

High court OKs sign removal

United Press International

WASHINGTON — A city trying to improve its appearance can tear down signs posted on public property without violating free speech rights, the Supreme Court ruled Tuesday.

The 6-3 decision reinstated a Los Angeles sign-posting ban enacted as part of the city's beautification program. A city council candidate challenged the ban, arguing that barring temporary political signs from public property violated his constitutional right of free speech.

A federal appeals court agreed, saying the First Amendment guarantees of free speech outweigh any governmental interest in an uncluttered urban landscape.

Reversing that ruling Tuesday, the Supreme Court, for the second time in recent years, gave cities freedom to clean up visual blight. In 1980, the justices allowed San Diego to restrict commercial use of billboards to "preserve and improve the appearance of the city."

In other action Tuesday, the court ruled 6-2 in a Wisconsin drunken driving case that police cannot enter a home without a warrant to arrest a person for a "civil, non-jailable traffic offense."

The justices also unanimously ruled that hydroelectric project licenses must follow Interior Department rules pertaining to Indian reservations only when the projects are inside a reservation's boundary. Projects that affect reservations but are not actually on reservation land need not follow department recommendations, the court said.

In the Los Angeles sign-posting case, Justice John Paul Stevens wrote for the majority that a city may reasonably attempt to upgrade its appearance by ridding itself of an accumulation of signs posted outside.

"We accept the city's position that it may decide that the esthetic interest in avoiding 'visual clutter' justifies a removal of signs creating or increasing that clutter," he said.

Stevens said a "state may sometimes curtail speech when necessary to advance a significant and legitimate state interest."

Preventing visual clutter, promoting traffic safety and protecting workmen who scale utility poles — all reasons advanced by the Los Angeles City Council for barring signs — are such valid interests, Stevens said.

The ordinance "does not affect any individual's freedom to exercise the right to speak and to distribute literature in the same place where the posting of signs on public property is prohibited," Stevens declared.

But Justice William Brennan, writing in dissent, said the ban "sweeps so broadly and trenches so completely on... use of an important medium of political expression that it must be struck down as violative of the First Amendment."



You're joking

Photo by BILL HUGHES

Melanie Weinmann and Gene Roberts, both sophomores journalism majors from Houston, helped sophomore zoology major Margaret Abadie pack her car last Friday. Abadie was moving out of Krueger Hall and heading for her hometown of Houston.

Pushing new tax, education plans

White takes pleas to committees

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AUSTIN — Gov. Mark White took his tax hike proposals and educational reform plans to House and Senate committees Tuesday, making a personal plea for action in a special legislative session to "give education the priority it deserves."

Teachers, school administrators, education groups and state officials packed the House chamber as members of the Legislature's education committees took their first collective look at proposals to raise taxes and reform public education.

White has not yet officially ordered the Legislature into a special session, he continued to steadfastly maintain that lawmakers would best deal with

the educational reform issue in a summer meeting rather than waiting until the next regular session convenes in January.

"A special session offers the best opportunity to give education the priority it deserves," White testified at the joint committee hearing.

Some legislators apparently disagreed, however.

Sen. John Montford, D-Lubbock, pressured budget officials for a firm figure on how much a special session would cost the state.

"I want some straight poop on how much this will cost," Montford said, pointing out that no tax hike had been approved in a special session since 1969.

The legislative committees, which will meet again Wednesday, were considering a draft bill by House committee chairman Bill Haley, D-Center, that incorporated many of the educational reform proposals recommended by H. Ross Perot's special education committee.

Haley's preliminary bill, however, ignored several of the Perot committee's key recommendations, including a controversial proposal to abolish the 27-member elected State Board of Education and replace it with a nine-member body appointed by the governor.

Perot's committee incorporated all its recommendations into its own 175-page draft bill and presented it to the legis-

lative committees Tuesday.

White has made separate proposals for educational reform — including his endorsement of an appointed State Board of Education — and for a \$4.8 billion, four-year tax hike but has not yet drafted any bills.

Harris Hill, president of the Texas Association of School Boards, testified his group opposed the proposal for an appointed state board, which he said would have "no constituency, even less visibility and, therefore, less accountability."

Several teachers appealed to committee members Tuesday for higher salaries, with one teacher complaining that principals unfairly received higher pay than teachers.

