

A voter's
guide for
March 8 primary
Special Section

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Understanding the
myths of menopause

Style/E-1



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The Houston Post

Houston owned, Texas proud

SUNDAY, February 27, 1994

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GUNS: IN THE CROSSFIRE

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AN DENSON,
HOUSTON POST STAFF

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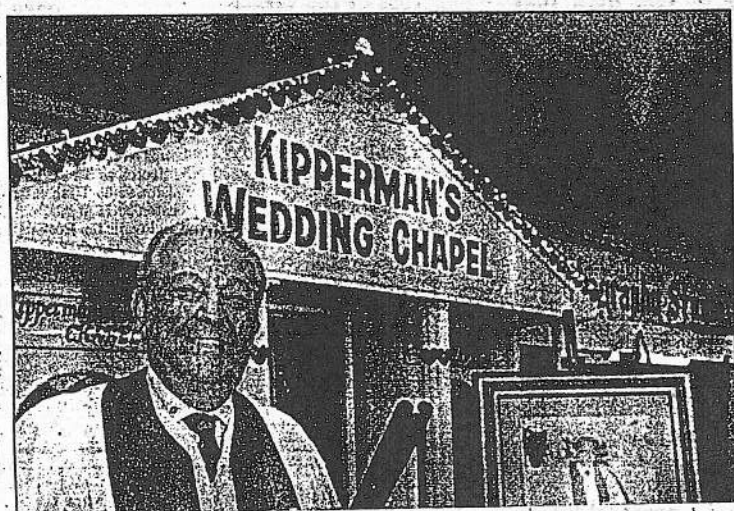
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Please see DAVIDIANS, A-24

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Law firm joins 2 Houstonians in HL&P case

The New York law firm that filed a class action suit against the federal government over Agent Orange for Vietnam veterans will represent two

Houstonians who have single-handedly forced the Houston Lighting & Power Co. to the brink of a full-scale rate hearing. /A-32



King Chou Wong/The Houston Post

Ted Kipperman, pawnbroker, chaplain and one of Houston's many federally

licensed firearms dealers, offers a free wedding if you buy a ring... or a gun.

Firearms found in strangest places

BY BRYAN DENSON,
OF THE HOUSTON POST STAFF

Hunt down Houston's licensed gun dealers and you'll find yourself at some odd counters.

Federally licensed gun dealers here include a hairdresser, a veterinarian, a watch repairman, a cabinetmaker, a travel agent, a high school reunion organizer, a veteran police officer, a race car builder, a laundry owner, a locksmith and — make up your own jokes — a

pest exterminator.

And if you feel a shotgun wedding coming on, Ted Kipperman's got you covered.

At Kipperman's Pawn Shop, in the bosom of a southeast Houston ghetto, you can buy a 14-carat band and a 12-gauge pump in one stop. Kipperman's is a combination hook shop, jewelry and camera store, notary public, check cashing outlet, wedding chapel and gun dealer-

Please see DEALERS, A-27

But 5 cultists
convicted of
manslaughter

2 others found guilty
on weapons charges



BY KELLEY SHANNON
ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN ANTONIO — The remnants of David Koresh's flock won a measure of vindication Saturday when a jury acquitted 11 cult members of murder, re-

Complete coverage/A-16,17,19

jecting claims they ambushed federal agents. Five were convicted of manslaughter.

The verdict came almost exactly a year after a botched raid by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms that left four agents and six cult members dead and escalated into a closely watched law enforcement fiasco.

All 11 defendants had been charged with murder and murder conspiracy, which both carry possible life sentences. All were cleared of those charges, the most serious.

Five were convicted of voluntary manslaughter, which carries a penalty of up to 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Two others were convicted of weapons charges. Four were acquitted of all charges.

No sentencing date was set. "I'm so happy! Oh, my goodness!" Bonnie Haldeman, Koresh's mother, cried when she heard the news. "God bless them jurors!"

Reverberations from the raid and the ensuing 51-day standoff that ended with the compound in flames reached from the Texas prairie to the White House.

The fallout helped bring down the head of one of the nation's top law enforcement agencies.

"Those agents did not die in vain," said prosecutor Bill Johnston, tears in his eyes. "I want to tell everyone in law enforcement throughout this wonderful country and especially in the ATF to

Please see DAVIDIANS, A-24

Branch Davidian is comforted by Edna, outside courthouse Saturday. Doyle, of all charges.

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BY DOUGLAS FRF
OF THE HOUSTON PC

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Law firm joins 2 Houstonians in HL

The New York law firm that filed a class action suit against the federal government over Agent Orange for Vietnam

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LOCAL & STATE

Other news to note...

