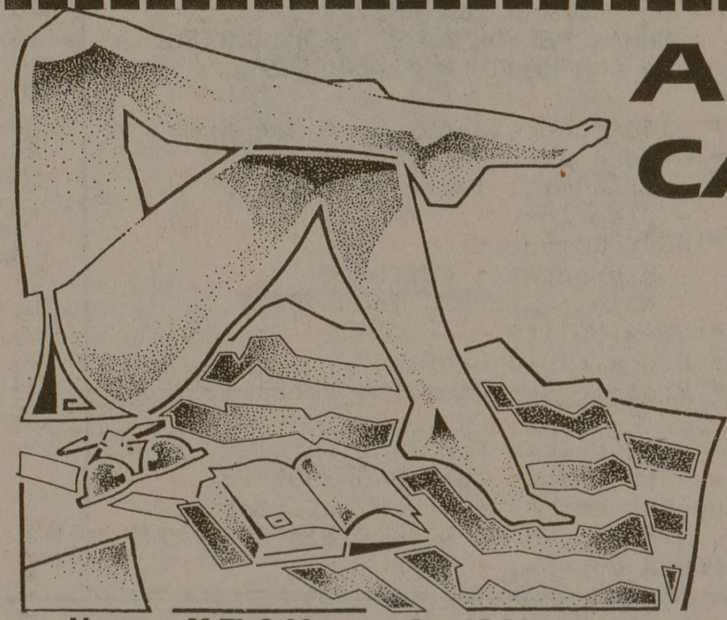


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Mattox, board facing clash on insurance liability crisis

AUSTIN (AP) — The head of the State Board of Insurance and Attorney General Jim Mattox clashed Wednesday over whose job it is to investigate causes of the current liability insurance crisis.

Chairman Lyndon Olson told Mattox, who has been seeking a special public hearing by the insurance board, that if he had evidence of wrongdoing, he should prosecute it himself.

Mattox replied that "since the board has chosen not to carry out its responsibilities" the attorney general's office "will use every power within our authority to do this job."

Olson told Mattox earlier in the day that the board has no immediate plans of calling a special public hearing on the liability insurance crisis, as Mattox requested.

"The State Board of Insurance is proceeding in accord with our best judgment and within the constraints of our authority to seek solutions to

today's liability insurance problems and to assist Texas consumers in finding coverage," Olson said in a letter to Mattox. "We believe that we are moving properly and successfully."

Mattox asked the board March 7 and again March 19 whether it was going to call a special public hearing to investigate why many small businesses and local governments are being red-lined out of liability insurance coverage.

Mattox said in a news release that many small businesses, such as day care centers and nursing homes, and professions, including ministers of the gospel, are being denied coverage despite the fact that no claims have ever been filed against them.

Olson said in his letter that the board has received no specific facts about any Texas insurance companies violating state laws regarding unfair competition and unfair practices.

"Your letter mentions that we have come to your knowledge you forward none," Olson said. "If you have specific information about your possession which would justify board action, please forward information immediately."

Olson also said that he is standing that the attorney general had authority to prosecute unfair trade practices.

"I believe that the attorney general's office has full power to bring charges where the anti-trust statutes and other provisions of the Texas Insurance Code indicated," Olson said. "I understand that you have authority to initiate fact-finding visits in that authority."

Olson said no special hearing planned on liability insurance information could be submitted to the upcoming hearing on the "made" policy in commercial insurance.

Court orders company to rehire farm worker

AUSTIN (AP) — The Texas Supreme Court ruled Wednesday that a Hidalgo County company must rehire a union farmworker who was fired after her complaints about sanitation facilities brought county health officials to the fields.

The United Farm Workers called the decision a significant victory.

"It provides the workers with a strong moral backing for their efforts to bring about humane working conditions in the fields," said James Harrington of Austin, who represented Maria Guadalupe Vasquez in the lawsuit.

Vasquez was fired by La Joya-based Bannworths Inc. on Nov. 5, 1982, after two Hidalgo County Health Department officials came to check on her complaints. She had become an organizer for the UFW earlier that year.

In her complaint, she said all Bannworths workers were required to share a single drinking cup and that the portable toilets in the fields were filthy.

Vasquez had worked for Bannworths periodically since 1973, usually laboring in the fields for 10 hours a day and always at minimum wage, according to court records.

She won the lawsuit, but appealed when Hidalgo County Court-at-Law Judge Richard Garcia refused to order Bannworths to rehire Vasquez. She was awarded \$3,000 to cover

wages lost in the period from when she was fired until she filed the lawsuit. The trial court also barred Bannworths from discriminating against Vasquez if she was ever rehired.

The Corpus Christi Court of Appeals affirmed the trial court, but the Supreme Court said Wednesday the lower court decisions fall short of remedying the harm.

"The trial court abused its discretion in failing to order Mrs. Vasquez's rehiring because, in effect, the court's order allows Bannworths to continue to discriminate against Mrs. Vasquez by refusing to hire her because of her union membership," Justice Sears McGee said in his opinion for the unanimous court.

Bannworths officials were not available for comment after the Wednesday ruling.

