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Vo-tech measure passes

Senate brought bill to top of the agenda

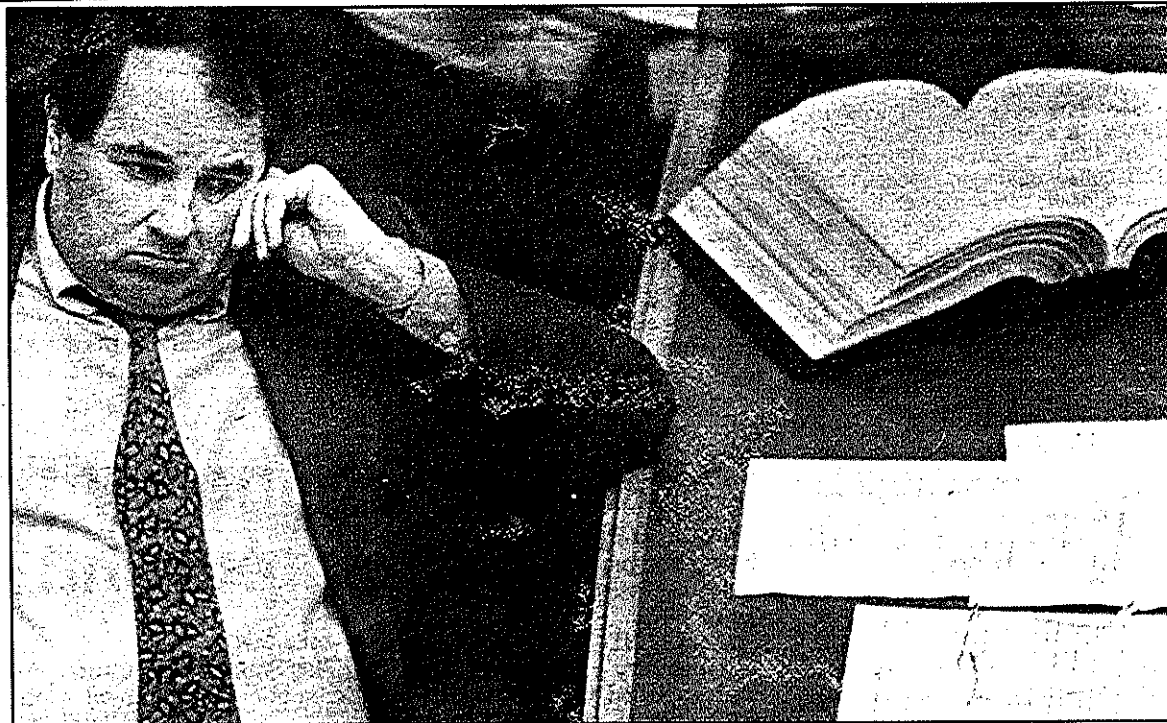
By Michael Arbanas
Gazette Staff

A plan by Sens. Allen Gordon and Nick Wilson to make sweeping changes in the state's vocational-technical education system passed in the Senate on Thursday over the objections of the author of a competing measure.

Senate Bill 357, which would convert 10 of the state's vo-tech school into technical colleges under the jurisdiction of the Department of Higher Education, passed on a vote of 23-10.

The Senate suspended its rules to bring the bill to a vote to the top of its agenda Thursday, despite an impassioned plea by Sen. Lu Hardin of Russellville, author of the competing SB 165, for his colleagues to wait until his bill could clear the Senate Education Committee and then hear both bills on the Senate floor.

"Whether you vote for 357, or whether you vote for 165, or both, you are going to change the course of vocational education in the state for the next 25 years," Hardin said. "That is not being melodramatic. That is a fact."



Don Marquis/Gazette Staff

DEBATE: Sen. Nick Wilson listens to debate Senate Thursday. Wilson's bill was passed over concerning his vo-tech bill that was passed in the a measure introduced by Sen. Lu Hardin.

Gordon, of Morrilton, said there was no time to waste, though. He said neither bill would do any good without some source of money to pay for the changes, and that the sponsors needed to see the bill passed so they could concentrate on coming up with the money.

"If we don't pass a funding mechanism, Gov. [Bill] Clinton should veto the bill," Gordon said.

The bill would convert 10 of the state's 24 vo-tech schools into technical colleges that concentrated their efforts on tech-

nical education but also offered college-level courses. The colleges would be controlled by local boards of directors, acting under the approval of the state Board of Higher Education.

The vo-tech schools currently are administered by the Board of Vocational-Technical Education, which has identical membership of with the Board of Education. Gordon and Wilson have claimed the board concentrated mostly on primary and secondary education.

Wilson, of Pocahontas, said efforts to encourage the state's colleges and universities to offer

college-level courses on the vo-tech campuses have been largely unsuccessful. He said he did not blame the colleges, since their focus was on higher education.

Gordon and Wilson have amended the bill six times since its filing last week to satisfy various groups concerned with aspects of it, but the Vo-Tech Division of the Department of Education has expressed opposition to the bill, anyway.

"We have made every effort to accommodate those people, and have satisfied, by and large, everything but the bureaucracy down the street here."

MONDAY

INSIDE TODAY: Little League baseball action recapped. Sports, page 8

COMING TUESDAY: Coverage of the Malvern City Council committee meetings.

Malvern Daily Record

35 Cents

May 4, 1992

Malvern, Arkansas

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the chairman

Stiles steps down as county Democratic chairman

By MARK BIVENS
Staff Writer

Dewey Stiles laughs a lot. He talks about circumstances that have given him handicaps. He overcame those handicaps with two things — determination and midnight oil. It took a heaping portion of both. Dewey Stiles is a tough guy. He doesn't admit it. But he would to be.

Stiles didn't graduate high school. He earned the equivalent of a high school diploma through a correspondence course. He attended the University of Chicago briefly. He earned his way through life. Nothing came easy. Without a diploma, Stiles said the days things are different. But he's not then," as he termed his younger years, the key ingredient to overcome obstacles was determination.

Stiles has been the extreme example of an over-achiever. He's been a service worker, a state representative, a Steel Workers Union representative and chairman of the Hot Spring County Democratic Committee for 20 years. Achieving his status has been a bumpy road at times. Personally, Stiles has been faced with unspeakable hardship. In 1962,

his son Ricky, a 17-year-old senior at Malvern High School, died suddenly. Encephalitis from a mosquito bite, Stile's wife, Marcille said.

"It was in October," Marcille recalled. "Ricky had been out hunting. We guess that's where he got the mosquito bite. He went to sleep about 10 or 10:30 and woke us up about 1 (a.m.)."

Ricky was rushed to the hospital, where he died. Marcille said there was a two-year period following Ricky's death that was difficult on the family. In 1964, the Stiles built a house. They reside at the Brownwood Street residence today. The couple's surviving children, Gary, 45, and Kay, 44, remain close. They share wall space in the living room where their senior pictures are lined up with Ricky's. Family always has been a priority with the Stiles.

"I've always tried to put my family and church first," Dewey Stiles said. "I have stayed real busy for 40 or 50 years and I really have no regrets." Stiles said if hindsight were 20-20, he can see nothing he'd change concerning decisions he'd made. Born in Dallas County, Stiles came to

Malvern in 1939. He married Marcille in 1944. He had worked at Hunter Point in San Francisco in the Civil Service, because he'd been turned down for the military due to asthma.

Following World War II, Stiles returned home to work at Reynolds, where he was employed from 1946 until 1956. He'd been elected state representative in 1952 and served until 1959. At that time he went to work for the Union until his retirement in 1983. The job of Union representative for the Steelworkers was a major responsibility. Stiles said at that time over 10,000 steel workers were in Arkansas.

Stiles said reaching the lofty goals he set for himself didn't require any magic.

"I think by not having a lot of college, I feel like I know as good or better than anybody in the state (on the value of) education," Stiles said. "It was different then. A lot of hard work and midnight oil and you could get by. Today you can't do it. You've almost always got to have a good education to compete. I competed very well

Please see STILES, page 10



Daily Record Photo-Bivens

Stiles reminisces about his 20 years as Democratic chairman.

Pomp and Circumstance'

Two teens arrested; charged with arson

Stiles

Continued from page 1

"I don't think the government is in good shape," Stiles said. "It worries me. It's somewhat out of hand. If something doesn't change, we'll wind up as a third country. I'll give you an example. Years ago we went over to Japan and gave them technology. Now we've got overpasses in Arkansas from Japan. They're putting the American steel companies out of business." Stiles said the importing of foreign automobiles is heading to an epidemic.

"Our government hasn't said 'hold up' and the Japanese are eating us alive," Stiles admitted. "There's more don't plan on quitting."

Stiles is a fixture in politics and is an observer. Things have changed over the years in the political scene. Stiles

Stiles said the type of person that I have spent no telling how many hours on political action," Stiles said. "If you give up on that, you've had it. Now 30 to 35 percent of the people are voting in political races. That's pathetic. I never intend to quit as far as the political process. I get discouraged, but I don't plan on quitting."

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In hard times as they once were, Stiles

Stiles said Democrats are becoming more conservative. Republicans are becoming more liberal. Whether that's good or bad, Stiles says it's hard to label.

"I'm a Democrat and I think there ought to be a two party system," Stiles said. "I think I'm somewhere between a conservative and liberal. I try not to be an extremist either way. I'm an independent thinker. I've always been that way."

Stiles said he tries to avoid local political races where campaigning is technical College Board, the Arkansas Democratic Committee, the Second Baptist Church and trying to coordinate Bill Clinton's campaign in the county as the governor vis for president of the United States. If he has any time unscheduled, he plays golf and relaxes doing yard work.

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Trust, Stiles said, is something hard to obtain, hard to keep, and worth every minute of the task required in

"Anything you do, you have to be gaining it," Stiles said. "I never did run from the press. Regardless, I keep anything to hide."

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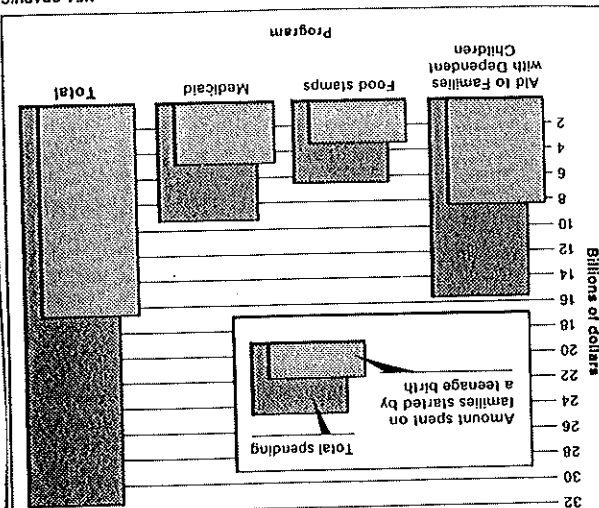
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Teenage Pregnancies How much they cost the taxpayers



Source: The Alan Guttmacher Institute

NEA GRAPHIC

Just more than half of the combined spending on three major national welfare programs in 1985 went to families who had been started when a child was born to a teenage mother.

Tucker's running ragged

By RON FOURNIER
watch on this budget while I am Governor," Tucker said.

Continued from page 1

bell telephone. On March 14 the six allegedly vandalized two county road graders parked at Boyette's Garage on County Road 36. Eight windows were reportedly broken, and the fire extinguishers taken. The same night they allegedly hurled a rock through the window of the old Central grocery store on U.S. Highway 67, Cook said. A few miles away from the store, the six allegedly threw rocks through the window of a station wagon belonging to W.L. Price.

In addition to tearing up the equipment, the six allegedly vandalized the small concrete building near Eda Road that houses the controls for the tracks. The same night the six allegedly vanditized a pickup truck belonging to men, they allegedly took the small electric heater that maintains the proper temperature inside the "hotbox," Cook said.

Also, the six are charged with breaking into Hot Spring County Jail Waste Station No. 3 in Central on last year's abduction of local teen Tyson Eftard. Meny's truck was parked at his vacant house.

Continued from page 1

hit at just the right time ... you take a chemical train or the Amtrak ... that switch could throw them off course and cause a terrible wreck."

Four times during March the six allegedly broke into the "hotbox," a small concrete building near Eda Road that houses the controls for the tracks. In addition to tearing up the equipment, the six allegedly vanditized a pickup truck belonging to men, they allegedly took the small electric heater that maintains the proper temperature inside the "hotbox," Cook said.

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Malvern Daily Record

February 18, 1994

Malvern, Arkansas 72104

35 Cents

Trustees vote to re-submit ordinance to council

By AMY PARTAIN
Staff Writer

The Ouachita Technical College Board of Trustees will be sending a half-cent sales tax ordinance back to the Malvern City Council. The board approved the ordinance again at Thursday's meeting with a vote of 6-1.

