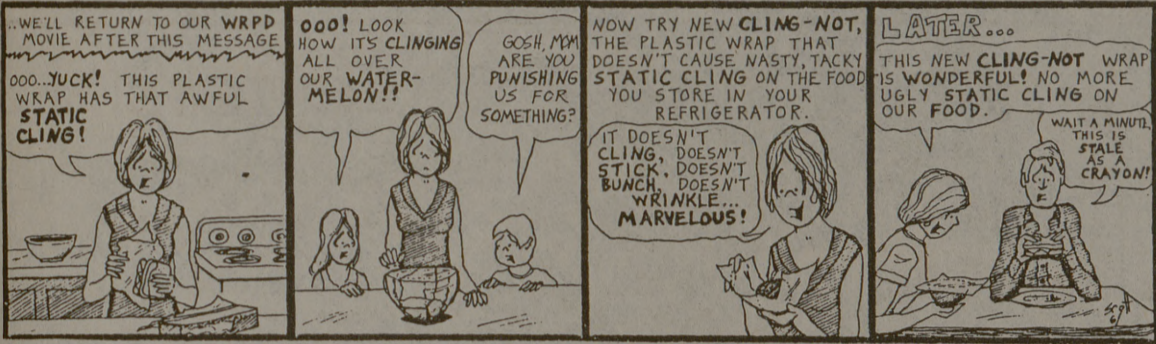


Warped

by Scott McCullar

Workers inspect shuttle



Writing center authorized

Committee considers plan

By ROBIN BLACK
Senior Staff Writer

To be or not to be — that is the question a new committee created by the Board of Regents must answer about a proposed writing center at Texas A&M University.

The Texas A&M University Writing Center — envisioned as one of the few activities of its kind in the nation — was authorized by the regents at their meeting last month. The center will emphasize the development of all kinds of creative and non-fiction writing.

Arthur Blair, an assistant to University President Frank Vandiver, said the center will not be open to Texas A&M students only, but will be at the disposal of the entire Southwest.

Similar programs have been established at the University of Iowa,

Stanford University, Columbia University, Johns Hopkins University and other universities.

Blair said Texas A&M will not be competing with the other universities with writing centers but that the University will strive to have the best writing center.

"We won't be second best," he said. "That's why we have a committee researching it right now. If we can't have the best writing center we won't have one at all."

Dean of Faculties Clinton Phillips is chairman of the advisory board, which is working on a full definition of what the center will do as well as looking for someone to serve as director of the center.

"We hope to have an interim director by the first of September," Blair said, "and we hope to be able to

open the center sometime within the coming school year."

Vandiver, who recommended the authorization of such a center to the Board of Regents, said the creation of this center provides an opportunity for an unusual contribution to the liberal arts.

"I envision this as an incubator for creative writing in this region," said Vandiver, who is also a historian and author of several books.

Blair said the center would focus on creative writing, non-fiction prose and poetry. The center will not deal with any kind of remedial writing, he said.

The highlight of the center's function will be an annual writers' conference which will bring nationally prominent writers to the campus to share their knowledge of the craft with developing writers.

United Press International

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — Workers swarmed over the crippled space shuttle Discovery Wednesday to find out the full impact of a last-second launch abort and flash fires expected to delay a third blastoff attempt at least two weeks.

Damage inspection teams arrived at Discovery's oceanside launch pad shortly after sunrise to begin extensive checks of the spaceship's systems. At one point, a giant crane hoisted a truck equipped with a "cherry picker" on top of the pad to give workers access to hard-to-reach areas.

A NASA spokesman said an initial inspection revealed only minor damage from Tuesday's dramatic abort just four seconds before Discovery's giant solid rocket motors were to fire, blasting the billion-dollar space

freighter off the pad on its maiden voyage.

But he said "closer inspection" of the damaged areas is necessary, as well as tests of various systems before a new launch date can be set.

