

# State and Local

Texas official predicts 95% will pass

## Teacher skill testing begins today

**Associated Press**  
AUSTIN — About 205,000 Texas teachers will be sitting on the other side of the desk Monday as they take reading and writing tests to determine whether they will keep their jobs.

State officials say about 10,000 may fail the test or a make-up exam to be offered in June. Those who do not pass will lose their teaching certificates — and their livelihoods.

Commissioner of Education W.N. Kirby said Saturday, "Well, I've said along that I think 95 percent of our teachers are skilled and dedicated and so I feel very good that our teachers will perform very well. I'm convinced that when everything is all said and done at the end of this summer, there will not be

more than five percent of the people that haven't demonstrated they have the basic skills necessary to teach."

Kirby, along with other officials of the Texas Education Agency who hold teaching certificates, also must take the test.

The Teachers Examination of Current Administrators and Teachers (TECAT) was mandated by the public school reforms passed by the Legislature in 1984.

Kirby said he did not think a ruling by a South Texas judge would affect the test. Friday, State District Judge R.L. Eschenburg of Jourdanton exempted a veteran teacher from taking the test because she earned her teaching certificate before the reform law was passed.

"That still leaves some 200,000

minus one to take the test," Kirby said.

Gov. Mark White, who spearheaded the reform package, also predicted that most of the teachers would pass.

"There's an enormous amount of pressure brought to bear upon them (teachers) because of the test, but they're going to do well," White said.

The Texas State Teachers Association unsuccessfully challenged the test in court, arguing that local school boards should decide if teachers are competent.

The reading part of the test includes identifying the main idea and details in reading matter, distinguishing fact from opinion, using and selecting reference sources and

comprehending a job-related vocabulary.

The writing portion includes capitalization, punctuation and spelling, proper English usage, identifying errors in sentences and writing a brief composition.

On Saturday, the State Board of Education approved emergency procedures for school districts that lose teachers due to the test and are not able to replace them.

Provided the school can prove there are no eligible replacements available, instructors failing the test may be given a one-year temporary permission to teach the 1986-87 school year. The temporary certificate may not be renewed.

## In Advance MSC Council will choose committee leaders tonight

**By JEANNE ISENBERG**  
Staff Writer

The last slate of nominations for unfilled leadership positions in the MSC Council and MSC committees will be presented to the Council at its 6:30 meeting tonight.

Denis Davis, MSC president, says about 20 positions still need to be filled.

The Council also will address the two budget problems confronting the Memorial Student Center — Gov. Mark White's ordered 13 percent budget cut and the recent money losses suffered by MSC Town Hall.

The MSC budget was ready for approval when White issued his order. With the Texas A&M Board of Regents' approval of a 7 percent cut in the University's

budget, Davis says, the MSC must consider the possible approaches to the re-arrangement of its 1985-1986 budget as well as its 1986-1987 budget.

Town Hall has had losses on its Broadway program and several other programs this year, Davis says. MSC Director Jim Reynolds said last week that all the MSC committees' budgets would be analyzed to see whether Town Hall's losses could be covered without cutting programs from any of the committees.

The Council also will discuss several programs to be presented by the Program Review Committee, Davis says, and will listen to reports on recent programs, such as SCONA and the Miss TAMU pageant.

## End-of-year rebound in oil prices predicted

ABILENE — The head of an oil association said Sunday he thinks the price of oil will rebound to \$20 to \$22 a barrel by the year's end, but before it does, the number of operating wells may drop below a 1971 low.

Although Bud Scoggins, Independent Petroleum Association of America president-elect, believes prices will start rising before the year is over, he says the upturn probably won't help the diminishing number of operating wells.

"The rig count last week was 1,248. It's been dropping from 50 to 70 units per week," Scoggins said. "At the rate we're going, in about six weeks we will drop below the all-time rate of drilling since World War II, which was established in 1971" when the year's average sunk to 971 active rigs.

"I hate to say it, but I believe there's enough downward momentum built into the situation now that

even if we had an upturn in prices tomorrow, the rig count would drop below that 1971 low," Scoggins added.

Scoggins said his organization is seeking a temporary moratorium on the plugging and abandonment of wells to lessen the industry's troubles. The measure would allow temporary plugging, so operators could re-enter a well and bring it back into production when the energy economic climate improved, he said.

About a hundred members of the West Central Texas Oil and Gas Association listened to Scoggins' remarks at the opening session of the group's annual meeting.

"Unemployment in the industry is rampant. . . . Every time the price drops a dollar a barrel, 25,000 jobs are lost just in the state of Texas," said Scoggins, who heads about 15,000 independent oil and gas producers.

## Dallas paper says blacks excluded as jurors

**Associated Press**  
DALLAS — Dallas County prosecutors routinely manipulate the racial composition of juries through legal challenges that allow lawyers to dismiss prospective jurors without cause, the Dallas Morning News reported Sunday.

In a copyright story, the News said that as many as 90 percent of qualified black candidates are routinely excluded from felony juries.

The newspaper said its eight-month investigation showed that prosecutors manipulate the racial makeup of juries by the use of peremptory challenges. In Texas, prosecutors and defense attorneys each have 10 such challenges in non-capital cases.

**Legal experts say the study's findings show that prosecutors systematically exclude blacks from jury duty.**  
—Dallas Morning News

Dallas County District Attorney Henry Wade said his prosecutors do not exclude prospective jurors solely because of race. But he said race sometimes can be a factor in whom they dismiss.

Blacks constitute 18 percent of the county's population, but they made up fewer than 4 percent of jurors on 100 felony juries the newspaper studied. A black had a 10 percent

chance of being selected for a jury, while a white had a 50 percent chance of being chosen, according to the News.

The study found that of the blacks struck from juries by peremptory challenges, 92 percent were barred by prosecutors, 4 percent by defense attorneys and 4 percent by both sides.

According to the News, several legal experts said the findings showed that prosecutors systematically exclude blacks from jury duty.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that systematic exclusion of an identifiable group of jury candidates is unconstitutional and has overturned criminal convictions on those grounds.

Wade, who is retiring this year after 35 years as district attorney, said the newspaper's findings might be the result of a large number of blacks saying they have personal knowledge about the cases or have reservations about assessing the maximum sentence.

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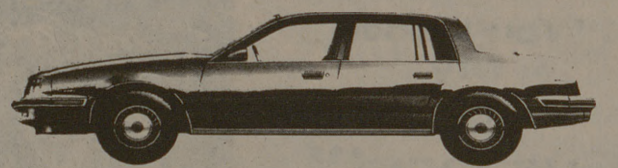
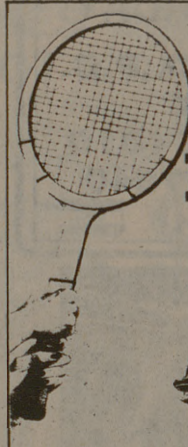
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  4. The entry fee is \$30 per team.

For more information call Tommy Connell, 846-8724

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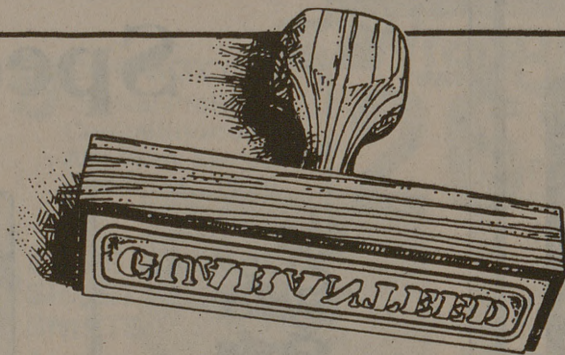
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