

Property Ewe Hall

Owners battle Ozarka

ATHENS, Texas (AP) — The battle over historic Rohr Spring moved to a Northeast Texas court Wednesday as residents with wells tried unsuccessfully to block Ozarka Natural Spring Water Co. from pumping.

Attorneys for three Eustace-area residents sought an injunction against Ozarka. But a state district judge granted a motion from the Fort Worth-based company that prevented their testimony.

"The company has always been in compliance with Texas law, including the right to capture circulating ground water. You can't pump ground water what you want regardless of your neighbors," said Lauren Cargill, an Ozarka spokeswoman.

Visiting State District Judge John McCraw was scheduled on Wednesday afternoon to hear another complaint that around-the-clock pumping posed a nuisance. The hearing was expected to last through Thursday.

"These are regular, hard-working family folks who cannot get their day in court — cannot get justice or any information," said Dale Groom, president of Rohr Springs Citizens Inc. "Current law says Ozarka can take all the water it wants to. That may be another example why the people of Texas and their legislators need to wake up and take charge of their own destiny instead of being victims of outside influences."

The citizens' committee, which has opposed pumping plans since last year, contends at least one other East Texas spring dwindled after Ozarka began withdrawals and contaminants seeped into the water.

Before pumping began in March, Ozarka told residents no wells near the spring along the Henderson-Van Zandt County line would be harmed.

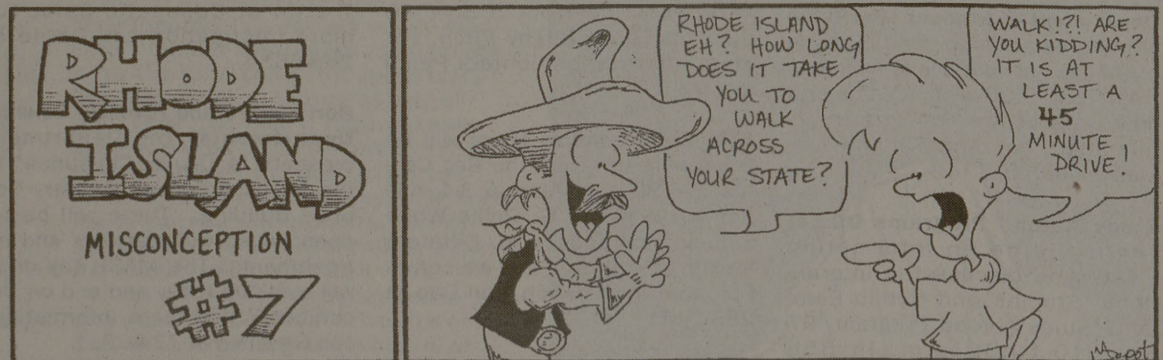
"It has never been our intent to harm residents — that's why we installed hundreds of thousands of dollars in monitoring equipment," Cargill said. "They stand by their evidence that they had no adverse effects. But they want to be good corporate citizens."

By JED



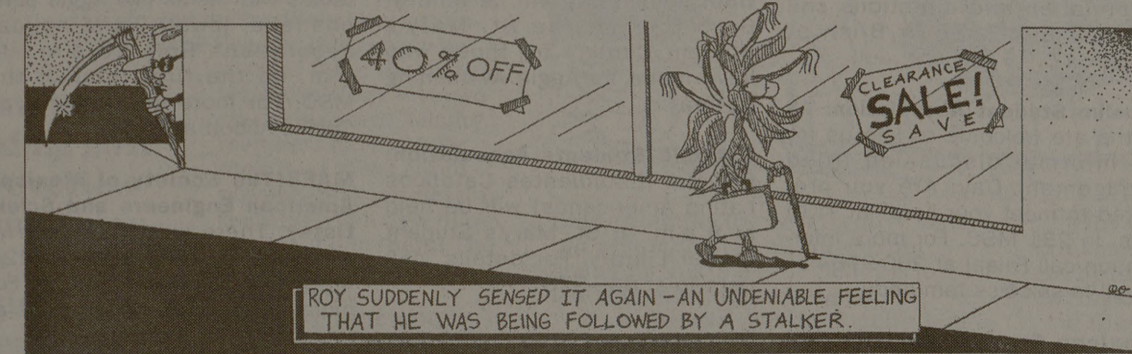
Peeps

By Michael



Sketch

By Quatro



Morales warns against 'bogus' checks from Republic

AUSTIN (AP) — Members of the Republic of Texas organization are passing worthless checks, Attorney General Dan Morales is warning retailers, consumers and government agencies.

The Republic of Texas organization claims the annexation of Texas in 1845 was illegal. Its organizers say they have taken over assets held

by the state and will hold a constitutional convention next year.

Morales, who's suing the group over false government and legal documents it has circulated, on Wednesday said Texans need to beware of the group's bogus checks.

"They are attempting to pass these bogus documents in return

for services and products," Morales said. "Some have attempted to pay credit card bills or deposit the fake checks in real checking accounts."

Group leaders have ignored court hearings in Morales' lawsuit against them, saying neither the court nor the attorney general have jurisdiction over them.

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