

THE BATTALION

Serving the Texas A&M University community

Vol. 75 No. 64
12 Pages

Wednesday, December 2, 1981
College Station, Texas

USPS 045 360
Phone 845-2611

The Weather

Today		Tomorrow	
High	68	High	65
Low	35	Low	35
Chance of rain	10%	Chance of rain	10%

the season
ing to
After the
(Riley)
n high
gges to
en slant
score an
turning
ark, from
tes into

we state
of the ga
d wro
it at a
to

gans
We do
nd we
up. We
and the
us a

TA

Y

inter
corate

fruit

itizen

SOLD

OS

Y

P-1

PUS

DO!

L

Y



Photo by Diana Sultenfuss

Lana Dial, standing, a freshman general studies major, get into the spirit of the season by decorating a Christmas tree in Mosher Hall. Cathie Feighl, a senior journalism major, and another woman are also present.

Vandiver's new aide discovers busy job

By DENISE RICHTER

Battalion Staff
Writing letters to former students, arranging brunches and visiting student organizations is all in a day's work for the assistants to Texas A&M President Frank E. Vandiver.

Sheran Riley, 36, discovered this recently when she was hired as an assistant to Vandiver. She joins Dr. Malon Southerland, who has served as an assistant to the president for two years.

Riley previously was employed as a trust administrative officer at RepublicBank in Dallas. She came to College Station Nov. 15 to start work the next day.

Riley will also be working towards a master's degree while at Texas A&M. She holds a bachelor of business administration degree from Memphis State University and she says plans to enroll in computer science and statistics courses.

"This position was a wonderful opportunity, an opportunity to be on a university campus," Riley said. "This job won't be too different from the one in Dallas — both positions involve working with people. The actual day-to-day work will be different but basically, a lot of the problems will be the same."

"I'm still getting broken into the job. This office handles a lot of special events and it's our responsibility to see that everything is coordinated for these events."

Being an assistant to the University president is never boring, Riley said. Her duties can, and do, include everything from ordering football tickets for guests of the University to corresponding with former students.

"I didn't realize the amount of paperwork in this office," she said. "Former students write (Vandiver) with their opinions on ... specific things going on and each of these letters has to be answered."

Riley said she and Southerland usually write the letters, which are subject to Vandiver's approval.

Although Riley is a newcomer to Texas A&M, she is no stranger to Aggie traditions: "I've always felt there was a real spirit among people who had gone (to Texas A&M). I've heard



Sheran Riley

the saying 'Once an Aggie, always an Aggie' and now I know that it's true. There's a great fellowship among Aggies."

"This school has a lot of traditions and I like that. That's why the idea of getting a master's degree from here and being a true Aggie appealed to me."

Riley replaces Dr. Elizabeth Cowan, who served as an assistant to the president for one year. Cowan, a professor in the Department of English, took a leave of absence to complete work on a book on writing. She plans to return to full-time teaching in July.

Reagan offering olive branch to union leaders

United Press International
WASHINGTON — President Reagan is offering an olive branch to union leaders — a possible change in administration policy that would allow 11,400 fired air traffic controllers to get other federal jobs.

The White House said Reagan expressed that possibility Tuesday during a meeting with Teamsters union President Roy Lee Williams and will restate it today when he meets with AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland and leaders of the 15-million-member labor federation.

White House spokesman David Gergen emphasized that Reagan is not considering putting the air controllers back in the towers at this time, but at some future date.

Kirkland has expressed anger over Reagan's handling of the controllers' strike, charging the administration with having "an economic house of ill repute," and attacked its response to the 8 percent unemployment rate.

Today's meeting with the 35-member AFL-CIO Executive Council caps a three-day effort by the White House to court better relations with the labor movement that has become increasingly hostile in recent months.

In a statement released Tuesday, the White House said Reagan told the Teamsters officials there was no change

in his fundamental position with regard to the controllers.

"The president suggested to the Teamsters leaders today (Tuesday) that he was considering the question of whether or not the controllers who have been fired should continue to be barred from any federal employment for a three-year period, as is currently the case," the statement said.

Reagan wanted to confer with Transportation Secretary Drew Lewis before making any decision, the statement added.

"Our first responsibility is to the controllers who stayed on the job, working long hours to keep the planes flying safely," the statement quoted Reagan as saying.

Prison director to speak about recent problems tonight

Behind bars in the Texas Department of Corrections is not the safest place to be these days.

W.J. Estelle, director of the Texas Department of Corrections, says this year is winding down as the most violent of the 10 years he has been chief of the nation's largest prison system.

And he will be in College Station tonight to discuss the TDC's recent problems and how they are being handled in a program sponsored by the MSC Political Forum Committee.

Estelle has served as director of the TDC since 1972. His career in corrections began 29 years ago with the California Department of Corrections, and he also served as a warden of the Montana State Prison.

This year, 11 inmates have been murdered by other prisoners and from Nov. 14 to Nov. 21, violence erupted at three Texas prisons, injuring 70 guards and inmates and causing at least \$300,000 in property damage, the Dallas Morning News reported.

In addition to violence, the TDC has been faced with overcrowding. The Texas prison system has grown from 15,000 in 1971 to over 31,000 in 1981. Department of Justice efforts to control overcrowding have led the TDC to set up tents on prison grounds for the inmates to help alleviate the problem.

The program, entitled "And Justice for All?" will begin at 8 p.m. in Rudder Theater. Admission is free.

Trees started chain of customs

Yule origins unknown

By JENNIFER WAYMAN

Battalion Reporter
This Christmas countless evergreens will be decorated with ornaments and lights — although few people know where the holiday tradition originated. Tree worship and using evergreens as home decorations was a practice of pre-Christian origin. However, it surfaced after European pagans were converted to Christianity.