Troubleshooters suspect either a softball-sized fuel valve or the computer that controls it failed Tuesday when the signal to start the shuttle's powerful main engines was given.

The No. 3 engine controller told Discovery's master computer it had a malfunction and in fractions of a second the engines received shutdown commands.

But explosive hydrogen gas briefly collected around the base of the orbiter and flash fires scorched about 25 square feet of a wing-like flap designed to protect the shuttle's engines from the fiery heat of re-entering the atmosphere.

Jim Mizell, a spokesman for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, said scorch marks also were found between the shuttle and its huge external fuel tank and around service masts that supply power to the orbiter when it is on the pad.

Glynn Lunney, shuttle program manager at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, called the launch abort a "minor setback," but he predicted it would take about two weeks to get Discovery ready for its third launch attempt.

Discovery's first effort was canned when an onboard computer failed Monday with just 20 minutes to go for blastoff.

Shuttle commander Henry Hartsfield praised the shuttle system for detecting the engine failure and stopping the launch sequence.

Land fill filling up says CS manager

By LESLIE HEFFNER
Reporter

The College Station land fill will run out of room by the early 1990s, said North B. Bardell, College Station City Manager Wednesday night at a workshop meeting.

Composting, a method for solid waste disposal was discussed as an alternative to land filling. Leon Potter, spokesman for the Riewe and Wischmeyer study of composting said "there are three ways to get rid of garbage: you can either burn it, compost it, or put it in a land fill."

He added that composting is probably the most beneficial choice because 21 to 30 days after sewage sludge and solid sewage have been blended together, it is odor free and rich in organics, making it a good fertilizer.

Burning garbage, Potter said, is not a feasible alternative because of its mass quantity. He added land fills are not feasible because they are not always safe for the environment.

College Station Mayor Gary Halter said it would be worthwhile to research benefits the city would receive if composting was used. Whether it would be feasible depends on the economy of scale, system adequacy and machine technology, Halter said.

The composting study will be fur-

ther discussed and voted on at the July 12 council meeting.

A demonstration of a population survey computer program was presented by the city planning department. The demonstration consisted of showing population growth on graphs, showing the housing industry growth spurts, and explaining the system's two files (building permit and land use inventory files).

Bryan, College Station, and the Texas highway department purchased three complete computer systems to keep accurate data of population increases, city growth rates, and serial zone changes, Halter said.

Al Mayo, city planner said the system can evaluate growth projection impact and it can graphically show vacant land areas. "It is an extremely valuable tool," Mayo said.

In other business at the meeting, the council voted to pass an ordinance which will levy taxes for the use of the municipal government, the City of College Station, and provide for the 1984-85 Interest and Sinking Fund. They also voted to pass the 1984-85 fiscal year budget and authorize expenditures.

The council unanimously approved the Lone Star Gas Co. rate increase for installing new gas service main lines.

Educators don't like teacher test

United Press International

EL PASO — Competency tests are a waste of time for experienced teachers, said educators from throughout the country attending a national convention.

Members of a national sorority for women educators, meeting in El Paso Wednesday, made clear their displeasure with a proposal approved Tuesday by a Texas House-Senate conference committee. If both houses pass the measure all Texas teachers will be required to pass a competency test by June 1986 to retain their jobs.

"A lot of people have book knowledge but don't know how to be good managers or how to handle children," said Elaine Wills of Odessa, Texas, one of about 500 members of Kappa Kappa Iota meeting this week. "I've got my degree and I took the NTE (National Teachers Exam), and through the years I've proven that I've been an able teacher."

Wills, a special education teacher, said school districts should continue to use in-class observations when deciding whether to hire or fire teachers.

Interest groups criticize tax plan

United Press International

AUSTIN — Interest groups ranging from amusement park operators to advertising executives lined up Wednesday to criticize as unfair and counter-productive a proposed \$4.9 billion tax plan.

Several of the tax opponents appearing before the House Ways and Means Committee criticized the tax measure because it assessed sales taxes on personal services such as dry cleaning and haircuts, but excluded professional services offered by doctors, lawyers and architects.

