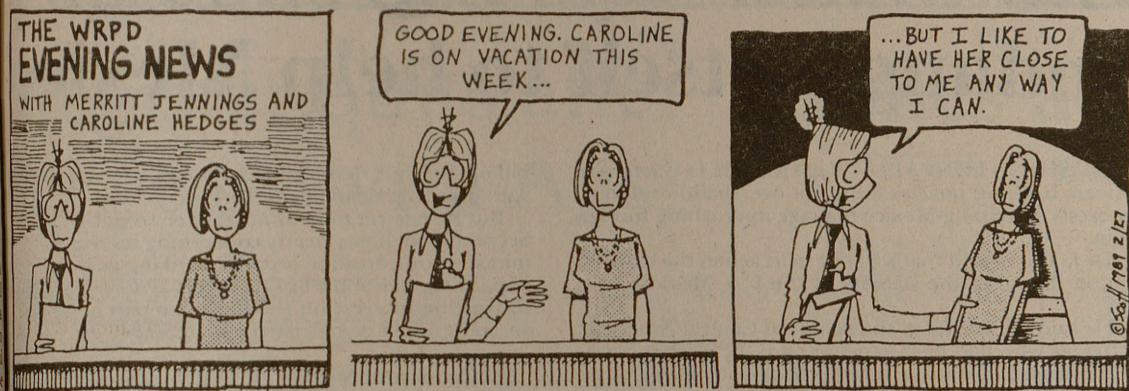


Warped

by Scott McCullar



Waldo

by Kevin Thomas



Personnel pinch presses police to prepare for private patrols

HOUSTON (AP) — A severe personnel shortage is forcing police officers who once patrolled in pairs to monitor the city by themselves. Since November 1986, the department has gradually been shifting from predominantly patrolling in pairs to one-man units, Mark Clark, head of the Houston Police Officers Association said. And, he said, although there are more than 4,200 officers within the Houston Police Department, there are far fewer officers actually patrolling neighborhoods.

The department has not hired a single officer in almost three years, and it has been longer than that since officers had a pay raise. Police Chief Lee P. Brown said if

he were suddenly given an adequate budget by City Hall, increasing manpower would not be the first priority. "Economics is the No. 1 morale factor," Brown said. "I would give the officers a decent salary. Second, I would hire more officers, and third I would give them decent equipment."

Brown said he supports using one-man patrols because the increase in cars increases police visibility. "We don't need more two-man units," he said. "We need more cars."

Brown said the biggest problem caused by the manpower shortage has been the disbanding of success-

ful police programs to take up the slack in the patrol divisions. "My policy as we've cut back is to keep the same number of cars on the street," he said. "But to do that, we've had to abolish certain squads, like the school task forces and the cantina squad."

The school task force was formed to round up truants, since it was discovered that the majority of daytime household burglaries were committed by youths skipping school. The cantina squad specialized in violence-prone bars in Hispanic neighborhoods.

The lack of a pay raise and overwork is causing low morale within the department. Things are so bad that the San Antonio Police Department received 150 applications from HPD officers when it recruited in Houston recently.

Since 1986, at the peak of HPD's manpower, more than 400 officers have left the force for various reasons. Another 180 are expected to retire, be fired for disciplinary reasons or move on to other jobs this year, according to HPD's official projections.

In San Antonio, a veteran patrol officer can draw a base salary of about \$33,000 a year. Houston pays the same officer about \$6,000 less.

San Antonio has a population of nearly 1 million and employs about 1,600 officers. The city is trying to hire another 400 police officers.

Houston has spider-like boundaries surrounding its 556 square miles, which is more than twice the area of San Antonio. Within those boundaries — 4,270 officers — with only about half that many actually working patrol — police a city of 1.7 million people.

R.E. McFarland, a 19-year Houston police veteran, said it can be misleading to use the population as an indicator since people come into the city from suburbs each day.

Judge to face hearing for going easy on killer

AUSTIN (AP) — The State Commission on Judicial Conduct noted Monday it has instituted formal proceedings against Judge Morris Jackson Hampton of Dallas, who sparked a public outcry when he said he gave a lighter sentence to a killer in part because the two victims were "queers."

Formal proceedings, according to the commission, involve a hearing before a master appointed by the Texas Supreme Court.

The master would report to the 11-member commission.

In December, Jackson said he sentenced 18-year-old Richard Bednarski to 30 years in prison instead of a maximum life sentence because the two men he killed were homosexuals.

Bednarski was convicted of the execution-style slayings of Tommy

Trimble, 34, and John Griffin, 27, who were found shot to death in a Dallas park.

"I don't care much for queers cruising the streets picking up teenage boys," Hampton told the *Dallas Times Herald*. "I've got a teen-age boy."

His remarks triggered protests from homosexual and civil liberties groups, who staged a series of demonstrations and news conferences in December to call for his removal from the bench.

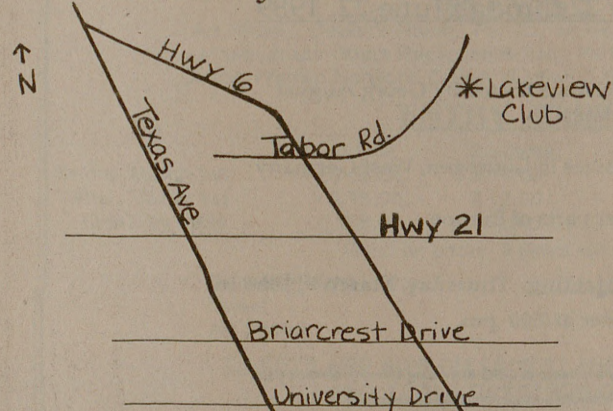
The commission said in a brief statement Monday that it had had a "large number of complaints in this matter."

It said the Texas Constitution provides that the commission may issue a public statement during any of its proceedings.

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