

Boys pricked by needle advised to get AIDS test

SPRING (AP) — The mother of a 10-year-old boy said a doctor has advised hepatitis and AIDS tests for her son and several other children who were pricked by a 10-year-old playmate with a hypodermic needle as part of an initiation rite to a secret club.

"My son came in screaming, Mommy, Mommy, they stuck me with a needle," said the boy's mother, who asked that she not be identified.

"I was sewing at the time, and I thought he meant a sewing needle of

some sort," the woman told the *Conroe Courier*.

"I didn't think anything about it until the next day," she said.

"You don't think of a 10-year-old running around with a hypodermic needle," she said.

That was Wednesday.

By Thursday evening, the child's arm was red and swollen, according to a report by detective Mickey Worley of the Montgomery County sheriff's department.

Upon further questioning, the woman learned from her son that

the needle was not a sewing needle, but a hypodermic needle.

Authorities investigating the woman's complaint said the 10-year-old boy at first denied pricking the woman's child in the arm, but later confessed.

He said he found the hypodermic needle in a vacant home next door, Worley's report said.

The 10-year-old gave an account of an initiation rite to some type of secret club and said his 14-year-old brother pricked his arm with the needle.

The 10-year-old said he in turn then pricked the arms of six other boys, according to the detective's report.

However, the 10-year-old's account differed from the version of another child, who said the needle came from the 10-year-old's house, from his brother's drawer, the mother of the 6-year-old said Saturday.

Montgomery County sheriff's officers tried to find the needle, but the children said they had dumped it down a sewer line.

Spring is 25 miles north of Houston on Interstate 45.

The woman took her child to the Woodlands Community Hospital, 10 miles north of Spring.

There a doctor said the redness around the puncture wound and the swelling indicated bacteria under the skin.

The bacteria could enter the bloodstream, the doctor said, advising her to have her son tested for hepatitis in two weeks and for AIDS in six months, she said.

Six of the seven children pricked

with the hypodermic needle have had a reaction and must be tested for hepatitis and for AIDS, the woman said.

"They tell me it was a needle like one used by drug users," she said.

A woman supervisor in the Woodlands Community Hospital said Sunday that no one was available to comment on the incident.

The spokesman said she did not know which doctor might have treated any of the youths and that no one would be available to comment on the matter until today.

Officials: Vacationers saw attractions in Texas, but tourism fell by 4 percent

(AP) — The oil-busted Texas economy didn't keep vacationers away from major state attractions this year, but overall visitation statewide was down an estimated 4 percent from 1986, industry officials said.

Last week, heading toward the close of the summer tourist season, attractions such as Six Flags Over Texas and Wet 'N Wild in Arlington and Astroworld in Houston reported sizable increases in attendance.

boys don't win, you can't get a crowd. When Texas is perceived as being a bust, then people won't want to come down here. People want a winner."

Also, while some major theme parks benefited from visitors traveling short distances, other smaller attractions across the state were hurt by the combination of early rains

up from about \$16 billion in 1985, Todd said. No cash totals for 1987 are available, but Todd suspects figures may be down.

A tourist agency survey of selected private attractions showed Six Flags and Astroworld with 6 percent increases over last year through July. Six Flags attendance totaled 1.77 million, up from 1.66 million, and

other than the fact the economy has been in a downturn."

The hotel economy generally across the state ranged from soft in the West Texas Permian Basin region to excellent in the Brownsville-South Padre Island area, said Don Hansen, executive vice president of the Texas Hotel & Motel Association. In fact, South Padre Island perhaps has been the brightest spot for Texas tourism in 1987.

But many families took shorter vacations than in years past, frequented only big attractions and stayed within easy driving distance of home to hold down costs with the uncertain economy, officials said.

"Most of the attractions I've talked to are having a good summer, but people are staying closer to home, taking shorter trips and staying with friends and relatives," says Murrell Foster, director of visitor development for the Dallas Convention & Visitors Bureau. "People are still being very, very cautious with the pending."

Statewide, a letdown from the 1986 Sesquicentennial celebration, bank attacks along the Gulf Coast and "negative publicity" of the state's fiscal economy were blamed for a slight decline in overall visitation.

Larry Todd, director of the Texas Tourist Development Agency in Austin, says, "When the Dallas Cow-

and reduced travel from some oil-depressed regions, Todd told the *Dallas Morning News*.

The tourism agency, based on surveys of private attractions and public parks and museums, estimated total visitation through July this year of 29.6 million tourists, compared with 30.8 million for the first seven months of 1986.

The number of out-of-state travelers passing through Texas' 12 visitor information centers declined 9.1 percent to just more than 2 million through July, from more than 2.2 million in 1986, the Texas Department of Highways and Public Transportation reported.

Tourist expenditures in 1986 produced revenue of about \$17 billion,

Astroworld had attracted almost 1.1 million visitors, up from 1.04 million.

Visitors to the state's museums slipped to 4.29 million, down 7 percent from 4.61 million, while state parks registered 13.17 million visitors, down 5 percent from 13.83 million. Attendance at national parks and seashores was 3.17 million, up 3 percent from 3.06 million; and at national forests, 1.05 million, up 14 percent from 920,337.

Tourist agency spokesman O.C. Garza says, "Last year was a record year for most private attractions because of the Sesquicentennial, especially during the first four months of the year. It's a pretty normal year,

'Landmark' sign sends conflicting messages to Carrollton citizens

CARROLLTON (AP) — A rainbow-colored sign that for six years has been atop a grain elevator near Interstate 35 in a north Dallas suburb is considered by some to be a landmark.

