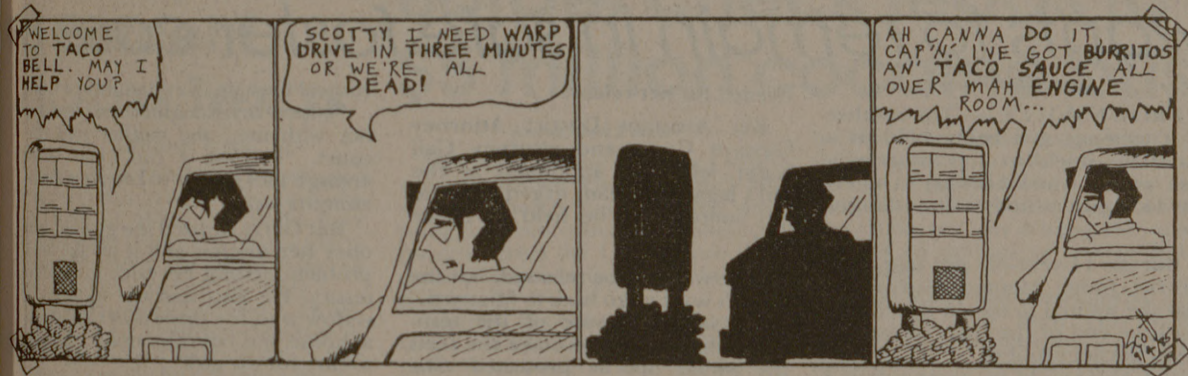


Warped

by Scott McCullar



Texas

Resident dreams of surrounding state with 40 foot high 'Great Wall of Texas'

By SALLY TAYLOR
Reporter

Kenny Bob Parsons wants to build a wall around Texas. Kenny Bob says he wants to build his wall 40 feet high and 40 feet wide all around the state's border — all 3,816 miles of it.

Kenny Bob is the self-proclaimed, head honcho of The Great Wall of Texas Society, "a group of concerned Texians (as the Texas revolutionaries of 1835 called themselves at the Alamo) who realize and appreciate the abundant economic, cultural and emotional wealth provided us by the great Republic of Texas."

He says that while most politicians are more concerned about the state's southern border, several true Texians feel that the biggest threat to the Texas way of life comes from north of the Red River.

Kenny Bob says that he doesn't mind people moving to Texas ("even Stephen F. Austin came here from Missouri"), but he objects to "the new wave of immigrants who want to change our way of life."

"We feel that the time has come to protect and preserve Texas from the exploitationists and people who are intent on Californicating Texas," Kenny Bob says.

The wall idea was born four years ago when Kenny Bob was a song-writing musician in Dallas.

"I was writing a song called 'The Great Wall of Texas' he says. But his friends weren't impressed.

"They said, 'forget the song, just build the wall,'" he says.

"I've been at it for four years now. I've just stayed at it. It's one of those crazy things I wanted to do. It's kind of a dumb idea, except I'm just so stubborn. I just stick with it."

Kenny Bob spends most of his time at the society's headquarters in the World Trade Center in Dallas.

"I write computer programs in my spare time to make enough money to eat," he says. "But all my time is devoted to the Great Wall right now."

Membership in the society ("and that's for life") costs

\$15. In return, members get a brick minted at the oldest brick factory in Texas, Kenny Bob says.

Each brick is stamped with the words, "The Great Wall of Texas."

The society has 2,070 members including Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby, Attorney General Jim Mattox and country-western singer Rusty Wier.

"Right now, everybody thinks there's some kind of a harmless con-man somewhere that's selling bricks and making a mint of money," he says. "That's just not the truth; the money just covers the cost. Like if I was mailing a brick to College Station, it costs me about \$4.20 to prepare and then it costs about \$2 to mail, and so on and so forth. The rest of the money goes to keep the office open."

"I should be moved from the harmless con-man category to absolute maniac. That's what I'm striving for."

Kenny Bob is also striving to make the wall a reality.

