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## Don't get ripped off by scams

Ben Johnson, Chief of Police for the Eagle Lake Police Department, reports that a few Eagle Lake residents have recently suffered the effects of a "home repair" and "pest extermination" scam.

One for example—an elderly lady was approached with the offer of a "free" termite inspection. The inspection was made and the lady was informed that she had a very bad termite problem. A contract was drawn up for a "preventive treatment" payment was made and little to no work was performed. At this point, the lady was confronted with yet another problem—her house foundation was in desperate need of repair. Her check for exterminating services was returned (to show good faith) and a new contract was drawn up for the foundation work at a cost of approximately \$4,000. Once the check was cashed, a pretense of repairs was carried out, then the so-called repairmen moved on to their next victim.

Law enforcement agencies call these groups "American Gypsies". The name in no way reflects a nationality, it is based on their lifestyles, methods of operation and types of crimes committed. These men travel in pickups and travel trailers. They may operate in groups as large as 20 to 30 trailers or as

small as 3 to 5 and stay in trailer parks. When committing crimes, they work in groups of three to five men. The crimes they most frequently commit are "home repair", "utility employee impersonators", "extortionists" and "driveaway impersonators".

Examples of their crimes include:

1. Home Repair. An elderly homeowner is approached by one or more of these men stating they can repair roofs and chimneys, paint homes, seal driveways or a number of other odd jobs, such as yard work. Once the resident agrees on a price, the men will then complete the work in a very short period of time and will have used a poor grade of material. They frequently receive the agreed upon fee and intimidate the victim into paying a larger amount. After receiving their money, they leave and begin another job elsewhere. If they painted the home or repaired the driveway, the homeowner quickly discovers that the paint washes off after the first rain and the driveway has been coated with a slick substance that is not driveway seal.
2. Utility Impersonators. An elderly homeowner is approached by one or more of these men claiming they are representatives of the local utility company. Using their driver's licenses or other identification, they enter the home and inform the resident that the utility company has overcharged the resident and they are

## Superpowers see things differently

The Superpowers of Texas government, Bill Hobby, Gib Lewis and Bob Bullock, see some things differently these days, and because of it, Texas is never going to be the same.

With time running out on the Legislature's efforts to balance the budget, Hobby and Lewis think lawmakers can legally roll over about a million dollars in debt into the next fiscal biennium.

Last year's decline in revenues created a \$1 billion deficit which the leaders of the Legislature assumed could be paid off with a tax bill passed this session.

But Comptroller Bob Bullock, much to everyone's surprise, says that concept would violate the pay-as-you-go mandate written into the Texas Constitution, and he has asked Attorney General Jim Mattox for an official ruling.

If Mattox says "no", the Legislature must erase the deficit by August 31 or Bullock won't certify the appropriations.

Hobby and Lewis contend the constitution only requires the comptroller to certify that a budget is balanced at the beginning of a spending period, not the end.

Hobby, in fact, pointed out that Bullock himself said as much to a Senate committee last summer, and indicated Bullock was changing the rules in the middle of the game.

Bullock just wants to know where he stands. It's an interesting point. Texas has not been in this dump for quite a while.

## State Capitol Highlights

By Lyndell Williams

Supporters say a state lottery could be installed and marketed quickly, with tickets being sold at various stores, particularly convenience stores.

**Fine threat lifted**  
As for good news, a federal judge temporarily backed off his threat to fine Texas for contempt of prison reform court orders.

The next day the Texas AG's office told the federal appeals court that the contempt ruling was beyond the judge's authority and asked it be overturned.

The inmates' lawyer asked the appeal court to stay out of it.

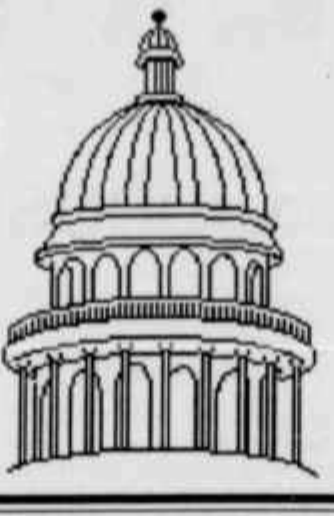
**Proposed Court Reforms**  
Meanwhile, two plans to overhaul the Texas court system caught the limelight, and they don't necessarily like each other.

The most dramatic plan, backed by Gov. Bill Clements, would combine the state's two highest courts, the Supreme Court and the Court of Criminal Appeals, into one of appointed judges.

Another, sponsored by Wichita Falls Sen. Ray Farabee, would trim down the "appointment plan" to include the Supreme Court, Court of Criminal Appeals and 13 civil appeals courts, and not state district trial judges.

Farabee commented the governor's idea might kill the appointment plan altogether. The governor, of course, would have the appointment power.

Other highlights  
"Clements could become a defendant in a possible lawsuit against individuals by SMU officials



for his role in "Pony-gate", the play-for-pay football scandal. He isn't worried.

"Mattox said he will review as a matter of course the \$400 million purchase by the Hearst Corporation of the Houston Chronicle from the non-profit Houston Endowment.

"Meanwhile, a bill drafted by Clements' office would bar Mattox and subsequent attorneys general, as well as most of the consumer representation, from public utility rate cases. Even the GOP sponsor, Dallas Rep. Patricia Hill, said the bill may have been misled by Clements staff on its contents.

Austin banker Robert Lane quit the Texas Board of Corrections, leaving Clements with four vacancies to fill.