Harrington praised the Supreme Court ruling.

"This is another example of the Supreme Court putting bite into union laws that exist to prevent retaliation," he said.

Harrington said he expects Vasquez to return to work at Bannworths this summer. She has been working part-time. He said she would continue to aggressively monitor conditions in the company's fields.

Sheriff says watch out Sandinistas

BROWNSVILLE — Texas no to Reagan has warned that the Texas county is in the front line should Nicaraguan troops enter the United States and not believe what has to be done — ways a working to keep straight faces into it.

Cameron County Sheriff Perez's stalwart boys already have a half-dozen Uz sub-machine guns and a stack of M-16s in a county commissioner's office for a dozen or so riot helmets, shields, the sheriff quipped to kill her deputies willingly would be trenches as a first line of defense against any Sandinista invasion.

County commissioners ever, on Monday turned Perez's request to purchase dozen riot helmets, shields, shotguns.

Turned down locally, sent President Reagan a Wednesday requesting \$100,000 in "equipment aid" to beef up the department.

The sheriff said he had planned to telegram the word request because of the agency, but opted to send mail because of the \$25.00 gram cost.

5 escaped prisoners still at large

GAINESVILLE — Five escapees from the Cooke County Jail, including a man described as part of a modern-day "Bonnie and Clyde" team of bank robbers, remained at large Wednesday, authorities said.

Authorities regarded the men as armed and dangerous, Sheriff John Aston said.

Lawrence Byrom, 56; Thomas Bromfield, 25; Steven Dooley, 22; Patrick Lewis, 17; and Ismail Bruno, 17, escaped between 9 p.m. and 10 p.m. Monday after sawing a 19-inch-wide hole through the bars in a dayroom skylight, Aston said.

He said he believes they used five hacksaw blades found at the scene.

The men, who Denton County deputies said may have taken clothes and two rifles in a house burglary, also are believed to have stolen a van, authorities said.

Officials said the men could have had outside help in the escape, speculating that someone might have handed the blades through the skylight. The jailer dis-

covered the escape while on regular hourly rounds.

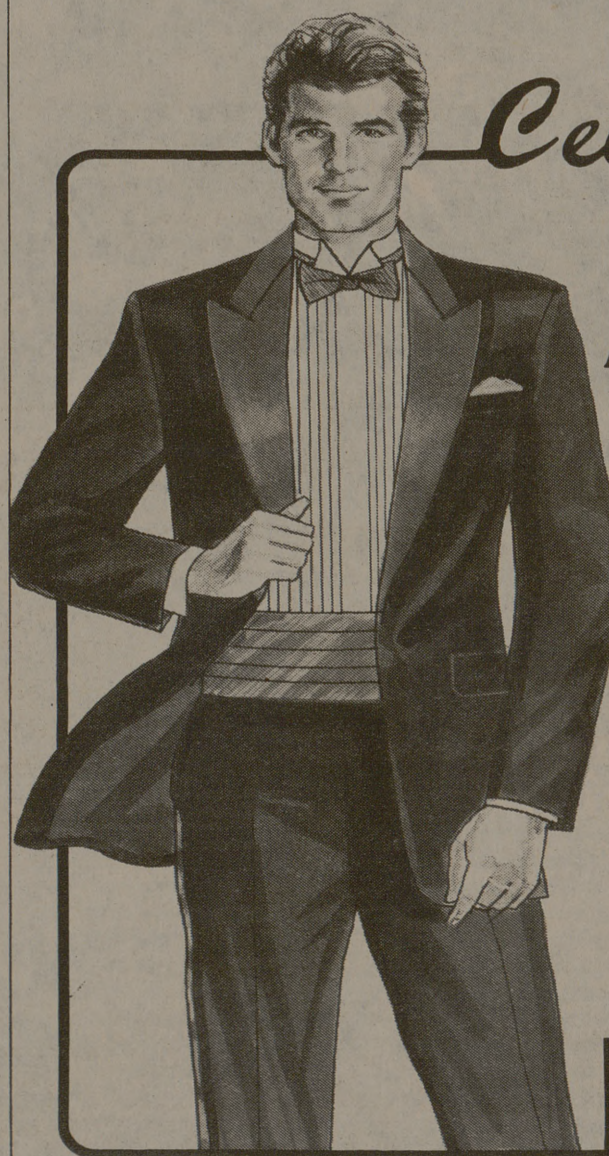
Byrom pleaded no contest last July to four bank robbery charges. His wife, Alice Elizabeth Marie Byrom, pleaded no contest to two of the heists. Byrom is accused of 14 North Texas bank robberies that cost \$572,592, authorities said.

Byrom was sentenced to 50 years in federal prison and was awaiting trial in Gainesville on a state charge. Mrs. Byrom is serving a 25-year sentence.

At the time of their arrest, authorities compared the case to Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow, a 1930s bank robber.

Authorities said it was not the first time that had escaped from the Cooke County Jail.

After an April 1950 escape, Byrom avoided authorities for three weeks before surrendering at his Fort Worth home. Byrom later served 14 years in prisons for armed robbery convictions, officials said.



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