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Emergency medical services improved

-By MAUREEN BUCEK

In recent years, local governments, community groups and education systems have become active in upgrading emergency medical services and facilities in the Bryan-College Station area.

Texas A&M University offers a health education course to train emergency medical technicians (EMTs). With an outline from the Texas Department of Health Resources, the course requires 80 hours of classroom training, 40 hours of hospital training and five ambulance runs with the Houston Fire Department, working with Houston EMTs and paramedics. Students do research papers, hear lectures from physicians, nurses, and other medical specialists.

An eight hour course at the fireman's training school to work with extrication of victims from a burning building and other forms of light rescue is also required.

Bandaging and splinting techniques, work with mechanical breathing aids (oxygen bags and masks, suction units, airways), taking and monitoring vital signs, transporting victims, and sometimes even help with suturing of victims in emergency room situations are learned.

The course is limited to 30 applicants who are selected according to need. "In a job with emergency needs, parks and recreation majors for instance, those working with a rescue squad, or pre-med people—they're taken first," said Laura Kitzmiller, director of emergency care programs through the Health and Physical Education Department.

Kitzmiller also teaches CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation), a life sustaining measure combining heart massage and mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to sustain circulation of oxygenated blood until advanced therapy can be given. Kitzmiller taught the technique to nurses at St. Joseph and Bryan hospitals and the staff at Beutel Health Center. Members of the Woman's Club of Bryan and the College Station Community Education group completed the six hours of CPR training and 12 more hours to qualify as instructors.

In September the Woman's Club began a series of CPR courses open to the public. Sixteen members are certified as instructors by the American Heart Association and the American Red Cross. Offering two daytime classes and one night class each month, they have certified more than 100 people.

To be certified, the student must pass a written test and perform one man and two man CPR on special mannequins which give a print-out to show if pressure is properly applied to the heart and an adequate volume of air blown into the lungs. Certification lasts for only one year because "the procedure changes as they make new discoveries and, quite frankly, people forget" Whiting said.

The Woman's Club wants to teach CPR to one out of four people in the community. "I might be the next one to keel over, I'd want someone there who knows what to do. For all I know about CPR, it won't do me any good then," Whiting said.

Prompt and intensive emergency care administered at the scene of a

heart attack and en route to the hospital, could save 100,000 lives a year according to the American Heart Association. In 1974 the National Research Council found that more than one third of accident fatalities in the United States occur at the scene or within minutes after arrival in the emergency room.

Dr. Henry C. Huntley of the U. S. Public Health Services said, "the care provided during the first hour

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after onset of a medical emergency is probably more important than the entire subsequent episode."

Ambulance attendants are usually the first to arrive at an emergency scene. For the city of College Station, Texas A&M University, and south Brazos County, ambulance service is provided by the College Station Fire Department. The ambulance service is certified by the state and listed in the state registry. It is required to carry specific equipment ranging from traction splints, oxygen tanks, and poison kits to pillows and safety pins.

The Fire Department has 24 EMTs and assigns a minimum of two to each vehicle. There are two ambulances now and a third is expected in January.

"Anytime an ambulance makes a run, emergency medical techniques are used, — whether it is splinting fractures, taking vital signs, or recognizing diabetes or heart attacks," said Bill Schaefer, ambulance supervisor.

"We spend time at the scene trying to stabilize the victim, stopping severe bleeding or whatever the problem may be. That's the whole idea of this EMS program: stabilize first, then transport. People always seem to wonder 'Why are you still here?'" Schaefer said.

After working with the victim and before leaving the scene, attendants call the hospital emergency room and tell them the extent of the injuries and estimated time of arrival.

"The whole idea of 'run out, throw them in the back and race off' doesn't apply anymore," he emphasized.

The Mid-Tex Ambulance Service is a private enterprise serving Bryan and Brazos County. It operates four ambulances, with a fifth vehicle on the way. The new ambulance will be able to transport six stretcher victims. Two attendants are on duty at all times, at least one of which is an EMT. The service is certified by the state and carries the required equipment.

Brazos was one of seven surrounding counties whose services were upgraded in the last three years. With federal funds of nearly \$280,000 from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare matched by local funds, these counties entered a five-year program to improve emergency medical care.

The EMS program was coordinated through the Brazos Valley Development Council. During the first three years, hospitals upgraded their emergency room equipment and ambulance attendants trained as Emergency Care Attendants and EMTs.

At least one hospital in each county has a radio in the emergency

room to communicate with ambulances. Seven emergency vehicles were bought and distributed to Brazos, Bryan and Madison counties. Three EMT schools were opened in Brazos County and 65 people were trained. The steps in this basic life support phase were completed in three years, ending June. EMS program director Ed Nelson said the goals of this phase were to make it possible for a vehicle to receive basic first aid and primary emergency care within 15 minutes and be taken to a well-equipped emergency aid center.

The program did not continue into the next phase, advanced support. This part involves advanced EMTs or paramedics. In turn calls for more equipment, ambulances and a doctor in the hospital emergency room 24 hours a day. "Being rural and the economy of it (advanced life support) kept from going forward. It's very expensive and tax dollars would have to support it," Nelson said. There must be a certain volume of accidents and emergency situations to keep the training current and make the investment worthwhile, Nelson said. "I think it's coming," he added.

Local research project seeks more coal uses

More uses for coal may result from the research of Texas A&M University chemists who are looking at new ways to break up the coal molecule.

"Some of these coal-derived products, such as methane, butane and propane can be used as heating and cooking fuels, while other organic chemicals, presently obtained from petroleum, could also be removed from coal," explained Dr. C. S. Giam, head of the project being funded by the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA). "Some of these chemicals are ultimately used to prepare plastics, medicines and a variety of modern products."

"We want to use a more selective process to cleave the coal polymer into small, useful molecular chunks," Giam said. "Presently, through thermal degradation, coal can be converted to a gas that substitutes for natural gas, or to liquid resembling gasoline by a variety of liquefaction techniques."

"However, this is too drastic a process to get at the large fragments such as butane or benzene," he added. "We propose to use less energetic but more selective processes to produce the large particles."

Giam says the project's objective is efficient and environmentally acceptable use of coals, particularly Texas lignite, as a source of liquid and gaseous fuels and organic chemicals.

Lignite is a major energy resource in Texas. More than 10 billion tons have been mapped, equivalent to 277 billion barrels of oil. More than 200 million tons of lignite have been discovered in the Bryan-College Station area.

The fundamental molecular structure of coal still remains to be completely explained. It is believed to be a complex, high molecular weight polymer of irregular and definite structure.

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A drive home best forgotten

RICHMOND, England — John Oliver, a technician attached to the Royal Armored Corps training regiment, had one too many party recently and says he can't really remember what happened after he left.

Maybe it's a good thing. According to testimony heard in court Tuesday, here's what he would have remembered:

He decided to take a joy ride at the party and chose as his vehicle a 60-ton tank.

The court heard that Oliver took the tank from a hangar at Caterham Garrison and drove it straight through the hangar doors. It then tened signs, tore up fences and destroyed two miles of roadway.

Finally the tank veered toward the highway with multiple police cars following it.

"The people in pursuit were liged, in the interests of their safety, to leave their vehicles and follow on foot," the prosecuting attorney said.

Oliver, 25, who said the entire incident was "vague," pleaded guilty to nine charges arising from the ride: assault, causing criminal damage, driving without a license, insurance, dangerous driving, driving with excess alcohol and taking a tank without the owner's consent. He was fined \$2,000.

Capt. Roger Jagger, Oliver's superior, told the court the defendant had been "of good military character" until recently, but "his future in the army has not been decided as yet."

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