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Plethora of poultry

Turkeys aren't the national bird, despite Ben Franklin's wishes. But they have survived better than the symbol that was picked, and those who wish to

gobble a wild turkey on Thanksgiving will find the pickings plentiful this year, state game commissions say. See page 7.

Consol school head fired; board still pays \$54,400

By DOUG GRAHAM
Battalion Staff

Fred Hopson, superintendent of the A&M Consolidated Independent School District, will be looking for a new job June 30, 1979.

But he will be \$54,400 richer when he does.

The A&M Consolidated school board terminated his old contract and wrote a new one Monday night in closed executive session.

It agreed to pay Hopson \$34,400 for salary and \$20,000 damages for terminating his contract two years early. The school district will also provide \$2,500 in relocation expenses should Hopson move.

Last year the board voted to extend Hopson's contract one additional year, to June 30, 1981.

Hopson's firing was announced by School Board President Bruce Robeck at a specially called press conference Tuesday morning. Robeck said that due to disagreements "concerning educational policy and policy implementation," the district decided to terminate Hopson's contract.

Hopson, who was present at the press conference, gave no moor his firing, saying only that he would work to make the administrative change a smooth one.

No one would say why Hopson's contract was terminated.

Elliot Bray, board vice president, said that in the best interest of the school district the board would not discuss the matter.

Robeck said the board wanted to avoid possible slander from discussing personnel matters in public.

Other officials of the school district were

also reluctant to talk, although some wondered why Hopson had been fired.

Many expressed surprise at the announcement. "We cannot, individually or as a board, criticize the administration," Robeck said.

He said the board's legal counsel, Jack Woods, advised the board to remain silent on why the contract was ended. "The board does not have the privilege, or immunity, to discuss personnel matters like the state legislature or Congress does," Robeck said.

Robeck said the board decided that a good working relationship was of such immediate importance that the costly termination of Hopson's contract was justified.

"It is critical that a board and the superintendent be able to work together in complete harmony," he said. "And it is better for both to find alternatives where there is not complete harmony."

Robeck said he wished the board could further explain the termination of Hopson's contract to the public since the taxpayers will be paying that action's \$54,400 cost.

"It is a Catch 22 situation and we're caught right in the middle of it," he said. "We have to make our decisions and let them stand on the basis of their own merits and demerits, and that puts us in a squeeze, obviously."

"Ultimately, we may have to take what criticisms may come from not dragging the

laundry out," he said. Robeck said the board will not offer an explanation for Hopson's firing at a later date, although many school officials Tuesday anticipated such a meeting.

"My preference would be free discussion as a matter of public policy to debate these questions," Robeck said. "I think it is a serious public policy problem that public officials are so burdened by these (legal) restraints."

Robeck said that five years is about average tenure for school superintendents, adding that Pon's dismissal after four and one-half years is not unusual.

Hopson has been with the school district since 1960, and has served as superintendent since 1974.

Feds OK Brazos County reapportionment plan

By SCOTT PENDLETON
Battalion Staff

The U.S. Department of Justice has withdrawn its letter objecting to last spring's reapportionment of Brazos County.

That objection was the cause of action for a suit that challenged the reapportionment plan and prevented three of the Nov. 7 county elections from being certified.

The current Brazos County commissioners and certain other county officials are the defendants in the suit. The commissioners redrew the county precinct lines to balance the population among the four precincts.

Steve Garza, Steve Gongora and Jesse Flores filed the suit in August, when they learned that the Justice Department had objected to the reapportionment plan as possibly diluting the minority vote in violation of the Voting Rights Act. The three plaintiffs are Mexican-American residents of Brazos County.

Their lawyer, Joaquin Avila, Tuesday said that the plaintiffs would have to dismiss the objection as their cause of action. Avila, who works for the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), said that the plaintiffs may drop the suit if there is an alternative.

"Our ultimate objective is a new reapportionment (of Brazos County)," he said. Avila said he will contact the defendants' lawyer next week to investigate the possibility of a settlement out of court.

If the plaintiffs want to continue the

suit, Avila said, they can do so by amending their current letter of complaint. That way they wouldn't have to refile the suit.

Now that the Justice Department has withdrawn its objection, the suit would no longer be an administrative proceeding based on the Voting Rights Act, Avila said. Instead, it would be a "constitutional attack" on the reapportionment plan in federal court.

The federal court in Houston, where the suit was filed, had served only to enforce the Justice Department's letter of objection, Avila said. But if the plaintiffs con-

tinue without that objection, he said, the judge will decide the suit's outcome.

The suit would still argue that the minority vote was diluted, Avila said.

Avila told his clients Monday that he received a form letter from the Justice Department. The letter said that the objection was withdrawn "based on new information," Avila said. The letter did not give more specific reasons.

Although Avila was not expecting the objection to be withdrawn, he said that is not unusual for the Justice Department. And, he said, the department does not usually state its reasons in detail.

No sellout for TCU; tickets still available

The Aggie football team, accustomed to playing in front of a sold-out Kyle Field, may see many empty seats Saturday.

