

State

Texas product liability bill draws Senate static

United Press International
AUSTIN — A proposed products liability bill pending in Senate committee would benefit manufacturers and plaintiffs attorneys, but neglects the interests of many citizens, defense attorneys told the Economic Development Committee Thursday.

Kleber Miller of Fort Worth, representing the Texas Association of Defense Counselors, said the proposal sponsored by Sen. Bill Meier, D-Fort Worth, abandons a 1973 compromise concerning comparative negligence in damage

suits and allows plaintiffs to collect even though they are 75 percent at fault for their own injuries.

"We came to this session hoping for products liability law reform. Now we are looking at what was presented to us as a compromise, but we cannot support it because it goes far beyond products liability," Miller said.

"We believe the bill creates far more questions than answers." The products liability compromise was worked out earlier in the session, and the bill passed the

House with surprising ease. Meier has made some changes in it during Senate committee deliberations, but it remains essentially the same as the House version.

Charles B. Jones, a Lubbock attorney, objected to provisions he said would allow plaintiffs in some instances to collect more than 100 percent of their damages, and to the comparative negligence provision allowing plaintiffs to collect damages even though they were 75 percent at fault.

Makes home for 100 children

Special mother takes a bow

United Press International
MISSION — With the approach of Mother's Day, it is fitting that Lorie Blair take a bow. And it is also fitting that her husband, Dan, join her.

The Blairs moved from Wisconsin to South Texas 18 months ago to manage the Rio Grande Children's Home dairy farm, and since then have been mother and father to a hundred eager, and emotionally deprived children.

The children assist with the daily feeding and milking of the home's 60 Holstein cows

and Mrs. Blair believes the work has helped many of the youngsters — some just neglected by their parents, others abandoned — readjust.

"Dan and I want the children to feel a part of the dairy," she said. "We try to explain how the farm operates and why their jobs are important."

She was somewhat apprehensive when she and her husband, head herdsman for a large Wisconsin dairy, decided to move to the home.

"I really didn't know if I had anything to

contribute. The older ones were nearly as old as Dan and me. But I soon realized the kids needed mostly simple things, things like a pat on the back, encouragement, and someone to talk to about what is important to them — even if it's a momentary thing."

The dairy is part of a milk marketing cooperative, so the children are exposed to both an individual dairy and how numerous dairymen work together. Mrs. Blair said some of the children already have become so interested they're considering becoming dairy farmers when they grow up.

Klan plans fundraiser for trial costs

United Press International
SANTA FE, Texas — The Ku Klux Klan plans a Saturday fish fry and crossburning — but no boat-burning — to raise money to defend the Klan and Texas shrimpers against a lawsuit by Vietnamese fishermen, organizers said.

Among speakers scheduled is Jerry Paul Smith of Maiden, N.C., a Klan member acquitted of murder in a Nov. 3, 1979, shootout between Klan and Nazi Party members and Communist Workers Party members in Greensboro, N.C.

City officials said Thursday Texas Klan leader Louis Beam signed the \$60 rally permit papers

as sponsor. The fee is calculated by multiplying 20 cents liability for each person expected. Beam's \$60 fee would cover 300 persons.

"It's just a fundraiser, boiled shrimp, fried oysters and fried fish. Just a big old party, open to the public," said Joe Collins, who owns the 30-acre site where the rally will be held.

"They (the public) are not gonna have to pay. We'd like to have some donations to help with our lawyer fees. Our lawyers cost us about \$200 an hour."

"We don't have the Southern Poverty Law Center representing us. They donate their time and money free for the Vietnamese.

We've got to pay our lawyers."

Collins said that, in addition to Smith, Beam, Gene Fisher of the Seabrook-Kemah Fishermen's Coalition and the Rev. Richard Butler of the Aryan Nations Church in Idaho were scheduled to speak.

At a rally Feb. 14, Beam and Fisher called for government action to remove Vietnamese refugees from the overcrowded coastal fishing industry. They warned vaguely of trouble and ceremoniously burned a boat labeled "S.S. Viet Cong."

Partly as a result of hostile speeches and actions at the rally, the Vietnamese, aided by the Ala-

bama-based Southern Poverty Law Center, filed a federal court suit April 16 seeking a court order forbidding violence and seeking the protection of U.S. marshals.

Collins said no boat would be burned Saturday.

"They're ain't no boat gonna be burned. I think the boatburning got all out of proportion last time. The Vietnamese thought it was a threat to burn their boats, but it really wasn't."

Three Vietnamese boats have been burned in Galveston Bay, but Collins said the mock burning was to show how the Klan would have burned the boats if it had in

fact committed the arsons.

Beam could not be reached for comment.

Santa Fe Police Chief Bryan Lamb said he would have all six of his regular officers and eight reservists on duty. He said the Galveston County sheriff's department and Texas Department of Public Safety would help provide security.

"I don't expect any problems," Lamb said. "I think they (the Klan and fishermen) have so many problems now they can't afford any more."



A TRIBUTE TO THE BEST OF THE WORST
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Get measles shots, travelers told

United Press International
Health officials are warning travelers to be immunized for red measles before going to epidemic-prone South Texas and El Paso, Jim Harrington says they are worried the disease, which is carried to other parts of the country by migrant farm workers.

More than 184 cases of red measles — including the nation's first fatality from measles — have been reported in Texas so far this year, more than the total number of cases in the state last year, said Antonio, the Texas Department of Health immunization specialist.

"We're stepping up vaccination programs all over the state," Smith said. "If someone is planning to go in these areas or go through the areas, they should have protection before they go."

El Paso health officials have undertaken an immunization program because of 83 red measles cases since last Friday, but those infections seemed to be limited to teen-agers.

The epidemic is still on and we expect it to last another 10 days or two weeks before we declare it over," said Dr. Bernard Rosenbaum, city-county health director at El Paso.

A Hidalgo County child, 11

months, who died last month in a Galveston hospital, was the nation's first measles death of the year.

In Harlingen, a specialist from the federal Center for Disease Control in Atlanta said the CDC is working on a plan with Texas and local health officials in four South Texas counties to stop the outbreak.

"It (the measles outbreak) has

national implications because it involves migrant workers," said Dennis Olsen. "They (workers) will be moving across the United States."

Dr. Alan Bloch, a CDC epidemiologist in Harlingen, said at least one-third of those who have contracted the disease have been hospitalized and half of those hospitalized have developed pneumonia.

Bloch said about 1,100 measles cases have been reported nationwide this year, and only an outbreak of 110 cases in Philadelphia has outnumbered the frequency of Texas cases.

At least another 45 cases are suspected in the lower Rio Grande Valley, but those incidents have not been medically confirmed, federal health officials said Wednesday.

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