

State

Protests professing belief in God

O'Hair fights Texas oath law

NEW ORLEANS — A federal appeals court is studying a request from atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair that a Texas law requiring public officials to profess a belief in God be struck down.

O'Hair, president of the Society for Preservationists based in Austin, did not enter the courtroom Monday until after opening ceremonies invoking God's favor on the judges.

Once she entered, however,

she assisted in arguing her own case.

"I'm an atheist," she told judges of the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. "Take a good look. One hundred and seventy pounds on the hoof. I am one of an excluded class."

She said that even if she wanted to hold office in Texas, she could not because of the oath that public officials and judges must take swearing their belief in God.

O'Hair said the same requirement would bar her from serving on a jury.

The law she attacked is part of the 105-year-old Texas constitution. She claimed it violated the U.S. doctrine of separation of church and state.

O'Hair and her society filed suit attacking the law in 1978 but U.S. District Judge Jack Roberts dismissed the case. On Monday she asked the 5th Circuit to overturn

that decision.

Susan Bradshaw, a lawyer with the Texas attorney general's office, asked the court to reaffirm Roberts' ruling, saying the law was seldom, if ever, enforced.

"Everybody on the federal level from the president on down has taken a religious test" by taking oaths that end "so help me God," she said. "They are part of a ritual. It is simply part of our history."

Teens lose claim to cash believed tied to drugs

HOUSTON — Three teenagers who found a suitcase with more than \$22,000 while rabbit hunting lost their court fight and claim to the cash. The district attorney's office said the money appeared to be the product of a drug deal and should go to the state.

State District Judge Reagan Cartwright ruled Monday the Harris County District Attorney's office investigative fund

will get the cache. The teens made their claim to the money because they said they followed fresh footprints last Sept. 9 to an old barn and found the locked suitcase in a freezer.

The teens said they shot off the lock and found \$22,000 in cash plus a pound of marijuana, a bag of cocaine, more than 1,000 methamphetamine pills, a bottle of Valium and other assorted pills.

They grabbed some of the money, but got scared when they heard voices. They then reported the incident to police.

Prosecutors said the teens had no claim on something they took from another person's property.

Officials said the money will be used to purchase special equipment such as a surveillance van and special radios to be used to investigate drug cases.

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25	138,874	38 to 1	1 to 1
Total	158,134	31 to 1	3 to 1

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Quirks in the News

Officer kills hostile hog

CHICAGO — A police officer shot and killed an irate 400-pound hog that had kicked his partner in his shin.

The hog, which had escaped from the American Meat Packing Corp., was spotted Monday racing down a street and the officers chased it to an alley several blocks away.

Patrolman Jerry Kostlmy shot and killed the hog after it kicked his partner, Floyd M. Gills, in the left shin when Gills attempted to stun the escaped porker with a blow from his baton.

The general manager of the packing company said the animal would not be fit for human consumption because the bullet might have shattered and gunpowder was poisonous.

Gills drove to Mercy Hospital for treatment of a bruised leg.

A few good dogs

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL — The Department of Defense is looking for a few good dogs.

Instructors from the Pentagon's Dog Center at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas, are coming to the Boston area next week with recruiting on their minds.

The center, which trains canines for security patrols at military installations worldwide, needs about 50 new German shepherds.

"They needn't be purebreds or registered, but they must look and act like German shepherds," said Sgt. Michael Blackshear, canine training coordinator at the Texas facility. "We're looking for a dog with aggressive traits who will protect himself and his master."

"They must be between 1 and 3 years of age, stand at least 23 inches high at the shoulder and weigh at least 60 pounds," he said.

Dogs who pass the initial evaluation for desirable traits and alertness will be given a physical evaluation, he said, before undergoing a 10-week training course. Owners may donate their pet or name a price up to \$250.

Motherly gorilla

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL — Mama was so loving and protective of her newborn it took officials almost a full day to determine the sex of the latest lowland gorilla born at the Columbus Zoo.

The zoo, where the first lowland gorilla was born in captivity 25 years ago, Monday announced Toni, 9, had given birth to her third baby, a healthy 5-pounder.

Dianna Frisch, keeper of the zoo's great apes, said the baby was born shortly after noon Sunday but its sex — female — could not be determined until Monday.

Life in Dire Straits

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL — Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's pledge of government relief only for those "in absolute dire straits" has led some 40 enterprising residents in the tiny town of New Dundee, Ont., to take matters in hand.

The group has repainted a sign that normally reads "Welcome to New Dundee" to read "Welcome to Dire Straits."

Although the name change is not official, the suggestion has put the small southwestern Ontario hamlet of 900 on the map.

"I don't think these people realize what they have got me into," Grant Swartzentruber, the clerk-administrator for the township of Wilmot, in which New Dundee is located, said Monday. "All day long I've been getting phone calls from people wondering what is going on."

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