



photo by Karen Kaley

Ben Vogler, a sales representative for First Fone, Inc., helps students sign up for the phone service, which offers discounted long distance rates. Terry Stephenson, a general partner, explains the service to interested students.

First Fone sign-ups held in MSC

by Johna Jo Maurer
Battalion Staff
If long-distance phone bills are keeping you from talking to out-of-towners as often as you'd like, there may be a solution. Student Government, on behalf of all Texas A&M students, has chosen to sponsor First Fone, Inc., a company offering reduced long-distance phone rates.

Sign-ups for First Fone will be held through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the second floor of the Memorial Student Center.

Sharon Moore, a member of Student Government's Student Services Committee, said Student Government chose to sponsor First Fone because Student Government members felt the company could best serve students.

"First Fone has a local office and service up here," Moore said. "They are smaller than MCI Telecommunications and are very personable and willing to serve."

With First Fone, long-distance calls can be made anywhere. First Fone customers dial an access number, hear a beep, dial an authorized code, then the area code and phone number.

In addition to the company's

rates per call, a \$5 monthly fee is charged for service from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. weekdays and 24-hour service on weekends and holidays. A \$10 fee is charged for continuous service.

Child abuse hearing set Friday in Rudder Tower

By Cindy Gee

Battalion Staff
Last year John was a statistic. He was one of 387 child abuse cases reported in Brazos County.

A recent publication by the Texas Department of Community Affairs said John is likely to become a statistic again: "Many social problems have their origin in childhood. Much of the crime, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, physical handicaps, unemployment and other problems of today can be reduced or averted if appropriate steps are taken in childhood."

Dorothy Taylor, family life specialist with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, said research shows that child abuse is a never-ending cycle. Abused children tend to grow up to be abusers, she said.

"We can't wait around for a lifetime of research," Taylor said. "We've got to get to the root of the problem so that these kids won't end up needing some kind of government support."

To examine these issues, the Texas House Select Committee on Child Abuse/Neglect and Child Pornography will hold a hearing Friday in 302 Rudder. The hearing will begin at 9:30 a.m., and anyone who wishes to testify will be heard. There is no agenda for the all-day meeting.

State Rep. Bill Presnal, committee vice chairman, said that from the hearings, the committee will determine what new legislation might be needed, as well as locate gaps and loopholes in existing laws.

Taylor said: "If everybody — doctors, genetic scientists, social workers, support systems and families — comes together to show the problem, this commit-

tee could go back to the Texas legislature to get more funding."

Taylor said she would like to see government agencies take the preventive approach to child abuse. "We want to help people see the responsibilities of parenthood," she said. "Do they really want children? The responsibility doesn't get to them until the child is here screaming and crying, and bills are due but the budget is low."

The number of students and faculty members at Texas A&M who abuse their children is surprising, Taylor said, because "anytime you have a mobile population undergoing stress and strain you'll have a high incidence of child abuse."

Anyone knowing of a child abuse situation, including physical, emotional, sexual or neglect, is required by law to report it to the county Department of Human Resources. Reports may be made anonymously.

The Brazos County Department of Human Resources receives an average of 35 to 40 reported cases a month. Out of these, about one case a month goes to court.

After a case has been reported, a protective service worker from the DHR or an in-home care specialist from the Community Action Agency is sent to work with the parents, to teach them home management, health care, parent/child in-

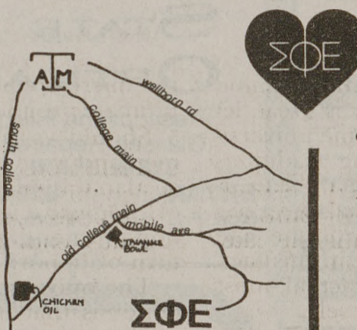
teraction, alternate discipline methods and family communication.

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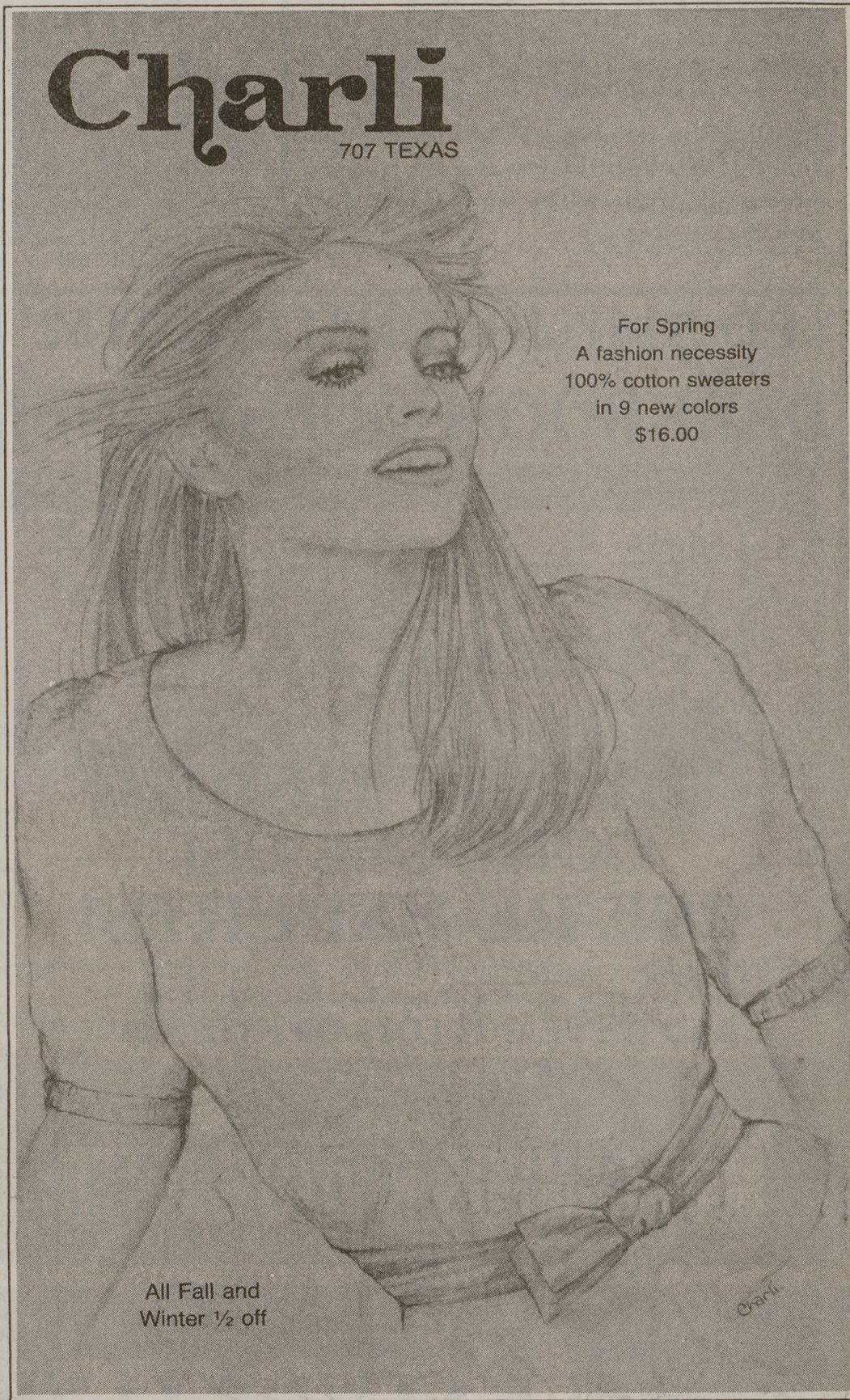
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