

Residents cope with floods

In CS it's 'Life in the Flood Plain'

By ELLEN EIDELBACH
Battalion Reporter

When the storms roll in and gray clouds break with rain, some College Station residents count on wading through their yards. Residents near the lower end of Holleman Street close to Wellborn Road contend with standing water and mosquitoes whenever there's a heavy downpour.

Robbie Clark, 313 Holleman, says she has lived in the "same spot since 1944" and the drainage has always been bad.

In a heavy rain, Clark said, "We don't have enough drainage. Sometimes when we get out of the car water comes up to my ankles."

"The bridge down there (on Holleman next to Hervey) overflows. You can't walk over that," Clark said.

She says mosquitoes are also a problem when it rains.

Although water doesn't come inside her house or stand in her yard, Clark says it takes about a half day to drain.

Clark said fixing the street would solve the problem.

A few doors down from Clark live George and Mary Washington at 203 Holleman. Their house lies in a lower area than Clark's.

Mr. Washington says, "It takes a couple of days and nights" of hard rain to cause water problems.

"I can't go to my truck with no rubber boots, it gets so bad," he added.

Mrs. Washington says water stands in their yard. "Out in the back here it stands about a week — in this little patch," she commented.

Both said mosquitoes are a bad problem after a hard rain.

"The best way to solve it (drainage) is to clean out that ditch (the pipe beneath the bridge near Hervey Street)," Mr. Washington said.

Paul Joseph White, 1006B Welsh Street, lives a few blocks east from Clark.

"When it gets wet there are mosquito problems" and a lot of wet ground, White says.

"I think my situation is unique, because I think it's more of a problem of drainage," he said.

White said the ground around his house is continually soft and damp.

"When it rains, you can just see the tips of the blades of grass," he says.

White says the solution to improving his soggy surroundings is to "improve drainage on the road."

The area where these people live is in a natural rain runoff, the Bee Creek tributary. On a 20-year flood plain projection map which was completed in July for the City of College Station, the west end of Holleman is in a flood plain.

Mark Lewis Smith, assistant to the College Station city engineer, says there's nothing the city can do about drainage on private property.

"They should come here and check first (before buying a house)," Smith said.

He said the city has flood plain maps which are available to the public. Smith pointed out "Our maps show approximate (flood plain) locations."

Although there are several areas of town that were built before a flood plain study was ever done, Smith says now "what the city requires is they have to build the structure one foot above the 100-year flood plain."

As far as drainage on streets is concerned, Smith says the city considers many different factors when repairing streets. A factor he cited would be if a fire truck could get on and off a street safely.

Smith did say the city will be putting in a drainage easement on a current project at Detroit

and Nevada streets (in the neighborhood on Holleman). But he said this wouldn't include the area on Holleman near Hervey.

The project, which is under Community Development, is scheduled to start on the thirteenth of this month, Smith said.

Jane Kee, College Station Community Development Planner, says the area along the west end of Hollan is a target area in the Community Development Block Grant.

Kee says the grant money provides for "curb and gutter, base and top (for street pavement) and any necessary drainage facilities that we'll have to do."

"We've already paved four streets in that neighborhood. Next year we'll pave two streets. This year we'll pave one," she said.

She added that the city is in the process of acquiring right of way on Holleman in order to widen it.

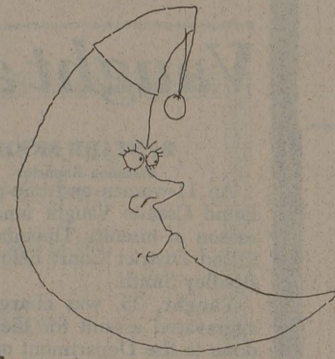
An area qualifies for the federal block grant if 80 percent of the families in the area are median income, Kee explained. "The median income is based on a four person family," she said, making \$13,300 annually. She said \$13,300 is the College Station median income figure.

There are four target areas in College Station, Kee said, including the Holleman area.

She says "if we need to acquire easements (in the target area) we can do that."

"Between Southwest Parkway and Nevada, the city has a big 20 foot drainage easement ... we're going to use that (to tie into)," Kee explained.

Meanwhile, when it rains hard, folks like George Washington will have to put up with extra water and mosquitoes. Washington joked, "I was figuring on getting a little boat."



