

**"Speak Out"**

Sally McIntosh, a mother involved with PFLAG (Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians and Gays), will talk about her personal experiences with gay issues and her involvement in PFLAG & OutYouth Austin.  
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**Secretary of state wonders: too many elections**

AUSTIN (AP) — Early voting for yet another election began Wednesday, just one day after only 3.07 percent of Texas' 11.1 million registered voters bothered to cast ballots in the primary runoffs.

Maybe Texas holds too many elections, the state's chief election officer said.

"We are seeing the voter turnout decreasing election after election after election," Secretary of State Al Gonzales said. "The first problem, as I see it, is that we have too many election dates."

"I think that anything that eliminates the number of elections and increases voter participation ... is

something that we ought to look at," he said.

Texans already have been called to the polls twice this year — for the March 10 primary and Tuesday's runoff. Wednesday's early voting was for May's city and school board elections.

"What does that do when we have so many elections?" Gonzales asked. "First of all, it confuses voters. People don't understand how can I have an election yesterday and now be participating in another election today."

"Secondly, it creates fatigue, and it dampens enthusiasm for volunteers at the local level who are involved in running these elections."

For example, the secretary of state said, 103 elections have been

in the past decade. That's an average of 10 per year.

"Maybe they were all consolidated. But I think to look at that. Was it better to have 10 elections a year for the past 10 years in Dallas?" Gonzales asked.

Only 20,647 of the Dallas County voters — 2 percent — voted in the runoff.

That was less than the 20,000 who attended Tuesday's Rangers baseball game, slightly more than the 15,000 who attended Tuesday's Dallas Mavericks basketball game.

**"We are seeing the voter turnout decreasing election after election after election."**

**Al Gonzales  
Secretary of State**

conducted in Dallas County alone

**Cancer patient goes one-on-one with Olajuwon**

HOUSTON (AP) — Fourteen-year old Valerie Wheeler, her white bandana set firmly around her bald head, ignored the towering presence of her hero, Hakeem Olajuwon, and calmly sank the free throw.

"I have to make this or she wins," Olajuwon said, smiling as he stepped to the free throw line and missed the shot that made Valerie's day.

Valerie, who suffers from a rare form of bone cancer, on Wednesday got the chance to go one-on-one with the Houston Rockets star, thanks to the Make-A-Wish Foundation and a gener-

ous couple from North Carolina.

"I was nervous at first but it was fun to see how he is on the court," Valerie Wheeler said. "He's my role model. Now I get to tell everyone that I beat him."

Olajuwon spent about two hours with the Pasadena teen-ager, first in a private session inside the Rockets locker room and then on the court, where they split two brief games of one-on-one.

"I didn't know she could shoot," Olajuwon said. "She was very good."

"I've been to all the games that I could

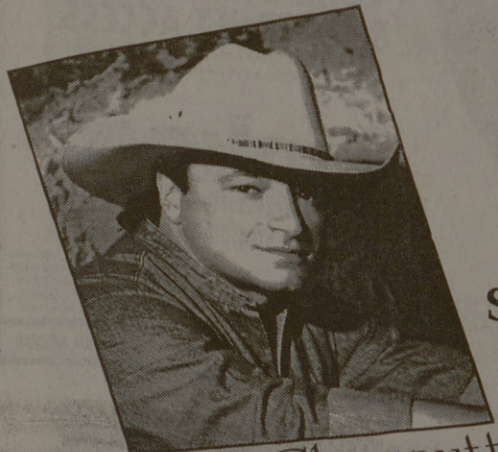
make," Valerie said. "Sometimes, I had to come from the hospital."

Then Ann and Norman Coates of Salem, N.C. won the chance to square Olajuwon in a drawing held by a Houston-based group as part of its advertising campaign to attract publicity for Houston.

After winning their prize, the Coates family had to pass it along.

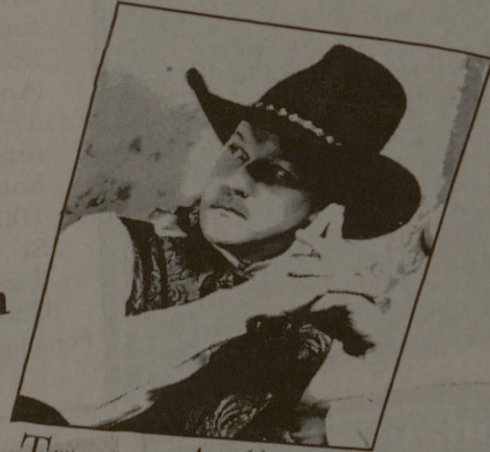
"We knew that some kid would give up the chance to do this, and Make-A-Wish was the choice," Ann Coates said.

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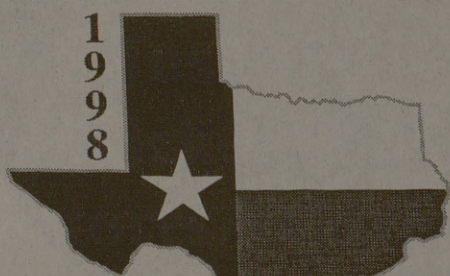
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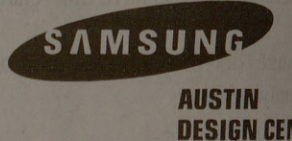
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