In Scandinavia the custom was to decorate the house and barn with evergreens at the New Year to scare away the devil.

And in Germany, trees were placed in the home during the winter, indicating that nature did not die under the ice and snow and spring would come again.

But, the custom of trimming and lighting a tree at Christmastime probably had its origin in medieval German

mystery plays when a fir tree, called the Paradise tree, was decorated with apples representing the Garden of Eden. After these plays were discontinued, a Paradise tree was placed in the home on Dec. 24, the religious feast day of Adam and Eve.

The tree was hung with cookies representing the Host, the Christian sign of redemption. Candles often were added as a symbol of Christ.

Also during this season, a Christmas pyramid — a triangular, wooden construction with shelves to hold Christmas figurines — was decorated with candles, evergreens and a star, and placed in the home. By the 16th century, the Christmas pyramid and Paradise tree had merged, becoming the Christmas tree.

By the beginning of the 19th century the custom had spread from Germany to most of the countries of Northern Europe. It was introduced in England in 1841 by Prince Albert of Saxony, husband of Queen Victoria. The Victorian tree was decorated with candles and candies, and fancy cakes hung from the branches by ribbon and paper chains.

German immigrants brought the Christmas tree to the United States in the 17th century and it was the height of fashion by the 19th century.

Today many types of Christmas trees are available including the Douglas fir, noble fir, blue spruce, Scotch pine and a new variety called the white pine.

Ernest Gregg, salesman for the local Farm Patch, said the most popular tree this year is the white pine because it is guaranteed to last six to eight weeks without shedding or discoloring. The bark and needles also are less sticky than other trees.

Gregg said trees range in size from about 3 feet to 17 feet tall and in price from about \$6.95 to \$74.95.

Trees may be flocked in almost any color requested including white, red, pink and even maroon.

Service forester, says. About 30 million Christmas trees are sold in the United States annually, with about 4.5 million sales in Texas. Most trees sold in Texas are from northern states, mainly Michigan, Wisconsin and Oregon.

Yet, the Christmas tree industry hit Texas several years ago. Three to four million trees have been planted in Texas with about one million new trees planted each year. About 40,000 Texas trees were sold this year.

Several campus organizations are participating in Christmas tree sales this year.

The Texas A&M Forestry Club is selling 5 foot to 8 foot trees for \$18 at the Forestry Building until the supply is depleted.

And first year veterinary students are selling 5 foot to 8 foot trees at prices ranging from \$19 to \$35 at the College of Veterinary Medicine. Proceeds will go mainly toward renovation of an animal shelter in Bryan.

Lambda Sigma, a sophomore honor society, will sell 2 foot to 4 foot trees for \$4 to \$5 at Commons and Sbis Dining Halls beginning Dec. 3.

Finding the right tree to liven up the holidays

By TINA LINCH

Battalion Reporter
How to select a live cut Christmas tree eludes you, following is a list of hints:

*Check freshness by bouncing the tree trunk on the ground to see if the needles fall.

*If the trunk is sticky with resin, the tree is fresh.

*Keep in mind where the tree will be placed. A small tree may look better on a table than on the floor. If the tree will be viewed from all sides, choose a fully branched symmetrical one. But, branches may be wired into a tree's bare spots.

*When ready to decorate, make a diagonal cut across the trunk an inch above the original cut for better water absorption. Keep the tree in water to prevent drying out and fire hazards. Do not place by televisions, heaters or fireplaces.

Although many people avoid the annual tree-lot shopping by opting for artificial trees, the live Christmas tree industry is not declining, Dr. Mike Walterscheid, Agricultural Extensive

Alien education arguments studied by Supreme Court

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The issue of a free education in the United States as a motive for illegal immigration was the focal point of arguments before the Supreme Court testing a Texas law excluding the children of undocumented workers from the state's schools.

The case, heard Tuesday by the Court, will be decided sometime before July.

All of the justices took active part in questioning the lawyers but despite prodding by Justice Thurgood Marshall, the key constitutional issue of whether the illegal aliens are protected by the Equal Protection clause of the 14th Amendment — and thus have the right to an education — was addressed only obliquely during the oral arguments.

At issue in the controversy is a 1975 Texas statute, struck down by lower courts, that cut off state funds to local public school districts for the cost of educating the children of illegal aliens.

However, the law allows school districts to either exclude the children or to make them pay tuition which, because illegal aliens are generally poor, effectively prevents their enrollment.

"We feel it (illegal immigration) may be a disastrous number in the future," Richard L. Arnett, Assistant Attorney General of Texas told the court.

Arnett argued that if the law is ruled unconstitutional, all the children in Mexico could potentially cross the border for an education in Texas.

He said the state had "one overriding objective, and that is preservation of the educational resources of the state."

But lawyers from the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, representing the interests of the children, argued that education was not much of a lure in bringing illegal aliens into the country.

"The evidence indicates that education is a minimal pull factor," Peter Roos told the Court. "Education has little to do with unlawful immigration," he said,

adding that "the preclusion of education will not solve the problem."

Peter Schey, also representing the undocumented children, argued that the state of California has a much larger non-citizen population than Texas yet has not found it necessary to deny the children of illegal aliens in that state an education.

He also noted that Texas gets some 25 percent of all federal funds aimed at bilingual and migrant children.

Roos told the court that despite their illegal status, many families of undocumented workers had been in the United States for more than a decade and it was very unlikely the Immigration and Naturalization Service would ever move to deport them.

"There is a de facto amnesty policy in the United States (that effectively) dulls the likelihood of these children being identified and deported," he said.

"The INS has limited resources. They do not go after families except in the rarest of cases."