### 'Babe' Again

"Babe" Schwartz has always been one of my legendary heroes; however, his tirade "agin" the tuition Equalization Grants in the 8/14 *Observer* is certainly unfair and short-sighted if not dead wrong. It seems Mr. Schwartz harbors a stream of vituperative bigotry after all — against Christian colleges.

It makes sense to me for the state to educate as many of its children in as many and varied ways as possible. This enriches the democratic mix of native educated Texans. And it is the case that it's cheaper for the state to subsidize a student in a private school than to educate her/him in a state school. Why build more state buildings for education if private buildings are half-empty? It is certainly arguable that one can receive as humane an education at SMU, St. Mary's, or Texas Lutheran College as at Huntsville or Texas A&M.

I admire his writing and I value his opinions, but I expect Sen. Schwartz to reconsider this one.

Wayne Walther, 1710 W. 34,  
Austin, TX 78703

### Come On Up, Babe

The piece by Babe Schwartz on his days in the Texas Legislature (*TO* 8/14/81) was a beauty. I urge that he write a book on the subject. If he does, I pledge to buy a copy and if need be offer him sanctuary in New York.

Walter J. Ligon, 320 Bedell St.,  
Freeport, N.Y. 11520.

### More Celebrations

How delightful the discussion on the Strategic Oil Reserve by Bubba and

up that the people might hear. Leave it to these seven — the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker, and the Lieutenant Governor's chairpersons of the Senate appropriations and state affairs committees and the Speaker's chairpersons of the House appropriations and ways-and-means committees — and you might as well let the lobbyists do it directly.

The legislature provided that if this proposal is approved, the committee of

Beauford is (*TO* 6/26/81). Let us hope that this will not be the last we will hear from Fred Schmidt's memories. — Jeanne Hains, 2944 Greenwood Acres Dr., Apt. N300, Oak Crest, De Kalb, Il. 60115.

Keep at it . . . The *Observer* Revival (Restoration) is wowing 'em in Northern California — Michael Smith, 474-D 55th St., Oakland, Ca. 94609.

I will be happy to support the *Observer* again. . . . I look forward to being informed in the coming years of increased political deception and injustice. — John Lunstroth, 4808 Mt. Vernon, Houston, Tx. 77006.

### Pearls in the Swill

Herewith find a check for a year's subscription. . . . In the ordinary case, I will read it with interest as a guide to the things that ought to be opposed. I have found your politics, as opposed to your facts, to be 180° out of phase with the true interest of the country.

Every now and then, however, you do allow the reproduction of a pearl in the midst of the usual hog-swill of your paper's editorial output. Such moments are to be treasured, as much for the hope that even you can hope to see daylight, as for the contrast with the rest of the paper. I refer to your quotations from Bernard Rapoport and from Cranston [*TO* 3/13/81]. If you will allow such messages as those in the columns of your paper, perhaps it is just possible to hope that you will ultimately be able to discern the good reason underlying Mr. Reagan's economic programs and the Kemp-Roth program of reduction of the federal income tax, notwithstanding your inherited biases.

In the meantime keep up the good work in your assumed role of Devil's Advocate. And don't go out politicking

seven may manage federal block grants that replace categorical federal grants that previously went to more than one state agency. This is not of much practical importance now, but could become important later if the Reagan group increases its success in dismantling humanitarian government programs through the ploy of block grants. In that dimension, too, state spending is better left to the legislature.

R.D.

for any Pulitzer Prizes! (The ones you win on merit are much more valuable!)

S.A. Cochran, Jr., Attorney, P.O. Box 607, Tyler, Tx. 75710.

### Back-Alley Holocaust

. . . Will we *never* learn from history? Some things are not enforceable. . . . Abortion, the new "prohibition" question, tops the list of the unenforceables. The argument is reduced to methodology:

1. Permit abortions performed in sanitary environments by licensed, qualified professionals in the field of health, or

2. Return to the back-alley holocaust. The rich can go abroad; the only victims are the poor — women, and the children they leave behind. . . .

R. V. Williamson, Rt. 6, Lubbock, Tx. 79412.

### A Clarification

A July 10th *Observer* article concerning a tour of the Ferguson Unit of the Texas Department of Corrections noted that TDC inmates who stay out of trouble can receive as much as two days "good time" for each day served. A clarification may be in order. "Good time" as used in the article means total time credited, including time served and time awarded. TDC inmates drawing the maximum "two for one" good time can therefore cut their time in prison by roughly half.

We have received two letters from prisoners about this. In one, Juan M. Flores, #290497, Huntsville Unit, Box 52, Huntsville, Tx. 77340, also wrote us, "As an afterthought, the \$8.60 per-prisoner expenditure that TDC claims (is the average) has remained suspiciously fixed despite inflation for a good many years. . . ."





Photo courtesy of West Texas Catholic

The Most Reverend L. T. Matthiesen D.D.

## Background on the Bishop

Austin

Who is this Bishop Leroy T. Matthiesen, who has risen to confront nuclear immorality like Thoreau transported from Concord to the High Plains?

He is a West Texan born and bred, he has spent 35 years laboring in the Catholic Diocese of Amarillo, and now his time has come to prophesy and to lead.

His parents had a poor cotton farm near Olfen, which is near San Angelo. They also had eight children, who are the Bishop, his brother who is a Monsignor in the same diocese, a sister who is a Benedictine nun in Florida, and three other brothers who farm in the Miles, Olfen and Millersview communities near San Angelo, and two other sisters who live with their families in San Angelo.

In Germany, Bishop Matthiesen's grandparents were maids, leatherworkers, and harness-makers. He has been back there, searching into his family's lives; he found 75 letters that his great-grandmother wrote in old German script.

For the historical novel he has been working on, based on his family's life in Muenster and Olfen, Germany, and then in early Texas, he has memories of his own. On the farm near Olfen, Texas, as a boy, Matt took baths in a big lard kettle that was

used to make soap. He ate with Mexican families who cooked over open fires outside the buildings they slept in — "I developed a real love for the Mexican people," he says. When he was 12 the farmhouse burned down and his family had to move into a three-room house.

After finishing eight grades at the Olfen school, taught by the Benedictine Sisters, he wanted to go to seminary, but could not get in. The parish priest started teaching him Latin anyway. Matt got Spanish and Latin mixed up — "You'll never learn Latin!" yelled the priest slamming down his book — but Matt did. Ordained in 1946, he later obtained masters' degrees in journalism and secondary education.

This then is the home-bred Bishop, the Texan, the West Texan, gentle readers, who wrote in the *West Texas Catholic* last January 11th —

"There is even talk now of abandoning the concept of a (nuclear) deterrent force and thinking rather in terms of first-strike capability. In short, we are setting ourselves on a course that will do them in before they do us in. . . . (This) is not only totally un-Christian, but also unrealistic. There is no way we can do the enemy in without them doing us in. We are caught on the horns of a dilemma of cosmic proportions. If nuclear war comes, the Golden Spread, indeed, most of the world will lie dead and desolate.

"A symposium of physicians, scientists, and concerned citizens meeting in Cambridge, Massachusetts [advocated banning the use of all nuclear weapons and beginning to dismantle them]. My first reaction to that was: That's unrealistic. We can't do that. But the scientists, who are much more realistic about material things than I am, say this is the reality:

"In an all-out nuclear exchange, all major population and industrial centers will be hit, both in the U.S. and in the USSR. Such an exchange will be complete in one hour, and will destroy most life in the northern hemisphere. Worldwide fallout will result, with possible destruction of the ozone layer, changes in the earth's temperature, and mutation of crops. It will be a different world afterward, colder, harsher, and contaminated by radiation for thousands of years. The number of deaths will break all scales of comparison. . . .

"If our own hands were clean there would be reason for confidence that goodness will prevail. But they are not clean, as we must ever remind ourselves. It was we who set off the first atom bombs that threaten now to destroy us all, and we are not even horrified by it, assuring ourselves that we saved many lives by taking thousands of them. . . . 80,000 men, women, and children, were indiscriminately destroyed in nine seconds. Tens of thousands of others were left crippled and maimed, their lives destroyed . . . they were killed or maimed without warning. There are still survivors suffering from diseases caused from that one bomb dropped 35 years ago. . . .

"The choice today, said the late Martin Luther King, is no longer between violence and non-violence. It is either non-violence or non-existence."

This is the unpretentious, homely Bishop who calls his vestments his "monkey suit" and who presented himself to the hearings April 20 at the Amarillo Civic Center on whether to locate the MX missile system in West Texas and New Mexico and said:

"Like you, we love our country, and more than you we love this part of it. We live here. I know you have our interest at heart as you look into the feasibility of locating the MX Missile System here. I beg you not to do this for reasons that have already been recorded by people more technically skilled than I am: You will criss-cross our farms and our ranches with highways and yet more roads; you will uproot families, hundreds and hundreds of them; you will drain our already rapidly decreasing water supply; you will bring in a boom-town atmos-



phere, then leave us with ghost towns; you will require us to provide services for the work crews, then tell us you do not need us any longer.

"Worst of all, when it is finished, you will have made us a primary target for enemy bombs, with the MX Missile System to the west, north and south of us, and the Pantex atomic warhead assembly plant to the east of us. What choice will you leave us but to pick up our belongings and follow a new Trail of Tears? For how can we in conscience leave innocent people, especially the children, at the very center of a target area?"

"I do not ask you to move the MX Missile System elsewhere. I ask you to forget it entirely. We do not want it, anywhere. No system which guarantees the destruction of innocent men, women, and children is morally acceptable. You know better than I that the present atomic armament race is madness. That we can assure the destruction of the enemy even as we are being destroyed ourselves make it no less mad. We must find some other way to deter the enemy, to defend our country, to protect innocent lives.

"The enormously high cost of the proposed MX Missile System makes dramatically prophetic the words of the late Dwight D. Eisenhower, military general and president: 'Every rocket fired, every warship that is launched, in the final sense is a theft from those who are hungry.'

"We must take a new course. 'Peace,' said the late Albert Einstein, 'cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding.'

"In our Roman Catholic tradition, the late Pope John XXIII said that 'it is hardly possible to imagine that in the atomic era war could be used as an instrument of justice.' And our present Holy Father, John Paul II, pleads: 'Do not kill! Do not prepare destruction and extermination for men!'

"I beg you, do not turn our ranchlands and our farmlands into wastelands and bases for your terrible engines of destruction. Do not turn our ploughshares back into swords!"

"I AM SHOCKED and surprised he'd get involved," the mayor of Amarillo, Rick Klein, told the *Amarillo Globe-News*. The mayor regretted that the Bishop felt "the necessity to not take care of church matters but to take care of politics instead."

"Klein said he considers Pantex a tremendous asset to the area because it brings revenue to the area and is a larger employer of the people here," the paper reported.

Matthiesen (pronounced Matt-thee-sen) said he didn't realize what was going on at Pantex until recently. After his statement a woman worker at Pantex called him saying she thought she was doing the right thing and a postcard suggested he should go to Russia to stay, but most people favored his statement, he said. He was not requiring Catholic Pantex workers to quit, but "to consider the implications of what they are doing," he said.

By early September, Matthiesen told the *Observer*, his mail continued to run about three-to-one in support of his position.

"At first people just reacted — it went from 'You bum' to 'You saint,'" he said. "I am now getting some very thoughtful kinds of responses. Those who do not support my position nevertheless recognize the horror that nuclear war could be. But they say it's idealistic, we have to be realistic, we have to keep up with the Russians, the communists." Or his correspondents simply agree with him, he said.

Judging only from the Amarillo paper, the other citizens and clergy in Amarillo reacted with boilerplate pro-military patriotism. The city manager, John Stiff: "Our country should be extremely strong in defense." A city commissioner, Beau Boulter: "I'm real proud of Pantex — they do a job vital to our country." Dr. James Carroll of the First Presbyterian Church: "If the enlightened military thinking feels that the neutron bomb can be

an effective deterrent then we need to give heed to this kind of thinking." Rev. Arnold Holley, director of pastoral care at High Plains Baptist Hospital: "I think that his statement is idealistic. . . . To give up our strength as a nation is giving up to aggression." Lyndon Latham, president of the Amarillo Ministerial Assn.: "It would be suicidal for a nation to not be prepared."

Pantex workers, including some Catholics, quoted by the Amarillo paper, said about the same thing. "If we don't make a neutron bomb, the Russians will," said Henry Ornelas. Don Bailey said the U.S. has to build the neutron bomb to keep up with the Russians, Bailey added that the Bishop's statement wouldn't have any bearing at Pantex, some employees out there "don't even know what they're doing."

The Amarillo paper also reported, "Dan Stewart, a Pantex worker, described the Bishop's statements as 'idealistic.' He said if they didn't do the job someone else would."

THIS HAPPENS to be the same argument — if he hadn't done it, someone else would have — which Adolph Eichmann used to justify his supervision of the transporting of millions of captive civilian Jews and others to the Nazi gas chambers.

No analogy? Visualize the world 30 minutes after nuclear war begins. Half a billion, a billion, two billion dead. Visualize it. Now, try to imagine 30 hours later. Try: I won't help you: try. Then, 30 years later. No analogy?

Challenging the 2,400 workers at the plant where all U.S. nuclear weapons, without exception, are assembled, challenging them to consider what they are doing, this heretofore little-known Bishop of the High Plains has taken the plain high ground in the still piteously faint debate upon which the future of life on the earth depends.

This is the work of prophecy, this is the moral use of powers, for now that Bishop Matthiesen, alone among Catholic Bishops — or any other Bishops, as far as I know — has raised this question, it must be faced.

