

White's letter isn't a pitch, aide says

United Press International
AUSTIN — Gov. William White's press agent said a state-financed letter mailed to Vietnam veterans by the attorney general carried out a 15-year-old legislative mandate and was not a campaign tool.

Jim Francis, campaign manager for Gov. Bill Clements — who faces White in the gubernatorial election next Tuesday — said the Democratic candidate sent the letter to make a campaign pitch.

White's campaign press aide, David Lindsey, said Monday the 1967 Legislature directed that veterans be kept informed of the Agent Orange situation.

"It sounds like Mr. Francis is grasping at straws," he said.

"It sounds like the dying gasp of a losing candidate."

"The information in the letter is complete nonsense, except as a piece of political propaganda," said Francis. "The letter begins, 'Dear Fellow Veteran' and ends with a campaign speech."

The letter was written by White last Wednesday and distributed by the attorney general's office to inform veterans that documents about the use of Agent Orange, a toxic defoliant used in Southeast Asia, would be released by the Air Force in November and December.

In other political news, Jim Mattox has been accused of lying about his political experience by Republican attorney general candidate Bill Meier.

Meier said Mattox has never tried a single district court jury trial and had only two district court trials in 12 years. "Jim Mattox has very limited legal experience," Meier said. "He hasn't practiced law for six years."

In the race for land commissioner, Republican candidate Woody Glasscock of Hondo said his Democratic opponent, Garry Mauro, is not seeking the post for the sake of the office, but as a springboard to future political races.

"He's using this purely as a base," Glasscock said. "Why else would he run for land commissioner? He doesn't know anything about oil and gas."

Park asked to extend deadline for eviction

United Press International
PINE SPRINGS — Sen. Lloyd Bentsen mailed a letter Tuesday to the head of Guadalupe Mountain National Park asking park officials why they cannot allow a woman to keep open a safe that has been in her family for 54 years.

Although the park service is under no obligation to agree, a Bentsen aide said he was optimistic after a talk with Park Superintendent Bill Dunmeyer that Mary Hinson, 67, will not have to leave at 5 p.m. Dec. 31.

The senator's interest in this could cause something to be done to extend the December deadline, Tommy Denton, Bentsen's executive assistant for state affairs, said.

However, the park service is under no legal obligation to grant the five-year extension Hinson's friends are hoping for, he said.

"Please advise me in view of the long-standing presence of the Glover family and its place in the regional cultural fabric what would prevent such a reasonable extension of the occupation of the property," Bentsen's letter to Dunmeyer said.

Hinson's father and mother won a brief legal battle to remain on the land for the remainder of their lives when Guadalupe Mountain National Park was created 12 years ago. At the time, 76,000 acres around the

Glover homestead were purchased.

Hinson returned to Texas from Arkansas to help care for the couple two years later.

Her father, Walter Glover, died in 1973 at age 91 and her mother, Bertha Glover, 89, died last month, giving the park legal right to reclaim the last of the Glover homestead.

The park service ordered Hinson to leave the gasoline-and-food outlet Oct. 15, but after an appeal, it extended the deadline to Dec. 31.

The final decision on Hinson's store rests with the park service's regional office in Santa Fe, N.M.

Secret tapes don't worry murder-for-hire witness

United Press International
SAN ANTONIO — A witness in the Federal Judge John H. Wood slaying trial testified Tuesday she learned about two weeks ago that her estranged husband recorded their conversations in the bedroom, car and elsewhere to help the FBI.

But Teresa Starr, 25, the stepdaughter of accused hitman Charles Harrelson, said she was not concerned about the tape-recordings made by her estranged husband, Michael Jasper. She was cross-examined Tuesday by attorneys for her mother, Jo Ann Harrelson, and Harrelson, who is also on trial.

"I knew I hadn't said anything to him. I did not trust my husband or anybody else," Starr said.

She left Jasper the same day her parents asked her to go to Las Vegas for them in June 1979, after Wood's slaying in May 1979. The recordings were made in early 1980 when Starr returned to her husband in Dallas for a few weeks. Officials said Jasper was asked by investigators to tape his wife's conversations and agreed.

Starr said she obeyed the Harrelsons' instructions not to tell anyone about her Las Vegas trip until she had been jailed for six months for refusing to testify to a grand jury.

Prosecutors say the \$250,000 she picked up in Las Vegas and delivered to the Harrelsons was Harrelson's payoff for killing Wood, but Starr said she still does not know whether that is true.

"I still don't know anything about the judge's death," she said.

Her testimony came after a long weekend break granted by Federal Judge William Sessions

to allow defense lawyers time to review 60 hours of wiretapped telephone conversations between Starr and Jasper, and a videotape of her FBI interview under hypnosis.



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State employee morale up despite insurance complaints

United Press International
AUSTIN — Morale among state employees is higher in 1982 than it was two years ago, but they still complain about health insurance benefits, a new University of Texas study says.

The study surveyed nearly 40,000 workers in the 12 largest state agencies for a gubernatorial task force on personnel management. "Generally there was an improvement in attitude from 1980 to 1982," Martha Williams, dean of the UT School of Social Work, said Monday. "Satisfaction with benefits was the only significant downward shift," she said.

The survey measured employee perception of their supervisors, co-workers, agency loyalty, job satisfaction, salaries, benefits and working conditions.

Employees at every agency in the survey said they were happier with their salaries than two years ago. During that time, the Texas Legislature approved pay hikes amounting to 23 percent.

But state employees said they were displeased that the state still does not provide a group health insurance plan that includes dental coverage and is

fully financed by the state.

Under the most comprehensive plan, the state pays a \$60 monthly premium while an employee with a family pays \$142 a month.

Gary Hughes, director of the Texas Public Employees Association, says, "Insurance premiums could be eating up anywhere from 20 to 25 percent of their net take-home pay."

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