

Non-PUF college bill faces Senate battle

United Press International
AUSTIN — A proposed constitutional amendment to direct \$125 million a year for capital expenditures to 25 Texas colleges still faces a fight in the Legislature because the House approved only \$75 million per year.

The measure sponsored by Sen. Carl Parker, D-Port Arthur, passed Wednesday on a 25-5 vote.

The proposal would divert \$125 million a year in general tax revenues to pay for buildings, repairs and improvements at 25 state colleges excluded from the oil-rich Permanent University Fund, which funds construction at the University of Texas and Texas A&M.

The amendment, which ultimately would have to be approved by the voters, already passed the House in similar form, but that proposal called for a \$75 million annual appropriation.

Parker's proposal also put all branches of the University of Texas and Texas A&M under the PUF fund as of 1985.

Parker said his argument in the expected conference committee fight will be that the larger amount would allow the schools to issue bonds against the fund.

"They may make some long-range plans," he said. "It is my belief that it will save millions of dollars in the long run and provide a higher quality of education."

The proposal met strong opposition from several senators who said the state should not be dedicating general tax revenues at a time when it is experiencing a budget squeeze.

Current budget proposals exceed expected revenues by more than \$2 billion.

"I don't think I need to tell you the kind of financial straits Texas is in right now," said Sen.

Ray Farabee, D-Wichita Falls. "And with the unwillingness to pass a tax bill, there is just not as much of the pie to go around any more."

Farabee said the state should place a higher priority on funding needs other than colleges.

"If you dedicate that money, it's going to be spent whether it's needed or not," Farabee said. "You drive to another part of your town, and you will find needs far greater than those on the campus."

Under Parker's proposal, the 25 schools would be specifically prohibited from using the fund to finance housing, athletic buildings or enterprises such as day care centers or refreshment stands.

The measure passed by the Senate left open the possibility that lawmakers will find a source other than general tax revenues to create the non-PUF schools' fund.

Insurance firm files lawsuit against Chagra

United Press International
EL PASO — Claiming Joe Chagra fraudulently concealed his involvement in a conspiracy to kill a federal judge, an insurance company has filed suit to cancel a \$500,000 life insurance policy issued to the former attorney.

Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Co. claims that in applying for the policy, Chagra fraudulently concealed the fact

that he was involved in the conspiracy — a fact that was material to the company's decision to issue the policy.

If the company had "known of the facts fraudulently concealed by (Chagra), it would not have issued such an insurance policy," the brief read. According to the suit, Chagra was issued the policy on Feb. 25, 1981.

Chagra, who pleaded guilty

to conspiring to kill U.S. District Court Judge John Wood Jr. in San Antonio, is serving a 10-year sentence in the federal correctional facility at Pleasanton, Calif.

Chagra was indicted in 1982 and later pleaded guilty to being involved in the Wood murder conspiracy. The conspiracy occurred prior to Chagra's application for the policy, Connecticut Mutual's lawyer W.R. Simcock said.

Texas man plans to resume search for Titanic, jewels

United Press International
ABILENE — Jack Grimm, a West Texas oilman, says he is headed to the North Atlantic for the third time to find the sunken British ocean liner Titanic.

Grimm's third expedition to find the ship will leave Halifax, Nova Scotia, July 1.

"Maybe the third time will be the charmer," he said Wednesday, referring to similar excursions he financed in 1980 and 1981.

Grimm hopes to locate the luxury liner which struck an iceberg and sank April 15, 1912. He eventually will try to salvage such valuables as the ship's silver and a shipment of diamonds rumored to be on the Titanic.

This summer, Grimm said Dr. William Ryan of Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Geological Observatory would direct the search.

"Ryan advises we will use Sea Marc, which is a state of the art

side-scan sonar and a video photographic camera system to map and film the ocean floor where the Titanic went down," Grimm said.

In his 1981 effort, Grimm said he believed the crew had filmed a propeller of a ship about 12,500 feet deep in the Atlantic.