Although when she telephoned clergymen in Amarillo asking for comment on Matthiesen's statement, San Antonio columnist Jan Jarboe heard mostly silence, Rabbi Martin S. Scharf said he agreed with the Bishop for "practical, moral, and ethical reasons. . . . I can think of a lot of ways to spend money rather than spend trillions on arms, especially when we already have the capability to destroy the planet."

What is the morality of helping to make nuclear bombs one of which can kill a million human beings?

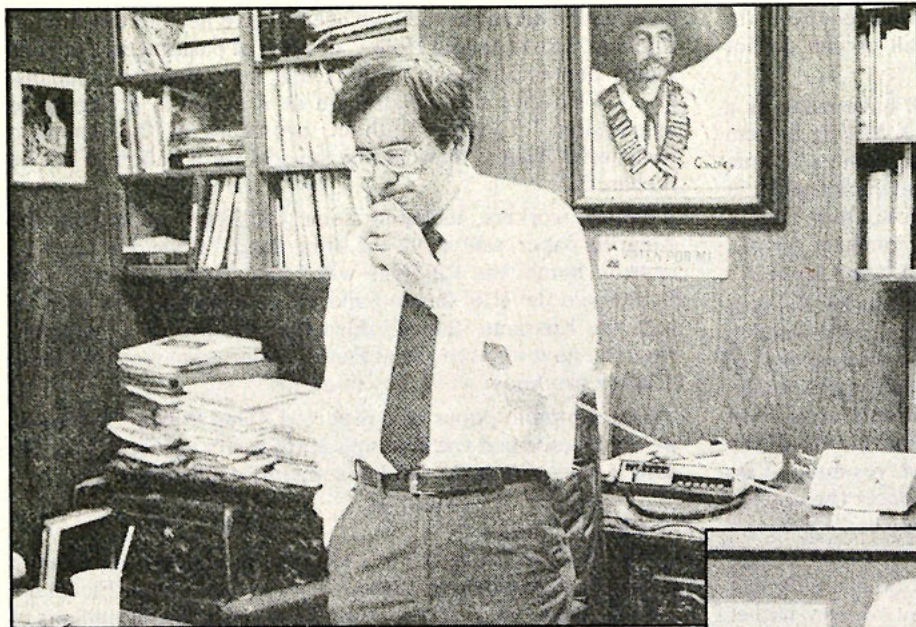
But then, what is the morality of being the young military people who are stationed in the underground silos trained and primed to send the nuclear missiles whistling through the air to kill millions of their fellow human beings unbeknownst forever to them?

And, well, then, what is the morality of the balance of terror, and our government's refusal for the whole duration of the 36 years since Hiroshima to pledge never to make first use of nuclear weapons, and the return to nerve gas — the whole deadly cycle and sickness of fantastic preparation for war-making in the name of keeping the peace?

And, so, finally, what is the morality of nations and leaders forever failing to take the mortal risks for peace — unilateral de-escalation, a department of peace instead of a department of war, the beginning of conversion from militarism to production for human welfare?

Bishop Matthiesen has honored his fellow West Texans, our state, and our country, and he has enriched the tradition of his church. Now where are the rest of the church leaders? Ministers, rabbis, priests, bishops, archbishops, oh ye of ethics and the soul: Why do we not hear you?

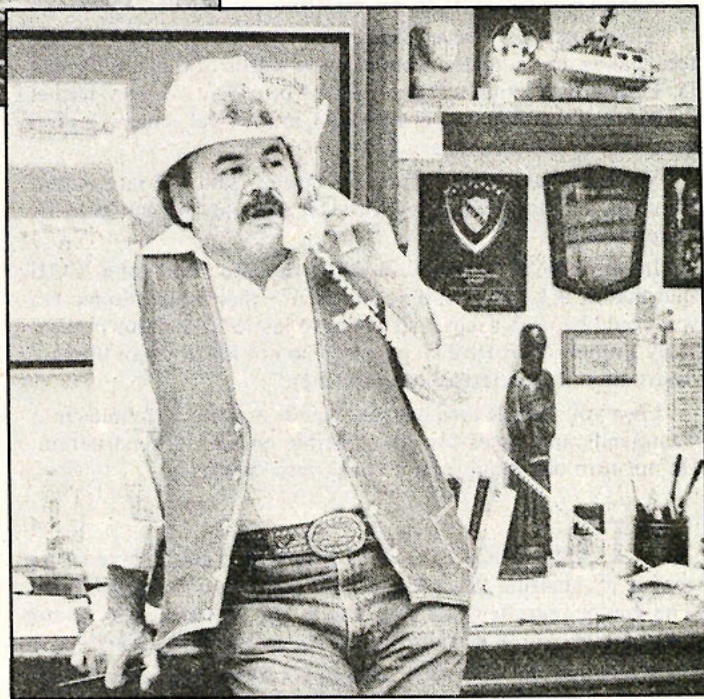




Ruben Bonilla (l.) and Tony Bonilla (r.)  
in their Corpus Christi law office

Photos by Ruperto Garcia

# Bonillas awaken LULAC



By Ruperto Garcia

Corpus Christi

At times, it used to be not much more than cardboard placards in someone's picture window in the *barrio*, usually in one of the better homes, but with the ubiquitous caliche roads underlining the message: "LULAC Meeting Tonight." The League of United Latin-American Citizens, for decades after its conception in 1924, was not much more than that — a social club, a civic organization, English tea parties in chicano homes. But that has changed.

The change has been caused, perhaps, more by one man than any other, if one man could have done it: Ruben Bonilla, the recent president of LULAC. It was through him that the once sleepy-eyed and dreary organization became the political voice of Hispanics across the country. Not only are there Mexican-

Americans involved now, there are the Cubans, Puerto Ricans and Central Americans. There are 800 or 900 chapters across the nation, and weekly, according to the new LULAC president, Tony Bonilla, Ruben's brother, more are being formed. "Since I was elected, I've gotten communications from North Carolina, Rhode Island and Mississippi," says Tony, beaming, inhaling from a large cigar. On a particular week, the LULAC president met with the Majority Leader of the House, Jim Wright, Vice-President George Bush, and the national presidents of the AFL-CIO, the NAACP, and the Democratic Party.

On the wall in the Bonillas' law office in Corpus Christi, which also serves as the national headquarters for LULAC, is a letter to Ruben which probably best describes the resistance that he's gotten during LULAC's changing of direction: the salutation is, "Hey Bigot."

LULAC is a straight organization. Unlike the ravings of the sixties' militant leftists, from the leaders of LULAC ooze words about the organization of communities, education for the future, pragmatic politics instead of one-directional ideology, and votes rather than pickets.

It is the "American mainstream" approach which they expound: "No one will know the system better than we will," says Arnold Torres, the LULAC lobbyist whom the *Observer* found also in Corpus Christi. What LULAC wants is more participation by Hispanics in the political and economic affairs of the country.

From the melting pot, however, there come the unsigned letters of resistance:

"People are fed up with you, fed up. Your continuously disruptive spouting nails you for exactly what you are — a trouble-maker. Mexicans take and take and take. They



have their hands out for everything they can get — free.”

What LULAC wants, says Torres, “Is not some kind of income maintenance program. We’re not asking for anything just for our community. We’re merely asking for those things that should be given to us as human beings and as citizens of the country. That’s all. How can anybody argue with that?”

There are the issues, of course: bi-lingual education, legal services for the poor, the budget and tax cuts, housing, immigration, and the Voting Rights Act, among others.

## Tony and Ruben

“One of the critical issues is the extension of the Voting Rights Act,” says Tony Bonilla. “The thrust of the new federalism is to let the local governments take control. Local governments have always been the source of the problem, and we have to try to make them a source of the solution. If we don’t win extension of the Act, it will dilute our strength at the local level and make it even more difficult for us to get our fair share. With the extension of the Act for another ten years, without amendment, at least the doors are open for us to get broader representation through the political process. We can affect the people serving in the positions that will be dishing out the local funds through the block grant programs.”

Tony Bonilla is a large man, 45 years old, with a mustachioed smile that comes readily when he speaks, his hand outstretched to anyone who nears his office door. On Saturday, without his clients coming in, he wears blue jeans and boots, a large hat on his head, and his cigar, unlit, points out the issues as he speaks.

“Immigration,” he says, “is another important issue. They’re talking about imposing employers’ sanctions, which we think will create further discrimination. There is a danger of some super-identification card, which we would strongly oppose. Then there’s the re-institution of a bracero program, under the name of temporary guest worker program. There’s some real dangers and concerns about that.

“The President’s economic package is going to have a really adverse effect on the Hispanic community, for the disadvantaged and the elderly. So, we’re turning to the corporate community and finding out what kind of partnership we can form with them, whether it’s in the areas of economic development, bringing in new industries into the cities where we have Hispanics unemployed, or just getting them to contribute to our social and economic or educational programs,” he adds.

“We are in desperate straits,” says Ruben Bonilla. “The Reagan Administration has developed an economic policy without regard for Hispanics, blacks, or the poor in this country. I’m not sure if LULAC can impact all that, but we’re gonna do our best to impact it and to develop a stronger voice with the private sector.”

Ruben Bonilla will head LULAC’s new branch, Hispanics Organized for Political Education (HOPE), and serve as general counsel to LULAC. “I’ve put in too much effort, there have been too many sacrifices, and we’ve made too many gains to just disappear. I think that Tony’s election was a kind of vindication for the direction in which we’ve taken LULAC,” he said.

“I’m staying active nationally, but I want to focus more on Texas. I see Texas as being in the precarious position where it could move to the right really rapidly, and we’ve got the potential of a million voters by 1982, which I think can bring us back to the center in the political arena.”

He is a milder-spoken man than his brother Tony. His voice is quieter, in a sense; his clothes all match his status as a successful attorney. He is a walking contradiction — a master of the pocketed word, hidden like rounded stones in a boy’s pocket, which he will fling at wayward politicians and community leaders. Up close, he looks too silent to have done the yelling that attracted national attention to his organization, and yet, that is what he is known for.

“There are many people who held low regard for LULAC,” he explains, “largely because of ignorance on their part. But I’ve studied the history; I know that it has always been a very volatile organization. This is not a new phenomenon. Some people say that it is only recently that we’ve taken a new direction.”

He sits quietly for a minute, bookshelves providing backdrops for his comments. “As I looked over our history, though,” he went on, “I found that, among other cases, it was LULAC that began the litigation that provided the thrust for the elimination of separate-but-equal classroom facilities,” a thrust that culminated in the famous Brown case of 1954.

## The Strategy

To “impact” political decisions, there will be a “double-barrel” approach to the problems.

“LULAC will be concerned with membership services,” explains Torres. “HOPE will be concerned with

educating the communities on Hispanic issues.” There are already nearly 100 HOPE chapters around the country, but they are mostly run on the same resources that sustain the local LULAC chapters. The new HOPEs will be individual entities.

“We can use HOPE as a vehicle,” explained Tony Bonilla. “LULAC first as a vehicle to bring everybody together. HOPE as a vehicle to get people actively involved. We will do registration drives working with the Southwest Voter Registration group. Voter education — we’ll have the state and local councils putting out voter information on county commissioners, governors, legislators — in fact, going through a big education process as to who is our friend and who isn’t, who we want to be our representative at every level of government. Through this process we can elect people who are sensitive to the Hispanic community. They don’t necessarily have to be Hispanic. As long as they are sensitive and will respond to our needs.

“We need to start flexing our political muscle,” Torres explains. “I don’t think LULAC did that until Ruben got elected president. I want to do that even more. We may not defeat every candidate we set out to defeat, but we can make him so uncomfortable that he’ll never forget where his loyalties better be next time around.”

There will be political “hit lists,” according to the LULAC president. “We go through the *Congressional Record* and we know what the politicians are saying off at Congress, even though sometimes it doesn’t get reported back home. We know how they’re voting on the issues.” When the votes are compared to a list of critical votes for Hispanics, the LULAC organizations will be informed of the politicians’ standing on the issues.

“The minute we announced that (Kent) Hance, (Phillip) Gramm, and Richard White were on our hit list, we heard from them. Their staff called our staff,” he said.

“When the Vice-President of the United States appears at your national convention and defends the Administration’s economic policies and in effect says that ‘There have been some criticisms leveled at the administration, some of them unfair, and I think it’s time to answer these criticisms,’ when he goes to that extent, then you know you’re reaching home. You know you have arrived,” he said.

## Going Local

“We don’t like the new federalism — the return of government power to the local level,” explains Torres. “But it’s



inevitable. Our only alternative is to develop our capabilities at the local level."

Locally, he said, whether it's county, city, or even state government, "you get somebody out of office by eventually getting your people to say that 'this guy's not worth it, vote for anybody else except this guy.' And we're not gonna lead them to a guy that's going to be worse," he said.

"There's a lot of chicanos out there that want to be politically aggressive; HOPE will provide that opportunity.

"We've got to wash away many years of non-activity and ignorance of how the political system works, of how it can actually benefit you. It didn't take place completely, but it began with Ruben. Why? Because he raised the issues, daily, in the newspapers, in journals, on

TV. That began to get people, and if they didn't agree with Ruben, at least they got to know more about the issues. At least they began to hear a Hispanic view.

"We don't intend to set the world on fire, but I do guarantee that we certainly intend to have the same sort of effectiveness that we have had and the outspokenness that we've had in the last two or three years," said Torres. "It's a difficult undertaking to get our community to get really politically active. It's hard to get a number of them to vote for a number of reasons — many of which are not directly their problems, but have been foisted upon them — intimidation, gerrymandering, that's something they can't help. But they certainly can help one thing, and that is how true they are to their own beliefs and their own princi-

ples. They're certainly responsible for getting involved."

