

# State and Local

Program improving reading skills

## Prof's plan helping youngsters

By GRACE LOVELL  
Reporter

A multi-ethnic reading program developed and tested by a Texas A&M professor has improved the reading skills and racial attitudes of elementary and junior high school students, says Dr. Donna Norton, the program's founder.

The students who have used the program have gained an average of two grade levels for each year in the program, she says.

"Many children need an understanding of their own culture as well as the culture of others," Norton says.

Biographies and reading material are used to show the children other culture's beliefs, such as legends and traditions, Norton says.

Not only has this program advanced some remedial students by two grade levels, but it also enables them to pass statewide tests, she says.

In 1980 Norton began a study to change children's racial prejudices. After conducting the study on her own, Norton received a three-year grant from the Meadows Founda-

tion in September 1984 to continue her study.

Last year, the first year of the

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grant, the material was expanded and tested, and an in-service program was held for teachers who will be using the program within the schools.

This school year, the second year of the grant, more teachers will be added and the first-year teachers will be trained to become self-sufficient. The dissemination process and the development of an institute that will include other school districts will take place the last year of the grant, Norton says.

In 1980 she began the study by identifying positive children's literature and then developing material to go along with the books, Norton

says. She then had students in her classes at A&M evaluate the program.

"To evaluate good literature we look at the values presented and determine if they are appropriate or authentic," Norton says.

Sue Mormon, who is now working on her doctorate in spelling, was hired in 1980 as a summer graduate assistant to write lessons to go along with the children's books, Norton says.

Mormon, who was teaching an eighth grade remedial class at Stephen F. Austin Junior High School,

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used the reading program in her class. The students were tested by

three attitudinal inventories. After testing the students, Mormon found that the program had increased several children's reading skills by two levels and three student's by five grade levels, Mormon says. She then sent a report to the principal explaining the program and the results.

Norton says that she received permission to test students at Sul Ross Elementary on racial attitudes.

Mormon adds, "We knew it changed attitudes, but we didn't know if it was helping or hurting."

Norton says, "After testing the students, we found that it was not only decreasing racial prejudice but increasing reading and writing skills. We then received a call from the Bryan Independent School District, asking if we could develop a program to help reading skills for remedial classes in the fifth through eighth grades.

Mormon says that after this year they hope to begin a summer training program, in which at least three faculty members from each district will spend three weeks of intensive training.

## Hearing on pipeline may be delayed

Associated Press

AUSTIN — State District Judge Joe Dibrell says he will decide by Friday whether to allow a Texas Railroad Commission hearing to continue on a proposed high pressure oil pipeline across the environmentally sensitive Edwards Aquifer.

Outspoken opponents of the application by All American Pipeline Co. say the commission's hearing, which began Dec. 10, should not continue until stricter water pollution standards are adopted as required by the 1985 Legislature.

Attorneys for All American and the Railroad Commission say present regulations are adequate to guarantee a safe pipeline across the important water-bearing strata be-

tween Austin and San Antonio.

The second phase of the commission hearing is scheduled to begin Jan. 14.

"I will give you a decision by Friday," Dibrell told about a dozen attorneys.

Opening statements were heard by a commission examiner on All American's application for a permit to operate a heated, high pressure 30-inch pipeline across Texas to transport Alaskan crude oil to refineries near Houston.

Witnesses said surveys for the pipeline were being made and land was being condemned along its route. Technical testimony was scheduled Jan. 14.

After the commission examiner

makes a recommendation, the application will go to the three-member commission for a decision.

Following the December hearing, a group called Concerned Citizens for the Edwards Aquifer, made up of landowners and others from Hays and Caldwell counties, asked Dibrell for an injunction.

They said the commission should not resume the hearing until it complied with an act of the 1985 Legislature calling for stricter regulations concerning pollution of surface and underground water by oil pipeline spills.

"All American has descended on Texas and is rolling across the state like a freight train," said attorney Tom Groce for Concerned Citizens.

"The Railroad Commission should slow it down."

Phillip Pfeiffer, attorney for the Edwards Underground Water district, said, "A hearing under present rules is wholly inappropriate and should be delayed and stayed until new rules are adopted."

Speaking for the commission, Joe Foy, assistant attorney general, said, "The Railroad Commission is not acting unlawfully in going ahead with the hearing. Our position is that no further rules are needed than those which were adopted previously."

Dan Moody, attorney for All American, said, "The commission may need to make some new rules but they are not prevented from proceeding now on this application."

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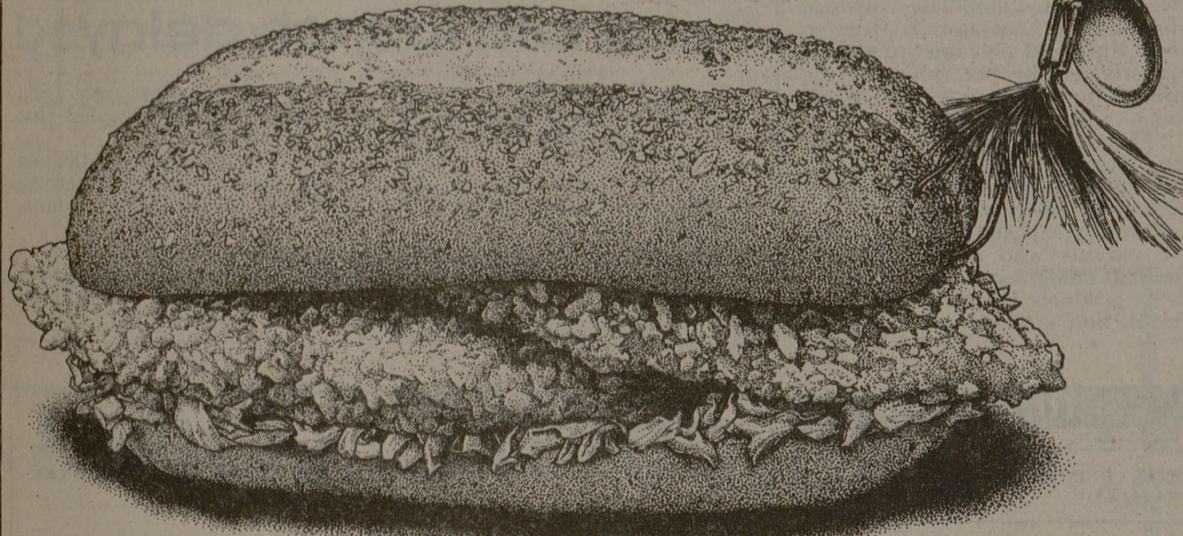
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