

STATE AND LOCAL

Landscaping important to energy conservation

By PAUL HERNDON
Reporter

Proper landscaping around a house or apartment can cut heating and cooling loads up to 30 percent, says an energy information specialist for the Texas A&M Energy and Mineral Resources Center.

Students should look for apartments surrounded by trees and grass instead of asphalt and concrete, said Nancy Hawkins.

"A student should try to avoid renting an apartment that faces west," she said, "or one that has a patio with a picture window facing west because they collect the most heat during the day."

Hawkins said re-learning the techniques of natural insulation can help reduce the cost of utility bills.

Strategically placed trees, shrubs and vines on and around east and west walls can reduce the wall temperature by as much as 25 degrees during periods of direct sunlight.

Shade trees can reduce the amount of solar heat in a house by 40 to 80 percent, depending on the density of the trees, according to a report by the center. Climbing vines can reduce wall temperatures eight to 14 degrees.

Although landscaping helps with insulation, Hawkins said too many

house plants can add to the energy consumption of a house.

"Indoor plants add to the humidity," she said. "The higher the humidity, the more an air conditioner has to work to keep a house cool."

Another way to keep air conditioning costs minimal is to take care of the yard. A well-kept, 1/4-acre lawn can do the same work each day as a 42,000 British thermal unit central air conditioner running for 48 hours, according to the report.

Hawkins said landscaping should be a supplement, rather than an alternative, to proper insulation because its effectiveness as a conservation measure depends on the local environment.

Gramm: Administration raises offer in offshore oil dispute

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Reagan Administration has agreed to a new, higher offer to the states in a dispute over offshore oil-lease revenues if Congress passes it, Sen. Phil Gramm said Thursday.

Gramm, R-Texas, said the Office of Management and Budget, speaking on behalf of the administration, had pledged that if Congress passes legislation giving states 27 percent of

the offshore revenues, President Reagan will sign the measure.

Such legislation is currently pending in Congress.

The government has put about \$6.4 billion in an escrow account pending settlement of the issue of how to divide revenue from oil leases in a three-mile offshore band shared by the states and the federal government.

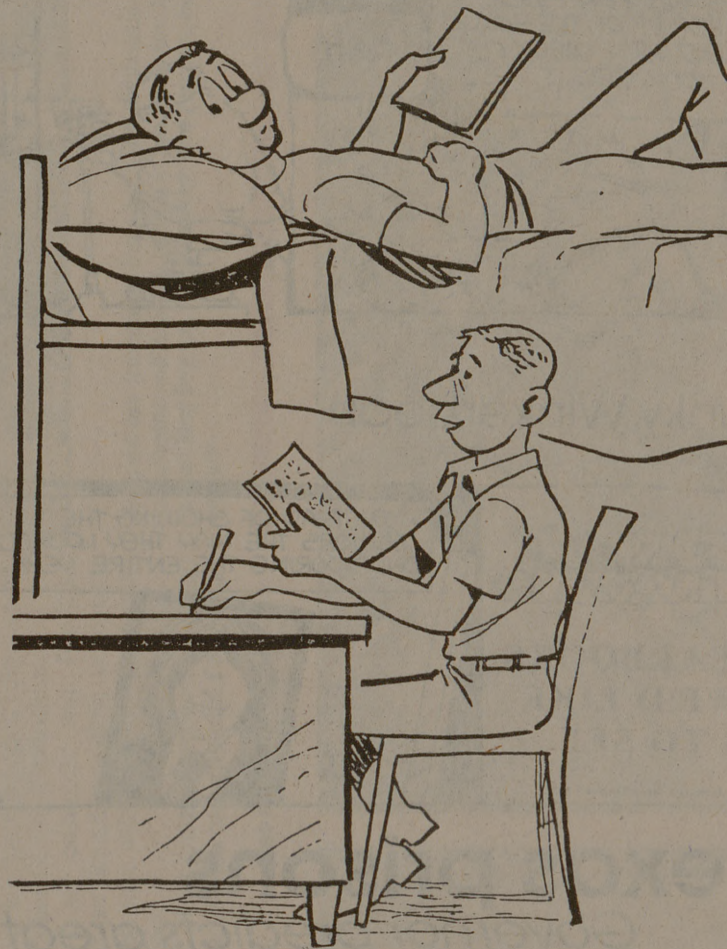
Under the administration's new offer, if approved by Congress,

Texas would get an immediate lump payment of \$375 million, Gramm said.

