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Youth leader profits from caring

By **LINDA SCARMARDO**
Reporter

College and high school students constantly walk in and out of John Clifford's in-home office. Peering from behind his desk, Clifford looks like any other businessman out to make a profit. But he is a different kind of businessman.

His profit is in helping area high school and junior high school students cope with today's world, something he does with the help of Texas A&M students.

Clifford is the area director for Brazos Valley Young Life.

Young Life is a non-profit religious organization. Through Young Life, A&M students, under Clifford's direction, interact with high school and junior high school students from Bryan, College Station, Navasota and Snook.

"I'm in Young Life because I believe every kid has the right to hear about the gospel of Jesus Christ in an exciting way and have it lived out for them by people who care about them," Clifford said. "That is our number one goal and overriding purpose."

Clifford's responsibilities as area director are numerous.

Clifford said he is primarily re-

sponsible for training volunteer leaders from A&M. He also is in charge of recruiting and overseeing the content of what goes on in area Young Life clubs.

He must tend to administrative duties as well as "creating and discovering other ways to reach kids," he said.

When Clifford came to Bryan-College Station in 1979, 20 volunteer leaders from A&M worked with area youth. Today 57 volunteer leaders are involved in the Young Life program.

"Young Life here is unique in that we rely mostly on A&M students as leaders," Clifford said. Other areas, including college towns, use young adults in their communities, he said.

"They can't seem to get the commitment (from college students). Texas A&M students seem to be more serious and dedicated. We have an excellent group of committed A&M leaders who put in 10-25 hours a week to help kids," he said.

Clifford said he would like to equip A&M students for a lifetime of ministry.

"Because of A&M and the people it draws, we have the chance to affect a lot of people," he said.

Clifford said Young Life can help young people through examples and by giving them alternatives.

"High school and junior high kids are given too much responsibility at a time when they can't handle it and as a result, maturity comes later in life," Clifford said. "Their input for decision making is coming from television and movies."

"This is giving them false direction. They (television and movies) show that it's normal to live with people before marriage, be divorced, or shoot people out of anger. Young Life combats this by living in a diseased world without the disease."

Clifford's involvement in Young Life began as a high school junior.

"All of my friends were going (to Young Life club)," he said. "They said it would be a big party and a dance, and that all the girls would be there. They lied."

Since that beginning, Clifford has been involved as a Young Life club member, youth volunteer and staff member for 19 years.

Clifford says when he came to Bryan-College Station, Young Life was in four schools and had 150-200 members.

Today in the Brazos Valley area,

Young Life is in seven schools and has 300-370 members.

Clifford and his volunteer leaders conduct weekly club meetings in area homes. Clifford said opportunities are provided for club members to go on ski trips, summer trips, and weekend trips.

One difficulty Young Life in the area faces is the need for "neutral spots for kids to meet," Clifford said. "We are growing out of homes (A&M Consolidated and Bryan High School and Snook need a place to meet. We also need five to six leaders for junior high schools."

Young Life was incorporated in Dallas in 1941. It is active in all 48 states and in 17 foreign countries including Africa, Australia, England, Korea, France and Peru.

"The foreign clubs change the ministry to fit each country's customs and lifestyles," Clifford said.

Before coming to Bryan-College Station, Clifford said he worked as a Young Life staff member for four years in Corpus Christi and in Oklahoma.

Clifford has a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Oklahoma and is working on a master's from Fuller Seminary.

Oil slick threatens California wildlife

United Press International

BODEGA BAY, Calif. — Crews worked behind 2,000 feet of boom stretched across the harbor mouth Sunday in a battle to clean up an oil spill killing seabirds and threatening "the most extensive aquaculture facility on the West Coast."

The spill came from the stern section of the tanker Puerto Rican, which was hit by explosion and fire after it sailed out San Francisco Bay Oct. 31 and broke apart during a savage storm four days later.

Three skimming vessels operating in the harbor have so far sucked up about 10,000 gallons of the oil, most of it of the light lubricating variety, said Coast Guard Chief Warrant Of-

ficer Dale Puckett.

Swells off the coast were running at 10 feet Sunday with winds up to 23 mph, making work offshore impossible, he said.

Crews, including volunteers, worked to keep the yellow-colored oil from reaching the Bodega Marine Laboratory, Refuge and Reserve of the University of California.

Laboratory manager Paul Siri said the 425-acre habitat was "the most extensive aquaculture facility on the West Coast" and was in danger of being ruined.

