

Thursday, August 31, 1989

## 'We're going to have races' Official: G. Rollie White Downs horse track to open on schedule

AUSTIN (AP) — One of the two Texas horse tracks scheduled to run the first legal pari-mutuel races in more than 50 years this fall may not open on time, it was reported Wednesday.

But officials of the second track, G. Rollie White Downs near Brady, said they will get out of the gate on schedule Oct. 6.

"We're going to open," said Jan Black of the Brady track. "We're going to have races."

G. Rollie White and Manor Downs, east of Austin, had been granted the first racing dates by the Texas Racing Commission. Both tracks had told the commission they would open Oct. 6.

At Manor Downs, officials refused to comment Wednesday, referring calls to the Austin law firm of Johnson & Johnson. The firm failed to return three calls from the Associated Press.

But the *Austin American-States-*



man, quoting several racing sources, reported that pari-mutuel racing at Manor Downs might not begin racing until November.

The newspaper quoted a veterinarian as saying, "Trainers have been told the earliest they could open would be November. I was told there was a possibility of a sale (of

the track). I had heard months ago there would be new ownership after the track was licensed."

Jack Shaw, a horse owner from Manor, said he was at the track late last week.

"There is no way they can have that track ready by Oct. 6," Shaw said. "They haven't started building a thing. The rail is down. There is lots of equipment there, but nothing is moving. It doesn't look like anything is happening."

The track hasn't notified the Texas Racing Commission of any possible delay, commission spokesman Angie Roberts said.

Roberts said track officials have been asked to appear at the panel's Sept. 11 meeting to report on their progress and plans.

"We haven't heard anything officially," she said. "They are on the agenda for Sept. 11. That's when they're supposed to update the commission."

Horse race gambling had been illegal in Texas since the 1930s. But after a voter referendum in 1987, the Legislature legalized pari-mutuel wagering on both horse and dog races.

The Racing Commission has licensed several Class 2 horse tracks, but only G. Rollie White and Manor Downs had requested racing dates for this year.

Manor Downs had been granted 46 racing days from Oct. 6 through Dec. 30, Roberts said. The track also had been awarded several racing days each week from Jan. 5 through April 29, 1990, she said.

At Brady, Black said G. Rollie White Downs has scheduled racing for Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from Oct. 6 through Jan. 28. She said the grandstand has been completed and other work should be wrapped up on time.

## Lobbyists may be summoned to testify for panel

AUSTIN (AP) — The chairman of a legislative committee examining state laws on campaign finance and spending by lobbyists said Wednesday he may summon lobbyists to testify before his panel.

"If we don't get any lobbyists who want to testify, we'll ask some if they will come and testify," said Rep. Pete Laney, D-Hale Center.

Laney's House State Affairs Committee began looking Wednesday at the campaign finance and lobbying laws. A Senate committee is scheduled to do likewise.

The investigations follow months of news reports about lobbyists who spent more than \$1.8 million on entertainment and gifts for members of the Legislature during the 1989 regular session.

That money, which averaged more than \$12,000 per day during the 140-day session, purchased food, drinks, hunting and fishing outings, golf games at exclusive private clubs,

ski trips, Mexican vacations, and even a trip to the championship boxing match in Las Vegas, Nev.

In addition, recent news reports showed that some powerful legislative committee chairmen used contributions to their political funds, called officeholder accounts, to pay for everything from home mortgages to airplane leases.

Laney said he wasn't certain what problems may exist with the current laws on lobbyist regulation and political financing.

However, he said all the news reports had raised questions in the public's mind.

"Anytime there's a perception there's a problem, there's a problem," Laney said. "I don't think anyone on this committee or in this Legislature wants to do anything illegal, immoral or unethical."

"I think the issues themselves (for his committee) will cover all the lobby reporting, all the campaign

disclosure, all the way down to the local offices' disclosure. If we're going to look at it, we're going to look at it all."

Laney said he won't call any legislators to testify but may hear from them, also.

"I'm not going to call any members (of the Legislature), but if any want to testify they'll sure be wel-

come," he said. "This is all of the members' business and the lobbyists' business, so I think they're going to be very interested."

Some 800 lobbyists registered for the 1989 Legislature.

State law requires them to report their total spending each month on entertainment and gifts for lawmakers.

## LULAC investigation leads to forced resignations

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — The League of United Latin American Citizens has asked ten former national presidents to resign from the group's foundation board amid an investigation into financial irregularities, league officials said.

National LULAC president Jose Garcia de Lara said the ten have five days to quit. Otherwise, the Hispanic rights organization will suspend sponsorship of the foundation and the foundation's tax exempt status will be stripped, de Lara said.

