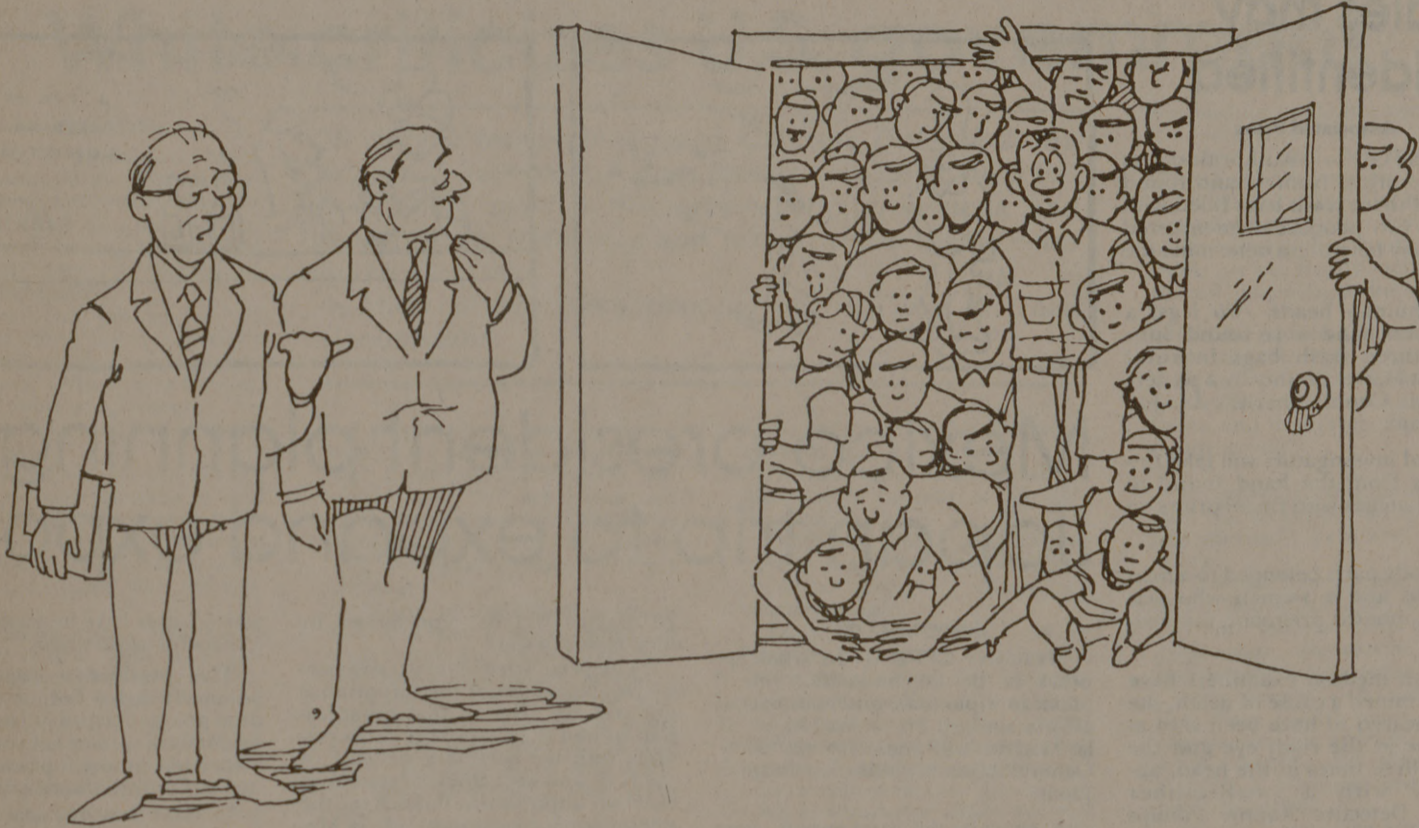


Slouch

By Jim Earle



"All it takes is one hole in one card and your class is changed from one with 42 students to one with 420 students."

Sen. Sharp enters Railroad Commission race

Associated Press
AUSTIN — State Sen. John Sharp, saying he has no ties to the industries it regulates, on Tuesday entered the race for the Democratic nomination for the Texas Railroad Commission.

"The sound regulation of oil and gas and the assurance of adequate transportation for all areas of Texas are matters of critical concern at this point in our history," Sharp said. The Victoria lawmaker has served two terms in the Texas House and has been in the Senate since 1982. He also said he has about \$1 million pledged from backers and estimated the primary race will cost from \$500,000 to \$900,000. "While I have no industry ties related to the commission's regulatory authority, I have a good working knowledge of the agency's work and

of state government in general," he said. Sharp said the most important area of oil and gas regulation the commission can become involved in is "conservation . . . doing those things that are necessary to get the most oil and gas production over the longest sustained period of time." He also said public officials have "a sacred trust" to protect water supplies from pollution.

Any well operators who consistently pollute underground supplies or above-ground water such as rivers and streams "should not be permitted to do business in the state of Texas," he said. While Sharp said he believes in a free-market transportation system, he said he also recognizes the need for regulations that assure service to rural areas.

Lockdown

Prisoners still confined, 4 more deaths occur

Associated Press
HUNTSVILLE — Some 17,000 inmates at 13 Texas prisons remained confined to their cells Tuesday as corrections officials hoped the lockdown would quiet a war among rival prison gangs. The emergency lockdown order, the second in recent weeks, came Monday from Department of Corrections Director O.L. McCotter after four inmates were stabbed to death within a 24-hour period.

