

Rooker Report

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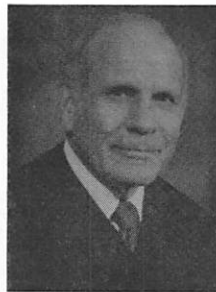
Judges Find G.R.E.A.T. New Program

New approaches to coping with some of the nation's social ills, including violence in the courtroom, youth street gangs and driving under the influence, have captured the interest of many of the country's jurists.

Among them, General Sessions judges Leon Ruben and Donald Washburn, who were introduced to the fresh concepts during a four-day convention of the American Judges Association in Maui, Hawaii. They were the only judges from Nashville attending the



RUBEN



WASHBURN

conference, which attracted members from every state in the union.

Ruben said he was most impressed by a relatively new, federally funded program designed to curb neighborhood gang activity. The program is G.R.E.A.T.

That isn't an editorial comment. The acronym stands for Gang Resistance Education and Training. The program adopts

(See JUDGES, Page 2)

Pretrial RELEASE

A question of rights

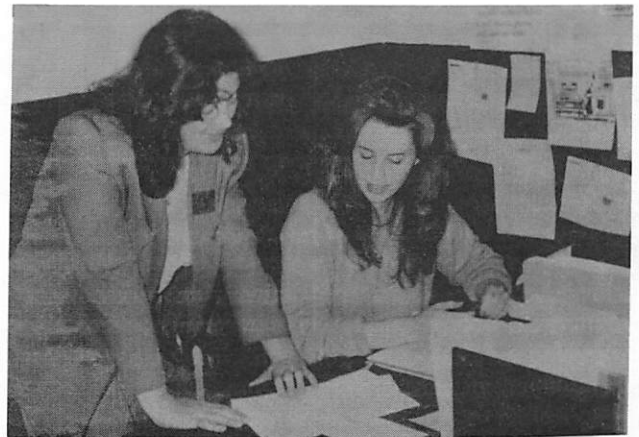
The strain is clearly visible on Tana Comer's face as she examines the piles of paperwork on her desk, a routine morning greeting for the manager of the county's perpetual motion program known as Pretrial Release.

It is difficult to ascertain if her weariness is from pure physical fatigue or the byproduct of mind bashing from the program's critics. You soon realize that the symptoms are about equal.

"We just can't allow this type of publicity to deter us from doing our job," she emphasizes, tossing a copy of a newspaper across her desk. "We're rendering a public service based on conscientious effort put forth by qualified and dedicated people. We just have to accept the adversity and go on with our work."

The adversity, in this case, was spelled out in a three-word headline: "Pretrial Releases Slammed." The words that followed constituted a scalding critique from a member of a local victims' rights group, assailing what was described as a too-lenient policy of releasing criminals.

(See PRETRIAL RELEASE, Page 2)



Pretrial Release Manager Tana Comer reviews a report with case worker Linda Griffin (right).

Want to pay a traffic ticket late? Bureau leaves light on for you

It's not always convenient to break away during the day to handle such matters as paying a traffic ticket.

But if a ticket is your problem,

then worry no more. The Traffic Violations Bureau is open for business until 8 p.m. Monday - Friday.

It is the only government office we know which offers this convenience. And it might make a big difference, especially during the upcoming Christmas-buying season.

Bureau Chief Chuck Link says about 50 people utilize the cashier windows between 4 and 8 p.m. daily.

"Citizens who show up for the late office hours say they're grateful to have the opportunity to pay their fines, especially those who have tickets to be nullified," Link said.

If your palette is craving something other than the "traditional" turkey and dressing, let our 'Cajun in Residence,' Ed Chauvin, spice up your holiday menu.

Ed shares his technique for Louisiana-style "deep fried" turkey and mouth-watering side dishes on Page 4.

Happy Thanksgiving; Here's What's Cooking

As the holiday season approaches and daily routine positions itself for a number of breaks, our thoughts are reflective of the gains for which we are thankful and of the losses for which we mourn.

