



THE EAGLE LAKE HEADLIGHT

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Hayek

I have from the beginning of this prosecution, that I am not guilty of any criminal conduct. The facts are that I cannot remember exactly what I did with the reimbursements in question in 1994 or 1995.

If I did fail to reimburse this money to the County, it was an oversight and mistake on my part, but it was not committed with any criminal intent.

As for 1996, I have a clear recollection of reimbursing the money but do not have the records to prove that fact. Because I made this reimbursement in cash, and did not at the time see the necessity of requesting a receipt for this cash from the auditor's office, it is my word against hers.

If I had taken these allegations to a jury, I would have taken the stand and said, essentially, what I have just said. It would have been up to the 12 citizens on the jury to decide whether or not they believed me or the circumstantial innuendos that had been supplied to the district attorney's office. The district attorney's office has never had, nor do they have today, any direct evidence that I am guilty of any criminal offense.

So, why didn't I go all the way through a jury trial?

Believe me, that was — until very recently — the only possible resolution I saw to this situation. But when the district attorney approached my lawyer with the offer to settle this matter in the way that we have, I had to seriously consider that offer for a number of reasons.

First, the emotional and mental strain that this prosecution has placed on myself and my family is beyond belief.

Over the last few months, I have been very concerned with the possibility that my service to the public as county clerk had been impaired by the drain on my emotional and physical energy. I only hope that everyone will understand what I have been going through and understand the personal difficulties caused by this prosecution.

As for my family, their loyalty and support has been without fault. While I know that they would have continued to stand by me, regardless of the outcome of a trial, I could not be so self-centered as to not take into consideration the strain that they have been under, too.

Second, I had to face the possibility that I could be found guilty — which would mean an automatic re-

moval from office and the probable end of my political career.

Because I am very proud of my 10 years of public service and am committed to continuing that service as an elected official in this county, I had to look seriously at a resolution to this matter that would allow me to retain my office and continue my public service.

Up until this happened, I felt that our county government, although not perfect, was better than most. However, when I was indicted, I felt as if the persons with whom I worked on a daily basis and fellow elected officials had apparently conspired to turn an honest mistake into a felony prosecution. My faith in our county government was severely shaken.

During the last six months, I have

said to myself and others many, many times, "I can't believe this has happened to me. If somebody thought I had made a mistake, why couldn't they just call my attention to it and let me pay the money back or give me a chance to show it was their mistake."

Instead, it seems as if it was a premeditated decision on the part of one or two persons to use my mistakes as a noose around my political neck. Instead of being handled within the county government system, these persons referred the matter to the district attorney who accommodated their desire to place my entire political career in jeopardy.

If I had taken this case to a jury trial and, God forbid, been found guilty, then I know that I would have automatically been removed from office.

However, by the terms of the plea I have made, I retain my office.

And, equally important, I retain the ability to work within the current county government system to expose and help eliminate unfairness and abuses of power that threaten the basic frame work of our government, and thus threaten every citizen's right to fair treatment.

If this can happen to me, it can happen to you.

If there are any attempts to have me removed from my current office, I will fight them with all resources available to me. The voters put me in office and, as far as I'm concerned, I will continue to hold a public office until the voters tell me that is not what they want.

I will not be intimidated into re-

signing by a select few who might feel threatened by my honesty and integrity.

I pledge to all citizens of Colorado County that I will continue to maintain my high standards of professionalism and service to the public.

I believe that the public will give me the benefit of the doubt that was not afforded to me by others.

To those of you who have supported me throughout this ordeal — and there are many of you — thank you! You will forever have a special place in my heart.

Now that this battle is over, I hope you will become activists in the fight against politicians and others who attempt to use the system for their own political agendas.

Continued from Page 1

State Senate approves tough underage drinking bill



By Lyndell Williams
and Ed Sterling
Texas Press Association

The legislation, sponsored by Sen. Royce West, D-Dallas, hits underage drinkers where it hurts most: it takes away their "wheels," the *Dallas Morning News* reported.