"(You should) abolish the sweat shop practice of rewarding one man for getting more work from the workers," said teacher Peggy Bonds of Gilmer. "When you start setting education policies, talk to the teachers. We make sense, but we also need to make dollars."

A vocational education student from Madisonville testified against proposals to cut funding for vocational programs, claiming the work programs bolstered academics.

"What kind of leaders do you want for your children or your grandchildren?" said Gary Andrews, a senior. "Do you want an educated, experienced leader or do you want an inexperienced bookworm?"

Charming grey-haired Dallas lady is the editor of '101 Aggie Jokes'

United Press International

DALLAS — A terrible secret is concealed by a charming grey-haired lady who lives in a treat-as-a-pin brick house on a tree-shaded street in north Dallas.

She is the editor of the Aggie joke book. In fact, income from the 10 editions of 101 Aggie Jokes help this lady live in comfortable retirement.

She is a founder and one of four owners of Gigem Press, which publishes the often comical, sometimes outrageous but always profitable series of joke books both hated and loved at Texas A&M University.

All four Gigem Press owners insist that their identities be kept secret, not through fear of reprisals from irate Aggies but simply because they feel they do not have the time or resources to handle the calls, letters and time-consuming demands that publicity would bring.

More than 900,000 copies of the 10 editions have been sold. The books' best marketplace is the Bryan-College Station area, where Texas A&M. Gigem Press is privately owned and does not disclose financial details.

But when the editor was asked if it has been profitable she replied, "Oh Mercy, yes. We

have no complaints on that score. Except we think that we have been a little foolish on the price."

The price is a bit of a sore point. In 1965 the first edition was sold for 98 cents. Ten editions later the 1983 edition sold for \$1.50, which the owners now feel is too low.

They have spotted a similar joke book about North Carolina State — which certainly does not have the peculiar tradition of Texas A&M — that carries a price of \$3.98. It seems a cinch that when the 11th edition goes to press in the fall of 1985 it will carry a higher price.

Nobody claims the jokes are especially witty, or in good taste. ("Do you know why Aggies carry cow chips in their back pockets? For identification.")

"No racial, religious, homosexual or excessively dirty jokes are used," a Gigem Press news release says, "but many raunchy ones are, if they are funny enough."

"Then there was the Aggie who had VD of the eyes. He looked for love in all the wrong places."

Despite the fact that they are edited by a sweet little lady and the corporation is run by a rather upright group of owners, the books probably are not

items you would show to your Sunday School teacher — even though at least one of the owners has taught Sunday School.

The book's owners do not make up the jokes. Each edition of "101 Aggie Jokes" asks readers to "Share your Aggie jokes." Share them they do.

"Lord have mercy," exclaimed the editor. "Aggies, their relatives, kids who plan to go to A&M, they all send us jokes."

The jokes come from all over Texas, throughout the United States and from foreign outposts. About 1,000 jokes come in for each edition, often in envelopes bearing postmarks from spots in Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Malaysia.

The idea for an Aggie joke-book was voiced in Amarillo in 1965 when three members of the Dallas Advertising League were attending a convention. Dozens of Aggie jokes were being told in the convention's hospitality suites. The editor recalls she told the other two advertisers, "Somebody could make some money if they collected the jokes and put them in a book."

When they returned to Dallas discussions about a book became serious. In November 1965 the first book was re-

leased. The first printing of 10,000 copies sold out in two days.

A new book has been issued in every odd-numbered year ever since. In 1968, at the request of an A&M regent, an assistant state attorney general visited Gigem Press to request that publication cease, the founders say. A Baylor graduate, the state official admitted he personally liked the jokes and ended up apologizing for his mission.

The Texas A&M Library orders three copies of each edition. In 1976 editors of the Texas A&M 100th anniversary yearbook received permission to reprint a two-page spread of the best Aggie jokes and cartoons from the Gigem Press books.

In 1982 Gigem Press was incorporated. One of the three founders moved away from Texas and his share was purchased by two other Dallas residents.

"I always think these jokes are a form of envy," said the prim and proper editor. "They are the only ammunition against the bragging Aggie. We think Aggies don't mind the jokes because they know they're better than anyone else."

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