

State and Local

Station gives TECAT review session

DALLAS (AP) — A public television station is presenting a review of writing and reading skills for teachers who failed their first attempt at a statewide literacy test that will determine whether they keep their jobs.

A total 6,579 teachers and administrators who took the Texas Examination of Current Administrators and teachers failed it on the first testing date. They will have a second — and final — chance to take the test June 8.

Fred Tarpley, an East Texas State University professor who is an in-

structor in the televised reviews, said, "Before the TECAT, on almost any night of the week, educators had a wide choice of review workshops."

"Now it's difficult for teachers to find workshops. Also, the confidentiality of television instruction is important."

In addition to the educators who failed, those unable to take the test in March, and those who want to keep their certification current will take the second exam.

State officials developed the show, "TECAT in Review," two weeks ago at a meeting in Austin, said Dottie

Keetch, producer and director for the Richardson Instructional Television Center.

About a week ago, the department was asked to produce the shows jointly with the Region 10 Education Service Center in Richardson, a Dallas suburb.

Keetch, Tarpley and about 20 other educators and technical experts finished the first two shows Monday afternoon, and aired the first review on KERA-TV in Dallas June 26.

The lessons that review writing

and reading skills are enlivened by dramatizations.

"I'll tell you, it's far easier to teach sentence fragments to a real live person than it is to a camera," said Tarpley, who teaches literature and language at ETSU.

Educators also can send in writing samples on topics assigned on television, Tarpley said.

A group of 40 Dallas-area teachers will evaluate the samples and send them back before the test.

Texas Guard to get help with goddess

AUSTIN (AP) — The Mississippi National Guard will try to put the Goddess of Liberty statue atop the Texas Capitol dome Saturday, a task that proved too tricky for the Texas Guard.

The Texas Guard, using a Chinook CH47 helicopter, failed to mount the goddess on the dome in several attempts May 31 and June 1.

Texas officials looked to Mississippi for help because its guard has a CH54 helicopter — known as a "Sky Crane" — that could prove more suitable for the exacting job.

The airlift is set for 9 a.m. Saturday, weather permitting.

Texas pilots had no trouble using their Chinook CH47 transport helicopters to hoist the old Goddess of Liberty statue from the dome-top pole where she had perched for 97 years. But they could not put the 3,000-pound replacement statue up.

Maj. Gen. James Dennis, adjutant general of the Texas National Guard, said putting the replica back on the dome has proved very difficult.

"There was no problem getting her off," he said. "But threading the needle coming back down is another story."

Border authorities: Mexican, U.S. to continue cooperation

HIDALGO (AP) — Allegations of corruption caused a rift between U.S. authorities and their Mexican counterparts along the border, but both sides vow to work together to combat drug trafficking, alien smuggling and car thefts.

Last month, U.S. Customs Commissioner William von Raab, testifying before the Senate Foreign Affairs subcommittee, alleged massive corruption among Mexican officials who are supposed to combat drug trafficking.

But local, state and federal officials along the Texas border said arresting burglary suspects and recovering stolen merchandise in Mexico would be impossible without the help of their Mexican officials.

Jose G. Perez, police chief of this border community, said: "The Mexican officials we work with could care less what the senators say about that. They don't go by that. They could care less what the government said or what the president said."

Silvestre Reyes, chief of the U.S. Border Patrol sector in McAllen, said von Raab's testimony sparked concern among his sources in Mexico.

"They are an intricate part of operating on the border and that kind of testimony strains and, in some cases, damages those efforts," Reyes said.

"A few days after the testimony, they stated they were concerned they

were all being lumped together," he said about his Mexican counterparts. "But I reassured them that for my part we wanted cooperation to proceed."

In Cameron County, Chief Sheriff's Deputy Carlos Tapia described the relationship as being more personal than bureaucratic.

"Regardless what they say in Washington, we have a good relationship," he said. "We get tremendous cooperation from the State Judicial Police and sometimes we go directly to the mayor (of Matamoros), who has been a great help."

The cooperation between U.S. and Mexican authorities depends on the agencies. Border Patrol agents rely on intelligence work in controlling and arresting suspected narcotics and illegal alien smugglers.

Local and state authorities rely on help from Mexican law officers to recover stolen merchandise and vehicles and to arrest burglary or theft suspects in Mexico.

Reynaldo Garcia Duran, head of the Mexican immigration office in Reynosa, Mexico, said the testimony in Washington did not have a detrimental effect.

"We have a good working relationship with them and we dedicate ourselves to our work and what is said doesn't affect us," Garcia Duran said of American authorities.

U.S. authorities said working with Mexican officials is a two-way street.

"It's reciprocal in the way that if they have a problem and we can help them with it we attempt to help," Smith said. "We return the favor with a favor."

Reyes said Mexican authorities also have their own law enforcement concerns.

"They are very concerned with ammunition and drug smuggling into Mexico and we do joint investigations into that," Reyes said.

In Laredo, the Chamber of Commerce and the International Good Neighbor Council sent letters to newspaper editors asking for more positive stories about U.S.-Mexico relations in order to strengthen tourism in their city.

The letter said that local officials, "the real experts," should be allowed to testify before the subcommittee in Washington.

Dr. Dianne Freeman, the Chamber president, said Mexico does have its problems, but she said she hopes they can work them out. She said von Raab's testimony did not help.

"It's just bad timing and bad public relations in dealing with someone that we depend on," Freeman said. "They sit in their offices in Washington and make decisions and we pay for them."

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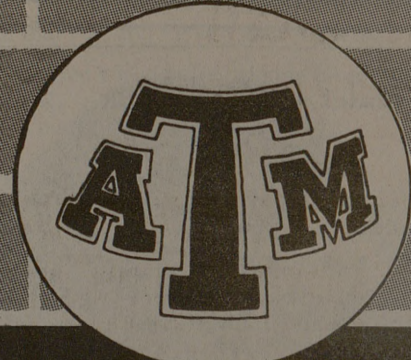
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