

State

Tough anti-litter bill would work offenders

AUSTIN — Judges could sentence litterbugs to labor on Texas highways removing roadside trash if a bill by a central Texas legislator is approved.

Cleaning up highways and roads is just one aspect of a bill by Rep. Bennie Bock, D-New Braunfels, creating a statewide comprehensive litter abatement and recycling program. Current laws have left cities mostly on their own to enforce litter ordinances.

Under Bock's bill, a three-time litter offender could find himself doing up to 40 hours labor on highways. A person convicted of violating any provision in his legislation or of a Class C misdemeanor also may be ordered to remove litter from highways.

Bock says it is everybody's business to eliminate litter and the state has made it a business to the tune of \$10 million.

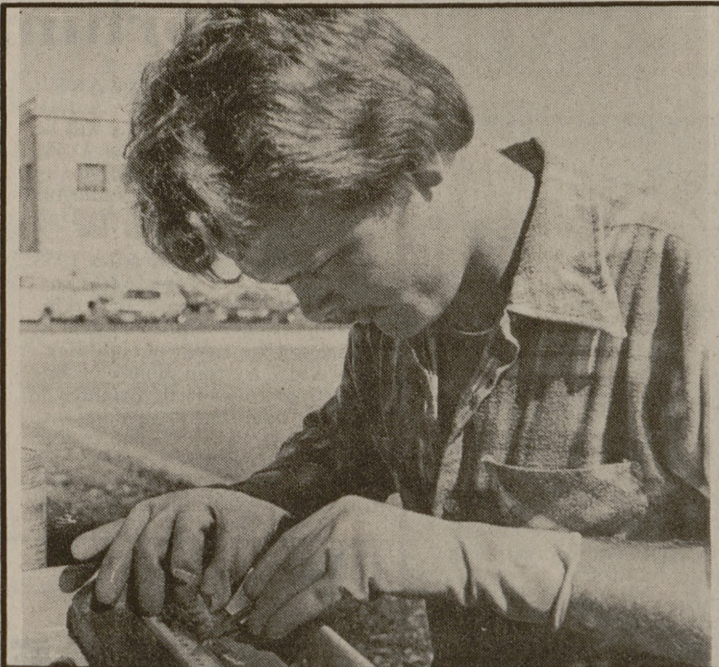
"The highway department is spending \$10 million a year picking up litter," Bock said. "A (soft drink) can is readily visible, but that's not all that's out there."
He said a survey indicated cans and bottles amount to only 29 percent of what is picked up highways. The rest was tires, chairs, couches and paper products.

"It strikes me that litter is a problem broader than just one isolated instance," he said. "I think people can prevent it."

Bock's bill also would require cars to have litter bags in order to pass inspection just as they have blinkers, horns and lights.

His legislation also offers tax credits as incentives to control litter.

Bock, a five-term legislator, admits the bill may be creating some litter of its own. The bill establishes a division within the governor's office to coordinate litter abatement and recycling and a 25-member advisory commission.



Staff photo by Chuck Chapman

Too small to keep

Ray Baker, a Class of '80 graduate from Texas A&M University, measures small fish from the Gulf of Mexico. The measuring is part of Bryan Mound Marine Research project conducted by the Wildlife and Fisheries Department at the Animal Husbandry Pavilion.

Farmer without land title gets help in keeping farm

AUSTIN — Land Commissioner Bob Armstrong said Monday he will support a proposed constitutional amendment permitting the state to relinquish its claim to land an 81-year-old East Texas farmer has farmed since 1928 in the belief he owned the tract.

Armstrong met privately Monday with Speaker Bill Clayton, Attorney General Mark White, representatives of the governor's office and legislators interested in resolving the dispute concerning legal ownership of a 120-acre tract bought 52 years ago by Jessie Johnson of Jewett, Texas.

Johnson and several other Leon County landowners believed they had clear title to the land and did not learn until 1978 that the state had never surrendered ownership to the land 127 years ago.

