

Volunteers training to help rape victims

by Gwyneth M. Vaughn

Battalion Reporter

Training sessions for 22 volunteers began Monday for the area's first rape crisis center. A location has not been found for the center, but organizer Carolyn Ruffino said Wednesday, she hopes it will be open within the next two months.

Ruffino, the county court at law judge, said the volunteer counselors will provide escort counseling for rape victims, which means they will go to the hospital with them, see them through questioning and assist them through a trial if one results. The counselors will act as sounding boards for the victims and "give them moral, physical and emotional support," Ruffino said.

The center also will provide referral services — sending people to other agencies for additional services or information, she said, and will work to educate the community about rape.

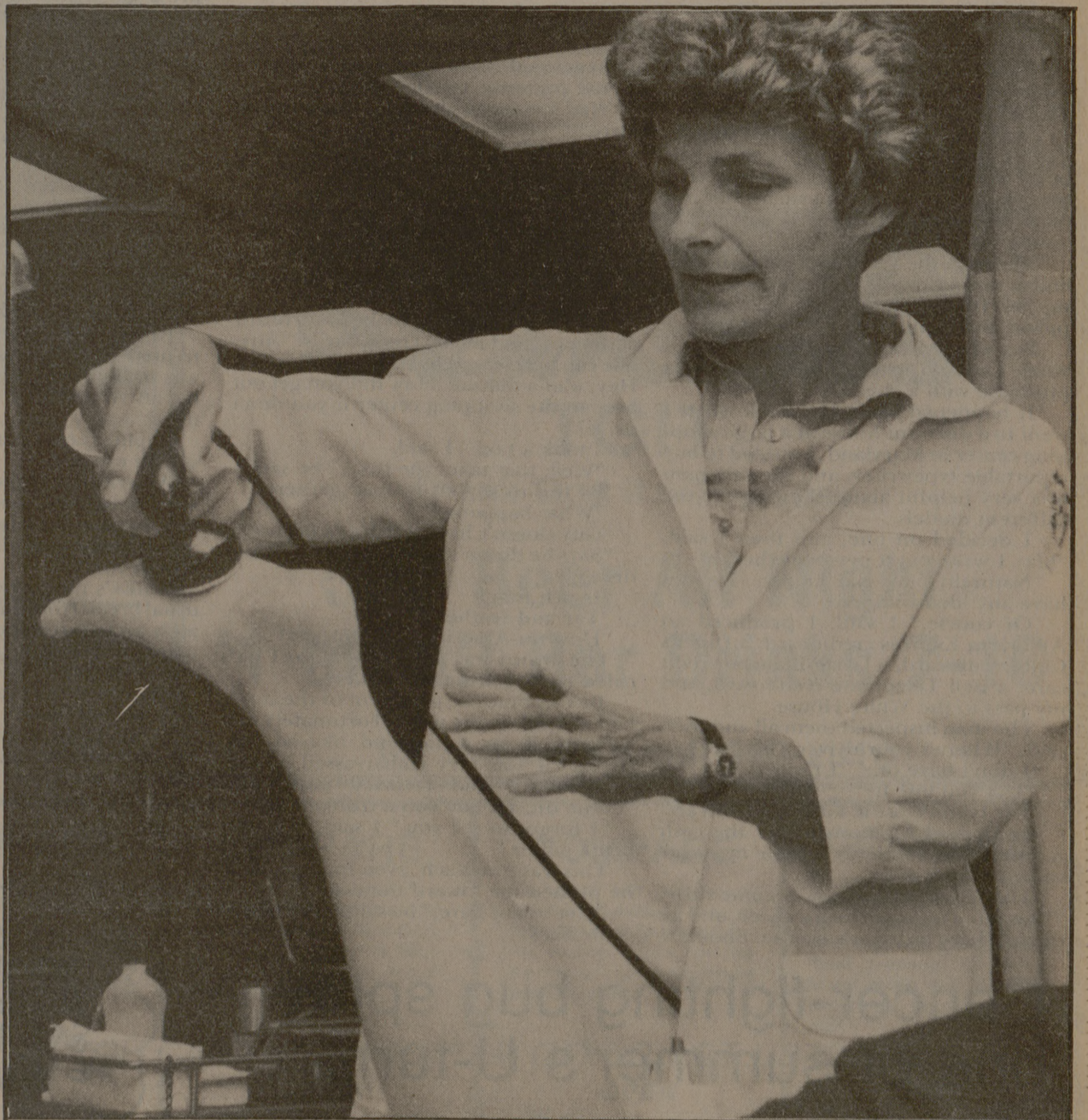
Bill Turner, Brazos County assistant district attorney, said most people think rape is a sex crime, but it is really an assault crime. The victims seldom bring it upon themselves, he said.

