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# The Battalion

Vol. 71 No. 45  
16 Pages

Wednesday, November 2, 1977  
College Station, Texas

News Dept. 845-2611  
Business Dept. 845-2611

## Senator stresses conservatism

By JOHNNIE HENDON  
The Republican party must take a conservative stand on controversial issues to establish itself in Texas, said Senator Walter Mengden.

Mengden, state senator from District 13 in Houston, spoke on "The Republican emergence in Texas" for Political Forum at Texas A&M Tuesday.

Mengden said the four basic issues are order, the right to work, constitutional limitations on taxation and limitations on terms of office for governors, senators and representatives.

He added that most people, even liberals, are in favor of limiting legislators' terms — except legislators.

"Republicans must overcome the 'Country Club Syndrome.' They have to get out and work where the people are," Mengden said.

Mengden said most people in Texas, according to Republican polls, favor the conservative side of most issues.

He said Republicans should favor deregulation of natural gas, the right to work laws, oral confession laws and holding on to the Panama Canal.

"There is so much apathy in the state now because people don't feel that they have a choice," Mengden said.

Mengden said the Democrats take a more politically liberal stand than the Republicans who provide a conservative

choice. However, the Republican party is afraid of controversial issues, Mengden said. Also, the Democrats get credit for Republican inspired programs, he said.

He said he outlined the anti-crime package that Governor Dolph Briscoe has suggested.

"The Republicans drop it and Gov. Briscoe picks it up," Mengden said.

Mengden also said he disagrees with the National Republican Committee, which wants to have an opening to the left.

"We're not winning anything anyway," he said, in support of his complete conservative program.

Mengden also favors the repeal of the

Equal Rights Amendment in Texas, another issue he feels the Republicans should take a conservative stand on.

Although he voted for the ERA in 1972, Mengden said he is afraid of what the federal courts will do on issues such as homosexual marriages and women in combat.

"I've always introduced a bill that wouldn't allow homosexuals to be a recognized entity on a campus," said Mengden, "but I can't get it passed yet."

He said these issues should not be decided by judges in New York or Washington, where they cannot be touched by the people being affected.

"I think we've had as much help from

government as we can stand," added Mengden.

Mengden is called "Mad Dog" because he is reported to howl and bark when approaching the microphone during floor debate.

He was also a member of the "Dirty Thirty" who opposed the leadership of Texas House Speaker Gus Mutscher.

Mengden said, "It's alleged that when the 30 votes lit up in front of Mutscher against his plan, he said 'Those thirty dirty expletive deleted!'"

Mengden served for two years in the House of Representatives before his election to the Senate in 1972 and reelection in 1976.



Walter Mengden . . .  
. . . Republicans afraid of 'hot' issues



"Slip, Slosh, Splish, Splash . . ."

A group of Texas A&M students scurry to class Tuesday after a cold front brought rain to the area.

## Residents apprehensive about bonfire

By MARK POWER  
Each year's bonfire provides a season of competition and a night of inspiration for thousands of Texas A&M students. But for some College Station residents and fire control officials, the chill winds of late November bring apprehension of the fire

that could wipe out a neighborhood. "All it would take for us to be wiped out would be one burning tree," said Ed Miller, resident in the area directly south of Jersey street. "The fire wouldn't go house to house, it would travel tree to tree and roast everybody."

Ed and Norma Miller are owners and operators of Bi-City Hobby-Craft, a shop in downtown Bryan. The Miller home is located due south of the bonfire site, at the corner of Guernsey and Welch.

Since the fire has been moved to the field behind Duncan Hall, sparks from the 80-foot-high flames have blown across Jersey street and threatened to start fires all over that neighborhood, according to people in that neighborhood.

"Any strong wind blows sparks right over the house," says Norma Miller. "Last time we had a norther blow through on bonfire night, the sky looked like a meteor shower."

Burning embers carried aloft by the bonfire draft may worry residents, but the Millers fear firetrucks could not navigate the narrow streets during bonfire because of the parking problem.

"People park bumper-to-bumper on both sides of our street and even other cars have a hard time getting through," said Ed Miller.

Streets in the area south of campus between Dexter and Wellborn are mostly eight feet wide. Cars are generally about six feet wide. If cars park along both sides of the easement, right-of-way becomes non-existent.

Fire officials share the concern of local residents in the "fire path" downwind of the bonfire. "We man everything we have to try and provide security for the city," said College station Fire Marshall Harry Davis. "We keep moving about and chasing sparks almost 10 blocks at the peak of the fire."

Each year the College Station Fire Department blocks off streets for emergency access to the area south of the bonfire in the event of a fire. Davis said roadblocks are established to keep parking to a

minimum and to assure entry for fire vehicles.

"Officers at the roadblocks are issued phone books to check identities of drivers wanting to park," Davis said.

