

Reading for those who can't

Taping opens books to blind

United Press International
DALLAS — Sometimes the spoken word is not mightier than the written word. An agency in Texas proves that point in tens of words each month. The Dallas Taping for the Blind — one of only a half-dozen such agencies under contract with the Library of Congress — has opened the pages of "Treasure Island" to blind children in hospitals, computer manuals to hi-tech buffs and financial reports to blind stockholders.

"We help anybody who can't read the printed word," said agency director Edward Sterne. "That means the blind, the hearing disabled, the handicapped person who is incapable of reading a book."

He said the agency's productions, based on the voices of 130 volunteers, run the gamut. "We tape trade publications

We help anybody who can't read the printed word. That means the blind, the learning disabled, the handicapped person who is incapable of holding a book. — Edward Sterne, agency director.

and financial reports," he said. "We do a lot of textbooks, documents for graduate students,

newspapers, books on pesticides. We have an American Indian who gives us scads of Indian books."

The service has filled the library of a local children's hospital with classics including "Treasure Island," "Alice in Wonderland," "Tom Sawyer" and "Little Women."

Sterne said the service issues about six books a month under contract with the Library of Congress and tapes another 2,022 publications monthly by local request.

But the work is time-consuming and difficult.

"For '20,000 Leagues Under the Sea,'" he said, "we made eight cassettes of 90 minutes each. A volunteer gives us only two hours a week. When one volunteer is through reading,

we move in another so taping goes on all day long. So that's a lot of volunteer time in a single book."

He said the printed word sometimes can cause problems when it's vocalized.

"In current novels there are a lot of four-letter words," he said. "It's one thing to read something in the privacy of your living room and quite another to read it out loud."

Sometimes the objections are political or religious.

"We have two people who refused to read a book by Jane Fonda because they didn't like what she stood for," he said.

"Another reader wanted to put a disclaimer on a book we were assigned by the Library of

Congress," he said. "This is the Bible belt and the book was about atheism, an anti-God treatise. That was tough."

He said the assignment was given to another.

"We have to be flexible," he said. "These are volunteers."

He said the readers must be given hours of training and many cannot qualify in taping national publications.

"The Library of Congress doesn't want to hear Texas or Southern accents," he said.

He said the Dallas agency pioneered a new field of word-talk.

Now, he said requests for the computer tapes are flooding from New York, Chicago, St. Louis and elsewhere.

Gramm opposes proposal to swap his constituents

United Press International
AUSTIN — Rep. Phil Gramm, of Bryan-College Station, has been quoted by one congressional representative as being strongly opposed to a redistricting plan that would take some voters from his current district and give him some in House Majority Leader Jim Wright's district.

ty and put them in Dallas Democratic Congressman Martin Frost's district.

To compensate for the loss, primarily Democratic voters from House Majority Leader Jim Wright's district would be shifted into Gramm's district.

Sen. Oscar Mauzy, D-Dallas, who is sponsoring the plan, denied it is an attempt to punish Gramm for resigning his seat as a Democrat and successfully being re-elected as a Republican in February.

"The two changes are basically a wash. They cancel each

other out," Mauzy said Monday. But Gramm supporters contend the primarily white and conservative voters in Dallas County gave Gramm 79 percent of the vote in the special election.

"According to him (Gramm), it (the changes) would make it much tougher for him to get re-elected," said Sen. Buster Brown, R-Lake Jackson. "The net effect of the two changes causes trouble."

In addition to the changes in Gramm's district, the proposal also would alter freshman U.S.

Rep. Tom Vandergriff's district by expanding it to include the entire city of Arlington. That city, which was the long-time former mayor's strongest base of support, currently is divided among two districts.

"The people of Arlington were upset about not being in just one congressional district and I think rightly so," Mauzy said.

also would alter freshman U.S.

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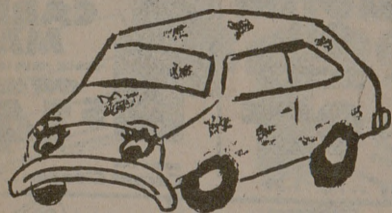
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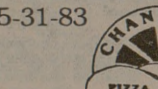
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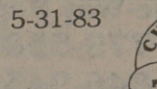
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