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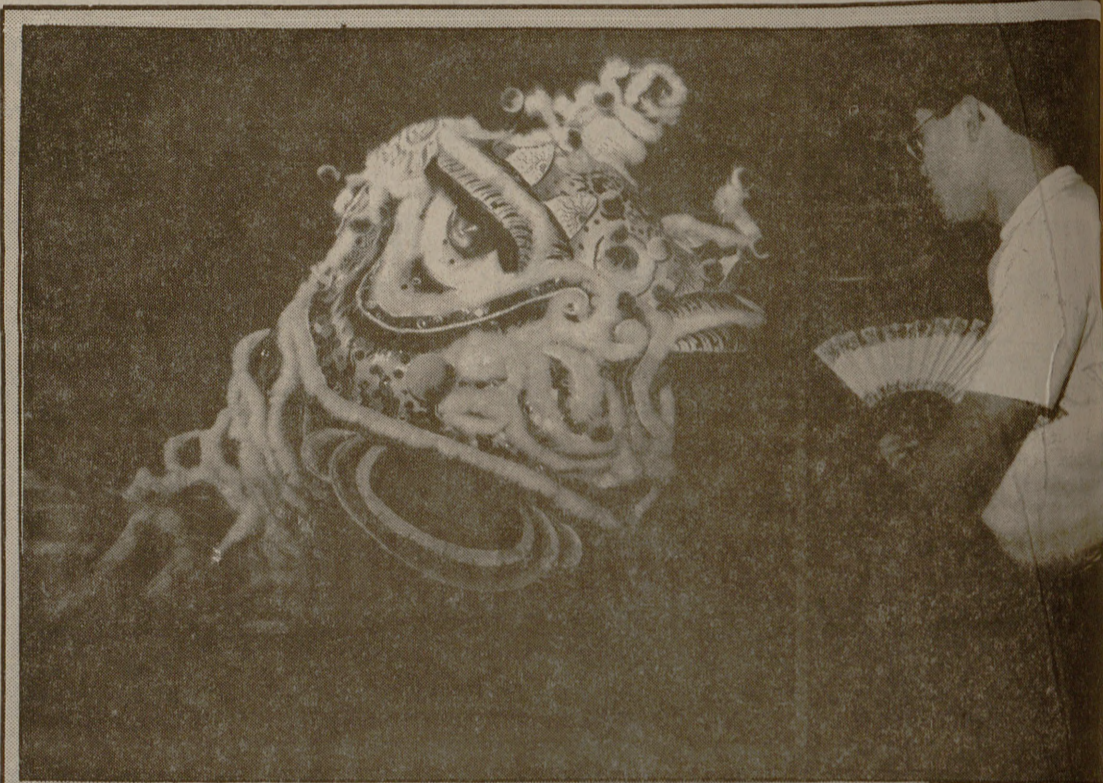
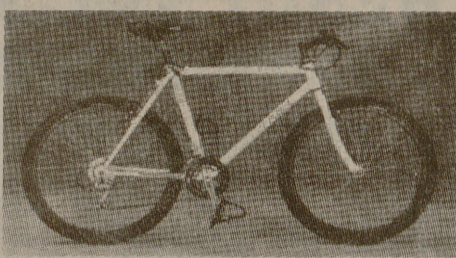
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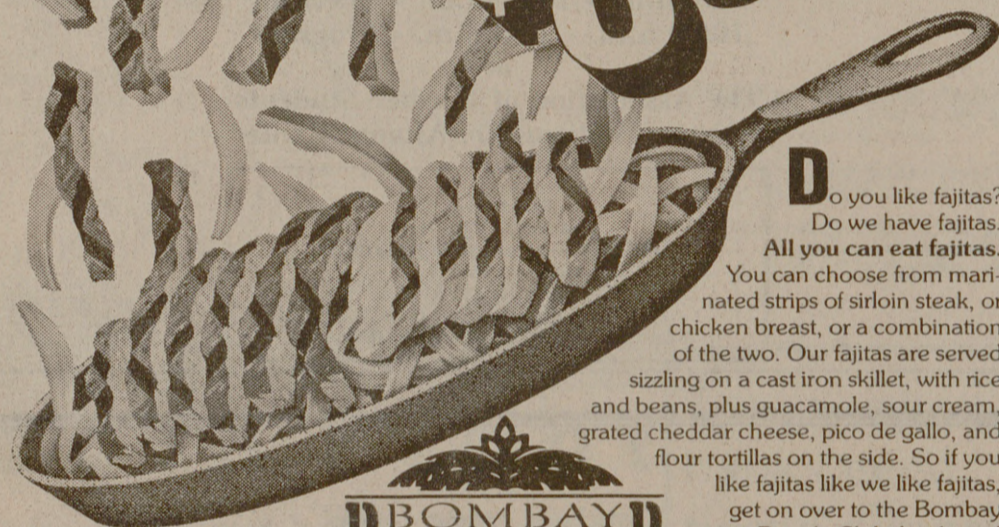
The Year of the Goat