The phone book addresses are used to check out stories of drivers claiming to live in the area, Davis explained.

"We have to keep parking to a minimum and the trucks have to keep moving or drivers will box them in," Davis said. "Moving around is purely in self-defense."

The fire department has all of the city staff on call to fight potential fires and man roadblocks. Staff are kept on call and on-duty until midnight or after the center pole falls.

Estimates on the cost of bonfire protection vary, and Councilman Gary Halter places the figure at \$2,500.

"The fire is very important to the community," said Halter. "We will spend anything necessary to protect those people, probably more than last year."

Davis said the manpower required will cost nearly \$500, but did not know what any additional costs would be.

Fires have been a real threat to the neighborhood. In 1964 a number of small roof blazes broke out and there was one major 2 alarm house fire. Last year, Duncan Hall roof was almost destroyed by sparks.

If a north wind lofts sparks across Jersey street this year, the dry weather patterns of late October and early November turn trees into excellent tinder. Records at the Texas A&M University Weather Station show that the 30 days prior to bonfire are traditionally dry spells, and that northerly winds have dominated on bonfire night.

The fire department has little comforting advice for residents south of the bonfire. Davis advises residents to follow all

the tips provided in the fire department bulletin that is issued to the community prior to bonfire.

"Be sure to clean your roofline and gutters bonfire to keep them from debris," said Davis. "Keep a garden hose handy to extinguish sparks and try to wet the roof if it is wooden shingles."

## First Ladies celebrate century-old friendship

EL PASO — Rosalynn Carter and Carmen Romano de Lopez Portillo will mark the amicable end of a bitter boundary dispute Thursday by dramatizing on the banks of the languid Rio Grande the friendly ties between the United States and Mexico.

Mrs. Carter and Mrs. Lopez Portillo, wife of Mexico's president, will meet at noon on the Bridge of the Americas before proceeding to ceremonies at the Chamizal park and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

The festivities in the riverside memorial celebrate the 10th anniversary of the creation of the park, which sits on territory once hotly disputed between the U.S. and Mexico.

The scrap of land, known as the Chamizal, was originally part of Mexico but ended up on the American side when the muddy river changed its course. The parties reached a settlement to return the 437 acres to Mexico by diverting the Rio Grande down a concrete-lined canal.

After speaking at the Chamizal ceremonies, the first ladies will visit the cul-

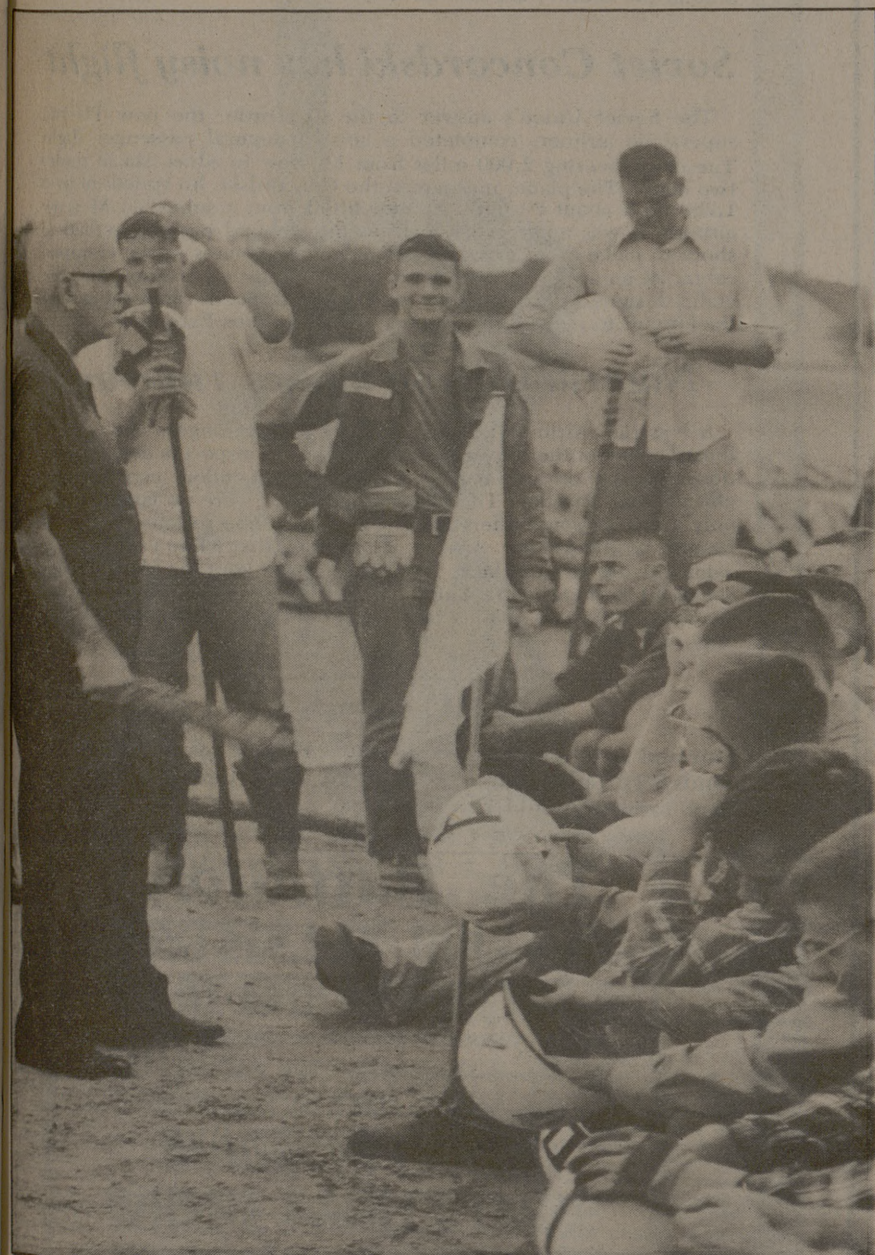
tural center in Juarez. Mrs. Lopez Portillo will brief Mrs. Carter and her party on cultural, educational and economic development plans for the border area.

