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## THE EAGLE LAKE HEADLIGHT

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## School financing could go to court... again!

Over the past decade, the Texas Legislature and state courts have gone around and around to make the financing of public education as fair as possible, but a number of poorer school districts want a better deal.

Last week, a group called, "Plaintiff Intervenor Committee" filed a petition in state district court to readress the issue of public school finance. The committee released a statement alleging "persistent and progressive erosion of the equity and efficiency standards" set forth in a 1995 Texas Supreme Court ruling on school finance.

State lawmakers expressed chagrin over the likelihood of another long court battle.

"It's frustrating. I don't think it shows good faith on the part of those school districts who are once again biting the hand that feeds them," Senate Education Committee Chairman Teel Bivins, R-Amarillo, told the Associated Press.

Sen. Bill Ratliff, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, said that if the Plaintiff Intervenor Committee's lawsuit is in court when the Legislature meets in Jan., initiatives for public education could be stalled.

"We tried to do a lot of things for these districts. We don't expect anybody to toss any bouquets at us, but yeah, I'm disappointed in it. It makes a person like me look at it and say, 'Why should I try again?' Maybe we should just sit on our hands and wait for the court to tell us whether we've done enough," said Ratliff, R-Mount Pleasant.

## Insurers Agree to Rate Cuts

Southern Farm Bureau Group, the state's fifth largest rate-regulated car insurer, and Amica Mutual Group, the state's 15th largest, agreed to greater reductions in their premiums after the Texas Department of Insurance challenged their rates.

## State Capitol Highlights

By Lyndell Williams  
and Ed Sterling  
Texas Press Association

Southern Farm Bureau will cut its rates an average of 6.25% after originally filing a 4.25% reduction. Amica Mutual will cut its rates 12.5% after filing a 6.5% reduction.

The reduced premiums, which will take effect July 1, affect nearly a quarter of a million Texas drivers.

"Companies knew we were determined that rates should follow the downward trend of car insurance claim payments, so nobody should be surprised that we've looked hard at this year's rate filings," said Insurance Commissioner Elton Bomer.

## Pharmacy Proposal Pending

Texans would find it harder to obtain nine types of prescription drugs under a proposal pending before the State Board of Pharmacy, the Association Press reported last week.

The proposed rule would require pharmacists to inform physicians and customers when changing their prescriptions from one drug to another or to the brand-name drug.

Proponents of the rule say it would prevent patients from having their prescriptions changed without their doctor's knowledge.

But some pharmacists and representatives from generic drug companies say generic drugs have been deemed to be exact copies of brand-name drugs.

These are the types of generic drugs named in the proposal:

•Digoxin, used to strengthen and improve the efficiency of the heart and to control the rate and rhythm of the heartbeat;

•Warfarin sodium, a blood thinner;  
•Theophylline, for asthma;  
•Leothyroxine, for thyroid dysfunction;  
•Carbamazepine, for epilepsy and other problems;  
•Valproic acid, for epilepsy;  
•Lithium, for depression; and  
•Divalproex sodium, an anticonvulsant.

## Illiteracy Rate High in Texas

Twenty-four percent of Texas adults - more than 3 million people - perform at only the most basic reading level, according to a study by the National Institute for Literacy.

Those who are performing at the "most basic level" have trouble with reading tasks such as understanding a newspaper article or picking out a street intersection on a map.

In acknowledging the need for more adult literacy programs, Dr. JoAnn Martin, a Texas A&M professor and literacy expert, said, "One in every four people can't read the prescription information well enough to keep from harming their child. Now that's scary."

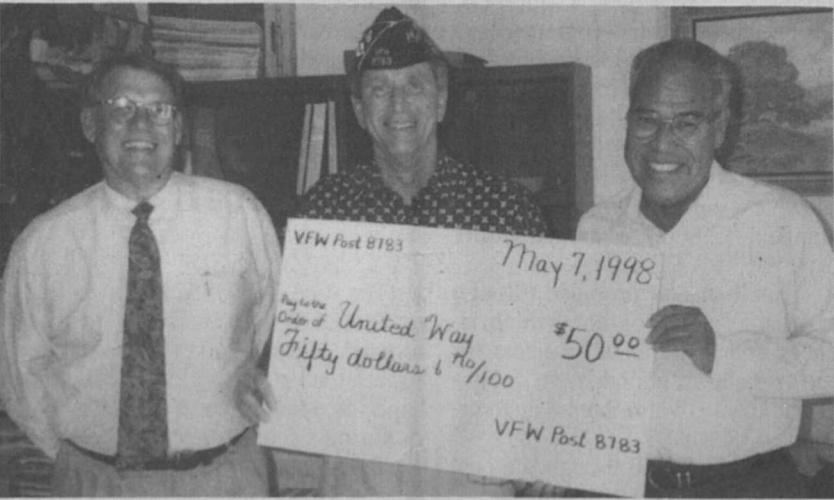
woman for the Texas Education Agency, said more than 230,000 adults receive assistance through publicly funded programs annually. She estimated that \$24 million in state and federal funds was available in 1997 for literacy programs in Texas.

## Other Capital Highlights

•The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy reports that the rate of teen-age pregnancy in Texas is the second-highest in the nation, with one out of every 13 girls getting pregnant.

•Starting this fall, the Texas Department of Public Safety will begin testing a laser monitoring system to identify air-fouling vehicles driven by suburban residents who aren't bound by clean-air laws to get their exhaust systems checked.

•Austin police have arrested nearly 45% more people this year than last year on charges of driving while intoxicated. Through April, police had arrested 1,277 people on a charge of driving while intoxicated, up from 884 a year ago.



## VFW kicks off 1998-99 United Way Campaign

VFW Post #8783 Commander Len Matula presented a check for \$50 to the Eagle Lake United Way to kick off their 1998-99 campaign recently. Pictured with Matula, center, are, from left, Jerry McNeely and Mike Duarte, members of the United Way Board of Directors.

Headlight Photo  
By Jeannine Fearing

## Citywide Mortgage Company

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Rice High School UIL One-Act Company Presents  
In The Shadow Of The Glen

By John Millington Synge  
Directed by Robbin Clipson

Sunday, May 17

1:30 p.m.

Prairie Edge Museum Theatre

408 E. Main, Eagle Lake

With Valerie Galvan as Nora Burke;  
S. Silva as the Tramp; James Aviles as Daniel  
Burke; and Ben Turner as Michael Dara

Production Crew: Chrissy Leopold • Namita Verma  
Delana Smith • Amy Fearing

Alternates: Kim Axel, Fulton Dromgoole & Debbie Leopold

Tickets Available from Any Member of the Cast or Crew  
\$10 for lunch\* plus performance \$5 for performance only

\*Sportsman's Restaurant Sunday lunch buffet