



staff photo by Dawson Clark

retired Army Master Sgt. Roy Benavidez, center, salutes a Corps outfit with William Izard, left, commanding officer of the Third Battalion, and Greg Netardus, Corps personnel officer, right.

Benavidez was the last man to receive a Congressional Medal of Honor for saving the lives of eight men in Vietnam in 1968. Benavidez spoke to the Corps Thursday in Rudder Auditorium.

Textbook bill wins tentative approval

United Press International
AUSTIN — The Texas House tentatively approved a bill that would allow both favorable and negative testimony during annual textbook adoption hearings, winning praise from an anti-censorship group that called the vote a "major victory for the citizens of Texas."

The Senate-passed textbook bill would void previous State Board of Education rules that allowed only those who opposed the adoption of certain textbooks to testify at the state textbook committee hearings.

House members, who tentatively approved the bill Wednesday, added minor amendments that will put the measure in a House-Senate subcommittee to iron out the minor differences.

"(The bill is) a major victory for the citizens of Texas," said Michael Hudson, Texas coordinator of People for the American Way, an anti-censorship group.

"No longer can the system be monopolized by those voicing only criticism of proposed texts."

Now Texas citizens who have something positive to say will also be heard," he said.

The House also tentatively approved bills Wednesday that would:

— Allow a county commissioners court to create a dispute-

mediation center for resolving citizen conflicts outside the court system.

— Give recreation and wildlife conservation equal status at the Matagorda Island State Park and Wildlife Management Area.

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Speaker isn't 'intimidated'

United Press International
AUSTIN — House Speaker Lewis says a proposal to weaken the speaker's power through a special executive committee is a warmed-over idea that means would reject.

"I don't feel intimidated by Lewis said Wednesday of the change advanced by House Majority Leader Robert Bush, Sherman.

"I haven't heard anyone complain about the way the session is being run, except for one of two people," he added.

Bush proposed breaking down the "imperial speakership" by establishing a panel to share the power now held by the speaker alone. He said the time is right for "structural reform."

The Fort Worth Democrat, who is serving his first term as speaker, has been repeatedly criticized since his belated disclosure of his business links with a beer distributor, two liquor dealers and a horse racing lobbyist.

"The speaker's office is now under attack," said Bush. "There is guilt by association, and the members are concerned."

Bush said when he has completed a draft of his amendments, he plans to submit them directly to Lewis.

"It could give him something significant to hang his hat on," he said. "He could be a reform speaker."

One of Lewis' first acts as speaker was to push through

rules changes that permitted him not only to make committee assignments, but to appoint and remove chairmen and members.

The committee proposed by Bush would be elected by the House to share those and all other powers of the speaker.

Lewis said he told Bush he would be willing to review his plan, but he called it "an idea whose time has come, and come, and come for as many sessions as I have been a member and even before."

"It basically smacks of all such previous proposals which, in essence, would reshape the House along the same lines as the U.S. congress," he said. Lewis said Texans are satisfied with a system where committees "are

structured along lines of talent and ability — rather than on the basis of partisanship and seniority along as is the case in Congress."

Rep. Carlyle Smith, D-Grand Prairie, one of only two House members who opposed Lewis for speaker, said he wished Bush

had been more supportive when the rules were changed at the start of the session.

Dallas smelter a threat

United Press International
DALLAS — Mayor Jack Coughlin has asked city attorneys to find a way to close a lead smelter that is potentially hazardous to children living nearby.

Responding to a request from councilman Ricardo Medina, Evans instructed the city manager Wednesday to prepare a resolution seeking an injunction against RSR Corp., owner of the Murph Metals smelter.

The Environmental Protection Agency released a study on Feb. 1, based on two years of testing, that found potentially hazardous lead levels in 5.6 percent of preschool children living around the plant.

"We have a responsibility at the local level to do something about the plight of the people who live around the lead smelter," Councilwoman Elsie Faye Higgins said. "I think it's past time to do something at the local level."

Regional EPA toxicologist Dr. Norman Dyer has alleged the city downplays the seriousness of the problem, since it did not concentrate on children living downwind of the plant.

RSR Corp. has maintained throughout the controversy that it complies with lead emission standards.

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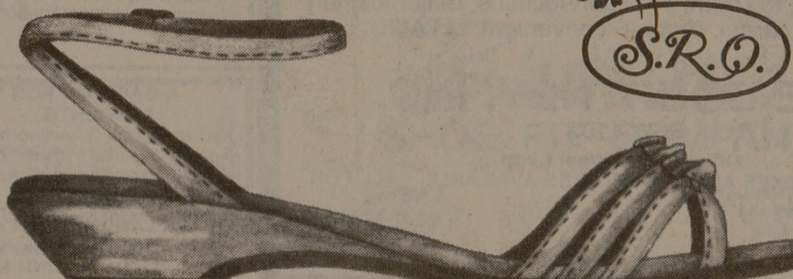
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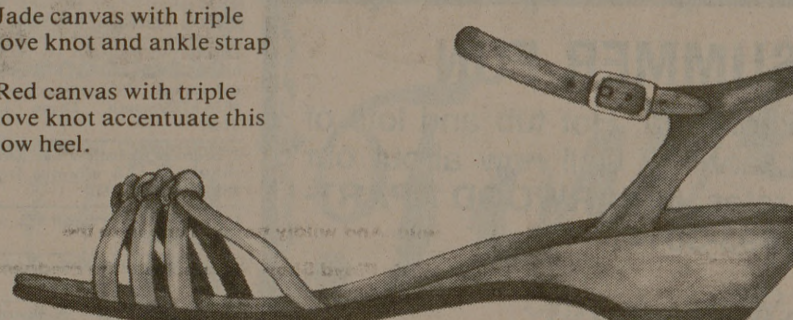
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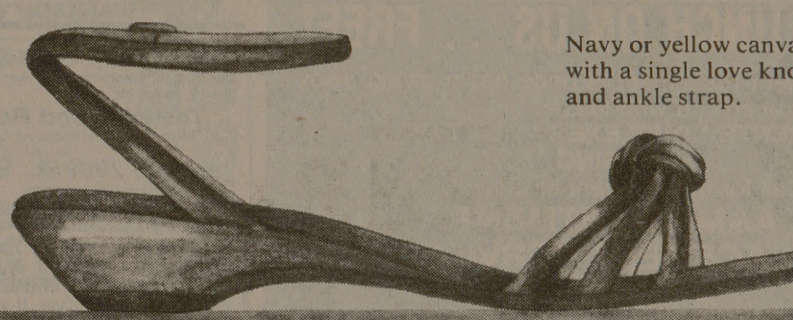
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