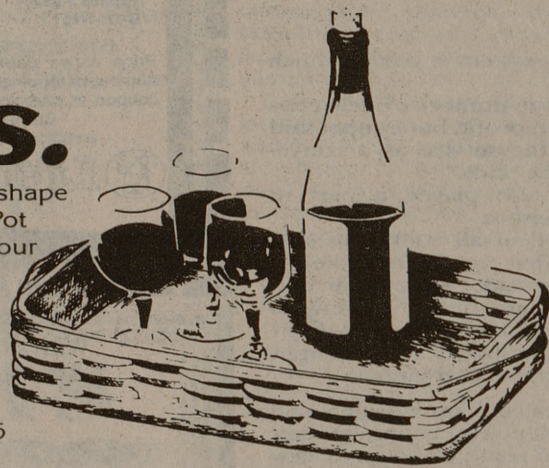


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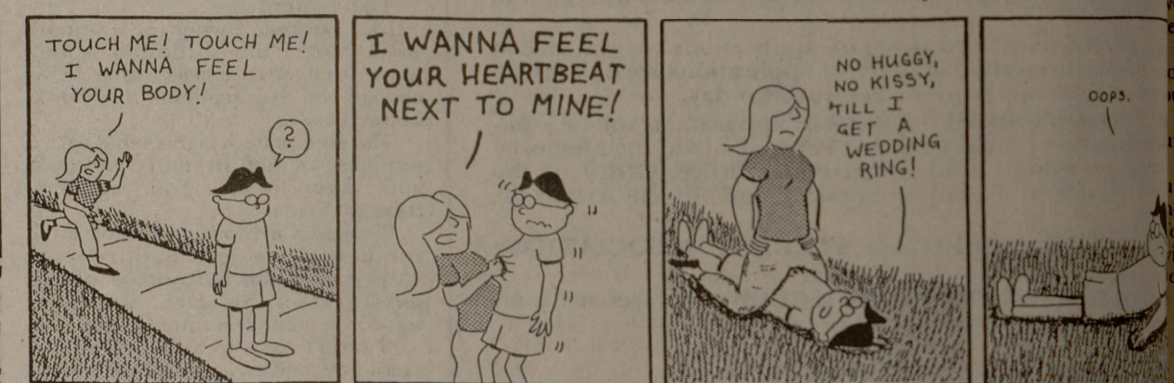
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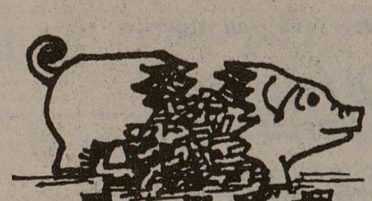
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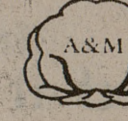
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Caretakers of elderly, disabled take a break

Respite Care program offers helpful service

DALLAS (AP) — An elderly woman checked into Gaston Episcopal Hospital. She wasn't in need of medical treatment; she just wanted to give her family a break.

She was one of the first to participate in the hospital's Respite Care program, an idea gaining popularity as hospitals around the country look to expand health-care services and make use of hospital beds that otherwise would remain empty.

"It's designed to give the caregivers a break from the duties of taking care of their loved ones," hospital administrator Charles Cooper said. "They need the relief."

For a fee of \$175, the hospital takes in Respite Care "guests" for the weekend, from 6 p.m. Friday to 6 p.m. Sunday.

The respite program combines a hospital's watchful accommodations with the schedule of a get-away weekend. The "guest" — an elderly or disabled person — gets a private room with television and individual bathroom and is cared for by the nursing staff.

The staff members who otherwise must stay home to provide their relative feeding, bathing and medical care are free to travel away from the home — or to stay and enjoy it all to themselves, program organizers said.

Cooper estimated that 60 percent of those dependent on others' care

the most personal attention, the center can be draining for members who feel tied down by responsibilities.

"It can really wear you out," said Susan Early, who helped organize the Respite Care plan. "The give the caretaker a break, a respite."

In Gaston Episcopal, a four independent hospital tucked in the Baylor University Medical Center, administrators have set up of the hospital's 100 beds in the program, Early said.

The staff will care for any patient person 16 or older, including those who have chronic diseases, functional disabilities, hospitalizations said. They are assisted with meals, bathing, dressing and taking any medication they need. Staff also takes care of such procedures as changing bandages.

Early said officials at Gaston Episcopal decided to try the program reading about similar hospitals elsewhere in the

"It's designed to give the caregiver a break from the duties of taking care of their loved ones. They need the relief."

— Hospital administrator Charles Cook

live in the homes of relatives. Most common, he said, are elderly parents staying in the homes of sons and daughters.

While families most often provide an elderly or disabled person with

Plastics catch on fire; 10 families evacuated

LEAGUE CITY (AP) — A fire raged through a League City plastics warehouse on Wednesday, forcing the temporary evacuation of about 10 families.

Firefighters contained the fire early Wednesday at the Reliance International warehouse but were letting the flames burn out, authorities said.

"It's under control," Dickinson Fire Chief Jasper Liggio said. "But it will probably be a couple of days before it's put out. We're going to let it burn itself out."

Two types of non-toxic plastics, polystyrene and polyethylene, caught fire at the facility in this Galveston County town about 30 miles southeast of Houston, said a League City police dispatcher who refused to give her name.

Louis West, a firefighter from the

Dickinson Fire Department, twisted an ankle while trying to contain the fire.

Liggio said there were no other reports of injuries resulting from the fire, which was reported at about 5 a.m.

A few nearby residents were evacuated from their homes as a precaution.

They were permitted back into their homes again several hours after the fire was contained, Liggio said.

Flames shot up several hundred feet after a series of small explosions at the plant, he said.

The fire produced acrid clouds of black smoke that brisk winds spread over the area.

The company stores recycled plastic pellets used in the manufacture of various plastic products.

Man accused of threatening federal witness

FORT WORTH (AP) — A man accused of causing a month's downtown natural gas explosion was held in custody Wednesday after a prosecutor accused him of threatening a witness.

Former restaurant owner McClelland, 25, threatened a young woman after learning she had talked to federal prosecutors after the explosion.

District Attorney Fred Schattman said Tuesday. Schattman said federal authorities wanted to protect the witness by keeping McClelland in bars.

McClelland is on parole from Texas prison for robbery.



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