

State News Briefs

Foster care cuts to cause refusal

HOUSTON (AP) — Rate cuts imposed by the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services may make it difficult for many foster care providers to continue serving Texas children, foster care experts said.

Irene Clements, president of Texas State Foster Parents, said her members may refuse to accept new foster children as early as October because they cannot afford to continue their care.

The Texas Association of Licensed Children's Services filed a lawsuit against the state Aug. 30 in an effort to block a cut in the foster care rate.

Texans win big in rib cook-off

SPARKS, Nev. (AP) — Texans were the winners as an estimated 170,000 people turned out for the four-day Best in the West Rib Cook-off.

The first place prize of \$7,500 went to Texas Brothers Bar-B-Que of Dalhart. Charlie's Texas Pride from Dallas came in second, winning \$3,000.

"It's my brother, Leland, who deserves all the credit," said Dale Heiskell, one of the two Texas Brothers.

A humble Leland Heiskell, said, "We're just proud to be invited to take part in this event."

"Always the bridesmaid," said Wayne Goble of Charlie's Texas Pride.

Attendance at the event, sponsored by John Ascuaga's Nugget, was about 10 percent higher than last year.

Search continues for missing men

AUSTIN (AP) — Divers and rescue workers searched an area lake for possible drowning victims, marking the third such search in three weeks.

Rescue workers, relying on sonar and sketchy information, searched Walter E. Long Lake unsuccessfully Monday for two Austin men presumed drowned in a swimming accident.

The 1,269-acre lake is located nine miles east of Austin.

"The biggest problem the divers have is that they didn't get an exact spot where to look," said fire specialist Kenneth Hoelscher. "It's kind of

like looking for a needle in a haystack."

Hoelscher said the missing men are 23-year-old Robert Davis and 49-year-old Freeman Thompson. The two were last seen late Sunday. They had been boating on the lake, about 200 feet from the shoreline, authorities said.

Authorities said Thompson had gone for a swim and that the boat's two other passengers later heard him call for help. Davis dived in to search for Thompson and never reappeared, authorities said.

Fire Department officials speculated the two may have become tangled in underwater weeds. The third passenger, Thompson's daughter, called out for help.

School district to help fund others

JAYTON, Texas (AP) — Voters in the Jayton-Girard Independent School District considered two options Tuesday that would strip their oil-rich entity of \$8 million.

Kent County's only school, 90 miles northwest of Abilene, must scale back its per-student property wealth from \$2.3 million to \$280,000. The election is part of the Legislature's effort to equalize the way Texas funds public education.

Superintendent Gary Harrell said Jayton-Girard ISD would send money to Austin and educate students from Spur and Aspermont, if the measures pass.

Economic expert decides to retire

DALLAS (AP) — U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics economist Nic Santangelo celebrated Labor Day by retiring from the work force.

Santangelo has been the voice behind Texas' unemployment rate for the last 14 years.

Through double-digit inflation, two national recessions and Texas' 1980s boom-and-bust cycle, Santangelo explained the state's primary economic indicators in no fewer than 2,500 interviews.

"People take economics personally, because it is a pocket-book issue," Santangelo said. "Unemployment means jobs to the man on the street. Inflation means money in his pocket."

Government budget cuts have slashed Santangelo's economic analysis and information unit to three full-time staffers and one part-timer, from a peak of nine in the mid-1980s.

Judge grants gay adoption

The Associated Press

FORT WORTH — In a landmark court decision, a Tarrant County family law judge has permitted a lesbian to adopt her live-in companion's biological daughter.

The 2-year-old, conceived by artificial insemination, now legally has two mothers. The two Fort Worth women have shared a home for the past decade.

"This a landmark case. It's as far as we know the first one in the entire South," Austin attorney Suzanne Bryant, co-chairwoman of the National Lesbian and Gay Law Association, said of last month's ruling.

"I'm thrilled to hear that Texas is finally coming out of the Dark Ages," she said.

The Fort Worth couple filed the adoption petition so the girl legally can inherit from both partners and receive health insurance and Social Security benefits through either. If her biological mother dies, the girl's adoptive mother may assume responsibility without legal hassles.

The Fort Worth parents, a day-care center employee and an aerospace worker, asked that their names not be disclosed because they fear negative reaction.

Records in the Tarrant County case are sealed, including the name of the judge. The adoption was disclosed in the current issue of "The Alliance News," a monthly publication of the Tarrant County Lesbian-Gay Alliance.

The biological mother said she, her partner and their daughter have attended social gatherings in Dallas for gay and lesbian parents.

Since 1985 when a lesbian in Alaska adopted her partner's child, about 100 homosexuals have gained parental rights through the courts in what is called a co-parent, second-parent or same-gender adoption, according to San Francisco's National Center for Lesbian Rights.

In Dallas, at least 10 lesbian couples are raising children conceived by one of the partners via artificial insemination, said Carolyn Dunbar, a Dallas psychotherapist.

Dunbar, a lesbian who gave birth to a daughter two years ago, leads workshops and support groups for homosexuals bringing up children and trying to get pregnant or adopt.

Some lesbians use sperm banks or donors. Others go through traditional adoption agencies.

"I tell them which agencies will work with you and which will kick you out," the psychotherapist said.

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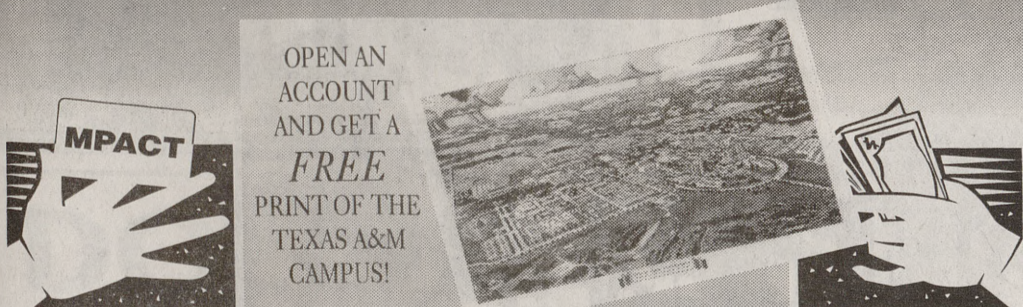
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