

School balks at task

IRVING — School district officials Wednesday said it was not within their realm of educational responsibility or authority to provide a 15-year-old special education student with regular catheterizations.

Attorney Craig Enoch, representing the family of the girl identified as Amber T., said an appeal would be filed with the state Board of Education Saturday in Austin.

Amber, who walks with the aid of braces, was born with spinal bifida, a condition in which the nervous system is not completely enclosed. The defect resulted in a neurogenic bladder that requires catheterizations every three hours to facilitate urination.

The girl's parents started her in school under an Irving Independent School District program that allows enrollment for handicapped students but have requested the dis-

trict provide personnel to perform the catheterizations.

Amber was allowed to begin school this year and a teacher, teacher's aide or therapist has been administering the catheterizations.

"I think the real issue is a question of whether a school district should be required to maintain the health of a child...and risk it," said Dr. John Townley, superintendent of schools.

"The parents would like the school district to provide personnel to make her urinate. Our position is that the school district shouldn't have to treat her unless it is for educational purposes. An example of treatment for educational purposes would be speech therapy.

"We're also concerned about the child's health. Catheterization can result in serious injury. And we're shy of being held legally responsible for malpractice from medical treat-

ment."

Townley said the school district would not object to the girl's family hiring a nurse to administer the catheters.

Enoch said his appeal is based on laws that dictate a child is in need of special education, there may come a time when schools will have to provide a related service.

"The issue is what's the extent of the related service to be provided the child," Enoch said.

He said a Kansas City, Mo., school was ordered to provide catheterization for a disabled student and schools in nearby Dallas provided them without legal confrontations.

In earlier proceedings, the Irving school district said it would not provide catheterizations but a hearing officer overruled the decision. The state commissioner of education upheld that ruling.

Birds returning to beaches

Coastal oil slick improves

CORPUS CHRISTI — Although an 80-mile finger of light oil sheen moved near the Texas Coast Wednesday, the Coast Guard said counts of oil on and near shore had increased dramatically and large numbers of birds were returning to beaches.

Coast Guard officials also predicted none of the oil from a blow-out Mexican well would reach beyond beaches at Galveston over October currents shift outward.

Oceanographers attributed the new formation of sheen, stretching from the Mexican border northward to 20-30 miles from shore, to surface winds that have been light and variable the last few days.

But Environmental Protection Agency spokesman Roger Meacham said, "Beach surveys generally indicate the amount of oil in the coastal zone has decreased considerably since last week."

A combination of improved beach conditions and migration patterns, he said, has led to an estimated twofold increase in the coastal bird population in six days.

A bird count from Cedar Bayou on the Rio Grande on Aug. 26 found 89 birds. A Sept. 1 count found 175.

The improved conditions have allowed the federal response team that has spent months tracking the world's largest oil spill time to pursue studies on the spill's effects and a closed meeting was scheduled Wednesday to discuss the recent change of events.

Businessmen on South Padre Island also were to meet to compile figures on Labor Day losses. Tourism was estimated down 66 percent during the weekend.

Coast Guard Capt. Roger Madson said no substantial amounts of oil washed ashore during the Labor Day weekend and only the light

sheen patches could be found during reconnaissance flights the past two days over an area 100 miles south of the U.S.-Mexico border and 150 miles east of the shore.

The largest concentration of oil was located in Mexican waters 75 miles south of Brownsville and Mexican officials said they were trying to clear away that oil with chemical dispersants.

"I think the weather systems of the past week have helped and we are frankly very much surprised," Madson said.

Wind and current conditions from Tropical Storm Elena, which hit the Gulf Coast Saturday, helped keep new oil from coming ashore from the Ixtoc I well in Mexico's Bay of Campeche.

Meacham said the currents still were keeping oil away but it was impossible to determine how long they would hold their position.

"Right now we have only scattered sheen well offshore and lots of clear areas but it could change tomorrow," he said. "But the currents and wind still have been favorable to us so far."

Madson said crews would continue to clean oil from the Texas coast, especially on the beaches of Mustang and South Padre islands for weekend tourists.

More than 7,800 cubic yards of oil and sand have been removed from Texas' beaches since the oil began washing ashore in early August and more than 46,000 gallons of oilwater emulsion have been picked up.

