

Residents uneasy about secret sale

United Press International
MERIDIAN — Landowners in this community 80 miles southwest of Dallas are uneasy about General Dynamics' secretary's purchase of more than 2,000 acres in Bosque County, a newspaper reported Sunday.
 Secrecy concerning various land deals, rumors about land use and concern about fire protection are making local ranchers nervous, the Fort Worth Star-Telegram reported.
 The newspaper reported that landowners have heard different stories from General Dynamics about how the land will be used.
 A General Dynamics official in December told the Meridian Tribune newspaper that the land would be used to test radar antennas, but the Star-Telegram reported attempts to confirm the report proved unsuccessful.
 Landowner O.E. Mullins said a man called him in November, offering to buy 350 acres of his

land. Mullins said he was unaware at the time that the man represented General Dynamics.
 Mullins said the man told him "they were going to put in a land preserve." But several hills have been blasted with explosives to make way for a road, the newspaper reported.
 Joe Heartsill, who owns land adjacent to the property, told the newspaper he can see an 8-foot chain-link fence topped with barbed wire going up around the land.
 His brother, Tom, sold 315 acres to the contracting company, but said he wishes now that he hadn't.
 Dynamiting to build the road may have ruined his water well, Heartsill said, although General Dynamics has offered to pay for repairs. Heartsill said he also will have to patrol the fence surrounding the land.
 "Not even Comanche Peak (nuclear power plant) has a chain-link fence all the way around," Heartsill said.
 When Heartsill sold his land,

he was told it would be used to test radars. He said the buyer also mentioned "sending messages into outer space."
 "He told me (the project) would be five years, and they would be through and sell the land. But I don't know if that's true," Heartsill said. "I just don't want to see an atomic dump site or an MX missile site there in five or 10 years."
 If General Dynamics intends to install a dump site, a permit from the state would be required. But no such application has been made, the Star-Telegram reported.
 Heartsill, a real estate agent, is concerned about depreciation of the land. Others are worried about fire threatening their grazing land or cattle.
 About eight acres belonging to J.L. Varley burned from General Dynamics' land onto his land in late December.

Man gets last wish

Cowboy burial held

United Press International
COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — Friends of John Mancini say the late cowboy will be dressed in his Western-best trappings, hat and boots before his "last ride" to be wrapped in a horse blanket and dropped in a casket on Deer Mountain.
 That was Mancini's last wish. It will come true at noon Tuesday.
 A district judge ruled last week that Mancini, 58, was in a sound mental state when he communicated the desire to his friends. The judge ruled against Mancini's wife and son, who wanted him buried at Fort Logan National Cemetery south of Denver.
 Mancini died of a stroke Jan. 10 at a Colorado Springs hospital. His ex-wife, Patricia Bower, and son, Bob, 15, both of Wheatland, Wyo., claimed the body, dressed in a business suit and arranged for burial at Fort Logan.
 But several of Mancini's friends, recalling his love for Deer Mountain and his desire to be buried there, filed a petition with Fourth Judicial District Judge Richard Hall. Hall then postponed the scheduled Wednesday burial until a hearing could be held.

One friend, Malcolm Smith, said Mancini had sent him a Christmas card in which he expressed his desire "to be dropped in a crack on Deer Mountain when I take the last ride."
 Hall ruled that burial on the mountain was "consistent with his (Mancini's) lifestyle itself, and is an understandable and appropriate expression on his part." The judge said he was "not only satisfied the wishes of the decedent were made clearly known, I do not find those wishes were the result of mental incompetence."
 Hall gave Mancini's friends until Tuesday to come up with the money for a proper burial through a mortuary.
 "John Mancini had a thousand friends," said E.A.

Tripp of Lake George. "They'll come forward if we need them."
 One of Mancini's friends, Diane Payton, said she would take Mancini's cowboy clothes, including his cowboy britches and vest with horse-hide stitching, boots, hat and a pipe, to the funeral home so they can "dress John properly for his last ride."
 A spokesman for the Swan Law Funeral Home in Colorado Springs said that after the body is re-dressed in the cowboy clothes Tuesday it will be taken as far as possible up to the mountain's base by hearse. Then it will be transferred to a horse-drawn sleigh.
 "We've had some unusual requests (for burials)," said the funeral home employee, "but this is in a class by itself."

Drilling executive forecasts recovery for energy in '84

United Press International

DALLAS — Ed McGhee sees a faint, flickering light down that long dark tunnel through which the drilling industry is passing.
 "I expect 1984 to be considerably better than 1983," McGhee, executive vice president of the International Association of Drilling Contractors, said recently. "It just won't get started right away."
 The first quarter of every year finds the U.S. domestic

drilling industry in a seasonal slump caused by harsh weather and uncertainty over taxes. Since the economics of drilling are influenced — some say dominated — by tax considerations, many independent oil-field operators aren't certain until later in the year how much money they will have available for exploration, he said.

But after the traditionally slow first quarter, McGhee sees an upturn in the second

quarter and a continual rise throughout the year.

At the end of the year the U.S. rig count was 2,870. "I will be vastly surprised if it doesn't exceed 3,000 (rigs in 1984) and I expect that we might get as high as 3,400," McGhee predicts.

One reason the long-awaited upturn will take place this year, he said, is that "finally the gas situation will become a little clearer to everybody."

"What we've had in the way of weather this winter so far will make people ask questions about how much of a supply of gas do we really have."

"We do not have an adequate gas reserve right now, but just a surplus of deliverability," he said.

Such a shortage will be even more likely, he said, "if this winter of '83-'84 continues to be as harsh as it has been."

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