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Senate OKs pari-mutuel gambling bill

AUSTIN (AP) — The Texas Senate gave final approval Tuesday to a proposal that would legalize pari-mutuel gambling at horse and dog races for the first time in nearly 50 years.

The 17-12 vote sends the measure to the House, where it will be debated Thursday, said Rep. Hugo Berlanga, D-Corpus Christi, sponsor of a similar House bill.

Berlanga said the defeat of a last-minute amendment in the Senate will force the House to pass the measure by two-thirds vote, or 100, for it to be on the November ballot.

That amendment, which lost by a two-vote margin, would have allowed the House to get the two-thirds majority of both houses to be on the 1986 ballot.

The Senate tentatively approved the bill 19-10 on Monday.

Pari-mutuel wagering's supporters have said throughout that the measure was not an instant cure to Texas' financial woes, but said it would be a substantial revenue producer in the future.

Opponents claimed it would be an open invitation to organized crime and would lead low-income people to spend money at the tracks that was needed elsewhere.

Sen. Bill Sarpalius, D-Amarillo, said, "I hope the people of Texas realize this is not an alternative to raising the state sales tax. The real question is whether the people will get both."

Pari-mutuel wagering has been prohibited in Texas since 1937. The Senate approved a betting bill in 1983 but it died in House debate. In 1985, a bill failed again in House debate.

If the current bill is approved by this Legislature, a statewide referendum will be on the Nov. 4. general election ballot.

If voters approve, local-option elections could be held in 251 counties on horse race betting and in three counties for greyhound wagering.

Gov. Mark White has said he would take a close look at any wagering bill sent him.

"My position on that has always been there should be a statewide referendum, local option and strong protection against organized crime," White said.

The proposed legislation calls for a Texas Racing Commission to supervise horse races and wagering in about four large tracks in metropolitan areas, about 17 regional tracks with mostly weekend race programs and any number of temporary race meets at county fairs and other celebrations.

Most efforts to change the Senate bill were defeated by lop-sided votes. But one that would have set aside all state income from pari-mutuel wagering for dependent children was settled only when Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby's vote broke a 14-14 tie and defeated it.

"Without this amendment, there is nothing in this bill for little people," said Sen. Craig Washington, D-Houston, who unsuccessfully sponsored pari-mutuel bills in the 1983 and 1986 sessions.

Washington threatened to filibuster the bill Tuesday but called off his effort, noting that it was still a week away from the end of the special session.

The racing commission would consist of the chairman of the Public Safety Commission, the state Comptroller and six public members appointed by the governor. The commission would elect its chairman.



Kent Caperton

Caperton named for conference committee

AUSTIN (AP) — State Senator Kent Caperton of Bryan is included in the 10 Senate and House members named to the conference committee on spending reductions (HB 1).

The complete list of the committee's members appears below.

Senate — Sens. Grant Jones, D-Temple; Ray Farabee, D-Wichita Falls; John Montford, D-Lubbock; Kent Caperton, D-Bryan, and Bob McFarland, R-Arlington.

House — Reps. James Rudd, D-Brownfield; Bill Hollowell, D-Grand Saline; Mike Toomey, R-Houston; Frank Madla, D-San Antonio, and Jim McWilliams, D-Marshall.

State may spend \$2.5 million settling sexual abuse suits

AUSTIN (AP) — The attorney general's office is recommending that the state spend \$2.5 million to settle lawsuits filed by families of Texas School for the Deaf students who were sexually abused by school employees.

The recommendation was made Monday as a Senate committee put off hearing legislation that would have rescinded resolutions passed in 1985 giving the families permission to sue the state and, in some cases, waived the limits on the state's liability.

The legislation, resolutions that would keep the negligence suits in state court and would limit damages to \$100,000 per victim, are awaiting hearings before the Senate State Affairs and House Judicial Affairs committees.

Regarding the settlement offers, parents of the deaf children say money is not the only issue. They want to use settlement negotiations to prompt a thorough house-cleaning at the state-funded school.