Eulata Miller, athletic ticket manager, said only 13,000 tickets for the game with Texas Christian University had been drawn by Tuesday.

She said 11,000 to 12,000 tickets are usually drawn on senior day alone.

Because of the Thanksgiving holiday, seniors were to pick up their tickets last Thursday, juniors on Friday, sophomores on Monday, and freshmen on Tuesday. Miller said many students did not know

about the date change on the ticket draw.

She said the freshmen that picked up their tickets today were definitely getting better seats than they usually would.

Seventeen hundred tickets were picked up Tuesday, Miller said.

Miller said she could not estimate how large the crowd would be at the game. "It is a totally new experience. We have never played TCU on a Thanksgiving weekend before, so we have no way to estimate the number."

Today is the last day to pick up tickets for Saturday's 1:30 p.m. game.



Battalion photo by Lee Roy Leschper Jr.

It's fall, all right

At least one Aggie hunter was successful during Texas' deer season opening weekend. This fresh set of whitetail deer antlers was hanging outside a second story window of Aston Hall. Texas has the largest herd of whitetail deer, an estimated 3.3 million. The season opened Saturday.

State illegal food stamp use may involve Brazos County

By JAIME AITKEN
Battalion City Editor

Investigators with the Texas Department of Human Resources have completed the first phase of a state-wide crackdown on illegal food stamp trafficking and one case is expected to be filed in Brazos County.

DHR officials said Tuesday that 16 complaints are being filed with prosecutors in central Texas counties.

The case involving a Brazos County resident has yet to be filed with Brazos County District Attorney Travis Bryan III, a spokesman with the local DHR office Tuesday the complaint should be filed

by the end of the week.

Twelve of the complaints are classified as felonies, which could bring as much as 10 years in prison upon conviction.

The name of the Brazos County suspect has not been released, and it is not known whether the case is one of the 12 felonies.

Seven persons were arrested in Waco Tuesday in connection with the food stamp abuse. Five complaints are expected to be filed in Travis County, two in Bell County, and one in Williamson County, in addition to the Brazos County case.

Bryan Chenault, DHR supervisor of investigations, said those being sought have illegally purchased food stamps from qual-

ified recipients for less than face value and cashed the stamps at full value at local banks and grocery stores.

Qualified food stamp recipients use the stamps for grocery purchases. Grocers receive government reimbursement for the stamps.

Chenault said the illegal purchases were made by a barber, a liquor store owner, a college instructor, and various merchants, including grocers. It is against the law to buy or sell food stamps.

A DHR spokesman in Waco said Tuesday that the college instructor is from Waco.

Children discover therapy of horses

By LIZ BAILEY
Battalion Reporter

Horses are strong medicine. That's what some handicapped children and members of the Texas A&M Horsemen's Association have discovered.

The first three Saturdays of this month, Horsemen's Association members taught 23 mentally and physically handicapped students basic horsemanship skills as part of the TAMU Horsemen's Association Special Students Riding Clinic.

The students, from ages 7 to 16, were from the Bryan-College Station area.

Doug Householder, staff adviser to the Horsemen's Association and also horse specialist with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, said he got the idea for a riding school here after taking part in a similar school sponsored by the Equestrian 4-H Club in Brazos County.

Karl Little, student coordinator of the program and a member of the Horsemen's Association, said the school's purpose was also to help the students improve their balance, coordination and develop confidence and muscle strength. "I guess horsemanship was just our way to do it," he said.

The students came to a one and one-half hour session at the Texas A&M University Horse Center each Saturday morning during the first three weeks of November.

They were divided by age into two groups. Those from 7 to 12 years old rode from 8:30 a.m. until 10 a.m.; 13 to 16-year-olds rode from 10:30 a.m. until noon.

Each riding student was assigned a group of three instructors, all from the Horsemen's Association.

Basic grooming techniques, how to stop, back and turn horses, trotting and relay races were all part of the sessions.

During the races, designed to

make the students think while riding, the students had to walk their horses over poles on the ground and walk or trot around several upright poles.

Throughout the races, students and instructors alike cheered for their teams.

At the end of each riding session, students unsaddled and groomed the horses. By the end of the third session, most of the students were almost able to saddle and bridle their own horses.

T-shirts were presented the third day to signify their completion of the riding school.

Householder said instruction was individualized.

The goal of the clinic, Little said, was to teach riding and trotting on a horse. But some were successfully loping their horses on the third day.

Many of the instructors, Householder said, called their students frequently during the week and some brought them to the sessions. One instructor said one of her students asked if his horse was a boy or girl horse. When she stooped down to look, he burst out laughing.

A participant asked her instructor if horses ears were cleaned with Q-tips.

