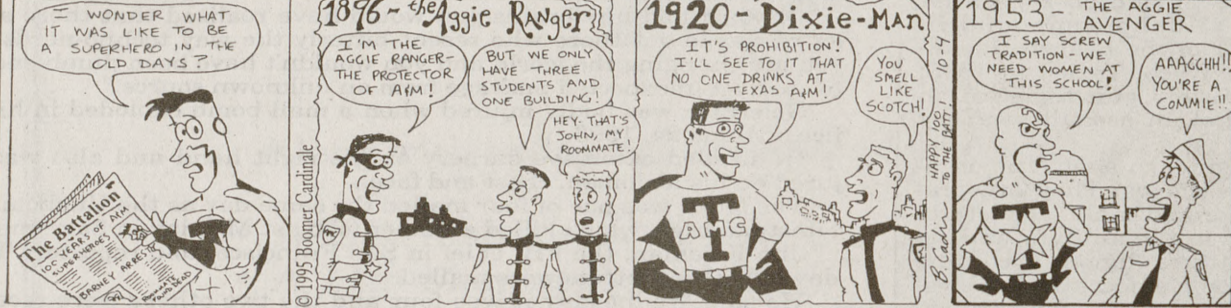


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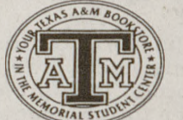
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## Bush Marks 100th day in office

**Bush highlighted his 100th day with a picnic for lawmakers and high public approval ratings.**

AUSTIN (AP) — George W. Bush, only the second Republican governor since Reconstruction, marked his 100th day in office Wednesday by saying lawmakers are on track toward enacting his agenda and that his opinion of them has changed.

Hosting lawmakers at a luncheon on the Governor's Mansion lawn, Bush said his first weeks have been marked by bipartisan cooperation with the Democratic-controlled Legislature.

"I told people in a speech today, and I've said it quite often, that when I first came to Austin I thought most legislators were drunks and philanderers. And they're not," Bush said.

"They're extremely hard-working citizens of Texas who, in a limited period of time, are working for what's right for our state."

Bush said he believes the Legislature, which ends its regular session May 29, will help him make good on key campaign promises — civil lawsuit reform, tougher juvenile crime laws, overhauling the welfare system, decontrolling public education and avoiding new taxes.

"I believe we're on the verge of a substantial legislative session," Bush said. "As a result of

a cooperative spirit with the lieutenant governor and speaker, we've been able to put partisan politics aside and focus on what's best for Texas."

Lt. Gov. Bob Bullock and House Speaker Pete Laney, both Democrats, have given Bush high marks. "We're real good friends. We all work together," Bullock said in a recent interview.

Bush's personal popularity among average Texans is running high, too.

A Texas Poll published over the weekend put his personal approval rating at 74 percent, above the 70 percent high reached by his well-known predecessor, Democrat Ann Richards. His job approval was 49 percent favorable, compared with 52 percent for Richards at the same period of her term.

Bush's walk on the gubernatorial road hasn't been without a few bumps, however.

His decision to withdraw the proposed Texas Coastal Management Plan from federal consideration drew criticism up and down the coast. The plan would have established one policy of coastal development for agencies

which already have jurisdiction and given the state oversight of federal agencies operating on the coast.

Ed Martin, executive director of the Texas Democratic Party, said Bush is lucky his agenda mirrored that of Democratic leaders.

"Just like he was with the Texas Rangers, Bush is a limited partner in state government who has little to do with what's going on on the playing field," Martin said.

Martin said the current reform plan came from a study and recommendations of state Comptroller John Sharp, a Democrat. He said Democratic lawmakers were working on education and juvenile justice before the November election.

"What Bush has done is come in and try to take credit for issues and solutions that our Democratic legislative leadership has been working on since last session," Martin said. "But many lawmakers give Bush high marks for his one-on-one approach. Bush said that personal relationship helps everyone focus on the job at hand. 'You can begin to break down certain barriers,' he said. 'Partisan politics can disrupt the legislative process. I think we've seen that in Washington, D.C. People are appreciative of the fact that we're debating issues based upon philosophy, not based upon party politics.'"



