

STATE AND LOCAL

Billboards

House OKs bill requiring cities to compensate for sign removal

Associated Press

AUSTIN — The House voted 82-61 Tuesday to require cities to compensate owners of billboards that are ordered removed as a result of city ordinances aimed at controlling such signs.

"This is a bill that protects the individual's right to own and maintain property against overreaching government," said bill sponsor Bill Messer, D-Belton.

Also Tuesday, the House gave final approval to Brownfield Rep. Jim Rudd's fee hike bill, which would bring the state \$106 million over the next two years and help balance the appropriations bill scheduled for House debate Wednesday.

The fee bill, on its way to the Senate, would raise the cost of a four-year drivers' license from \$10 to \$12, increase the cost of personalized license plates from \$25 to \$40 and raise a variety of other state fees.

The billboard measure, which faces another House vote, also gives the state the power to regulate bill-

boards in unincorporated areas. Messer complained that city ordinances against billboards amount to unfair confiscation of existing billboards. In lieu of compensation, some cities allow illegal billboards to remain up for several years so the owner can continue to make money.

That does not go far enough, said Messer, who wants compensation in the form of cash payments, tax abatements or other benefits.

In 1983, Gov. Mark White vetoed a similar bill approved by the House and Senate. Messer told the House that White told him he "will make his decision when it gets there" this year.

The lengthy floor debate included a series of amendments, most of which were killed. The debate on state regulation in unregulated areas boiled down to a discussion of the relative merits of billboards.

"I don't like driving along looking at billboards," said Messer. "I'd rather look at wildflowers. But it is property."

Court split on rights of mentally retarded

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — For the second time in five weeks, an apparently divided Supreme Court grappled Tuesday with a dispute over a Texas community's exclusion of a group home for the mentally retarded.

The court must decide whether the rights of 13 prospective residents of a group home for mentally retarded people were violated when Cleburne, Texas, officials banned the home from a neighborhood where boarding houses, apartment houses and nursing homes could locate.

The court's decision, expected by July, could alter significantly the legal rights of the nation's mentally retarded, reaching beyond the "home movement" aimed at removing such people from large institutions.

A second round of arguments was

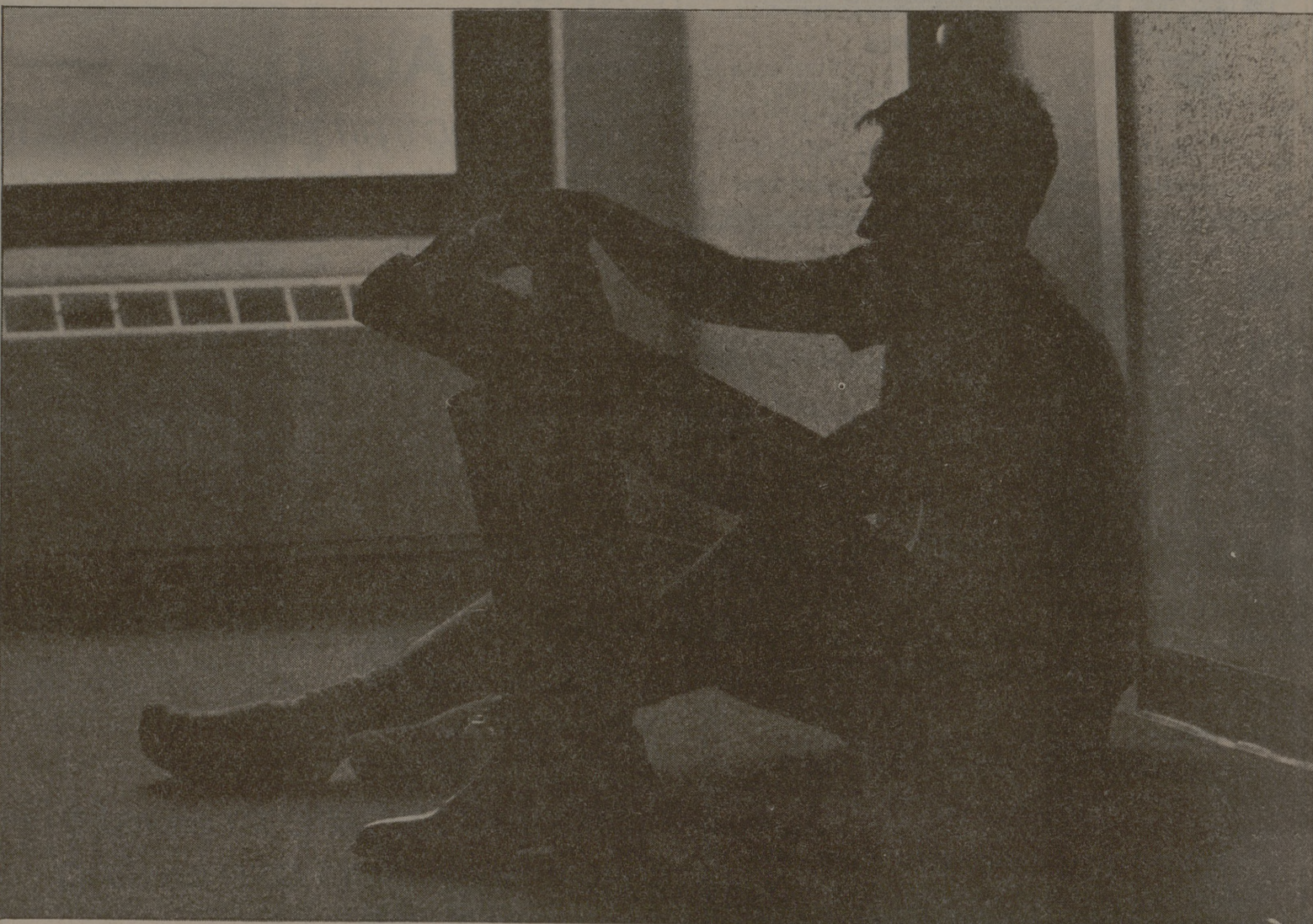
ordered by the court after Justice Lewis F. Powell missed the March 18 argument session while recuperating from surgery.

