

Professor praises new cycling class

Bicycles provide alternative in P.E.

By Tami Tate
Reporter

If bouncing a ball has become a bore and beginning golf has lost its swing, try a new form of exercise and activity — bicycling.

Cycling was offered for the first time at Texas A&M in Spring 1987 through the outdoor education class, ODED 300, Outdoor Education Field Experiences, said Dr. Simon Priest, a health and physical education professor.

The class consists of rock climbing in the fall and cycling in the spring, he said. Dr. Camille Bunting, health and physical education professor, teaches rock climbing while Priest teaches cycling.

This semester is the first in which cycling has been offered at A&M, and so far 12 students are enrolled in the one-credit-hour program.

Priest said students can credit the class as a physical education requirement with permission from the dean of their college, and grades are based on attendance, a midterm examination, a skills assessment and a term assignment.

While in the class, students must devise a plan for a three-day bicycle tour. This includes a list of equipment and food, a map of the chosen route, an itinerary of activities and camping sites and a schedule of

times and distances involved, he said.

Despite its availability as a P.E. requirement, the class is structured more as a lecture course than an activity course. Lecture topics include bicycle construction and maintenance, road safety and regulations, equipment, group touring, cadence

and gearing ratios for hills, fitness training, nutrition and trip planning and execution, Priest said.

During one of its regular meetings, the class took a one-day trip in College Station and a three-day trip to the hill country west of Austin this month.

"The first day of the trip, we cycled from Dripping Springs to Blanco, which was 25 miles," Priest said. "The second day we went from Blanco to Pedernales Falls, which was 60 miles. The third day we cycled 25 miles from Pedernales Falls to Dripping Springs."

Students are required to provide their own bicycles, food and camping money. Camping equipment is

provided, he said. The students' cycling skills are graded during each trip. This accounts for 30 percent of the class grade.

Laszlo Szabo, assistant leader for the cycling class, said, "The three-day trip was very successful and everything went as scheduled. The trip was flexible and everyone had a lot

of fun." Priest said biking is the best way to exercise without injury because riding a bike does not stress parts of the body such as the knees. Cycling is a better beginning exercise than aerobics or running, he said.

Marty Muehlegger, an employee at Cycles Etc., also says cycling is healthier than other forms of exercise.

"There has been a definite increase in cycling due to health and fitness reasons," Muehlegger said. "It's a proven fact that bicycles are more healthy and easier on the body than some other activities such as jogging. You're sitting instead of putting pressure on your knees and joints."

Szabo says many people are cycling as a hobby, for competition and commuting. This, he says, has created a price increase in bicycle equipment.

"Bicycle equipment has increased 20 percent this year," he said. "There are more imports from Japan and a larger variety of equipment and products."

Muehlegger also says there is a larger variety of bicycle equipment. Prices have increased because of the equipment's exchange rate that comes from Japan and Europe.

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The class is geared toward bicycle touring instead of road racing, Szabo said.

"Bike touring involves riding longer distances and for longer periods of time," he said.

Because bicycle touring involves riding for long periods of time, the students were only able to take two riding trips.

"I would like to see the students able to take more rides around campus and take more day rides," he said.

Priest said the students enjoyed the class and learned more about cycling. "Many bikers are poorly educated in this area," he said. "This

Wife of minister attacked; condition remains critical

DALLAS (AP) — A Methodist minister who wore a bullet-proof vest to Easter services because of a string of life-threatening letters prayed Thursday at the bedside of his wife, who was in a coma after being choked and left near death.

FBI agents and police said they believed six threatening letters sent to the Rev. Walker Railey may be linked to the attack on his wife, Margaret.

Railey, minister of the 6,000-member First United Methodist Church of Dallas, preached about equality for blacks, said the Rev. Gordon Casad, the church's executive minister.

"He was concerned that blacks be given more opportunity to become a part of mainstream America," Casad said Thursday.