LULAC doesn't exaggerate the problems, according to Torres. "We don't go out there and exaggerate any police brutality killings, we don't go out and exaggerate abuses . . . I could never look at LULAC and say that we are one of those fringe groups. We're not. Continued support for Ruben's two years, a unanimous vote the second time around, Tony's lopsided victory — are LULAC and its constituency groups, the members, all radical? No.

"I think we've just gotten to the point where we finally recognized that what we're asking for is only right, and it's right for the whole country."

## The Situation

Times, however, have changed, admits Torres. "It's really hard now," he said. "What used to be considered a defeat in congressional lobbying is now considered a victory. A defeat in the old days would have been the cutting of a program by \$20 million; now, if the proposed cut is \$50 million and you get it cut by \$20 million, you're a success.

"We have a narrow-minded type of person in power. I mean, not only are the senators sometimes that way, but even the staff. The staffs are downright racist — and I don't used the word loosely. I'm being very honest about this; they don't give a damn about the poor. They don't. I'm not quoting this as copy that you read in the paper. I'm telling you specifically — they don't care. You don't argue with them. There's no reason to their logic. There's no logic. It's a fanatical view of what America is, and the Hispanic is not a part of that plan," Torres said.

"But, no other Hispanic group has the presence we have in Washington. Nobody else has the presence in over 500 communities in the country, over 40 states. Who's going to rank with that?"

"Two years of strong rhetoric plus a lot of concrete action made Ruben very successful, and LULAC, but now people want more. That's not a criticism of Ruben. His role was to get LULAC to be respected and noticed — and he did that. And now that they see that, people expect more. They want something in place to help them deal with their problems, not just someone to go into town talking about it and writing a letter, and that's it. They want hard-core follow-up."

Ironically, it is a letter of criticism that summarizes LULAC's role. "This is the United States," it says, "and don't you forget it. We need people who are capable. . . ." LULAC, according to those involved, intends to recruit them. □

# Farm workers win one

As of August 31, farm workers in Texas cannot be forced to use *el cortito*, the notorious short-handled hoe responsible for chronic back pain, premature arthritis, and crippling back disorders. Foremen used the hoe primarily as a punishment tool and a method of supervision (workers bent low to the ground with a hoe in their hand are obviously hard at work.)

The legislation abolishing the hoe was sponsored by Rep. Tony Garcia of Pharr and Senator Carlos Truan of Corpus Christi. It represents the first farm-worker-initiated legislation the Texas legislature has passed.

"The history of farm work has always been a history of non-compliance," Rebecca Flores Harrington, Director of the UFW, said recently. The UFW plans to monitor employers in the Valley. An offense will be handled in municipal or justice-of-the-peace court and will be processed as a criminal offense. A fine of up to \$200 per employee found using the hoe can be levied. Complaints can be filed by a third party.

Employers must also begin providing toilets for farm workers in the next harvest season, the Texas Department of Health has ruled. The Department has determined that agricultural workers, while in the fields, are covered by the wording of the Texas Sanitation and Health Protection Law and by the Occupational Health Regulation #2, "Environmental Standards in Industrial Establishments" requiring sanitary facilities at all places of employment.

The Health Department noted that because no toilets were being provided in the fields, human excrement was being deposited on the vegetables being harvested and was a potential medium in the spread of disease. It is a violation of health regulations to allow a business to conduct its operation in such a way as to have potentially adverse effect on the health of any person. The Department also ruled that clean water must be available for drinking and washing purposes.

The one-hundred-year-old Texas child labor law was also updated this past session, making it illegal for farm worker children under the age of 14 to work in the field during school hours.

What the 62nd Legislature didn't pass — unemployment compensation for farm workers and workers' compensation — wasn't surprising. Workers' compensation legislation introduced by Rep. Juan Hinojosa of McAllen actually passed the House, but its Senate counterpart failed to make it out of committee. Groups testifying against farm worker compensation included the Texas Farm Bureau, Texas Southwest Cattleraisers Association, Texas Citrus and Vegetable Growers Association, the Texas Cattle Feeders Association, and the Texas Poultry Federation. Farm work is now the #1 killer and disabler in work-related accidents in the United States, surpassing mining and construction work, but opponents argued that mandatory coverage would be too expensive, especially for small employers.

J.H.



# People an endangered species in Shoreacres

Shoreacres

Next October the home of the Allison family in Shoreacres, Texas, will be located only a thousand feet from the loading dock of a small refinery that will process 30,000 barrels of crude oil a day. Nine of the Allisons' neighbors share the predicament caused by the "tea kettle refinery," as they call it. They all worry that "our homes will be depreciated in value and we won't be able to give them away."

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has completed the review process on the construction of the refinery and its dock. Without requiring an environmental impact statement, the agency granted the company, Intercontinental Refining of Houston, a permit to dump water into Taylor Bayou, Clear Lake, and Galveston Bay. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, from which an additional permit for the dredging of the channel is required, has gone along with the EPA.

The agencies held a public hearing in Seabrook last October to let citizens testify. As EPA reported, the witnesses' concerns included "water and air quality degradation, limited returns to the economy of the affected areas, and fire and explosion hazard risks to residential areas," but the EPA concluded, "The process did not produce new significant information that would change EPA's initial decision or findings."

Dr. Richard Allison is bitter about

*After obtaining a BA in chemistry with minors in math and biology at UT-Austin, the author worked as a chemist for the U.S. Geological Survey in Austin and the Texas A&M water pollution lab at Morgan's Point and as a math analyst and computer programmer for NASA contractors. A few years ago she decided to become a free-lance writer, particularly in the environmental field. This story grew out of an assignment in a journalism class at UH-Clear Lake City, where she is now enrolled as a graduate student in humanities. She lives in Nassau Bay, across the street from Johnson Space Center, where her husband works. They are a few miles from Shoreacres.*

By Betty Nolley

what is happening to his family and their home. "All the governmental agencies are more concerned with fish than people," he says. "The impact assessment they did, I could've done in a day if I'd had the information."

Allison is professor of environmental management at the University of Houston at Clear Lake City, holds a Ph.D. in civil engineering from Texas A&M, and has spent most of his career in the environmental field. He, his wife Lora, and their eleven-year-old son Richard have lived in Shoreacres five years.

Their two-story, Spanish-style house of beige brick is surrounded by thick woods and overlooks a branch of Taylor Bayou. Brush and grass cover the flat area stretching behind the bayou to Bayport channel, where the refinery dock will be. The refinery itself is being built about a mile further west. There are two ranch-style houses beside the Allisons' and another one across the street. A two-story colonial stands empty on the opposite side of the bayou's north branch. The five remaining houses are located on both sides of this group.

Shoreacres is a bayside community of about 2,000 residents. The Houston Yacht Club is the only commercial activity in the town, which was originally a summer resort area frequented by people from Houston who liked water sports. Now many of the residents are retired. Increased industrial activity at the Bayport Industrial District of Pasadena and the Port of Houston's Bayport channel have changed Shoreacres from a rural community into a metropolitan one.

"The quality of life in Houston has deteriorated significantly, and Shoreacres is no exception," Allison says. "We have the aura of a whole horizon of lights. It's difficult to see the stars at night because of the general lights of the city sky. In fact, if it's cloudy the light reflects, and it's like sunset all the time. Houston's become the new Land of the Midnight Sun," he says wryly.

"There's not the quietness that there

used to be," he continues. "You can hear compressors, pumps, tugboats, hootin' and hollerin', talking to each other over loudspeakers, the banging together of barges and vessels against docks. 'Bang, bang, bang' kinda noises.

"Everyone in this area is trying to preserve a quality of life by attempting to restrict certain kinds of commercial and industrial activities, but it's a losing battle. You try to preserve a neighborhood, but you can't. This is a result of the apathy toward planning and development that characterizes this area. I can't say we haven't all benefited from growth. This school (UH at Clear Lake) wouldn't be here without it, and I'm appreciative of these kinds of things. But you pay the environmental cost, which is lowering of the quality of life."

Small, inefficient refineries thrive while large, complex ones operate at less than their capacities, according to recent articles in petroleum and business publications.

The government regulations favoring small refineries — exception and appeals relief, the small refinery bias, and Special Rule 6 — have been in effect during the last six years and have made marginally competitive plants profitable. The low level of investment required for simple refineries produces a high return on invested capital. Once built, the plant gets a guaranteed allocation of imported oil from other refineries and can sell its products at free-floating prices in the spot trade, which operates like the commodity market. Large refiners are generally tied to long-term contracts. (The end of U.S. crude oil price controls and associated refinery regulations could change this general picture.)

David Saletan of La Porte said at the EPA hearing, "There is a negative social and economic contribution from this facility and any other tea kettle refinery that is simply a device to transfer oil payments." Saletan is a member of the Galveston Bay Conservation and Preservation Association (GBCPA), a group of citizens who have organized to try to reverse the trend in the area's deteriorating ecology.



"Every gallon that goes through this refinery is taken from other existing refineries that have ample spare capacity," he said. "There is no job creation. People will be laid off at other refineries for every job that is created here."

"Most of our refineries are running at only 80% of capacity today. This is strictly a gimmick built into our laws, unfortunately. These small refineries have a handsome payoff before they open a valve, because of a loophole created by Congress. Big companies provide them with oil at the average price. But on each barrel they run through, they get spot price, premium price, as much as \$4.50 per barrel profit."

EPA dismissed all complaints that there would be only limited benefits to the economy of the affected area by saying in their ruling, "The proposed facility is part of the Bayport industrial development which has the potential of becoming a major economic force in the area."

Speaking at the hearing, Allison said, "They assess each individual little permit and none seems too bad. But all together the impact is significant. I think the time has come to look at a total basin plan for this port facility . . . Other federal agencies, such as Housing and Urban Development, secure thousands of acres for proposed development and do total environmental assessments on a grand scale. Bayport should be approached in the same manner."

Bayport Industrial District was created by Friendswood Development Co., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Humble (now Exxon). Humble donated land to the Port of Houston for construction of Bayport channel. In 1965 Friendswood Development distributed brochures to area residents with pictures and maps (projected to 1984) which appeared to indicate that only warehouses and docking facilities would be built east of Highway 146. One of the pictures, captioned "artist's conception of what Bayport channel will look like," appeared in the January, 1972, issue of *Humble in Houston*.

Russell Schutt of the city of Pasadena tax office says, "The land was annexed by Pasadena in the past, but then de-annexed to form the industrial district. The original set of contracts with Friendswood Development, Celanese, and the other companies that were already there, was in 1970. The development is now called the Pasadena Industrial District. It is surrounded by a 200-foot-wide strip that is within the city of Pasadena's jurisdiction, so other cities cannot annex the area. Approximately thirty industries are located in the district now. We don't have any control of

what goes in there. It's not a part of the city of Pasadena. We don't tax it. They pay a fee to Pasadena in lieu of taxes. We make our own appraisals of that property."

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*"There is no job creation. People will be laid off at other refineries for every job that is created here."*

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In 1978 American Hoechst Corp., which is part of a multinational pharmaceutical and chemical conglomerate under Hoechst AG, the parent company that is headquartered in Frankfurt, West Germany, announced it had bought land on the south side of Bayport channel and obtained a permit from the Texas Air Control Board to build a \$160 million plant for producing high-density polyethylene and styrene monomer. GBCPA sued the Texas agency in state courts to overthrow the permit, but lost. The Hoechst plant was completed a year ago.

Saletan says, "Friendswood Development used a block-buster approach in bringing in Hoechst's plant as the first heavy industry east of 146. Now they're building on the north side of the channel, next to homes."

"It's a question of best land use," says Allison. "They aren't making any more coastal land."

Clark Thompson, GBCPA's lawyer, adds, "When something happens, when Hoechst puts a cloud of benzene across (the area), how much damage will we sustain? How many people will be injured? Nobody seems to give a damn but us."

"Intercontinental is going to be refining both sweet and sour crude," says Allison. "That's a messy operation."

Saletan points out that large volumes of high-pressure hydrogen sulfide, a highly toxic gas, would be produced in the refining process. "What if a cloud of that is released?" he asks.

Shoreacres Mayor Rowe Holmes told the EPA, "In the original public hearing, Intercontinental Refining stated that its crude oil would be pipelined in. Now it wants to bring it in and out by barge and

truck. Channel traffic will be increased by four tankers, 33 barges per month, and the fire and explosion hazard will rise by 60%."

Hector Peña, an environmental specialist with the enforcement division of the EPA, said, "The total fire and explosion probability would be only one-half percent per month." Saletan pointed out that comes to "6% per year, or a reasonable chance of fire or explosion every 16 years . . . The assumption is that you're going to have a single fire or explosion, but these events do not come singly — they cascade." He reminded residents of the runaway butadiene barge that forced the evacuation of many homes in the area during Hurricane Allen last summer. "You can view the woods as a buffer, but it's also something that can carry the flames to homes," he said.

The Texas City disaster of April, 1947, which killed almost 600 people, injured approximately 4,000, and caused property damage in excess of \$67 million, was triggered by a shipboard explosion. Allison comments, "If a tanker came in the channel and exploded, you'd kill a bunch of people, that's all. The EPA doesn't like to deal with hazard situations. They're more ecologically oriented than socially oriented."

The EPA estimates that, for 78 vessel movements per month at the Intercontinental dock, "the probability of an explosion event (is) about .03 percent (once every 292 years) and of a fire event .18 percent (once every 102 years)." The agency also claims these expectancy rates decrease significantly for a major explosion or fire ("F/E event"). The EPA concludes, "The possibility of major F/E event at dockside is effectively mitigated."

Other potential "F/E" situations are disregarded because they are "not associated with the cargo," won't be due to storage tank rupture since no storage tanks will be on dock, and cannot result from "collision, structural failures or groundings" in the channel because the channel will be one-way, its depth will be maintained, and "most structural failures occur at sea during rough weather."

