

Programs serve 2-county region

CAA aids 26,500 poor, elderly

By CRAIG ROGERS
Battalion Reporter
The Community Action Agency (CAA), a non-profit government corporation offering a variety of pro-

grams to low-income clients in Brazos and surrounding counties. Operating with a budget of around \$3 million, the center supports work for elderly, poor, and

children. Through all its programs, the CAA last year helped 26,500 people who were mostly low income, or on fixed incomes in

Brazos, Burleson, Grimes, Leon, Madison, Robertson, and Washington counties.

"Some of the counties around here have the highest incidence of poverty, not just in Texas, but in the nation," Dale Marsico, executive director of CAA.

According to the 1970 census figures, Robertson county has the highest poverty level in the BS Valley, with 43.5 percent of the population living below the poverty level. In Brazos County, 22 percent of the population live below the poverty level.

A nationally recognized poverty area, the Appalachian mountain area has a 35 percent poverty level. Most of the people who qualify for aid do not participate, according to Marsico.

Sarah Goodman, is a client in the "Years for Profit" center in Bryan, one of the programs offered by the CAA.

The center is a place for senior citizens to gather, enjoy a hot meal, and conduct group activities. The center at 30th and Bryan streets is one of 14 centers operated by the CAA within the Brazos Valley.

"I come here mainly for the food, because I don't like to cook," says Goodman.

Marsico says the day-care projects run by the agency are designed to help mothers who are on welfare to leave their children and find a job. A 100 percent poverty guideline is used to determine a eligibility for the program.

In Brazos county there are two

day-care centers, handling a total of 64 pre-school children.

There is also a home-based program in which the staff members visit rural areas two or three times a week to help educate mothers in nutritional education.

The Women Infants and Children (WIC) program is an educational and nutritional program for mothers and infants. The CCA has 1,500 clients who receive supplemental food through the program.

"Being as money has become so scarce, we try to provide self-help kinds of things," said Marsico. The agency also helps pregnant mothers and mothers with infants receiving food stamps. Mothers enrolled in the course are educated about the nutritional value of foods. In addition, they are provided with coupons to pay for dairy products, nutritional cereals and fruit juices.

Every client must have a physical before entering the program to determine if they are low in iron and they are re-evaluated every six months in the program. Normally, when they are re-evaluated they will leave the program, making an opening for new clients.

A family planning service is also offered by the CAA. It provides family planning education and birth control counseling at no charge to clients.

The total family planning services reach about 70,000 patients a year.

For the elderly, the CAA will weatherize the homes at no charge if the houses are owned by the clients.

Hold-up stand-off bandit vs. woman

HOUSTON — A man suspected to be the shotgun-toting robber faced down by a woman security guard with a .357 Magnum pistol has been arrested.

Elizabeth E. Wilkins, 38, said her boss at a United Savings Association of Texas branch recognized a customer entering the bank at 2 Tuesday as a robber.

She drew her pistol as a 25-year-old man pulled a sawed-off shotgun from his clothing. The two stood face-to-face with their weapons pointed at each other.

Wilkins spoke first, ordering the gunman to put down the shotgun. He refused and told her he would kill her if she did not drop the pistol, the woman said.

"I told him I wouldn't shoot him in the back if he would just leave," she said. "My first concern was for the safety of the employees. The second was not to let him get any money."

The man turned, ran to his station wagon and sped away.

Less than two hours later a suspect was arrested after pulling a Liberty Savings Association of \$800. He was found to have a shotgun, a .22-caliber pistol and a knife.

"I hope," Ms. Wilkins said, "that this changes people's opinion of female security guards."

Bunny suit hop denied

WASHINGTON — Rep. Patricia Schroeder is hopping mad about reports she wore a bunny costume to the Great Wall of China.

"I don't know where that came from," Schroeder said concerning a wire service report that she wore the costume to distribute Easter eggs and jelly beans to American tourists and Chinese while visiting the wall Easter Sunday.

Schroeder said Monday she did wear the costume twice during her Chinese visit as a

member of the House Administration Committee. Other Americans gathered at the hotel for breakfast, and the report was later that day at a White House Easter party for children.

Rep. Les Aspin, D-Wis., another committee member, said he thought Rep. Schroeder's gesture was "very nice." Aspin said the erroneous report by Associated Press involving the incident at the wall was a "bad."

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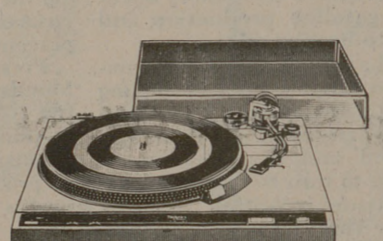
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