But others hate the sign, which advertises the World of Faith Outreach Center in Farmers Branch, and think it ought to be changed to something that promotes the community.

The elevator, owned by Lee and Dorothy Groves, owners of Groves Electrical Services, bears the message "Jesus is Lord," along with a Word of Faith telephone number. Another side of the tower urges passers-by to "Visit Word of Faith This Sunday."

Consultant Dennis Wilson asked 80 local merchants for their opinions about good and bad aspects of Old Downtown Carrollton and said the sign was high on both lists.

"I think a lot of people were concerned about the sign in general, but a lot of people associate it with Carrollton," said Wilson, whose company, Wilson Killinger Inc., was hired by the city to devise a revitalization plan for the Old Downtown area.

Mayor Pro Tem John Heath

said city officials hope to lease the tower and replace the sign with a painted message telling motorists they have entered Carrollton.

"We wanted to see if we could use any of the hotel-motel tax money to put up a sign or logo that would be supportive of our city," Heath said. Heath said some City Council members discussed a leasing arrangement several months ago with Mrs. Groves and that she appeared interested in the offer.

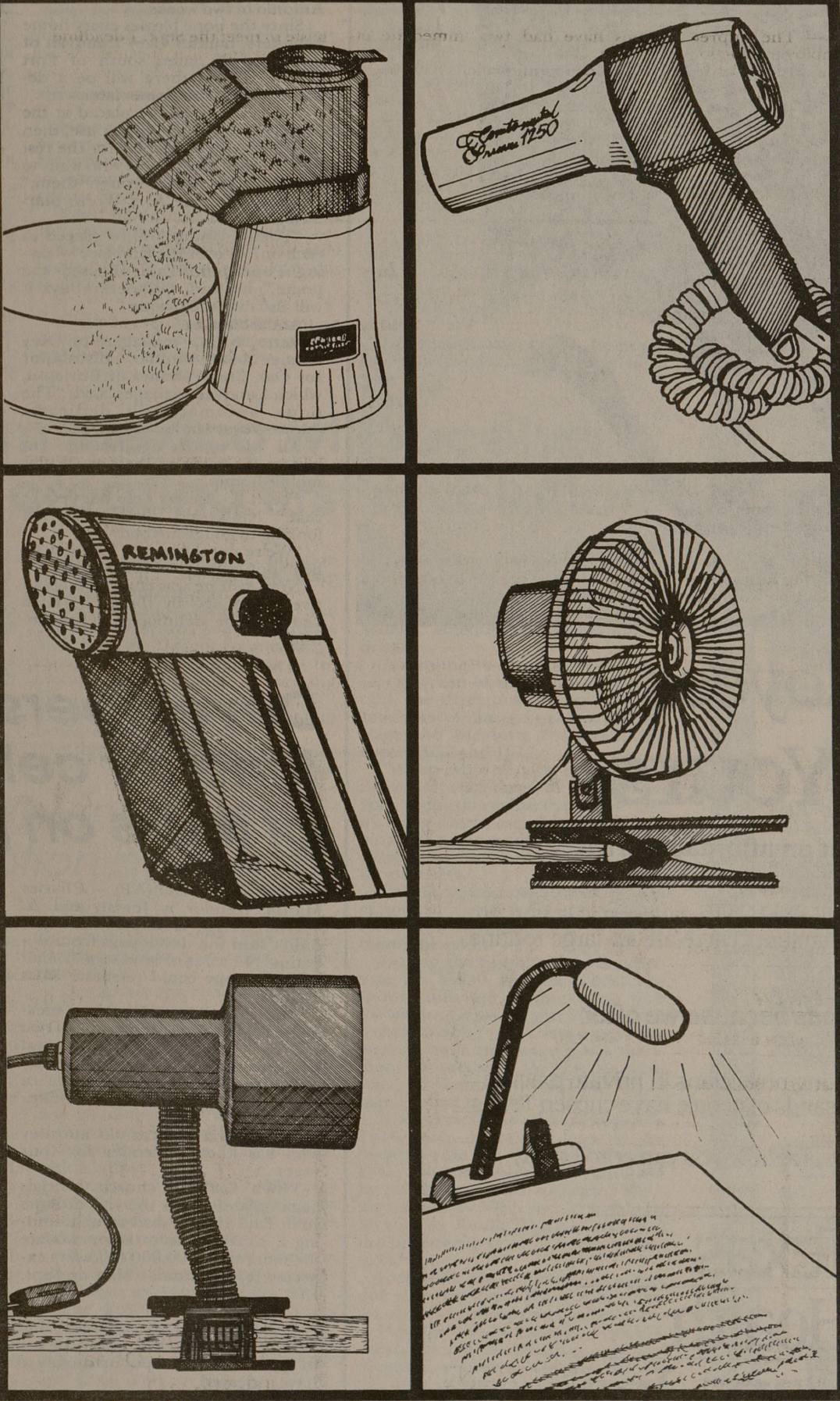
But Mrs. Groves said no one from the city has spoken to her about leasing the grain elevator since that meeting.

"Nothing has been decided on that sign at all," Mrs. Groves said.

Council member David Oldfield said, "We just haven't gotten back with them to figure out the dollars and just what we're going to do."

Mary Groner, president of the Old Downtown Carrollton Association said, "I think that a Carrollton logo would be real nice."

Oldfield said he and other members of the Old Downtown Carrollton Association would like to paint a sign on the grain elevator that would urge motorists to "Visit Charming Old Downtown Carrollton."



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