Bush

## State says two die weekly from abuse, neglect

AUSTIN (AP) — An average of two Texas children a week died last year because of abuse or neglect, and state child protective officials suspect the actual toll could be much higher.

The Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services reported Wednesday that a confirmed total of 102 children died in 1994 in such cases.

More than half the child deaths from abuse and neglect involve infants 1 year old or younger.

Pat Devin, director of child protective services, said, "We suspect there are abandoned babies that are never found, or are incorrectly identified as stillborn."

"Sometimes, the cause of death of a young child is mistakenly identified as accidental or natural because there has been no autopsy or investigation."

Some common forms of abuse that can cause death for infants are head trauma, beating, smothering and shaking. Some children die from accidents, such as fires and drownings, that occur while they are left unsupervised.

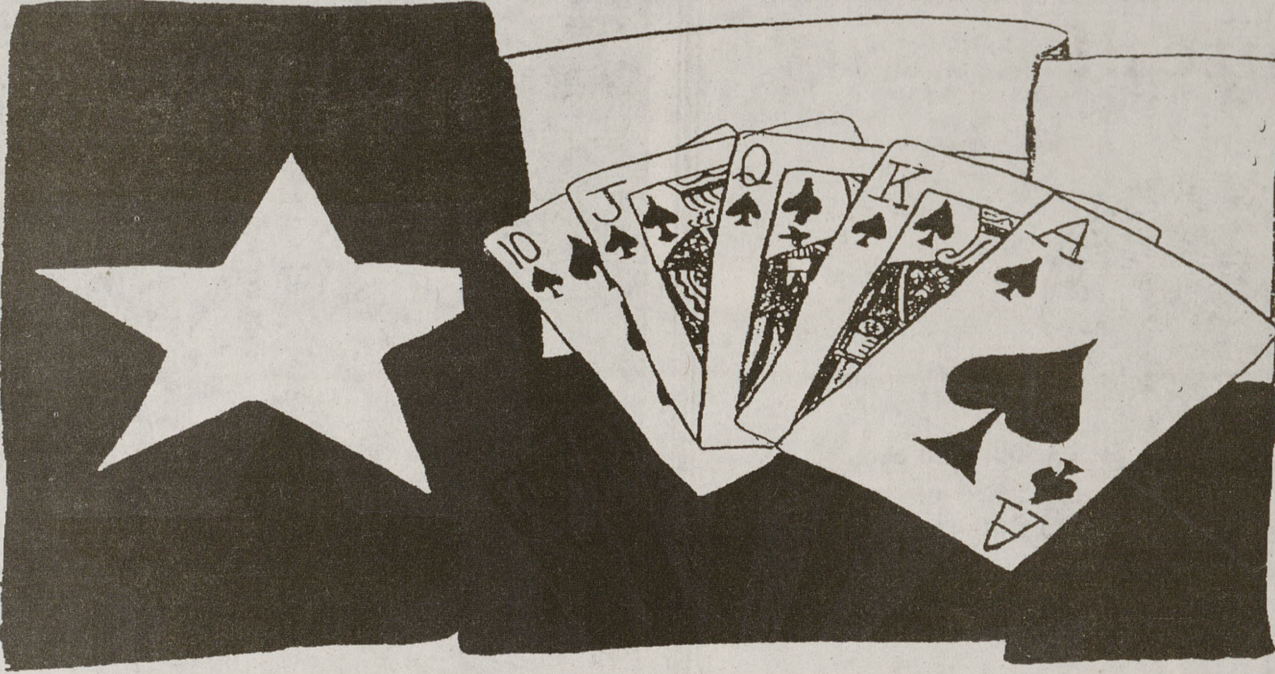
To better understand why children are dying, Texas has developed 23 community-based child fatality review teams over the past three years. The teams include physicians, medical examiners, police, justices of the peace, prosecutors, child protective officials, public health officers and child advocates.

"Our goal is to make Texas a safer place for children," Devin said. "And we believe we owe our children to investigate suspicious deaths to root out what is harmful to children and find ways to prevent it."

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