

# State

## That old black magic alive and well in San Antonio

United Press International  
SAN ANTONIO — Religion is in the eye of the beholder, say police, who often have strange encounters with an assortment of ethnic and religious customs, including voodoo rites.

Reports of Haitian refugees practicing voodoo or gypsies putting the evil eye on people are not unusual in a community with a diversified ethnic population and religious beliefs, a member of the city's Crime Prevention Bureau said.

But the practices are deemed harmless unless an illegal activity is involved, Sgt. Rafael Lopez said Tuesday, following a local nursing

home's complaint of Haitian voodoo men approaching elderly residents with offers to halt the process of old age through magical potions.

"She wanted us to check into one of her patients who had some voodoo dude come up there and tell an old man that ... he could keep him from getting older," Lopez said.

But, Lopez said, the man's family did not complain so the police never investigated it.

Between 1,000 and 2,500 gypsies reside in San Antonio and complaints sometimes crop up about gypsies putting the evil eye on people and selling mystical mixtures and potions, Lopez said.

"They (gypsies) have got a regular tribe here, a clan," he said. "But for us to conduct an investigation into them or any other group, we would first have to prove there was some illegal activity."

"If it's a cultural belief or religious belief or whatever and people are willing to put out money for it, what can we do?"

Most voodoo is harmless, he said.

"There are gypsies and Haitians with voodoo, and the Mexicans go to 'curanderos,'" Lopez said. "The curanderos have a love potion or prayers for the dead. They tell you to go buy herbs and make tea and carry an eyeball of a deer or whatever. That's a going thing."

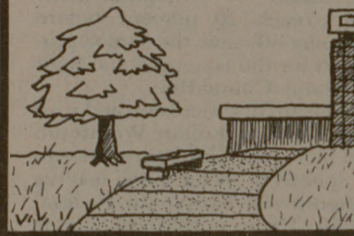
"I don't think there's anything negative about that. I've been a patient of it."

He described a Mexican custom of placing an egg in a bowl of water beneath the bed of a suspected victim of the evil eye. If the egg was cooked the next morning, it meant the evil was gone.

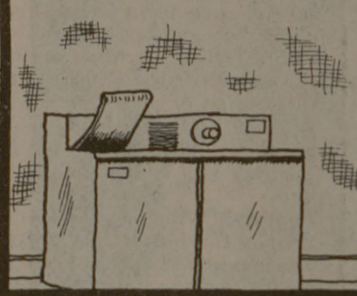
"It can't hurt; it just wastes an egg," Lopez said.

### Warped

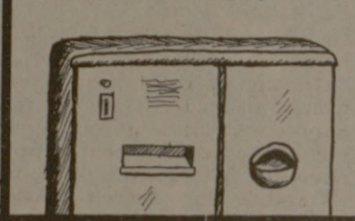
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### Former secretary of state blamed

## No raise for election judges

United Press International  
AMARILLO—Randall County Democratic chairman Mel Phillips,

hearing that a dollar-an-hour pay raise for election judges hadn't come through, laid the blame on former Secretary of State George Strake.

Phillips blasted the former secretary of state in a statement Tuesday, saying Strake was "running for another office instead of tending to business."

The secretary of state's office has informed county chairmen that the Legislature did not appropriate enough money to cover both the pay raise of election judges from \$3 to \$4 an hour, and increases in other election costs

due to inflation.

Now chairmen from both parties face a shortage of almost \$1 million in funds to pay for the May 1 primary election.

Vic Terry of Austin, director of financial management and planning for the secretary of state's office, said Tuesday the state is short about \$913,000 of what it would take to cover the increased pay of election judges.

"What it amounts to is that George Strake didn't go and ask for the supplement that he was supposed to," Phillips said. "It's totally unfair for our election offi-

cial to have to take less than he has been allocated for them because the secretary of state at the time neglected to do what he supposed to do."

Strake, a Republican, resigned about a month ago to seek office of lieutenant governor. He was replaced by David Dewhurst. Chairmen for Potter and Randall counties said they will seek the cooperation of county commissioners and the school district, setting aside usual voting material charges and school district fees to keep all polls open for the primary.

