

Blind girl tries to be 'sighted'

United Press International
ARLINGTON — Donna Mack, 16, knows sighted people have no need to compete in her sightless world so she makes light of her blindness and works at being "as sighted as possible."
"I'm blind," she said after winning the regional University Interscholastic League poetry interpretation contest last month at Denton. "Big deal."
The Arlington high school senior travels to Austin today for the state semi-finals of the contest. As in the regional contest, she will read her entry in braille.
She entered her first poetry interpretation contest this academic year and her efforts to overcome her handicap cost her.
She had seated herself front row center so she had only to stand up

and turn around to speak — without needing her cane. Some of the judges failed to realize she was reading braille and thought she had memorized her poem, illegal under contest rules.
"Now I have someone lead me in so the judges can see I am blind and there won't be any questions. I don't want to be penalized," she said.
Born two months premature with poor vision, she developed glaucoma in her right eye at age 7 and lost sight in that eye. Five years ago, the retina in her left eye began to detach and she lost her remaining sight.
"I'm still not totally adjusted (to being blind)," she said in an interview Wednesday.
She credits her parents with helping her adjust.

"My parents more or less said 'This is the world you're going to live in, so live in it,'" she said.
The first year after she lost all her sight was the most difficult.
"When the majority of my sight left, my eye contact got worse. That summer was the pits. I cried a lot. I kept asking 'God, why me?'"
Now, however, she can joke about her blindness and often does to put others at ease.
"People are afraid they're going to hurt me. A lot of stereotyped blind people haven't been exposed as much (to sighted people). Some blind people won't try to compete in a sighted world, but I try to be as sighted as possible."
"They can't conform to me, so I want to be as near to what most people are as I can."

Clements gives home loan interest hike OK

United Press International
AUSTIN — Gov. Bill Clements announced Thursday he will reverse an earlier position and approve legislation permitting interest rates on home mortgage loans in Texas to soar above the current 10 percent limit, but said he will insist on provisions tying the rate to a federal economic indicator.
Clements insisted, however, that any bill increasing the interest ceiling have a cap that would prevent rates from going higher than 12 percent, and recommended that the Legislature approve a floating rate of 2 percent higher than the interest rate on 10-year U.S. Treasury Bonds.
He said the bond rate today is 9.31 percent, meaning under his proposed legislation home mortgage

interest rates in Texas could immediately jump to 11.31 percent.
Clements also said he wanted a provision allowing people to refinance without penalty if interest rates go down. The governor earlier had indicated he would veto any bill raising the interest ceiling above 10 percent, but announced last week he would reconsider that stand in view of an announcement by the Federal National Mortgage Association that it would restrict its purchase of VA and FHA loans in Texas.
He said his decision to allow an increase in the home mortgage interest rates was based on three factors — the FNMA decision to curtail purchase of VA and FHA mortgages in Texas, concern that Texans be able to purchase homes

without delays or complications imposed by the FNMA rulings and the danger of unemployment and damage to the state's economy that could result from a drastic slowdown in the housing industry.
Clements said he had discussed the idea of a floating interest ceiling with Attorney General Mark White, and White had found no constitutional problems with such a law.
Clements' announcement is expected to prompt quick movement in the House and Senate on the interest rate legislation, which has been stalled for more than two months.
But strong opposition still exists to any increase in the interest ceiling, and a number of senators are expected to filibuster Sen. Bill Meier's, D-Eulesen, proposal.

Trade talks 'productive'

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Japanese Prime Minister Masayoshi Ohira headed Thursday for Capitol Hill to brief members of Congress on the trade talks President Carter predicted will lead to an accord within a few months.
The Japanese leader scheduled morning meetings in the House and afternoon discussions in the Senate on the last full day of his visit to Washington.
"We have made tremendous progress," Carter told guests at a state dinner for Ohira Wednesday, at the end of a day of intensive talks between the two leaders.
Carter described Wednesday's discussions as "one of the most productive days of my life" and said the trade problems dividing the two nations "are well on the way to being solved."
"I can't think of any predictable problem that could separate us for more than a few months," he said.

