

JULY 13, 1972

Women's rule over Texas took a new turn in the spring primaries. A lady candidate openly sought the governor's office. She was defeated, but not before she'd given a rancher from south of the Shortgrass country a tough race.

Until this bid, women had been satisfied to run the state from the first lady's chair. The male governors were allowed to go around posing with Boy Scouts or Indian chiefs and the orders were issued from the kitchen or the sewing room.

Plenty of powerful politicians developed; yet anytime the wives wanted to, they could put a whoa on them that'd make a calf roper think he'd broke his reins. The thimble was more powerful than the gavel; a lot of the big shots who were throwing around a lot of weight would have treaded air for the first 15 steps if their wives had given the signal.

Married men, I think have never really wanted to be in politics. The place for a husband is underneath a sink working on a drain or up on the roof patching a hole. He poses as an outdoorsman, yet underneath that front he is actually tied to the homestead.

No definite answer can be given why a woman would want to step down to the governorship. The Texas Constitution created a weak governor's office. One of the obvious reforms needed has been to increase the executive powers.

A guess would be that wives have become bored by their power. Ancient queens used to get tired of their old milk and honey routine and throw beheadings that surprised every victim that passed under the axe. So I suppose the modern ones grow tired of running things from the background, too.

I do know that if a lady governor (I refuse to use the word governess or mama governor. If you crave something like that, look in a fairy tale) was elected, senators wouldn't need a hearing aid to hear her the second time she told them to stop missing the spittoons. Nor would the Congressmen need a public reader to understand what she meant when she said to quit throwing paper on the floors .

Women have a way of wielding power. I've seen sisters who wouldn't qualify as flyweights who could make big brothers chin an eight foot bar before they thought they were able to raise their arms in the air. I think when that weaker sex myth was started, "weak" must have had another meaning. I never did see anything else that was called weak that could perform like a mad woman can.

Liberation movements have never amounted to much in this state. Now and then a group of males will complain, but it doesn't amount to much. You do hear rumors of rebellion along the aisles of supermarkets, yet other than a little pouting or crying jag, female chauvinists rule supreme.

The last I heard, the lady candidate had taken off to Florida to be a delegate in the Texas Democratic delegation. She still worries me. A herder doesn't have much chance of standing off a determined woman. I bet she'll make them jump down in Miami.