"We're working a deal with some people on the Red River who are going to donate some land to us," he says. "I've talked to the people we get our bricks from and they're gonna donate some bricks. I've got an architectural firm here that's going to design a structure that's 40 feet wide and 40 feet high and 80 feet long to start with."

"It's going to be unusual in that it's going to be of gothic design with no framework, no steel or wood. It's gonna be all bricks with vaulted ceilings and flying buttresses and such."

Kenny Bob says the structure will house four museums, including a Texas artists' gallery.

"Hopefully we're gonna break ground next San Jacinto Day (April 21)," he says. "We're hooked up with the Texas Sesquicentennial Commission, so they're gonna declare it an official sesquicentennial celebration."

"We're gonna build it. Well, we're gonna start building it — you know it took the Chinese 2,000 years to build theirs."

"Nobody in the world anticipates me even starting it — I'm gonna start this thing."



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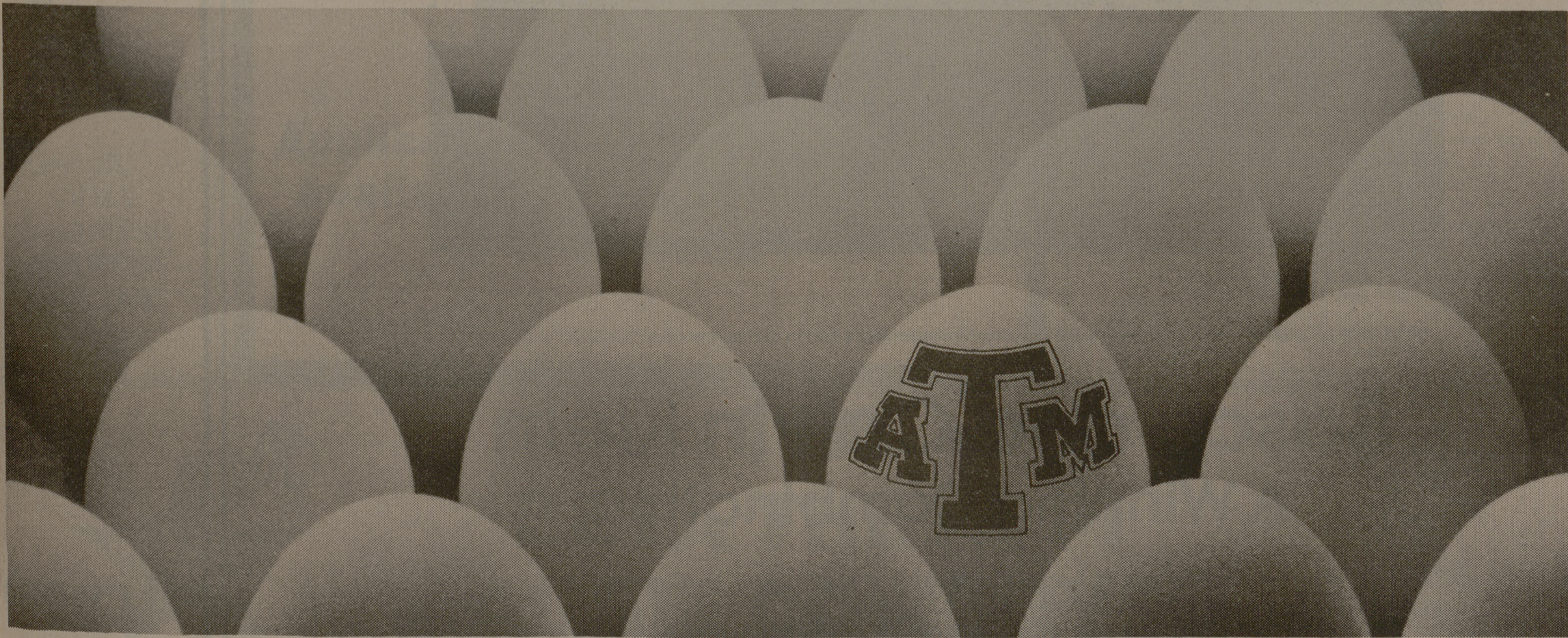
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