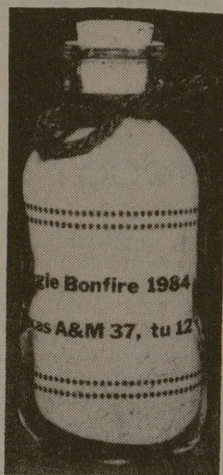


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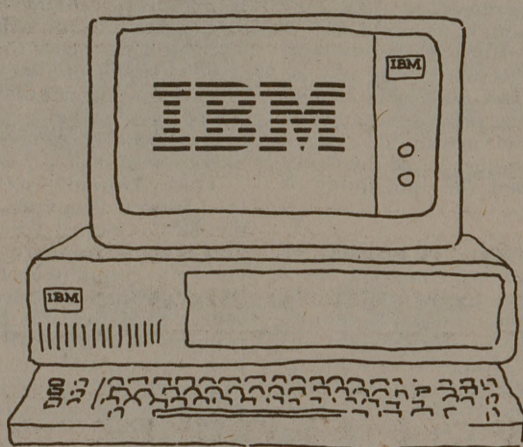
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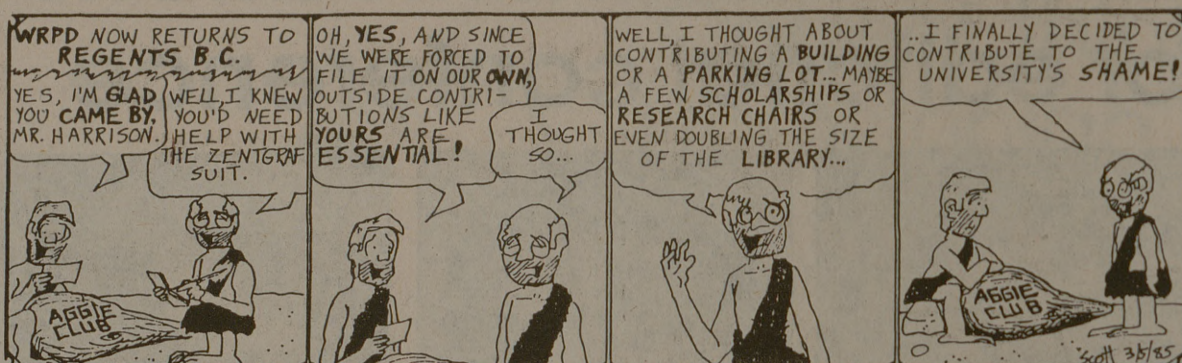
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Lecturer advocates free speech

Censoring schoolbooks

By REBECCA ADAIR
Staff Writer

"We are taking the second ride of Paul Revere," said a People For the American Way spokesman Monday night at Rudder Theater.

Mike Hudson, the group's Texas coordinator, said the group is trying to alert the public to the fact that textbook censorship now is a serious problem.

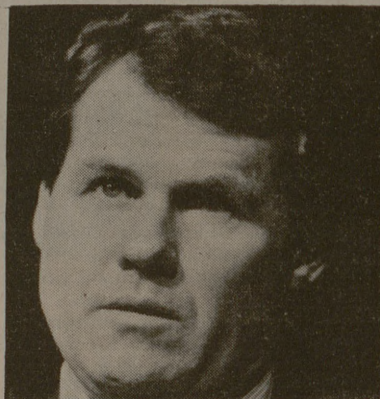
In his speech, "Challenges to the First Amendment in Public Education," Hudson cited what he termed the "religious right" group as the driving force behind textbook censorship.

Hudson said the influence of this group in government and American politics can't go unnoticed. He said the group's principles are a threat to the basic constitutional provisions of free and open access to different ideas and points of view, the tradition of respect for diversity and pluralism and the tradition of separation of church and state.

Hudson mentioned religious leaders — such as Jerry Falwell — as part of the religious right. Hudson emphasized the difference between this group and the mainline traditional religious participation.

"Let me discredit the notion that religion and politics should not mix," Hudson said. "Religious beliefs and private morality always play a key role in American public values and public policy."

Opposition to the religious right and their censorship attempts claim they do not oppose the religious right being active in politics.



Michael E. Hudson

"It's not that they're wrong in being active," Hudson said, "they're actively wrong in what they're advocating."

Hudson said the movement, often termed Moral McCarthyism, stands against anything "anti-God, anti-family or unpatriotic." The religious right also issues "Biblical report cards," Hudson said.

The Seventh Amendment prohibits religious tests, Hudson said, and our forefathers came here to escape them.

"I don't think there's a Jew in the country that wouldn't automatically say, 'Haven't we heard this before? Isn't this what we came here to get away from?'" Hudson said.

One of the problems with the religious right's claims, Hudson added, is that they say there is only one answer, one divine answer, and if you don't agree with that, you can't be divine.

Hudson said he is amazed that what was once a lunatic fringe now is at the forefront in politics.

"It sounds funny, but we've sat around and let a minority fringe group have an unbelievably disproportionate power," he said.

Hudson said leading theologians in the country think the religious right's view is an aberration of theology, yet their views still are significant to average folks.