Speculation has centered on the possibility that the court's eight other justices were so closely divided in the case that they scheduled Tuesday's argument session to assure Powell's participation.

Powell shed his usual courtroom reserve to pose several questions to both lawyers.

He quizzed Earl Luna of Dallas, Cleburne's lawyer, about the wisdom of a city ordinance that lumps the mentally retarded in the same category as "alcoholics, drug addicts and the insane."

And he pointedly asked Renea Hicks of Austin, the lawyer representing the corporation seeking to locate the group home in Cleburne, about potential "overcrowding" there.



Spit and Polish

Photo by GREG BAILEY

Patrick Martinez, a junior pre-med major, polishes his senior boots that he'll wear for the first time during Final Review on

May 4. The Corps will pass in review twice. Once in this year's uniforms and once in next year's uniforms.

Association of Former Students to get award

The Graduate Student Council will present the George W. Kunze Award to the Association of Former Students today because of the association's service to graduate students.

Graduate Student Council member Martha Miller said the Former Students' Association was chosen for

the award because of the financial assistance it has provided many graduate students.

The George W. Kunze award was created by the 1983-84 Graduate Student Council to honor those organizations or individuals who have given outstanding help to graduate students.

Kunze, a La Grange native, was Dean of the Graduate College of Texas A&M from September 1968 to August 1984, a longer than usual term for a graduate dean, said Jane Thompson, Kunze's secretary during his administration. The Graduate College really began to grow in large numbers under Kunze's administration, Thompson said.

During his term as dean, Kunze created an automated graduate student record system. Thompson said A&M operated with this type of system before most other graduate colleges.

The award was presented for the first time in May 1984 to Janet C. Winniford, assistant director of student affairs.

BRAZOS RODEO Rodeo & Dance

April 25, 26, 27, 1985

Rodeo:

7 p.m. Nightly All Seats reserved

Thursday night

Advance \$3.50

Gate \$4.50

Friday and Saturday

Advance \$4.50

Gate \$5.50

Dance:

8:30 p.m. - 1 a.m.

\$3.00 per person

Tickets available

- Bossier Chrysler Dodge
- All Courts Western Stores
- Post Oak Mall
- Rodeo Headquarters
- (Manor East Mall)

BRAZOS COUNTY PAVILION Tabor Rd. & E. By-Pass



Don Gay, 8 Time World Champion Bull Rider (Rides Thursday Night)