

Roping the wind



Justin Peeler performs rope tricks at Sigma Alpha Epsilon's Chilifest on Saturday. All proceeds from the festival benefit the United Way.

Mail-in ballot investigation unfolds

Texas officials press for changes after authorities uncover crimes

The Associated Press

CORPUS CHRISTI — State officials are calling for changes in Texas election laws after discovering that mail-in ballots for this year's elections were manipulated in several counties.

Four South Texas counties have reported allegations of fraud after finding various irregularities with mail-in balloting, the Corpus Christi Caller-Times reported Sunday. The problems gave some candidates control over how many ballots were cast in the March 8 primary and April 12 runoff.

"We've had calls from various counties in the state where similar situations occurred in the early voting — where people manipulated the system to obtain ballots and vote them for people," said Tom Harrison, director of elections for the Secretary of State's Office in Austin.

Texas voters can apply for a mail-in ballot if they are over 65, disabled, out of the

county or in jail. If a voter is going to be out of the county, the ballot must go to an out-of-county address, Harrison said.

In Jim Wells County, at least two investigations are pending and another may be forthcoming into allegations of voter fraud in connection with mail-in ballots.

The case involves 134 ballots that were mailed from two apartments in Falfurrias. Some of the voters whose names appeared on the ballots said they had never seen or heard of the apartments.

The Alice Echo-News first reported on the suspicious ballots April 12. The newspaper said a register of mail-in ballots at the Jim Wells County Clerk's Office showed 66 applications were returned from one address and 68 were returned from another.

It is not illegal for more than one mail-in ballot to be sent to the same location, but officials have said the quantity of ballots at the two Falfurrias addresses appears suspicious.

In addition, three voters involved in a case told the newspaper they received mail in ballot applications and ballots from campaign workers for a specific candidate.

In Jim Wells County, which has 12 registered voters, the number of mail-in ballot applications received for the April runoff was a record 3,091. In comparison, there were 3,550 applications for mail-in ballots in Harris County, which has 14 million registered voters.

Harrison said election officials are considering changes to laws that would reduce the number of ballots to a residence, prevent campaign workers from distributing, collecting ballots and monitor the eligibility of voters who are getting mail ballots.

"In fact, I know I have talked to Sen. (of State Ronald) Kirk in an attempt to come up with some legislation in an effort to tighten up the process in the future," Harrison said.

Assessment test analyzed for racial bias

The Associated Press

AUSTIN — Whites continue to perform about twice as well as Hispanics and blacks on the statewide achievement test that high school students are required to pass in order to graduate, according to a newspaper's computer analysis.

The Austin American-Statesman said its analysis of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) results from the 1992-93 school year found that of juniors taking the test for the first time, the passing rates were 69 percent for whites, 39 percent for Hispanics and 32 percent for blacks.

Among sophomores taking the TAAS for the first time, the passing rates were 66 percent for whites, 34 percent for Hispanics and 29 percent for blacks.

In this year's senior class, two of five black students and one of three Hispanics have yet to pass the test. Nine of 10 whites

passed the exam.

The analysis, published in Sunday's edition, also showed that low-income students were less likely to pass. Overall, 54 percent of high school juniors passed the TAAS last school year, but the passing rate was a third less (36 percent) for students who qualified for free or reduced-price lunches.

Ethnicity, socioeconomic status and school district wealth are not absolute predictors of a student's academic performance, educators say. Learning also is influenced by student initiative, family support and involvement and the education level of students' parents.

But a growing number of educators and researchers — even those who support standardized tests — say performance on the largely multiple-choice exams might reflect a student's socioeconomic status and the school's wealth as much as the student's comprehension of basic academic concepts.

The American-Statesman said its analysis showed similar trends.

Minority students who attend predominantly white schools do much worse on the TAAS than their white classmates. However, they do slightly better than minority students who attend predominantly minority schools.

For example, 82 Texas high schools were at least 80 percent white and reported 11th-grade TAAS scores for white and black students.

In those schools, the passing rate was 83 percent for whites and 38 percent for blacks. In the 19 high schools that were at least 80 percent black, 33 percent of 11th-graders passed the TAAS.

The same trend holds for Hispanic students. There were 116 high schools that were at least 80 percent white and reported 11th-grade TAAS scores for white and Hispanic students.

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The Battalion

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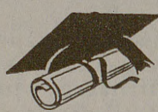
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Bill's	Mon. 4/25	Tue. 4/26	Wed. 4/27	Thur. 4/28
3 p.m.	CHEM. 102 CH. 32	CHEM. 102 CH 30	CHEM. 102 Final Review A	CHEM. 102 Final Review B
5 p.m.	CHEM. 102 CH. 32	CHEM. 102 CH. 30	CHEM. 102 Final Review A	CHEM. 102 Final Review B
7 p.m.	CHEM. 102 CH. 32	CHEM. 102 CH. 30	CHEM. 102 Final Review A	CHEM. 102 Final Review B
9 p.m.	PHYS. 218 CH. 14, 15	PHYS. 218 CH. 16	PHYS. 218 Final Review A	PHYS. 218 Final Review B
11 a.m.	PHYS. 202 CH. 42	PHYS. 202 CH. 44	PHYS. 202 Final Review A	PHYS. 202 Final Review B

Arr's Classes	Mon. 4/25	Tue. 4/26	Wed. 4/27
	5 - 7 p.m. ACCT. 229 CH 10, 13	5 - 7 p.m. ACCT. 230 CH. 16	5 - 7 p.m. ACCT. 229 CH. 11, 14
	7 - 9 p.m. MATH 151 CH. 3, 4	7 - 9 p.m. MATH 151 CH. 4, 5	7 - 10 p.m. MATH 151 Test Review
9 - 11 p.m. ACCT. 230 CH. 15	9 - 11 p.m. BANA. 303 CH. 10	10 - 12 a.m. BANA. 303 CH. 11	