"If it takes forcing the system to change, we will and we won't give up," one parent told the *Austin American-Statesman* as she waited outside the Senate chamber.

Larry Watts, an attorney from Houston who represents two teenagers who were victimized, said the students were tied up and raped, photographed and tortured by school employees.

"The people who were guilty of this had a smorgasbord of children on which to ply their perversions," Watts said.

The former director of the school, Dr. Victor Galloway, and Charles Horton pleaded no contest to misdemeanor charges of failure to report child abuse to police authorities. Both were placed on probation. Horton is now the school's director of security.

Three other school employees — John Barryhill, Gary Hoover and Robert Gates — were convicted of felony sexual abuse charges.

Watts said sexual abuse of students took place despite reports to school officials.

Some parents said they would not accept the \$2.5 million settlement unless sweeping changes were made in the operation of the school.

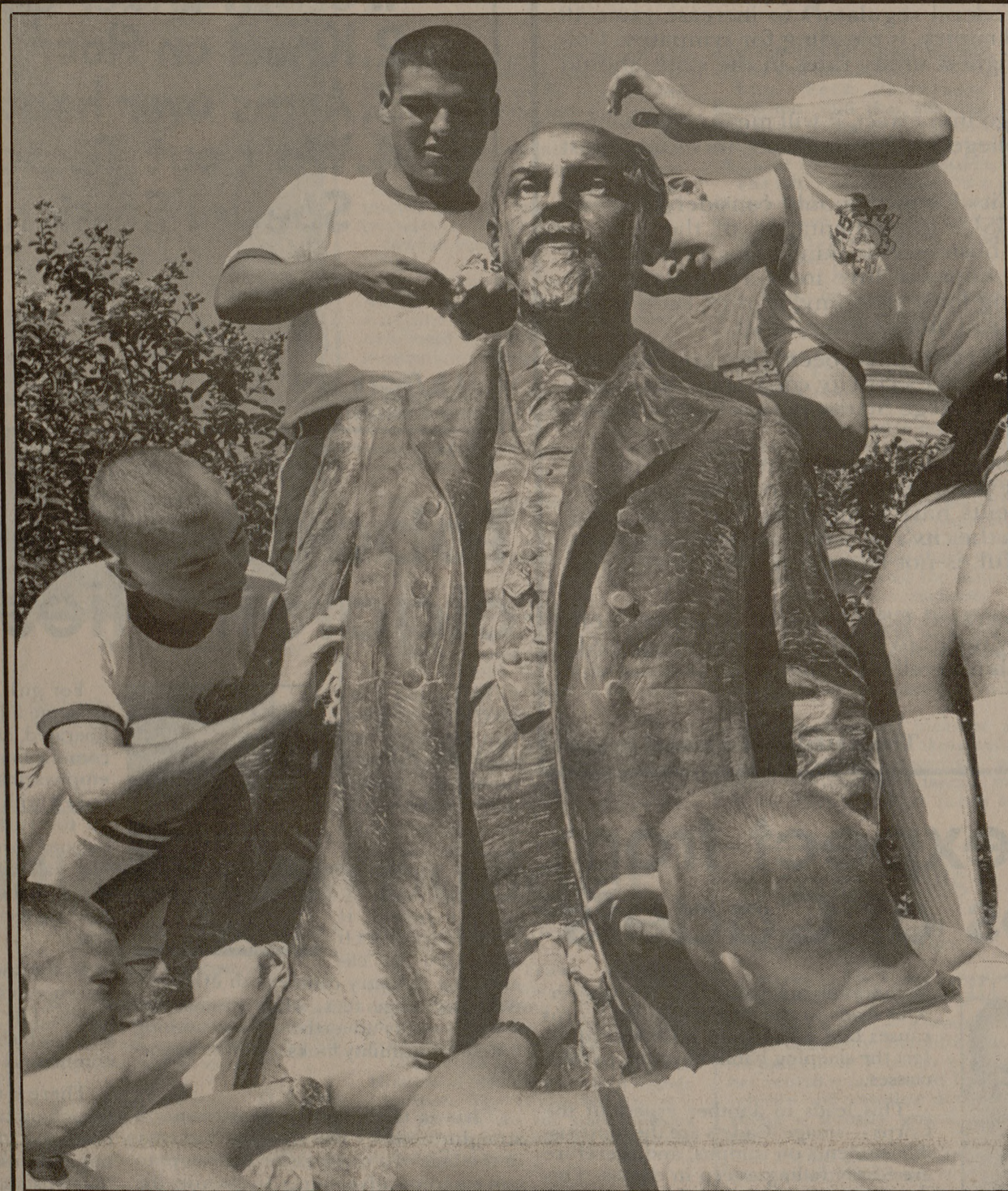


Photo by Anthony S. Casper

Sully Shines

Freshman members of Squadron 15 clean the statue of Lawrence Sullivan Ross near the Academic Building. The polishing of Sully is traditionally the responsibility of the corps freshmen.

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Witnesses describe gas disaster

Death toll rises in Cameroon

YAOUNDE, Cameroon (AP) — Witnesses to the gas disaster in the Cameroon Highlands, where 1,534 people are listed as dead, said Tuesday they saw the ground covered with corpses and entire villages devoid of life.

Worst hit was Nios village, where about 700 people lived beside the volcanic lake of the same name in this West African nation.

Lake Nios' usually clear waters were bright red.

Scientists said this might be a warning of continuing volcanic activity which could reactivate the chain of events which spewed deadly gas into the air last week.

A French rescue team that reached the scene Tuesday reported only two survivors in Nios, 200 miles northwest of Yaounde.

A few hundred yards away, there was not one victim among the inhabitants of Upper Nios, a separate village on high ground, the French said.

French and Israeli doctors said their main concern now was preventing an epidemic.

