



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE
SBC Executive Committee
480 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
James Lee Young, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041

DALLAS Orville Scott, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996

NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Gomer Lesch, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234

Telephone (615) 254-5461

RICHMOND Jesse C. Fletcher, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151

WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

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'Flyer' Gambling Article
Draws Texas Baptists' Fire

By Dan Martin

DALLAS (BP)--Parimutuel gambling is a hot topic in Texas.

Texas Baptists got into the gambling fray in a new way recently when Texas International Airlines, a regional air carrier, distributed to its patrons a magazine which contained an article favorable to horseface gambling.

The magazine, Texas Flyer, contained an article entitled "Off and Running." It was subtitled, "Parimutuel Race Partisans and Religious Zealots Stand at the Starting Gate of a Holy War."

John Hurt, editor of the weekly Baptist Standard, suggested Texas Baptists use Texas International "only when essential," because of the article.

Hurt's comments came in response to a letter by Jimmy Allen, pastor of First Baptist Church of San Antonio, and former executive secretary of the Texas Christian Life Commission.

Allen had suggested a letter writing campaign to the president of the airline, noting Texas Baptists spend thousands of dollars annually traveling on the airline.

Hurt told a secular news reporter he favors traveling "as little as possible" on the airline until it publicly apologizes for the gambling article.

The matter of horserace gambling has long been a key issue for Texas Baptists. A number of battles have been fought against what Allen terms "an obviously well-financed campaign" to make parimutuel gambling legal in Texas.

The matter is even more critical now, observers point out, since Texas is in process of writing a new constitution to replace a document nearly 100 years old.

The present constitution outlaws parimutuel gambling, banning parimutuel betting and lotteries.

However, a convention committee has proposed "an extremely weak" anti-gambling section, which will be debated in the months ahead.

Hurt has editorialized he will seek to kill the entire constitution "if it lacks barriers which are essential to a decent society."

He also commented: "We will not be satisfied with anything less than a clear prohibition. We want lotteries banned and that means all lotteries. We also want parimutuel gambling prohibited now and forever."

Texas International Vice President James O'Donnel said the airline is "deeply upset" by the article in the Texas Flyer, which he said is a special edition of a statewide publication.

"Texas Flyer is a special edition of Texas Parade Magazine.

"All they do is wrap a special banner on the cover of 15,000 issues which says 'Texas Flyer,' and we put them in the seat pockets for inflight entertainment," O'Donnel said, explaining that the airline has no editorial control over Texas Parade, the magazine.

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O'Donnell said the airline does not take stands on political issues, and that the article will more than likely "prompt some soul searching" about the future of the magazine on the airline.

Allen noted he believes the article "is a propaganda piece for the gambling interest."

Whatever the outcome of the Baptist Standard vs Texas Flyer issue, the whole war of gambling interests versus Texas Baptists is far from over.

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Layman's Gift Largest
In Clear Creek's History

3/8/74

PINEVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Clear Creek Baptist School here received a gift of \$90,203.72, the largest single contribution in the school's history.

D. M. Aldridge, president of the school, said the gift came from the estate of the late H. C. Vires, a veteran mine operator and Baptist layman from Jackson, Ky.

"This timely donation will materially strengthen the missionary -evangelistic outreach of our ministerial training school," Aldridge said.

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