

## Austin begins collection of unpaid fines

AUSTIN (AP) — City marshals have taken to the streets for the first time in 64 years as officials launched a drive to collect some \$13 million in unpaid fines.

In the past four years, about 156,000 outstanding Class C misdemeanor warrants — most for traffic-related offenses — have accumulated, Lt. Dell Shaw of the Austin police warrant division said.

Shaw said that if every fine were paid, the city would collect \$13 million.

"We have so many outstanding warrants on our files," Shaw said. "We hope this program will reduce that number."

In 1924, city marshals in Austin were responsible for peace-keeping duties in the city, officials said. Their jobs later were assumed by the police department.

The three new marshals, who are paid by the city's legal department, will concentrate solely on serving the warrants. "They are commissioned police officers, but they will not be doing any patrol work," Shaw said.

Currently the marshals are assisted by a seven-member police warrants task force, which eventually will disband after more marshals are commissioned, Shaw said. By October, there should be 16 city marshals, he said.

## Ruiz may return to Texas prison by end of month

HUNTSVILLE (AP) — A prison inmate whose handwritten complaints led to sweeping reforms within the Texas prison system may be returning to the state's custody by the end of the month, officials said.

David Ruiz, 55, was transferred to a federal prison in 1979 because of fears for his safety at the Texas Department of Corrections, but U.S. District Judge William Wayne Justice has ordered that he be transferred back to Texas.

Prison officials received the order late last week, said Carl Jeffries, assistant director of classification. That office will be responsible for assigning Ruiz to one of the 26 prison units.

But Nancy Juren, an assistant attorney general, said Monday the state has not yet decided whether to appeal Justice's order.

The order requires Texas prison officials to accept Ruiz by May 31.

The state has until May 25 to appeal the decision.

Some state officials said they are worried about the return.

Ruiz, who is being held at the federal prison in Terre Haute, Ind., asked that he be moved back to

Texas so he could be closer to his family and attorney, Juren said.

But moving Ruiz to state custody could cause several problems, Jeffries said.

"Our biggest concern is other inmates who have been in the system a while who may have a cause in their mind," Jeffries said, indicating there were some worries Ruiz might be harmed.

One of the major changes that Ruiz's lawsuit wrought was the elimination of "building tenders" — inmates who had reached a position of authority and were allowed to help guard other inmates.

At issue is whether Ruiz waived his one-time right to be returned to state custody, Juren said.

The state contends that right applied only to his first transfer to the federal prison system in 1979. She said he was reassigned to a federal penitentiary in 1985 for a subsequent offense and did not seek confinement in the Texas prison system.

Ruiz was serving a 25-year sentence for a 1968 armed robbery conviction when he filed his lawsuit 15 years ago.

## Doctor turns train station into retreat on canyon rim

DAUGHTERY, Texas (AP) — Trains don't stop at the old Floydada station house any more. In fact, the Santa Fe stationhouse is no longer located in Floydada. Instead, it perches on the rim of a canyon almost 15 miles away; trains passing through the area are a puff of smoke on the horizon.

"I waited four months after I read in the paper that Santa Fe was phasing out small stations in the area beginning in the next year," explained Dr. Richard Morgan, Plainview optometrist. "I reasoned that I still had eight months to bid on one of the stationhouses."

"When I called, I was told that the Hale Center station had been donated to a museum and that all the others were gone — except for the station at Floydada. I said I wanted to bid on it right then and there — over the telephone."

It was probably fortunate that the Floydada station was the one available since it was closest to the site between Floydada and Matador where Morgan planned to move it.

"I called Dewey Henry (Plainview house mover) and he gave me an immediate quote," Morgan said. "He already had been contacted for an estimate by someone else interested in the structure."

The logistics of moving the station from Floydada to Morgan's ranch were staggering.

The site he selected first proved to be too difficult to reach, so he revised his plans.

It now rests on a flat piece of ground at the edge of a canyon, overlooking the historic Bursleson Ranch.

"When they set the building down, the neighbors came over to look," Morgan said. "I think I can imagine how they felt. They had been out here isolated forever — then suddenly there's this house overlooking their ranchland."

"I think it would be like someone in town building a skyscraper next door to you where they could look into your windows and backyard — out here where they're used to open space for miles, just having a neighbor overlooking your canyon must seem like an invasion of privacy."

Morgan purchased his small ranch nine years ago as a place to get away — a weekend home. Named Arroyo Seco, he explains (tongue in cheek) that his brand is an AS on the left hip, devised so his city-bred wife, Sharon, can tell the cow's head from its rear.

Naturally, she denies his assertion, adding that although she grew up in Illinois in a rural town, she can tell the difference between the cow's head and its tail. She does add that

she considers herself a "city girl" and isn't too fond of the outdoor life.

"Television reception out here is poor — especially with the little rabbit ear antenna we have," she explained. "I read a lot, but I don't really enjoy hanging around the house while Richard is plowing or hunting."

A confessed movie buff, she muses, with one eye on her husband's reaction, that maybe she needs to buy a VCR so she can while away the hours watching movies.

*"When they set the building down, the neighbors came over to look . . . They had been out here isolated forever — then suddenly there's this house overlooking their ranchland."*

— Dr. Richard Morgan

Besides being a place to raise a few head of cattle, Morgan enjoys taking friends to the ranch to hunt. He has photos taken near the stationhouse of deer, including one of a buck with an impressive rack of antlers. Rabbits, turkeys, quail, possums, raccoons and porcupines populate the area, along with rattlesnakes.

The Morgans spotted a cougar last year on top of a neighbor's hay stack. "Its silhouette was visible against the sky," Mrs. Morgan said. "We first thought it was a bobcat, but the tail was too long."

