

# State may have \$1.2 billion in excess

AUSTIN (AP) — The state could have \$1.2 billion more than predicted this budget cycle, allowing leaders to avoid a "mirrors and blue smoke" financial maneuver and cover part of a welfare deficit, a key lawmaker said Tuesday.

"We are projected to have that money, and I think we will have that money," said state Rep. James Hury, Ways and Means Committee chairman.

Comptroller's office spokesman John Bender would only say that the revenue estimate for the next biennium will include an update on the current two-year budget cycle, which ends Aug. 31.

The Legislative Budget Board has been working on figures for lawmakers, said director Jim Oliver.

"We're certainly better off than we thought we were going to be" when the 1990-91 budget was written last year, Oliver said.

However, he cautioned that the comptroller's estimate is what legislators must use. "It certainly isn't official yet ... What our numbers look like in-house, informally, don't count."

A one-day transfer from special funds to the general revenue fund, to avoid a deficit at the end of this fiscal year, was estimated to be about \$1 billion when authorized by the last Legislature, Oliver said.

Since then, revenues have come in ahead of the forecast, largely from oil and gas and the sales tax, Oliver said.

If budget board estimates hold up, he said, the transfer could be avoided and "we might even have a couple of hundred million in the balance."

Besides averting the bookkeeping transfer, Hury, D-Galveston, said he would like to use the extra money to make up about half of an anticipated \$380 million shortfall in the welfare budget this fiscal year.

The rest of the shortfall could be made up through short-term borrowing, by the use of cash management notes, he said.

"These aren't all hard numbers," Hury said. But he added, "I'm praying."

# Tubularman

by Boomer Cardinale



# Morales says he may appeal sodomy ruling

AUSTIN (AP) — Attorney General-elect Dan Morales said he'll decide after he takes office whether to appeal a state judge's ruling that Texas' law against homosexual sodomy is unconstitutional.

"I am going to need to wait until I have an opportunity to assume office and review the documentation and review the specific case," Morales said Tuesday.

He said he expected to make a decision on that and other pending lawsuits soon after taking office.

Gay men and women from Austin, Houston and Dallas challenged the 1879 law before District Judge Paul Davis of Austin, who made his ruling Monday.

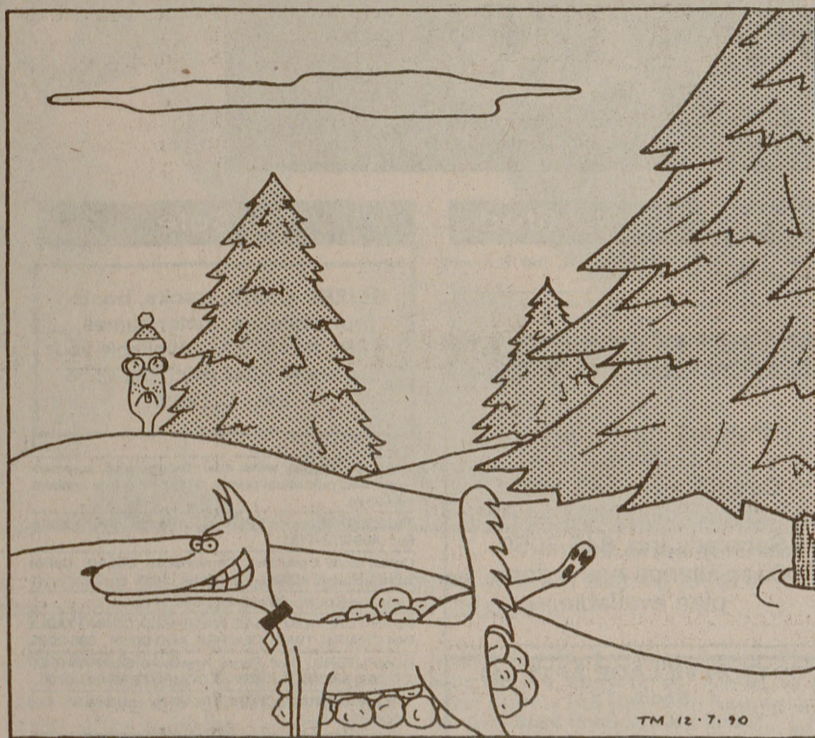
The law makes it a Class C misdemeanor, punishable by a \$200 fine, for consenting adults of the same gender to have "deviant sexual intercourse."

The plaintiffs asserted that the law violates Texas constitutional guarantees of privacy, equal protection and due process, as well as the state Equal Rights Amendment.

Davis' ruling drew a protest Tuesday from a small group led by Mark Weaver, head of the American Family Association of Texas.

Weaver and three other demonstrators displayed a banner reading "Gay is not OK" at a downtown overpass on Interstate 35.

# Nerd House by Tom A. Madison



# Pair hopes to make oil investments safe

DALLAS (AP) — There's a part of the oil business that bothers Bobby Ewing.

"It's a funny thing about gold and diamonds and oil — people have been investing in them for years, and people have been getting burned for years," he said. "In the promoted oil business, (hyped as investment opportunities to unsophisticated investors) it's probably one in 1,000 that get their money back. I cannot comprehend how you can call somebody on the phone and send them a few pieces of paper and get them to send thousands of dollars to put in a hole in the ground 2,000 miles away."

