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Experts: Libraries need money, not gimmicks

The Associated Press

DALLAS — More funding, not gimmicks, is what libraries desperately need, officials said Thursday in the wake of a stunt that sent money-hungry radio station listeners rampaging through a Fort Worth facility.

"Funding is a lot more important than patronage," said Michael Clark, a spokesman for the Texas State Library. "Libraries are not going begging for people."

Officials of radio station KYNG, which calls itself "Young Country," have apologized for the promotional stunt and promised to cover damages. Hundreds of people stormed the downtown library late Tuesday, tossing more than 3,000 books to the floor, after a disc jockey told listeners that the station had planted money there.

The disc jockey later said he thought the promotion would be a good way to get people to visit the library.

Circulation of library materials and circulation of materials per capita — which are two ways to measure library usage — have increased between 1989 and 1992, according to recently released figures from the Texas State Library.

Per capita local government spending has grown from more than \$6 in 1982 to more than \$10 in 1992.

Keith Swigger, dean of the School of Library and Information Studies at Texas Woman's University, said although per capita funding has increased, the cost of materials has skyrocketed.

"So that's the funding crisis," he said.

Local officials often propose cutting library, parks and other services they consider "non-essential" during tight fiscal times, experts said. And that's when the facilities are needed most.

"Nationwide, when times are bad, more and more people turn to the public library for job information, for family entertainment, and all the other things that go along with a poor economic climate," said Pat Woodrum, president of the Public Library Association.

Libraries that get the majority of their funding from local governments are facing budget cuts, particularly in the metropolitan areas and on the east and west coasts, Ms. Woodrum said.

California is a prime example, she said. According to the California State Librarian's report for fall 1993, public libraries have reduced public service hours by 14 percent, closed 25 facilities

and cut library staff by 11 percent.

Ms. Woodrum, who is executive director of the Tulsa City-County Library System, said 80 percent of her Oklahoma library system's funds come from property taxes, which tends to be "one of the most stable ways of financing public libraries that I have seen."

In Texas, seven percent of the money spent on public libraries comes from federal and state sources, or \$13 million. Local money provides the rest, Clark said.

Statewide, libraries spend about \$9 per person. The national average is \$17.80 per person.

"Local funding for major public libraries is pretty well in crisis mode. I mean, libraries do have enough money to do what they need to do," he said.

In addition to providing books and reference materials, libraries increasingly are offering education. For example, some offer literacy training, English-as-a-Second-Language courses and parenting instruction, Clark said.

Also, libraries face the prospect of major capital outlays to buy the new computer technology that will put them on the information superhighway.

Scientists question female fish's attraction to male's 'sexy' swordtail trademark

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Swordtail fish, placid inhabitants of many home aquariums, have scientists awash in a debate over sex and the single fin.

Male swordtails sport sword-like extensions from their tail fins.

Charles Darwin said the sword may have become the species' trademark because some ancestral female found it sexy. Perhaps, he theorized, the female preferred to mate with the occasional mutant male that had one, and together they produced offspring that retained the feature.

At issue is whether females developed an attraction after that trait showed up, or whether they had already developed a yen for some physical aspect, like color, that just happened to be fulfilled by the sword.

Superman battles Doomsday in final DC Comic rematch thriller

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — It's a rematch that guarantees more thrills than this year's Dallas Cowboy-Buffalo Bills super bore blowout: Superman, back from the great beyond, is pairing off against the creature that killed him, Doomsday.

The sequel to the best-selling super-slaughter hits newsstands next week. It's the first part of a three-part miniseries titled "Superman-Doomsday: Hunter-Prey," according to DC Comics.

Doomsday and Superman first tangled in Superman No. 75, when both died after a titanic struggle in November 1992. A little ink,

a little eraser, and a few plot twists brought both back to life, setting up Superman-Doomsday II.

It turns out Superman didn't handle things very well. He's haunted by a recurring nightmare of his death, and driven to find out if Doomsday is actually dead or revived.

In addition to Doomsday, Superman must also deal with Hank Henshaw — a nasty cyborg who tried to lay claim to the Man of Steel's cape after his death. Superman vanquished Henshaw after his resurrection.

By issue No. 3, the battle will be over. There's no word on the winner, but bet on Superman: DC editors said at the time of his return that he could not die and come back again.

A highly publicized study in 1990 argued for this second idea.

The swordtail is often cited to support the idea that such prior female yearnings explain the evolution of some male traits in some species.

The 1990 study was done by Alexandra Bosolo of the University of California, Santa Barbara. She showed that among sword-less relatives of sword-tails, called platyfish, females were in fact attracted to males that sported a bogus sword.

The traditional evolutionary family tree that includes swordtails and platyfish implied that this preference came before swords developed in ancestors of swordtails.

