

Officials say student groups not part of act

AUSTIN (AP) — Student government groups do not fall under the Texas Open Meetings Act, the state attorney general's office has determined.

State Rep. Juan Hinojosa, D-McAllen, had sought an opinion on behalf of the student newspaper at Pan American University at Edinburg.

The weekly newspaper, the *Pan American*, has been at odds with the Student Government Association over closed "executive sessions" and the advance posting of agendas.

The Open Meetings Act requires governmental bodies to post advance notice of meetings, list topics to be discussed and limits the circumstances under which closed sessions may be held.

Hinojosa said the attorney general's office did not address the question of student government. He said he is considering sponsoring legislation to bring student governments under the state law.

The *Pan American* editor Cindie Powell said the paper will lobby for the legislation.

Votes sway in election for betting

LUBBOCK (AP) Few are laying bets on whether self-styled proponents of economic development or local church leaders will sway voters their way in Saturday's hotly contested local-option election for pari-mutuel betting.

One group promises horse racing will be a boon to the city's economy, while the other says legalized gambling will corrupt residents' morals.

Two counties, Lubbock and Dallas, will hold local-option elections Saturday. Those two probably will be the last two counties in Texas to decide whether to allow pari-mutuel wagering in their areas, Ricky Knox, executive director of the Texas Horse Racing Association, said.

Since Nov. 3, when voters statewide decided in favor of pari-mutuel betting, 31 counties have decided the local-option question, with all but six voting in favor of horse racing.

In this city of 190,000, the pari-mutuel issue has been hotter than an illegal tip sheet, and the outcome is likely to be a photo finish.

"It's anybody's guess as to how it will go Saturday," said Steven Lemley, president of Lubbock Christian University and a pari-mutuel opponent.

Lubbock County clerk Ann Davidson said high absentee voting totals indicate heavy interest in the issue, although for approximately 40,000 voters outside Lubbock the racing question is the only item on the ballot.

City residents also will elect city council, municipal judges and school board trustees.

As the battle lines have been drawn, preachers have urged their congregations to vote against pari-mutuel and racing supporters have raised \$31,000 to aid their effort.

The local newspaper hesitantly endorsed the measure, while school Superintendent E.C. Leslie, Mayor Peck McMinn and county Judge Rod Shaw all came out against pari-mutuel wagering.

A group calling itself Citizens Against Pari-Mutuel Gambling has run quarter-page newspaper ads citing statistics that gambling causes failed marriages and fosters organized crime. Television ads are to run later in the week, said the Rev. Gene Glaeser, pastor of Broadway Church of Christ.

Racing opponents worry that having a racetrack will soil Lubbock's image.

RIF program encourages reading for local children

By Ashley A. Bailey
Reporter

Ejsh om yjr eptdf od jsoorbuhb ub yhid dyotir. E esny yo knor ehsh id giubh bb, nut U fibyjbje.

The previous paragraph is nothing but a jumble of letters that make no sense. To a person who is illiterate, the following paragraphs will make no sense either. Reading is Fundamental Inc. is trying to reduce the illiteracy that prevents people from reading even the simplest sentences. The group aims its efforts at children, teaching them the love of reading that RIF hopes they will keep for life.

Children who read grow up to become adults who can read.

So asserts the slogan of Reading is Fundamental Inc. RIF is a nonprofit, nationwide organization that inspires children to read and to aspire to learn through reading.

Founded in 1966 by Margaret S. McNamara and affiliated with the Smithsonian Institution, RIF serves more than 2 million children each year through a far-reaching network of local programs.

The Bryan-College Station RIF program was established in 1985 by Wendy Costa to distribute books to children who would not have books of their own or be able to experience reading for pleasure.

Costa, who taught English at Blinn College in Bryan for 12 years and who now works on Texas A&M's Project 30, a project for improving teacher education, said she was horrified at the literacy problems her Blinn students had.

"In 12 years, I rarely had a student who could read well," she said. "Almost everyone I taught could read a little because they weren't totally illiterate, but most of them never read anything for enjoyment and very few could remember the last unrequired book they'd read."

"It was unique if I had three people in a class that'd read a book in the last year, and that was what inspired my involvement with RIF."

Nearly 100,000 volunteers work with RIF across the country.

"Parents, educators, librarians, business and civic leaders — people from all walks of life — give their time and talents to run local programs."

"We make books available to children and create a climate in which children want to read."

There are about 3,000 RIF projects in the United States, most of them administered through school organizations such as parent-teacher organizations and libraries.

But not enough people in the Bryan-College Station school districts wanted RIF, Costa said, so she decided to take another route.