In reply, Ohira expressed eagerness "to work to make the U.S.-Japan partnership productive for more stable peace and greater prosperity."
The two nations have been at odds for years over Japanese protectionist policies that have contributed to a massive American trade deficit.
Earlier, Carter and Ohira issued a joint communique calling for a more productive American-Japanese partnership in the 1980's with a new approach to solving the trade problems between the two nations.
The two leaders said America's billion-dollar trade deficits with Japan "were not appropriate in existing international circumstances."
Ohira pledged "to open Japan's markets to foreign goods, particularly manufactured goods" — the major issue in dispute.
He indicated Japan would try to stimulate future economic growth

through stepped-up domestic demand — an apparent switch from Tokyo's overwhelming past reliance on increasing exports.
Carter promised to reduce the U.S. rate of inflation, restrain oil imports, promote American exports and reduce the trade deficit.
Carter and Ohira completed their official talks in only one day, capping the discussions with an unusual barbecue dinner on the roof of the West Wing of the White House.
Meanwhile, Henry Owens, a presidential economic aide, reported a resumption of U.S.-Japanese technical talks abruptly broken off last week by Robert Strauss, Carter's special trade representative.
Strauss ended the talks when Japan adamantly refused to let foreign firms bid on about \$600 million in government contracts, most with the Nippon Telephone & Telegraph Co.

Veto of strip-mining bill sought

United Press International
AUSTIN — A spokesman for an environmental group Thursday said a proposed House strip-mining bill will result in the loss of a million acres of Texas prime farmland.
Edward Fritz, speaking for the Texas Committee on Natural Resources, said 62 counties will be despoiled if Gov. Bill Clements does not veto the Texas Surface Coal Mining and Reclamation Act already passed by the House and Senate.
"These counties comprise the lig-

nite belt, mainly from Texarkana southwest to the Rio Grande and from Marshall south to Milan, where 1 million of the acres likely to be strip-mined are prime farmland or potential prime farmland — a massive hunk of Texas' productivity," Fritz said.
Fritz explained that the act will allow strip-mining companies to pile up soil beside the trenches as they dig for coal, then shove it back into the trenches in bulk, thus mixing

the topsoil into deeper layers.
"Topsoil contains the micro-organisms essential to fertile production of crops," Fritz said. "These organisms cannot survive when buried deep. It takes up to 100 years or more to develop topsoil."
He added that weakened federal regulations on strip-mining have jeopardized the topsoil in the entire United States, and that Texas' laws are even weaker.
Fritz also attacked other legislation which he described as anti-environment, claiming that special interest groups are frustrating environmental issues this session.
Fritz said the beverage container deposit bill has been "bottled up" by the soft-drink and liquor industry. He said the bill would help eliminate litter, save energy and natural resources.
The bill would require that consumers pay 5 cents deposit on all beverage containers, which would be repaid when the bottle or can is returned.
A panel for the Texas Resources and Environmental Council, composed of labor and industry leaders, testified before the House Liquor Regulation Committee Wednesday that the bill would not solve litter problems and would virtually eliminate aluminum recycling programs in Texas.

Britain to switch to liquified coal

United Press International
LONDON — "What are you going to do when the well runs dry?" asked Britain's Undersecretary for Energy Alex Eadie. "We've made up our minds. It's coal."
When the Middle East and North Sea oil wells pump no more — and sooner or later that is going to happen — Britain plans to run its cars, power its factories and produce its petrochemicals with the fuel that first made it an industrial giant: coal.
Not ordinary coal, but coal turned into crude oil.
"Coal is not just a lump of black stuff you throw on the fire," said Keith Beeston, spokesman for the British National Coal Board (NCB). "Once you liquify coal, what you've actually got is oil."
After coal is in liquid form, said Beeston, "you can make virtually everything from it that you can make from oil with the existing oil refining techniques."
The British government recently granted the NCB, which runs the coal industry, nearly \$2 million to design two plants for extracting oil from coal.
Although Britain hopes to be energy self-sufficient by 1980 — using North Sea oil and gas, coal, and atomic energy — it expects to remain so for only a decade.
By the 1990s, experts expect oil to be very expensive and scarce. Britain's North Sea reserves will be declining and it will have to limit petroleum to uses like motor transport.
At that point, the British government wants to be ready to switch gradually from an oil-based petrochemical industry to one based on liquified coal.
"The oil companies are investing in coal as fast as they can," said Beeston. They realize that their existing crude oil is limited in quantity and subject to all sorts of political uncertainties.
Britain is looking at two methods for turning coal to oil, both of which have successfully produced gasoline and other petrochemicals in laboratory tests at the NCB research center in Cheltenham.
Using the "liquid solvent extraction" technique, a hot chemical solvent is poured over coal, dissolving it into a tarry liquid. Hydrogen is added and it is then refined.
In the "gas solvent extraction" method, coal is dissolved by exposing it to a very hot compressed gas. Various stages of processing produce a tar-like solution which is hydrogenated and refined.
The major drawback with both methods is price. A major coal refinery would cost about \$3 billion to build. Coal Board officials estimate a barrel of oil from such a refinery would cost about \$26, compared with the OPEC price of about \$13 a barrel.

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