

Waldo by Kevin Thomas



Warped by Scott McCullar



Cat owner, 80, faces jail, fines in Fort Worth

FORT WORTH (AP) — An elderly Fort Worth woman may have to pay several hundred dollars in fines or go to jail if a court agrees with the woman's neighbor that her cats are littering without a box.

The city's Animal Control Department has issued six citations against Nan Farris, 80, since July after her neighbor complained the three cats have dug up his shrubs and used his yard and van as a litter box.

One citation charges one of Farris' cats with "walking on a car in the 9000 block of Roanoke Street."

Farris must appear in Municipal Court Tuesday to answer the citations.

"The whole thing is about the silliest thing I've ever heard of," Farris said.

"This thing is crazy, and I don't know why it's happening. And I can't afford to pay all this money they're talking about."

Her attorney, Charles Baldwin, wrote a letter to the city attorney's office seeking dismissal of the citations.

Baldwin wrote: "I would appreciate it if the great city of Fort Worth could find in its heart to show mercy and dismiss these tickets, as I don't believe a conviction in this case would serve as a deterrent to other cats with a compulsion to violate the law."

"Unfortunately, there is a violation involved — animal at large — and it is normally our policy to prosecute," a spokesman for the city attorney told the Fort Worth Star-Telegram.

The neighbor, Ralph Neal, said he lives in a neighborhood overrun by cats and didn't see any humor in the situation.

"All I want is for my property to be left alone," he told the Star-Telegram last summer. "I have a right to plant shrubs without getting my hands in cat stuff."

Neal has since obtained an unlisted phone number.

In Advance

Black history teleconference airs in Rudder

A national teleconference titled "Beyond the Dream: A Celebration of Black History" will air in 701 Rudder at 3 p.m., 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. Wednesday.

The teleconference, sponsored by the Black Awareness Committee, will serve as a national kickoff of February as Black History Month. It will be two hours long and will focus on contributions of blacks in the fields of education, politics, economics, the military, the arts, sports, entertainment and social issues.

The program also will feature young black men and women who represent the next generation of black leaders in the United States.

Admission to the program is \$2.

Several prominent speakers will be featured during the teleconference, including Rep. Cardiss Collins, D-Ill.; Dorothy Gilliam, a columnist for the Washington Post; Mary Hatwood Futrell, president of the National Education Association; and Terry Cummings, forward for the National Basketball Association's Milwaukee Bucks.

Austin joins research into high-definition TV

AUSTIN (AP) — Central Texas high-tech experts, including the Microelectronics and Computer Technology Corp. consortium, are joining a national research effort aimed at producing the next generations of advanced television sets.

The research centers around high-definition televisions, or HDTV. Experts say it could put Austin in the middle of an industry expected to grow to \$40 billion in sales in the next 20 years.

The new television sets, with clear, crisp pictures and compact disk-quality sound, have become the darlings of the U.S. electronics industry as it tries to recapture a market overtaken by the Japanese in the 1970s.

In addition to producing TV sets with 10 times the detail of current ones, HDTV research is expected to boost domestic computer chip production, since the sets will be microprocessor driven; increase VCR and cable sales; and help transform a bevy of industries — from medical testing and military systems to publishing.

In Austin, MCC officials are negotiating with an arm of the U.S. Defense Department to produce a comprehensive HDTV study.

A Baylor University research lab already is examining new applications for HDTV, even though the technology still has not passed the drawing-board stage.

"This is the next evolution in television's history," said Corey Carbonara, project director at Baylor's New Video Technologies Lab and the former HDTV project manager for Sony Corp. "I don't think anybody familiar with these issues cannot at least stop and take a second look."

Experts say HDTV's magic is in the number of scanning lines used to produce the picture. Traditional U.S. televisions use 525 scanning lines, while Europeans use 625. HDTV, under current proposals, would use 1,200 or more, with the result being a picture unblemished by tiny gaps between the lines and one that looks more like 35mm film than traditional television.

Sandy Dochen, a spokesman for MCC, said the high-density television could apply to a cross section of the computer consortium's work.

Camp, flood victims' families reach out-of-court settlement

KERRVILLE (AP) — Out-of-court settlements were reached Monday between the operators of a youth camp and the families of four teen-agers who drowned near the camp when their bus was swept into the rain-swollen Guadalupe River in 1987.

Terms of the deal were sealed by State District Judge V. Murray Jordan. Jury selection began Jan. 23 and testimony began last Wednesday.

Attorneys negotiated all day Monday before reaching a settlement late in the day.

Ten children died and 33 others survived when a bus and van from the Seagoville Road Baptist Church in Balch Springs, a suburb of Dallas, were caught in floodwaters after the Guadalupe River overflowed its banks on July 17, 1987, near Comfort.

The campers, along with others from other parts of the state, were leaving the Pot O' Gold Ranch Camp en route home.

The families of John Bankston Jr., 17; of Leslie Gossett, 14; and of sisters Stacey Smith, 16, and Tonya Smith, 14, had filed negligence lawsuits totaling \$11.75 million.

Defendants in the suit were the camp; its operators, Huisache Avenue Baptist Church in San Antonio; and two camp administrators, the Rev. Claud Bonam Sr. and his daughter-in-law, Zelda Bonam.

The families contended that the camp administrators were warned the morning of July 17, 1987, that the Guadalupe River was rising to dangerous levels after nearly 12 inches of rain fell in the area.

However, numerous church buses leaving the camp were not warned of the dangers, the suit said.

Defense attorneys argued that the flood that caused the accident was a natural disaster and that their clients were not to blame.

A fire department dispatcher in Comfort, about three miles northwest of the camp, testified Friday that she could not recall whether she told Mrs. Bonam in the early morning hours that there was flooding at the headwaters about 10 miles upstream.

John Bankston Sr., father of a teen-ager who saved numerous lives before he disappeared under the Guadalupe River, said he hoped the suit and settlement will prevent any type of accident from occurring again. The body of Bankston's son was never recovered.

Bankston said flood warning systems could have prevented the deaths.

"It's hard to explain how hard it's been," Bankston said at a news conference. "It's something that we would rather not have gone through, but through all of this, all these camps will take this measure to ensure the safety of the people at these camps because children can't make up their minds like a grown-up can."

Bonam told reporters outside the Kerr County Courthouse that changes will be made at the camp to avoid future flood problems, but he declined to say the camp was at fault.

"We regret most deeply that such a flood came our way," Bonam said. "Most importantly, we are working with the Sons of Hermann Lodge, the adjacent land owner, to have an alternate route out."

The Bonams' attorneys said they preferred exoneration for their clients in court, but felt a settlement was the most appropriate thing.

Defense attorney David Stephenson of San Antonio said the settlement prevented the parents whose children died from testifying and the defendants from having to hear that they were negligent.

"From a human point of view, it was good for both sides," Stephenson said.

"But we never got a chance to put on our side of the show and, personally, I don't like stopping trials in the middle and I would have liked to put on our case," he said.

Several other families of victims and survivors have filed lawsuits against the camp, but trial dates for those cases have not been set.

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