Hudson said mainline theologians have said they have no conflict with the scientific teaching of evolution theories.

"If they believe, as they do, that God did all the creation, who are we to say how he did it?" Hudson said.

Hudson has one major criticism of the censorship process, he said. It's easier to define the difference between acceptable and unacceptable than to pick it out, he said. The censorship pursued by the religious right involves restriction, not selection, and there lies the problem.

Because Americans are in a time of weakness — feeling a sense of loss, confusion and instability — the easy answers provided by this group can seem attractive. This group claims to have an exclusive relationship with the deity, and if you follow their choices, you will know what God thinks is right.

"Textbooks are a monument to dullness," Hudson said, "and the kids aren't stimulated or excited by them."

"If the religious right have their way, it'll be even worse."

Legislative bill emphasizes mental health

Associated Press

AUSTIN — The chairman of a special committee on mental health said Monday caring for the mentally ill in community centers "is the buck buy" for the state.

However, Oswin Chrisman, Dallas, underscored that his Oversight Committee on Mental Health and Mental Retardation had even discussed closing state hospitals or schools for the retarded.

"They have a significant and role in a strategic plan," Chrisman said, but he added that he would like to see the state "move to the communities where care can serve more people, more efficiently, for less dollars."

Chrisman joined Rep. Jack Voelker and Sen. Chet Brooks, D-Pasadena, at a news conference to announce the filing of a bill that would re-emphasize the importance of the community mental health and mental retardation program.

Voell, R-El Paso, said the bill would establish a citizens' planning council to advise the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation "on all stages of the development and implementation" of a long-range strategic plan. The bill calls for at least a six-year plan, updated every two years.

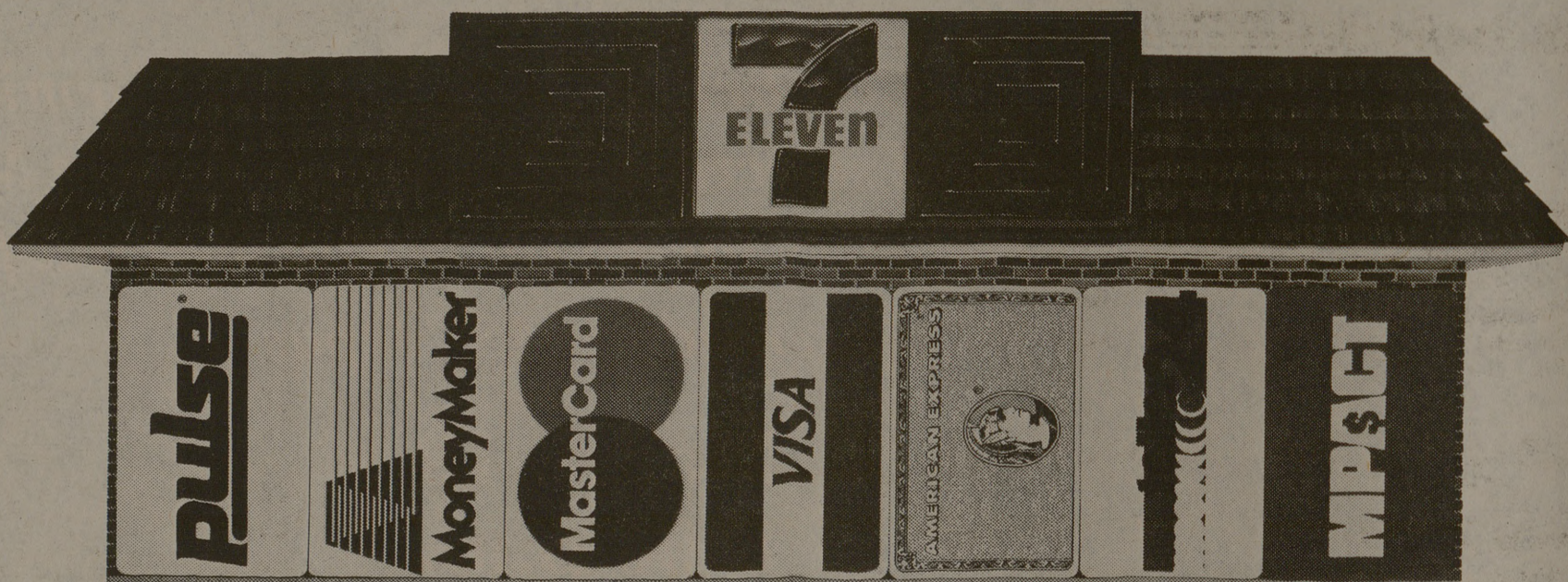
Legislative resolutions, which do not carry the force of law, would emphasize community treatment for alcoholism, insurance coverage for treatment of alcoholism and compliance with settlements of lawsuits challenging state mental health and mental retardation services.

Chrisman said, "We're spending lots of money for people who can't help but if you measure a society by how we treat those who are aged and those who are children, those who can't help themselves, we've got a long way to go."

"We're in a crying need for a strategic plan. This is not a problem which you can simply throw dollars and expect to have results."

"If it's good business and good medicine in general medicine, the same applies to this area of health care."

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