Air quality is another of the citizens' concerns. Richard Rogan, a representative of the city of Seabrook, urged the EPA "to consider the aggregate pollution of this area." EPA says, "Phase I (of the refinery) will have no emissions problem. Phase II [sour crude refining], however, . . . will have emissions of NO<sub>x</sub> [nitrogen oxides], SO<sub>2</sub> [sulfur dioxide], and hydrocarbons exceeding PSD [prevention-of-significant-deterioration] thresholds . . . Construction of Phase

*(Continued on Page 24)*



# Big Thicket Controversy

(Continued from Page 1)

In the end one is forced, trying to sum up the Thicket and its attraction for conservationists, to rely on the saying of its original settlers, "Why, you can find anything in there from a cricket to an elephant." Noting its confluence of western, southeastern northern-temperate, and subtropical species, conservationists have called it "the Biological Crossroads of North America." Professors Thomas Eisner and Paul Feeny of Cornell University, who have done field work in the Big Thicket, have argued that it is even more than this, declaring it to be ecologically the most diverse area of its size in the world. (They admit that the Himalayan Mountains, with their wide range of elevations, might be an exception.)

By the time the present Big Thicket movement began to gather, there was some question how long the Thicket would last. From the 1870's through the 1920's, the old lumber barons had mowed down the forests of East Texas without compunction or foresight. Only a few areas escaped scalping, but these, and the forests of stumps and saplings that remained, could in time regenerate some similitude of the original wilderness, and this was beginning to happen.

By the 1960's, however, a new timber technology had arisen that not only clearcut the forests, it ditched, bulldozed, and burned them. The result was a monoculture consisting of slash pine spaced out like corn stalks from horizon to horizon, and little else. The original diverse pine-hardwood or hardwood forest, with its substory of vines, bushes, small trees, and wildflowers, was gone, an artificial "forest" in its place.

The struggle from the 1960's through 1974 to create a Big Thicket National Park was a race between the new bulldozer-powersaw technology and a phalanx of determined conservationists. The conservationists "won," by the skin of their teeth. But, as bulldozing and clearcutting continue in the 12.5-million acre East Texas forest belt and across the South, it is clear that the public still

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*The author, a professor of philosophy at North Texas State University, has written a book about the Big Thicket. In some reportorial aspects this article is a collaboration with Ronnie Dugger.*

have not grasped the significance of clearcutting or its effects on the native forests.

By 1974, with the aid of a coalition of garden and women's clubs, hunters and fishermen's associations, and conservationist groups and the political leadership of Sen. Ralph Yarborough, Cong. Bob Eckhardt, and others, the Big Thicket Association succeeded in badgering Congress into creating an 84,550-acre Big Thicket National Preserve, the first biological preserve in the history of the Park Service. Nor was this the only achievement. In 1974, Time, Inc., the largest landowner in East Texas, added to the collection of ecosystems in the national preserve a 2,500-acre "arid sandland" sanctuary on Village Creek between Kountze and Silsbee. (The area is presently owned by Nature Conservancy.) In 1980, after continuing pressure from the BTA and other groups, the Texas State Parks and Wildlife Department purchased a 926-acre site on Village Creek for a Big Thicket State Park. The park is intended to absorb recreational pressures that would otherwise fall on the national preserve, which is to be only minimally developed for camping and other forms of recreation.

## Falling Out

Ralph Yarborough perceptively once compared Big Thicket conservationists to a guerilla army, meeting at the edge of the forest to battle the lumber companies and just as suddenly vanishing into the underbrush to regroup and fight again later. But such groups are usually made up of individualists, are under perpetual stress, and are prey to numerous kinds of fragility, and the BTA was no exception.

Its first two presidents, (Dempsie Henley, now county judge of Liberty County, and Charles Wilbanks of Beaumont,) were local men elected with the backing of Hardin County (Kountze, Saratoga) conservationists. Beginning in June, 1971, however, presidents began to be elected by a more statewide constituency and to take a more regional, and a less local, point of view. The result was a widening of the coalition to save the Big Thicket, but there was also a residuum of hard feelings on the part of local association members who believed their rightful powers had been usurped.

Tension between "insiders" and "outsiders," submerged during the final struggle to create the national preserve, never quite vanished. Last spring it emerged fullblown, released through a circuitous course of events which could hardly have been predicted. The Big Thicket Association has been split in two as effectively as if it had been halved with a meat

cleaver. It is not clear who or what will put Humpty Dumpty together again.

The initial cause of the division was a dispute concerning the director of the association's museum. One of the basic goals of the association had been the creation of a natural and historical museum, which had been achieved by the purchase of the old Saratoga high school and grounds. This left the association with a headquarters, public camping facilities, and a continually improving museum complex. For a small organization of 600 to 800 paying members, it is no easy matter to sustain a museum with a full-time director and staff. However, the award of a federal CETA grant and a gradual buildup of funds created for the purpose finally made it possible to hire a full-time director and to develop hiking, canoe, and educational programs.

Though the first director failed to work out, the second, a Chicagoan named Nick Rodes, proved to be an excellent entrepreneur and public relations man.

Secretive by nature and not exactly congenial towards authority, Rodes had organized successful hikes along the Saratoga-Bragg ghost road, where mysterious lights have been seen since the turn of the century. (Medals of valor were given to those courageous enough to hike at night.) He had begun to put together effective canoeing and hiking programs and to spread the word about the museum.

Unfortunately, he had also begun to balk at giving as much detailed financial information as some of the association's directors wanted. Directors were astonished to discover that he had opened an unauthorized canoe-purchasing program. Rodes told the *Observer* he informed the association's museum chairman and was assured he could proceed, but the chairman was hospitalized before the board was told. Rodes explained that funds for equipment in the program had been donated by a benefactor from Baltimore, Md., who did not want his name divulged. When questioned, Rodes explained to the *Observer* that the benefactor advanced the money and expected its return, so that if it was not repaid he would own equity in equipment bought with it. It did not help matters when the board discovered that the donor was repaid through checks to Haycox Canoe Rental. Rodes says this was the arrangement the donor wanted so he could remain anonymous. Haycox was the name of a person who later became one of the museum's CETA-grant employees, Rodes concedes.

Rodes' partisans, unimpressed by warnings and criticisms urged against him, argued that in opening a new bank



account he was simply taking the initiative, and with precious little help from a stick-in-the-mud "outsider" board that was opposed to getting him canoes. (Actually, the BTA executive board did not receive a finished proposal with cost estimates on which to take action, and two members of that board were interested enough to support the program by lending their personal canoes.) Rodes' supporters argued that a mysterious donor is better than none at all, just as a canoe program is better than lack of one. As for bookkeeping and the Haycox Canoe Rental, Rodes' allies insisted that a man does not have to be good at totaling up the pennies to run an effective museum program. The remark that "receipts are out of date" is attributed to Rodes at a meeting of the directors, but asked about this, he says, "There were receipts at every stage of the canoe program. . . . We have those and we can prove those."\*

After a long, unpleasant meeting of the BTA board of directors at Saratoga on January 25, 1981, Rodes was dismissed as museum director. Attempts by the board majority to reopen the museum on a part-time basis were frustrated by a tangle of factors, (among them Rodes' refusal to turn over the keys to the museum — he explains he had not been paid — or to return association property and records — now returned to Landry,

\*The donor took a trailer and some of the canoes back because money was still owed him, but the rest of the money was returned to him, Rodes told the *Observer*. The museum has re-established the canoe program, using canoes it owns, he said.

he says; the disaffection of local volunteer museum workers who "resigned" to protest Rodes' firing was also involved. When volunteers arrived to open the museum on February 14, they discovered that its doors were chained and padlocked. A Star of David had been scratched on the museum doors (the association's then-president, Gene Feigelson, is Jewish); the "local" faction in the association soon accused the "outsiders" of both padlocking the museum and defacing its doors. Angry feelings boiled over on both sides.

Under such circumstances the executive board decided that it was futile to try to keep the museum open, at least for the time being. The local faction loudly declared that the museum had been closed forever.

Why such a fuss over the museum? People who hope to make some money out of the Thicket as an attraction regard the museum as a magnet for tourists. Closing the museum activated the division between the conservationists and the pro-tourist people.

"They (those in charge) had decided that the conservation would have to prevail over the museum and what tourists we had," said Houston Thompson, the Silsbee attorney who led the countercharge. He grants he would like to have a tourist court and an apartment house in the area. "They cancelled everything that would make money for the museum," he explained. "I realize that we can't have tourists in here if we don't have some kind of an attraction. . . . We don't have to close down that museum to

be conservationists. They closed it down. We just ain't gonna permit that."

## The War

The closing of the museum marked the end of communication between the two factions. The non-local group chose to remain largely aloof, while the Hardin County insiders mounted an aggressive three-pronged offensive.

The first part involved a campaign of vilification in the pages of the *Hardin County News-Visitor* (formerly Archer Fullingim's *Kountze News*). Though the campaign was directed at all "outsiders," its main target was Maxine Johnston. The past president and (at that time) treasurer of the BTA, Johnston had played an important role in the creation of the national preserve and had subsequently put a great deal of effort into finding support for the museum. As treasurer of the association, however, she soon found herself at odds with Rodes and was able to furnish much of the rationale for his dismissal. As a result she now found herself accused, in letters and articles penned by the elderly ladies of Saratoga, of various deeds of which they disapproved.

No one who had known and worked with Maxine Johnston could take seriously the biweekly allegations in the *News-Visitor*. The repeated doses of venom supplied by the elderly ladies of Saratoga were little noted (and, in spite of many efforts, remained unpublished) outside of Hardin County and were discounted by knowledgeable people even there. But they succeeded in stirring up

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rancor on both sides of the controversy and made a middle ground nearly impossible to find.

Meanwhile the opposition began a campaign in the district court of Hardin County, first seeking an injunction preventing the BTA board of directors from meeting in Beaumont (bylaws require meetings in Saratoga). The original petition also charged Maxine Johnston with perpetrating plans to give the museum to Lamar University (as well as with planning other nefarious schemes culled from the pages of the *News-Visitor*). Lamar University officially denied that it had been offered the museum, and County Judge Clyde E. Smith had the allegations against Johnston stricken from the record. The board of directors of the association was formally enjoined by the court to meet in Saratoga. But the proceeding and subsequent legal actions entailed sizable attorneys' fees for BTA.

The original suit was followed by several others. The directors were enjoined against selling or trading any property in BTA's possession. A \$35,000 breach of contract suit was filed on behalf of Rodes for the full payment of his salary along with damages. (The suit was filed, but legal papers were never served.) Another injunction resulted in a delayed deadline for the payment of membership dues, but the judge in this instance did not allow several other requests. The suing faction was represented in court throughout *gratis* by Houston Thompson.

The postponement proved to be fateful — far more so than the board of directors could imagine. The third prong of the local offensive emerged at the May 30 annual election meeting in the form of a virtual "purchase" of the BTA. At a cost of \$3,000 in children's and retirees' memberships (at \$5, cheaper by half than regular memberships), the insiders marched in with 549 new member votes and won the election. The figures were 628 for the "museum" faction to 309 for the outsider "conservationist" faction. Of the old members 77% (259) voted with the conservation faction while 23% (79) sided with the museum-tourism side. The new memberships had reversed what would otherwise have been a two-to-one victory for the outsider-conservationists.

The new curators of the Big Thicket museum were serenely untroubled by the ethics of the situation. Purchase of new members was legal according to the association's bylaws. What was all the fuss about? "Look at it this way," quipped Houston Thompson to a *Dallas*

*Times-Herald* reporter, "the association has never had more members."

In fact, the situation was less happy than the membership rolls indicated. Many of the old members felt that they had been disenfranchised and threatened to resign. Many of the new members knew little about the Big Thicket and would be unlikely to pay dues to rejoin the association.

The manner in which many of the new members were acquired was not such as to inspire trust. A busload of students from Houston was met at the museum and told that it was closed for lack of funds. They were informed that a benefactor had donated a sum of money for student memberships so that the museum could be reopened and that all they had to do was sign a proxy. The students dutifully joined. Detective work by *Beaumont Enterprise* reporters Kathy Pijanowski and John Donnelly revealed that at least 106 of the new members were high school students, many of them students in Nick Rodes' classes. (Rodes had been hired as a science teacher by the Kountze Independent School District.) Only one of the 26 students interviewed said he had paid his own dues. All said that they had signed their proxies over to Rodes when they became members. "They were all given these memberships," Rodes concedes. "They

were biology students studying the Big Thicket."

A significant number of the retired persons signed up as new members turned out to be residents at a local old folks home. From most of these new adherents, young or old, it was doubtful whether labor or enthusiasm would be forthcoming. One long-time member of the conservationist faction suggested that some of the new members might be uncovered through a careful tour of Hardin County cemeteries. The task of tracing the new members was complicated by the fact that, of the \$3,625 in new dues payments, \$3,012 was paid in cash (including a dozen \$100 bills).

Thompson, in long telephone discussion with the Observer, conceded that he and his side bought memberships. He says that in 1970, "when the conservationists took over the organization," they bought memberships for students and kids, too. "We don't object to that," he said. His side used school kids because, Thompson said, "We don't have no colleges in Hardin County. . . . "I don't know that there was anything particularly wrong," he said.

He granted that some old people were signed up with paid memberships, too. He doubted any dead people were signed in as members. "I didn't do it," he said.

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"I did do this. I put some old people on I didn't have *their* permission to do it — I had their children's permission."

"They say it's unethical," said old politician Thompson. "But you know . . . it's always unethical, votin' absentee, not givin' 'em the full story. You're gettin' votes an' that's the end of it. They say 'He spent \$1,000.' Why, I spent \$3,000 for Carter. For them to figger that I'm not gonna try to *win*. . . !"

