

DWI

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light or drive far above or below the speed limit. We just keep a lookout for any behavior that is out of the ordinary."

Carmon said there are several ways to avoid a DWI charge.

"One of the best things to do is use the designated driver program," he said. "If four or five people go out in a group, one can agree not to drink and just be a driver. Everybody can still have a good time and no one gets in trouble," he said.

Many local bartenders will call a taxi for patrons they think are too drunk to drive home.

"A taxi may cost \$10 or \$15," Carmon said, "but it is a lot cheaper than paying for a DWI."

Brazos County Attorney Jim Kuboviak said one of the factors contributing to the number of drunk drivers is Texas' lack of an open container law.

"Creating such a law wouldn't solve the problem," he said, "but it is a big factor."

Lalk agreed, saying, "I think the best thing Texas could do is

pass an open container law. The fact that the law says it's legal to drink while you're driving but it's not legal to be intoxicated sends a double message about drinking and driving."

Lalk said Texans have an attitude of tolerance.

"I think that if the attitude were such that drinking and driving is dangerous, things would change a little," she said. "But as it is, kids grow up thinking it's OK to drive while they are drinking."

Aside from an open container law, she said, there are other ways to decrease the number of drunk drivers.

"More of a maximum sentence for convicted drunk drivers could help," she said. "Right now, the maximum sentence is five years in prison, which usually means four to seven months, and then the driver is back on the street."

Lalk said Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) has made people more aware of the drunk driving problem.

"MADD's horror stories and publication of drunk driving sta-

tics have made people aware that there is a problem," she said. "The organization gets so much publicity that people may be starting to listen and to be more careful about driving drunk."

People who insist on driving drunk often don't realize the damage they can cause, Lalk said.

"Fifty-seven percent of all highway deaths are alcohol-related," she said. "We should start educating kids about the dangers of driving drunk."

"Kids just don't think anything bad is really going to happen," she said. "Most of the kids who are picked up for drunk driving are on their way home from a bar or a private party and either think they are OK to drive or just don't consider the possible consequences of their actions."

"If kids who drive drunk could go through a morgue and see the body of a 16-year-old who was hit by a drunk driver and talk with the families they could see what grief driving drunk can cause."

Senate rejects men chosen for Texas board of pardons

AUSTIN (AP) — The Senate on Thursday rejected two appointees to the State Board of Pardons and Paroles after a senator — who called the appointees "eminently qualified" — said boards and commissions need to be better balanced by race, sex, age and finances.

The Senate vote to confirm Henry Keene of Dallas and Chris Mealy of Georgetown was 17-11, two short of the two-thirds needed for approval.

James Huffines, appointments secretary for Republican Gov Bill Clements, said, "I think it's a blatant display of partisan politics."

All 11 senators voting against the nominees are Democrats.

"We didn't hear one single senator today question their qualifications, and that's a disservice to the people of Texas," Huffines said.

Sen. Craig Washington, D-Houston, said, "My vote against them has absolutely nothing to do with their qualifications, because there's no question, in my personal judgment, that they are eminently qualified and will do a good job."

However, Washington said, "It is still important to many people in this state — black, brown and white, men and women, rich and poor, old and young — that they see someone similar to themselves on these various boards and agencies."

When two minorities are replaced by white, male individuals, "It sends the wrong signal," said Washington,

a black senator. He acknowledged later that he mistakenly thought that only one minority member remained on the board. Actually, there are two.

"At some point, sooner or later, we as individuals and as members of this Senate have to take a stand," Washington said.

"I know of no other way of sending a signal to this government, other than to elect a governor, that we expect there to be fair representation on the board on all these boards, commissions for black people, brown people, for women, white, black, brown, old and rich and poor," he said.

Shuttle astronaut's family agrees to lawsuit settlement

HOUSTON (AP) — The widow and children of Challenger astronaut Ronald E. McNair agreed Thursday to settle their lawsuit against rocket maker Morton Thiokol Inc., attorneys said.

Terms of the settlement were not disclosed, and case records were sealed after the agreement was reached in the chambers of U.S. District Judge Carl O. Bue.

"My family has amicably and equitably concluded legal proceedings against Morton Thiokol," Cheryl McNair said in a written statement. "The American legal system has functioned as it should in a free society."

McNair's attorney, Ronald Krist, said the agreement avoided a potentially long and costly trial.

"We're happy that it's over and reasonably resolved," he said. "The McNairs have been patient enough and the resolution has brought a lot of comfort to the family."

An agreement in principle lawsuit was reached about a year ago, but Krist added that the required Bue's active approval because minors were involved.

Ronald McNair, who was launched Jan. 28, 1986, along with another shuttle Challenger, plodded shortly after liftoff, survived by a 5-year-old son and daughter who is almost 3.

Other relatives also joined the suit that was filed last September and did not specify the amount of damages sought.

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