A multimillion-dollar system that treats seawater used in research was invaded by the oil, threatening the work of 100 graduate students, Siri

said.

The 105,000 gallon spill killed scores of birds and coated hundreds of others as it moved north from the stern that sank in 2400 feet of water off San Francisco.

Patches of oil were scattered along the coast, including Point Reyes and Tomales Bay and the mouth of the Russian River, an area 50 miles north of San Francisco.

"We found 130 dead birds around Bodega Bay and took scores more that were covered with oil to a cleaning station," said Peter Connors, a research ecologist at the laboratory.

Officials at the cleaning station located at an old Army fort estimated 438 birds have been brought in for

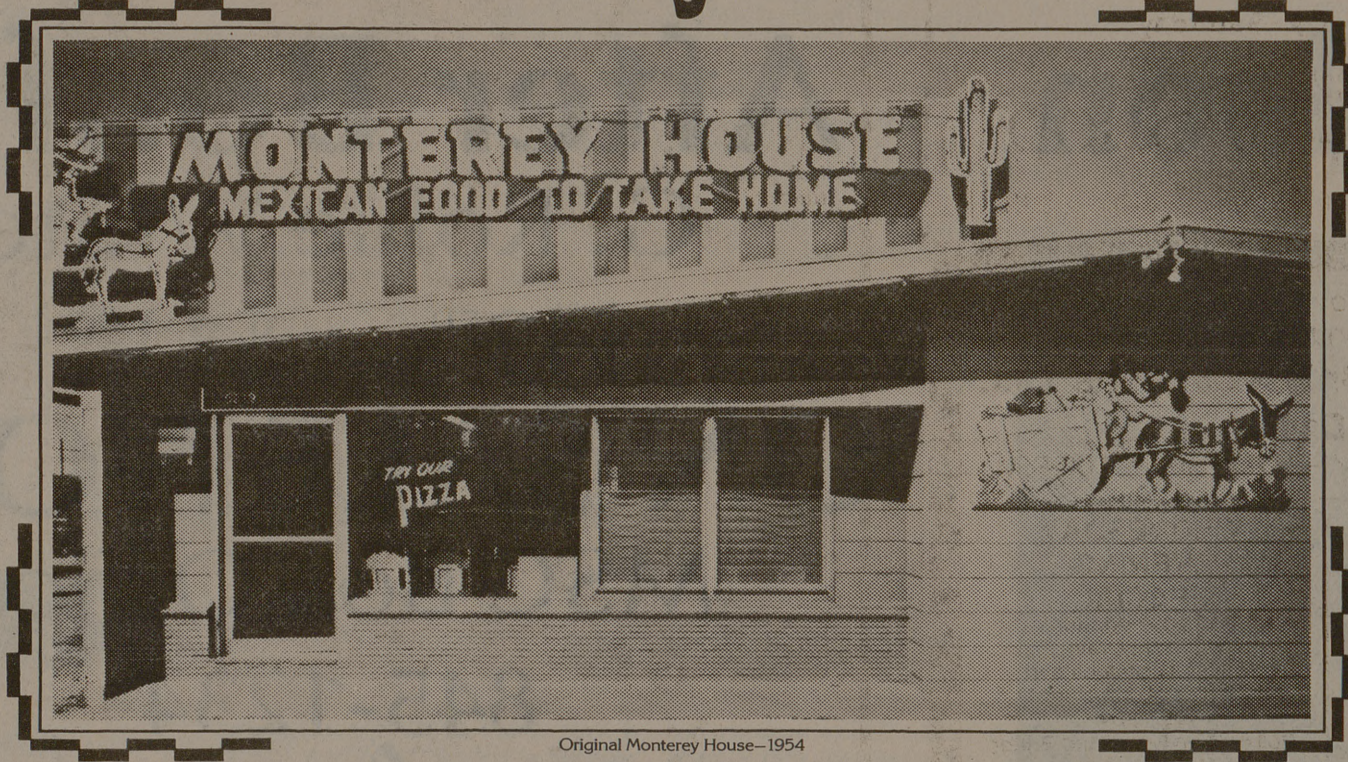
cleaning.

The bow section of the Puerto Rican, still containing 48,000 barrels of petroleum products, remained afloat and was being towed by a tug Sunday 67 miles off the coast.

The Coast Guard said the owner, Keystone Shipping Co. of Philadelphia, have submitted a plan on what to do with the bow which made up about 75 percent of the ship. But no details were released.

A Coast Guard Court of Inquiry has been holding hearings in an effort to determine the cause of the explosion which killed one crew member.

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