

Drinking in Dallas

'I'll vote for prohibition as long as I can stagger to the polls'

Associated Press

GRAND PRAIRIE — Warning: This article could drive you to drink!

That is, of course, if you live or visit in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex and are inclined toward exotic beverages from time to time.

The problem is the crazy-quilt laws governing the sale of alcoholic beverages in the metroplex, the most heavily populated area of Texas.

Seeking quick, easy answers, a visitor called upon the local office of the state regulatory agency, the Alcoholic Beverage Commission. There he discovered this sign:

"There is no reason for it . . . it's just our policy."

Among other discoveries:

— The Dallas-Fort Worth Airport came perilously near being the world's largest, driest airport.

— Texas Stadium, home of the Dallas Cowboys football club, gambled and lost that Irving would legalize the sale of alcoholic beverages.

— A motorist traveling between Dallas and Fort Worth might encounter virtually every wet, dry, booze, beer, wine and mixed drink combo imaginable.

— Drinking curfews vary from city to city, precinct to precinct.

— A dancer on Grand Prairie's infamous "strip" is "so big, she'd make a tidal wave on a water bed."

But back to the dilemma.

Because of so-called "local option" elections, cities, counties, justice precincts and incorporated cardboard communities can set their own drinking statutes.

The basic options include the sale of beer, wine or liquor — or all three — for on or off premise consumption, or they can scrap 'em all.

For instance, in large sections of Dallas and Fort Worth tippers can purchase mixed drinks in clubs, hotels and restaurants. If they prefer to drink in private, they can buy the beverage of their choice at a package store.

Leaving Fort Worth a motorist finds in Arlington that he can drink freely at any club but can not purchase liquor by the bottle. It is not uncommon to find just the opposite.

If the motorist takes a northern route, he'll traverse a totally dry area in Haltom City, find off-premise beer available in North Richland Hills and uncover a private club — only situation crossing a portion of Hurst.

Up toward Grapevine, D-FW Airport sprawls across both Dallas County and Tarrant County. The Dallas side is dry. The Fort Worth side is wet.

"All our terminals are in Tarrant County," sighed an airport spokesman. "Somehow or another, we got mixed drinks out here. It was one of our major concerns — that the world's largest airport would be dry."

If one pauses at the Cobra Club, presumably in Bedford, he finds he can purchase a membership in the private establishment for \$2 — and he gets a free drink.

Moving along toward Euless there's the Fireside Inn, freely and legally dispensing mixed beverages as one of the last watering holes before entering a rumhound's never-never land.

Then there is Irving. With a population of 115,310, Irving is reputedly the largest totally dry city in Texas, a step ahead of Abilene out west.

"The people here kinda agree with Will Rogers," a city official chuckled. "He said he'd vote for prohibition as long as he could stagger to the polls."

It is said that Dallas Cowboys executives expected Irving to vote wet when the decision was made to erect Texas Stadium in that Dallas suburb.

"Hell," said the city official, "they didn't get enough signatures on the petition to even call a liquor election."

The affluent imbibers thus watch the Cowboys on Sundays from private boxes or the Cowboys' private club.

Should one divert, meanwhile, into Grand Prairie, he finds perhaps the wettest and driest portions of the metroplex. With one notable exception, the city is dry except for an occasional private club.

That one exception is the strip, a block-long monument to revelry that lies just inside the Tarrant County line where Grand Prairie bumps East Arlington.

A visitor is confronted with 10 choices: the Foolish Pleasure, the Sadie Hawkins Club, Idle Hour, Golden Saddle, Branding Iron, Sugar Shack, Silver Saddle, Deb's, Love Bug or the End Club.

