

Wednesday, July 12, 1989

Lewis says lawmakers may finally compromise on workers' comp issue

AUSTIN (AP) — House Speaker Gib Lewis said Tuesday he expects lawmakers to reach a compromise by the end of the week on changing the state workers' compensation system.

"We need to do it and get over with it as quick as we possibly can," Lewis, D-Fort Worth, said. Lawmakers have been wrestling all year with the problem of reforming the workers' comp system, which has been criticized for hitting employers with high insurance rates and employees with low benefits.

The House has passed a proposal, supported by business, that limits the right to a jury trial in disputed workers' comp claims. The Senate plan, backed by labor and trial lawyers, would allow appeals to a jury trial.

Lewis, Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby and Gov. Bill Clements met over breakfast in the governor's mansion, and Lewis said he and Hobby agreed "that if it takes our intervention, that we're going to do it."

Clements seemed surprised by Lewis' comments.

"He's changing his position up and down and sideways, so exactly where we're going to come out, I would hesitate to say," Clements said.

But Clements added, "I also

need to say that at the end of breakfast both Hobby and Lewis seemed to be of one mind, and I would anticipate that they are going to meet this afternoon and hopefully we are going to get over this impasse that we are in right now."

Lewis said a House and Senate conference committee meeting on the issue of compensating workers injured in on-the-job accidents will produce a bill by Friday — six days before the end of the special legislative session.

The conference committee continued deliberations but remained far apart on proposals over resolving disputed comp claims and how to calculate comp benefits.

A key senator responded angrily to comments by Clements, who earlier blamed the Senate for the impasse over workers' comp.

"He hasn't read the bill or hasn't had someone read it to him or explain it to him," Kent Caperton, co-chairman of the conference committee, said.

Clements blasted the Senate workers' comp proposal, although he said he favored mandatory comp coverage for most Texas employers — a pivotal provision supported by the Senate and opposed by the House.

Battling mosquitoes can be bloody

Wet weather, low winds, skin oils make pest control difficult

By Holly Beeson
STAFF WRITER

There's a sucker born every minute.

The mosquito population has become a problem in Bryan-College Station recently because of heavy rainfall, but other environmental conditions and actions taken by individuals also are causing the pests to flourish.

Dr. Clifford Hoelscher, a Texas Agricultural Extension Service entomologist, said the area rainfall, type of weather and wind conditions all govern directly what mosquito problems will be.

"The more windy it is, the less problem you'll have because mosquitoes are weak fliers," he said. "Anytime it's calm following wet weather, you're going to have problems."

Mosquitoes are attracted to the natural oils in the skin, Hoelscher said.

"Some people are more attractive to mosquitoes than others," he said. "It's not uncommon that out of a group of six people outdoors, two will be attacked heavily by mosquitoes while the others aren't bothered much."

Hoelscher said the best way people can protect themselves is to wear loose clothing, particularly long-sleeved shirts and jeans. He also suggests using insect repellents such as Off or Deet.

"Don't be outside at dusk because that's when feeding is most heavy," he said. "If you're working outside, the practical thing to do would be to get your work done before dusk."

Just spraying the backyard is not sufficient, Hoelscher said.

"If you spray, but your neighbors don't, their mosquitoes will just come visit you in your backyard," he said. "So, it must be a community-wide effort."

When enough people complain to the city,

Hoelscher said, that's when they begin to spray. "As long as they don't get a lot of complaints, they're not going to spend the money to spray," he said.

Eric Ploeger, forestry superintendent for the College Station Parks and Recreation Department, said the city sprayed last week and will spray again two or three nights this week.

He said people can decrease mosquito populations by eliminating breeding sites.

"Any stagnant water in the yard is the perfect breeding place for mosquitoes," he said. "This is where mosquitoes lay eggs and larva become adults."

The city gives most attention to areas from which people complain, he said.

"We try to manage the problem the best we can, considering the limited resources we have," he said. "If we don't get a call from a certain area, we probably won't spray it."

Racing commission questions lobbyist about funds

AUSTIN (AP) — A Texas lobbyist was questioned about how much he has been paid by a prominent Florida family interested in getting dog racing legalized in the state as hearings continued before the Texas Racing Commission.

The commission's hearings this week are to decide which of five investor groups will receive a Galveston County greyhound racing license.

Nick Kralj, a lobbyist who helped bring greyhound racing to Texas, also was asked about his relations

with a man now in federal prison for tax violations and about his failure to pay off a car note he co-signed for an employee.

Kralj, who has been lobbying for pari-mutuel greyhound racing since 1982, is a major investor behind the proposed Galveston County Greyhound Track in La Marque.

His group is among five applicants seeking to win the sole license in Galveston County — a site many experts contend could become one of the nation's most lucrative.

Kralj told the commissioners

Monday he has received \$1.6 million from Florence Hecht and her family in Florida for his lobbying efforts and expenses in preparing the Texas license application. He said he will be paid an additional \$1.5 million from Texas investors if the group wins the license.

The Hecht family, described as having a long record of philanthropic and cultural contributions in Florida, operate two greyhound tracks there, including the Flagler track in Miami.

They would own 43 percent of the

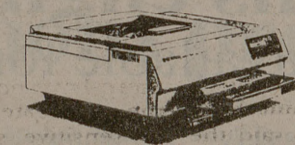
proposed \$40 million Galveston County Greyhound Track. Kralj and 17 other Texas investors, including former Houston Oilers Coach Bum Phillips and former House Speaker Billy Clayton, would own a total of 54 percent of the track. The remaining 3 percent would be owned by other non-Texans.

The Hechts and many of the same investors in the Kralj group also are seeking another license from the racing commission to operate a greyhound track in Corpus Christi.

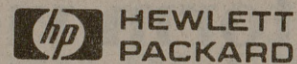
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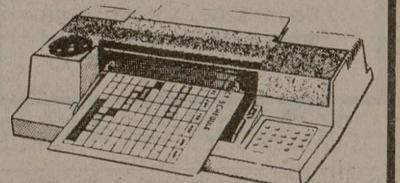
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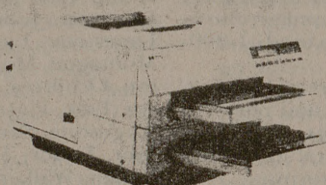
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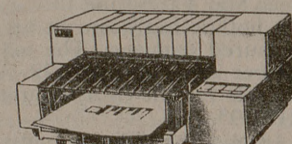
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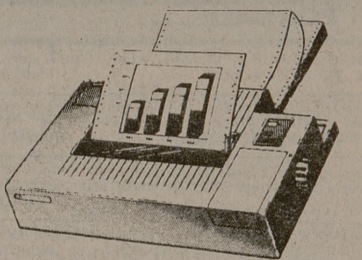
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So-called health plans that exclude such common — and important — conditions are no bargain. Regardless of their cost. Before you abandon your traditional health insurance package for a better-sounding bargain, be sure the small print reads as good as the bold promises.

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