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*this list is subject to change

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Dallas Democrat seeks leadership seat in House

WASHINGTON (AP) — Rep. Martin Frost said Monday he has taken the lead in a four-way race for a House leadership seat that will only open up through a still uncertain chain of events.

Frost, however, is taking no chances and says he has personally contacted all but about 10 of the House's 263 Democrats as he pursues a slot on the lower rungs of the elected House Democratic leadership ladder.

"My sense is that of the four candidates in the race I'm ahead in this race," the Dallas Democrat said. "My sense is that I have a good level of support, more than any of the other candidates."

Frost could know as early as Wednesday if there actually will be a race for the seat he is seeking — vice chairman of the House Democratic Caucus.

For there to be an opening, Rep. Bill Gray of Pennsylvania, the Democratic Caucus chairman, would have to be elected Democratic whip, and Rep. Steny Hoyer of Maryland, now the caucus vice chairman, would have to be elected to Gray's old seat.

Elections for House majority leader and whip will be decided Wednesday. Elections for caucus chair and vice chairman won't be scheduled unless Gray wins; if he loses, Gray and Hoyer would keep their current seats.

But Frost said it looks like there's a good chance that the vice chairman seat will open up. In the race with Frost are Marcy Kaptur of Ohio, Richard Durbin of Illinois, and Vic Fazio of California.

Although he would not name specific states, Frost said: "I've talked to virtually everyone in the entire caucus and have strong support from all regions of the country."

"You're dealing with a guy who has a lot of strengths," said Norm Ornstein, resident scholar of the American Enterprise Institute, a public policy research organization. "I would certainly assess Martin's chances as good."

Ornstein and Rep. Michael Andrews, a Houston Democrat, agreed however, that there has not been much focus in the House on the race for caucus vice chairman. It was only last week that Jim Wright of Fort Worth, reeling from an ethics investigation, handed over the speaker's gavel to Rep. Tom Foley of Washington.

"I think it's a race that may not occur, and most members don't want to commit at such an early time," Andrews said. "Most people would rather not have to focus on it. People generally don't like to vote until they have to vote, and in this case, they not even have to vote."

Ornstein said that while he is seen as a Wright loyalist, he is also seen as a "younger, more mainstream, more northern wing of the party."

Frost is also recognized for his role in party development and redistricting, and is considered to be placed by being on the powerful Rules Committee, Ornstein said.

Although caucus vice chairman at the bottom of the ladder of House elected leadership positions, Ornstein said any part of the election formal leadership is significant.

Elected to Congress from a blue-collar Dallas district in 1986, Frost has built a reputation as a House insider.

What's Up

Tuesday

TAMU SYSTEM ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT STAFF (TAPPS): will meet at noon in 308 Rudder. Dianne Cocanougher will be doing a color analysis presentation. For more information contact Peggy Ritchey at 845-5311.

TAMU COMPUTER USERS GROUP: will meet at 3:30 p.m. in 308 Rudder for a presentation on "Slidemaker for the Macintosh and IBM PC's."

Wednesday

MEXICAN STUDENT ASSOCIATION: will meet at 7 p.m. in 510 Rudder for a general meeting.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS: will meet at 8:30 p.m. For more information contact the C.D.P.E. at 845-0280.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS: will meet at noon. For more information contact the C.D.P.E. at 845-0280.

Items for What's Up should be submitted to The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, no later than three business days before the desired run date. We only publish the name and phone number of the contact if you ask us to do so. What's Up is a Battalion service that lists non-profit events and activities. Submissions are on a first-come, first-served basis. There is no guarantee an entry will run. If you have questions, call the newsroom at 845-3315.

Rash of child shootings sparks uproar in Florida Legislature

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — A rash of accidental shootings involving children playing with guns at home has Florida legislators clamoring for a special session to pass laws punishing adults who leave weapons within reach of kids.

Five such shootings since June 1 have killed two children and left one near death Monday.

After the third shooting, Rep. Harry Jennings filed a bill calling for prison terms for people who fail to keep loaded guns out of the reach of children.

The measure had passed in the House during the recently completed regular session, but the Senate didn't take it up.

Gov. Bob Martinez this week is expected to call the Legislature into special session this summer or early fall, mostly to deal with transportation matters.

Last week, the governor all but closed the door to taking up the gun-safety bill before the 1990 session, but on Monday he said he would discuss with legislative leaders the possibility of including it in the special session.