The volunteers will staff the center from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day, and calls will be forwarded to their homes at night, Ruffino said.

Anyone interested in helping can attend the training sessions, she said, and volunteers will be screened for counselor positions after the training is completed. She said she hopes to eventually have 50 trained volunteers.

The center needs funding — most of which will come from the community, she said. To help raise the funds Ruffino is applying for grants, but to open the center \$10,000 will have to be collected. Eventually, a director, secretary and full-time staff will have to be hired for the center, she said.

Persons interested in volunteering or donating money for the center can call Ruffino or Turner at 775-7400, or send donations or checks, made out to Brazos County Rape Crisis Center, Inc., to the county offices. Those interested in volunteering also can attend the training sessions being held Thursday and Monday through Thursday of next week at the county court at law courtroom on the second floor of the county courthouse.



Stimulating

photo by Scott Minton

Sue Hill, a physical therapist at A.P. Beutel Health Center, administers an ultra-sound treatment to a patient's foot. The patient was injured while jogging.

Search for steamboat to end in September

by Jill Slayman

Battalion Reporter

Several sunken steamboats have been found in Caddo Lake, but none have been the Mittie Stephens — the boat Texas A&M archaeologists hoped to find when they began their search in March.

Dr. Ervan Garrison, leader of the Mittie Stephens research team, says the team learned two weeks ago the boat believed to be the Mittie Stephens — which burned and sank 14 years ago — may be the R.K. Dunkerson.

The steamboat can't be the Mittie Stephens because the one which the team's divers found is a stern-wheeler, Garrison said. The newly discovered boat has one big paddle wheel behind it, but the Mittie Stephens had one paddle on each side of the boat.

But the research team is excited about the discovery of the boat, Garrison said, because it appears to be in fairly good condition and may contain quite a bit of machinery. Three-fourths of the paddle and the stern seem to be intact, he said.

Much of the Mittie Stephens' structure is believed to have burned before it sank shortly after midnight on Feb. 2, 1869.

The boat is of historical significance because of its three lavishly decorated decks, and because it was carrying many wealthy passengers when it went down. At least 62 of the 104 passengers died.

At one time the Mittie Stephens carried Union dispatches down the Red River during the Civil War.

The New Orleans-based boat navigated the Mississippi River, the Red River, Big Cedar Bayou and Caddo Lake — which straddles the Texas-Louisiana border.

The boat was bound for Jefferson — the second largest city in Texas at the time.

"I'm not totally convinced that we're in the wrong area," Garrison said of the search. "The banks could have caved in on her."

Searching for clues is a slow process for the divers, he said. A pipeline in the area with moss growing around it covers the divers' masks and equipment, causing them to surface about every five minutes to clean up, he said.

Metal detectors are used, he said, but if mud is covering an object, it usually can't be detected.

"We're going to keep working the Caddo area," Garrison said, "until we're absolutely sure the Mittie Stephens isn't there."

A silver spoon with the initials "G.H." which was found in the lake is

an interesting clue, Garrison said. It may be nothing, but at one time, the Mittie Stephens had a cook whose initials were "G.H." Researchers are checking with a silver company to see if it had the spoon pattern in the 1860s.

Two other boats also have been discovered, which Garrison said could be from a list of about 12 steamboats that have sunk.

To narrow down which ones they may be, he said, the dimensions of the boats must be taken after the mud is cleared away from them.