For the time being, we will acknowledge our losses in silence and dedicate our celebration to the blessings we have received.

Our offices, along with the rest of government, will recess business for this purpose according to the following schedule:

Thanksgiving: Closed Nov. 25-26; Reopen Monday, Nov. 29
Christmas: Closed Dec. 24-27; Reopen Tuesday, Dec. 28
New Year: Closed Dec. 31; Reopen Jan. 3.

Pretrial Release: Under-Staffed, Under Fire

(From Page 1)

Since assuming leadership of the program earlier this year, Comer has shouldered the brunt of such attacks from a variety of sources--usually the private grumbling type that filters down the gossip drain. Her skin has become somewhat toughened through offsetting compliments from her bosses, the General Sessions judges, who give her high marks.

"Tana exemplifies the quality of people we have administering the program," says Presiding Judge Michael Mondelli, who quickly defends staff decisions regarding high-risk defendants. "The system is doing exactly what it was designed to do," he adds.

What it was designed to do foremost was to guarantee constitutional freedoms for all persons charged with crimes, regardless of their economic status. A secondary benefit is the program's effectiveness in helping control jail population, an element that figured strongly in the judges' decision to take over the program from the sheriff's department, effective last August.

It was a claim of constitutional infringement that brought the 18-year-old program into the judicial limelight a little more than two years ago. As evidence unfolded during a federal court hearing, out sprang a mandate to contain jail population within an agreed remedial plan that included retention of all existing programs. U.S. Dist. Judge Thomas Higgins expressly recognized the pretrial program as an effective instrument for achieving balance to the overall goals.

On Dec. 1, the federal judge will get a report on how well the plan has worked.

Kennetha Sawyers of the Metro Legal Department, government counsel in the matter, is expected to give the transitional plan a

Judges Talk About New Programs

(From Page 1)

the theory that the long-term solution to gang problems is in education, not enforcement.

And the premise is projected through classroom lessons conducted by members of the federal enforcement program.

Ruben said the program has gotten extremely high marks from several cities where the eight one-hour classroom sessions have been taught. He plans to pursue the possibility of including Nashville in future classroom participation.

Also on Ruben's itinerary is exploration of treatment-oriented philosophies concerning persons arrested for driving under the influence. He said he was appalled to learn that almost two million persons are arrested nationally each year on charges of operating motor vehicles while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

"We haven't done anything significant to address this problem since 1982 when we man dated jail sentences for first conviction," the judge said. "It's time we recognize it as a disease and treat these people rather than punish them."

In support of his belief, the Tennessee Judges Association next year will be urged to adopt corresponding legislation. Noted lecturer E. John Wherry, Jr., professor at Widener University School of Law, will address the state group in support of the proposed changes. He made a strong impression on judges at the Hawaii conference, the two Nashville jurists said.

Ruben applauded the recent installation of a security system at the Metro Courthouse, saying "we're off to a good start." But, he added, judges at the conference unanimously agreed that government should go a step further and add bulletproof shields inside courtrooms to ensure the safety of judges.

good grade in her report to the court. While the jail population was growing so fast at one point that Saturday dockets became necessary, she said, the situation has greatly improved under the new pretrial release supervision.

Sawyers says she is sympathetic to the frustrations of victims' rights groups and toward police and bondsmen who might resent seeing accused criminals incarcerated free of charge pending their trials. "But, after all, because a person is accused doesn't mean he is guilty," she adds. "The overriding factor in all of this is that there are constitutional guarantees regarding guilt and innocence."

It is not the role of the Pretrial Release program to draw conclusions regarding guilt or innocence, but to ascertain if the accused qualify from the standpoints of trust and indigency to be under supervision outside the jail cell pending their days in court. That determination presently is in the hands of a meager staff of nine screeners, three supervisors and one pretrial diversion officer, who answer to Comer and her administrative assistant.