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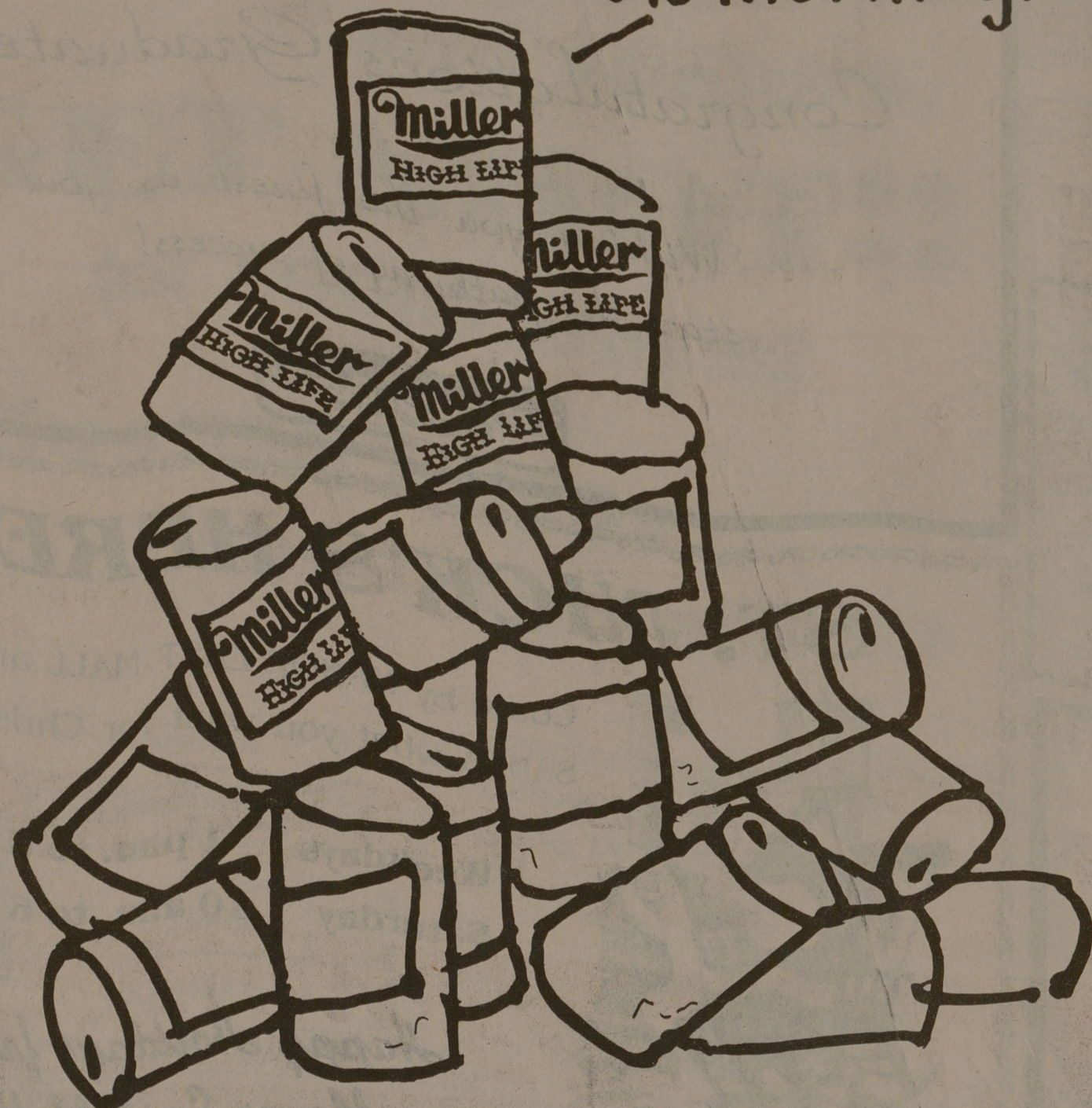


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# Miller times starring Miller High Life

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## Cyanide tested; results by Friday

United Press International  
HOUSTON — A city health department spokeswoman says a panel investigating an outbreak of suspected cyanide poisoning should complete its review of test results by the end of the week.

A general practitioner who discovered the 12 non-fatal poisonings said he suspected cyanide was leaking into the Heights neighborhood sewer system and mixing with chemicals resulting in poisonous hydrogen cyanide gas.

But, city health officials have criticized Dr. Tim Oesch's findings, saying he made his diagnosis prematurely and did not perform adequate tests.

"The committee will provide additional expertise and objectivity to the cyanide investigation," spokeswoman Shirlene Bridgewater said Tuesday. Health department air, soil, water and blood test results were turned over to the committee, she said.

"The committee will review all lab results, analyze data and prepare a statement to be issued within 24 hours upon receipt of all data," Bridgewater said.

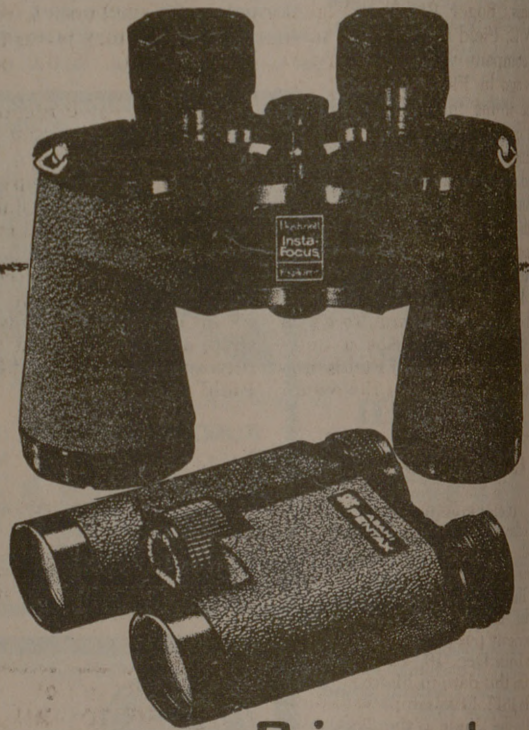
The committee, made up of University of Texas School of Public Health instructors, is headed by Dr. Marcus Key, professor of occupational medicine. Findings will be released through the health department, Bridgewater said.

Other panel members are Jeffery C. Pheiss, an environmental science specialist, Dr. Fred Weir, associate professor of toxicology, James Hammond, associate professor of industrial hygiene and Dr. Darwin Labadie, associate professor of epidemiology.

Oesch, meanwhile, planned to leave Houston because his blood tests revealed he had four times more poison in his system than the worst of his patients.

"I need to go and recover a bit," Oesch said. "This is threatening. I am getting very ill and I need help now."

A General Electric Co. plant near the affected neighborhood is licensed to use cyanide for electroplating, but company and city officials said the plant's disposal system was working properly.



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