Research can be slow at times because permits are needed to do any dredging or moving of objects at the lake's bottom, Garrison said. The permits are obtained from either Texas or Louisiana, depending on the side of the lake.

Researchers now are waiting for a permit from Louisiana to work on the R.K. Dunkerson.

Researchers will continue searching for the Mittie Stephens until September, Garrison said. If it hasn't been found by then, they will review documents again to decide if they will keep looking in the same area or start looking somewhere else.

"If anyone knows where the Mittie Stephens is," Garrison said, "please let me know."

Radioactive waste disposal site narrowed to 15 counties

United Press International

AUSTIN — The state has zeroed in on 15 counties in southwest and north-central Texas as prospective sites for a multi-million dollar low-level radioactive waste disposal facility expected to open in late 1987.

Tom Blackburn, spokesman for the Texas Low Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Authority, said

Wednesday the list will probably be trimmed to five sites by Aug. 31.

The 300-acre facility, which will cost between \$10 million and \$12 million, will store low-level nuclear waste produced at Texas hospitals, universities, laboratories and some industries.

Counties still in contention for the plant are Maverick, Zavala, Frio, Dim-

mit, LaSalle, Webb in Southwest Texas; and Garza, Borden, Howard, Scurry, Mitchell, Haskell, Throckmorton, Baylor and Knox in the north.

Blackburn said none of the potential sites are within 20 miles of a major city.

A three-part siting study is expected to be finished by Aug. 31 when

three to five final sites will be recommended to the authority, said Blackburn. A final site will be selected by the authority for licensing.

Meanwhile, the authority said it had extended its \$590,000 contract with a Houston firm that is conducting the siting study.

The consulting firm is reviewing elements such as geology, hydrology,

mineral resources, population and flooding potential in its study of possible sites.

Blackburn said the proposed facility, which will have a life expectancy of about 30 years, will be built "strictly for Texas-generated waste." He said one site will satisfy the state's needs until such facilities are no longer needed.

Blackburn said the facility, which will open in late 1987 or early 1988, will not store high-level spent fuel from nuclear power reactors, but it may handle low-level radioactive materials from nuclear reactors.

When asked about possible military aid, he replied: "We will support Nicaragua politically in all forms."

The American battle group, led by the aircraft carrier Ranger, is patrolling off the Pacific coast of Central America. The aircraft carrier Coral Sea and the battleship New Jersey are to join the group by the end of September.

'Show of force' rapped

United Press International

A top Soviet official visiting Nicaragua denounced the presence of U.S. warships off Central America as a "clear demonstration of force," but stopped short of promising military aid to the Sandinista government in case of war.

Soviet Secretary General of Foreign Affairs Yuri Fokine told a news conference in Managua Wednesday

that the United States was "flexing its muscles" by ordering a battle group to steam off Nicaragua's Pacific coast.

