

Marijuana seizures up 50 percent from 1998

ROMA, Texas (AP) — A bumper crop of marijuana is apparently making its way to the Lower Rio Grande Valley, resulting in huge seizures, *The (McAllen) Monitor* reported Wednesday.

Fifty-one Border Patrol agents working along the Rio Grande in Starr County have seized 27,840 pounds of marijuana this month, five times more than what was confiscated in February. That's enough for 25 million marijuana joints, according to officials. "It's just starting to peak now,"

said Fabian Casas, patrol agent-in-charge of the Border Patrol station in Rio Grande City.

From Falcon Dam to Boca Chica, where the Rio Grande empties into the Gulf of Mexico, Border Patrol agents have seized 222,304 pounds of marijuana valued at \$178 million in the past six months. That's 50 percent more than the same period a year ago.

Monday night, officers with the Rio Grande City Drug Task Force raided a home in Roma and found 11,071

pounds of marijuana. Bales of the drug, wrapped in cellophane and duct tape, were stacked from floor to ceiling in the living room, with a narrow path cleared to the bathroom, where more bundles were stashed. No one was home at the time.

Agents suspect a bumper crop of Mexican marijuana, mostly grown in the mountainous Pacific coast states, could be responsible for the increase in marijuana seizures in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The harvest season ends there in April or May.

UT male professors more likely to achieve tenure

AUSTIN (AP) — Men teaching at the University of Texas are more likely to be awarded tenure and be placed in prestigious, higher-paying jobs than women faculty members, a disparity administrators say they want to fix.

Although UT is making substantial progress, "Women are not breaking the glass ceiling when it comes to being promoted to full professor and getting

endowed professorships," said Janet Staiger, a professor of radio, television and film.

Staiger co-chairs the Committee for the Support of Women with UT Vice President Patricia Ohlendorf.

She shared data compiled by the committee that shows 406 men held endowed professorships and endowed chairs this year, compared with just 43 women, the *Austin American-*

Statesman reported Wednesday. Although UT has added women faculty in the past few years, boosting the faculty 22 percent women to 28 percent, the number of tenured faculty, a protected status, has not grown dramatically.

Fifteen years ago, 13 percent of the tenured faculty were women; today, it's 15 percent, UT data show.

Bush finds presidential full of obstacles criticism

WASHINGTON (AP) — As Texas Gov. George W. Bush begins to navigate the tricky shoals of presidential politics and flesh out his positions, he is finding that social issues are proving particularly nettlesome.

The Texan's pronouncements on abortion, gay rights and other issues have stirred criticism in the weeks since he was elected.

Bush, considered an underdog runner in a crowded field, has a delicate balancing act ahead of him as he lines up his positions, political strategists suggest.

On the one hand, he must effect in public what he has said in private. He must appeal to conservatives who want the bill to pass, but also to moderates, without whom he cannot afford to win in November, Bush himself realizes on prior to taking the task. "I don't want to get everybody's vote and funding for the president's undergarments," he said Monday, shrugging off criticism about his stance on abortion.

"It's an important issue, the only issue," he added. When Bush waded gingerly into the fractious debate over abortion earlier this month, after announcing the formation of his presidential exploratory committee, activists from both camps found room for agreement.

His unwillingness to take a stand on abortion in cases of threatened mother's life, incest or rape, drew the wrath of some conservative leaders, who refused to put the "pro-life" label on his campaign. At the same time, an abortion rights group is running a campaign in Iowa and New Hampshire to help Bush and Elizabeth Dole also is mulling a presidential campaign, soft-peddling their "extreme" views.

The attacks from both sides help Bush, who calls himself a "compassionate conservative." He has built an appeal to mainstream voters, some say. "For the activists on the right who want a candidate who will not be completely their own," he said, "I will not be their candidate." Larry Sabato, a University of Virginia political scientist, said Bush "never had any chance of winning his vote anyway."

Abortion is not the only hot topic Bush has tackled. His ambivalence toward crimes legislation making it easier through the Texas Legislature has stirred opposition from both sides. "It's a kinder and gentler bigotry," said Dianne Hardy, executive director of the Texas Gay Rights Lobby. "But it's bigotry nonetheless."

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