## STATE AND LOCAL

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By Jim Earle



"Did you say 'short on the sides' or 'short on the top??"

# Clergy may balk at ruling to report child abuse cases

#### **Associated Press**

AUSTIN — An attorney general's

AUSTIN — An attorney general's opinion saying state law requires even clergymen to report cases of child abuse could cause serious problems for the clergy in Texas, church officials say. "I would go to jail before I would ever admit anything that was brought to me in confession," said Monsignor James Jamail, pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church in southwest Houston. "I don't know a priest that wouldn't do the same thing," he said.

Attorney General Jim Mattox re-leased an opinion Monday saying a priest or minister is legally bound to report cases of child abuse, even if he learned of it from an abuser who admitted it in confidence.

The 1975 law "requires a minister of an established church to report evidence of child abuse when confi-dentially disclosed to him by a pa-rishioner," the opinion said.

Mattox also said state law doesn't give the clergy exemption from be-ing required to testify in court pro-ceedings involving child abuse.

An attorney general's opinion cus-tomarily carries the weight of law and remains in effect unless over-

turned in court or by the Legislature.

Several religious leaders said the opinion conflicts with church law and practices.

and practices. Tammy Edgerly-Dowd, a canon lawyer with the Diocese of Austin, said a Catholic priest cannot violate the promise not to repeat what is confessed, "unfortunately even at the expense of the children."

The canon law of the Catholic church, she said, explicitly states that it "is a crime for a confessor in any way to betray a penitent by word or any other manner, for any reason."

If the confidence is broken by the priest, she said, the penalty is auto-matic excommunication. She said it can be reversed only by the Vatican.

Mattox said he agrees, personally, that "you should have the right to talk to your spiritual adviser without the spiritual adviser being forced to

divulge that conversation." But he said, "As attorney general I frequently have to issue opinions that I don't personally agree with. The law is set by the Legislature, and the Legislature has spoken on this matter." matter.

Tom Brandon, a Fort Worth law-yer with the Christian Legal Society, said clerymen likely won't follow Mattox's opinion.



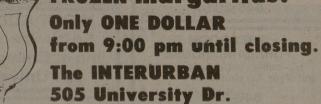
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### Messina Hof growing with industry

## Texas' wines building a reputation

#### **By AMY NETTERVILLE** Reporter

J.R., oil wells, Blue Bell ice cream, and "Urban Cowboy" are only a few of the things that have made Texas famous.

And Paul Bonarrigo, owner of Messina Hof winery and vineyard in Bryan says the state's wine industry soon may be another claim to fame for Texas.

Bonarrigo says the wine industry in Texas has a great future because of the acres of new grapes it pro-

duces. "We probably had less than 1,000 acres of grapes in the state less than five years ago." he says. "Now, we have around 6,000 acres, which is incredible

"The last two or three years peo-ple would say, 'Did you hear Texas has wine?'," Bonarrigo says. "Now we've reached the age where you hear, 'Did you know Texas makes some pretty good wine?' — now that's progress."

Bonarrigo says Texas' recent pop-ularity has definitely helped the

marity has definitely helped the Texas wine industry. "There's no shortage of Texas pride," he says. "Three or four years ago, if the product was Texas, it sold just on that merit. Now the industry is becoming sophisticated enough that it has to be Texas and good. Texas and bad doesn't sell anymo-re"

Bonarrigo says the Texas wine in-dustry in Texas has improved since the mid-70s.

"There were vineyards planted a. few hundred years ago in the state, but not much really happened," Bo-narrigo says. "Right now there are 20 vineyards in the state, Messina Hof is the 13th." Hof is the 13th.

In 1977 the industry comprised only one or two wineries and a branch of experimental vineyards.

Messina Hof was one of the ex-

tive through the agricultural exten-sion service and they assisted me in choosing original grape stock."

Messina Hof now produces 11 dif-ferent kinds of wine and distributes them statewide. "To market Messina Hof, I have to travel all around the state, giving wine seminars and promoting the wine in restaurants," Bonarrigo says. "As I go to different sections of the state, I find reaction from Texans to the Texas wine industry is very inthe Texas wine industry is very interesting.

teresting. "When people find out where our vineyard and winery is located, they always ask if our wine is Aggie wine. In the early phases, I thought about having a chateau Aggie because of our proximity to the University, but we never did produce it." Bonarrigo says the competition between A&M and the University of Texas is even true in the new Texas wine industry.

yard, St. Geneave, that has its cor-porate office in Austin," Bonarrigo says. "There's already been a few

stories by wine writers in the state comparing Messina Hof, the Aggie wine, to St. Geneave, the UT wine." Bonarrigo says five years ago Texas was one of the lowest per ca-nits wine consuming states in the pita wine-consuming states in the country.