Board member Dewey Stiles was the only dissenting member of the board.

Student Government Association President Liz Pfeiffer started off the discussion of the ordinance by asking the board, on behalf of the student body, to take a revote on the ordinance and present it to the city council again.

Stiles then suggested to the board that since the city council turned down

the ordinance that the board try to get a county sales tax.

He said he had received calls from residents in the county who felt a city sales tax was unfair because they shop in the city and would have to pay a city sales tax but would not get to vote on the issue.

Board member LaNoire Dawkins Leeper asked Sen. George Hopkins if a county sales tax would be feasible.

Hopkins said there is a permanent restraining order against Hot Spring County which prohibits the quorum court and the county judge from obtaining any money for institutions, organizations, corporations or individuals.

The injunction was ordered in 1982,

Hopkins said. He said getting a county sales tax by the same method the board is approaching the city sales tax would not be feasible unless the injunction can be modified in court.

Hopkins made note of a specific statute, Act 867, that exists for technical colleges but said he is not comfortable with the constitutionality of it.

Section one of the statute states that "any county quorum court may designate all or any portion of any undedicated county sales and/or use tax to be used for capital improvements."

Section two states the quorum court can refer the issue of the tax to a vote of the people in a general or special election. Hopkins said the law has been in

effect for less than a year and there has been no court challenge to it.

He said he feels that the statute is in a "serious position of being constitutionally challenged."

Hopkins said if the board decided to try for the tax under Act 867 he would not serve as legal counsel for the board, but would try to find them someone who could do the job for them.

"I'm not willing to lead you down a path that I feel is unconstitutional," he said.

Board member Steve Faris made a motion to submit the ordinance as written to the city council again. "We as board members are not lawyers and the legal counsel for both the board and the

city council have said this ordinance, as written, would hold up in court," he said

Stiles made a substitute motion that the board try to get a county sales tax so the county residents would have a chance to vote on it. The motion died for lack of a second.

Leeper said she felt the board should pull together in support of the decision of the board had already made.

"At a special meeting the board made a decision and had a motion passed," she said. "We are a unit and each member is only one-seventh of the board. It seems to me that when the majority rules and one member is outvoted, that

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Tax

Continued from page 1
we should pull together. A decision has already been made on this and I feel we should submit it again."

Faris asked Stiles why he felt the people of the county should have a right to vote on tax issue.

Stiles said OTC has never been designated as the city of Malvern's college. He said when the legislation was passed to create OTC, it set up the college's service area as Skaine, Grant, Hot Spring, Dallas and Clark counties.

"I don't know if Malvern is big enough to support the college as it grows," Stiles said. "That is my reason. The minutes will show that at one meeting I made a motion to present the tax issue to three counties in our service area."

Dr. Ken Martin, president of the college, said one of the reasons the board is asking for a city sales tax is that over 66 percent of the college's head count lists Malvern as their city of residence. Before a vote was taken on Faris' motion, Stiles asked that the record show his opposition. He said he believed people should know what the ordinance is asking for.

"I believe there should be some way (for people) to know exactly what we are asking the city government to do," he said. "I don't think the city government should take over any part of OTC and I don't think the residents will either when they know what is involved."

In an article in the *Malvern Daily Record* on Feb. 7, Martin said he had drafted a letter to the mayor outlining the sequence of events that will take place if the tax is approved.

According to the article, the first thing that will take place is OTC will have a survey conducted to get a legal description of the land where the capital improvement will be made. After this is done, OTC will deed that property to the city of Malvern.

The city of Malvern would then lease that property to the college for 99 years under a lease-sales agreement.

The city would build the building with the funds from the tax to suit the college's needs under a tenant build to suit agreement.

The city would be able to use the facilities in the building as long as the use did not conflict with OTC's mission. Along with classrooms and science laboratories, the building would house seminar rooms and a business and industrial job training center.

At Thursday's meeting, Martin told the board he did not feel the ordinance is asking the city to support the college.

"We are not asking the city to support OTC. We are asking for a little help to get over a hurdle," he said.

Once the discussion was over, Faris restated his motion and Leeper seconded. The board took a roll call vote on the ordinance.

EDITORIAL

Battle of the bump: Trustees move ahead

Oucahita Technical College's Board of Trustees got up, dusted themselves off and came out swinging Thursday night. The board voted, 6-1, to resubmit an ordinance requesting a half-cent sales tax election in the city of Malvern.

Lone opposition came from Trustee Dewey Stiles, (a speed-bump on the road to OTC's progress), who said he felt the tax should be presented as a county-wide option. In response to Stiles comment State Sen. George Hopkins, as he had at the City Council meeting on Feb. 14, questioned the constitutionality of the state provision which allows for the funding of technical colleges through counties. Also, Hopkins noted that if Hot Spring County voters were to approve a sales tax it would take months (too late for OTC to receive matching funds from the Dept. of Higher Education) for the money to be made available due to an injunction placed against Hot Spring County in the early 1980s. This makes the feasibility of a county-wide tax minimal as well as a less desirable choice to begin with.

For this and other reasons, the board, with the exception of Stiles, stood unified in its decision to once again approach the Malvern City Council to request the election.

The council on Monday night defeated the request, thus denying the voters of Malvern the opportunity to decide the fate of the tax and that of OTC.

Since that time there has been much discussion and debate of the issue. We hope that those who were offended by the council's action that night will contact their aldermen and voice their concerns. We have included, on page 8 of today's newspaper, a map of the city's wards and the names of the aldermen representing those wards.

The aldermen will soon have the opportunity to fight a wrong committed against the people of Malvern. They will soon have the opportunity to allow the people to decide what they are or are not willing to do to see education and industry grow in this city. The road to progress should not stop or be slowed down due to a few bumps along the way.

The residents of Malvern have to clear the way for OTC's progress. It is up to the citizens of Malvern to let their views be known. If you believe, as aldermen Wayne Selph and Cynthia Marin demonstrated by their vote last Monday, the people of Malvern should have the opportunity to vote on the OTC tax proposal, contact your alderman. Last Monday's six council votes against the right of Malvern's residents to make their own choice can be and should be corrected the second time around.

The OTC board and numerous supporters proved they have not given up in this fight and neither should the citizens of Malvern. Our future is at stake.

Martin addresses state of college

By AMY PARTAIN
Staff Writer

Dr. Ken Martin, president of Ouachita Technical College, informed the board of trustees of where he felt the college stands during the board's regular meeting Thursday.

Martin began his speech by telling the board that he loves his job because of the students and faculty he works with and because he is interested in higher public education.

"We gather at these meetings in the service of the students and our community and nobody could or should be here without a deep and passionate commitment to that service," Martin said.

He said that taking into consideration the "economic dynamics of our service area," he feels OTC has made progress toward realizing its goals.

"Herein lies my personal educational and management philosophy," he said. "The experience I bring to community-based

administration has grown directly from the philosophical foundations that make OTC what it is today — an instrument for human and community betterment.

"Our college is and must continue to be the vanguard institution in recognizing the individuality of each student, whether seeking education in the liberal arts, learning new skills, satisfying newly recognized interests, retraining or preparation for promotion, or for the enrichment of leisure."

Martin said it has been by experience in almost 20 years of administration work in higher education that he has learned that many issues, some diverse, come to light sometimes manifesting themselves as being pressing and critical at that moment.

However, he said with the advances in knowledge occurring

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OTC

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the college cannot afford to be held back by the past.

"It is our moral responsibility to look to the future with all its uncertainties, challenges and opportunities. I think this is something we do with great vigor," he said.

Martin said the occasional disagreements are to be expected in this situation. "That we would each advocate a specific agenda should be relished as a challenge to our honesty of thought. That we occasionally disagree should be honored as an expression of our intertwining responsibilities. And that we would engage in enlightened discourse should be welcomed as the source of a constructive and creative tension," he said.

"These are elements of organizational behavior and are healthy so long as they are undertaken within the frame work of truth. To do otherwise would be demoralizing to the staff, unfair to the students and community, fiscally and educationally irresponsible, myopic and display an unhealthy image of dissension during the infancy of this institution."

When the vocational-technical school became a technical college, Martin said it was the opinion of the department of higher education that OTC had very little chance of fulfilling the requirements of Act 1244.

"Today we are widely recognized for our expertise and innovation," he said. "We have become the fastest growing institution of higher education in the state because we will accept no less than excellence in everything we do."

"Yes, sadly, there are those who would advocate we should demand less; that we should send forth students without the human and technical skills necessary to become productive members of society and the workforce."

In closing, Martin said OTC's future is bright. He encouraged everyone to do whatever they can "to ensure that no one or no group distracts us from that path of success."

The board also heard an update on the renovation of the old automotive service building. Martin said the college has received bids for the renovation with the lowest bid being \$92,000.

Martin said he had previously been told the renovation would cost between \$55,000 and \$60,000.

He said by making some architectural changes and some changes in dealing with one of the heating ducts the total construction cost can be trimmed down to \$73,348.

Martin said the price left him a little concerned because it does not leave much money for movable equipment like tables and chairs.

The renovation is needed since the college is short on general purpose classrooms, Martin said. Once complete, the newly renovated building will provide six new multi-purpose classrooms.

Martin said he is hoping the renovation will be completed before the fall semester begins.

When the board returned from its executive session, the members voted to accept three retirements and accept faculty reappointments.

Letters to the editor

Ph.D., president, Ouachita Technical College, objected to being called a Simple Simon. I would like to set the record straight. I did make a statement that included the words, "Simple Simon." Although I was not referring directly to any individual, Dr. Martin apparently took the statement personally and for that I apologize.

I do not believe Dr. Martin is a Simple Simon. Quite to the contrary, he must be a very smart man. Why else would the taxpayers pay him in excess of \$91,000 per year (public record) to be the president of a non-accredited technical college? By comparison, Dr. David Craig, superintendent of Malvern Schools, earns approximately \$70,000 per year and is responsible for the entire Malvern Public School System.

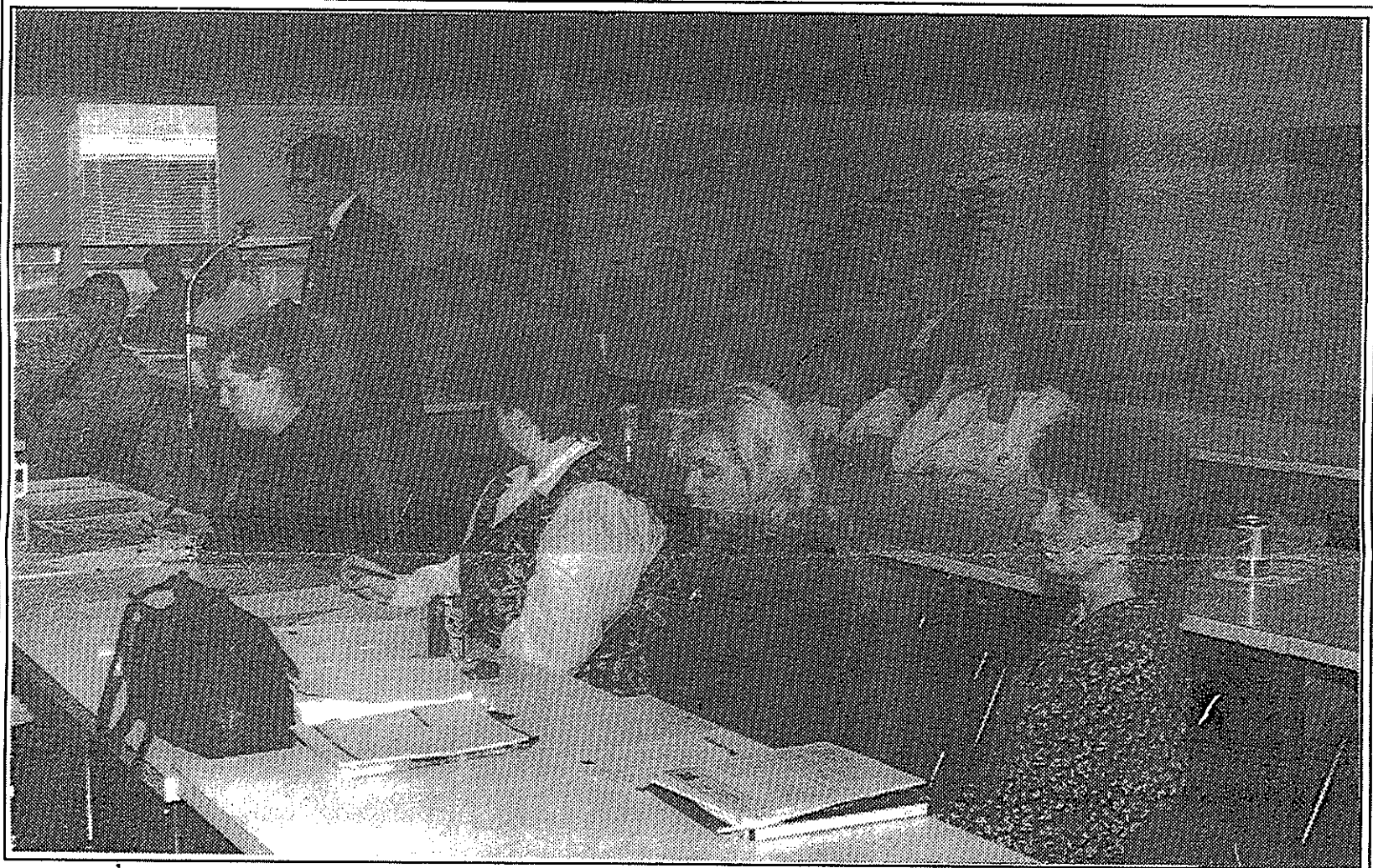
As a Malvern city councilman, it is my responsibility to represent the views of my constituency.