"We registered people all over. Even had a fella went out to the gamblin' town, Las Vegas — he got [bought] five proxies out there an' sent 'em in. They give us the proxies and we voted 'em. But the poor deveil lost his shirt out there. But he had *been* winnin'."

## The New Bunch

There were other problems as well. Not only did the new association focus on museum maintenance and tourism: it tended, to whatever degree, to de-emphasize conservation. The outsider faction meditated unhappily over the possible course of action of the new association president, Beaumont attorney Floyd Landry, who, in spite of his tenacious insistence that he was indeed a conservationist, found himself beset with both possible personal conflicts of interest and radically divergent views within his political backing. Landry's close corporate ties with PICA Investments Venture dated almost from the founding of that corporation. He had personally taken part in PICA's purchase of large tracts of land near the Pine Island Bayou Corridor segment of the national preserve — tracts which PICA was presumed to want to develop as real estate.

Landry told the *Observer* that, while he was and continues to be PICA's lawyer, the acquisition of a fair-market-value (FMV) price for its land in the preserve was accomplished before he became BTA president. PICA still has 15,000 acres in the area, and while Landry says chances that this will be developed are "very slim," the company has the right to do it. "I wouldn't mind if they did develop property that they own," he said. "When you own property in this country, you got the right to develop it."

A second possible conflict involves Landry's representation of landowners whose acreage lies within preserve boundaries. "If that's a conflict I'm guilty and they can take the Big Thicket and stick it," he told the *Observer*.

As a lawyer Landry's duty lies with his clients, who will try to get the highest possible price per acre; as a conser-

vationist he might feel that more conservative land prices would expedite the government's all-too-slow purchase of preserve lands. But questioned about this dilemma, he replied that landowners in public land-takings have a constitutional right to a FMV price, and if the government wants "to steal the man's land, I would be no part of it." If he had to choose between BTA president and such representation, "I'd represent my client," he said.

Even if Landry's staunch insistence that he was a conservationist with his heart in the right place were to be accepted at face value, there was the problem of his backing within the new association. Jeannie Turk, who represented homeowners along swampy Pine Island Bayou and who had many times called for "flood control" measures there, was among Landry's strongest backers. Turk and her allies had already managed to spark a million-dollar floodplain study of the bayou by the U.S. Corps of Engineers and had pleaded for vegetation removal, ditching, and leveeing within the national preserve. It was largely at her insistence that the Hardin County Commissioners' Court on June 8 passed a resolution urging Congress to appropriate no further funds for purchase of the preserve. Besides other ladies in the association who agreed more or less with Turk, but who had previously exercised little power, there was Houston Thompson, who, in an open letter to the citizens of Hardin County circulated in May, argued against land-grabbing outsiders and against completing purchase of the preserve. Thompson had been an early member of the BTA and had fought effectively for the creation of the preserve. What would he do now? That he later told a reporter that he would consider increasing the preserve acreage did not allay the suspicions of the conservationists. Now he says to the *Observer*, though, that in his letter against completing the purchase of the reserve, "I was tryin' to win an election. . . . It was a little demagoguery, I'll admit that."

The BTA is as committed to conservation as ever, Thompson says. "I want a lotta land that's left alone. I want some prairies," he says. But, he adds, "We are (now) I think primarily concerned with the museum. The purpose is to educate the young people in conservation. I think we're educators rather than conservers. We're not as radical, and I don't think we'll be as confrontational" as the group that was ousted.

Landry invited many of the conservationists to chair or serve on BTA committees, and in July the association passed a resolution urging the purchase of remaining preserve lands. But the future direction of the BTA is far from

clear. "It's gonna work out fine," Landry says, maintaining that he gave the conservation committee "a free hand to call the shots," and if the committee members need help from the directors it will be forthcoming. Nevertheless, the struggle has been, to understate the situation, destructive. And, considering the problems confronting both the Big Thicket and the Big Thicket Preserve, it could hardly have happened at a worse time.

pleased that he has picked it up and that he cares to ask about words. This has been a historic summer: he has cut back on watching television and discovered reading. He has made his way through all seven books of *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C. S. Lewis. He likes the Olden Days.

catch sparks. We carry big rocks, shape a fireplace, spread other large rocks around it to make, roughly, a surrounding table. We build our fire.

## Enter Reagan

When Congress creates a park or a preserve these days, it does not simultaneously appropriate the funds for land purchase and development. Funding comes later, usually through a long succession of appropriations bills. In the case of the Big Thicket Preserve Congress has succeeded in dragging its feet.

Some 15,100 out of the preserve's 84,550 acres remain to be purchased. That comes to 18% of the preserve. The 378 remaining unpurchased tracts lie primarily in the stream corridors which link several of the preserve units together: the Neches River Corridor (in effect East Texas' only wild and scenic river), the Pine Island Bayou Corridor, and the Beaumont Unit, at the confluence of the Neches River and Pine Island Bayou. Of the remaining acres, 8,100 are under condemnation, but there is no money to purchase them. Until land is purchased by the federal government the National Park Service has no control over it. If landowners do decide to harvest timber within preserve boundaries, they have the legal right to do so. This has happened in the past. Prior to the first large appropriations several areas in the preserve were timbered. One preserve unit (the Hickory Creek Savannah) was barely saved from becoming a trailer subdivision.

The Reagan Administration, acting through Secretary of the Interior James Watt, has not requested land and water conservation funds for the Big Thicket in fiscal 1982 and presumably would like to continue a policy of non-purchase into the indefinite future. The policy not only works a hardship on landowners whose property lines fall within preserve boun-



daries; with the sharp inflation in Southeast Texas land prices, the purchases will end up costing the federal government far more in the long run. Given the present situation in Washington, conservationists are beginning to wonder when or if the remaining acreage will ever be purchased. Landry believes Congress will buy most of it, but the climate is stormy.

This impasse gives rise to at least two sombre (and not necessarily exclusive) scenarios. Landowners might, if frustrated *ad infinitum*, begin to cut or subdivide unpurchased preserve woodlands. Still worse, Republican administrators might decide that the uncompleted preserve belongs in the hands of the state of Texas or even that parts of it should be given back to those hardworking entrepreneurs, the lumber companies.

Such scenarios are, hopefully, exaggerated, but they continue to lurk in the darker corridors of the conservationists' (and perhaps in James Watt's) minds. The ghosts will not be laid until the last acre is purchased and the preserve is such a fixture in the minds of Texans that no politician would consider touching its pristine wilderness.

In the meantime other troubles, literally, pour in. Some derive from the South Hampton Refining Co. of Silsbee, which regularly pours toxic substances into Village Creek and which has petitioned the Texas Department of Water Resources to increase its permitted effluent from 20,000 to 127,000 gallons per day.

Village Creek, probably the best canoeing stream in East Texas, flows through the Turkey Creek Unit of the national preserve and fronts both the arid-sandland donation and the new Big Thicket State Park. The state park, just downstream from the refinery, would be seriously damaged if the South Hampton Refining Co. was allowed a sixfold effluent increase. The creek would be degraded from one of Texas' prettiest to one of its sickest.

Some 20 miles to the southwest, salt water seeping from a sink hole in the Sour Lake oil field has begun to spill into nearby Clements Creek, which flows into the Pine Island Bayou Corridor of the Thicket preserve. It does not take an overdeveloped ecological sensitivity to realize the havoc salt water can wreak in a fresh water stream. Meanwhile residents who have built near the bayou continue to press for ditching, leveeing, and vegetation removal to make its floodplain safe for real estate development (if that is possible for a stream that floods one-half mile wide at least twice a year).

There should be more than one Big Thicket State Park in Southeast Texas. The region's massive population growth clearly creates a growing need for open spaces, including both recreational and biological areas, and the Thicket, with its many open streams and its biological wealth, provides a natural locale. There are also areas like the palmetto lowlands, on upper Pine Island Bayou below state Highway 770 and less than five miles west of the Lance Rosier Unit, which could be donated to the National Park Service or to private sources to add several thousand more acres to the catalogue of protected areas. (The palmetto lowlands are at present owned by Texaco, Sun Oil, and other interests, which have kept their distance from conservationist proposals concerning them.) Doubtless others concerned with and knowledgeable about the region could suggest other possibilities. But all such possibilities are only so many visions until organized, stubborn people get down to the work of realizing them. At present, such work has ceased. It will have to begin again.

It would be nice if, as in some sweet May wine operetta, the two contingents of the Big Thicket Association could make up and forget past bitterness. The rancor, however, cuts too deep, and the directions of the two contingents continue to contrast too sharply. For the foreseeable future the best that can be hoped is that the "locals" can work happily on their museum and on tourism, while the "outsiders" vigorously pursue the conservationist goals which they consider paramount. Towards this goal the outsiders are creating a Big Thicket Conservation Association (P.O. Box 12032, Beaumont, Texas 77706, dues \$5 for the remainder of this year) to pursue the policies that made the Big Thicket Preserve a reality. The new association, whose president is Bill Hallmon of Dallas, will have a state-wide (or wider) base and a purely conservationist focus.

Now, then, 17 years after 1964, there are two Big Thicket groups, the BTA of Saratoga, Texas (P.O. Box 198, 77585), and the new BTCA of Saratoga, Texas.\* Some, like this writer, will attempt to belong to both, while others will have to make their choices. In no case will the choices be entirely happy. The Battle of the Big Thicket is not entirely won, it could still be lost, just as the hard-won gains of the environmental movement in this country could be lost, to the grief of our descendants. It is time to retire from spectator ethics and to get back to the messy, problematic, unpleasant fight. □

\*There is even a third group if one wants to include the new Village Creek Preservation Assn., P.O. Box 153, Silsbee, Texas 77656.

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## Armstrong Pondering Race for Governor

✓ Land Commissioner Bob Armstrong suddenly is seriously considering running for the Democratic nomination for governor. Pressures built up on him from various traditionally Democratic sources, and he tells the *Observer* in effect that he may do it.

The principal question in his mind is whether former Atty. Gen. John Hill will stand aside in order to give Armstrong some chance of collecting enough contributions to get the television exposure without which no one has a chance any more. Armstrong has dispatched state Democratic Party chairman Lowell Lebermann to Hill to see if he will stand down. Armstrong says that state party chairman Bob Slagle has told him that he has broad support of the kind that would unite the various actions of the Democrats, and Armstrong thinks that is probably true.

Armstrong has announced he will not seek another term as land commissioner, which he has been ten years. He is in the middle of a divorce and is busy as a member of the state redistricting board. Nevertheless, he has found time to confer with a rising number of people interesting in getting him to run.

He is taking a good look at the levels of the state's oil and gas severance taxation, which as land commissioner he is in a good position to do. He believes that property taxpayers all over the state are going to have to be paying higher and higher property taxes and that the only way for the state to give homeowners tax relief may be to raise the severance taxes and direct the new revenue "straight to education and the local governments," which are hurting because of Reagan's budget cuts.

Proposition 13 in California, Armstrong points out, was "a house-tax revolt," not any other kind; people are not exercised against higher taxes on oil and gas, he says, but against higher taxes on their own houses. He believes that

such a program just might win the support of municipal authorities, the teachers, and "every homeowner in the state." Gov. Bill Clements is on record against new oil and gas taxes — or any other new taxes.

Armstrong conferred with Railroad Cmsr. Buddy Temple and labor leaders Harry Hubbard, Jack Martin, and John Rogers on the practical considerations. A labor poll shows Armstrong has positive identification of five- or six-to-one among voters, but only 27% know him. Without TV exposure he could not get known enough in time to win. Temple won in 1980 with \$1.4 million worth of TV time that earned him 40% name recognition, concentrated in East Texas, Armstrong believes.

The poll showed, Armstrong told the *Observer*, that Clements, Hill, and Lt. Gov. Bill Bobby have extraordinarily high negative ratings among the voters. Clements, Armstrong said, has 40% negative rating, compared to 55% positive. "You can shake 'em off a positive rating," Armstrong says, "but he can't shake the negative rating. So he will try to blacken the name of the guy running against him."

Temple said in the meeting that he is not running for any higher office unless Hobby chooses not to run again, in which case Temple would consider lieutenant governor Temple. Temple explained he and Hobby have too many mutual friends and supporters. "To a light degree, that's true of me," Armstrong said. In other words, if Armstrong doesn't go for governor he may go for lieutenant governor. He expressed concern he has heard about "handing it to [George] Shrake," the Republican who may run against Hobby.

"If John Hill will say he's considered it and does not want to run or can't, and he would say, 'I would turn loose my people and you can go ahead, even if Dolph

[Briscoe] runs, so get going —'" Armstrong says, not finishing, but adding, "It is totally a question about whether (Hill is out) and you would have a chance at that money," which Hill otherwise would get.

The state Young Democrats, Armstrong has been informed, voted about a month and a half ago 96% support for his running for governor. Yet Warren Burnett, the great Odessa defense lawyer, has told Armstrong he's convinced it's not worth the effort without the money necessary to win. "The thing that worries me is," Armstrong says, "it ought not to be that way."

Armstrong feels like he's on a mini-rollercoaster, considering what to do. "It's a very thin reed I'm seeing out there to lean on," he says. But then he gets to thinking about raising severance taxes to reduce property taxes, and he says warmly, "While we've got it [the oil and gas] here, let's take it and use it directly for the people that need it."

Friends who have talked with Armstrong say that he is also weighing whether there might not be a strong reaction against Reagan by election time, 1982. Armstrong is also said to be thinking that if he doesn't do it now he probably never will. And one friend reluctantly confirms that Armstrong is also thinking: "What have I got to lose?"

✓ Jim Hightower has told Billie Carr, the liberal leader in Houston, that he will announce for agriculture commissioner in October.

