

Slouch By Jim Earle

GOODBYE CLASS OF '84



Marijuana cultivated on public land in U.S.

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Marijuana growing on public land is creating a public health and safety hazard that is getting worse due to a lack of money to wipe them out, congressional auditors said this week.

U.S. Forest Service reports to the General Accounting Office showed marijuana plots on federal land increased 128 percent — from 3,600 in 1980 to 8,200 in 1983. Despite a budget increase from \$206,000 in 1982 to \$1.1 million this year to stop marijuana cultivation, pot growing on public land has become a major law enforcement problem, the GAO report to Rep. John Seiberling, D-Ohio, said.

"GAO has documented it as an intolerable situation, one that deserves our continuing concern," Seiberling said. "The report should be required reading for both the Congress and the administration."

Marijuana growers cultivated 8,200 plots on Forest Service land last year and harvested 7,000 of them.

Federal law enforcement agents raided 330 marijuana plots on Bureau of Land Management acres, nearly all in California and Oregon, and 27 secret gardens on National Park Service land.

It was the first year the BLM and Park Service kept records, but the Forest Service reported in 1981 it found and destroyed only 450 of an estimated 6,000 plots on its property.

Pot is grown illegally on public lands in nearly every state, but is a major cash crop in California, the Pacific Northwest and Hawaii.

Little if any public pot growing was discovered in Iowa, New York and New Jersey, according to Forest Service information given to the GAO.

GAO auditors visited 22 marijuana plots in California, Oregon, Hawaii, Idaho, Missouri and Arkansas to prepare the report for Seiberling's subcommittee.

"At 14 of the 22 sites there were

one or more incidents of marijuana growers shooting at, threatening, and harassing employees and federal land users, the GAO report said. "Marijuana growers also have booby trapped areas, killed wildlife and damaged natural resources," the auditors said.

The Park Service "took aggressive actions" to control marijuana cultivation at Hawaii's Volcanoes National Park site and greatly reduced the problem, they said.

Nearly 950,000 marijuana plants were discovered last year in 8,286 plots throughout the United States. The largest number of plots — 3,204 — were in California. Heavy growth also was found in the Pacific Northwest — 1,621 — and the South — 1,350.

In California's Trinity County, a lack of equipment hampered efforts to destroy the pot plots. A sheriff reported it took six hours to reach a site by road through another county that was only 45 minutes away by helicopter.

In addition, the GAO report also said Arkansas State Police reported an experimental Bureau of Land Management red dye spray program designed to mark the marijuana to deter its harvest had been discontinued in a June 1984 Interior Department policy statement. Interior officials cited concerns over potential health hazards caused by some red dye ingredients.

Officials at Missouri's Mark Twain National Forest also said they did not believe marijuana cultivation was causing a land management problem.

"The officials want to keep a low profile in the marijuana control program," the report said. "The forest's special agent said marijuana detection is a responsibility of state and local law enforcement agencies, but Forest Service personnel will lead them to plots or reported plots, or assist in eradication efforts when requested."

Board sets limits on extracurricular student activities

United Press International

AUSTIN — The State Board of Education fended off weekend attempts to soften restrictions on participation in extracurricular activities by failing students and adopted a strict set of rules that some members complained were ambiguous and unfair.

After weeks of public hearings and board debate of proposals to expand on legislative education reforms, the board adopted rules that require students to pass every course in a six-weeks grading period to be able to practice for or participate in athletics and other extracurricular activities for the next six weeks.

The board also agreed that each extracurricular event can take up only eight after-school hours per school week of a student's time, including practices and performances, and each student will be limited to 20 hours a week in extracurricular participation.

Jack Strong of Longview, chairman of the board committee that developed the rules, failed twice in attempts to slightly soften their effect.

The board voted 13-2 against Strong's motion to base the restrictions on a student's cumulative grade average in a course as opposed to a six-weeks grade and voted 10-5 against his effort to allow local school districts to decide whether to ban failing students from practices.

Board member Volly Bastine of Houston chastised Strong for trying to override the will of Strong's own committee, calling the former state senator's comments "self-serving."

Another board member said the rules were so ambiguous that they could be construed as banning fail-

ing students from attending football games or their school proms.

"I don't believe the intent (of the education reform law) is to totally disenfranchise students," said Carolyn Crawford of Beaumont.

"We should use caution in passing rules that isolate students, that say 'You're no good, you're a failure.' Some kind of extracurricular activity should be available to all students."

Strong said the Texas Education Agency would be allowed to "fine tune" the rules to clear up ambiguous points.

"There is no way possible to write a rule that contemplates every situation that occurs with 3 million children in nearly 1,100 school districts," he said.

In other action Saturday, the board unanimously adopted a resolution objecting to proposals to dip into the capital of the Permanent School Fund to make up a \$900 million shortfall in state revenues for the next two fiscal years.

Interest from the multi-billion-dollar fund, made up of money from the sale of state lands, provides \$120 per student in education funding each year and could rise to more than \$200 per student in as little as five years, board Chairman Jon Brumley of Fort Worth said.

"The Board of Education is fully convinced that no situation now exists, and that none will exist in the foreseeable future, which justifies the invasion of the principal or income of the Permanent School Fund — a course of action which could have but one result, the ultimate destruction of one of Texas' greatest heritages," the resolution said.

Number of priests decline in parishes

United Press International

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — Catholic parish priests, romanticized in films like "The Bells of St. Mary's" and portrayals by Bing Crosby and Pat O'Brien, have been declining in number and replaced by laymen, a study released Sunday said.

"The picture of a parish where Father O'Brien took care of God, Sister Cerita ran the school and the people met their mass obligations and said 'Hail Mary's' would be a woefully inadequate stereotype of U.S. Catholic parishes in the 1980s," the study of U.S. Roman Catholics said.

Laymen and women now occupy more than 80 percent of leadership roles and nearly 60 percent of paid positions in U.S. Catholic parishes, according to the first report from the University of Notre Dame's Study of Catholic Parish Life.

A non-priest — either a married deacon or a layperson — has supplanted clerics as the central authority figure in 10 percent of the parishes studied.

The study, which began with a 1981 survey of nearly 6 percent of the nation's 18,500 parishes, attributed the reduction of clerical power to recent declines in the numbers of priests and nuns as well as to the spirit of reform fostered by Pope

John XXIII in the 1960s.

The Second Vatican Council two decades ago radically changed the way Catholics worship and encouraged grassroots reform that has given ordinary church members real control and responsibility, the study said.

"Actually, some people would argue that it's a kind of return to the roots of the American parish," said Notre Dame political science professor David C. Leeger, co-director of the seven-year research project.

Leeger said it was not until late in the 19th Century that there were sufficient numbers of priests and nuns in the United States to take everyday control of parish affairs.

Among the other findings in the report, the first in a series to be released over the next two years:

- Nearly half the Catholics surveyed participate in parish activities beyond weekly mass, including an increasing number of spiritual renewal and education programs.

- "For many Catholics, religious practices in the parish cannot be likened to pulling up to a service station on a Sunday and gassing up with holiness," the report said.

- While today's Catholics regard the parish as the focus of their religious activity, fewer than ever, especially in the suburbs, see it as the center of their social lives.

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