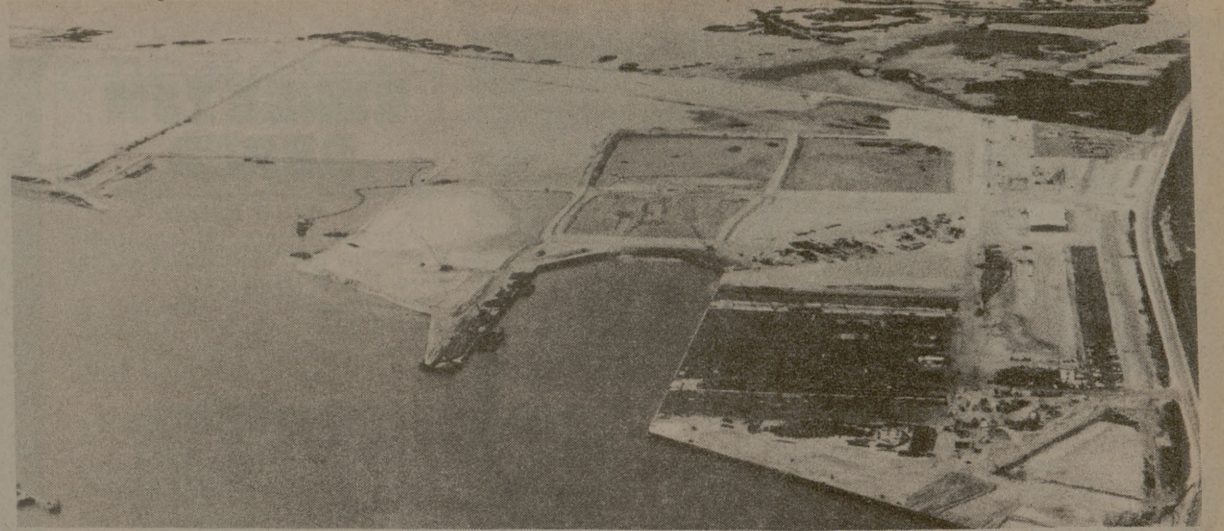
That's it.

There's nothing else on the block. No restaurants, no nothing. One can, however, cross the street and grab a beer and burger at Gart's.

And finally on to Dallas, something of an oasis itself, being surrounded by such dry areas as Irving, Grand Prairie, DeSoto, Lancaster, Richardson, Duncanville, Garland, Farmers Branch and the vast Oak Cliff section.

Big D also is renowned for its silk stocking park cities — Highland Park and University Park. The exclusive cities lie in the heart of North Dallas' bright lights. University Park is dry.

"We drink wet and vote dry," quipped one resident.



Surges cause trouble

Drill rig harbor studied

Brown & Root, Inc. started a multi-million dollar harbor along the Corpus Christi ship canal in 1975 expressly for building the huge offshore drilling rigs.

Unfortunately, they inherited some problems with the territory. Large passing ships produced surges of three to four feet in the harbor while the maximum fluctuation allowable during the loading of a rig onto the barges is one or two inches. Any more movement could cause a catastrophe and an expensive pile of junk.

Texas A&M University ocean engineers under the direction of Drs. John B. Herbich and Jack Lou took on the task of solving the loading problems.

"The project was divided into two major tasks," Lou explained. "The first concentrated on field investigations and measurements, while the second was devoted to laboratory tests."

"A student worker was stationed at the site for more than a month col-

lecting information on tides, currents, waves and surges, and ship movement," he said. "Two laboratory test series were also conducted using wave generators and model ships."

"We tried to see if there was any way we could attenuate the oscillations inside the barge slip harbor," Dr. Lou said. "Because of the long time of the oscillations the conventional breakwater just doesn't work."

"So, in order to study the problem under controlled conditions and evaluate various wave dampening methods, the laboratory tests were conducted for different types of slip entrances," he added. "Test results revealed that partial blockage of the entrance is not an effective means of reducing the surge."

Based on this study, three alternatives were recommended. These include timing of barge loading operations, complete blockage of slip entrance, and bottom pontoon support.

"The loading of the drilling rig onto the barges could be scheduled

for a period when no large ships are expected to pass," Lou pointed out. "However, information on ship passage is not always correct. Ships have arrived 15 minutes to 10 hours ahead of the announced schedule."

Observations from the harbor can only provide about 20 minutes warning for inbound ships, less than what is required to load the drilling rig.

"Complete blockage of the harbor can be achieved, but tests indicate forces due to water motion in the channel would require great force to hold the portable caisson in position," he noted.

"The solution that is believed to be failure-proof and most economical is to support the loading barge by pontoons sunk to the bottom of the harbor," Lou said. "After the off-loading is completed, the barge and pontoons can be floated by pumping out the ballast."

Keel blocks or hydraulic jacks on the pontoons will account for variations in barge depth.

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