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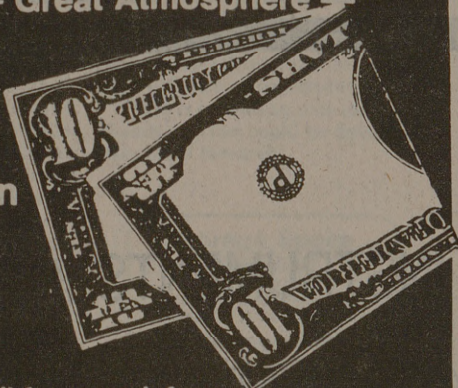
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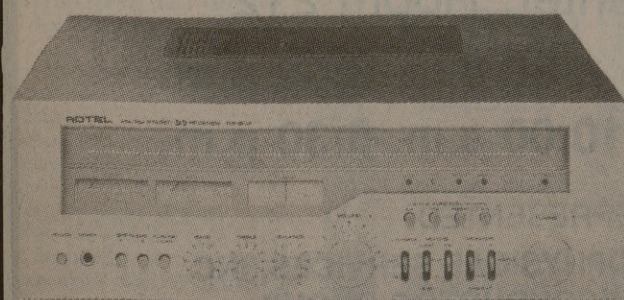


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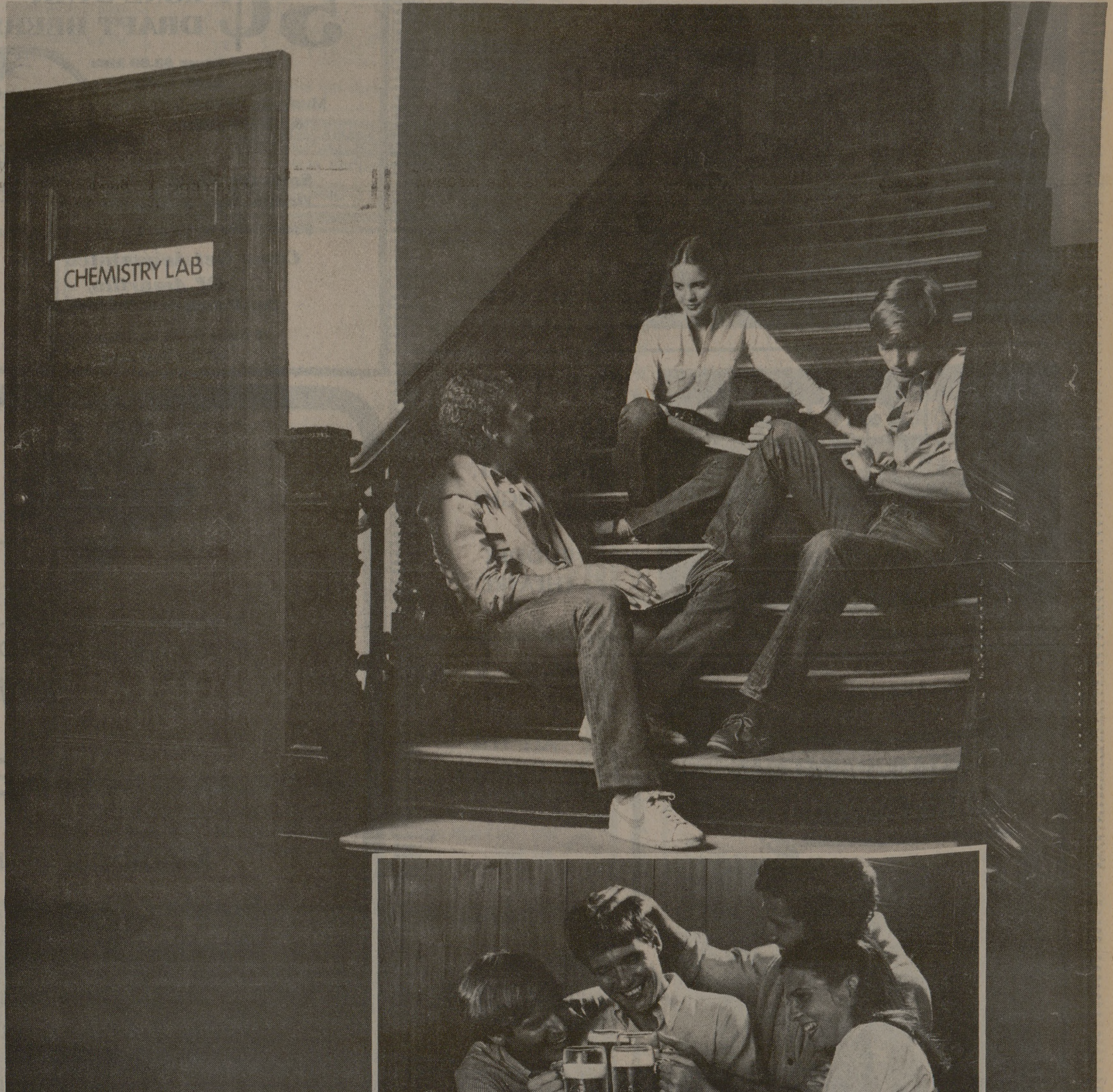
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