"What we're trying to do is send a message ... that we have zero tolerance for drinking and driving," West said.

In Texas during the past five years, 1,330 alcohol-related traffic deaths have involved drivers between the ages of 15 and 20. Half of all traffic fatalities in that age group are alcohol related, compared with 36% nationally.

Texas law currently allows drivers under age 21 to operate a motor vehicle with a blood-alcohol level of up to 0.07. A reading of 0.10 is considered legally intoxicated.

Under West's bill, even a trace of alcohol would bring stiff penalties:

- Minors stopped for driving under the influence, depending on first, second or third offense, would face suspension of their driver's license for 120 days to 180 days; a fine of \$500 or \$2,000; up to 180 days in jail and from 20 to 40 days of community service.

- Police would be allowed a choice of either taking a minor who is not driving, but in possession of alcohol, to the police station for a breath or blood test or issuing a citation on the spot.

- For those who were not driving but have been consuming alcohol or have misrepresented their age, penalties would be similar to those assessed to minors caught driving under the influence.

Panel OKs Abortion Bill

A Senate committee last week approved legislation which would require doctors who perform abortions to notify a parent or guardian of a minor seeking an abortion.

Abortion opponents cheered the approval of the parental notification bill sponsored by Sen. Florence Shapiro, R-Plano. They said its early consideration in the legislative session could give the bill momentum as it moves to the full Senate.

"It gives us a boost," said Bill Price, President of the Texans United for Life. "The pro-life movement in this state has not been successful in passing pro-life legislation. We've never gotten a hearing on a bill like this so early in the session."

"This bill doesn't ban abortion, and the purpose is not to mandate parent-child communication, but to proclaim the right of parents to know their daughter is in distress," Sen. Shapiro told committee members.

A similar bill failed in the Senate in 1995. But observers believe the new Republican majority in the Senate will assure passage. The measure is expected to face stiff opposition in the House, where Rep. Kenny Marchant, R-Carrollton, is the sponsor.

Affirmative Action Nixed

Affirmative action programs are illegal, state Attorney General Dan Morales advised Texas' universities last week.

In an opinion issued at the request of University of Houston Chancellor Bill Hobby, Morales cited the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals decision issued last spring that ruled the University of Texas School of Law may not consider race in its admission policy.

"Let us focus our time, energy and creativity on finding alternative ways to promote cultural diversity and equal opportunity in our universities instead of fighting a legal reality,"

Morales wrote.

Morales warned schools to not consider race or ethnicity in programs affecting students and advised them to use only race-neutral criteria in handling admissions, financial aid, scholarships, recruitment and retention programs.

Other Capital Highlights

- More than 2,500 people gathered Feb. 3 at St. Leo's Catholic Church in San Antonio to mourn the death of Congressman Frank Tejeda, 51, who died Jan. 30 of complications from brain cancer. Gov. George W. Bush last week scheduled a March 15 special election to fill Tejeda's seat.

- Acting Texas Lottery Director Zoann Atwood resigned last week, after less than a month on the job. Atwood was appointed to the post Jan. 7, after the Texas Lottery Commission fired former lottery director Nora Linares. The commission named Kim Kiplin, who has worked as a general counsel for the lottery since 1993, as acting director.

- Gov. Bush has proposed a \$70 million reading initiative designed to ensure that all Texas school children can read by the third grade. Last week, three democratic legislators filed a bill that would pump \$200 million into public school reading programs over two years.

- The state's Permanent School Fund sold \$3.5 million worth of stock in Seagram Co. after Sen. Bill Ratliff, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, objected to the "filth" on recordings marketed by Seagram subsidiary MCA Inc.

- Rep. Hugh Berlanga, D-Corpus Christi, was re-elected chairman of the Mexican American Legislative Caucus. Rep. Leticia Van De Putte, D-San Antonio, was elected vice chair of the 35-member legislator's group.

To The Editor & You

Local stores show holiday spirit

The Thanksgiving/Christmas season is always a time of giving and generosity but three local food stores helped make the holiday special for some Colorado County families.