Eight slayings occurred in eight days, bringing the number of homicides this year in the nation's second-largest prison system to 26, beating the record set in 1984 by one.

McCotter's lockdown order was indefinite. Prison system spokesman Charles Brown said some previous lockdowns had lasted for a couple of weeks before the security precautions were eased.

"It's been pretty quiet," Brown said Tuesday. A lone incident overnight Monday occurred between two cellmates at the Ellis I Unit and was not gang related, he said.

In that altercation, one inmate suffered minor lacerations when his cellmate slashed him with a razor blade during an argument, Brown said.

Prison officials, however, have labeled the entire system, which includes some 37,000 inmates, as very tense.

Most of the recent violence has been attributed to a recruiting war between two Hispanic gangs known as the Texas Syndicate and the Texas Mafia.

"Part of the initiation rite is that you beat someone or stab someone," Phil Guthrie, an assistant director, said.

Officials estimate about 750 inmates are participants in gangs, although Guthrie termed that number very conservative.

"It's the ones we don't know about that scare the hell out of me," McCotter said. "We've got to put a stop to this now. And I'll lock down every unit if I have to."

"I'm not going to let them (gangs) dictate how this unit operates," Darrington Unit Warden Michael Moore said.

Three inmates were stabbed to death Sunday night at Darrington, south of Houston, in an attack that lasted no more than 45 seconds, Guthrie said.

Then on Monday, another gang slaying occurred at the nearby Ramsey II Unit.

"In open dormitories, the only thing we can do is increase our vigilance, make our presence known," Ramsey Warden Lopher Jenkins said.

The Ramsey slaying, which took the life of convicted burglar Leonel Perez, 31, occurred in a minimum security dormitory.

Perez, serving an 8-year term, was stabbed 15 times with a metal rod, officials said.

Sunday night's victims included Lloyd Jacquez, 24, serving a seven-year sentence for three burglary convictions; Jose Arturo Garcia, 24, serving a 12-year sentence for aggravated robbery; and Albert Carrillo Jr., 28, who was serving a 12-year sentence for burglary.

Two inmates were in custody in connection with the Darrington slayings.

One inmate was held in connection with the Ramsey Unit killing.

Officials declined to give the gang affiliations of individual victims and attackers.

'The Exterminator' battles with bugs in Arlington

Associated Press
ARLINGTON — For 10 years, Gary Finley has armed himself with a gun, gas mask and slew of chemicals to combat a million-year-old menace.

One could describe him as a diluted version of "The Terminator." But Arnold Schwarzenegger he isn't. Rather, he's "The Exterminator," a pest controller equipped with fumigating munitions, an old-fashioned sense of adventure and a knack for encountering the unusual.

Oddly enough, the 34-year-old Arlington resident and owner of Finley Pest Control often stumbles into scenarios which might be found in a motion picture.

He's confronted "mounds of fire ants as large as compact-car hoods," attacks by hundreds of swarming bees, hordes of ticks chewing up

sides of houses, roaches the size of mice, a haunted house foundation and nude clients.

The firm handles an average of 25 service calls per day.

The exterminator has fought pests on almost all battlegrounds.

"Bugs have no economic distinctions," he said. "They can infest anywhere, from the most affluent places to the most humble."

Finley is outfitted with hefty water spray-guns, gas masks and more than two dozen different insecticide chemicals capable of destroying more than one million different insects. He is currently testing a new innovation in pest-control called the Insectiscope which detects the sound of termites behind walls.

Contrary to popular belief, Finley is not bugged by his tiny nemeses.

"If anything, I've gained a great deal of respect for insects," he said.

"They never cease to amaze me." And besides, they are responsible for Finley's lucrative business of late. He said Arlington has had "the buggiest summer in the last 10 years."

Moreover, Finley emphasizes that combating pests is "a lot of fun."

He describes the adrenalin rush he receives during bumblebee ambushes.

"Bumblebees are the most fun we've had," he said. "Everybody fights for that job. It's like a World War II movie."

Finley said two exterminators will advance to the scene of an ambush, both heavily armed with 200-gallon and eight-horsepower spray guns. Then they surround the hive.

Finley said a dense fog will usually form around the hive and the bees will become extremely aggressive and start nosediving.

"They (the bees) line up in front

of you and attack you like German bombers," he said. "When we spray they get gravely perturbed. They'll try to get you."

He said he doesn't wear any special protective clothing during the maneuver because vulnerability "makes it more sporting." However, it's important, he said, that somebody cover the back side of the nest to ward off other bees, such as ones away from the hive.

"It's exciting — like an anti-aircraft gunner on the battle-scene of World War II," he added.

He said he frequently arrives at a scene where a woman is screaming on top of a kitchen table or chair after seeing a cockroach or a rat.

And, "Folks from New Jersey are always asking us if we have unmarked vehicles because they're embarrassed to call us," he said. "I think that's kind of off-the-wall."

Policyholders win \$1.97 million in settlement

Associated Press
AUSTIN — A tentative settlement with brokers who sold annuities issued by an Ohio company that filed for bankruptcy will mean \$1.97 million for more than 10,000 Texas policyholders, state officials said Tuesday.

Attorney General Jim Mattox and State Board of Insurance Chairman Lyndon Olson announced the Texas portion of the \$157 million nationwide settlement with brokers who sold Baldwin-United Corp. annuities.

"With this settlement, 92 percent of the Texans who bought these policies will see the interest earned on their investment increase," Mattox said.

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