"One of Clements new appointees, Dallas investor Louis Beecher to the University of Texas board of regents, ran into trouble in the Senate.

Beecher admitted in committee testimony that he promised Clements he would outbid board chairman Jess Hay, a top Democrat fundraiser.

Panel Democrats may bust Beecher for promising something in return for office and planned to question him a second time.

## Colorado County Courthouse Report

**MARRIAGE LICENSES**  
James Robert Bogar Jr., 60, and Lisa Ann Leyendecker, 62.  
Oscar Hard, 61, and Marsha Shanel Kaykool, 64.  
Robert Eugene Combs, 55, and Nora Celeste Kirklighter, 56.  
E. Burnell Hranitzky, 41, and Janette Kay Hranitzky, 47.  
Jose Luis Salazar, 63, Donna Lee Weber, 56.

**DIVORCES FILED**  
Janie Rivers and Ben H. Rivera.  
Robert Molano and Shirley Kay Molano.

**REAL ESTATE DEEDS**  
Deed, Dale DeFoor, et ux, to Carl F. Culley, et ux, lot 4, block 3, The Falls Subdivision, Section 2, 2-12-87.  
Deed, Dale DeFoor, et ux, to Carl F. Culley, et ux, 15.875 acres, Robert H. Tobin Survey, 1-31-87.  
Deed, Merla Waage to James P. Berger, et ux, 9.97 acres, Phillip Bugler Survey, 2-23-87.  
Gift Deed, Ruth Alley Ward to Ruby Lee Ward, a part of original lot 2 and 3, block 74, town of Columbus, 3-9-87.  
Gift Deed, Ruby Jewel Ward to Ruth

## Deadline draws near for crop insurance program

March 31 is the last day to apply for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 1987 crop insurance program for corn, cotton, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans and peanuts in Colorado County, according to Tom Jean, district director with the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC).

Crop insurance covers unavoidable loss of production resulting from adverse weather conditions such as drought, excess precipitation, hail, wind and freeze damage. Each year millions of acres of valuable crops are severely damaged or destroyed as a result of adverse weather conditions beyond the farmer's control. Sometimes losses are over a wide area and sometimes in isolated "pockets" of disaster. Adequate crop insurance can provide a barrier between crop disaster and financial disaster. High levels of farmer participation in this federally subsidized program, as a risk management tool, can reduce the adverse economic impact of an overall crop failure on individual producers as well as the local community in which they live.

This year's insurance program offers three optional price elections for valuing production loss or damage and includes a plan that can provide producers with higher yield guarantees on the basis of their actual production history. Rates have been adjusted to offer reduced premiums for producers with above-average yields.

To find out more about the 1987 crop insurance program, producers should contact a local, authorized agent. To select an agent, producers may check the list of agents at their local ASCS office. March 31 is the final deadline for applications.

## Green up your lawn

By Leroy J. Hajduk,  
County Extension Agent

About this time of the year home lawns need a boost to get them in shape for the upcoming spring season.

Three operations that can get a lawn off to a good start are: scalping, fertilizing and applying a weed killer.

Scalping a lawn in early spring serves to revitalize it and promote early spring green-up.

Begin the operation by lowering the blade of your lawnmower 1/2 to 1 inch below the normal setting. Then mow the lawn in two directions that are at right angles to each other. Remove clippings as they go. They are excellent to add to a compost or to use as a mulch for garden and landscape plants. Also keep the lawnmower blade lowered until mid-summer.

After scalping the lawn, apply a complete fertilizer (one containing nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium) to promote leaf and root growth. Use 1.5 pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of lawn area. This is equal to 18 pounds of an 8-8-8 fertilizer, 12 and 14 and gradually declines thereafter.

Parents can help their teenagers by adopting a friendly and loving attitude not only toward their own adolescent but toward their teenagers' friends as well. Encourage them to "hang out" in your house when you are home. Stay in the background but be kind and friendly when approached. Don't be reluctant to make and maintain house rules, just don't nag about them.

## Green up your lawn

Proper maintenance is essential for a healthy lawn, and these practices will give new life to a dormant, weedy lawn.

Upcoming events  
A forage production field day will be held at 10 a.m. this Thursday, March 26 at the TAMU Research Station in Angleton.

The area farm pond management shortcourse is scheduled for this Thursday, March 26 at 7:30 p.m. in the Harris County Extension Service Auditorium in the Bear Creek Park in Houston.

On March 31, an ag economic development program will be held at 7:30 p.m. at Weimar City Hall in Weimar.

The Texas swine shortcourse has been scheduled for 9 a.m. on Saturday, April 11 at Guadalupe County Coliseum in Seguin.

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## Let's Look Back... 48 Years Ago

(March 24, 1939)

Work is now beginning to make a fine showing on the Eagle Lake to Altair highway under construction... Paul Powers killed a large rattlesnake on the Sandies, south of Rock Island, Sunday. The snake measured five feet six inches and had 16 rattles and a button... Today's issue of the Headlight is volume 36, number one—the first issue in the paper's 36th year of existence... A.B. (Bates) Brownson, prominent stockman and Paul Powers killed a large rattlesnake on the Sandies, south of Rock Island, Sunday. The snake measured five feet six inches and had 16 rattles and a button... Today's issue of the Headlight is volume 36, number one—the first issue in the paper's 36th year of existence... A.B. (Bates) Brownson, prominent stockman and Paul Powers killed a large rattlesnake on the Sandies, south of Rock Island, Sunday. The snake measured five feet six inches and had 16 rattles and a button... 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