"People were really very unen-lightened about wine," he says. "But at the same time, there were more at the same time, there were more high-quality wines in Texas than any other place in the world. If you went to France and wanted some really outstanding French wine, they would tell you the place to go was Houston or Dallas." Bonarrigo says Texas still has fine wines coming into the state — the difference now, compared to five years ago, is the percentage of Tex-ans drinking wine.

perimental vineyards planted in hope that grapes would do well he-re," Bonarrigo says. "A&M was ac-



## Sales tax up in Texas

#### **Associated Press**

AUSTIN ---- Fueled by retail sales growth and a broadening of the tax base lawmakers approved last summer, Texas sales tax collections are up this year.

The state comptroller's office reported Tuesday that Austin's sales tax receipts have increased by 25 percent so far this year, more than any other major city in the state the state.

Austin received \$5.4 million as its 1-cent share of the sales taxes collected in the city. The city's payments so far this year total \$30.2 million, up from \$24.2 milion a year ago.

The comptroller reported sales tax increases of 5 percent for Houston, which has \$104.8 mil-lion in tax receipt payments for the year, the highest payment to-the same site. tal for any city.

Texas cities receive 1 percent of all taxable retail sales as their share of the tax.



## Yuqoslavian tried for swindling collections affluent Austin man out of \$46,000

#### **Associated Press**

AUSTIN — A wealthy Austin man "obsessed" with finding his son man "obsessed" with finding his son who disappeared in the South China Sea testified Tuesday against a Yu-goslavian accused of posing as a So-viet KGB agent to defraud the man. Bratislav Lilic is charged with swindling Douglas Pierce out of \$46,000. Pierce testified he has spent \$400,000 in his so-far futile search for his son, John. Pierce identified Lilic in federal court as a man he knew as Alexan-

Pierce identified Lilic in federal court as a man he knew as Alexan-der Ivanov, who identified himself as a KGB agent who claimed he could secure the younger Pierce's re-lease from Vietnam. Defense lawyer Joe Turner said during a break that Lilic was an "in-termediary" connected with the So-viet embassy, and he might have been able to deliver the younger Pierce if the FBI had not intervened. Douglas Pierce gestured toward the detendant and identified him as "wearing a suit I assume he's bought

wearing a suit I assume he's bought

with my money." John Pierce was aboard the Glo-mar Java Sea, an oil drilling ship that sank 200 miles from the Vietnamese coast on Oct. 25, 1983. There were 81 crew members. Thirty-five bodies

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were found. Pierce's was not among

them. The elder Pierce, a former Ma-rine and now a wealthy business-man, quickly began a full-time search for his son. He believes his son, a derrick hand on board, sur-wived in a life boat and drifted to

Pierce said he was contacted by Lilic shortly after appearing on a network television show and dis-cussing the \$100,000 reward he is offering. He said he also advertised the reward in Vietnamese newspa-pers and magazines

In June 1984, two months after Pierce sought help from the Soviet embassy in Washington, a caller said he was a KGB agent working out of

ounger Pierce was aware of that, all counts.

For \$16,000 in cash or gold and a promise to keep the deal secret, the caller said Pierce would be returned,

He recalled telling Lilic, "I hope to heavens you are for real. If not,

physicians who were prepared to treat the son. They also rented a medically-equipped private jet to speed the son back to Texas.

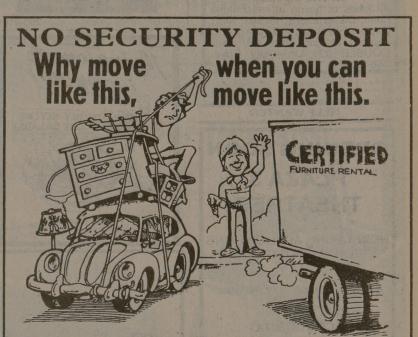
But the missing man was not re-

After Lilic took a total of \$46,000 from the elder Pierce, he was ar-rested in San Antonio on Jan. 11. Two FBI agents had accompanied Pierce to a planned meeting with Lilic Lilic

Washington. Lilic said Soviet officials were con-vinced the Glomar Java Sea was a spy ship, but they did not believe the of 35 years in prison if convicted of

Assistant U.S. Attorney Jack O'Donnell told jurors that Pierce was "reluctant" to work with the FBI.

the missing man's father said. The money changed hands in a dimly lit park in Chicago on June 19, 1984, he added. "This man was taking advantage of Mr. Pierce by dragging Mr. Pierce all around the United States, taking his money," said O'Donnell.



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