Vien Tran, a senior biomedical science major, teases the dragon at the Vietnamese-American

Students Association's party Saturday. Today is the first day of the lunar year of the goat.

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Poor schools stand to gain money Senate faces vote deadline

AUSTIN (AP) — Facing an April 1 deadline to reform the Texas school finance system, the Senate next week will vote on a proposal that would shift some funds from wealthy schools to poor ones, lawmakers said Thursday.

The proposal probably will be considered Wednesday, said the measure's author, Sen. Carl Parker, D-Port Arthur.

"I think we can pass it just like it is," before the full Senate, he said.

Parker said the bill is needed to comply with a Texas Supreme Court order to make equitable funding available to poor school districts.

In addition to shifting some funds from wealthy to poor schools, Parker's plan would consolidate all school districts into 20 taxing regions that would collect and distribute local property taxes.

Legislative leaders said the court's deadline is pressing.

"Unquestionably we need to move as fast as possible, but we want to be very careful in what we do," said Lt. Gov. Bob Bullock, presiding officer of the Senate.

"It's not moving fast enough for me," House Speaker Gib Lewis, D-Fort Worth said, but added, "it's moving as fast as it can."

He said education funding "is the most frustrating issue that the Legislature has to confront."

"There is no light at the end of the tunnel. You don't even see a freight train coming. When you think you have the solution, all of sudden here comes four or five other problems"

Gib Lewis House speaker

"There is no light at the end of the tunnel," Lewis said. "You don't even see a freight train coming. When you think you have the solution, all of sudden here comes four or five other problems."

Parker blasted an alternative plan filed by Rep. Lib Lineberger, D-Manchaca, that would continue to allow some school districts to raise more money than others through local property taxes.

Under that measure, Parker said, "We will continue to have the wealthy school districts not really care about what happens in Austin and opposing any revenue measures that would enhance school appropriations at the state level."

DEA arrests businessmen from El Paso

EL PASO (AP) — Drug agents arrested five people on marijuana charges, including one man with a history of arrests for trafficking links to convicted trafficker Jim Chagra.

Jack M. Stricklin Jr. was arrested Wednesday on a charge of conspiracy to import and distribute 1,000 pounds of marijuana seized at an El Paso home Wednesday.

Also arrested were Rene Martinez, minority partner and administrative manager of the downtown nightclub Club 101; Rumzy K. Aboud, owner of RK's Smokin' Press Restaurant; Mario Moreno and Ricardo McTague, both of Paso.

El Paso DEA Chief Travis Kendall said the arrests were made after agents followed a late-model sedan carrying 1,000 pounds of marijuana to Moreno's home at 7 p.m. Wednesday.

A noon hearing for the Thursday was delayed.

Kuykendall said Stricklin and Magallanez were thought to be in charge of the alleged smuggling operation.

"We suspect they were dealing 1,000 pounds of marijuana a week and that they may have been dealing in cocaine," the DEA chief said.

Kuykendall said DEA intelligence indicates that Magallanez is an acquaintance at least, and possibly business associate, of Rafael Munoz Talavera. U.S. authorities believe Munoz was the mastermind of a smuggling ring that moved tons of cocaine across the border, including 21 tons found in a suburban Los Angeles warehouse in September 1989.

Mexican officials have acquired Munoz of charges related to a warehouse cocaine seizure saying prosecutors lacked sufficient evidence. He was released from a Mexican prison.

McTague is related to James Mero McTague, an El Paso man who was convicted of drug possession and conspiracy charges in connection with the warehouse cocaine.

Stricklin has a history of arrest for marijuana smuggling dating from 1973. He was released from federal prison about a month ago.

He was charged along with convicted El Paso drug trafficker Jim Chagra of conspiring to smuggle tons of marijuana from Columbia, Boston through El Paso.

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