

State

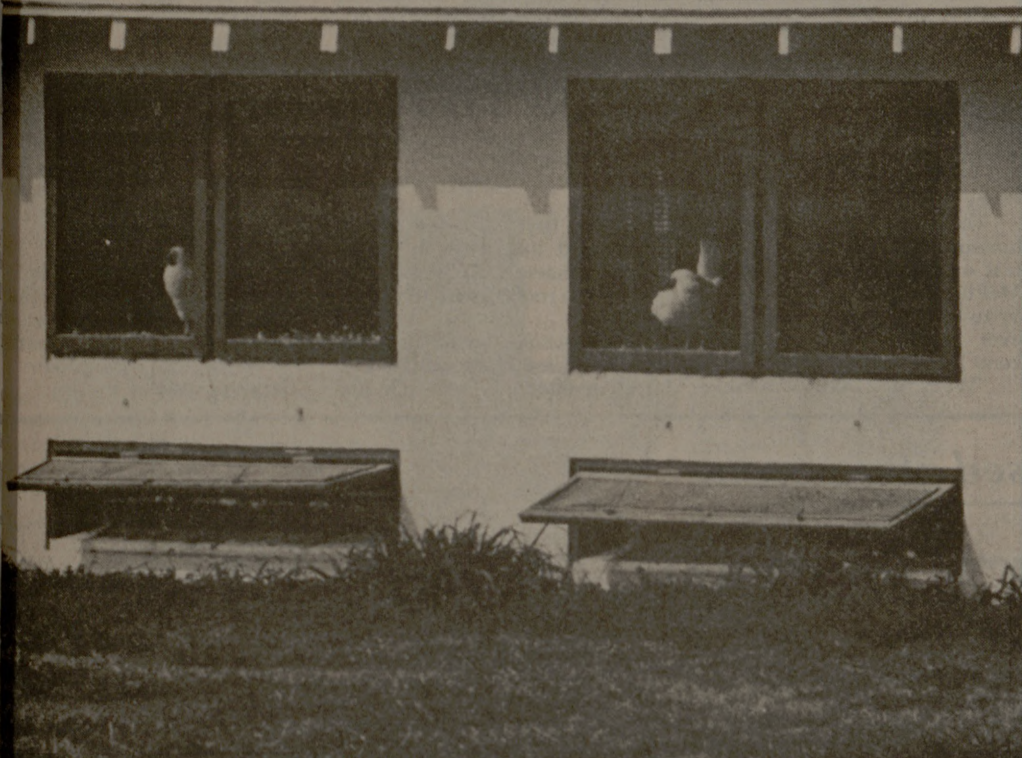
Investigations continue in playground death of girl

United Press International
MESQUITE — Medical detectives Wednesday were trying to determine why a 7-year-old girl collapsed and died on a school

playground after she and other girls were required to run as punishment for talking in line. An autopsy was scheduled late Wednesday on Stephanie Hal-

bert, a second grader at Florence Black Elementary School, who collapsed during an outdoor "play period." She was dead on arrival at a local hospital.

"This child's health records show no history of anything that would have led to this," Mesquite School Superintendent Dr. Ralph Potet said Wednesday.



Staff photo by Brian Tate

A chicken in every window

These hens enjoy a scarce commodity at Texas A&M University — on-campus housing. The White Leghorns, housed at the Poultry Center on the west campus, are used for breeding purposes by the Poultry Science department.

Senator hopes state will help buy railroad

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Sen. Dale Bumpers, D-Ark., said he hoped the state of Arkansas would be able to come up with its share of the \$45 million purchase price of the Rock Island Railroad line that runs from Memphis, Tenn., to Little Rock, Ark.

After a meeting Tuesday Bumpers said Sante Fe Railroad President Lawrence Cena assured him Sante Fe was willing to invest \$200 million to restore the Rock Island road bed and to build facilities including a terminal at Little Rock, Ark.

He said the Sante Fe would guarantee any money the states of Arkansas, Texas and Oklahoma would borrow to come up with their portion of the purchase price.

The federal Railroad Adminis-

tration has \$38 million available which could be loaned to the states at considerably under market rates," Bumpers said, noting application for the loans has been filed on behalf of the states.

However, several additional commitments need to be made by both the states and Sante Fe, Bumpers said.

"I am convinced that the Sante Fe is firmly committed to the operation of the Rock Island line and that the economic benefits Arkansas would derive is too great for the state not to do everything possible to come up with its share of the money," Bumpers said.

The Oklahoma legislature has already appropriated \$22 million to carry out its share of the plan should an agreement be reached. A consulting firm has recommended that Arkansas, Texas and

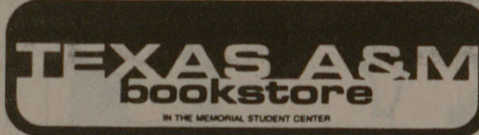
Oklahoma offer \$45 million for the line, although the Rock Island trustee in bankruptcy has not indicated whether an offer of that amount would be accepted.

Bumpers said that hundreds of Rock Island employees are anxious to return to work and the Sante Fe seems anxious to hire as many as possible as soon as the deal is put together.

"Since the federal Railroad Administration will be determining within the next 90 days how to distribute the \$38 million available through the national freight assistance program, it seems imperative that Arkansas pursue its application as vigorously as possible," Bumpers said. "I am sure this is a golden opportunity for the state that we should not let get away."

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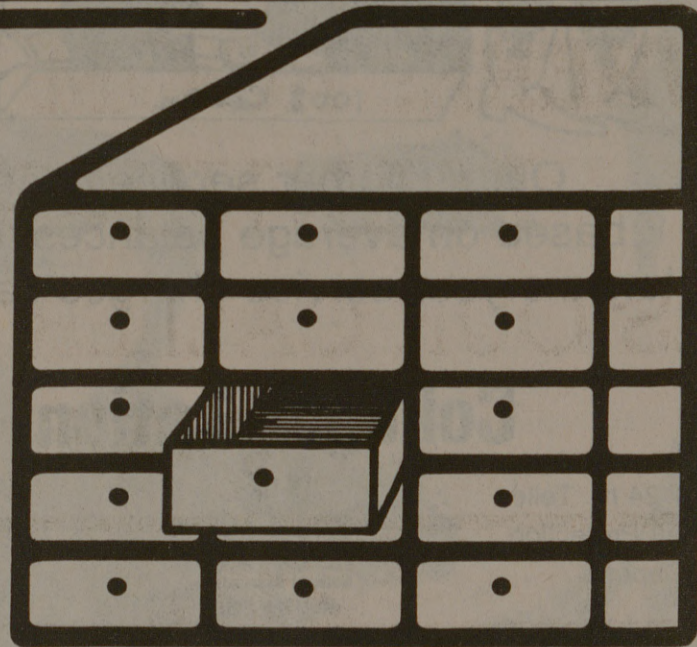
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