Mrs. Lopez Portillo also plans to give a luncheon in honor of Mrs. Carter at the Fiesta Real Hotel, featuring a Mexican ballet.

Afterward, they will visit the Pronaf cultural center for dedication of the new "Esto es Mexico (this is Mexico)," an exhibit of artistic treasures from all corners of the Republic of Mexico.

Mrs. Carter and Mrs. Lopez Portillo will cross the border to the Chamizal National Memorial in El Paso. Mrs. Carter will host a cultural festival and reception honoring Mrs. Lopez Portillo there.

Among the high ranking dignitaries from the U.S. participating in the events are Assistant Secretary of State Terence Todman, U.S. Ambassador Patrick J. Lukey, Assistant Secretary of Commerce Fabian Chavez, Grace Olivarez, Community Services Administration director, and Joseph Duffey, chairman of the National Endowment of Humanities.



Battalion photo by Paige Beasley

The Aggie bonfire is constructed each year behind Duncan dining hall on the A&M campus. But the work begins at the cutting area, where men gather logs for the project. Col. James R. Woodall (left) talks to cadets during a rest period Sunday. Woodall is commandant of the Corps of Cadets.

## Judge resigns in 'Son of Sam' trial

NEW YORK — The judge assigned to handle the Son of Sam murder trial has stepped out of the case because of criticism, by the legal community, of his pretrial comments to the news media.

"I asked to be relieved and they relieved me," State Supreme Court Justice John R. Starkey said Tuesday.

Starkey's decision to pull out was the latest in a string of bizarre incidents that have marked the case since the massive manhunt for the killer of six young men and women in New York's lovers' lanes ended with the arrest of a suspect Aug. 10. Several of those incidents involved Starkey's handling of the case.

They included:  
• Starkey's decision to allow the broadcast media to play back on the air, tapes of talks between a court-appointed psychiatrist and the man accused in the "Son of Sam" killings, David Berkowitz. Starkey later told the New York Daily News he was sorry he released the tapes.

• Berkowitz, claim during sanity hearings he was ordered to kill by evil demons, creatures who spoke to him through the howling of a neighbor's dog.  
• An interview with the New York Post in which Starkey said he would not accept a guilty plea from Berkowitz if the suspect continued to insist he was driven to murder by demons.

• Earlier claims by a literary agent that he had 10 hours of taped conversations with Berkowitz. Starkey, following an investigation of his own, determined those tapes did not exist.

Some legal observers felt several of Starkey's actions — particularly the airing of the tapes — could provide grounds for reversal on appeal should Berkowitz be convicted.

Starkey ruled last week that Berkowitz was mentally competent to stand trial for the July 31 slaying of Stacey Moskowitz, the last victim in the case.

The "Son of Sam" case baffled New York's Police Department — a force larger than the armies of 95 per cent of the member nations of the United Nations — for more than a year.

It began in the shadows of lovers' lanes throughout the city and quickly drew worldwide attention. Some said the manhunt for "Son of Sam" eclipsed the searches for the Boston Strangler and London's Jack the Ripper.

The court's administrative judge, Charles R. Rubin, said Justice Joseph Corso would succeed Starkey in presiding over Berkowitz' trial.

Rubin said in a statement that Starkey "has decided that the best interest of all concerned would be served if he were to be relieved of his assignment in this case. Accordingly, his request has been granted."

Starkey, 71, refused to comment further on the matter.