He will not run for governor, he told her. "He just didn't think he could win now and that he didn't have the money needed to win," Carr said.

On the other hand, he reasoned to her, the issues are good ones in the agriculture race, and by his information, ex-Gov. Dolph Briscoe is mad at incumbent Agriculture Cmsr. Reagan Brown and will not support him. Hightower has had conversations with such Briscoe people as ex-state party chairman Calvin Guest, confirming this. So Hightower thinks he has an especially good chance to win this office.

✓ Carr has been receiving information from Kennedy sources that indicates the Hunt Commission, rewriting the Democrats' national rules, is going to abandon the McGovern-era reforms. "The Mondale people, Manatt's people, and labor, including Fraser, all went on the program of wiping out the reform rules, even going back to winner-take-all," Carr said she understood. Hearings of the commission begin early in October.

✓ State Sen. Peyton McKnight, the Tyler Democrat, says he expects to decide by November about getting into the



governor's race. He told a convention of the Mexican American Democrats of Texas recently that Gov. Bill Clements can be defeated in 1982 and predicted that it would take \$5 million "if we don't have a hard primary campaign." Clements, you no doubt remember, spent \$7 million in 1978 to win the GOP primary and defeat John Hill.

Clements will be hard to beat, McKnight said, but he predicted that President Reagan's economic policies will chase Texas voters back into the Democratic column.

✓ In other races, State Comptroller Bob Bullock was a bit perturbed by rumors that state Sen. Grant Jones might be after his job. Jones, a Democrat, represents the 24th Senatorial District, which stretches from Abilene, where the Senator lives, to Waco nearly 200 miles away.

Bullock, who serves on the five-member Legislative Redistricting Board, accused Jones of "putting out the word he'll run against me because he's afraid he won't have a senatorial district to run and win in the next time out." Population shifts indicate redistricting might put at least two West Texas senators in the same district. Bullock, who has already announced for re-election in 1982, said he welcomes Jones into the campaign.

"Jones' record is negative and against the economic health of this state," Bullock said. "If Jones goes fishing to run for comptroller, I predict that he'll come up with nothing but the worm, and as an opponent his pipe will go out before the race is over."

Jones, an avid pipe-smoker, told Dave McNeely of the *Austin American Statesman* that "it's about what you'd expect from Bullock." He said his talk of a race is tentative, but that he has "been surprised at the reaction from a number of quarters."

Bullock said Jones' hint that he might take him on "has the smell of political blackmail."

✓ Speaking of smell, Comptroller Bullock recently sent gifts to two Texas newspapers. The *Mount Pleasant Daily Tribune* and the Austin bureau of the *Dallas Morning News* each received a plainly wrapped box containing a six-inch round cow patty. Bullock's media representative Tony Proffitt said he wasn't sure why the *News* was selected, but that Bullock sent the manure to *Tribune* publisher R. B. Palmer because "he's always been on Bullock's case."

✓ Lyndon Olson Jr., a former Texas Democratic legislator from Waco who is a member of the State Board of Insurance, is apparently going to Washington. Olson, according to Carl P. Leubsdorf of the *Dallas Morning News* Washington

bureau, has been selected to fill a Democratic vacancy on the Federal Election Commission. Leubsdorf reports that Olson was strongly pushed for the FEC spot by conservative Texas Democrats led by Rep. Kent Hance, D-Lubbock, who was given a strong voice in the selection for the FEC spot as a political reward for his support of the Reagan economic program.

The Federal Election Commission, which has jurisdiction over the complex array of laws governing the raising and spending of funds in federal elections, is composed of six members, three from each political party. The vacancy for which Olson was selected was created by the expiration April 30 of the term of former Rep. Robert O. Tiernan, D-Rhode Island.

Olson served in the Texas House from 1973 to 1978, when he sought Bob Poage's 11th District U.S. House seat. Olson finished third behind former state Rep. Lane Denton and Marvin Leath, a Marlin banker. Leath subsequently won the runoff.

Formal nomination to the FEC position is expected in September.

✓ Dallas County Commissioner Roy Orr is also resigning to accept a Reagan administration appointment. The 48-year-old commissioner will become regional director of the U.S. Department of Labor. As the Dallas-based representative of Secretary of Labor Raymond Donovan, Orr will earn \$54,087 annually and will handle community, industry, and labor relations in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. His salary as county commissioner was about \$47,000.

Orr says he is not switching parties.

✓ During debate in the U.S. House on the Housing and Urban Development Department appropriations bill, Cong. Charles Wilson of Lufkin offered an amendment that sought to prohibit the use of rental assistance programs for low and moderate income families in cities with rent controls. A point of order against the amendment was sustained.

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✓ Cong. Henry Gonzalez of San Antonio has introduced a resolution providing for the impeachment of Paul A. Volcker, chairman of the board of governors of the Federal Reserve System.

✓ Tipped off by former State Sen. Don Kennard of Fort Worth, now living at Harper's Ferry, W. Va., that the original American Briscoe's estate was being auctioned off near Charleston, W. Va., ex-Gov. Dolph Briscoe flew there and bought two vans of goods, spending perhaps between \$50,000 and \$100,000, Kennard estimates. The ancestor, who came to the U.S. from England in the 1600's, was Dr. John Briscoe. Frank Briscoe, ex-Harris County district attorney and a relative of Dolph's, was present, too (but hadn't notified his wealthy kinsman of the occasion).

Briscoe's wife Janey was not necessarily taken with all the purchases. At one point, Kennard says, she returned from taking a little walk, saw a large, but rather dilapidated dining table on the lawn (where the auction was being held), and exclaimed, "Oh, God, I hope he didn't buy that thing!" Ten minutes before, he had.

Briscoe is often said to be the largest landowner in Texas. He has been taking soundings whether to run for governor again in 1982 against Bill Clements.

Sign lettered out on the wall behind the counter of a cafe in Freer, Texas:

"Man does not live by words alone despite the fact that sometimes he has to eat them." 1981.

"The Miracle of the KILLER BEES" by Robert Heard. Honey Hill Publishing Co., 1022 Bonham Terrace, Austin, Texas 78704, \$7.95 plus \$1.03 tax and shipping.

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## When Congress Reconvenes

# Social Security Under Scrutiny

Washington, D.C.

For years good Democrats have been echoing the Kennedy assertion that a measure of civilization is the care and compassion shown to its older citizens. This is going to be put to the test when Congress reconvenes after Labor Day. Jake Pickle, Lloyd Bentsen, and Jim Wright will play key roles and have an opportunity to erase some of the Republican tarnish they acquired while playing footsie with Ronald Reagan's assumptions on fiscal policy and budget allocations.

The Social Security system will get an intense going over this fall and into next year's session. Cong. Pickle of Austin heads the responsible subcommittee on Social Security of the House ways and means committee, and Sen. Bentsen of Texas serves on the Senate finance committee. (Cong. Kent Hance is also on ways and means, but many consider him lost to the Democratic cause.) Cong. Wright of Fort Worth, as Majority Leader, can play a critical role.

The first issue to be joined will be restoration of the minimum benefits program, a casualty of the June budget-cutting orgy. This program provides minimal benefits, \$122 per month, to old people and their survivors who for various reasons fall outside full Social Security eligibility — the poorest of the poor. Later the Congress will address various aspects of the entire system — eligibility, coverage, funding, and reserves.

The funding of Social Security, with payroll taxes the primary resource, is set apart from much of the federal fiscal process. Although it isn't, this fact should be an issue, as it has the effect of pitting workers and employers against the aged. It also makes their security hostage to demographic patterns (more old, fewer working age, less money) and

to an economy (inflation and employment levels, particularly) over which old people have no control.

Few would hold out any hope of fundamental reform of the Social Security system, but Pickle and other leaders in this field will be trying to ameliorate the problems by tinkering with tax rates, interfund borrowing (there are sub-funds for the various programs), and — most importantly — eligibility and benefit levels. All this will be assembled in Pickle's subcommittee. A main-line Democrat close to the late LBJ, Bob Strauss, and the business-banking interests of the state, Pickle has become the principal legislative force on social security matters. His staff, headed by Austinite and Yale Law School graduate Michael Keeling, is probably more liberal than Chairman Pickle. What they and their boss hear from whom in the coming months may determine the immediate future of the nation's commitment to security for old people.

In September an attempt to restore minimum Social Security benefits is one of the first orders of business. The minimum benefit has been part of the system since 1935, when it was \$10 per month. By 1977 it had reached the current \$122 for new beneficiaries and was frozen there by Congress. Approximately three million Americans now receive the minimum benefit. Criticism that this provides unearned benefits to a vast number of people is mistaken. Seventy-six percent of current recipients are workers who paid at least some taxes into the system. They just never made much or else were not covered during much of their work life. Seventy-eight percent are over 65; 50% are over 70. Half a million of the 3,000,000 are over 80 and 80,000 are over 90. There are 200,000 school-age survivors of deceased workers. For most of

the recipients, elimination of the program would be, in the words of Pickle, "too harsh and in many cases cruel." If not reinstated by Congress, the minimum benefit will terminate in March 1982.

This is one of several programs that provide some protection for the poorest among us. It is a small program, but its constituency is not articulate, and it probably serves some who have hardly ever worked and live on the margin of conventional family and community life. It fell victim to the Gramm-Latta-Reagan budget cutting — killed with help from nine Texas Democrats, "The Nine" (Kent Hance, Phil Gramm, Charles Stenholm, Charles Wilson, Jack Hightower, Richard White, Ralph Hall, Sam Hall, and Marvin Leath).

After surveying the budget wreckage, the Democrats secured the restoration of the minimum benefits program by a vote of 404-20 in the House. Wright was a leader in this move. Three of the 20 voting against passage were Texas Republicans Bill Archer and Ron Paul and Democrat Phil Gramm, who stated, "The House took a courageous action in moving to terminate the minimum benefit" during the earlier budget reconciliation process. Jake Pickle strongly defended the restoration as "a reassertion that this Congress [does] not wish to take away Social Security benefits from current recipients." But, he added, his subcommittee has already considered phasing out the minimum benefit for future retirees. When the legislation reached the Senate Floor, Republican leaders cited procedural considerations for not taking it up. Democrats supporting the measure argued that 15 minutes could be spared for a record vote on the bill prior to adjournment for the summer congressional recess. The Republicans prevailed by 57-30 in a vote ruling that it was out of order to consider the minimum benefit restoration. Bentsen voted nay (which was for a vote on benefit restoration); John Tower of Texas voted aye. Three million Americans were left hanging until after the congressional break.

In the recent tax and budget debates the Democratic leadership approached the Reagan economic assumptions with pretty much of what Cong. Henry Gonzalez of San Antonio has characterized a "me, too" attitude. Now that the Reagan package is in place and the economy is slowing down, the federal deficit is predicted to be huge (\$70 billion?). The slowdown will diminish revenue into the Social Security system. The deficit will raise cries for more and more cuts in federal spending. Social Security will be a target. Pickle, Bentsen, and Wright will fight or fall back again.

KATHERINE AND TYRUS FAIN



# TEXAS LABOR

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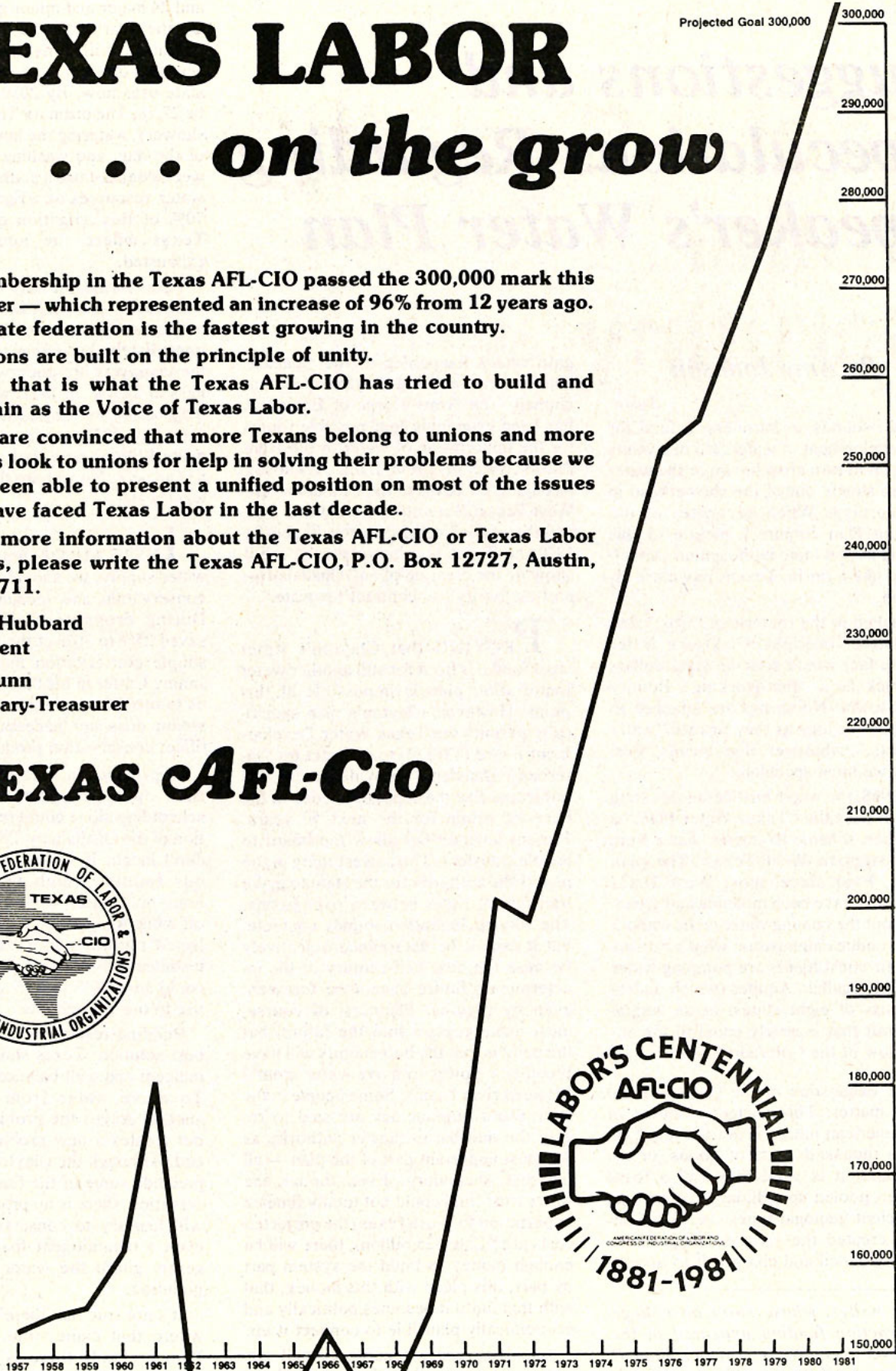
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For more information about the Texas AFL-CIO or Texas Labor Unions, please write the Texas AFL-CIO, P.O. Box 12727, Austin, Tx. 78711.