Elmo McCool
Malvern

'Simon says' comment not personal

To the editor:

On Feb. 15, 1994, the *Malvern Daily Record* reported that Dr. Ken Martin,



Daily Record Photo-Koch

STATE OF THE COLLEGE ADDRESS — Ouachita Technical College President Dr. Ken Martin presented a "state of the college" address to the board of trustees and others in attendance at the board's monthly meeting Thursday. Dr. Martin outlined the progress the college has made in the past year and spoke of the possibilities the future holds for OTC. One point Martin stressed was OTC's position as the fast growing institution of higher learning in the state. OTC has been recommended for

candidacy status for accreditation by the North Central Association review and evaluation committees. The college has until 1997 to gain accreditation under state law, or face a change of status or closure. The board voted Thursday to once again approach the Malvern City Council concerning a half-cent sales tax, which would fund an expansion project on the college's campus.

MALVERN DAILY RECORD

Just the facts, ma'am on OTC

The past week has been one of turmoil, debate, discussion, accusation and rumor. Ouachita Technical College's quest for a half-cent city sales tax election has everyone up in arms.

A lot of information has been presented in the newspaper, at public meetings and one-on-one. Some of it is true, some of it is a little warped from the truth and some of it is out-and-out bald-faced lies.

I don't claim to be a lawyer or a politician. My job as a newspaper editor is to disseminate information. We do our best to keep our news reports factual and objective.

Opinions are reserved for the editorial page. As a small-town newspaper, we are very community-oriented. We have spoken out in favor of the right of the people to decide whether or not OTC gets a half-cent sales tax.

We see the tax as a positive step in the right direction for the college and for Malvern.

What I want to do here, now, is present some of the facts. This information is taken directly from the ordinance presented to the city council and other written documents.

The writing of the ordinance was directed by state Sen. George Hopkins and was reviewed by City Attorney David "Mac" Glover. Both gave the ordinance their full support.

Glover, in a letter addressed to Mayor Scrimshire, stated, "the ordinance, as submitted by OTC, appears to be in strict compliance with the legislative mandate expressed in Act 25." Act 25 of 1981 established the guidelines for cities to present such proposals to the electorate.

I hope this helps clear the air about some of the questions the public may have concerning the ordinance.

First of all, the ordinance did not ask the council to approve a half-cent sales tax. The ordinance asked the council to approve a special election so that the public could determine the fate of the

tax.

The ordinance title states: "An ordinance to set a special election to submit for the approval of the electors of the City of Malvern the levy of an additional one-half of one percent local sales and use tax for a period of three years for the acquiring, constructing, and equipping of capital improvements of a public nature for a public facility."

As you can see from the title, as prescribed in the ordinance, the money collected from the tax can only be used to construct and equip the facility. None of the funds can be used to pay any of the operating costs of Ouachita Technical College. As a matter of fact, the ordinance states, "No other use of this money is authorized and any other use is



Deleisa
Bailey

Editor

strictly prohibited."

Operating costs of the college are financed through state funds allocated to the institution and tuition fees paid by the students.

The ordinance also calls for the tax funds to be used "for the acquiring, constructing and equipping of capital improvements of a public nature for a public education facility on city property on the campus of Ouachita Technical College in the City of Malvern, Arkansas."

In a letter to Mayor Bill Scrimshire, which was later passed on to the aldermen, Dr. Ken Martin, president of Ouachita Technical College, stated: "In return for a positive response by the electorate, Ouachita Technical College would agree to the following sequence of events:

A. The City of Malvern would immediately obtain an option to purchase the appropriate and necessary portion of the College's real property on which the capital improvements would be constructed. The College would provide a surveyed legal description of the area needed for the building;

B. Upon approval of the electors at the special election, the city will immediately exercise its option to purchase, acquire title to the real property in the name of the "City of Malvern" and simultaneously enter into a 99-year lease of the property back to the College, all under a Sale-Leaseback Agreement;

C. The City of Malvern would use the approved tax funds in the construction and equipping of a "build-to-suit tenant" building at the site in accordance with state approved architectural specifications provided through the College;

D. The purchase price of the land would be paid for, along with the construction of the building and the equipping of the building, by the approved tax funds; and

E. The consideration to be paid by the College to the City of Malvern for the long-term lease would be the City of Malvern's right to use these 'public education facilities' for the benefit of the city and its electors, which right of course, would be consistent with the College's primary mission."

Glover's letter also stated, "Dr. Ken Martin's Feb. 6, 1994, transmittal letter (quoted above) to you explaining the ordinance's implementation procedure... tracks the intent of Act 25."

Another point of fact is that the tax would "sunset" in three years, as stated in the title of the ordinance. College officials have stated they will not seek an extension on the tax, and if they did, it would have to be approved by the voters.

These are the facts. No opinion. No commentary. I hope they help you better understand the question at hand and make an educated decision on the matter.

Local support needed for OTC's future

Dear Editor:

Ouachita Technical College, like other public educational institutions, is funded in part by state revenues. Unfortunately, public schools cannot rely on those revenues alone. Grades kindergarten through twelve also rely on millage from their district to operate. Ouachita Technical College (Ouachita Vo-Tech) has been in Malvern for over 22 years and has never asked for nor received any local tax money for support.

Since converting to a technical college, OTC has come a long way. During this transition OTC has received praise from the State Department of Higher Education and North Central Association. The state Department of Higher Ed has recommended OTC's program degrees as models for other technical colleges throughout the state. NCA told us that our self-study was the best they had seen in their 30 years of experience. In fact, NCA was so impressed with OTC's progress that Dr. Ken Martin and Self-Study Coordinator June Prince were invited to be guest panelists at their March convention in Chicago to address the changing candidacy program. They are the only two from Arkansas invited to participate.

OTC and the community have so much at stake right now. The sales and use tax that OTC is seeking is one half of one percent for three years only and will go strictly to fund the construction of additional classrooms, science labs, library and learning resource center and to upgrade training equipment for programs. Absolutely no revenue from this tax will go to salaries, fringe, or operating expenses. All revenue will go directly to benefit OTC students. Put this in perspective, on a \$50.00 purchase the additional cost is only 26 cents. A small price to pay to secure the future of the college for our students.

I am asking the city council to please consider the future of Malvern and those of our students. By allowing the tax initiative to be placed on the ballot, the citizens of Malvern will be able to exercise their right to vote and voice their own opinion. The urgency of this issue is crucial if the college is to be eligible to receive the \$250,000.00 matching money from the state. The deadline is June 30, 1994. Should the tax be passed, OTC will immediately be eligible to receive the matching money which also will go to construction and equipment of new classrooms.

The city government and the citizens of Malvern must work together if we are going to progress and move forward to prepare the workforce for the future and a better way of life. The support of council members Cindy Marin and Wayne Seif is greatly appreciated. Whether they support the tax for OTC or not, they do understand the importance of allowing the voters Malvern the opportunity to decide the issue. I ask that the other council members please reconsider the issue and vote at next council meeting to allow the initiative to be placed on ballot so

Ouachita Technical College can continue for years to come to provide excellent training and education at an affordable cost.

Kathy Richardson
Coordinator of Development
and Community Outreach
Ouachita Technical College

OTC prepares students for job market

Dear Sir:

This is a plea for the future of Malvern. I have been the automotive instructor for Ouachita Technical College for seven years, and I have been teaching for 10 years. I transferred to Ouachita from another school because, after a visit to this area, I fell in love with it. I have never regretted the move and I am proud to call Malvern my home.

I chose this profession not for money, but because I had graduated through an Arkansas vocational program and I thought that teaching people to be successful technicians had to be one of the most noble vocations a person could choose.

Education is vital to virtually everyone regardless of their position in life. I chose a technical field because, at the time, I had no interest in college. Other people may choose education, business, medical, or some other area for their own reasons. Ouachita Technical College offers opportunities to this area that most towns in Arkansas do not have. This school has helped many people in this area to get jobs that they otherwise would not have. I have no doubt that nearly everyone recognizes the accomplishments of the school. I really believe that the majority of citizens in this area support the school and want to keep it going.

Our mission as a college has changed some from a vocational school to a technical college, but not really that much. My job is still to prepare students for employment in the automotive field. The main difference in our program is the general education requirements which includes some college courses. I know that people are concerned that the college is getting away from its original objective of preparing people for employment and now emphasizing general education. I see students every semester that are unable to read and understand service manuals even though they may be high school graduates. The reason is that many of today's service manuals are written above the twelfth grade level. A representative from Ford Motor Company told me last summer that their manuals were written on a sixteenth grade level (Bachelor's Degree). Whether we like it or not, technology has progressed to the point that in order to be successful we must have reading, math, and critical thinking skills that will enable us to cope with the changing technology. I think now, what our goal really is, TO PREPARE PEOPLE FOR LIFE.

Change is not always readily accepted or understood, but if we close our minds completely to change then we would still be plowing with horses and listening to the Razorbacks on the radio. We should not let personal prejudices, opinions, or other persons cloud our judgments or influence

our decisions. We should always be willing to listen to all sides of issues and base our decisions solely on what is best for everyone involved. If we do that then we will almost always make the right decision.

I think the city council and Ouachita Technical College's Board both have the best interest of Malvern and the school in their heart. Let's not allow the mudslinging and differences of opinion to elevate to a level that will result in consequences that could adversely affect the future of our community. Opposing views of any issue is usually healthy and all concerns should be investigated fully by everyone involved. It is the future of our community that is at stake, please don't punish our children for personal reasons. There is a place for general and technical education and Ouachita Technical College can provide both.

Sincerely,
Adrian Ashley
Automotive Instructor
Ouachita Technical College

LETTERS

Malvern Daily Record, Friday, February 25, 1994

MALVERN DAILY RECORD

LETTERS

Change is necessary for success

To the editor: There is one constant in the universe: Change. The society in which many of us lived twenty years ago, or even ten, is drastically different from what we face today and certainly from what we will encounter as we enter the 21st century.

The breathtaking advances in technology and the incredibly competitive atmosphere of a global economy demands that all productive citizens: (1) become capable of achieving a higher level of skills; (2) develop an ability to adapt to changing situations; and (3) perfect their capacity to work well with all types of individuals.

Diversity of opinions and ideas must be welcomed and even cherished. Even with the idealistic notion of complete harmony of thought, it is dangerous — if not disastrous — to cling to the old cliché of "But we've always done it this way!"

We cannot be prisoners of our own past; we must accept change if we are to advance. I challenge the local citizens to read the many publications which are available at your local library or college which set forth clear directives regarding the need for progressive change in our society.

I close with a quote from Albert Einstein: "Everything has changed but our ways of thinking, and if these do not change we drift toward unparalleled catastrophe."

Dr. Susan Azbel,
Vice President and Dean
for Instructional and
Student Affairs
Ouachita Technical College

Rights of county voters ignored

To the editor: Did I hear Ron Causay, publisher of this newspaper, say anyone who would deny the public the "right to choose" was an embarrassment? Did I hear Ken Martin, president of Ouachita Technical College, say anyone who denied the public the "right to choose" was "unethical"? Then Dr. Martin, I suggest you review the application of your legal representative in the tax issue, lawyer-Senator George Hopkins. For the past year and a half, lawyer-Senator Hopkins has led the fight to "overturn" the term limit amendment which over 60 percent of Arkansas voters chose to approve. Lawyer-Senator Hopkins prefers that a panel of six lawyer-judges decide what's best for us, rather than 500,000 voters. Dr. Martin, surely you will not continue to use the services of an "unethical" lawyer, by your own standards.

And how about the six Ouachita Technical College board members who want to "deny the right to choose," to the county residents? Alderman Elmo McCool made a very interesting point, that although Dr. Martin claims the majority of students are from

several courses there since it was established.

I truly believe the college and all of its staff are a valuable and essential part of our community and I sincerely want to see it continue to grow.

