

Editor's Notes

by Rod Speer

State Rep. Joe Pentony of Houston said money from the Permanent University Fund has been spent at the University of Texas on items like bouquets, paper shredders and even toilet paper. All this in light of the fact that the fund was established "to provide academic excellence" through increased research and graduate facilities.

Profits from the permanent fund are distributed annually, with the Texas A&M University System receiving one-third and the University of Texas System getting the rest. The annual allotments that have been split by UT and A&M, known as the University Available Fund, has recently been worth over \$30 million. Pentony claims that this money has been misused and should be divided equally among all state schools.

Pentony's allegations made me curious as to how A&M's share of the pie was being spent, so I visited Clyde Freeman, Jr., vice president and comptroller of the TAMU System. I learned that:

(1) The Permanent University Fund consists of the oil and gas bonuses and royalties from 2.1 million acres of land in West Texas. These profits are invested in corporate securities, stocks, bonds, mortgages and other securities. According to the constitution, the \$670 million Permanent Fund cannot be spent but income from its investments, which amount to about \$30 million annually go to the UT and A&M Systems.

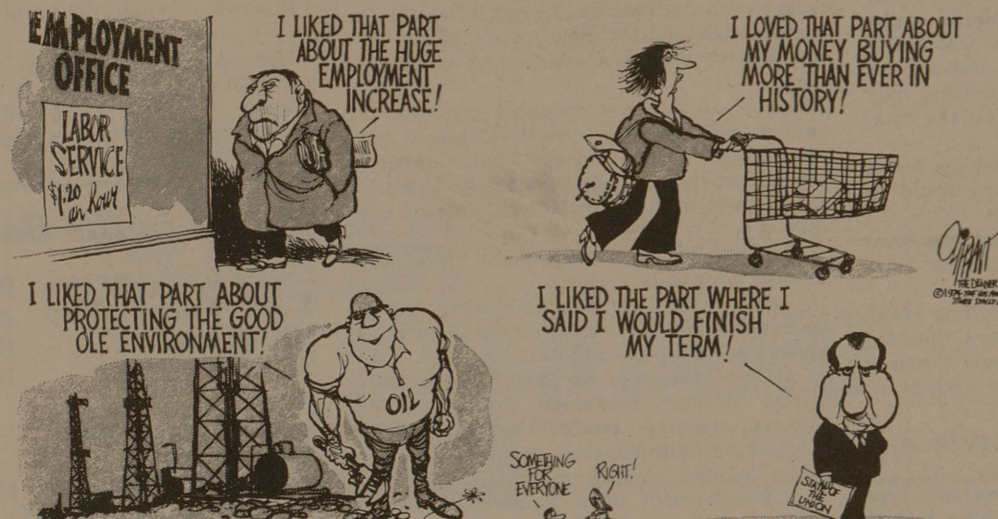
(2) Money from the Available Fund can be spent in three ways. It can be used for permanent improvements and major repairs to the TAMU campus only. It can be used to pay principal and interest on bonds issued by the Board of Directors and backed by the University Available Fund. (The principal outstanding cannot exceed 6 2/3 percent of the value of the permanent fund). In addition, the money can supplement the University's educational and general budget, which means it can be spent on just about anything.

(3) A 1958 amendment to the constitution allows the University to give proceeds from bonds backed by the fund to other colleges and agencies within the System. (The Moody College in Galveston was established after 1958 and cannot receive these proceeds). The bond money can only be used for new building construction. From September of 1958 until June of last year Prairie View received nearly \$6 1/2 million for new construction; Tarleton State, \$5.2 million; and A&M, \$35.7 million.

(4) For the fiscal year '74-'75, \$4.7 million of the Available Fund is obligated to pay off bonds. Of the remainder, \$2 million is allotted for permanent improvements and \$3.7 million will go into the general pool of state funds that support the current operations of the TAMU campus. At the end of the 1972 fiscal year this meant the fund could be used to help meet the salaries of a number of janitors and cleaning women.

(5) The money tagged for construction is not used to build dormitories or dining halls but only for educational or research facilities. The Oceanography-Meteorology Building, Zachry Engineering Center, Office and Classroom Building and the Library are among recent expenditures along this line.

Pentony is right when he says not all of the fund is used as the writers of the constitution intended. However, to split the money among the more than 30 state supported schools in Texas would destroy the initial concept under which the fund was established. It would not allow for the great expense of building a McDonald Observatory or a College of Veterinary Medicine. His plan would put all state schools of higher education on the same financial level and mediocrity could well become an accepted standard.



The Battalion

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Listen Up

SCONA head defends Kunstler move

Editor's note: SCONA chairman Steve Kosub was a major figure in a Battalion investigation and has been the target of criticism in several letters to the editor. Under this circumstance we are waiving our 300 word limit for letters to allow Mr. Kosub an unrestricted forum to defend his position.