If that sounds like an appreciable number, compare it to the current caseload of about 1,500 "clients" under the plan and you get an idea of the fatigue factor. And, because crime has no respect for time, the clock never stops ticking for the caseworkers, who regularly can be found in the presence of night court commissioners and shortly thereafter sitting in on the regular jail dockets.

Comer, who came to the program from the Probation Office where she spent two years following years of social and corrections work in Texas and Kentucky, says the pretrial program could use at least three or four more screeners to keep pace with the constant 1,000-plus caseload. In dollar terms, it would cost taxpayers less than \$100,000 a year and would allow the program to become more service oriented.

"Ideally, we could expand our alcohol, drug and mental health counseling," Comer said. "If we could help some of these people before they get to court, it might make a difference. It might prove to be a tremendous service to the community."

Obviously, the subject of pretrial release has many phases that could be addressed if space permitted. The program's replacement of self-insured bonds, its electronic monitoring of in-house arrests and its policies for extraordinary case considerations are but a few of the tentacles of this complex program.

But perhaps the unexplained will suffice as the best explanation of a system that thrives best off accountability.

December Birthdays

Traffic Violations Bureau

10 Carlton Sloss
11 Connie Murff
16 Jim Moreland
27 Monty Russell
29 Pat Baxter
Lori Davis
31 Don Clunan

Probate Clerk

None

Circuit Court Clerk

4 Becky Dye
9 Mary Binkley

General Sessions

2 Denise Dill
16 Irene Dady
25 Marie Anderson
27 Brenda Best
31 Jackie Knight

--Nailed--

Customer: "Are you a filing clerk?"

Clerk: "Naah...just using clippers"

Cheers...

Employees of the Traffic Violations Bureau didn't mind staying after work one afternoon this month when fellow worker **Rhonda Bright** invited them to attend her wedding to **Adam Hall**. In fact, some of the work pals brought along a cake and the works to **General Sessions Judge Gale Robinson's** courtroom where the vows were repeated. "It turned out just perfect," said mother-of-the-bride **Shelby Bright**, who even liked the ending when the groom expressed his joy by shouting, "Whee, Doggies!"...Congratulations are in order for **General Sessions Judge Phillip Sadler**, who recently became a grandfather. Son **Samuel (Sly) Sadler** and wife became the parents of a bouncing baby boy...We are also happy to report that **Harvey Owens**, chief accountant for **Criminal Court Clerk Joe Torrence**, has returned home from the hospital after undergoing major surgery recently...Also recovering from surgery is **Johnny Kummer III**, brother-in-law of Circuit Deputy Clerk **Virginia Larz**, who reports that Johnny is "doing fine" following the removal of a brain tumor.

...Tears

For many years before her retirement, **Lucy Still** was a loyal administrative assistant to the Chancery Court system here. She served a number of chancellors during her tenure and accumulated a great number of friends in the legal profession. Her death on Oct. 29 at the age of 76 brought sadness to us all...We are also saddened by the passing of **Janice Strong**, wife of **Assistant District Attorney General Bob Strong**. Mrs. Strong was only 41 years of age at the time of her death in a California hospital...Deepest sympathy also to **Criminal Appeals Judge Ben H. Cantrell** in the death of his mother **Hilda M. Cantrell**, who died Nov.2 in a Dresden nursing home.



Circuit Court Jury Trial Verdicts

WEEK OF OCTOBER 4

Case Number	Type of Case	Verdict
89C-2512 <i>⊗</i>	Auto Accident	(P) \$2,566
92C-2252 <i>768. pend</i>	Auto Accident	Defendant

WEEK OF OCTOBER 11

Case Number	Type of Case	Verdict
91C-1869 <i>⊗</i>	Personal Injury	(P) \$154,375
89C-3229 <i>1058 - pend</i>	Personal Injury	(P) \$12,000
91C-3051 <i>⊗</i>	Negligence	Mistrial
93C-33 <i>⊗</i>	Auto Accident	(P) \$5,000
92C-1821 <i>⊗</i>	Auto Accident	(P) \$2,922