However, OTC needs to heed the "speed bumps" and quit trying to avoid them like a speeding motorist. Slow down. Proceed with caution.

Sincerely,
Judy Butler
Rt. 8, Malvern

Support voiced for 2 aldermen

Letter To the Editor: We, the Adult Education Department of Ouachita Technical College, would like to give our sincere thanks to Council members Cynthia Marin and Wayne Selph for their "yes" vote of February 14, 1994, concerning Ouachita Technical College. A decision from the Council to allow Ouachita Technical College to take this issue to the citizens of Malvern would have been a "yes" vote for progress for this community, for industry, and for the college.

Ouachita Technical College is not trying to become a Liberal Arts College. We feel that Malvern needs a college to enable the citizens of Malvern and Hot Spring County a place that is close to home for higher education. Yes, we have Henderson, Ouachita Baptist, UALR, UABP, and other colleges that are within commuting distance; however, many working citizens are unable to spend the time necessary to drive the distance to these facilities. Many of the students who attend OTC not only work a full-time job, but also have a family. OTC allows these people the chance to attend college. Additionally, it was the citizens in this community who wanted a technical college located in Malvern.

We feel that OTC is beneficial to this community. Industries, when looking for a community to locate that is within the area before making the decision to move to that area. They check the community to see if the people are willing to work together for the common cause. When the issue of the 1/2 cent sales tax goes before the Malvern City Council again, we hope that the members of the Council will think long and hard about these concerns and give OTC, Malvern, and the entire community the chance to progress and grow.

Again, we thank Ms. Marin and Mr. Selph for wanting to give the College and City of Malvern that opportunity.
Sincerely,
Zelma Jones
Brenda Keisler
Jan Robertson
Rhonda Stroud
David Tuten
Ouachita Technical College
Adult Education
Department

Majority vote applauded by letter writer

To the editor: As a resident of Hot Spring County, I would like to thank the six Malvern city council members who voted against the OTC ordinance February 14, 1994. Perhaps now the OTC will go to the Hot Spring County Quorum Court to request this tax increase as required by Arkansas State Law Act 867-1993, and I, too, will have the opportunity to vote.

Contrary to the *Malvern Daily Record's* viewpoint that the council's actions were an "embarrassment", I applaud their actions. They did not "veto" the public's right to decide on a tax increase; rather, they forced the OTC to put this issue before ALL of the voters of HSC, not just a select few, allowing a broader segment of the public to have a voice regarding a tax increase.

The OTC service area includes five counties: Hot Spring, Clark, Dallas, Saline and Grant. This means all qualified residents of these counties may attend OTC. This is an issue that should be addressed by all five counties. On April 2, 1993, Governor Jim Guy Tucker signed into law, Act 867-1993, a bill that provides for the funding of technical colleges. This law clearly authorizes the voters and/or the Quorum Court to provide funding for technical colleges with a county sales tax. This law is brief (less than 2 pages) and I dare the *Malvern Daily Record* to publish it in its entirety so the citizens of Malvern can decide for themselves whether the council's actions were embarrassing or whether they chose not to get involved in an inevitable legal battle over an ordinance that is at best 97 percent legal, according to attorney Sen. George Hopkins.

The MDR quoted Dr. Ken Martin, "There was not supposed to be a college here, but the people of the community got together with Sen. Hopkins to get one here. This college is here because the community wanted it here." Who are the people of the community? I do not recall an election or petition of the voters.

A select few people of the community decided the Vo-Tech School should be changed to a college without informing the rest of the community. Along with the change from Vo-Tech to Technical College came the responsibility of raising additional taxes to support the college. I would like to ask Sen. Hopkins, "Who in the community asked to change our fully State-supported Vo-Tech School to a technical college that requires local tax support? Have a few individuals put our technical college in jeopardy of possibly closing, leaving the community without a college or a Vo-Tech school?"

You deserve to know who Sen. Hopkins is talking to and why this tax increase is being pushed down your throat.

Let me reassure all of the diligent members of the Malvern City Council. Had you passed OTC's 97 percent legal ordinance that small 3 percent illegal part would have haunted you for months to come. Should you change your minds and vote for the special election be prepared for your actions to be tested in court!!!

Robert L. McCool
Rt. 8, Malvern

Malvern Daily Record

February 24, 1994

Malvern, Arkansas 72104

35 Cents

Municipal League opinion raises questions

By S. KOCH
Staff Writer

A letter from the Arkansas Municipal League to a city alderman states that the legality of the Ouachita Technical College tax ordinance may be in question, but the drafters of the ordinance say it isn't so.

William G. Fleming, counsel of the Arkansas Municipal League, an organization that represents 489 Arkansas cities, said in a letter to Alderman Elmo McCool dated Feb. 22, "On October 11, 1983 the people of Malvern authorized a

maximum of 1% sales tax, see A.C.A. 26-75-207. Since the maximum 1% sales tax is now being collected in Malvern no additional tax under this law can be voted by the people of Malvern. A.C.A. 14-164-338 permits cities and towns to vote for capitol improvement without a bond issue for a maximum of 24 months."

The ordinance asking for a special election for OTC would place a half-cent sales tax on the city for 36 months.

McCool said in a statement given to this reporter: "Beginning on Feb. 15,

the *Malvern Daily Record*...has questioned the reasoning abilities of the council, accused us of being against progress...and attacked the individual members by inferring that they are stupid, even publishing a cartoon portraying us as stooges.

"I wish to address only the issue of the proposed OTC ordinance, its legality. The citizens of Malvern should know that their city pays \$16,000 per year to belong to the Municipal League of Arkansas, an organization that...(provides) them legal guidance in conducting

city business."

However, the real tale of the tape will be decided by Attorney General Winston Bryant.

Sen. George Hopkins, drafter of the proposed ordinance, said he too is waiting for an opinion from the Attorney General's office, and the letter from the Municipal League "is much ado about nothing. The reality is the Municipal League has failed to recognize changes in the law. I'd like to see the amount of time and research (Fleming) used in his approach. If he is correct, then several

municipalities are in trouble with the law. I believe the opinion is based upon an old amendment."

Executive Director of the Arkansas Municipal League Don Zimmerman said "Malvern is proceeding cautiously, and that's the wisest thing. (Hopkins has) a pretty good argument — and I hope he's right. The bigger problem is that of the (Arkansas) Constitution" and its antiquated laws, Zimmerman said. "If the people had passed new constitutions

Please see TAX, page 10

Tax

Continued from page 1
decades ago, (Malvern) wouldn't have these problems."

The people of the state voted down new constitutions in 1970 and 1980.

Hopkins said he was informed by Ed Hicks of the Sales Tax Division in the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration that several municipalities have passed more than one sales tax under Arkansas Code 26-74-207, and at least one city has passed four.

"Unless these other cities are operating illegally under 207, then we can do it, too," Hopkins

said.

A copy of a facsimile sent to Hopkins from the State of Arkansas Bureau of Legislative Research Senior Staff Attorney David Ferguson was sent to the *Malvern Daily Record* office today by Hopkins.

The fax read in part: "(Ferguson) believe(s) the intent was to authorize a city to levy either a 0.25%, 0.5%, 0.75%, or 1% tax. The list of tax rates are joined together by the word 'or.' The word 'or' normally functions to show an alternative," Ferguson wrote.

"I think it likely," he continued, "that the intent of the amendment was to allow the one tax to be levied at a rate of less than 1 percent. Although I think the language allows only one tax,

I cannot rule out the possibility that the section could be interpreted as allowing a city to levy more than one tax," Hopkins said. "And several have."

Malvern Mayor Bill Scrimshire, who received a copy of McCool's letter, said, "we all have all sorts of different opinions. I'm going to wait on the — I think they're working on — the Attorney General's opinion. I'm sure there's a way to do it, to move forward with this thing and find something we can hang our hat on. Exactly where we are today, I don't know. I respect the opinions of the attorneys working on this. I've always had a positive attitude towards the school. I'm sure there is a way we can get local financing for our school out there."

MALVERN
DAILY
RECORD

LETTERS

**Council's vote
appreciated
by Erwins**

To the editor:

We appreciate the Malvern City Council's vote concerning the Ouachita Technical College. We don't need the expense of a special election.

We believe the OTC should be financially supported by state taxes because it is available to anyone in the state, not just to Malvern citizens.

We would like to know the per-

centage of students that are from the city of Malvern.

Fred Erwin, Glenda Erwin,
Everett Erwin and Nathau
Erwin
Malvern

**Remarks
criticized**

To the city council:

Pay no attention to ill-mannered remarks about you. Remember they cast doubts on the character of the speaker, not on yours.

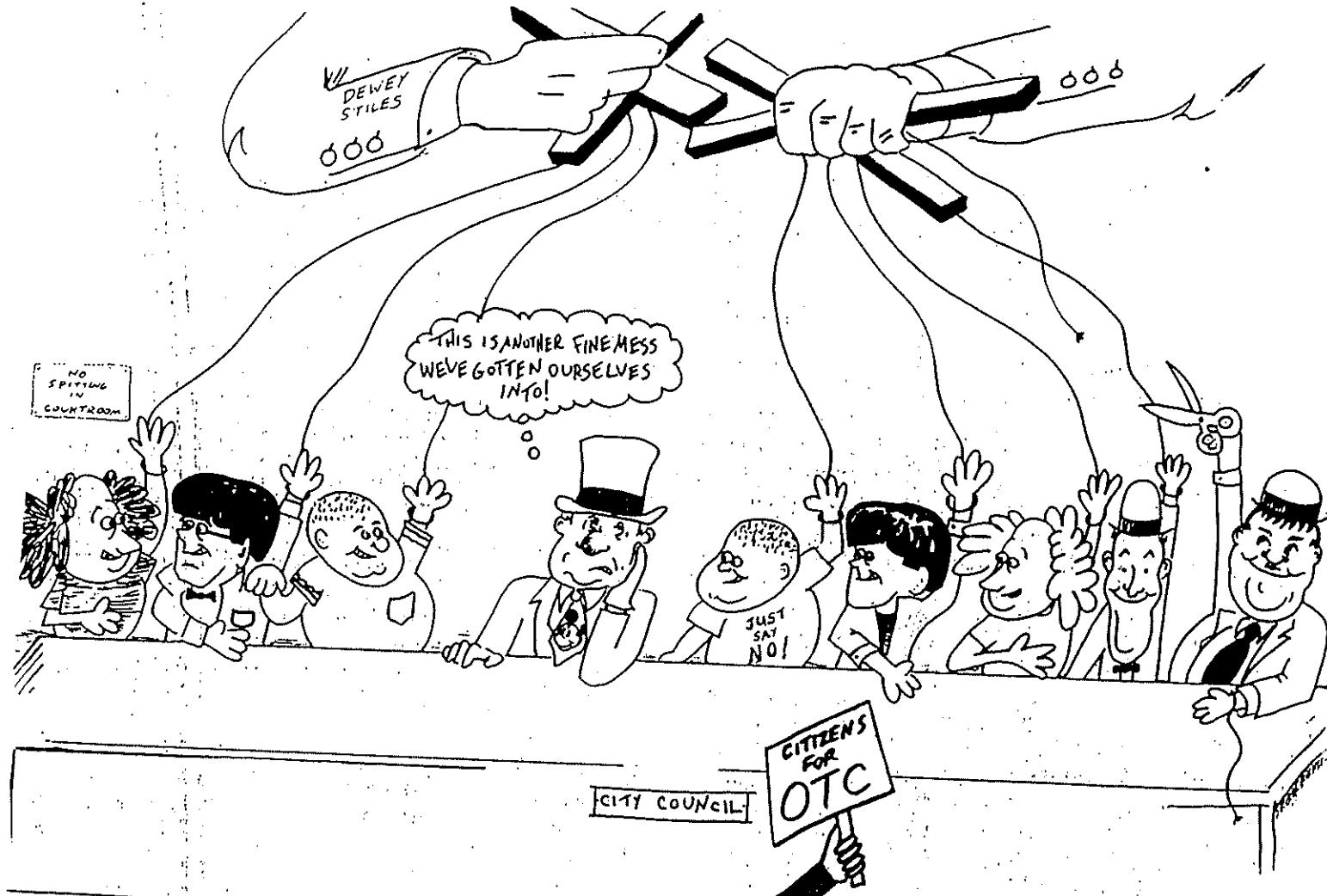
Joan Loe
Malvern

Basketball game

• A benefit basketball game for the Ouachita Technical College Nursing Program will be held at 7 p.m. in the Malvern High School Gym. Cost is \$2 for adults and \$1 for children and children under 5 free. Door prizes will be given away during halftime. A three-point shot contest will be held with a \$3 entrance fee. A prize of \$25 will be given to the winner.