"There's been a series of tragic accidents here that has the people of Florida very concerned," Martinez said.

"There's nothing more tragic than to lose a child. There's nothing more tragic to lose one by virtue of an accident that never should have occurred."

Two children were killed and three others injured in separate accidents last week as many Florida students began summer vacation.

"Unfortunately, fully one-third of all shootings of children occur during the summer months," said Jennings.

No statewide statistics on such accidents are kept, said Linda Booz, information specialist for the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

The latest shooting victim, 4-year-old Silvio Pierre,

was listed in very critical condition Monday at the General Hospital. He had found his father's 25-caliber pistol under a couch while playing Sunday, said Gary Bradford.

Earlier this month, a 10-year-old Orlando boy killed by a playmate; an 8-year-old Miramar girl killed by her 13-year-old brother, who thought her gun was unloaded; a 4-year-old Orlando boy wounded in the neck when her 6-year-old brother dropped a pistol, and a 9-year-old Tampa boy wounded by his 13-year-old brother while they played with a handgun.

Under Jennings' bill, leaving a firearm in a place accessible to a child would be a misdemeanor. The fence would be a felony if the person who made the available was negligent and a child died or was permanently disfigured.

His bill, which borrows language from the abandoned refrigerator law, would require that guns secured with a trigger lock or kept in a locked container.

"It's obvious that something must be done to deter responsibility in the daily habits of those people who own guns and leave them around where children get their hands on them," Jennings said.

The National Rifle Association would not oppose the bill if it were amended to exclude shootings involving guns that are stolen from a home, but the association's spokesman in Florida said the law proposed would be meaningless.

"We see absolutely no need to put another law on books that only duplicates laws that are already on books," Marion Hammer said.

"We have laws on our books now that deal with endangerment, negligence, culpable negligence, criminal negligence, and there is recourse in the courts."

Du Pont offers cash for arrest of oak poisoners

AUSTIN (AP) — The maker of the herbicide used to poison the 600-year-old Treaty Oak is offering \$10,000 for information leading to the arrest of those responsible, a company official said.

A Du Pont Corp. spokesman in Houston said the company regretted its product was used to harm the live oak, an Austin landmark since the city was founded in the 1800s.

"It was misused and we're outraged," Pat Getter said. "We're hoping the reward will help to flush out the vandals. A lot of people know about the tree, not just (those) in Austin. This is a state treasure."

The tree takes its name from a story that Stephen F. Austin signed a treaty with the Indians under its branches. But the Handbook of Texas says there is "little foundation for this belief."

The Texas Department of Agriculture is investigating the poisoning, and workers are trying to neutralize effects of the chemical.

Du Pont officials will announce the reward Tuesday underneath the tree, Getter said.

She said the herbicide used, Velpar, is made for industrial weed and brush control in "non-crop areas." Retail Christmas tree-growers use it to keep down underbrush. Velpar can be bought without any special permit, she said.

Austin diners save time at downtown restaurants by 'faxing' lunch orders

AUSTIN (AP) — Burger orders have been waiting their turn with business papers at the facsimile machine since several downtown restaurants installed the devices and began urging customers to "fax" in their lunch requests.

"It just seemed like it would be the most efficient way to do things in the restaurant," Garrett Finch of Iron Works Barbecue said.

"It saves a lot of time, it's cost effective, it's real accurate, and it gets us off of the phone and into the kitchen making orders," he said.

The barbecue restaurant, owned by Finch's father, has had a facsimile machine since last fall, Finch said. The machine also is used for letters and other business documents, he said.

"It's become kind of a new, popular thing. More and more people are going to have them, I'm sure," Donald Polise, owner of The Garden Spot, said. His restaurant, which uses the slogan FAXFOOD, has had a facsimile machine since opening at a new location about a month ago.

The Garden Spot counts among its customers workers from the Ann Richards Committee, a campaign organization for state treasurer who announces Saturday she will run for the governor's office.

Committee employees find convenient to simply pass around an order sheet obtained from the restaurant, Juan Barrientos, office manager, said. The information then is transmitted via the facsimile machine.

"It prevents mistakes, and you don't have to waste time on the telephone," Barrientos said. But he said there's one drawback.

"It's a little regrettable that you don't get to speak to a human," he said.

But Scott Hentschel, one of the owners of Waterloo Ice House, said that's also an advantage to customers.

"You don't have to deal with the person on the other end of the line," he said.