

Attorney urges federal action against schools

DALLAS (AP) — An attorney in a long-running suit protesting conditions at 13 Texas state schools for the mentally retarded has urged that the federal government cut off money to the facilities.

David Ferleger of Philadelphia also asked U.S. District Judge Barefoot Sanders on Wednesday to name a special master to run the Fort Worth State School for at least a year and to impose a series of escalating fines against the state.

Ferleger is the plaintiffs' attorney in the suit. Sanders ruled on Aug. 20 that conditions at the Fort Worth school violate the U.S. Constitution, state and federal laws and a 1983 court order.

In the ruling, Sanders said that despite the staff's efforts, a lack of money led to substandard medical care, unsafe conditions and harm to clients.

About half of the \$248 million budget of the state schools is federally funded, along with about the same portion of the Fort Worth facility's \$16 million budget.

Ferleger urged fines against the Fort Worth school for various problems of up to \$70,000 per day until requirements are met. He also encouraged further fines of up to \$2 million per day if overall compliance with the judge's order is not achieved by the end of the year.

The attorney earlier proposed that another \$11 million in damages be awarded to state school clients for harm suffered over the past four years.

Sanders, while finding the state in contempt, delayed until at least Oct. 16 the decision on how best to remedy violations.

Ferleger's motions on Wednesday outlined proposed fines, monetary damages and other measures that Sanders used to force the state to make major improvements at the Fort Worth facility.

Warped

by Scott McCullar



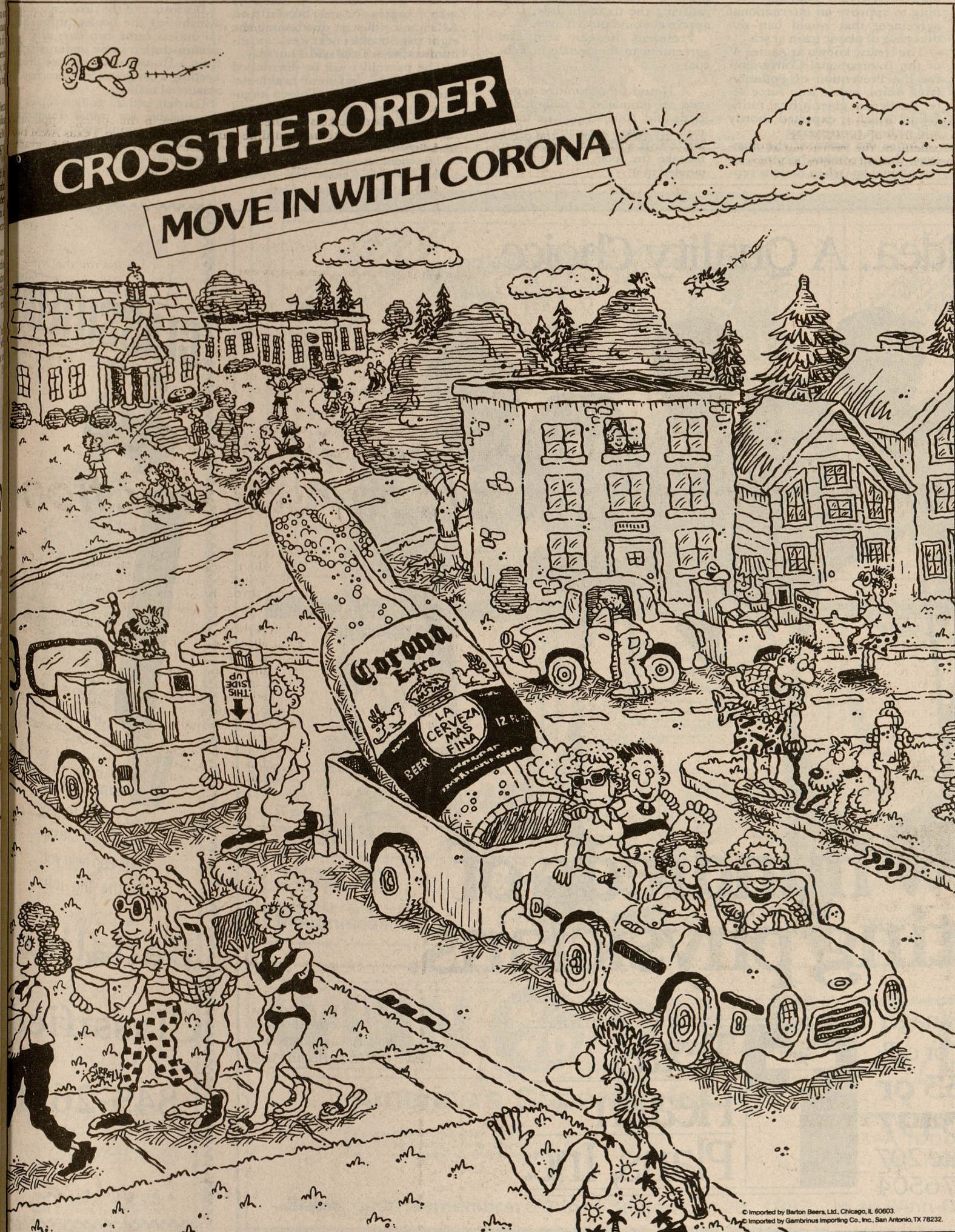
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