Malvern Daily Record, Tuesday, February 22, 1994

MALVERN DAILY RECORD



Malvern Daily Record

February 23, 1994

Malvern, Arkansas 72104

35 Cents

County tax would require court modifications

By AMY PARTAIN
Staff Writer

With the growing debate over the special election to consider the half-cent sales tax Ouachita Technical College has proposed, many of those opposed to the city sales tax are calling for the tax to be county-wide.

State Sen. George Hopkins, who is serving as legal counsel for the college, said in his opinion a county-wide sales tax is not possible.

According to Seventh Judicial District Prosecuting Attorney Dan Harmon, one reason a county tax is impossible is that an injunction, or consent order, prohibiting the county from funding projects like the one OTC is asking for was placed against the county in 1982.

Harmon said "it appears it would have to be modified" for a county tax to be possible.

Hopkins said if the quorum court passed a sales tax for OTC with the

injunction in place, the members of quorum court could be held in contempt of court.

"They have already been told they couldn't do it. Then they were told not to do it," Hopkins said. "If they did it now they would not only jeopardize what they are working for, but they could be held in contempt and fined or jailed. That is not something you want to happen to your elected officials."

If the injunction was contested and

there was any opposition to it, Hopkins said, there would not be time for OTC to receive its matching funds.

"If the plaintiff (in the original case) still lives in Hot Spring County and agrees to modify the injunction, it could happen quickly," he said.

County governments are included in the provision in the Arkansas constitution prohibiting local governments from becoming stockholders in private corporations or institutions.

The provisions states, "No county, city, town or other municipal corporation shall become a stockholder in any company, association or corporation; or obtain or appropriate money for, or loan its credit to, any corporation, association, institution or individual."

Hopkins said if only the constitutional provision existed, the county sales tax would be possible if it was done in

Please see COUNTY, page 10

County

Continued from page 1

the same way OTC is approaching the city tax. The county could purchase the land from OTC, build the new facility, then lease the property back to OTC.

Many people believe the county could give the money directly to OTC, Hopkins said, but even without the injunction that would not be possible.

Hopkins said there is a state law, Act 867, which states quorum courts or voters can dedicate all or a portion of a county sales tax to support a technical college.

He said he questions the constitutionality of the law. Hopkins said the attorney who helped write the legislation tried very hard not to violate the constitutional provision. Even so, Hopkins wonders about the law.

"Without a specific court decision on it, I'm not sure it is constitutional," he said.

Hopkins' questions led him to ask for Attorney General Winston Bryant's opinion on the law. "On Friday I requested the attorney general give an opinion on the legality of this legislation," he said.

The worst possible outcome, Hopkins said, is that everyone pulls together to get a county tax passed only to have the law challenged and never reap the benefits of the hard work.

"If it was challenged, a lot of hard work and time would be lost," he said. "I'm not willing to believe and follow the latest legislation passed when I think it is subject to be challenged."

Some have questioned why Hopkins voted for a piece of legislation that he feels might be unconstitutional. Hopkins said in trying to make the state a better place, the Legislature passes many bills that might be unconstitutional.

"There is an area that we know is constitutional and there is one we know is definitely not constitutional," Hopkins said. "Then there is this large gray area, and in order to accomplish

things we often work in that gray area."

He said he feels if the other legislators are willing to try it, he should let them create the law because it might turn out fine.

Hopkins said he has not explored the county tax issue in as much depth as he has the city tax issue.

"I'm acting as an attorney and trying to help my clients achieve what they want," he said. "They wanted to try for the city tax so that is what I have been working on."

Hopkins said Harmon said he is planning to meet with the quorum court at its next meeting to

discuss the injunction.

Harmon said he feels the injunction should be modified. "It started with volunteer fire departments," he said. "It knocks them out of state funds available to the volunteer fire departments. Departments in Hot Spring County can't participate."

When asked how he would advise the quorum court to act with the situation as it stands now, Harmon said he would steer the court away from considering a county sales tax.

"They can't (act) right now unless some modification is made in that consent order," he said.

MALVERN
DAILY
RECORD

LETTER

OTC sales tax spells progress

To the citizens of Malvern:

Let's try to get back to the issue at hand. That issue is the one-half cent sales tax proposal to upgrade OTC (Ouachita Technical College). Attacking each other and clouding the issue with personal vendettas will not help solve our problems.

I personally believe that education is progress. This is the very best thing money can buy. We have the chance to do something wonderful for Malvern, so for once, let's quit fussing and fighting and do it.

I live in the county and shop in the city. I would be proud to know that at

least one-half cent from my sales tax goes to improve an already great school.

I have talked to several city council members: Elmo McCool, Shirley Moore and Larry Stiles. They have their own agenda for the city council, in other words, they plan on asking for the money, but they have in mind other uses. These are valid projects, but certainly not more important than the advantages of upgrading OTC. I guess this means our priority list is very different.

Why not let the citizens of Malvern speak for themselves. Let Malvern do something positive for everyone's future. Please don't let this issue fall through the legal and political cracks of small town government. Upgrading OTC can only enhance other improvements the city council has in mind for Malvern. Let's do what is good for the town of Malvern.

Sheila Kelly
Malvern

**MALVERN
DAILY
RECORD**

EDITORIAL

Hopkins follows wishes of board

State Sen. George Hopkins is taking some heat for the role he is playing in Ouachita Technical College's effort to have a half-cent sales tax passed in Malvern.

Some have accused Sen. Hopkins of recommending to the OTC Board of Trustees that they pursue a city sales tax over a county sales tax. This is not true.

Sen. Hopkins, who also practices law in Malvern, stepped in to offer his legal assistance to OTC in this effort after the board had already voted, 6-1, to pursue a city sales tax over a county sales tax.

Sen. Hopkins offered his expertise as a lawyer and lawmaker to aid the college in penning an ordinance to present to the Malvern City Council that would be legal and at the same time meet the college's needs.

Since that time he has found himself in the midst of quite a controversial issue and acting as counselor to the college's board of trustees. He has answered legal questions when asked, and researched the answers when necessary. He has done nothing but offer his sound legal advice.

Sen. Hopkins became involved in this issue because he wanted to do the right thing — as a state senator, as a lawyer and as a concerned citizen of Malvern and Hot Spring County.

Sen. Hopkins has acted according to the wishes of the majority of the Board of Trustees of Ouachita Technical College. He has offered his services to the college in the most professional manner. That is not something for which he should be criticized.

There seems to be a misconception pervading the thoughts and arguments of some aldermen and their constituents. That misconception is that the OTC Board of Trustees and Sen. Hopkins are trying to do something to the citizens of Malvern.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. The board with Sen. Hopkins' assistance is trying to do something for Malvern's citizens today and those of the future.

The direction in which education starts a man will determine his future life

PLATO

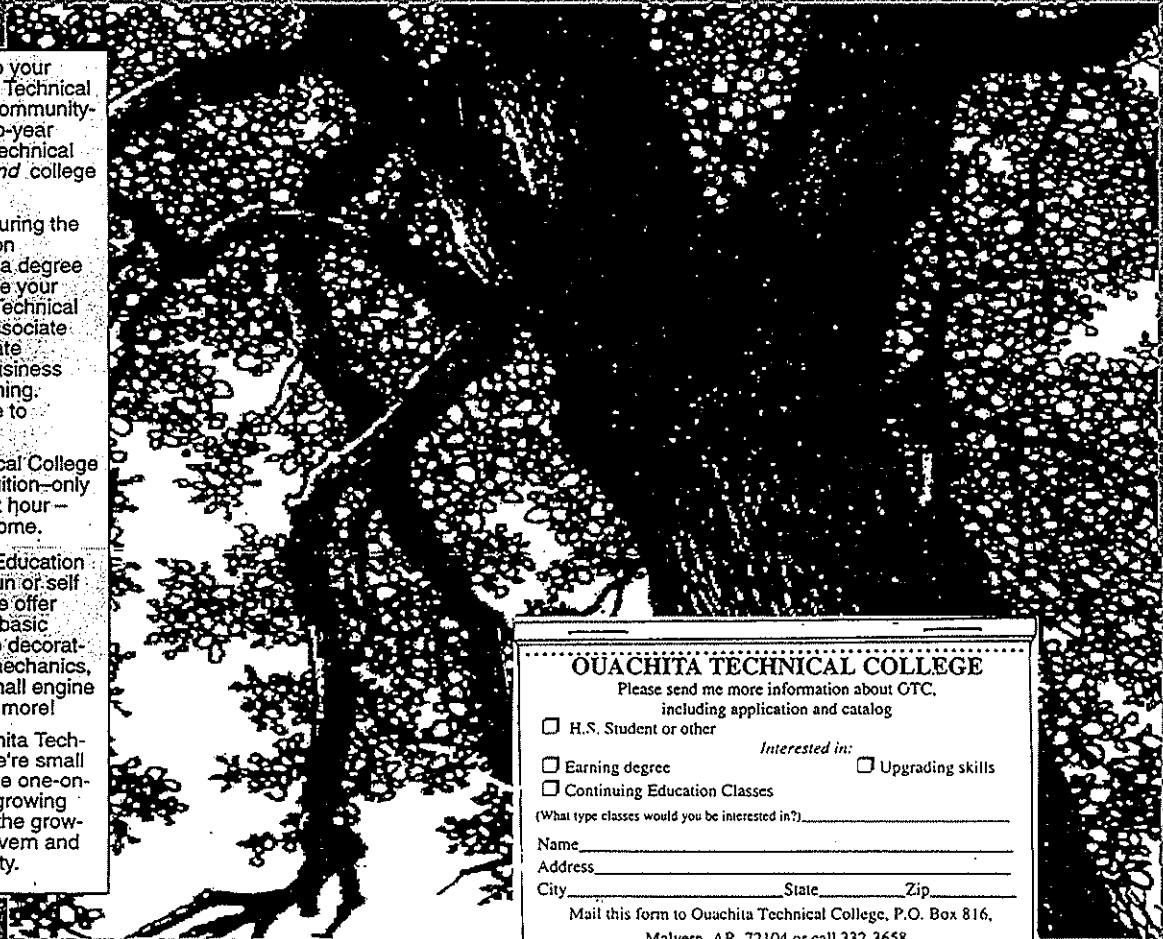
Looking ahead to your future? Ouachita Technical College is your community-based, public two-year college offering technical career training and college transfer courses.

Attend classes during the day, evening or on Saturdays. Earn a degree or simply upgrade your skills. Ouachita Technical College offers associate degrees, certificate programs and business and industry training. It's never too late to improve.

Ouachita Technical College offers low cost tuition—only \$34.25 per credit hour—and is close to home.

Our Continuing Education classes are for fun or self improvement. We offer classes such as basic investment, cake decorating, basic auto mechanics, photography, small engine repair and much more!

Check out Ouachita Technical College. We're small enough to provide one-on-one contact but growing enough to meet the growing needs of Malvern and Hot Spring County.



OUACHITA TECHNICAL COLLEGE
Please send me more information about OTC,
including application and catalog

H.S. Student or other

Interested in: Earning degree Upgrading skills
 Continuing Education Classes

(What type classes would you be interested in?) _____

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail this form to Ouachita Technical College, P.O. Box 816,
Malvern, AR 72104 or call 332-3658

Re-educating workers is top priority

By MICHELLE GILLHAM
Staff Writer

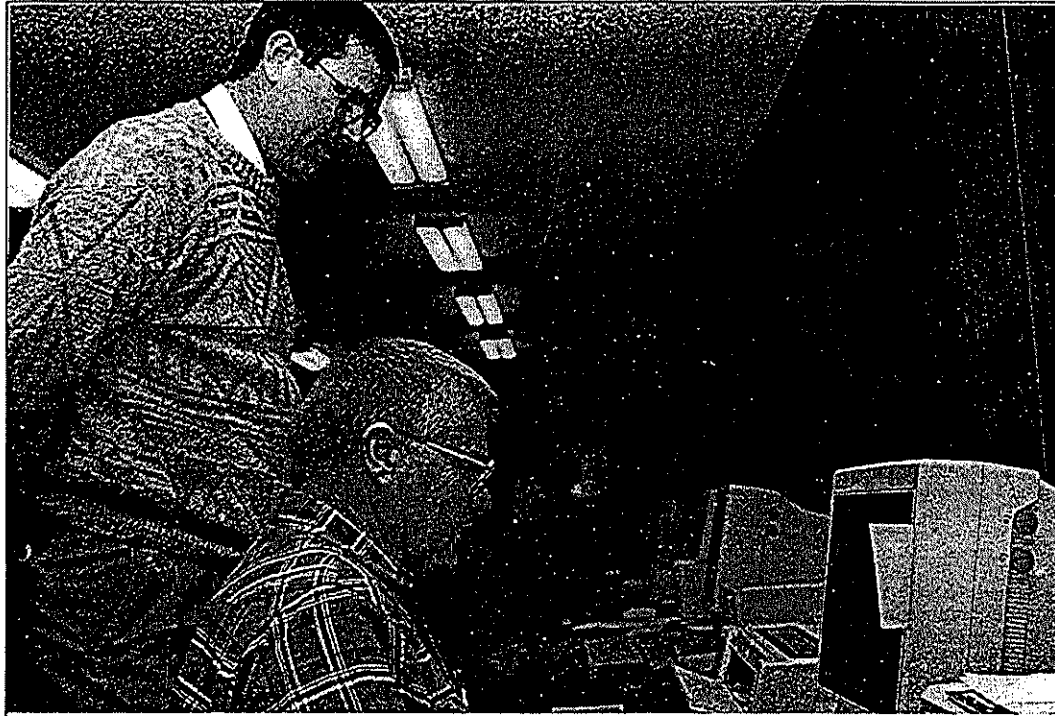
The loss of a job can leave a person disheartened, disappointed, depressed and feeling hopeless, but with the aid of a newly developed program at Ouachita Technical College, dislocated workers can take back their lives to move onward and upward.

