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Woman's car given back by Customs

BAYTOWN (AP) — A Baytown woman had her car back Monday after flying to Laredo over the weekend to pick up the auto that had been confiscated by Customs agents. The car was seized last week after Theresa Miller declared to Customs agents that a companion bought two stone pipes in Mexico, as souvenirs.

The onyx pipes were considered drug paraphernalia by agents, operating under the government's "Zero Tolerance" policy.

The agents seized the car. But after pressure from the media and U.S. Sen. Lloyd Bentsen's office, Customs officers in Laredo released the vehicle Sunday.

She even got the pipes back. Miller put a sign in her back window saying, "I got my car back from U.S. Customs."

Lots of people waved and honked as she drove home, Miller said.

Miller has contacted the American Civil Liberties Union about possible legal action against the federal agency, for possible reimbursement for expenses, and for review of the Zero Tolerance policy that is intended to stem drug traffic.

Warped

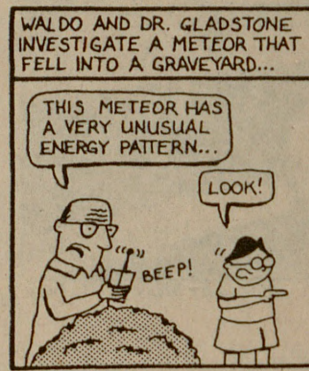


Mr. Zone, I'm feeling terrible today, so I'm calling in sick.



by Scott McCO

Waldo



by Kevin Tho



State hopes to start racing soon

AUSTIN (AP) — Told that the slow pace in starting pari-mutuel racing has cost Texas millions in anticipated tax dollars, the Racing Commission voted Monday to begin taking applications for horse and dog track licenses this November.

The commission approved a schedule for track applications that stretches from November until May. Applications for the major horse tracks in the Houston, San Antonio and Dallas-Fort Worth areas will be taken in March and April.

The commission also was dealt a setback in hiring an executive secretary. The third finalist for that post asked that his name be withdrawn.

Commission Chairman Hilary Doran said Anthony P. Fasulo, director of operations for Florida's Division of Pari-Mutuel Wagering in Miami, no longer is interested in the \$60,000-a-year Texas job.

"We are back to square one," Doran said, adding that he hoped to have names to recommend to the commission next month. The two other fi-

nalists withdrew earlier.

Because pari-mutuel racing hasn't yet started, Comptroller Bob Bullock told commissioners the original estimate that racing could bring the state \$162 million by 1990 must be slashed to about \$20 million in 1990-91.

"I don't think they (voters) were sold a bill of goods," Bullock said. "But all of us had our expectations up, I think, that we would have been in operation before now. We were under the impression that Texas would bet getting some tax money by now."

"That money was used to balance the budget and we didn't get it," he said. "If we weren't doing well in some other taxes, we'd be in pretty bad shape."

The commission was organized in January after voters last November legalized pari-mutuel wagering on horse and dog racing for the first time in 50 years.

But initial projections that racing could begin this fall have been pushed back.

Doran said he hopes the new licensing schedule will allow pari-mutuel racing at existing horse

tracks to start by May, June or August at the earliest.

Doran said some delays were due to the need to have the best-possible racing.

"All of us want to maximize the amount of money that comes to the state of Texas," Doran said. "We also want to make sure that the racing has the fullest degree of integrity of the in the union. Trying to get that happy you're going to have a few glitches in the way."

"Should we really take an adequate amount of time and, hopefully, pick the best location track, where it'll have the most handle (wagered), it'll have the most public participation and return the most money through the years? Or should we hurry and pick a location that might not get the most participation, not get the most handle, and be stuck for 20 or 30 years?"

Under the schedule approved Monday, commissioners said applications from potential track operators will be decided upon within 150 days.

Legislature hears debates on workers' compensation

AUSTIN (AP) — The insurance industry is using a "big lie" technique to convince the Legislature and the public that overall workers' compensation rates are skyrocketing and changes are needed in the system, the president of the Texas Trial Lawyers Association said Monday.

President David Perry said trial lawyers believe that the insurance industry and big business are shifting the cost of workers' compensation premiums from the large employer to the small employer.

Perry, of Corpus Christi, said no statistics are available to the public to support the trial lawyers' belief but the insurance-big business theory is the only reasonable explanation.

"There is no doubt in my mind that there are many, many small businesses that have suffered very substantial increases in their workers' compensation costs," Perry said.

"We believe what has happened is that big business and the insurance industry — the insurance industry gives very substantial discounts on

premiums to big business, to their most favored customers — are moving the cost of compensation from the large employer to the small employer.

"We believe it's true that the cost of compensation for small employers has been increasing, but we believe that it is because of this shift."

"The numbers clearly show the overall cost of compensation has not been increasing."

Rick Gentry of Austin, regional vice president for the Insurance Information Institute, responded that trial lawyers are looking for somebody to blame.

"They have identified us as the culprits," Gentry said.

Perry said, "Another big lie — parroted by Gov. (Bill) Clements — is that Texas has the highest cost and the lowest benefits."

Perry said figures compiled by the State Board of Insurance for a recent 10-year period show that the total cost of workers' compensation premiums as a percentage of payroll

dollars has declined substantially since 1978.

He also said Texas ranks second among 10 other major industrial states in average benefits for total temporary disability and fourth in death benefits.

"The truth of the matter is, when people say Texas workers' compensation benefits are among the lowest in the nation, that is not true," Perry said.

"It is essentially — based on the facts — a big lie," Perry said.

Rossanna Salazar in Clements' press office said businesses, large and small, are being effected by the high cost of workers' compensation.

She said that, according to the National Foundation for Unemployment and Workers Compensation, Texas pays lower weekly benefits and has higher costs per employee than other states it competes with for new industry and businesses.

Perry said the trial lawyers would tour the state to present its case to the public and legislators.

Delta plane dumps fuel after takeoff

GRAPEVINE (AP) — A news report that someone seen something fall off a Delta Airlines Lockheed L-1011 jet off from Dallas Fort-Worth National Airport forced the plane to dump its fuel and return to the airport.

Delta spokesman Henry Conley said Delta Flight 1014, headed for Orlando, Fla., which was carrying 130 passengers and a crew, was later allowed to leave the airport after maintenance employees thoroughly checked the plane and found nothing wrong.

"It could have been something on the runway — maybe kicked it up when he took off," Conley said.

Conley said an unknown person called the D-FW tower and said they had something fall off the plane. The crew, which dumped its fuel, returned to D-FW at 5:55 p.m.

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