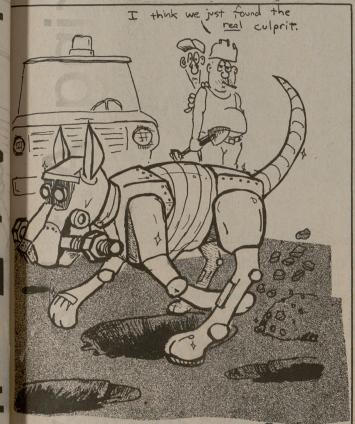
Wet weather equals pothole problems

merica's road system is becombadly blemished. Cracks and oles are multiplying rapidly, ing once-smooth streets and ways to resemble obstacle ses for motorists who swerve sway in order to keep from king the front end of their cars

out of alignment.

All across the country, bad winter weather has combined with a shortage of funds to restrict road maintenance efforts. The result is a growing backlog of repair work that is causing headaches for transportation offi-

"It's a situation everybody is facing state and local governments all



Politics, ping pong, protests predominate in Pyongyang there is nothing we can do when the

decision is made one week before the

championships begin," Evans com-

mented. "We believe it is in the best

interest of the sport to hold the

championships, although it is hard

on those countries which are

United Press International ONGYANG, North Korea

tennis, the game that spawned ng-Pong diplomacy" between na and the West eight years ago, become a political battleground, he 35th World Table Tennis appionships opened in this North an capital April 25. But when l banners were paraded around impressive 20,000 capacity m, four had no players behind and South Korean and Israel ot even rate a showing.

host country refused South is entry, claiming the Interna-Table Tennis Federation had ed to a unified Korean team. Iswas rejected on security

etnam also failed to show, havent word from Hanoi that it d not take part in these biennial pionships because of "Chinese

ITTF upheld North Korea's on to exclude South Korea and although the federation presi-Roy Evans in his opening adtermed it "regrettable.

en European countries towith the United States signed er of protest Wednesday night, one threatened to withdraw.

n's exclusion from the 1978 treal Olympics highlighted the sport has succumbed to politics, table tennis is no exception.

Te try to keep politics out, but

Figures released by the Department of Transportation show that it would take \$21.8 billion a year through 1990 to keep American highways at the same level of quality that existed in 1975. That's twice the

amount spent in 1978. Further, Berard says that between November and April the number of potholes in roads nationwide increased by an estimated 93 million. Approximately 354 are forming

every minute. Opinions differ on the quality of the roads in this area. Bob Gallaway, head of the highway materials division at the Texas Transportation Institute, calls them "not very good."

Gerald Lambert, head of transportation for the Bryan School District, says the roads "shake our buses to pieces." He mentions that window units, starter, motors and battery boxes have been known to fall out of buses at times.

On the other hand, John Hudson, president of of Traffic Engineers, Inc., a Houston consulting firm, says the roads in this area are better than the ones in most Texas counties.

Brazos County road authorities, along with those in Bryan and College Station admit they are falling behind in the race to keep things in

"Weather is hurting us badly," says Jack Cornish, director of public works in Bryan.

Bryan City Engineer Holland Winder says the roads the last three winters have been unusually moist. Consequently, repair crews have been unable to fill potholes as soon as they appear. That delay adds to the

'A pothole is like a cancer," says George Ford, director of public works for College Station. "If you don't treat it it's going to keep grow-

ing."
Not only does the weather inhibit repair work, moisture itself is the major cause of potholes. When water enters a crack in the road it soon drips down into the subbase. Once there, it doesn't dry - even when the sun comes out. Instead, it causes deterioration that combines with the bouncing of traffic on the pavement

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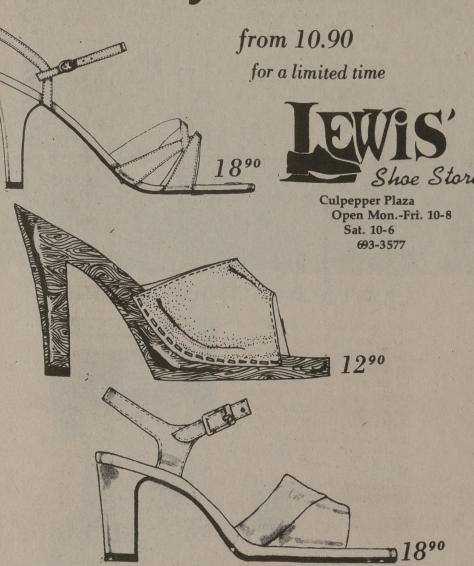
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to create a pothole. Winder says, however, "We don't have potholes at all compared to what they have in the northern part of the country.

Traffic volume is another major cause of road decay. In 1978 Americans drove more than 1.5 trillion miles. The total has been increasing at an estimated rate of 4.5 percent a

Berard says, "Nine times out of 10 you'll find local or county roads built for traffic conditions that existed before World War II.'

Because of that, communities enjoying rapid population growth often have maintenance problems.

That will hurt you worse than anything," Cornish says of Brazos County's rapid growth. The population grew 60 percent between 1970-

Adds Gallaway, "I doubt if any-body anticipated the growth in traffic we've had in the last 25 years.

Something else hurting local governments is a shortage of road construction and maintenance funds.

'The funds that you have for operation today are being eaten by inflationary rises that are far greater than taxation has risen," says County Commissioner Walter Wilcox. "You can't help but agree that the state of the roads is getting worse and

He adds: "The general public has It soon might be, however. Under probably seen the best era of roads in a new program, the Texas State De-

roads has more than doubled in the local bridges.

Although he says funding is not a problem for College Station right now, Ford, too, is apprehensive about the future. "I don't think the era of good roads is gone, but the thing that is going to affect us in the future is the energy crunch," he

In addition to road deterioration, the county government is also facing problems with several bridges in the

There have been a number of bridge failures in the last year caused by oil trucks going over weak bridges

near Kurten, an oil drilling area.

Moreover, Hudson's firm did a study of county roads and features related to traffic safety and found several bridges with structural de-

In its report to the county presented in September, the firm recommended that a bridge replacement program be started. It also warned that recent bridge failures would only be the beginning if there was not continuous inspection for bridge damage done by trucks with large loads.

Wilcox says each commissioner is keeping watch on the bridges in his precinct and that money for a large scale bridge replacement program is not available now

It soon might be, however. Under this country. Unless something dras- partment of Highways and Public tic happens, there is not going to be Transportation will inventory, in-enough money in the future to ex- spect and appraise bridges on all pand and maintain roads as we have public roads, not just state highways. In addition, a certain percentage of Just how expensive has road federal highway funds regularly maintenance become? Berard says earmarked for bridge replacement or the cost of building and maintaining repair will now be available for fixing

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