"I decided to go through local churches because churches are especially frequented and important in the minority community here, which is where illiteracy is concentrated," she said. "When I first started RIF it was only in Lee Chapel, a small black church, but now we distribute books to Shiloh Baptist Church, Santa Theresa Catholic Church, the Girl's Club and various other locations."

The Bryan-College Station RIF program now gives three books a year to the children of low-income families, she said. RIF gives books only to underprivileged children, she said, because they are the ones who cannot afford to buy their own.

"We just can't have RIF distribution centers at the mall and have 20,000 kids show up wanting free books," she said.

"We don't have the books or the funds with which to do that. If we did (have enough books or money) we would (have more distribution centers) because our job is to promote children's reading. It's really too bad that we can't give our services to everyone."

Because selection of the books can be complicated, Costa sought outside help.

Dorothy VanRiper, A&M lecturer in English, and Dr. Donna Norton, A&M professor of reading and children's literature, give insight and advice on appropriate children's books.

Norton said she uses several criteria

in choosing books. "I recommend some books by interviewing children for their favorites, but I also try to choose some really good multi-cultural books since most of the children involved with RIF are in minorities."

"It's important for them to learn about their heritages, and if they think the books are about them, they might be more interested and inclined to read them."

Costa said that the goal of the RIF program is to make reading a habit with young children.

"We're trying to make reading fun for these kids," she said. "It's not a real teaching organization. We're just trying to get these children interested in learning so they'll stick with it."

When young people are given the opportunity to choose — and keep — the books they want, they will read, she said. They will then continue to read and acquire literacy skills that will carry them through their school years and into adulthood, she said.

Norton said that RIF helps emphasize the importance of books.

"It gives a child a book and allows him to value the book as his own," she said. "It also helps to improve the child's reading skills and his attitude toward reading and books in general."

Debbie Hodnett, a first-grade teacher at Travis Elementary School in Bryan and the treasurer of RIF in

"A kid who's never been read to has little chance of competing with kids who've had books placed in their cribs since birth. There's no reason why all children shouldn't be read to; it doesn't cost anything. It's just sheer laziness on the part of the parents."

— Wendy Costa, founder of B-CS RIF

Bryan-College Station, said that RIF gives children access to books that they may never have had before.

"Many of the children that RIF serves have no opportunity to ever get to the library," she said. "Either there's no parental structure that will take them to the library, or they just don't know how to use the facilities once they're there. For this reason it's important that these kids be allowed to pick out their own books and know that it's really theirs."

Norton, a RIF volunteer for five years, also has helped A&M students to experience the joy of giving to the RIF children.

"In my language arts course, my students are required to work with children in some aspect," she said. "The RIF program has turned out to be the one they like participating in the best because they are performing a very worthwhile and appreciated service for needy children. They go to a place, such as the Girls' Club, one day a week and read aloud for the children."

"Even though they are required to do this all semester I haven't ever really received any complaints."

VanRiper said that the students who participate in RIF provide a great service.

"They might not realize it, but they are not only helping children in the RIF program here, but they might also put their knowledge to use in their hometown communities someday," she said. "I know of several former students who have been instrumental in beginning RIF programs in their hometowns."

As a result of Costa's initiative, the Bryan-College Station RIF program has been chosen as one of seven organizations across the nation to develop innovative pilot programs for their communities. In partnership with the national organization, the

local RIF project will conduct a 15-month multi-media campaign to encourage parents to share the pleasures of reading with children.

Costa, who helped develop the theme, "Reading Together," said that the primary goal of the new project is to reach parents before their children enter school.

Funding for the campaign, is provided by a \$26,000 grant awarded to the national RIF organization by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The grant enables RIF and its local partners to develop pilot programs to assist families whose children are at risk of growing up without necessary literacy skills, she said.

One of the new programs provides book boxes filled with used books and magazines for children to read, she said. The boxes will be placed in hospitals, laundromats, welfare agencies and various other locations.

Another program will provide a book for each newborn at Saint Joseph's and Humana hospitals.

"We have to get parents to read and talk to their children in the preschool years," she said. "Only children who have been read to and are familiar with the language will be able to take advantage of all that is eventually offered to them in school."

Costa said that reading leads to future success.

"Reading is the key to all success in school, and school is the key to getting out of poverty and to most opportunities in life," she said. An awful lot of children just aren't able to use these opportunities because they're not reading and some of them are coming to school with handicaps in reading. A kid who's never been read to has little chance of competing with kids who've had books placed in their cribs since birth. There's no reason why all children shouldn't be read to; it doesn't cost anything. It's just sheer laziness on the part of the parents."