In February, Ewing, of Dallas, teamed with Ron Herzfeld, an independent geologist, to form Corporate Energy Consultants. Ewing wants CEC to become the "Ghostbusters" of the oil patch — the company investors call when the need help evaluating a deal or getting themselves out of a scam.

"People have been tricked into giving money to things that have never been done or that have been overplayed," said Herzfeld, formerly the president of Independent, a Dallas energy consulting firm. "We hope to get to the point where people will know whom to call. There's not a lot of places people can go."

State and federal securities officials say promoted oil deals have increased sharply since the first of the year, encouraged by higher oil prices and increased horizontal drilling activity in South Texas.

The deals typically are touted through the telephone solicitations

from phone banks known as boiler rooms. Boiler-room operators "cold call" potential investors and ask them to buy into deals. Often, the investor commits his funds before he's even seen the prospectus, which is supposed to outline the risks involved.

According to securities officials, promoters have been known to use investors' money for personal purposes and typically keep few or no records, making it difficult for investors to get their money back. Estimates of investors' losses are almost impossible to assess. However, at the height of the oil boom, some officials believe the losses nationally may have reached billions of dollars a year.

Herzfeld describes many of the potential investors targeted by boiler rooms as intelligent business people who just don't understand oil deals. Ewing said CEC draws on his experience in the oil business and Herzfeld's technical expertise to help investors spot inaccurate claims and verify a promoter's background. So far, he said, recommendations have been mixed, with a number of "don'ts" and a few "do's."

Ewing recommends that anyone wanting to put money into an oil venture have an annual income of at least \$200,000 and a \$1 million net worth.

While Ewing admits name recognition from the fictional Bobby Ewing of "Dallas," may help his business, he said the similarities between the two stop with the name.

"I don't have the money or the looks, either one," he said.

# Crime lord Gotti arrested

NEW YORK (AP) — John Gotti, who is reputed to be one of the nation's most powerful crime bosses, was arrested Tuesday night at a social club in Manhattan, the FBI said.

Gotti was arrested by FBI agents and New York police officers at the Ravenite Club at 7 p.m. in the Little Italy neighborhood, said FBI spokesman Joseph Valiquette.

The charges against the reputed boss are sealed, Valiquette said.

A police spokesman, Officer Scott Bloch, said details about the arrest would be revealed at a news conference likely to be held Wednesday. No other details were immediately available.

Gotti's attorney, Bruce Cutler, did not immediately return a call left on his answering service.

Gotti has been under investigation in the shooting death of Paul Castel-

lano, reputed leader of the Gambino crime family, since the Dec. 16, 1985, slaying outside a Manhattan steakhouse.

Gotti was found innocent in February of state charges related to the shooting of a union official. It was the third time that he had been acquitted in recent years of major state or federal charges.

According to published reports, the FBI has gathered tape-recorded evidence against Gotti that could bring him up against federal prosecutors in New York for the 1985 slaying.

Jules Bonalovonta, in charge of the FBI's organized crime office in New York, recently described Gotti as "the No. 1 target of law enforcement" and added, "It's just a matter of time. He's going to go."

# Drugs Continued from page 1

applied research.

Three areas will be targeted — identification, interdiction and alienation.

TEES officials said Thursday the new institute is already in the early stages of working with several large telecommunications companies, defense contractors and smaller industries to use engineering technology in counter-drug efforts.

Barton said he was making the announcement on behalf of his Texas

colleagues in Congress, and he praised the efforts of congressmen who "believed in it and made it happen."

The grant funds come from the General Services Administration.

Hickman said emphasizing or taking away some of the recommendations weakens the whole report.

"The president will determine how they should be implemented," he said. "We just say they should be implemented."

# Graduations Continued from page 1

A&M at Galveston.

Rep. Delco has represented Travis County in the Texas State Legislature since her election in 1974, when she was the first black official elected from District 50.

She is chairwoman of the House Higher Education Committee and also serves as a member of the Science and Technology Committee.

Dr. Jordan, who now resides in Austin, has been on leave from his duties as professor of musicology at Penn State since Sept. 1.

Prior to being named that university's president, a position he held from July 1983 to August 1990, Jordan was associated with the University of Texas System for 18 years.

He served as president of UT-Dallas from 1971 until 1981 and held a number of positions, including interim president, at UT-Austin.

Ambassador Shelton-Colby is a consultant to International Banks and Investors, former deputy assistant secretary for Mexico and former Ambassador to Grenada, Barbados and eight other Caribbean nations.

Shelton-Colby is a member of the board of A&M's Center for International Business Studies, an adjunct professor of Latin American Studies at Georgetown University and co-editor of "Global Assessments," a business-oriented journal of international affairs.

# Faculty Senate Continued from page 1

asked. "Why not ask for more? We probably won't get it anyway. Why not get turned down for big bucks?"

Irene Hoadley, director of Evans library, said the \$2 million increase is not enough. She recommended the library's \$8 million budget be doubled.

"If funding becomes available, we will move to implement these recommendations," she said.

Dr. Jim Price introduced a motion to create a committee to develop spe-

cific plans of action for some of the proposals.

The Senate, after a discussion about "prioritizing" certain resolutions, voted against the motion.

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