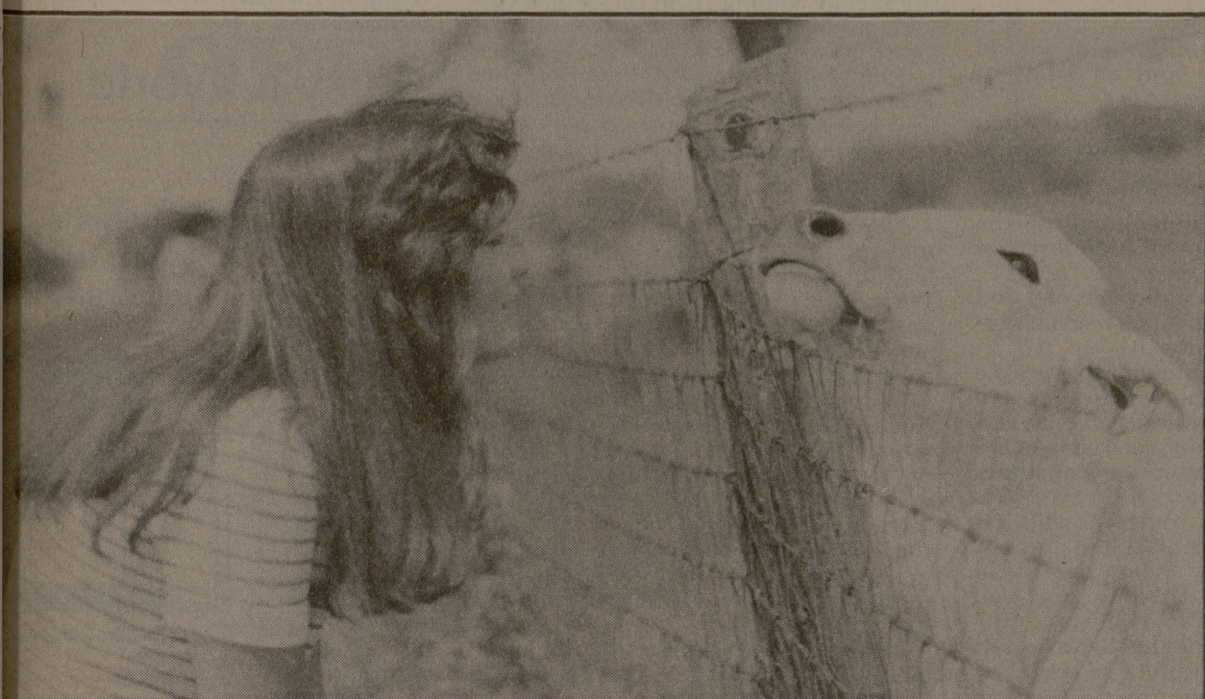
The ships are "a clear demonstration of force to coerce Nicaragua into certain action, into some behavior that is suitable, that is acceptable to the United States," Fokine said at the end of two days of talks with Sandinista officials.

Fokine, however, hinted the Soviets would not supply direct milit-

ary aid to the Sandinistas if Nicaragua became engaged in a regional war.

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Watch out, Bevo!

photo by Toni Renee Bishop

Julia Lynn, a music education major at the University of Texas, feels right at home with her bovine companion, Lynn,

visiting from Austin, was touring the cattle pasture by the Beef and Cattle Center on Wednesday.

GM to fight fine, recall of X-cars

United Press International

WASHINGTON — General Motors Corp., denying it tried to conceal a brake defect in its 1980 X-cars, vows to fight a government suit calling for a recall of 1.1 million automobiles and a \$4 million fine.

The government filed a complaint Wednesday asking a U.S. District Court in Washington to recall all 1980 model X-cars for brake repairs and to impose the unprecedented \$4 million fine on GM for trying to cover up the problem.

The No. 1 auto maker immediately vowed to contest the suit.

"We categorically deny the government's assertion of misrepresentation," GM's assistant general counsel, William Weber Jr., said from Detroit. The suit was unexpected, Weber said, and "it is especially unwarranted in view of the fact that GM has cooperated fully with (the government) to develop the facts which will show clearly that no further recall or other corrective action is appropriate."

Transportation Secretary Elizabeth Dole called the complaint "one

of the most serious ever filed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration" and said it "reflects the priority this department has for automobile safety."

The suit, filed by the Justice Department for the traffic safety agency, claims GM knew before it began producing its front-wheel-drive 1980 X-cars — the Chevrolet Citation, Pontiac Phoenix, Buick Skylark and Oldsmobile Omega — that the rear wheels had a tendency to lock prematurely.

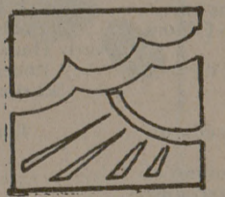
At least 1,740 owners have complained of rear wheel lockups causing skidding or loss of control, resulting in numerous accidents and at least 71 injuries and 15 deaths.

The lawsuit accused GM of going ahead with production, even though its own tests had spotted the problem, and of failing to notify owners or government highway safety officials of the defect.

GM changed its brake design beginning with its 1981 models.

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forecast

Cloudy to partly cloudy skies today with a 30 percent chance of thundershowers and a high of 89. The low tonight near 73. Partly cloudy Friday with a 20 percent chance of thundershowers and a high of 91. Partly sunny Saturday with a 10 percent chance of showers and a high of 91.