

Presnal: money problems for legislature

by Cheryl Burke
Battalion Reporter

State Rep. Bill Presnal said Friday that three issues face the legislature this session: "Money, money and money."

Presnal, who spoke at a meeting of the Texas A&M chapter of the Texas Association of College Teachers, discussed three legislative issues which affect college and university employees: the House Joint Resolution 19, the General Appropriations Bill and the Teacher Retirement System Fund.

HJR 19 is a proposed constitutional amendment which would provide funds for the support of higher education and would restructure the Permanent University Fund.

Presnal is optimistic about the chances for HJR 19.

"Finally, HJR 19 is something everyone is pulling together on," he said. "As far as I know, there is no dissension on the matter in the legislature. And this has all come about in the last two weeks."

Gov. Mark White also supports the bill, Presnal said. White offered an emergency call Thursday to have the bill passed into consideration quickly. Hearings on the bill were scheduled to begin today.

"After 10 years of working with it (HJR 19)," Presnal said, "I'm ready to put it to rest once

and for all."

HJR 19 has been kept off the ballot by what Presnal called "the Prairie View problem." The PUF is divided between the Texas A&M System and the

University of Texas System. Prairie View A&M University wants part of that funding, Presnal said.

HJR 19 would provide \$6 million a year for 10 years to Prairie

View to be taken from the available fund of UT, Presnal said.

The General Appropriations Bill will not be ready to be placed on the floor for hearings until April, Presnal said.

The bill calls for \$4.2 billion — \$1.5 billion less than was expected, Presnal said.

The Teacher Retirement System Fund is vastly overfunded, Presnal said. It must be trimmed

on both ends — from the state and the employees — to keep the burden of the cuts from falling fully on one, he said.

Presnal blames the recession, which only recently has hit

Texas, for the reductions in spending.

"There are just so many competing interests for a tax dollar which is steadily decreasing," he said.

'Evita' begins tonight

The award-winning pop opera "Evita" — based on the life of Eva Peron, wife of former Argentine dictator Juan Peron — will be performed tonight through Wednesday in Rudder Auditorium.

Tickets for all three performances, sponsored by MSC Town Hall, are still on sale at the MSC Box Office. Tickets are \$14, \$18 and \$22. All shows begin at 8 p.m.

The musical, which won seven Tony Awards in 1980, has been on Broadway for three years and has been performed by touring companies in the United States and abroad for more than a year.

The play — written by Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber — tells the story of the bewitching Evita almost totally by song, such like an opera.

Evita's whirlwind history, and the play, begins in a poor section of Argentina where she was the daughter of a poor farmer. Evita fills her dream of moving to Buenos Aires and begins climbing the social ladder — largely mesmerizing some of Argentina's more influential men. Ten years later, at the age of 27, Evita becomes Argentina's first lady and the president's consort.

According to some, Evita was actually the power behind Peron and is thus a controversial figure in Argentina's past. She also wanted to become vice president, but her dream was cut short when she died of cancer at 33.

The touring company that will perform here has been together for about a year and has appeared in Detroit, Miami, New Orleans, Houston and Dallas.

Shooting accident kills boy

HOUSTON — A boy, 13, was fatally shot by a teenage friend and a third youngster attempted to climb up a folding airway to investigate noises in the attic, police said.

Tommy Nash, the victim, was alone with two friends, both 12, Friday afternoon when they heard suspicious noises in the attic, police said.

Investigators said Nash got a pistol and told one of his friends here to find a second gun.

As Nash was pulling down a folding stairway leading to the attic, he fell back into the armed 12-year-old. Police say the gun went off, wounding the youth. The teenager was rushed to a nearby hospital, but he died less than two hours later.

Police said the shooting was investigated as an accident.