Costa said that RIF encourages activities that are free, so that all parents, regardless of their own reading ability, can ensure that their children read and enjoy all the advantages and pleasures of reading.

Parents should begin reading to children as early as possible, Norton said.

"Reading to children helps to teach them the value of stories," she said. "It also exposes them to other thoughts, cultures and knowledge that prepares them to read books on their own when they get into school. In fact, research shows that reading to children at an early age increases their own reading comprehension."

Costa said that parents can encourage literacy before their children start school.

"Children become verbal when they are talked to, and when adults use a wide variety of words, the children develop a better vocabulary," she said. "The advantage of reading to a child for 15 minutes a day from age 1 will never be bridged by children who haven't been read to. In fact, kindergarten and first-grade teachers have told me that they can tell on the first day of school which children have been read to and which haven't."

Hodnett said that until she started teaching first grade she did not believe that a child who had been read to would stand out.

"However," Hodnett said, "after teaching first grade in Bryan for three years, I have noticed that the children who've been read to are more interested in reading. They also know how to open books correctly and that they're supposed to read left to right."

"How do we know if the standard boxes, billboards and posters (that are used to advertise the program) are effective?" she asked. "It's very difficult to tell. Over the long run, if we have a very intensive campaign, maybe teachers will be able to tell that children are coming to school better prepared, but it'll be years before we know."

Sell Your Books
at
University Book Store
Northgate & Culpepper Plaza
& Village Shopping Center
across from the Hilton

Problem Pregnancy?

• We Listen. We care. We help.
• Free Pregnancy Tests
• Concerned Counselors

**Brazos Valley
Crisis Pregnancy Service
We're Local!**

3620 E. 29th Street
(next to Medley's Gifts)
24 hr. hotline
823-CARE

Sell Your Books
at
University Book Store
Northgate & Culpepper Plaza
& Village Shopping Center
across from the Hilton

AJANTA RESTAURANT
Exotic Food For Less!

Chicken Fried Steak with Gravy, Large Fries and Texas Toast.

Only \$2.15

bring this coupon
expires 5-15-88

110 College Main

AJANTA RESTAURANT
Exotic Food For Less!

Deluxe Cheese Burger Large Fries and medium Drink

Only \$1.99

expires 5-15-88

110 College Main

STUDY ABROAD

Aspire to see Germany Summer 1989 Hist 402

Live the history and culture of central Europe and earn TAMU credit (Pending final course approval)

with Professor Arnold Krammer Department of History
Harrington Bldg 549 2:00-3:30 MTTHF

For More Information

Come by our table in the MSC Hallway, May 5, 10 - 1:30.
There will also be a Meeting in MSC Room 027, 2-3.

161 W. Bizzell Study Abroad Office 845-0544

Life in the fast lane.

It's who you know. It's what you drive. It's how you dress. It's where you live.

If you want to be in the fast lane at A&M, you have to move in the right circle. Parkway Circle.

Parkway Circle gives you huge 2 and 3 bedroom floorplans, two full baths, private patios, washer/dryer connections, pool, hot tub, clubhouse with fireplace, shuttle bus and manicured grounds.

Why keep up with the Joneses when you can pass them? Move in the right circle. Parkway Circle.

SUMMER RATES FROM \$260

PARKWAY CIRCLE

401 Southwest Parkway 696-6909

Coupon

INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF PANCAKES RESTAURANT

\$2.99

Mon: Burgers & French Fries
Tues: Buttermilk Pancakes
Wed: Burgers & French Fries
Thur: Hot Dogs & French Fries
Fri: Catfish Nuggets & Fries
Sat: French Toast
Sun: Spaghetti & Meat Sauce

ALL YOU CAN EAT \$2.99

6 p.m.-6 a.m.

No take outs • must present this ad

Expires 5/31/88

Rooty Tooty \$2.49

2 eggs, 2 pancakes, 2 sausage, 2 bacon good Mon.-Fri. Anytime

International House of Pancakes Restaurant
103 S. College Skaggs Center

LIVE

Eric Johnson May 7th

Advance tickets at Lippmann Music & Eastgate Live.
Call 764-2095 for more info.

Summer Work INTERVIEWS MAY 3
at 1 p.m. or 3 p.m. or 5 p.m.

Rudder Tower 308

Please be prompt

SW SOUTHWESTERN

We need a few hard workers.

TRAVEL PROFIT LEARN EXPERIENCE EXCITEMENT

INDOOR SPORTS CENTER

Soccer Tournament June 4 & 5

Basketball Tournament June 11 & 12

Entry: one can of food per person for charity
Entry Deadline-May 20

3030 E. 29th Suite II Emporium Center 776-2267