Editor:

The events and discussion of the past week regarding the Nineteenth Student Conference on National Affairs, William Kunstler and "the free exchange of ideas" on this university campus have either obscured or ignored a number of points which if for no other reason than my own peace of mind, I feel very much need to be said. If I ramble, I beg your momentary indulgence; far too many conflicting thoughts have hounded me as a result of this matter to allow for any sort of orderly presentation.

In asking you to accept my credibility, several things must be set straight from the outset. With regard to my reply to Mrs. Kunstler when asked if withdrawal of her husband's invitation was prompted by political considerations, I did indeed reply "no." This was a shallow attempt at coverup on my part for which I have since apologized to Mrs. Kunstler. Also incomplete was my statement that Mr. Kunstler's cancellation resulted from a change in programming. The students of Texas A&M University deserve a more accurate explanation and to you also I extend my apologies. With regard to the statements credited to me in the January 29 edition of *The Battalion* by Mr. Greg Moses, specifically, "we decided it was not in the best interest of TAMU . . . Kunstler is not the most popular man at this time," I made no such comments, and do not feel qualified to determine the best interests of an institution of this size and complexity. Determining the best interests of the Student Conference on National Affairs however, is very much my responsibility, and it is a responsibility for which I have worked for three years to be qualified to accept.

My considerations in cancelling Mr. Kunstler's invitation can be defined on two levels: a fear of potential loss of funding to the university and a fear of potential loss of funding and advisory support to the SCONA Committee. Whether or not the implied threat of a loss of funding to this university as a result of a presentation by Mr. Kunstler is indeed a real consideration, I cannot know for sure. I have only the offer of one man's integrity that such is in-

given no reason to doubt that integrity. My own inability to determine what is or is not in this university's best interest has already been established; this same lack of perception must prevent me from determining that a presentation by William Kunstler is fair exchange for any potential loss or damage to any other single program of this university community. If I have exercised a forfeiture of courage in failing to make such a determination, it is a forfeiture for which I cannot apologize.

With regard to any potential loss of funding or advisory support to next year's SCONA program, I have a great deal more to say. I am fascinated by the statement of Messrs. McBee and Welborn that "lack of donations from conservative, systematic businessmen should not be cited as a valid reason for depriving the faculty and students of TAMU from hearing a controversial man who has risen to such national prominence." I would point out to these gentlemen, and all others who have expressed similar viewpoints, that these "conservative, systematic businessmen" have contributed some \$250,000 over the last 19 years to the SCONA program alone with no hope of any sort of return consideration. I am aware of no matching TAMU student body grants to date. To those who regret that the excitement of intellectual exchange must be tempered by the cost of making such exchange possible, I sympathize. For those who decry the limited responsibilities incurred in meeting that cost as far outweighing the value of the exchange, I have only contempt, and a challenge to gather together even a dozen delegates for a student conference without financial backing where a registration fee of \$150 is required.

Of those who have congratulated me on my efforts to protect TAMU from this "evil man," I must ask that you withhold your gratitude. One month ago I was very much convinced that William Kunstler was the right choice for the SCONA program. With or without Mr. Whitsett's endorsement, the SCONA committee and I feel the administration of TAMU very much hope that this university might someday become a place where one can indeed listen to the radical, the conservative and the middle of the road and draw one's own conclusions. In an effort to speed the realization of that goal, I suggest that next year's student body donate \$20,000 obligation free to the Student Conference on National Affairs Program and that the Student Senate draft a recommendation to increase tuition fees to such a degree that State and private funding is no longer necessary for the execution of this university's functions.

Rather than lend its support to an attempt at exposure of non-existent administrative suppression I would suggest that the men and women of Texas A&M University retain their idealism and devotion to the pursuit of academic freedom beyond the date of their graduation and devote themselves to the development of a social system that no longer requires money to make itself work.

The Nineteenth Student Conference on National Affairs begins on February 13 at 2 p.m. with the presentation of Mrs. Alice Rivlin of the Brookings Institute entitled "Overview: Re-ordering American Priorities." I hope you will join us in making it a conference of which the students and faculty of Texas A&M University, and the sponsors who

have made it possible, can be proud.

Phil Steven Kosub
Chairman, SCONA 19
Referring to your disclaimer of the quote "we decided it was not in the best interest of TAMU . . . Kunstler is not the most

popular man at this time. Moses says that was the answer you gave him to the question: "Why did you decide to bring Kunstler?" Moses referred to a phone interview of Jan. 24. *The Battalion* is behind him.—Ed.

CADET SLOUCH

by Jim Ed



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