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Gambling debate changes focus

Emphasis placed on legalizing land casinos

AUSTIN (AP) — Casino gambling proponents in Texas are changing the focus of their efforts to bring legalized games such as blackjack, craps, roulette and slot machines to Texas.

The emphasis has changed from riverboats to land-based casinos. In some states, riverboats take short trips and have extremely limited capacity, compared with land-based or dockside casinos. In other places — Mississippi, for example — casino gambling takes place on riverboats that never leave the dock.

One advantage dockside gambling has over riverboats is that people can come and go as they please, Criss said.

They are not stuck on a boat until it returns to dock.

As the January opening of the legislative session nears, the varying interests are expected to begin clamoring for position.

If adopted, the legislation will limit the number of casino licenses statewide.

At stake is an economic development pot of hundreds of millions of dollars generated by the new resorts, hotels, arcades and restaurants that a single casino could attract. Local governments also are interested in the potential for millions of dollars in new tax revenues.

Within two weeks, Texas Attorney General Dan Morales is expected to issue an opinion on whether local option elections for some form of casino gambling would require a constitutional amendment.

Criss said his organization plans to draft a bill for the 1995 Legislature to consider. He estimated the proposal would bring \$500 million annually into the state treasury. He said the development projects that would result from legalizing dockside gambling would cost \$150 million to build.

Casino advocates say that Texans should spend their money at home, rather than in Nevada, Louisiana, and the Gulf Coast of Mississippi.

Gambling industry sources estimate that Texans spend \$15 billion annually in Nevada alone, Lee said.

Police investigate Texas Gypsy feud

DALLAS (AP) — A couple went to police telling a terrible tale of how they were held and robbed at gunpoint by four men they thought looked familiar.

As investigators began unraveling the story, they found they were mired in the middle of a bitter feud between two of Texas' most powerful Gypsy families.

Officers across the state say they have listened to many stories — mostly fictitious — of robberies, assaults and revenge attacks on Gypsies by other Gypsies seeking to stir up trouble with their enemies.

The officers say the false stories waste their time and taxpayers' money and they have grown more and more weary of attempts to draw them into the fray.

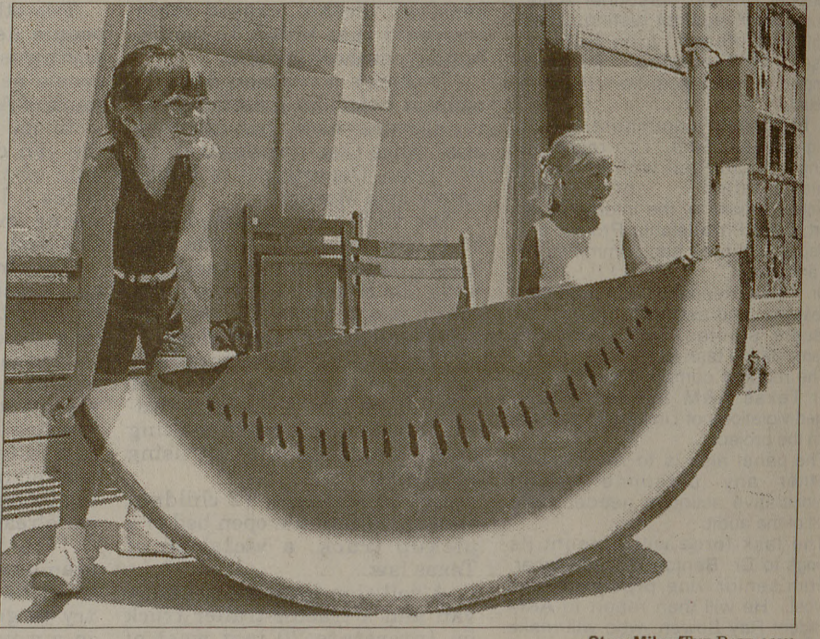
"There has always been a problem and probably always will. A lot of it has to do with tradition," said Lt. Donald J. McWilliams of the Houston Police Department's robbery division.

"You still have to handle it as a major investigation, and it ends up you go out and waste your time," agreed detective Stephen Haines of the Dallas Police Department's swindle unit.

But officers are optimistic. Perjury charges resulting from false reports filed in the feud should cut down on the misleading tales, they say.

The feud involves the Mitchell family, who live primarily in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, and the powerful Evans family, who are mostly in Houston.

Both families agree the feud began in 1991 after Joey Mitchell broke Gypsy law by having an affair with a Gypsy woman married to a member of the Evans family.



Stew Milne/THE BATTALION

What a Watermelon!

Kaci, age 8, and Kodie Petrey, age 4, play with a large slice of watermelon outside one of the stores in downtown Bryan during the "Old Fashioned Fourth of July" festivities on Monday.

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POLICE BEAT

The following incidents were reported to University Police Department between June 20 and 24:

- Minor in Possession** - One citation was issued.
- Harassment** - Offshore Technology Building - A person received several annoying calls at work.
- Reckless Driving** - Intramural Sports Center - A person reported a motorist was operating a motor vehicle at an excessive speed on the road by the complex.
- Criminal Mischief** - Northgate Post Office - A car was scratched on the left side with a sharp instrument.
- Misdemeanor Theft** - Various Campus Locations - Three bicycles were stolen.
- The Pavilion** - A checkbook was stolen from an unattended purse while the victim was purchasing a newspaper.
- Ireland Street** - A person was seen walking in the street carrying a Noltage Jazz bicycle that was locked with a cable lock between the front tire and frame. The person said he had found the bicycle on Ross Street. While completing the identification of the person, an individual called the police to report the theft of the bicycle. The suspect, who was also wanted for violation of parole, was arrested.
- Bright Building** - A black nylon bar containing two Texas Instruments graphics calculators and four white board markers were stolen.
- Burglary of a Vehicle** - Parking Area 9 - The right side vent window was broken and a NEC Cellular telephone with adapter and a red tool box were stolen.

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