"Generally, everybody is looking for the best remedy that we can come up with that will help people like Mr. Johnson and Mr. Benj (another of the landowners)," Armstrong said.

"I think most people felt it is going to take a constitutional amendment."

Armstrong said Clayton suggested he work with the attorney general to prepare a proposed constitutional amendment that would allow the land commissioner, for a limited period of time such as two years, to grant patents or surrender the state's claim to contested land tracts under certain circumstances.

Armstrong said the proposal will probably require that persons seeking to obtain clear title to land claimed by the state must have lived on the land, believed they were the legal owners, and held the land "under color of ownership."

Such guidelines would include Johnson, whose story has attracted nationwide attention.

"If they could come in and show the equity of their situation, we could either issue them a patent or

a deed of acquittance if they agree to the guidelines," Armstrong said.

The land commissioner first notified Johnson the state held title to the land on Jan. 17. Johnson had paid taxes for more than half a century, said he testified in support of the proposed constitutional amendment, and probably would help with the provisions.

"Everybody from the beginning here has wanted to know how an equitable solution could be reached," Armstrong said.

He said those meeting in the speaker's office Monday agreed the constitution would be amended to permit the state to give up its claim to the land, although the attorney general is doing research to determine if the Legislature can give up the land without a vote of the people.

Juror disqualified in Daniel child suit

LIBERTY — A 58-year-old woman was dismissed Monday from the jury that will decide whether Vickie Daniel is an unfit mother to her two sons by the man she is accused of killing, former House Speaker Price Daniel Jr.

That left only 11 jurors to decide the custody tug-of-war over Franklin, 3, and Marion, 1, Daniel's sister, Jean Daniel Murph of Richardson wants the boys taken from their mother.

Mrs. Daniel claims she shot her husband Jan. 19 in self defense.

Judge Sam Emison announced Monday the dismissal of Annie Mae Searles, whose husband was believed to have sought legal representation from Daniel and whose mother was believed to have once worked as a maid for the Daniel family.

The oldest juror on the panel and the least educated, Mrs. Searles denied she herself had ever sought legal representation from Daniel or that Judge Sam Emison spoke to her about her removal. She has a sixth grade education.

"Mrs. Searles has become disabled and cannot continue to serve on the jury," Emison told the court. "The remainder of the

trial will held by you eleven jurors."

Following Mrs. Searles' dismissal, one of Daniel's secretaries testified Mrs. Daniel once asked her whether she and Daniel were having an affair.

Pam Locke, 19, who worked for Daniel for about 18 months, testified that during the dedication of Daniel's law office in June 1979, Mrs. Daniel asked whether she was sleeping with Daniel.

"She said Price liked young girls with long hair," she said. "I was very shocked."

Locke said Mrs. Daniel was six months pregnant at the time. Locke also testified Mrs. Daniel asked her to watch a co-worker's home to see if Daniel was having an affair with the woman.

"She said she wanted me to watch Mary Cain's house to see if she and Price were having an affair," Locke said. "I didn't say anything. I just listened. I didn't do it either."

She also testified that the night of Daniel's shooting, she got a call from Cain to meet Daniel's campaign manager for his attorney general's race, Carl Pickett, at Daniel's office. She said they gave him the key to Daniel's home.

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TEXAS A&M KRUEGER DORM —
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BRAZOS COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY

Attention all gourmets and Chili lovers! Krueger Dorm is sponsoring a CHARITY CHILI COOK-OFF on Sunday, April 5 for 8-5! Proceeds benefit the Brazos County Humane society to build an animal shelter. HOW TO ENTER: All entry forms may be picked up at the following locations:

- Court's Western Wear Locations
- Commons Front Desk
- Hall of Fame
- Student Programs Office — 2nd floor MSC

Entry fees are \$10.00. Rules will be supplied with entry forms. All entries must be mailed to the following address, postmarked no later than March 26.

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