OTC's Dislocated Worker Program boasts three goals which, if accomplished, should make the student more valuable in the job market. Director Frank Opitz works toward the goals of ensuring each student has the right skills and knowledge to remain employed in the future, ensuring each student understands how to prepare for re-employment and ensuring the student has an understanding of business skills so he is more valuable to an employer.

Opitz communicates regularly with the adult education center and remedial teachers so as not to duplicate anything. "I find where they're at and build on skills each student already has."

Each task a student performs is a learning experience — a building block, Opitz says. To give an introduction to basic computer skills, students play games on the computers, write a resume or write a research paper for another class. By doing this, Opitz says the students receive hands-on training that improves their typing skills, "gets their hands on the computer" and helps in other classes as well.

Later, the students are taught job-search skills to help them feel better about themselves. Utilizing his own life skills, Opitz falls back on training he gave and received while in the army. "I tell them the story of the sparrow and the snake," Opitz chuckles,



Daily Record Photo-Gillham

Frank Opitz (standing) provides students with guidance and the freedom to learn on their own.

explaining his method of teaching professionalism in an interview. "The sparrow is mesmerized by the snake," and gets eaten. Opitz encourages his students to be the snake rather than the sparrow, and teaches that to do so, the person must be so prepared that the interviewer is mesmerized.

It is the teacher's hope that when his students leave class they "feel a little higher — pumped up — about their ability to succeed.

"The key to this class (is that it

is) designed for the students. I'll be here for them. They have my home phone number and if they have a project that is just eating them up, I'll come up and help them with it.

"They need to succeed. They don't need to be trod over. They need help, guidance, mentoring, compassion, an understanding ear and someone to go to bat for them."

Admittedly, the dislocated worker program takes longer than it would if taught different-

ly. However, Opitz says this is a plus. "I am here to reinforce what they do right. Let them make mistakes, talk to them, tell them how to back out of a mistake and reinforce what they do correctly."

Students selected to enter the program must meet certain criteria, including qualification under Title III of the Job Training Partnership Act and certification by either the JTPA representative or the Employment Security Division.

Opitz himself works under the direction of Dr. Ken Martin, OTC president; Phyllis Johnson, director at Vocational Technical Department in Little Rock; and David Moore, JTPA West Central in Hot Springs.

The three have given Opitz "the freedom to create, grow and serve the students."

At the beginning of the program for a new student, Opitz orients the student with computers before moving into the building of a business plan in the second semester. "This is part of

the plan to make (the students) more valuable to prospective employers. If they understand flow and requirements of business paperwork, the 'bottom line' and how managers reach and make determinations on the bottom line — automatically they should be able to translate into skills by which they can help the employer."

The range of the program is unlimited, offering students building blocks to the knowledge they already possess. Opitz uses a welder as an example. "A welder needs math skills for measurements, does math formulas to ensure size and fit — has to ensure the safety. Say he wants to go in to his own business, students don't think about other skills needed like what it takes to own a business, rental property, pay bills, having your own employees and taking care of them.

"If you have these skills, you are more likely to be successful. You need a good business plan. You may not have a lot of collateral, but have an excellent business plan that seems workable, marketable, you may get a loan anyway."

Courses of action in the program are likened to a train station by Opitz. "We find what track best suits your needs and we pull the right switches. A lot of the needs are the same — run on parallel track. That's where you have classroom teaching. Then, individual teaching in the places the paths do not cross."

Although good test scores are always a plus, Opitz admits, "I am looking at the long term, not that 100 on a test, but when they call five years from now and tell me they've changed (jobs) twice either laterally or up. Job skills for a lifetime are what we are doing here."

Ouachita undergoes growth explosion

By AMY PARTAIN
Staff Writer

Enrollment at Ouachita Technical College is on the rise, according to information from the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. OTC saw a 47.8 percent increase in the fall 1993 semester over the fall 1992 semester.

Maybe more impressive though is the percentage of increase this semester of the fall semester, said Dr. Ken Martin, president of OTC.

"We had a 16 percent increase this semester over last semester," Martin said. "It is almost unheard of for a college to have an increase in enrollment in the spring semester."

Enrollment for this spring semester jumped 20 percent over the spring semester 1993.

According to the statistics from the department of higher education, OTC had the fourth highest increase in enrollment in the technical college category in the state. Martin said the statistics were somewhat deceptive since two of the top four schools have already received candidacy status from North Central Accreditation.

"Black River and Ozarka (Technical Colleges) have already take over the general education program from their senior institutions," he said.

This means those colleges are able to include the students who are enrolled in the general education program in their enrollment head count, where institutions that have not yet taken over the program cannot count those students.

Black River Technical College and Ozarka Technical College were numbers one and two in enrollment increase. Cossatot Technical College had the third

highest increase in enrollment and has not taken over the general education requirements.

Martin said people can expect to see an enrollment increase of about 100 percent when these figures come out next year. "Next year this time you will see OTC with the biggest increase in enrollment," Martin said.

The reason for this is that once OTC is granted candidacy status from NCA it will take over the general education program from Henderson State University. Martin said he expects to take over the program in the summer since OTC is anticipating gaining candidacy status this month.

Martin said there are approximately 300 students enrolled in HSU general education classes at OTC this spring. When OTC takes over this program, it will double the college's enrollment.

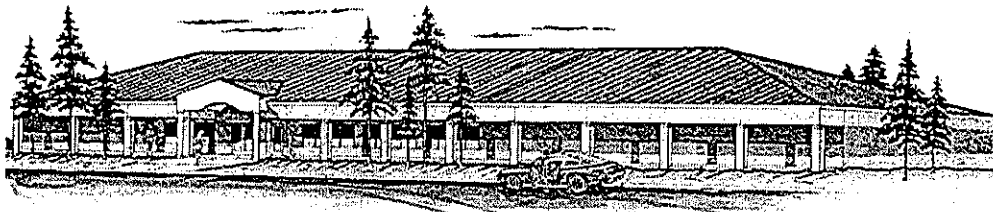
"Cossatot has around 100 students in their senior institutions general education program," Martin said. "It will be a bigger increase for us when we take over the program, than it will for Cossatot."

A surge of part-time students helps to account for the current increase in enrollment. Martin said when he took the job as president in August 1992 the college had no students attending only part time.

He said the change in scheduling has allowed students to take only one class if that is what they need and that now the enrollment is almost split 50-50 between full-time students and part-time students.

Martin said OTC's future is unbounded.

"Our opportunities are limitless," he said. "We are only limited by our imagination."



An architect's drawing displays how the proposed building expansion at OTC will look.

OTC faces accreditation

Continued from page 2

will meet and decide on whether to grant candidacy status to OTC later this month.

At the review committee's conference, OTC was praised for the thorough self-study done before the evaluation team visited last year. Martin said one committee chairman said OTC's self-study was the "best we've ever seen." According to Martin, the chairman encouraged other schools to get copies of the self-study as an example of how they should be done.

Part of meeting the NCA criteria means improving facilities on campus. The board of trustees has asked the Malvern City Council to call a special election so a proposed half-cent sales tax can go before the voters. The sales tax would raise money to fund a capital building and capital equipment project.

Phase one of the the building project includes construction of an academic/learning resources complex. The complex would include a learning resource center and library, career counseling and assessment center, science laboratories and additional classrooms.

Martin said the new complex would not only help the college meet the NCA criteria, but would also help the college better serve the community.

The architectural firm of Black, Corley and Owens in Benton estimated the academic/learning resources complex will cost \$1,580,000 and a parking lot to accompany the building will cost \$90,000. Total costs of

phase one of the building project would be \$1,650,000.

The NCA evaluation committee did note that OTC needed better learning resources, especially library facilities, and equipment to accomplish its mission.

The sales tax would also qualify OTC for money from a matching fund set up for technical colleges. Martin said a state-wide corporate sales tax, called Workforce 2000, was established to raise money for those institutions wanting to become technical colleges under Act 1244. He said the money from the tax was divided up between the technical colleges to upgrade libraries and buy some equipment.

As part of the Workforce 2000 fund, Martin said up to \$250,000 was set aside for each technical college to be used for capital improvement projects and capital building projects.

Martin said to get the money in this fund each college must raise matching funds. For example, if a college raises \$100,000 they will receive only \$100,000 from the Workforce 2000 matching fund. The money left over from those institutions that do not meet the \$250,000 will be redistributed among those technical colleges who went over the limit.

According to Martin, the deadline to meet the matching funds was originally set for June 30, 1993, but was extended by the Arkansas Legislature to June 1995. However, the state Board of Higher Education moved the cut off date up to June 30, 1994.

Martin said the deadline was moved up so that the board would have more time to redistribute funds to the technical colleges who have reached the limit.

To date OTC has raised between \$115,000 and \$120,000 for the matching fund.

The sales tax would automatically give

ante that OTC will receive all of the matching funds and would qualify them for money that will be redistributed, Martin said.

The school is asking for the sales tax to be put in place for three years. Martin said the tax would raise around \$1.5 million dollars in the time period.

"We promise that not one penny of this money will go for operational expenses," he said. "It will strictly be used for capital building and capital improvement."

Martin said the state identified the building OTC needs to continue to provide a quality education and to meet NCA standards. He said there is no state money available for capital building, so the school will have to get the money somewhere else.

An economic impact study showed that by the year 2000 Ouachita Technical College would bring between \$41 million and \$42 million into the city of Malvern.

"We are asking for \$1.5 million to return \$41 million to the city. That is including both direct and indirect impact," Martin said. "That is a substantial amount in six years."

Martin said OTC has until June 1997 to become fully accredited with NCA and it will be 1995 before the evaluation team visits the campus again. There has to be two years between visits.

If OTC fails to become accredited after the next team visit they will only have one more chance to try for accreditation before the limit runs out.

"We would rather be prepared next time the team visits, than be under the gun if we have to wait two more years," he said.

If OTC fails to get accredited by 1997, the future of the institution is uncertain. However, Martin said the state law says that if accreditation does not occur by the deadline the institution ceases to be a technical college.

College status brings many changes

By AMY PARTAIN
Staff Writer

In the years since 1991, a lot of changes have occurred for Ouachita Technical College. The technical college came into existence on July 1, 1991. Up until this time the institution had been a vocational-technical school.

This change is what has led to growth for Ouachita Technical College, according to Dr. Ken Martin, president of OTC.

As a technical college, OTC is now seeking accreditation through North Central Accreditation, which is based in Chicago.

Martin said accreditation is a measure of quality for an education institution. "It is an important way to lend legitimacy to what we do," he said. "A level of quality is assumed if we reach accreditation."

Martin said accreditation gives students the guarantee on the transferability of most classes and allows students to apply for federal and state financial aid.

"Accreditation shows that one institution can be compared to other institution," he said. "For example the freshman English class here would be comparable to freshman English courses at the University of Arkansas or Henderson State University."

OTC has already started the quest for accreditation by seeking candidacy status. This started with doing a self-study. Martin said the self-study forced OTC to look at every detail of its operation and future. "I feel we came out of the self-study a better institution," he said.

The self-study is then reviewed by NCA and then an evaluation team is sent to look at the school. After visiting the college, the team writes up a report evaluating the school on how well it meets the criteria established by NCA.

An evaluation team from North Central Accreditation reviewed the school in September and recommended the college be considered for candidacy status after the school met all five criteria.

