

campus



Tree sale ends today

Amy Bayer, member of Lambda Sigma, a sophomore honor society, straightens up Christmas trees in front of the Commons on the southside of campus. Lambda Sigma will sell the trees from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. today in front of the Commons. Battalion photo by John Littman

A&M researcher to gather info

Program to study drownings

A Texas A&M University researcher in Galveston has begun a two-year study of the thousands of water-related deaths in Texas since 1971 to help design a safety program catered to preventing more tragedies. The search, said Dr. James McCloy of Texas A&M University at Galveston, will examine when, how and why drownings and other water-associated deaths occurred on Texas rivers, lakes and bays from 1971 to 1978. First phase of the project will concentrate on the coastal zone. With 367 air miles of marine coastline and 2.8 million acres of inland water, Texas has the nation's second highest death toll from aquatic accidents, said McCloy. An average of 608 people died annually from 1970 to 197 in water-related accidents, he said. The study is being supported by \$19,000 from the Texas A&M Sea

Grant College Program and \$9,968 from the Moody Foundation, he said. Through Sea Grant's public education programs, he said, safety measures can be implemented at hazardous locations during seasons when dangerous water activities occur most. Data for the eight-year period is being gathered on a confidential basis from the Texas Health Department, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and from coroners in the coastal counties of Harris, Galveston and Nueces where Houston, Galveston and Corpus Christi are located. About 32 percent of all water fatalities occur on the coast. McCloy said drownings are the number 2 killer of persons under age 45, second only to automobile accidents. California, with its 840 miles of coast, is the leading state for

drownings while Texas is second. The search, said McCloy, will examine a number of circumstances, including whether drugs or alcohol were involved, what kinds of clothes were worn, where and when the accident happened and what kind of activity was involved. Information correlated by the computer should tell Sea Grant specialists and other safety officials where to concentrate efforts in drawing up procedures and management techniques, he explained. The information might also point to whether environmental changes such as a new lake or beachfront development tend to increase or decrease water-related death rates in specific geographical areas.

Program helps infants

By PHYLLIS J. POWELL

Special to the Battalion
At first glance, the class of 3-year-olds playing and running around the wooden floored classroom was like any other day school class of their peers.

Two boys threw bean bags through the clown while a girl rode a tiny tricycle around the room. Another girl was rocking in a wooden structure whose flip side formed a tiny set of stairs; three steps up, three steps down. A third girl rushed from one toy to the next.

But after a few moments it became obvious that this class was different. Several of the children laughed as they played, but none of them talked.

This class is one of the two classes the Bryan Mental Health and Mental Retardation Center (MH-MR) offers in its Infant Stimulation-Parent Training program.

"The program is available to any child 3-years-old or under that is identified as delayed in development," said Sue Leysath-McBeth, the program's director.

The program is divided into two

parts. The First Steps Forward section is designed for infants up to 2-years old who show some sign of developmental delay.

The second part of the program is a day school program for 2- and 3-year-olds who show some problems in their development. But these children must be able to walk to attend the day classes.

The classes, Leysath-McBeth said, are available to children of all income levels. There is no charge.

The Texas Educational Agency provides some of the funding for the developmental skills program for the 2- and 3-year olds. The rest of the funds are provided by Grant-in-Aid and local donations. The First Steps Forward program for the infants receives all of its money from private donations and the Grant-in-Aid program.

The children are referred to the First Steps Forward program by physicians, friends, the Health Department or by their parents. Leysath-McBeth said they use the Koontz Developmental Program as a guideline for determining what levels the children are functioning.

Four skill areas are tested: gross motor; fine motor; social and language. The Koontz guideline gives the staff an idea of what the child should be able to do at certain ages. The results of the evaluation determine what children are admitted to the program.

The infants are seen in their homes three times each week for one hour sessions with the parents and the teachers.

There are two home teachers in the First Steps Forward program. They are trained to exercise or stimulate the babies in the areas they need help in. While they are exercising the babies they also show the parents how to perform the exercises.

There are 36 children in the First Steps program and 14 others still in the application stage.

The day school program for the 2- and 3-year-olds is divided into two classes. One meets on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings

and the other is held on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The classes are held in the classroom annex of the First Free Will Baptist Church in Bryan.

The special education teacher for developmental skills is Linda Ledbetter. She has four teaching assistants who are students at Texas A&M University and are interning for the MM-MR Center.

We emphasize the behavioral approach," Leysath-McBeth said. "We encourage good behavior by rewarding it with praise.

Only three of the students in the day care program are classified as mentally retarded and only three of the 36 infants are classified as retarded, although the majority do have significant delays.

"But we try not to label these kids," Leysath-McBeth said. "We try to give them all the help we can without burdening them with labels."

ALTERATIONS

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United Press International
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