

Texas A&M visitors "Sissy" Farenthold, center, and Gladys Heldman, far left, talk over educational plans with Dr. Douglas Von Gonten and Dr. Charles Rodenberger, left to right, A&M engineering officials. A former Texas politico, Farenthold is now president of Wells College in New York.

## Joint engineering program discussed

Discussion of a cooperative engineering education program between Wells College at Aurora, N.Y. and Texas A&M has been initiated. Preparations involved a Thursday visit here by Wells President Frances "Sissy" Farenthold and Wells College alumnus Gladys Heldman. Heldman is editor of the Houston-published "Tennis World."

The visitors conferred with Engineering Dean Fred J. Benson, other college officials including Dr. Charles Rodenberger and Dr. Douglas Von Gonten, petroleum engineering department head.

If agreed upon, the degree program in petroleum engineering would operate on a 3-to-2 basis. Selected Wells students would study at the New York campus three years and at Texas A&M two, earning B.A. and B.S. degrees at the respective institutions.

Wells is a 500-student independent women's college at Aurora. The college enrolls top students, according to Rodenberger, who study under an 8-to-1 student-teacher ratio. Farenthold is the well-known former Texas legislator from Corpus Christi who was a gubernatorial candidate.

## Seminar scheduled for single/divorced students

Single, widowed or divorced students who feel a need to talk about their concerns and interests will have a chance during a special weekly seminar beginning Jan. 27 at Texas A&M University.

Sponsored by the Personal Counseling Service, the meetings will be held 9:30-11 a.m. Fridays, said seminar leader Dr. Joyce O'Rear. Those interested in joining should contact the service in room 017 of the YMCA Building or by phone at 845-4427.

## Intellectuals back up idea

# TV can help children read

United Press International  
NEW YORK — Teachers are arguing that television need not be enemy of instruction — it even can help children read if properly used.

There was a time when prophets of intellectual doom warned that television would do everything from ruin eyesight to atrophy the brain.

Now no less an authority than the president of the National Council of Teachers of English insists that television can help children learn to read and write.

Dr. Marjorie Farmer, who also is executive director of English and reading curriculum for the 200,000-student Philadelphia public school system, said in an interview.

"Among English teachers, we don't get the reaction we used to so often — that television was the enemy of instruction."

Now the reaction is not necessarily negative. But teachers haven't been educated in how to use television as a source and many are uneasy with it because it was not within the scope of their training.

"I believe television is a major mode for the reception of information and the enhancement of experience. People just have to learn how to control it. After all, until you make use of the library, it just looks like a stack of books and people scurrying around."

"Our whole notion in Philadelphia of our educational job is to give parents more and more control of the world around them. Either it controls them or they manage its access to their lives and their use of it."

Projects in the schools involving television can be as simple as teaching the children to use the television stings in their daily newspaper — at the same time familiarizing children with the newspaper and giving them an inducement to read.

When a Philadelphia newspaper published the script of "Roots," it proved a valuable classroom conversation piece.

"Students can make up their own viewing schedules for the week and report on programs they have seen, which improves their writing skills. Parents as well as teachers should become involved in their children's television habits."

"It's very important to involve

parents," Dr. Farmer says, "and teachers and schools can help do this through programs such as Teachers Guides to Television."

"Parents need not only to make decisions about what television programs their children are going to look at, but also it is a way children and parents can relate television events to their own lives and interests."

"Television can prove a neutral ground for discussing things the family needs to talk about. It provides small talk between parents and children like the social talk kids have with their own friends."

She notes that reading scores are lowest where children are poorest and points out that "it is characteristic of poor families that they do not have a lot of sharing. Television is something they can share."

While she agrees that the time children spend in front of the tube should be sensibly limited, she insists there is plenty of quality

entertainment for them to watch — programs ranging from "Hard Times" and "Roots" to "Eleanor and Franklin" and even "The Hobbit."

She doesn't stop at shows with obvious literary merit. "The Hardy Boys" and "Nancy Drew" are just fine with her, because after a few television episodes, children can be led to the library for further adventures of their favorite teen-age detectives.

She remembers back to the pre-television days of her own childhood when books had hard covers and paperbacks and magazines just weren't respectable.

"Reading should be fun and for a lot of kids it hasn't been associated with pleasure," Dr. Farmer says. "Kids are going to read what they like. Television can be a really useful ally instead of the arch enemy of education as many people still see it."

"As parents we must realize that we have some responsibility for the values a child learns and the plot ac-

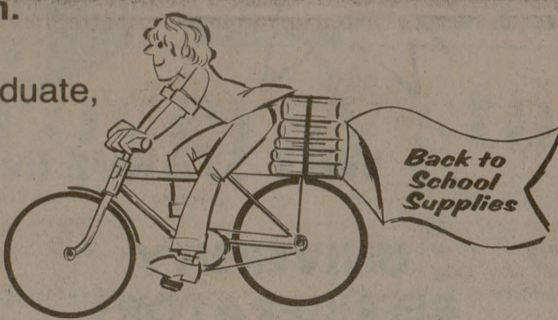
tion in television can be a much more effective teacher of certain values than many other ways in which we might try to share our values with them."

"The parents must take responsibility for managing that part of their television experience, reacting with them and questioning what's on the screen. Parents have to work with

their families to control the use of the medium — the same way our parents used to watch our books to see we weren't bringing in too many of the kind you hid under the covers and read by flashlight.

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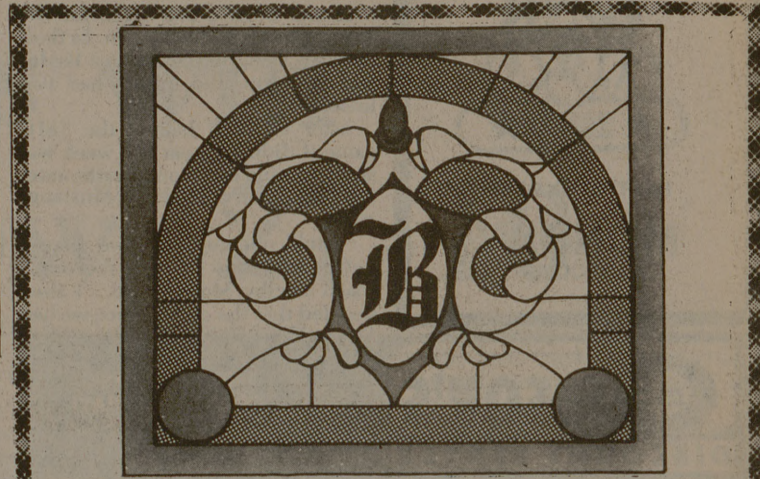
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