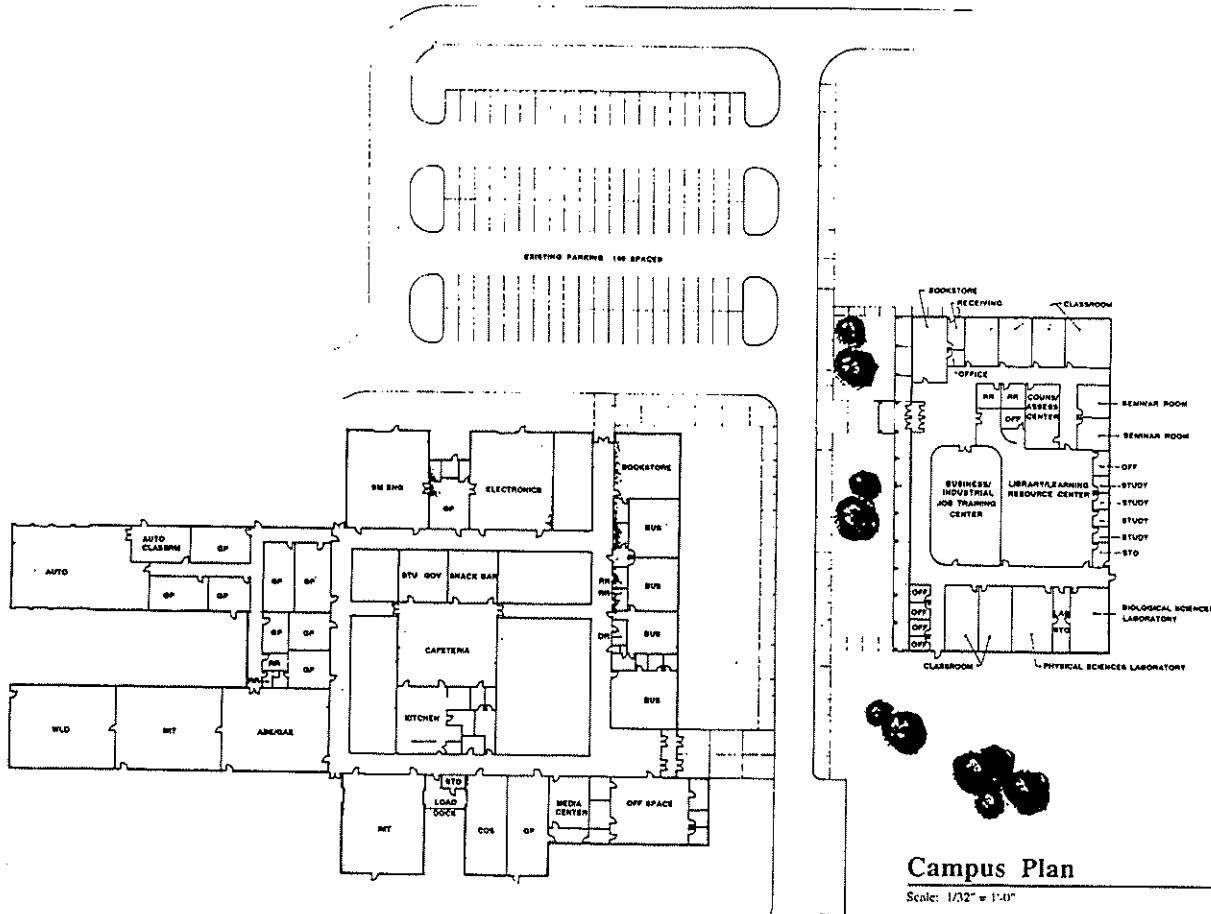
The team noted the college only marginally met one of the criteria. Criterion Four states that "the institution

can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness." The team was concerned with OTC's ability to obtain funding to support their continued development, stating that it

could be a major challenge to the college. They said the college needs a source of local funding.

The team also felt that the laboratories and grounds should be improved. Martin and June Prince, NCA coordinator for OTC, went before a NCA review committee at the end of January in Chicago. The committee voted unanimously to recommend OTC for candidacy, Martin said.

"It was so positive there is virtually no way we will be refused candidacy," he said. Martin said the full NCA commission Please see OTC, page 3



Plans for the proposed building project at OTC include additional parking and additional classrooms.

OTC earns NCA candidacy status

By AMY PARTAIN
Staff Writer

Ouachita Technical College received notification by telephone this morning that they have been approved for candidacy status by North Central Association, June Prince, NCA coordinator at OTC, said.

OTC will receive official notification from NCA through a formal letter, she said.

The full commission granted OTC the status after a recent meeting of the full commission of the NCA. An NCA evaluation team and an NCA review committee had both recommended that OTC be granted candidacy status.

Prince said candidacy status does not mean the college is now accredited. "It is a pre-accreditation status," she said. "We are being invited to try to become a fully accredited member."

Receiving candidacy status does entitle the college to some new perks, Prince said. The college can now claim affiliation with NCA, she said.

"Candidacy status is like getting the 'Good Housekeeping' Seal of Approval," she said. "Now we will be recognized by other institutions as a quality institution."

Another plus, Prince said, is

Please see OTC, page 10

OTC

Continued from page 1
that OTC students can continue to be eligible for financial aid. She said for the students to receive financial aid the college had to be certified by some organization after the college's certification as a vocational-technical college ran out.

OTC will also now be able to take over the general education requirements from Henderson State University. HSU now offers some general education courses on the OTC campus.

With the candidacy status in place, OTC will be able to offer these core classes and they will be transferable to any four-year college or university in the state, Prince said.

Dr. Ken Martin, president of OTC, said he fully intends to take over the general education courses in the summer.

"We have signed the amended contract with Henderson and plan to hit it off starting this summer," he said.

Prince said with the candidacy status in place there is also a

chance that some of the technical courses offered could be transferable to other institutions. She said this would be done on a course-by-course basis with each institution.

Receiving candidacy status puts OTC in a better position to receive accreditation, Prince said, but it does not guarantee the college will receive accreditation in the future.

"We are feeling really proud of ourselves," she said. "When we started, the state saw us as least likely to come up to par and we have surpassed that. We are looked at by other technical colleges as being the leading institution in the state."

Prince said the next step for the college will be to start the self-study process over. This second self-study will be due in 1995. She said the college will have to decide if they want the 1995 visit from the NCA evaluation team to be a continued candidacy visit or an accreditation visit.

The college has until 1997 to become accredited, according to the act that created technical colleges in the state.

Martin said he is going on the assumption that the 1995 will be

for accreditation.

"We have been hoping that if we get the local support we are looking for and get our new facility in place we would go for accreditation on the next visit," Martin said. "But we really can't make that decision for another year yet."

He said it will take between 16 and 18 months to put the new self-study together. Martin said basically they are having to go back to "square one" in the self-study process.

Prince said the study requires the institution to evaluate "where you are, where you are going and how you are going to get there."

OTC's first self-study has received national recognition, she said.

The college only marginally met one of the NCA criteria with the evaluation team noting that OTC needed additional funding and more long range plans.

Martin said OTC will not get accreditation in the future if they only marginally meet the criteria.

"They will take a little closer look at us if we go for accreditation," he said. "We can't be marginal in anything and receive accreditation."

Malvern Daily Record

March 2, 1994

Malvern, Arkansas 72104

35 Cents

LETTER

Burks' comments criticized

To the editor:

Bruce Burks's letter stating George Hopkins is unethical was pathetic. Senator Hopkins is one of the most honest, caring individuals I know.

I would like to know, Bruce Burks, when was the last time you volunteered to go visit young school children to participate in programs ranging from reading awareness to government. You have not done this once. George Hopkins has done it dozens of times.

George Hopkins has donated many hours of work toward the betterment of rural fire departments. Not only as a senator, but as a citizen. (He worked toward getting more and better rural fire departments long before he was elected to the senate.)

In addition to the above, I know George Hopkins has a true commitment toward bettering the educational opportunities for young Arkansans. He has fought hard for secondary schools and institutions of higher learning.

I could go on and on, but instead I will close and suggest you try to say something productive and helpful about someone for a change instead of your usual negative, name-calling, finger-pointing, selfish comments. You know nothing about George Hopkins or what he stands for. You never have anything positive to say about anything or anyone.

In short, look at yourself before you cast stones at the reputations of others. You might not like what you see.

Carol Zgleszewski
Malvern

P.S.: All the work George Hopkins has done for Ouachita Technical College has been free. In addition, he didn't decide to ask for a city-wide sales tax, the OTC Board of Trustees did.

WEDNESDAY

Malvern Daily Record

March 2, 1994

Malvern, Arkansas 72104

35 Cents

State releases \$129,000 to assist OTC accreditation

By AMY PARTAIN
Staff Writer

Ouachita Technical College will be receiving additional funds from the state to help the college meet some of its needs for accreditation, according to a news release from the Arkansas Department of Higher Education.

The Executive Committee of the State Board of Higher Education unanimously decided to give \$129,000 from the Workforce 2000 funds to the college at a committee meeting Monday in Little Rock, according to the release.

Dr. Ken Martin, president of OTC, said the college will use the money to fund two new positions and update library materials and equipment.

Martin said the college will need personnel to fill

the new positions of director of enrollment management and director of the Center for Workforce Excellence.

He said the \$53,000 of the funds, which will go for personnel, will now become part of the college's operating budget. The remaining \$76,000 will go for one-time purchases.

"Forty thousand of the remaining \$76,000 will go for library holdings," Martin said. "The holdings will be updated to accommodate the associate of arts degree proposal and the general education proposal we have."

The remaining \$36,000 will go for equipment, Martin said. A majority of the money, \$20,000,

Please see OTC, page 2

OTC

Continued from page 1
will go to purchase new equipment for the industrial equipment maintenance program, he said. Martin said whatever is left will be distributed to the other programs according to need.

Martin said the money will help OTC continue to work toward accreditation through the North Central Association. He said the money should reach OTC in matter of days.

The amount of the money received by each college was based on enrollment figures, Martin said.

Over \$2 million in additional

funds will be distributed to 14 technical colleges in the state. The money will help each college meet its particular needs to reach a full accreditation status as a two-year technical college, the news release said.

The release said the funds can be used to buy library materials and instructional equipment, to hire additional personnel, or to complete other accreditation needs.

The Workforce 2000 funds were established by Act 1246 of 1991. The funds are to be used by technical colleges to overcome "accreditation deficiencies," the release said.

The state board of higher education distributes the funds each year based on the specific needs of each college.