An abandoned apparatus used for mining diatomaceous earth stands alone a few hundred yards from the house, visible evidence that early residents used every resource on the land.

"The neighbors tell me that a man came up here every year and mined the earth, then sold it to garages to sprinkle on their floors to absorb oil," Morgan said. "Then he just quit coming. No one seems to know what happened to him."

Improvements to the station started with the bathrooms. The men's restroom is used for the bath and retains the original toilet with a high overhead tank and pull chain. Finding a small clawfoot cast iron bathtub proved to be a problem.

"I took a tape measure with me when I was looking," Morgan said, laughing. "I knew I had seen one somewhere. I was mowing the lawn at my mother-in-law's house one day and looked over the fence into the neighbor's yard. There was my tub."

The women's restroom is now a tiny efficiency kitchen, complete with microwave oven. Heat for the main room, formerly the office and waiting room, is provided by a handsome burgundy enamel wood stove. "That stove was the one we had at home when I was growing up just north of Plainview," Morgan said. "It's in perfect shape, except for a nick at the base near one of the handles."

A built-in desk where the stationmaster and telegrapher worked remains in the living area, at home with Morgan's collection of railroad memorabilia. Santa Fe safety posters hang alongside lanterns, railroad prints and photographs.

Large sliding patio doors were added behind the massive sliding wood doors in the baggage room, one framing a breathtaking view of the canyon and one facing a rugged pasture dotted with mesquite and wildflowers. A loft is used for storage now, but Mrs. Morgan says it would be great for grandchildren to play in someday.

Graffiti, autographs and comments remain where they were written years ago on the walls beside the doors and a faded railroad crossing sign hangs on one wall. An old Hilton Hotel doorway sign hangs over the three-step stairway leading down into the waiting room.

"Richard's father and Porter Morgan (no relation) were partners in the hotel at one time," Mrs. Morgan said, explaining the hotel sign. "Richard's father gave him the old sign that used to hang over a door at the hotel."

A foundation for a deck is laid outside the front window, waiting for Morgan to continue work on it. "First I have to get the haygrazer planted," he smiled.

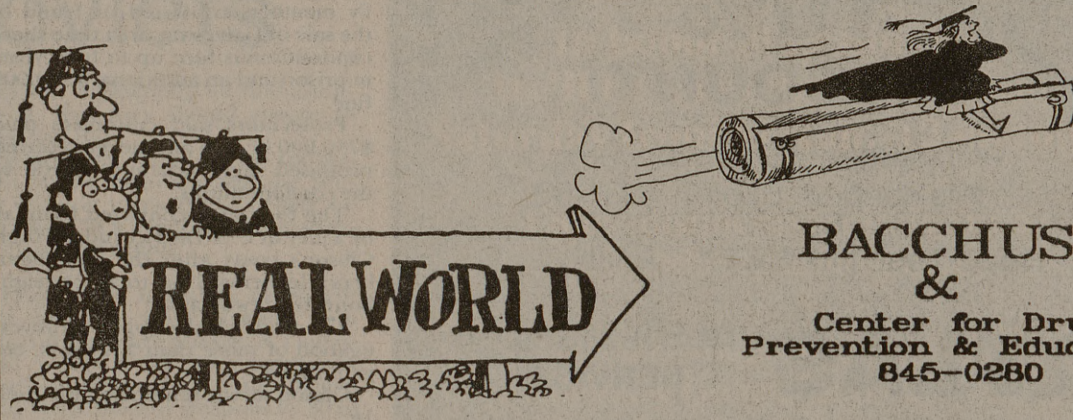
Railroad ties are stacked to form a rambling fence around the stationhouse, partly for decoration while at the same time keeping cattle from roaming in the yard. A friend gave him a mile sign "836" that was on the rail line at Daugherty, 3 miles southwest of his place. "The sign designates 836 miles to St. Louis. I think it was on the Burlington line," Morgan added. He said the sign is now just a few miles from where it was originally.

The Morgans live a busy professional life (she owns Plainview Newcomer Greeters) involving complete personal involvement. Their "home away from home" is ideal — a completely different environment close enough in miles to enable the couple to "get away" often, yet still offering a "laid-back" atmosphere free of pressure.

The best of both worlds.

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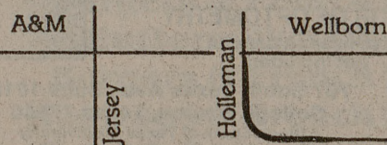
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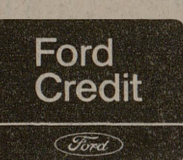


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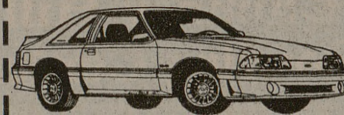
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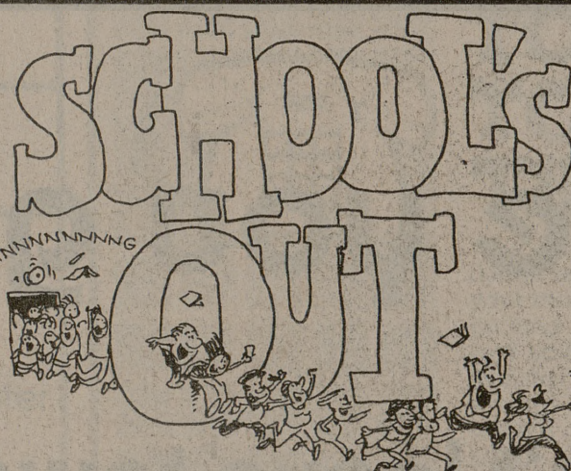
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