MORE RAPE CHARGES

More charges have been filed against a 17-year-old man suspected in at least 10 sexual assaults in northeast Houston's Northline Park area. Harold Dean Carter was charged on Friday with one count of aggravated sexual assault and two counts of aggravated kidnapping in Feb. 20 incident involving two women. Carter, already in custody, was charged earlier with one count each of aggravated sexual assault, aggravated kidnapping and aggravated robbery in connection with a separate incident.

CHEMICAL SPILL

Dangerous hydrogen sulfide gas fumes from a chemical spill in Crosby kept firefighters and other emergency personnel busy for eight hours Saturday. Russell White, assistant fire chief for the Crosby Fire Department, said a fire in a chemical storage facility in the 15000 block of Ramsey Road near the Dayton Crosby Road was put out with damp sand, creating a chemical reaction with phosphorous pentasulfide which had leaked from the facility. No injuries were reported, White said. The spill was still being investigated, he said.

Compiled from staff reports

New York law firm to represent 2 men pursuing HL&P rate case

Handled vets' suits over Agent Orange

BY MICHAEL DAVIS
OF THE HOUSTON POST STAFF

The New York law firm that brought the Agent Orange class action suit against the government will represent two Houstonians who have single-handedly forced Houston Lighting & Power Co. to the brink of a full-scale rate hearing, a partner in the firm said Saturday.

For the past 18 months, Kenneth Williams and Charles Pace have been acting as their own attorneys, trying to convince the Public Utility Commission to call HL&P in for a Section 42 rate hearing based on estimates that the company exceeded its earnings ceiling in 1992.

Last week, Administrative Law Judge Stephen Davis agreed with Williams and Pace, who were laid off from HL&P in April 1992. Davis recommended the PUC call in the company for a rate filing. Davis calculated HL&P overshot its 1992 profit ceiling set by the PUC by \$23 million to \$101.4 million.

Victor Yannacone Jr., of Yannacone & Yannacone, which handled the Agent Orange suits for Vietnam veterans, said the firm will assist Williams and Pace free of charge. Yannacone spoke at a news conference at Leonard's Barbecue, 2508 Quitman, which is partly owned by Williams and has become the headquarters of the effort.

The case has proceeded further than any third-party complaint seeking a rate hearing against HL&P. In addition to a rate reduction, Williams and Pace have asked the PUC to remove the South Texas Project nuclear plant from the rate base.

HL&P, which has argued Pace and Williams are disgruntled former employees using the PUC as a forum to harass the company, has indicated that it will appeal Davis' recommendation.

Yannacone's firm will be representing Williams and Pace in the upcoming PUC hearings and in Travis County District Court, where the fight is expected to go if the commission agrees with Davis' recommendation. HL&P would be expected to take the matter to state court to have the commission's decision voided.

"The people of Houston need to take back their light company," Yannacone said, describing how

Houstonians at one time paid some of the lowest rates in the country before HL&P's parent company, Houston Industries, diversified into areas such as cable TV companies.

"This is a case with national significance," Yannacone said. "Every official with every utility in this nation is watching this case."

Yannacone said Houston Industries should be forced into receivership and HL&P should be spun off so ratepayers will not have to foot the bills for other HI losses. The company's cable TV enterprise, KBLCOM, has been a consistent money loser since it was acquired by HI in 1989.

Pace said he and Williams had been able to handle the matter up to this point, but they have reached a level now where they have to have legal assistance.

Other attorneys at the news conference who will be assisting Pace and Williams included Houston attorneys Benton Musslewhite and Gary Riebschlager. The latter is also representing Pace in a lawsuit against HL&P in Fort Bend County seeking recovery of \$500 million in so-called "phantom taxes" charged by HL&P.

Candidate Bush calls for end to inmate release program

ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN — Republican gubernatorial candidate George W. Bush has called for an end to mandatory supervision, a program under which 3,000 prison inmates were released last year. Mandatory supervision is similar to parole except the parole

board no longer has a say over the release date.

Instead of a parole board vote, inmates released under mandatory supervision are set free when their actual time and their good conduct time equal their sentence.

They then would be supervised by parole officials for the re-

mainder of their actual sentences and could be returned to jail if they committed another offense.

"Every prisoner who is let out on mandatory supervision has previously been denied parole and for very good reason," said Bush. "So it makes no sense to then let them get out of jail without first passing muster with the

parole board."

Mandatory supervision was started in the 1970s to ease prison crowding.

Bush's proposal, which would require action by the Legislature, would close the door to the release of nonviolent criminals.

Hutchison probe cost at least \$50,000, Travis DA says

ASSOCIATED PRESS

District Attorney Ronald Earle said there was no precise way to calculate the total figure. Earle defended the expenses as necessary to preserve the

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