If enacted, the tax proposal would be the first general tax increase in Texas in 13 years. The bill's author, Rep. Stan Schlueter, D-Killeen, predicted the House Ways and Means Committee would adopt the mea-

sure on Thursday, then scheduled floor debate for Friday.

Some of the most outspoken critics of the plan were advertising executives, who face a 5 percent local and state sales tax on the placement of all ads if the bill is enacted.

John W. Barger, chief executive officer of Clear Channel Communications in San Antonio, said a tax on advertisements would cause sales tax collections on retail purchases to decline.

"Everytime you impose \$1 in tax on advertising, you ultimately take away \$1.65 in retail sales taxes," he said.

Jeremy L. Halbreich, senior vice president of the Dallas Morning News and a representative of the Texas Daily Newspapers Association

and the Texas Press Association, predicted a tax on advertisers would be difficult to enforce.

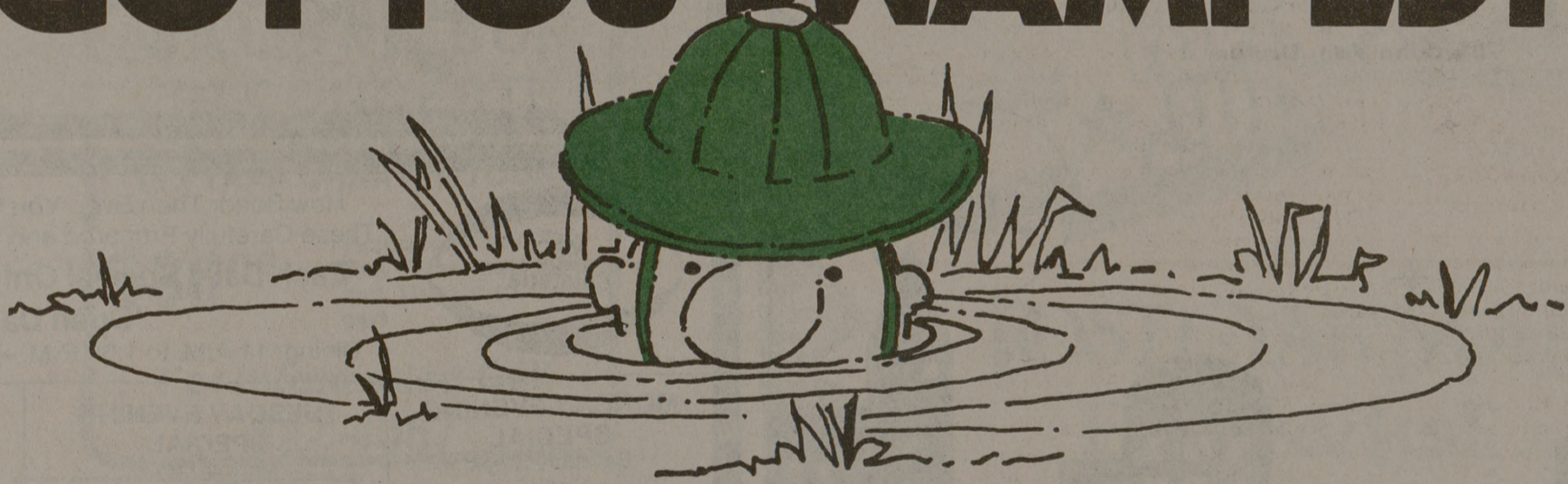
"I assure you, the state will spend more time keeping track of these advertisers than it will raising tax dollars," he said.

Halbreich also said the tax would discriminate in favor of out-of-state companies that do advertising business in Texas.

Another critic of the tax bill was Harry Hubbard, head of the Texas AFL-CIO. Hubbard said he generally supported the bill but was against the sales tax exemption for professional services.

"We're a little concerned that babysitters are taxed but doctors and lawyers are not," he said.

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