Harry Hubbard  
President

Joe Gunn  
Secretary-Treasurer

## TEXAS AFL-CIO





# Suggestions and Speculations Regarding Speaker's Water Plan

By Amy Johnson

Austin

It all sounds so harmless: a fund for the development of water. No one wants the lawn to turn crisp brown or the water to drip slowly out of the showerhead in the morning. When advocates of the Clayton Plan conjure a picture of this second largest state in the nation shriveling up like a raisin, Texans pay close attention.

Cloaked in the rhetoric of "trust" and legislative foresight, Clayton's water fund in fact would soak up state dollars as quick as a "fast-working" Bounty paper towel. No strings are attached to the bonds as long as they finance "water projects," whatever that means. Perforce, we must speculate.

In 1968, the water hustlers in this state tried to pass the "Texas Water Plan," a \$7 billion scheme to import water from Mississippi to West Texas. The plan failed. Ever since, most West Texas legislators have been moaning and groaning about the coming water crisis without laying undue emphasis on what's causing it. Their constituents are pumping water from the Ogallala Aquifer (which underlies parts of eight states) at an annual overdraft that is nearly equal to the annual flow of the Colorado River.

The exhaustion of the Ogallala is no small matter. This ancient resource of the American nation is not the result of, say, a thousand years of floods, or ten thousand; it is what they call a fossil aquifer, pooled up millions of years ago, in ancient geologic times. In 1976 Congress created the six-state High Plains Study Council and charged it to investi-

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*The writer, whose story on college construction funding appeared in the Observer recently, is a senior Plan II student at UT-Austin. She has undertaken further work on water for the Observer.*

gate what's happening to the Ogallala. Bill Clements and Bill Clayton sit on that council. The Army Corps of Engineers has been examining four possible routes for the importation of water to the High Plains, two of them from Arkansas through East Texas to the Panhandle and West Texas. Not until the middle of 1982 will the council release its results, but in 1979 the Texas legislature passed a bill allowing the creation of an "Ogallala Import Authority" to contract for water.

PROVING that Clayton's water trust fund is a front for still another water importation plan is impossible at this point. However, Clayton's plan specifically permits the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) to contract for "interbasin transfers," provided these will not jeopardize the supplies needed in the basis of origin for the next 50 years. Present laws do *not* allow the board to handle transfers. The newest thing in the plan is the authority for the state to make transfers of water between river basins. The 50-year limitation sounds concrete, but it cannot be determined objectively because the next half-century of the indeterminate future cannot be foreseen, even by regions. Planners, of course, must make guesses into the future, but the point is that the bureaucrats will have broad *new* power to move water around between river basins. Some people in the state water bureaucracy are said to regard the interbasin-transfer authority as the most important part of the plan — all the rest, secondary. Even though the water trust fund could not totally finance importation to West Texas (the projected costs are \$12 to \$25 billion), there will be enough money to build the system part by part, this piece with this money, that with that, until it becomes politically and economically plausible to connect it up.

Importing water benefits a small segment of the state. We all pay the bill, but agribusiness gets the most water. Irrigation used 76% (13.15 million acre-feet) of

all the Texas water tapped from the 3,700 streams and tributaries, 173 reservoirs, and 24 major and minor aquifers in 1980. By the year 2000, the TWDB predicts, irrigation will consume 18.36 million acre-feet of water — more than the entire state uses now. By 2030 that figure will be 22.18. The ordinary Texan taking long showers, watering the lawn in the middle of the day, and washing the car once a week does not use a sixth as much of our water resources as irrigation does, and 70% of this irrigation occurs in West Texas where the aquifer is being exhausted.

Texas farms not only use most of the water, they also get it at low cost. This is not to say that we should raise the cost immediately, but rather to point out that the taxpayers are underwriting agribusiness in Texas. In 1977, whether farmers irrigated or not they earned about \$13 an acre. By 2020, irrigated farmland will make \$108 an acre, but a dryland farm, \$39 an acre. No wonder the West Texans want water.

INSTEAD OF manipulating the water supply, we should be emphasizing conservation and reclamation projects. During droughts, Californians have saved 25% to 30% of their water through simple conservation measures. Forget Jimmy Carter in his blue cardigan asking us to turn down the thermostat. Conservation does *not* necessarily mean sacrifice; conservation produces.

Drip irrigation uses much less water than open-air sprinkling. Irrigation scheduling alone could reduce the depletion of the Ogallala by 25% to 30%. Now, don't laugh: If we just put big rocks in our toilets, which use 45% of the household water; if we turned the faucet off while we brushed our teeth; if we collected rainwater in a barrel; and if we installed self-metering shower heads, we could save 30% to 70% of the water we use in our households.

Building reservoirs is not always the best solution: Texas should have an intelligent and well-balanced water policy. To move water from one place to another solves the problem at one end, but creates a new problem at the other end. Although the Clayton Plan does not preclude some of the fund going to conservation, there is no promise that Texas will *first* try to conserve. There is not even a commitment that we will stringently guard the water we have from pollution.

It's not true that there's always "more where that came from." The Clayton Plan pretends there is. Billy Clayton plays politics like a Bobby Fischer. His water "trust" fund may sound harmless. But it's not. □



'This Revolution is nothing if not original'

# Observations from Nicaragua

*Molly Dougherty, a native of Austin who lives now in Nicaragua, sent us this report from there.*

*Managua, Nicaragua*

"Would you like a chocolate Santa Claus?"

That wasn't quite what I expected from the pistol-toting, tough burly captain in an olive-green Sandinista uniform sitting behind the desk.

He explained to me that the Nicaraguan government had put limits on the commercial use of Christmas so that the spirit of Christmas would not be lost in

profiting off of Jesus or Santa. So here it was early November and here I was eating chocolate Santa Clauses with the press secretary of the Sandinista Army.

This revolution is nothing if not original.

... That November trip was a quick one — to get material on the literacy campaign to add to a documentary film, "Nicaragua: These Same Hands," that I was working on. Recently I returned to Nicaragua for a longer stay.

**M**ANAGUA, Nicaragua's capital

"city," looks like a collection of small villages, with cows grazing in fields in the "downtown" area. This is because instead of rebuilding the city after its center was leveled by an earthquake in 1972, dictator Anastasio Somoza and his cronies pocketed the money sent as aid from overseas.

This has to be one of the very few countries in the world with "Pepsi-Cola" and "Diners Club" billboards intermingled with others bearing revolutionary slogans. The other day I saw "Fanta — Happiness and Flavor" next to "Everyone Join the Militias!" What you



## The World From Texas

There has been a tempest in a South Texas teapot concerning whether an El Salvadoran woman serving 90 days in a Corpus jail on illegal entry into the U.S. is a communist and formerly the mistress of the secretary-general of the communist party in El Salvador. She identified herself as Ana Estela Flores Guevara, a Baptist looking for work as a domestic to pay her tuition to theological school in the U.S. *Corpus Christi Caller* reporters Jay Rosser and Gardner Selby, quoting seldom-named sources ("the military source, who refused to be identified"; a Border Patrol spokesman, "who asked to remain anonymous"; "Salvadoran embassy officials in Washington"; "a Washington source, an acknowledged expert on Central American affairs") were told she was believed to be "Commander Norma Guevara," active in a front for Salvadoran communists.

\* \* \*

In a final environmental impact statement, the Air Force says tripling the

number of aircraft at Bergstrom AFB outside Austin would increase the number of people under the risk of slight hearing loss from 600 to 2,000 and double the number of Austin residents who are now "highly annoyed" by the noise of the flights. Changes in flight patterns could just about cancel the increases, but there are no guarantees of the changes. A decision on the aircraft tripling is expected in August.

\* \* \*

Arab investors from Kuwait and perhaps Saudi Arabia have bought, through a Bahamian intermediary, three oil refineries on the Texas coast — the Uni Refining plant in Corpus and refineries in Port Neches and Winnie — and the American Petrofina refinery in Port Arthur is being sold to Venezuelan and Swiss interests, the *Beaumont Enterprise* reported. A group including Kuwaiti investors is also buying a refinery in Hawaii. OPEC investments in the U.S. have heretofore been concentrated mostly in banking and real estate.

\* \* \*

The National Bank of Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, one of the 26 banks

held by Republic of Texas Corp., specializes in military accounts. By winning a Department of Defense contract to service overseas military personnel accounts by satellite, the bank has added 30,000 new accounts and increased its assets by 45%. The San Antonio bank will service accounts at 17 U.S. military bases in England, Scotland, Iceland, and Guam, UPI reports.

\* \* \*

There is no apparent move from the government to stop the planned private-enterprise rocket launch in Texas. Space Services, Inc., the company planning the launch, has moved its launch date to Aug. 1 and its launch site from Matagorda Peninsula to land owned by Dallas oilman Toddie Lee Wynne on Matagorda Island, about 45 miles from Corpus Christi. A NASA official was quoted in the *Dallas Times-Herald* asking, "If they launch their rocket and it comes down in the middle of downtown wherever, who's going to pay the damages?" The company has \$25 million in liability insurance. An attorney for the firm argues that there are no laws now prohibiting the private launching of rockets and that's the way it should be. □



won't see is billboards with women in suggestive poses: all advertising considered exploitive of women has been banned.

One is continually struck by all the beautiful proud women who wear police and military uniforms — most of them with long hair and make-up. It is said that during the war against the Somoza dictatorship, 30% of the combatants of the Sandinista National Liberation Front were women.

There is clearly a strong Christian presence in this revolution. Priests, nuns, and grassroots Christian communities are enthusiastically involved in rebuilding the country and reflecting on what it means to be a Christian in the revolutionary process. Nicaraguans who have never met Cubans sometimes re-

gard them, with suspicion because they are seen as atheists. Nicaraguans are deeply offended by those who say that they are creating a second Cuba: this is a Christian country that is very much determined to do its own thing. As Father Ernesto Cardenal, Minister of Culture, says, "We don't want a second Cuba here, we want a first Nicaragua."

One is struck by how few trained people there are to fulfill the enormous task of rebuilding this country out of the ashes of an earthquake, a war, and 44 years of dictatorship. And yet there's high unemployment.

To deal with this problem, Nicaragua first mounted a literacy campaign which in five months was said to have reduced the country's illiteracy rate from 50% to 12%. Reportedly there were few families in the country without someone teaching or learning. Now the best students from the literacy campaign are the teachers in the next phase of adult education — an experiment that's never been tried before anywhere. After a year or two of learning basic skills, the students can move directly into a job training program. When they graduate, those in the cities will immediately have jobs in areas the country desperately needs; those in the countryside will have learned skills to increase agricultural productivity.

In Nicaragua there is no death penalty, and 30 years is the maximum sentence. Many convicted ex-National Guard members have been pardoned, which upset people here who had seen them torture, murder, and rape for so long. A friend whose work includes visiting the prisoners told me that most former guardsmen have been surprised at the good treatment — they were expecting torture and death. Instead workshops have been set up where the inmates can learn skills and work.

**T**HERE ARE TWO really overwhelming impressions I have from being in Nicaragua this short time. I've read about U.S. imperialism and rich and poor countries for years, but now for the first time I'm beginning to understand on a gut level what it's like to be a victim of the U.S., what it's like to be on the other end of the stick, to be so *dependent*.

I was here in March when the word came down from Washington to cut off aid to Nicaragua, a loan the government here was planning to use to buy wheat. Soon there was a bread shortage. (Nicaragua produces no wheat of its own.) How could anything be uglier — the big rich U.S. cutting off wheat to a desperately poor country of two and a half million people? Not to mention the U.S. allowing ex-National Guard members to train in Florida with the announced intention of invading the country.

The other overwhelming impression is how this tiny poor country is showing in every way its determination to forge its own destiny no matter what the odds and no matter what the U.S. does. People here are really willing to die to defend their country from foreign domination or another dictatorship. This had always sounded like rhetoric to me until I began meeting people who expressed it in a simple, straight-forward, unmistakably determined manner. In response to the imminent threat of a war, people are joining the militias in increasing numbers.

The victory they won on July 19, 1979, at a cost of 50,000 lives has given them a chance to build a new society — unique, original, Nicaraguan. It would seem more logical, more humane, for us to send them aid, rather than to be allowing (in effect encouraging) those they fought so hard to overthrow to be training on our soil. — MOLLY DOUGHERTY

Let us affront and reprimand the smooth mediocrity and squalid contentment of the times.