Helpers buried victims in mass graves. Dead animals were hurriedly interred.

More than 7,000 dead cattle were counted, Israeli rescue workers said.

The program director of Cameroon's state radio, refusing to be further identified, said many people were being evacuated.

One doctor said many survivors had serious lung lesions and were in danger of getting pneumonia.

The few hospitals in the region overflowed with hundreds of casualties, some sleeping two or three in a bed.

In Geneva, the Office of the U.N. Coordinator for Disaster Relief said 1,534 bodies had been counted and others were still being discovered.

Its figures showed 300 people hospitalized and 20,000 affected.

Kenneth Kritby, a Canadian Baptist missionary in Wum, said after visiting the nearby disaster site Tuesday that many bodies remained in the grass and mud huts and went unreported because no relatives were alive.

In the lakeside village of Soubo,

he said, more than half the Baptist congregation of 300 people died, "but . . . no one living on higher ground was affected."

Disaster investigator Francois Leguern, of the French National Center for Scientific Research, said the red lake water was due to particles of laterite mud, indicating continuing underwater volcanic activity.

Leguern said the disaster was caused by a huge bubble of heavy

volcanic gas long trapped in the lake and released by an explosion deep down in the waters of the long-dormant crater.

"The gas was heavier than the air, so those on low ground were the first victims," he said.

"It was as though a neutron bomb had exploded," the Rev. Fred Tern Horn was quoted as saying by the British Broadcasting Corp. "Noth-

ing was destroyed, but every living thing was killed."

Horn, a Dutch Roman Catholic missionary, said he traveled with a group from his mission station in Wum to the stricken area 30 miles away.

"In the first village we came to, we found men, women and animals stretched out dead on the ground, some in front of their huts or in their beds, some on the road," he said.

Experts: Quake or landslide could have released gases

NEW YORK (AP) — Volcano experts in the United States say an earthquake or landslide could have triggered the release of what was probably a combination of carbon dioxide and smaller amounts of poisonous gases from a lake in Cameroon.