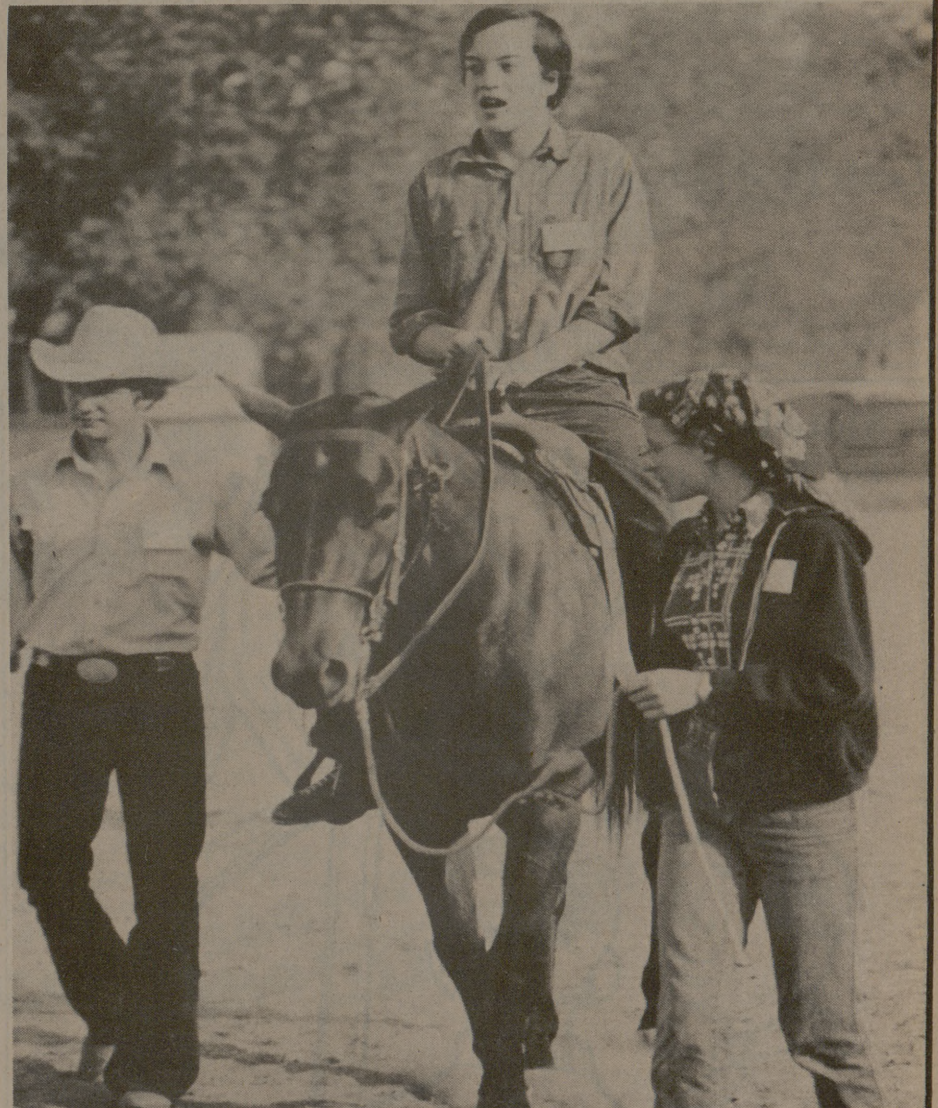
Householder said most of the students' parents were very enthusiastic.

Donald Farris, Professor of Agricultural Economics, said his son took part in the clinic and "he thoroughly enjoyed it."

"It was a nice way to spend three Saturday mornings," Farris said.

He said he was impressed with the Horsemen's Association members because they had their horses and were ready to go at 8 o'clock. "I have some kids that can't make it to class by 11 o'clock," he said.

Householder said the future of the riding school is not yet certain, but there may be another one next spring.



Andrew Clark, 16, participated in the TAMU Horsemen's Association Special Students Riding Clinic for three weekends this month. Larry Nausle, left, and Kathy Wilson of the Horsemen's Association were two of Andrew's three instructors.

Battalion photo by Liz Bailey

Person says members tricked into suicide

United Press International
GEORGETOWN, Guyana — Steven Jones, 19, said Tuesday he believed his father the Rev. Jim Jones had tricked the cult members of his Peoples Temple into mass suicide by telling them it was only a "drill" when he offered them a bottle of grape-flavored Kool-Aid laced with cyanide.

Guyanese police and army troops said they had found the bodies of 409 men, women and children sprawled through the Jonestown jungle commune where they died alongside each other in a scene of carnage.

They found their pet cats and dogs were dead. Police said they had found 36 survivors of the surrounding jungle and in Georgetown as well as Jonestown and that they were still searching for some 600 members who disappeared into the bush. It was not known whether they were dead or alive.

See related story, page 6.

He said his father, a onetime city planning official in San Francisco, had not been well lately and had been taking drugs. He had turned him into a paranoid. He did not know what kind of drugs his father was taking.

"I hated him," Steven told newsmen in Georgetown. "He became a Fascist. He proved everything that we lived and believed for. He has discredited socialism."

Steven Jones said his father's followers most likely been tricked into suicide because it was a "drill." He confirmed reports of "white night" suicide drills in which simulated poison was drunk by the members as proof of loyalty and brav-

U.S. team aided by Guyanese authorities and some survivors were trying today to identify the victims. They said the victims were Americans from California with the exception of seven Guyanese adopted children. Most of them were in the Jonestown commune. A few were dead by fanatics at the Jonestown