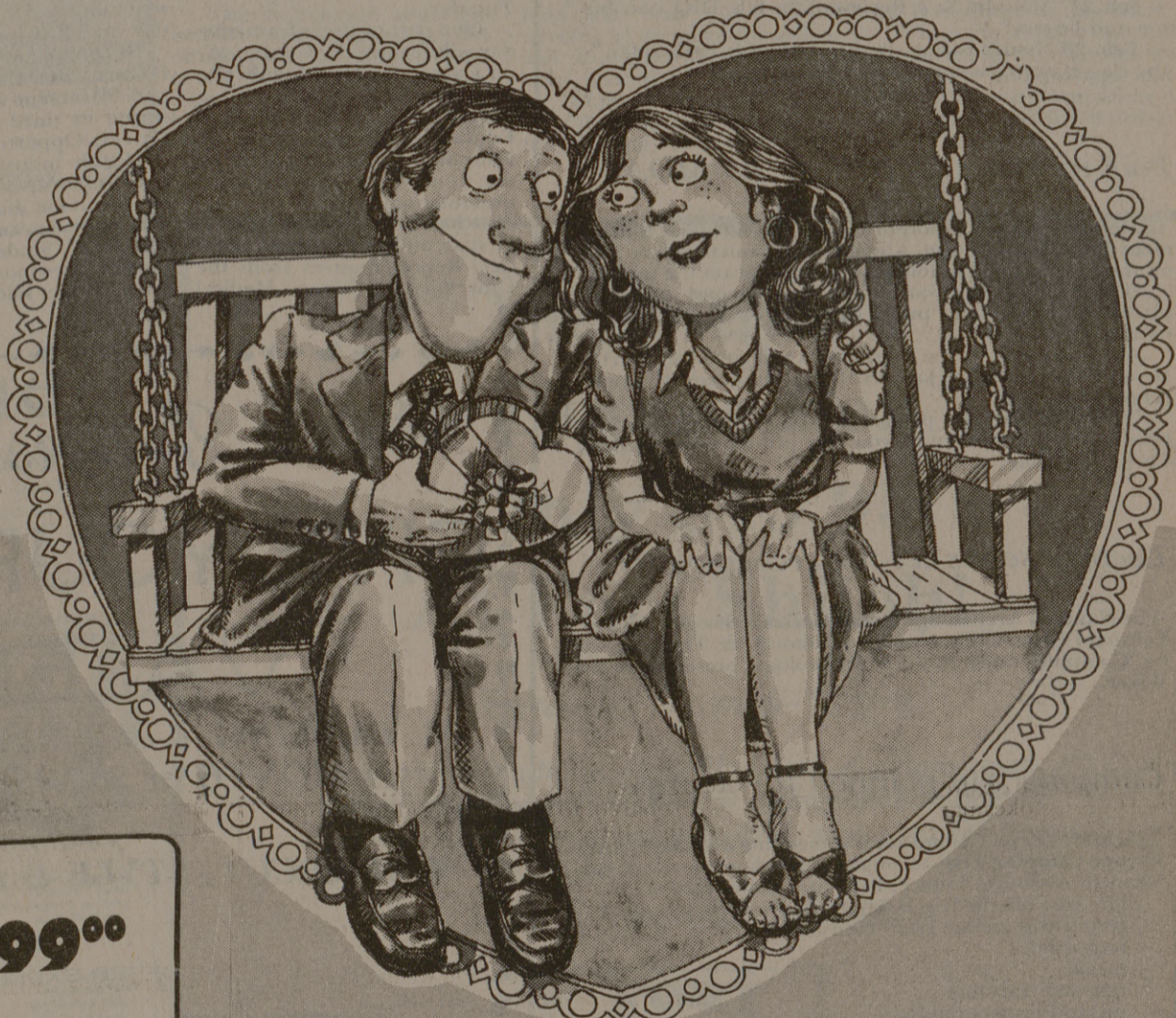
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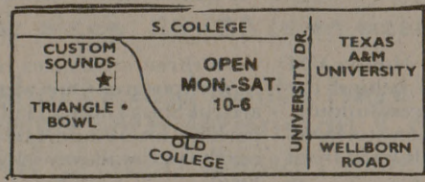
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