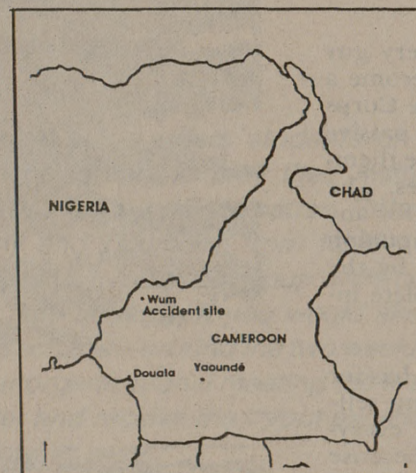
Furthermore, the harmful effects of the gas might have been enhanced by chemical and physical processes in Lake Nios, researchers said.

"It may be that the lake acts as a stopper that allows carbon dioxide pressure to build up," said Terrence Gerlach, a volcanologist and geochemist at Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, N.M.

Or, he said, the lake may be acting as a sponge, absorbing carbon dioxide and eventually releasing it in response to some disturbance.

Many authorities have now said that carbon dioxide — not hydrogen sulfide, as first reported — is the most likely cause of the deaths of some 1,500 people living near Lake Nios in northwestern Cameroon.

Donald Peterson, a geologist with the U.S. Geological Survey in Vancouver, Wash., said the



carbon dioxide may have come from volcanic vents underneath the lake, or may have been generated in the lake itself.

The lake could be rich in iron and carbon, if studies of a similar gas release in 1984 at nearby Lake Manoun are any guide, Peterson said.

"With this combination, carbon dioxide is one of the gases that can develop," he said.

Peterson, who has studied gas releases from Mount St. Helens,

provided the following speculation about the cause of Friday's disaster:

The gases most commonly found in volcanoes are carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide, hydrogen sulfide and carbon monoxide, and these may have been gently bubbling to the lake's surface.

High pressure at the bottom of the lake might have held carbon dioxide and the other gases back, however, until they were released by a volcanic burp, a landslide or an earthquake. This could have been caused by a small earthquake that did not register on seismographs elsewhere, Peterson said.

"Carbon dioxide is not poisonous, but it's heavier than air," he said. "If it is present in large amounts, it will collect in a low-hanging blanket. When people are enveloped in carbon dioxide gas, it's just as if they were enveloped by water — they have no access to oxygen and are unable to breathe."

The other gases that Peterson mentioned are poisonous. He said that if substantial amounts of these other gases were present, the people would have suffocated faster.

Policemen charged in beating of agent

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Eleven Jalisco state judicial policemen have been charged with beating and torturing a U.S. narcotics agent in Guadalajara, the Attorney General's office said Tuesday.

A statement from the attorney's office said the policemen were charged with abuse of authority and injuring Victor Cortez Jr., a U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration agent, after he was taken into custody Aug. 13.

The United States lodged a diplomatic protest against Mexico, charging Cortez was subjected to unprovoked, brutal and criminal acts while in custody in Guadalajara, 360 miles northwest of the capital.

The DEA said the agent, freed on the order of U.S. officials who spotted him being taken away by Mexican authorities, was beaten and shocked with an electric cattle prod.

Cortez is now in the United States. Spokesmen for the Attorney General's office originally denied Cortez was beaten or abused.

The government news agency Notimex said statements from two policemen, Salvador Salas Castaneda and Anselmo Pulido Galvan, said they took Cortez to police headquarters after he and a male companion failed to produce identification and weapons were found in their car.

An automatic weapon was found in the glove compartment and a semi-automatic rifle and an Uzi machinegun in the trunk, Notimex said the policemen told investigators.

Local reporters in Guadalajara obtained the report of an Aug. 14 examination by a Red Cross physician, which was filed with state authorities.

They said it reported light bruises apparently produced by a sharp instrument were on Cortez' abdomen and right shoulder.

Federal prosecutors asked a district judge, Oscar Vazquez Marin, to obtain a statement from Cortez, Notimex said.

It said the investigation remains open.