Railey returned home about 12:45 a.m. Wednesday after leaving the couple's house four hours earlier and found his wife unconscious on the floor of their garage, Dallas police Lt. Ron Waldrop said.

"She was strangled to the point of

being unconscious and is in bad condition," Waldrop said.

Officials at Presbyterian Hospital said Mrs. Railey, 38, was in critical condition Thursday afternoon.

Casad said she was in a coma and had not regained consciousness since Railey found her.

Waldrop declined to disclose details of the letters or how they were delivered, but said they were "generally directed at the minister," who is white, and criticized his efforts to promote racial harmony.

Waldrop said police now were guarding Railey and the couple's 5-year-old son and 2-year-old daughter, who were asleep in the house when their mother was attacked. Plainclothes officers also attended Sunday's services, he said.

Railey, 39, was at his wife's hospital bedside Thursday, Casad said.

Casad said Railey had received other critical letters since joining the church in September 1980, but that the ones that began arriving in March were the first of their kind.

"It's unusual, but it's certainly not unheard of," Sterns said of the threatening letters.

"Ministers obviously get involved in some weighty, moral issues," he said. "It's rare for an actual physical attack to occur."

Both Sterns and Waldrop said authorities had not determined the letters definitely were linked to the assault, but Casad said he believes they were.

"They took nothing," Casad said. "There was no robbery. Nothing was disturbed — just her life was threatened."

Railey had spoken out against a new chapter of the Ku Klux Klan being formed and urged city leaders to work to ease racial tension.

In 1985, while president of the Greater Dallas Community of Churches, Railey went before City Council and accused a councilman of exacerbating racial tension by using intentionally inflammatory rhetoric.

Austin bank declared insolvent

AUSTIN (AP) — North Central National Bank, which had been under regulatory scrutiny since 1986, was declared insolvent Thursday by the U.S. Comptroller of the Currency.

Robert Herrmann, senior deputy comptroller of the currency, said the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. had been appointed receiver of the bank.

FDIC officials in Washington said insured deposits and fully secured or preferred deposits of the insolvent bank would be transferred to Greater Texas Bank, North, of Austin.

Federal regulators began reviewing the bank's operations in 1986 because of "rapid growth in loans and very liberal lending practices . . . that resulted in excessive problem loans," Herrmann said.

The bank failure was Texas' 21st of the year, the FDIC said.

Houston woman arrested in murder of family

HOUSTON (AP) — A woman was in jail Thursday after being charged with capital murder in the shooting deaths of her husband and two children, authorities said.

Harris County Sheriff's Lt. Drew Warren said investigators are not certain of a motive for the killings, but said the family recently had purchased a life insurance policy naming the woman as the beneficiary.

"It (the policy) is a definite item that came up during the investigation," Warren said. "It is a financial gain if you're looking for a reason for the killings." He refused to specify the amount of the policy.

Sheriff's detectives arrested Frances Elaine Newton, 22, Wednesday afternoon after deter-

mining she had handled the gun used in the April 7 slayings, Warren said.

Newton was being held without bail in the Harris County Jail on capital murder charges, a jail spokesman who declined to be identified said Thursday.

The bodies of Adrian Newton, 23, and the couple's children, Alton, 7, and Farrah Elaine, 21 months, were found in their north Harris County apartment.

Newton told deputies she had left the apartment and found the bodies when she returned an hour later. Her husband had been shot in the head, and the two children were each shot in the chest.

Detectives said they were puzzled by Newton's story because there were no signs of forced entry

or of a struggle, and no property was missing from the apartment.

Detectives said Newton has denied any part in the slayings.

But about an hour after detectives arrived on the scene, a relative told investigators that Newton had taken a pistol from the apartment and had hidden it in another relative's house about 10 miles away.

Deputies found the .25-caliber pistol at the house, Warren said. Bullets test-fired from the weapon by investigators matched those taken from the bodies, he said.

A capital murder charge was filed against Newton because there were multiple victims, not because she may have benefited financially from the slayings, Warren said.

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