"They really have no choice," said de Lara, a San Antonio architect who won re-election as LULAC's national president on a promise of fiscal reform. "We need to clean this up."

The *San Antonio Express-News* reported Wednesday the allegations of financial irregularities involve at least \$88,000 and range from cronyism to secret bank accounts of funds donated to the foundation.

A subsidiary of the 140,000-member league, the LULAC Foundation, collects corporate dona-

tions to the organization's educational, job and civil rights program.

The former LULAC national presidents ordered to quit the foundation board are Hector Godinez of Santa Anna, Calif.; Manuel Gonzales of Waco; Oscar Laurel of Laredo; Ed Pena of Washington, D.C.; Roberto Ornelas of Dallas; Pete Villa of Seattle; Paul Garza of Laredo; Eduardo Morga of Los Angeles, chairman of the foundation board; Mario Obledo of Sacramento, Calif.; and Oscar Moran of San Antonio.

## Parks and Wildlife proposes restrictions on stocking wildlife

AUSTIN (AP) — The Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission said Wednesday it wants to know about every wildlife stocking application made by individuals in the wake of allegations that the politically powerful received special treatment in placing animals on their ranches.

Parks and Wildlife Executive Director Charles Travis recommended that the commission be told of any stocking request made by an elected or appointed state official.

But Commissioner Tim Hixon said that the proposal "singles out a particular group. And I'm not sure it's entirely fair."

Hixon said that perhaps all stocking requests could be publicly posted, but Commissioner Lee Bass said, "You may invite every poacher in the county to some guy's ranch."

The commissioners agreed that the Parks and Wildlife Department inform them monthly of all private stocking applications.

There are between 12 and 24 requests for antelope and deer stockings from private individuals a year, according to department officials.

News reports earlier this year told of several stockings of antelope, deer, fish and other animals onto lands owned by public officials, including House Speaker Gib Lewis, University of Texas Regent Louis Beecherl and former Parks and Wildlife Commission chairman Ed Cox Jr.

Travis said the commission could vote on the new stocking policy at its November meeting.

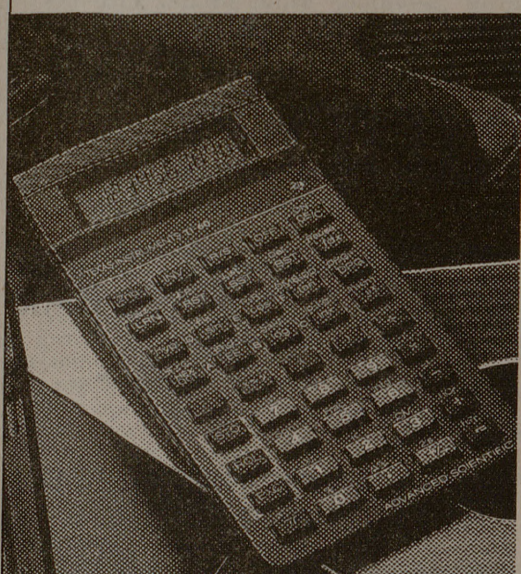
Commission Chairman Charles Nash said he believes the policy would address concerns raised by the public.

"We're tightening it down a little bit, enclosing those maybe existing loopholes that were there," Nash said. "Before, we were not advised of any stockings. And I think that will be the major change."

Under the proposed new rules, Travis would prescribe the form and condition of the stockings through a written agreement with the landowner.

All stockings would be for investigation, propagation, distribution, scientific or educational purposes.

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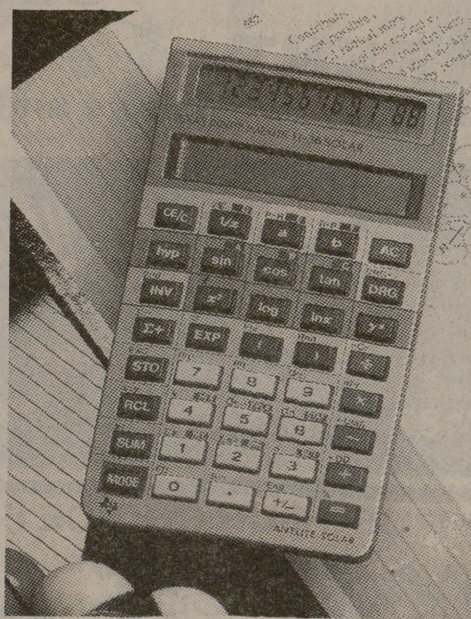


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