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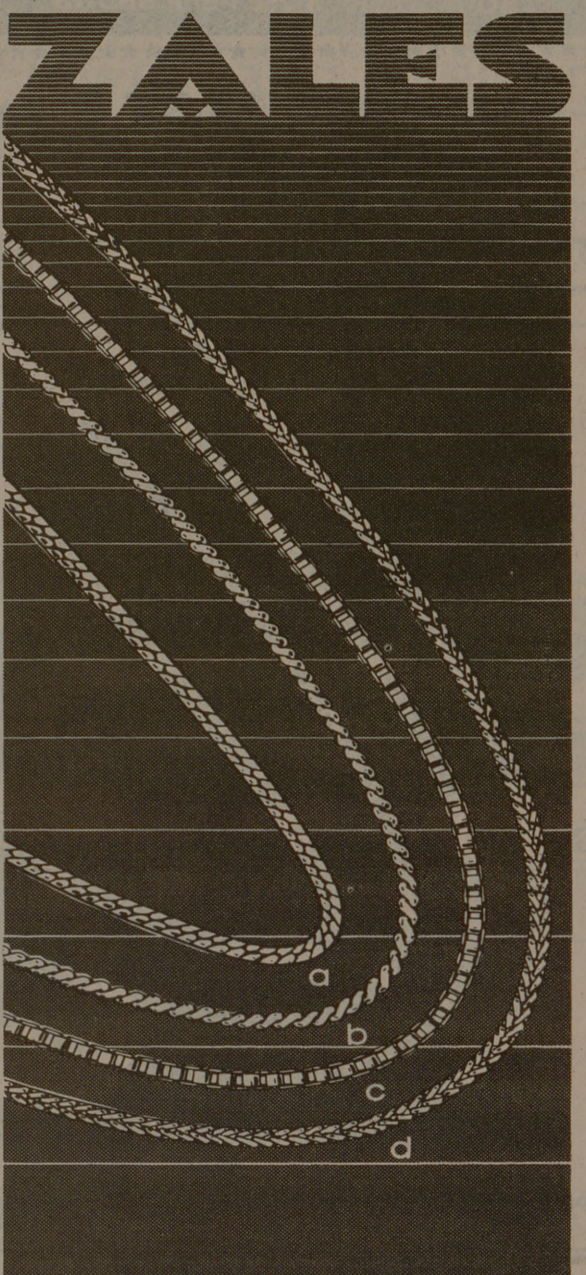


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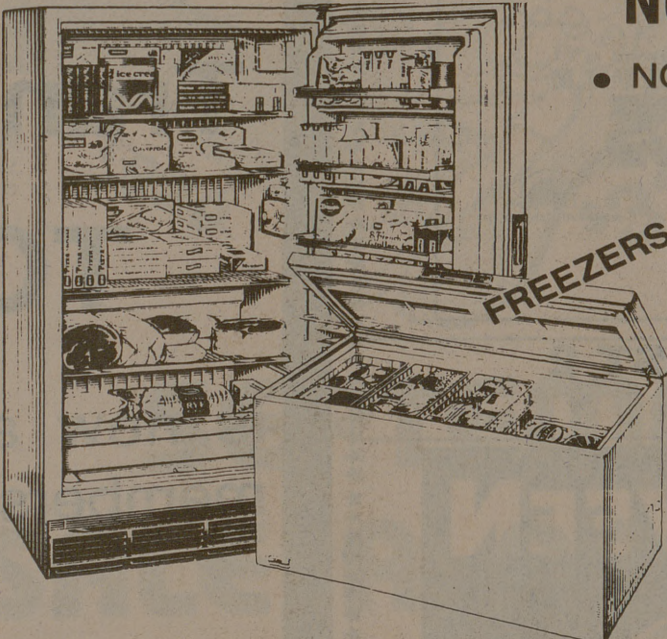
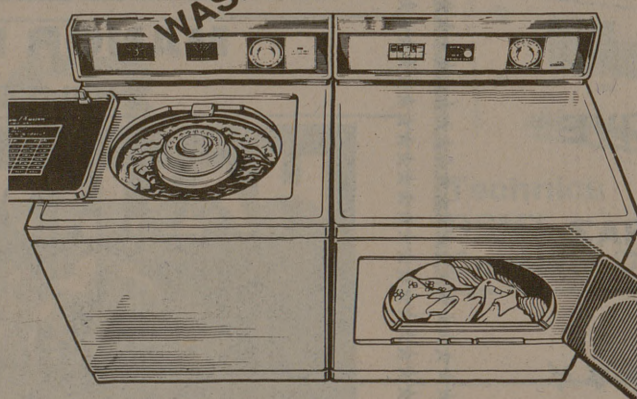

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