Each year, the Colorado County Children's Services Board likes to present a turkey for Thanksgiving and a ham for Christmas to our Colorado

County Foster Parents.

It is a small way of thanking them for the wonderful, loving and helpful work they do with the children of our county.

This year, HEB Pantry Foods in Columbus, IGA Foods in Eagle Lake and Brookshire Brothers in Columbus donated the turkeys and hams which

were presented to the foster families.

Their generosity helped make Thanksgiving and Christmas just a little more festive for these families and we thank them for their kindness and generosity.

Rev. Skip Sirnic
CCCS Board Member



...Congratulations Rachel Flowers

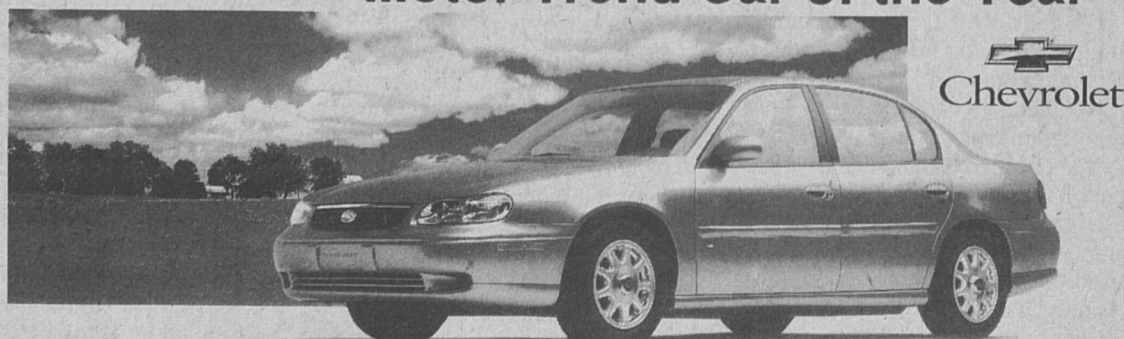
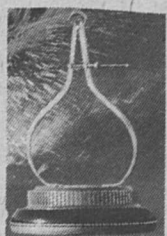
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Let's Look Back...

24 & 48 YEARS AGO

April 27, 1972

E.H. Shirley accepted congratulations from Travis Wegenhoft, president of the Eagle Lake Chamber

of Commerce and the Eagle Lake Lions, for the construction of a miniature train. A.W. Kohleffel is engineer for the train...

JOHN B. MYRES, D.D.S.
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Views On Dental Health

DENTURES THAT "STAY"

If you wished your denture stayed in place better, there's hope. As few as two implants are needed to hold in dentures equipped with precision attachments. Dentists are amazed at how well the implant-attachment denture stays in place. It could literally change the lifestyle of millions of frustrated denture wearers.

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The "Beauty Box", operated by Charlene Konesheck and owned by Mrs. A.W. Kohleffel, invites you to come by for an inspection and approval as they celebrate their open house on April 30...

Mark S. Burke, son of Mr. & Mrs. George Burke of Eagle Lake, is the winner of a \$1,000 National Merit Scholarship award...

Texas Farm Bureau President J.T. "Red" Woodson announced the appointment of W.J. "Ted" Brunner of Eagle Lake to a seven-member State Rice Advisory Committee for 1972...

Mrs. Robert Schiurring, known as "Millie" to her friends, was elected State Regent of the Catholic Daughters of America for a two year term...

Mrs. Leo Buchanek of El Campo and the late Mr. Buchanek announced the engagement and approaching marriage of their daughter, Ramona Ann, to Delmar Krenek, son of Mrs. Joe Krenek of Garwood and nd the late Mr. Krenek of Garwood. The wedding is planned for June 10 at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Nada...

Funeral services were held Tuesday, April 20, from St. James Catholic Church in Gonzales for Mrs. Mary Theresa Novak, a former resident of this community...

Mr. & Mrs. Ray C. Toliver announced the engagement and approaching marriage of their daughter, Mary Frances, to Robert Earl Simcik. The prospective groom is the

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