— EMERSON IN "SELF-RELIANCE."



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# The Social Cause Calendar

## MASS RALLY IN D.C.

Massive protest against Reaganism will be demonstrated in the National Solidarity Day in Washington D.C., all day Saturday, Sept. 19. 815 6th St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20006, 202-637-5380.

## VIET VETS BAR-BE-QUE

The Brotherhood of Vietnam Vets, the group that successfully lobbied for Agent Orange legislation, is having a barbecue on Sept. 19 at Pease Park, Austin, from 1:00-9:00 p.m. Tickets \$5 for adults; \$2.50 for children.

## ANTI-HUNGER COALITION OF TEXAS

Statewide meeting will focus on the status of federal food assistance programs and community alternatives to feed poor people in the face of federal cutbacks. Sept. 23-24 at the Gunter Hotel, 205 East Houston, San Antonio; no registration fee.

## DALLAS CELEBRATES TEXAS WOMEN

Exhibition of *Texas Women: A Celebration of History* at the Hall of State Museum at Fair Park, Sept. 25 through Jan. 10. Sponsored by the Dallas Historical Society.

## BUILDING COMMUNITY POWER

Neighborhoods, zoning, the environment, and public transportation are some topics to be discussed at the Second Annual Austin Neighborhoods Issues Conference. All day Sept. 26 at the Electric Utility Auditorium, 301 West Avenue, Austin. Call 451-2347; \$5 registration fee.

If you know of an event that you feel deserves inclusion in this calendar, please forward all information at the earliest possible date to "Social Cause Calendar" at the Observer.

## Progressive Organizations

In no hurry, the *Observer* is building up lists of the political organizations we regard as progressive, their meeting evenings where that is applicable, and a phone number for each, in Texas cities. The editor invites communications recommending organizations for inclusion, by city.

### HOUSTON

ACLU, 524-5925; ACORN, 523-6989; Americans for Demo. Action, 522-9544; Amnesty Intl., Group 23, Anne Chastang, 6006 Saxon, Houston 77092, and Eileen at 869-5021 x42; Citizens' Anti-Nuclear Info. Team (CAN IT), 522-3343; Concilio de Organizaciones Chicanas, P.O. Box 9, Houston 77001; Demo. Socialist Organizing Cmte., 921-6906; Gay Political Caucus, 1st and 3rd Weds., 521-1000; Harris Cty. Concerned Women, 674-6798; Lesbian and Gay Demos., 528-2057; Houston Area Women's Center, 528-6798; Lesbian and Gay Demos. of Tx., 521-1000; Mxn.-Amn. Demos., 6944 Navigation, Houston 77001; Mockingbird Alliance, 747-1837; NAACP, 1018 Clebourne, Houston 77001; PASO, 6716 Fairfield, Houston 77023; Senate Dist. 15 Demo. Coalition, 862-8431; Tx. Coalition of Black Demos., 674-0968; UofH YD's, 749-7347; Westside Demos., 464-2536.

Thanks to Rosemary Rudesal for her assistance in preparing this entry.

### AUSTIN

ACORN, 8 nighborhood groups, 442-8321; Amnesty Intl., Group 107, Cindy Torrance, POBx. 4951, Aus. 78765; Austinites for Public Transportation, 3rd Tue., 441-2651; Aus. Lesbian-Gay Political Caucus, 4th Tue., & also Lesbian-Gay Demos. of Tx., 478-8653; Aus. Neighborhood Ccl., 4th Wed., 442-8411; Aus. Neighborhood Fund, 3rd Mon., 451-2347; Aus. Tenants' Ccl., 474-1961; Aus. Women's Political Caucus, 1st & 3rd Tues., 472-3606 or 447-4409; Black Aus. Demos., 3rd or 4th Thu., 478-6576;

Center for Maximum Potential Buildg. Systems (appropriate technology.) 1st Sat., 928-4786; Central Aus. Demos., 3rd Wed., 477-6587; Central Tx. ACLU, 477-4335; Citizens' Coalition for an Eco-

nomical Energy Policy, 474-4738; Demo. Socialist Organizing Cmte., 2nd Wed., 453-2556; Gray Panthers, 4th Thu., 345-1869; Lignite Group, 479-0678 & 512-321-5250 (Bastrop); LULAC, 2nd Wed., 451-3219;

Magnet Coalition, (managed growth), 441-2651; Mxn.-Amn. Demos., 1st Mon., 444-7668 or 472-9211; New Amn. Movement, every other Sun., 454-2888 or 478-2096; Nurses' Environmental Health Watch, 454-3932; Northeast Aus. Demos., 2nd Tue., Dr. Gary Witt, 8512 Grayledge; Phogg Foundation, POBx. 13549, Ax.; Save Barton Creek, every Tue., 472-4104; Sierra Club, 1st Tue., 478-1264; Socialist Party of Tx., 2nd Tue., 452-3722; South Aus. Demos., 3rd Tue. or 3rd Thu., 447-4091;

Tx. Consumer Assn., 477-1882; Tx. Mobilization for Survival, Sun., wkly., 474-5877; Travis Audubon Scty., 3rd Thu., 447-7155 or 477-6282; Travis Cty. Demo. Women, every Fri., 453-3243; Travis Cty. YD's, 453-3796; Univ. Mobilization for Survival, wkly., 476-4503; UT YD's, 452-8516; West Aus. Demos., 2nd Thu., 454-1291; Zilker Park Posse, 472-1053.

### SAN ANTONIO

ACLU, 224-6791; Amnesty Intl., U.S. Group 127, Julia Powell, 828-4141; Women's Political Caucus, 2nd Tues., 655-3724; Civil Rights Litigation Center, 224-1061; Citizens Concerned About Nuclear Power, 1st & 3rd Weds., 655-0543; Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS), 2nd Th., 222-2367; Demos for Action, Research & Education (DARE), rsch. volunteers needed, 4th Wed., 674-0351; Latin-American Assistance, alternate Sats., 732-0960; Mxn.-Amn. Demos., 3rd Mon., Walter Martinez, 227-1341; NAACP, 4th Fri., 224-7636; Organizations United for East Side Development, last Tue., 824-4422; People for Peace, 2nd Th., 822-3089; Physicians for Social Responsibility, 1st Mon., Dr. Martin Batiere, 691-0375; Poor People's Coalition for Human Services, 923-3037; Residents Organized for Better and Beautiful Environmental Development (ROBBED), 3rd Tue., 226-3973; S. A. Demo. League, 1st Thu., 344-1497; S. A. Gay Alliance, last Wed., Metropolitan Commnty. Church, 102 S. Pine; Sierra Club, 3rd Tue., 341-5990; United Citizens Project Planning and Operating Corp. (federal funding), 3rd Mon., 224-4278.

### DALLAS

ACLU, 2001 McKinney, Suite 330; ACORN, 823-4580; Amn. Friends Service Cmte., 321-8643; Amnesty Intl., U.S. Group 189, Renee Berta, 915-584-4869, and Group 205, William H. Winn, 214-361-4690; Armadillo Coalition, 1st Wed., 349-1970; AMIGOS, 339-9461; Bois d'Arc Patriots, 827-2632; Brown Berets, 337-4135; Bread for the World, state, Joe Haag, 741-1991 x298, and 495-1494 (Dist. 3); Citizens' Assn. for Sound Energy (CASE), 946-9446; Clean Air Coalition, 387-2785; Comanche Peak Life Force, Wed. wkly, 337-5885;

Cmte in Solidarity with the People in El Sal-

vador (CISPES), 375-3715; Dallas Gay Alliance, 2nd Mon., 528-4233; Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), 1-370-3805; E. Dal. Nighborhood Assn., 3rd Mon., 827-1181; Frederick Douglass Voting League, 428-2407; Nighborhood Info. & Action Service, 827-2632; NOW (Dallas Cty.), 1st Mon., 742-6918; NOW (North Dal.) 3rd Tue., 690-8971; No. Lake College Solar Club, 659-5254;

Progressive Voters League, 372-8168; Sierra Club, 2nd Wed., 369-5543; Txns. for Handgun Control, 528-3985; Tx. Cmte. on Natural Resources, 352-8370; Tx. Tenants Union, 823-2733; Dallas UN Assn. (DUNA), 526-1853, 387-2785; UN Children's Fund (UNICEF cards), 241-7807; War Resisters League, 337-5885.

We acknowledge with thanks the assistance of Cordye Hall and Teri Wiss in preparing this entry.

### FORT WORTH

ACLU, 534-6883; ACORN, (11 nighborhood groups).. 924-1401, board meets mthly; Armadillo Coalition, 927-0808; Bread for the World, 924-1440 (Dist. 12), 923-4290 (Dist. 6); Citizens for Fair Utility Regulation, 478-6372; Coalition of Labor Union Women, 469-1202. Dist. 10 Demos., 2nd Sat., 535-7803; First Friday, 1st Fri., 927-0808; F.W. Tenants' Ccl., 923-5071; IMPACT, (telephone chain, works largely through progressive Protestant churches), 923-4506, meets on call; Mental Health Assn., 2nd & 4th Tue., 335-5405; NOW, 3rd Th., 336-3943; Precinct Workers Cl., 3rd Th., 429-2706; Senatorial Dist. 12 Demos., 2nd Sat. or 2nd Wed., 457-1560; Sierra Club, 3rd Wed., 923-9718; Students Against the Draft (UTA), 261-1935; Tarrant Cty. Demo Women's Club, 2nd Sat., 451-8133, 927-5169; Tx. Coalition of Black Demos (F. W. chap.), 1st Tues., 534-7737; Women's Political Caucus, 1st Wed., 336-8700.

### THE ACLU

American Civil Liberties Union chapters, not listed elsewhere: Denton, 387-5126; El Paso, 545-2990; High Plains (Amarillo), 806-373-7200; Houston, 524-5925; Lubbock, 806-765-8393; Rio Grande Valley, Bill Fulcher, 541-4874 (Brownsville); Sabine area, 713-898-0743; South Texas Project, Jim Harrington, 787-8171 (San Juan); Waco; Prof. Frank Newton, 755-3611. (At present there are no active chapters in Corpus Christi or East Texas.)

### LONE STAR ALLIANCE

The Alliance is made up of member groups opposed to nuclear power. The groups, not listed elsewhere:

Houston: Mockingbird Alliance, 747-1837.

Bryan: Brazos Society for Alternatives to Nuclear Energy, 822-1882.

Nacogdoches: Pineywoods Coalition, 218 W. Austin St.

### AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Contact persons for Amnesty International in Texas, not elsewhere listed:

Beaumont, Group 221, Karen Dweyer, 420 Longmeadow, Beaumont 77707; Regional membership coordinator, Rita Williamson, 512-441-8078 (weekends).



Photo by Roy Hamric



## Shoreacres . . . from page 10

It cannot begin until a PSD permit has been approved."

In other words, EPA said Intercontinental could start building, but could not build the polluting part of the refinery without another permit. As Allison says ruefully, "Texas has never shut down a completed plant."

Davis Ford, a consulting engineer who represented Intercontinental at the hearing, said the new facility, a small and simple refinery, would use "the best available control technology, consistent with past environmental assessments." He pointed out that the company documents filed with the EPA formed the basis for the finding of no significant impact. He also said, "To qualify as a statutory new source requires a certain level of control technology." Only uncontaminated stormwater runoff, he explained, would be discharged directly into the bayou. All other effluents would be treated first.

Dolan Dunn, chief of the permit processing section of the Corps of Engineers, which has recently issued the dredging permit for the refinery dock, said at the hearing, "The decision to issue or deny the permit will be based on an evaluation of probable impact of the proposed activity on the public interest, including economics, fish and wildlife values, flood damage prevention, land use classification, navigation, recreation, water supply, water quality, and in general the needs and welfare of the people." The

Corps determined, however, that "No known endangered species or their critical habitat will be affected."

Agnes Skelly of El Jardin, another small town on Galveston Bay south of Bayport channel, but north of Seabrook, told the bureaucrats about some effects upon one endangered species in the area, people. The refinery, she said, could cause deterioration of the community of Shoreacres, abuse of the land, danger to the waterways through collisions, spills from the increased bay traffic, and the loss of beach land because of the passage of the tankers and barges.

The Port of Houston Authority, which owns the channel land and leases it to companies, sees the development of Bayport channel as good for the community. Richard Leach of the Port Authority said, "We have invested \$23 million at Bayport. It has been reported that one-third of the economic activity of Harris County is directly or indirectly attributable to the port. It put \$3.5 billion into the local economy in 1979, providing 74,000 jobs . . . . We believe the importation of crude oil into this area is for the benefit of all citizens."

Seabrook now has annexed the area south of American Hoechst's plant and zoned that section for light industrial development. Some residents hope the zoning will at least prevent Houston Lighting and Power Company's proposed coal gasification plant from being built there. According to Allison, such a plant would bring big ocean-going barges of coal down from Illinois.

"Once a permit is issued," Allison explains, "if you don't like it, you have to sue the government. Resources required to do this are just tremendous. Individuals can't do it. It's even too much for organizations. And rarely is one overturned."

Skelly says, "Where are the governmental agencies that are supposed to protect us? They're in their offices granting still more permits."

Ultimately an entire community pays the prices of uncontrolled industrial growth, but the residents of Shoreacres, watching preliminary construction begin on Intercontinental's refinery, are bearing an excessive share of the bill. Other neighborhoods will follow. □



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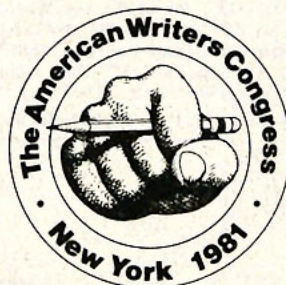
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