WEEK OF OCTOBER 18

Case Number	Type of Case	Verdict
90C-3595 <i>⊗</i>	Slip & Fall	Defendant
91C-1811 <i>⊗</i>	Auto Accident	(P) \$165,000

Rooker Report

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Gene Baker **Editor**

Changes

New Jury Assembly Room Coming

A new jury assembly room will soon be constructed on the ground floor of the Metro Courthouse, providing a central gathering point for both criminal and civil venire panels.

The consolidated jury room, targeted for completion early next year, will occupy a large space at the east end of the courthouse ground floor. The space was formerly occupied by the trustee's office, which has relocated, and the Public Service Program and part of the sheriff's office, which will relocate.

Once completed, the facility will eliminate the two jury assembly rooms on the fourth and sixth floors. That space can then be utilized for other court purposes.

The new jury quarters will provide greater comfort with refreshment and recreation areas. A television set will also be situated in an area that accommodates the largest mass of people. Several hundred citizens each month are subpoenaed for jury duty in the criminal and civil divisions combined.

Ben West Getting Facelift

The Ben West Building has been undergoing much needed improvement projects for several months. Repairs have been made to the roof, outer walls and windows; the ventilation system has undergone extensive cleaning and new carpet has been installed in the work areas of the Traffic Violations Bureau where new wallpaper is next on the agenda.

Easier access to public telephones has also been provided. There are now two pay phones in the main lobby of the building's street-level floor. The phones had previously been located at either end of the hallway, but were moved to provide greater convenience to the general public while at the same time discouraging vandalism.

Hats off to General Services for an excellent job.

Security System Rules Modified

The new courthouse security system made its debut, as scheduled, on Nov. 1 with some modifications to procedures previously advertised.

Among changes was a decision to allow women to bring small containers of Mace inside the building. Authorities determined that the chemical spray is used as a "defensive" mechanism and not a potential offensive weapon, and may be needed by females leaving the building after working late.

Meantime, police officers from some satellite communities have asked to be included in the list of law enforcement agencies permitted to bear arms inside the building. Municipal police officers, except Metro, currently are prohibited from carrying their weapons into the courthouse, despite the fact that they are there on official business. Judges have taken their grievance under advisement and have promised an answer on Nov. 18.

New policy also evolved in respect to persons authorized to enter the courthouse through the east entrance. The conclusion was that, as a general rule, only judges would access that door during hours the security stations are in operation. This after Mayor Phil Bredesen demonstrated leadership by announcing that he and his staff would avail themselves of security scrutiny, a move echoed by other elected officials.

Spice Up Your Thanksgiving Meal the Ed Chauvin Way

When you think of Thanksgiving, what's the first thing to come to mind?

Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock? Naah.

If you're a normal, red-blooded American, you immediately visualize a turkey...feathered at first, then golden brown in a prone position on the dinner table. Mmmmm.

And how about some cornbread dressing, giblet gravy, cranberry sauce, green beans, sweet potatoes and...Stop it, already! You're only supposed to be thinking about turkey.

Oh, what the heck. Let's "talk" turkey...and trimmings, too.

Instead of sticking to the so-called traditional fare, though, let's spice it up with a dash of Cajun. And who better to help us achieve palette perfection in that culinary area than our own Cajun in Residence, Ed Chauvin of our Traffic Violations Bureau.

Now, Ed doesn't limit his bayou chef techniques to the holiday season, mind you. Folks in the bureau get to sample his cooking skills throughout the year as he shares "teasers" from home. But he takes on a special glow at this time of year and his chit-chat descriptions of "how it's done in Louisiana" whets everyone's appetite for the adventurous sampling of ethnic difference.

For example, fried turkey.

Excuse me. Did you say "fried" turkey?

