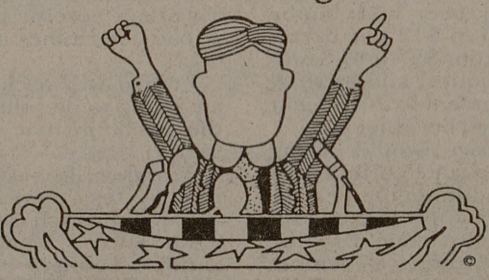


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Boulter seeks bid for RR post
Hopes to improve gas, oil industry

AUSTIN (AP) — Former Congressman Beau Boulter, the Republican who lost his bid last year to unseat Democratic U.S. Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, is back on the campaign trail.

Boulter on Monday announced his candidacy for the Texas Railroad Commission seat now held by Republican Kent Hance, who is running for governor.

Boulter, 47, of Amarillo, said he would seek to revitalize the oil and gas industry and increase competition in intrastate transportation.

He said the three-member Railroad Commission, which regulates Texas energy and transportation industries, must play a key role in composing a national energy policy.

"The foundation of our economy is the oil and gas industry," he said, adding that the United States' dependence on imported oil "imperils our economic, energy and military security."

Boulter, a two-term congressman, received just 40 percent of the vote in 1988 against Bentsen. But he said the campaign had helped him establish name identification with voters.

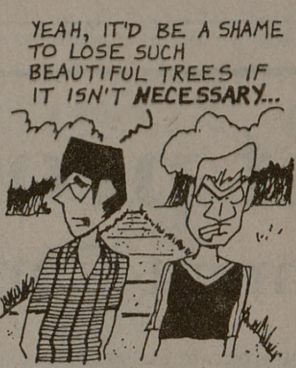
No other GOP candidates have announced bids for Hance's seat. Democrat Clint Hackney, a former Houston legislator, has said he will run for his party's nomination.

In other political developments:

- Sen. Chet Edwards, D-Duncanville, a candidate for lieutenant governor, urged voters to support Proposition 21 on the Nov. 7 constitutional amendment ballot.
- The proposal would authorize \$75 million in tax-exempt college savings bonds. Edwards said the bonds would help needy Texas students and their families to save money for a college education.
- Sen. J.E. "Buster" Brown, R-Lake Jackson, a candidate for attorney general, said he has filed a bill in advance of the Nov. 14 special legislative session to allow the death penalty for those who kill children age 6 or younger.

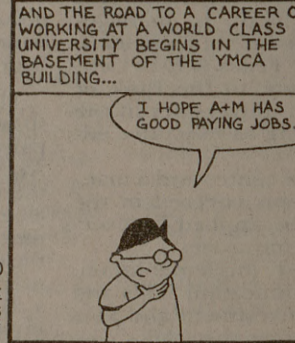
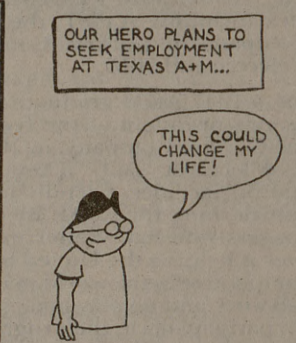
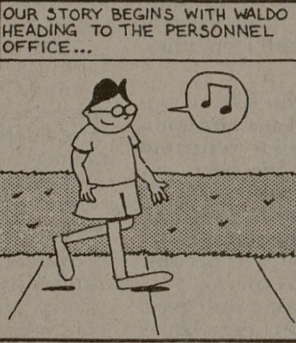
"The death penalty should be reserved for the worst and most heinous types of crimes committed in our state," Brown said. "I can think of no worse crime than intentionally taking the life of an innocent, helpless child."

WARD



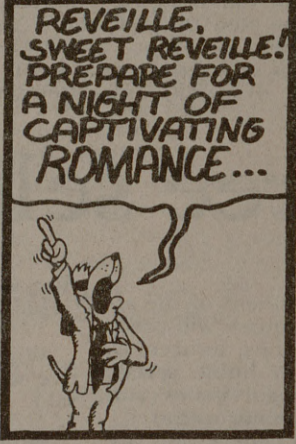
by Scott McCullar

WALDO



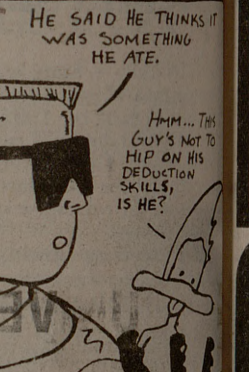
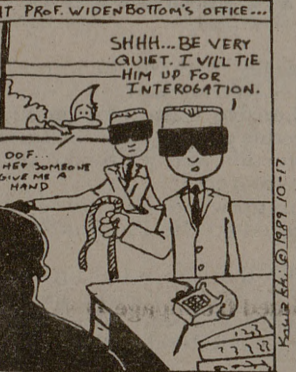
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Inspectors say Texas nuclear plant not ready to load, test uranium fuel

ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission opened a special inspection Monday of the Comanche Peak nuclear power plant in Texas amid charges that senior agency officials had covered up problems at the \$9 billion facility.

A team of NRC inspectors will spend 11 days at the plant, about 40 miles southwest of Fort Worth, to assess whether it is ready to begin loading uranium fuel for tests required before it starts full-scale commercial production.

The move followed allegations in an Oct. 4 letter to NRC Chairman Kenneth Carr from an anonymous group of agency inspectors. The inspectors maintained that Comanche Peak was not ready to begin loading fuel and that senior NRC officials had manipulated inspection data to make it look as though it was ready.

The plant had been scheduled to start loading fuel sometime this month.

Meanwhile, a group calling itself the Citizens for Fair Utility Regulation on Monday filed a request for an order that would delay a fuel loading and low power license for the plant. The request was filed with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

The inspectors implied that agency documents

had been edited to create an untrue impression of the plant's readiness to operate, and that negative information about the plant owner's performance was deliberately withheld from official inspection reports.

"We believe that the commission should be aware of what we view as manipulation and the exclusion of factual information."

— letter to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission

"We believe that the commission should be aware of what we view as manipulation and the exclusion of factual information," the inspectors wrote. A copy of the unsigned letter was made available to the Associated Press.

"If such information were properly considered and evaluated, it would indicate a less than satisfactory performance rating in some areas" by the plant owner, Texas Utilities Electric, and a

need for improvements before the NRC approves fuel loading, the letter said.

Joe Fouchard, an NRC spokesman, said the commission does not know who wrote the letter but has no doubt that it is legitimate.

"We are treating it seriously," Fouchard said. The letter itself did not spell out the flaws. Comanche Peak had allegedly been covered by a draft inspection reports and internal NRC memos that they said demonstrated the seriousness of problems there.

The NRC declined to release the draft inspection reports and internal memos.

In their letter to Carr, the NRC inspectors said a draft report on Texas Utilities' performance at Comanche Peak had incorrectly concluded that there were no problems. The letter said the report of "those who knew the real performance" had been "outvoted" by senior NRC officials who had little or no direct involvement with the site.


Comanche Peak is one of the most thoroughly inspected nuclear power plants in the nation, though it has never operated. After 1,000 allegations of construction flaws surfaced in 1982, Texas Utilities switched engineering contractors and spent several years re-evaluating the plant's design and repeating tests required by NRC.

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