In Thursday's issue of the journal Nature, other researchers say their new family tree comes to a different conclusion. It suggests that the ancient fish that gave rise to all platyfish and swordtails probably had a sword. So the preference Bosolo found apparently did not come before swords developed, conclude Axel Meyer of the State University of New York at Stony Brook and colleagues.

The sword and the female preference probably evolved hand-in-hand, Meyer said. The study, based on comparing gene fragments from 28 species, concluded that the sword was lost in some species.

In an interview, Bosolo said she now has evidence that the female preference for the sword is even older than the common ancestor of platyfish and swordtails. She found the preference in a closely related group of swordless fish, suggesting an older evolutionary origin.

Meyer says the question is not yet solved. Even more distantly related fish like guppies can sport small swords, which suggests that swords go back even further into evolutionary time, he said.

Bosolo says the sword fin in distantly related fish may have evolved independently. Meyer said he is not ready to accept that argument.

Midland gay-rights group plans rally to protest sentencing of murderer

The Associated Press

MIDLAND — Gays, lesbians and others outraged by a murderer's lenient prison sentence plan to protest what they say is bias against homosexuals.

Organizers hope Saturday's "Justice for All" rally in downtown Midland calls attention to the 12-year term Ramsey Harrell received for shooting Tommy Musick four times in the back of the head last April.

"This case illustrates that not only are lesbians and gays victims of violence in Texas, but lesbians and gays are also not treated fairly by the judicial system."

Attorneys for Harrell portrayed their 18-year-old client as fearful of being sexually assaulted by Musick, 48.

But the Lesbian and Gay Rights Lobby of Texas, which is helping plan the rally, says Harrell and co-defendant Michael Scott Thomas intended to rob Musick. The Austin-based organization says the defendants should be convicted of capital murder.

— Dianne Hardy-Garcia
executive director
of the gay-rights group

"This case illustrates that not only are lesbians and gays victims of violence in Texas, but lesbians and gays are also not treated fairly by the judicial system," said Dianne Hardy-Garcia, executive director of the gay-rights group.

But defense attorney Vern Martin said Ms. Hardy-Garcia's group misunderstood the trial and is overreacting.

"The fact that Musick's homosexuality was brought up in the trial was simply related to the fact that Harrell said this gay fellow aggressively was trying to seduce two young kids, which was the precipitating factor for the shooting," Martin said.

Musick was shot with a .22-caliber handgun as he sat in his car just a few doors down from his home. Midland County authorities said Thomas — Musick's neighbor — had asked Musick for a ride.

The body was dumped in an isolated area of the county.

District Attorney Al Schorre, who prosecuted the case, said the rally could cause a change of venue for the Thomas trial.

Schorre said the jury made its decision based on Harrell's personality and history, rather than Musick's sexual orientation.

But the Rev. Billy Charles Cawley, pastor of Prodigal Ministries Community Church in Odessa, said the trial victimized Musick again.

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3 p.m.	CHEM. 102 CH 21	CHEM. 102 CH 23, 24	CHEM. 102 CH 31	CHEM. 102 Practice Exams 4	
7 p.m.	CHEM. 102 CH 21	CHEM. 102 CH 23, 24	CHEM. 102 CH 31	CHEM. 102 Practice Exams 4	
9 p.m.	CHEM. 102 CH 21	CHEM. 102 CH 23, 24	CHEM. 102 CH 31	CHEM. 102 Practice Exams 4	
11 p.m.	CHEM. 101 CH 11	CHEM. 101 CH 12	CHEM. 101 CH 13	CHEM. 101 Practice Exams 4	
	Sun. 4/10	Mon. 4/11	Tue. 4/12	Wed. 4/13	
9 p.m.	PHYS. 218 CH 10	5 p.m. PHYS. 218 CH 11, 12	PHYS. 218 CH 13	PHYS. 218 Practice Exams 4	
Arf's	Sun. 4/10	Mon. 4/11	Tue. 4/12	Wed. 4/13	Thurs. 4/14
3 p.m.	ACCT. 229 Test Review	5 p.m. MATH 151 CH 3, 4	MATH 151 CH 4	MATH 151 CH 4	MATH 151 Test Review
6 p.m.	FINC 341 Test Review	7 p.m. ACCT. 230 CH 9	ACCT. 230 CH 11, 12	ACCT. 230 CH 13, 14	ACCT. 230 Test Review
9 p.m.	BANA 303 CH 7, 8	9 p.m. BANA. 303 CH 8, 9	BANA. 303 CH 9	BANA. 303 Test Review	MATH 152/161 Test Review
		11 p.m. MATH 152/161 CH 10	MATH 152/161 CH 10	MATH. 152/161 CH 10	

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