The last offer made to the states by the Interior Department was 16 and 2-3 percent of bonuses (payments for the leases) and rentals. The federal government would get the oil royalties.

Under the new proposal the states would get 27 percent of the bonuses and rentals.

Slouch By Jim Earle



"With the increase in tuition, we won't have the option to fail courses like in the good ole days."

Former director of sanctuary is sentenced

Associated Press

BROWNSVILLE — The former director of a shelter for Central Americans was sentenced to two years in prison Thursday after she told a federal judge she would continue to violate immigration laws.

"Some things are worth going to jail for," Lorry Thomas, 41, the former director of Casa Oscar Romero, told reporters outside the courthouse.

Thomas told U.S. District Judge Ricardo Hinojosa that her religious convictions would prompt her to continue helping Central Americans fleeing their war-torn region.

Hinojosa said he had no choice but to sentence her to prison.

Thomas pleaded guilty May 30 to hiding Raul Dominguez, 28, in the trunk of her car. The two were arrested May 12 at the Border Patrol checkpoint at Sarita, about 70 miles south of Corpus Christi, authorities said.

In a pre-sentence investigation statement, Thomas said, "I have done this many times before and I will continue to do it."

Hinojosa told the defendant that there were other ways to help Central Americans, but breaking the law was not one of them. He ordered Thomas to surrender to authorities on June 27 to begin serving her sentence.

But the judge said he would give Thomas 120 days to reconsider her statement about continuing to break the law. Hinojosa said that if she did change her position, he would consider reducing the sentence.

Her attorney, Lisa Brodyaga, said neither she nor her clients were surprised by the sentence.

Thomas had faced a maximum five years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine.

She was released on \$20,000 bond after refusing for two weeks to be released on a personal recognizance bond because the Nicaraguan initially was denied bond.

Dominguez has since been freed on a \$5,000 bond.

During her arraignment, Thomas said she was helping the man flee dangers in his country imposed by U.S.-backed rebels fighting the Sandinista government.

Around town

Science students must take exam

Any junior or senior in the College of Science who has not previously taken the English Proficiency Examination should plan to take the test June 27 unless they have completed English 301 with a minimum grade of C. Students in the College of Science must pass the proficiency exam or satisfactorily complete English 301 by the spring semester of their junior year in order to qualify as a degree candidate.

The English Proficiency Exam will be administered by the English department. Students in the biology, chemistry, mathematics and physics departments should register for the exam in 152 Blocker before June 27.

State school to care for child

Mother wins 2-year battle

Associated Press

GALVESTON — An 8-year-old mentally retarded girl is being transferred to a state school after her mother — saying she could not afford to care for the child at home — refused to claim the girl from another state facility.

Family District Judge Andrew Z. Baker on Wednesday ordered Melissa Elaine Collins transferred from the Beaumont Respite Center to the Richmond State School for at least

60 days while Galveston County social services officials hunt for a permanent facility for the child.

Kathleen Gomez, the girl's mother, has refused to take the girl home, contending the child should be cared for by the state because she cannot afford to give the child proper care.

At the same time, Gomez has refused to give up legal custody of the child to the state.

"I'm a bit bitter," Gomez said after Wednesday's hearing. "I don't think

it was necessary for the state to get another 60 days of custodianship. But they tell me I'll be able to visit my daughter anytime. And I will."

The woman said the point of her effort is that she should be able to retain full parental rights.

But she said she believed her two-year fight, capped by the "abandonment" of her daughter, had worked.

"I'd still be trudging through the system trying to get help for my daughter" if she did not take the action, she said.

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