"Sure," responds Chef Chauvin. "That's the way nearly everybody prepares it down in Houma." (Notice how he sneaks in a plug for his lower Louisiana hometown?) "It is scrumptious fried. Take my word for it."

Sorry, Ed. Can't let you off the hook that easy. Either bring us a fried turkey or tell "us" how to fry one.

Since he opted for the latter, he agreed to toss in a few of his other favorite recipes to help form the nucleus of a true Cajun Thanksgiving dinner. To which we reply, "Aaayeee!"

FRIED TURKEY

Ingredients: 1 whole turkey, salt, pepper, Creole seasoning, 3 gallons peanut oil.

Completely thaw and wipe turkey dry, making sure there is no moisture left. In large pot, preheat peanut oil to 375 degrees over propane gas burner. Coat turkey in abundant amounts of spices.

(Note: In Louisiana, special marinade is injected into the breast, thighs and drumsticks with a large syringe. But the ingredients for that spice are not available here.)

Lower turkey slowly into heated oil (make certain oil has reached required heat). Cook for approximately 4 minutes per pound. When turkey is nearing completion, it will rise to the top of the pot, similar to deep fried fish. The turkey might need to be turned until completely cooked.

Caution: Do not puncture turkey with a fork. This will cause it to lose moisture, thereby affecting flavor. When properly prepared, turkey will be moist on the inside and crusty on the outside.

Slice and enjoy, along with...

LaBAYOU DIRTY RICE

1 lb. chicken livers, chopped	1/2 cup oleo
1/2 cup chopped celery	2 tbsp parsley, chopped
1/2 tsp thyme	4 cups cooked rice
1 lb. bulk sausage	1 cup onion, chopped
1 bunch green onions, chopped	1 clove garlic, minced
1/2 tsp basil	salt and pepper to taste

hot sauce to taste (optional)

Saute livers and sausage until browned, remove and set aside. Melt butter in skillet; add onion, celery, green onions, parsley and garlic. Saute



Ed Chauvin answers questions from a caller, one of many aspects of his job as business manager of the Traffic Violations Bureau. When his day is done, it's home to the kitchen to practice his favorite hobby of cooking.

until tender. Add remaining ingredients, including liver and sausage. Cook over medium heat until rise is hot, stirring constantly. Makes 8 servings.

Ed borrowed the above recipe and the following two from a Louisiana Council of Telephone Pioneers cookbook. He didn't want you to think this was a totally original meal.

CANDIED YAMS

8 medium sweet potatoes	1 tsp vanilla
1/4 cup butter	1/4 tsp cinnamon
1 cup milk	3 tbsp sugar
pinch of nutmeg	1 tbsp orange juice

Bake potatoes at 350 degrees until done, peel and mash. Scald milk, add vanilla, sugar and butter to potatoes. Add nutmeg, cinnamon and orange juice; stir. Add milk mixture to potatoes. Place layer of potatoes in bottom of baking dish; layer potatoes with marshmallows. Top with remaining potatoes. Bake at 350 degrees until hot. Add marshmallows to top and brown.

BLACKBERRY JAM CAKE

1 cup shortening or butter	2 cups sugar
2 whole egg	3 cups flour
1 cup blackberry jam	1 tsp baking soda
1 cup buttermilk	1 tsp cloves
1 tsp nutmeg	1 tsp allspice
1 cup nuts	1 cup dark raisins

Cream butter and sugar; add eggs. In another bowl, mix flour and spices. Add baking soda to buttermilk; add flour mixture to creamed sugar mixture, alternating with milk. Add the jam, nuts and raisins; beat by hand. Pour into 4 pans and bake at 325 degrees for 30 to 45 minutes.

FILLING;

1 large can crushed pineapple	1 1/2 cups sugar
	2 tbsp butter

Mix ingredients together; let come to a boil. Cook 3 minutes, stirring constantly. Spread between layers, sides and top of cake.

Happy Leftovers!