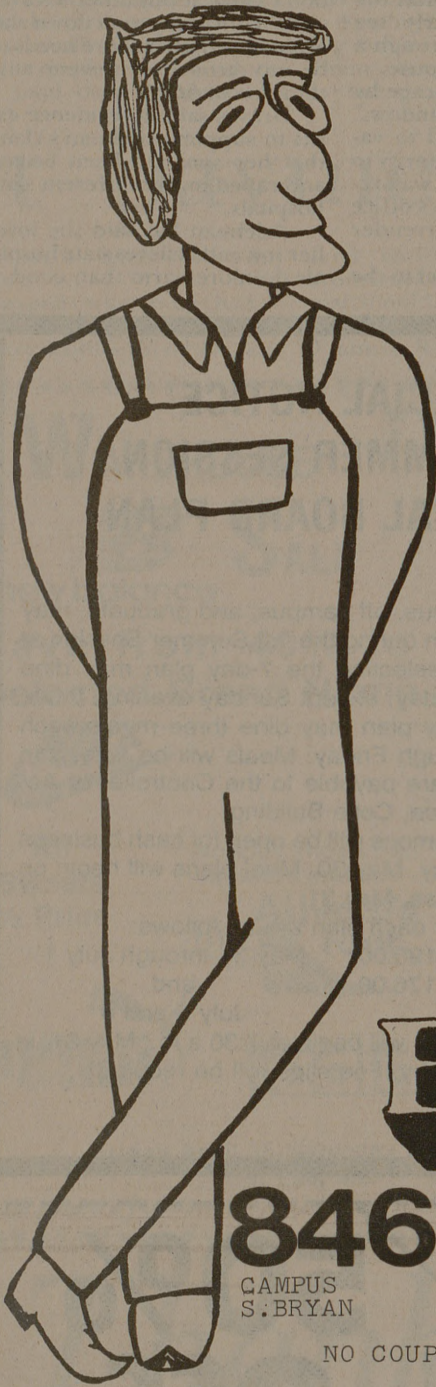
Grimm said he would return to the ship, which rests off the coast of Newfoundland, this summer, and he expects to be gone at least two weeks.

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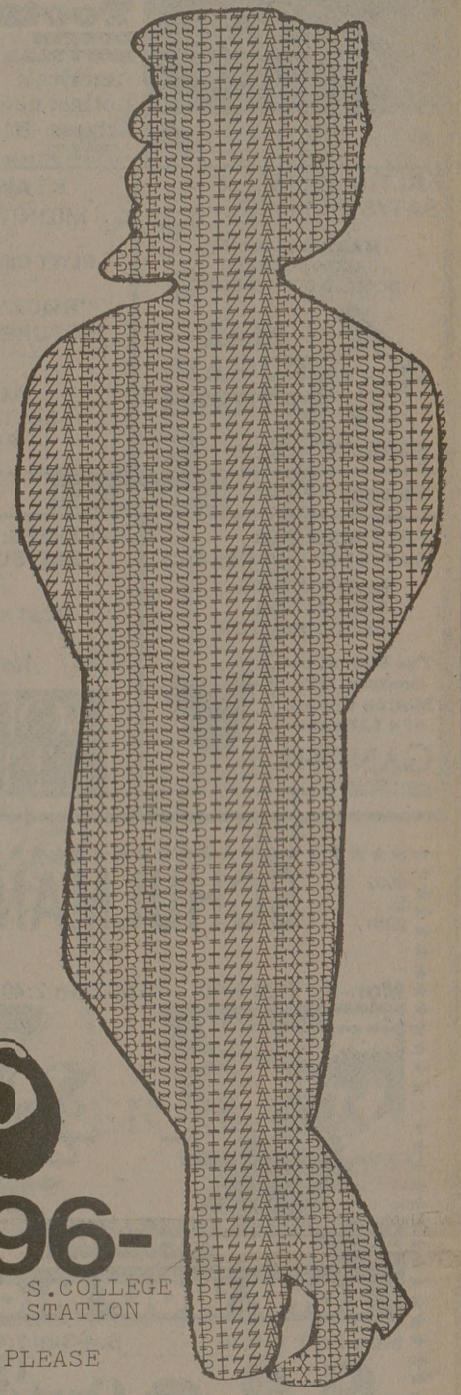
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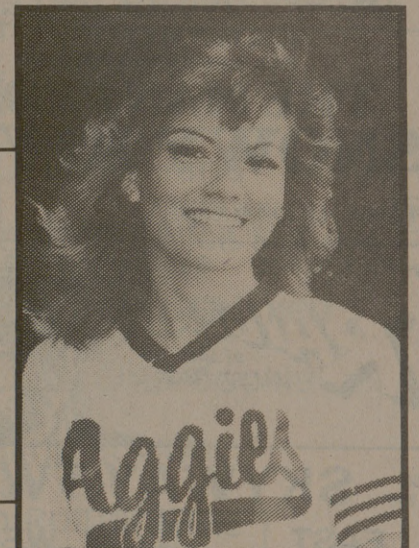
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