VIEWPOINTS

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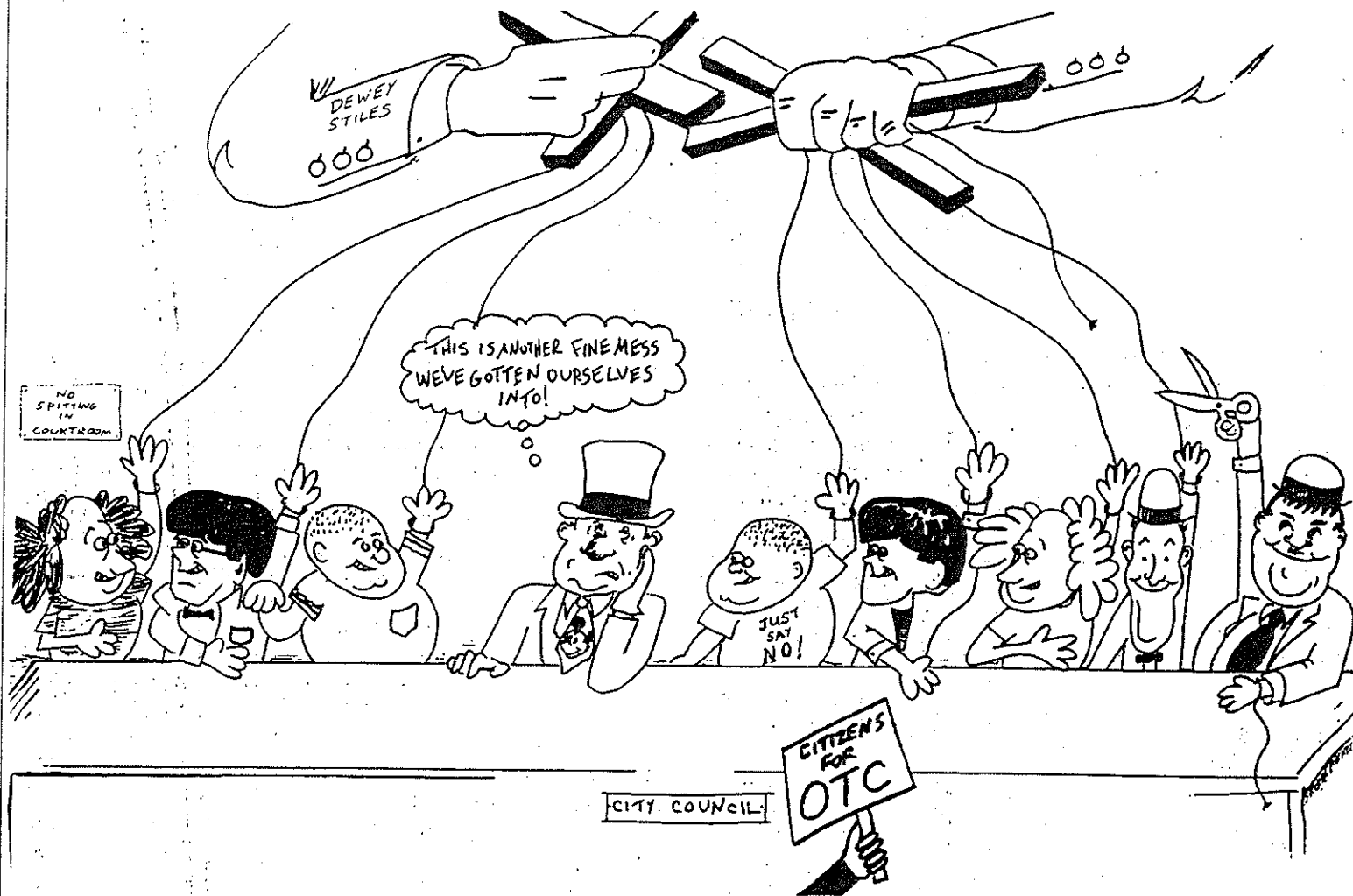
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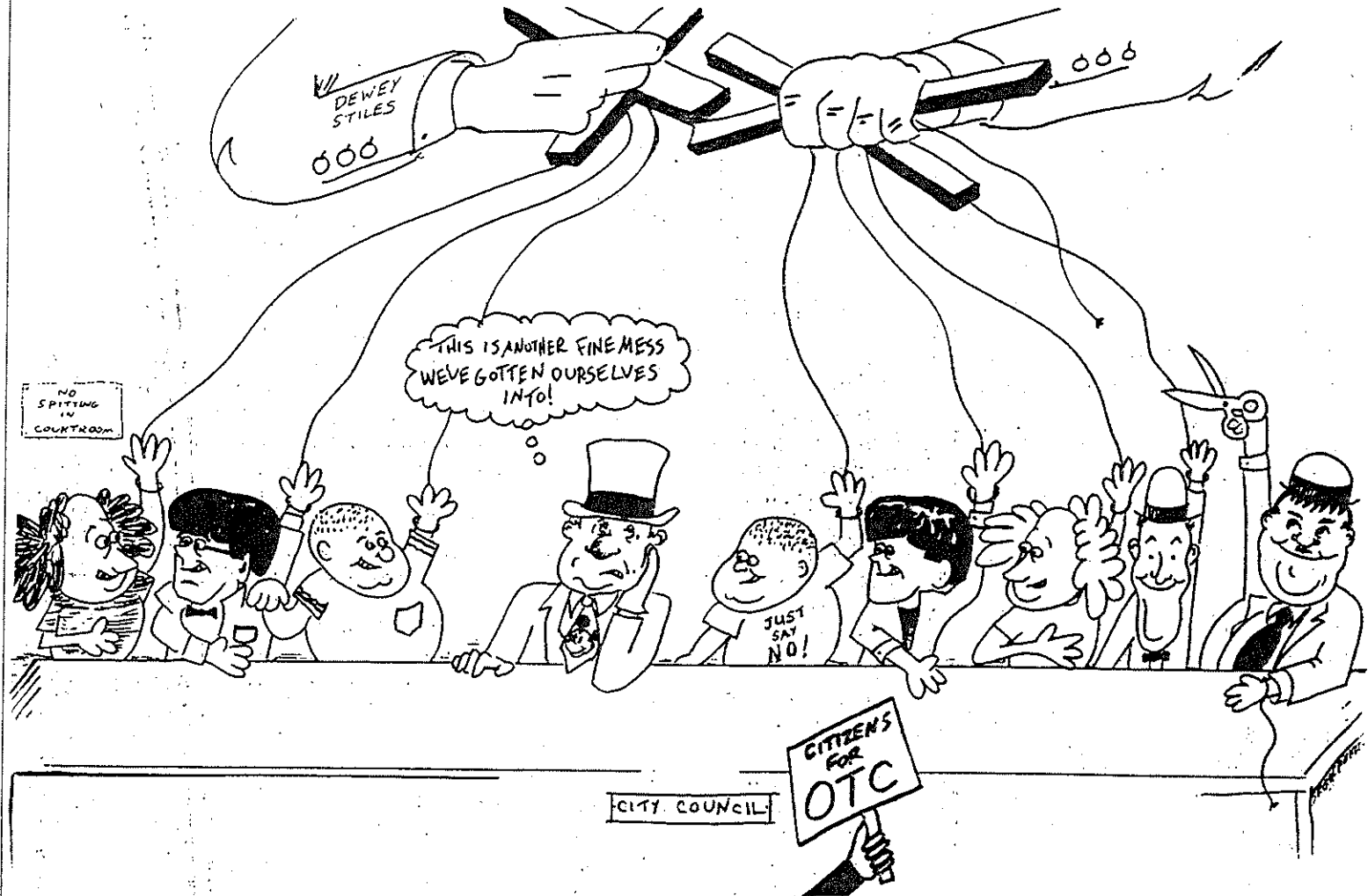
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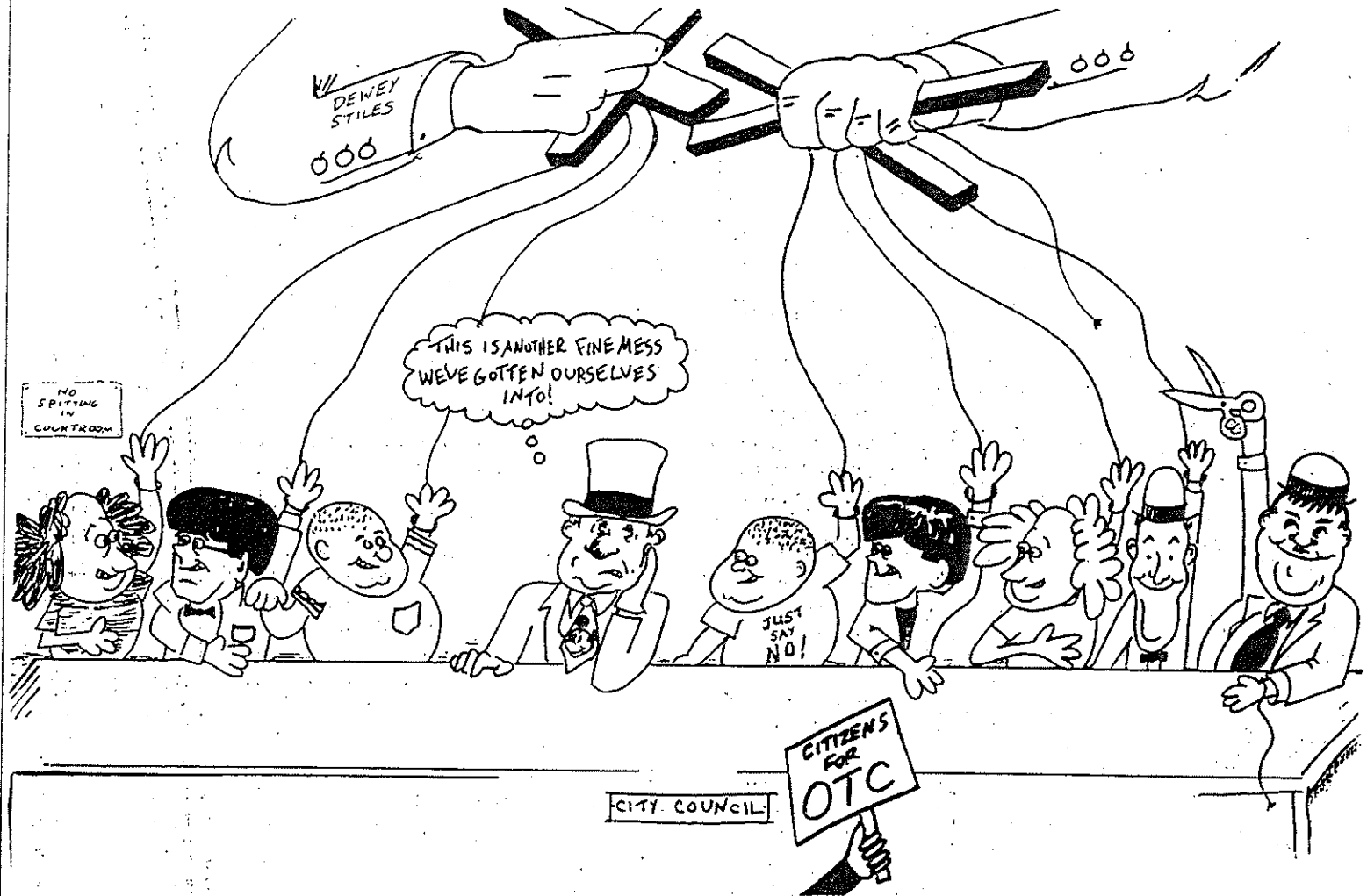
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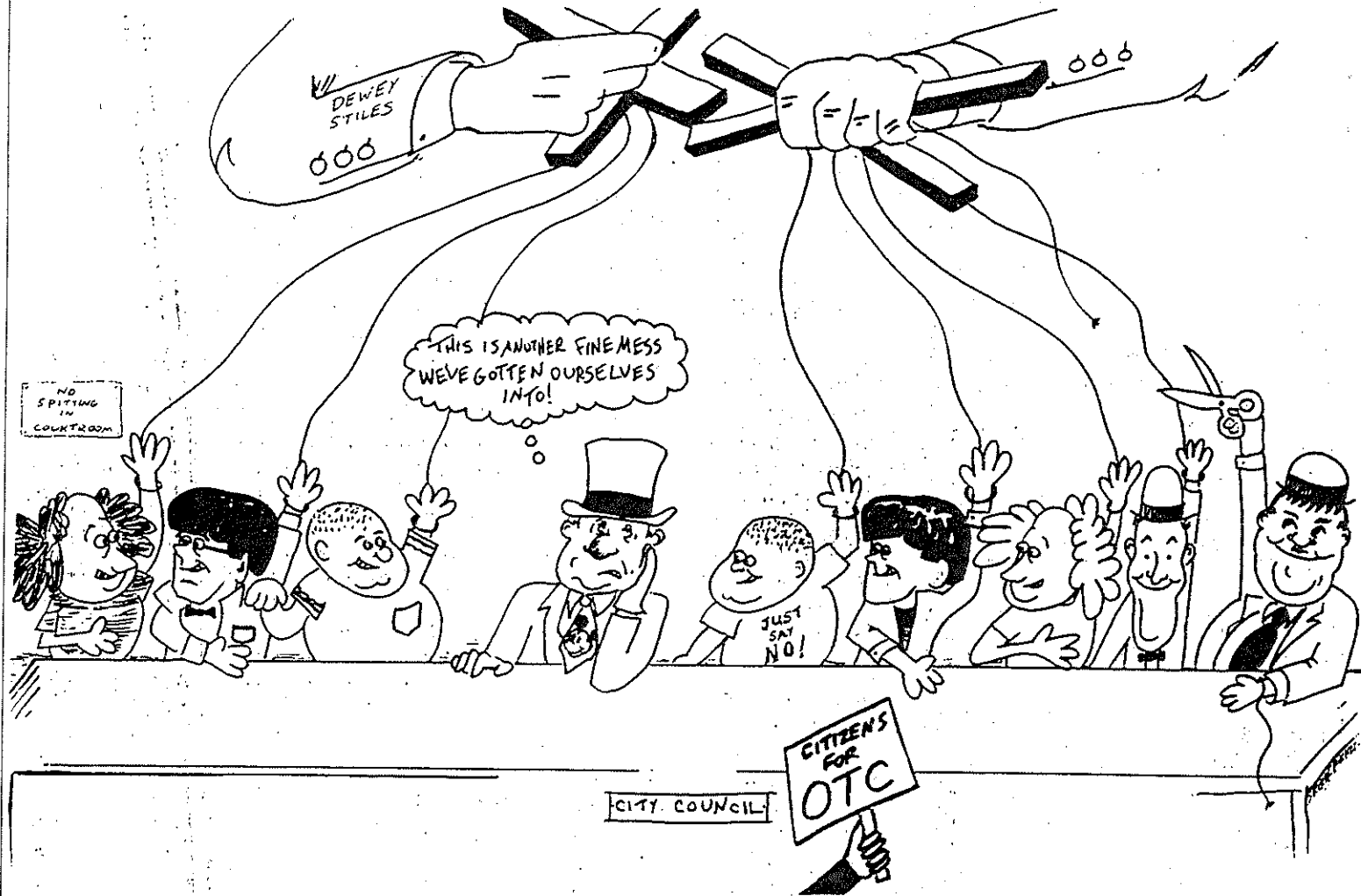
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