

Residents move frequently

B-CS neighbors lack 'unity'

The impersonal hand of government can never replace the helping hand of a neighbor. — Hubert Humphrey

By STEVE MAYER
Special to the Battalion

Hello. How you doin'? See you. Sometimes the conversations in Bryan-College Station neighborhoods are much longer, sometimes they're shorter.

The reason? Well, most people say either they or their neighbors just moved in or that they plan to move out of the area soon. They didn't have a chance or don't think it's worth it to start a more permanent relationship.

As a result, there's a chance of more crime, deteriorating streets and other problems associated with the transitory neighborhoods of Bryan-College Station. Not many want to make the effort to build stronger neighborhoods.

FOR DECADES, successions of people have moved in and out because of the temporary nature of their dealings with Texas A&M University.

This transition was indicated in a recent survey at Manor East Mall. The reporter's survey of 50 College Station and 50 Bryan residents questioned their thoughts on moving and neighborliness. Compared to Bryan, more than twice as many respondents in College Station were affiliated with the University.

Eighty percent of the College Station respondents said they will definitely move from their residences. Of those definitely moving, 87 percent said they will move outside of Brazos County.

Thirty-eight percent of the Bryan respondents said they will definitely move. Of these, 73 percent will move outside of Brazos County.

FEELINGS ABOUT NEIGHBORLINESS may also be related to the lack of neighborhood organization. How often do residents exchange favors such as loaning books and garden tools, or taking turns at babysitting and carpooling?

Thirty-four percent of the College Station respondents said if they exchange favors at all, it's only a few times a year. Fifteen percent said they exchange favors several times a month.

Fifty-two percent of the Bryan participants said they never exchange favors, or do so a few times a year. Exchange occurs several times a month for 22 percent.

The survey appears to show the lack of unity. The fact that no active, influential neighborhood organizations exist supports this.

LAVERNE SKINNER, director of the Brazos County community council, says she doesn't know of any neighborhood organizations in Brazos County. "We mostly help individual needs by referral to agencies who help with things like poverty and health," she said. "There was an effective citizens group in San Antonio which got the commissioners to take care of their problems. But I don't know of one around here." Skinner said a group was started a few years ago, but no longer exists.

A well-organized neighborhood isn't just a sentimental goal. Community control of local bureaucracies can be a means of making these bureaucracies more responsive to the residents' needs.

Better streets, housing improvement, neighborhood upkeep campaigns, and city planning can be accomplished more effectively with a

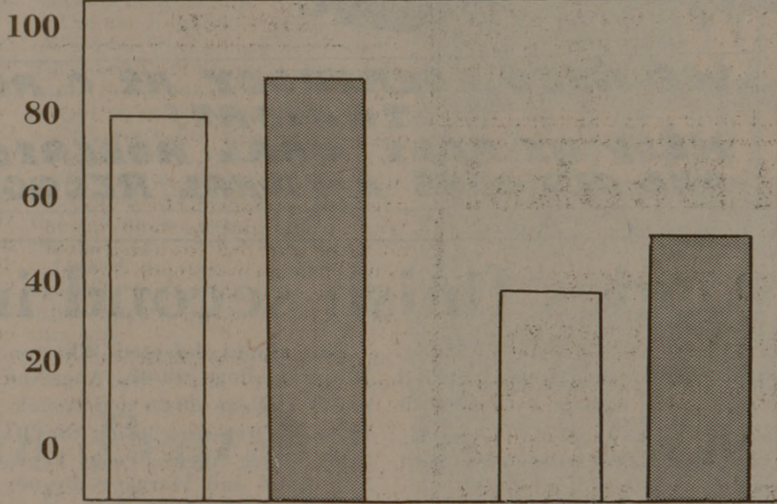
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strong grass-root network. This network can keep area crime down. Healthy neighborhood ties permit formal agencies to work more effectively.

THE MANOR EAST MALL survey results hinted that area residents would like to know each other better. Forty-four percent in Bryan, and 34 percent in College Station said they'd like to exchange favors more often. However, some respondents who exchange favors several times a week felt that was too often. The majority of them lived in apartments.

The demand for local control and returning power to the people in the community may one day come to Bryan-College Station. It will take an activist to get things started; someone who can devote the effort in get-

ting transitory residents involved. Next time, you might think about being neighborly — it may keep your home safe and your streets paved.



This chart shows the results of a recent Manor East Mall survey of 50 College Station and 50 Bryan residents. The survey appeared to show that the low number of permanent residents in Brazos County is due to short-term affiliations with the University.



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