

State and Local

Official says campus day-care requires commitment from A&M

By Cindy Milton
Staff Writer

For the past 15 years, several attempts to get a child care center on or near the Texas A&M campus have started and fizzled out with lack of support, perhaps because of the tremendous time and money considerations that starting such a facility requires.

"We're talking about a tremendous financial commitment from the University," says Diane Welch, family-life specialist at the Texas Agricultural Extension Service.

Welch says a needs assessment is necessary before any actions can be taken to create a child-care service.

The Faculty Senate committee on the status of women last spring mentioned the possibility of a child-care facility in a survey given to A&M faculty. Both men and women faculty agreed that child care services would benefit A&M.

A report to the Faculty Senate

from the committee says "the addition of child-care services would be an asset to the campus work environment."

Linda Busby, a member of the committee, attended a meeting of the National Coalition for Campus Child Care last spring that gave advice on planning for child-care facilities.

The committee, she says, is concerned with getting people interested in child care together and establish support for campus child care.

Dharam Ahluwalia, a member of Students with Children, a group whose goal is to get University support, says an A&M-sponsored child-care facility that would cater to students and faculty could be a great selling part of A&M.

"We think a University child-care program would appeal to anyone who has children, and it would be fair to everyone involved," Ahluwalia says.

Members of the group met with Carolyn Adair, director of student affairs, Oct. 26 for a faculty opinion.

Adair says she would support a child-care facility for A&M. However, she says the procedure to create a campus child-care program might take a great deal of money and continuous support.

"If the University is interested in attracting 25 percent of the student body — people like graduate students with children — it will consider adding child-care facilities," she says.

But problems could arise from Bryan-College Station child-care centers that expect business from A&M students and faculty, she says. The University, she says, is sensitive to the surrounding area, and other centers may see a University effort as interference with their business.

Ahluwalia says Students with Children is interested in seeing how other Texas colleges and universities

have developed child-care programs supported by the schools.

The University of Texas at Austin has a child care center, the University Student Child Care Association, that caters only to the school's students and is supported financially by the university and other organizations.

Dr. L. Wayne Bryan, chairman for the association's steering committee, says the facility, in its fourth year, has had a good response so far.

He says the development of the association was a result of high student demand, which is what A&M is dealing with now.

The UT facility, Bryan says, benefits university students with children and offers child care flexibility. The association's financial support comes from a university grant, UT's student counseling center, the student government and United Campus Ministry. The university also helps the child-care program with money from student fees.

Station's billboards provoke controversy with Plano residents

PLANO (AP) — A radio station's billboard campaign is making waves with some residents who think the signs are bordering on pornographic, but the station's manager said Wednesday most listeners like the naked truth.

Dallas station KTXQ launched a \$300,000 advertising campaign for its morning show during which disc jockey Bo Jackson encourages unclothed early risers to describe their immodest activities on the air.

"People just call in and say, 'Hi. We're here at work and we're all naked,'" station general manager Clint Culp said.

But one resident complained to the Plano City Council that the signs threaten the integrity of the city.

Shelton Cotton told the council Monday, "I don't want to bring my son up in this kind of environment. If Plano wants to continue to project a positive image across the nation, it needs to screen these kinds of things."

Council members drafted a letter Monday urging the station to remove the signs.

The signs feature the torsos of men and women with a big red bow covering areas of traditional public concern.

The four signs with male torsos carry the caption "Early Risers Love Bo."

The six signs with female torsos read "It's Bo or Nothing."

Culp said the billboards, posted in 10 locations leading to this north Dallas suburb, are toned down from original designs.

"The first design of the torso we felt was too provocative, and we changed it. These are cartoons — these are not even real people," he said.

Culp said he hadn't received the council's letter by Wednesday and only received five other complaints.

"That's not very many," he said. "These signs are out on the outskirts where people get in early and drive to work."

Disc jockey Jackson asked listeners Wednesday morning to give their opinions of the billboards, and he didn't have one person call in saying anything negative about them, Culp said.

"When you do any kind of advertising, you try to do something that stands out," he added.

Yuletide sales will indicate stock's effects

AUSTIN (AP) — A significant drop in Christmas retail sales would be the first indication that the stock market's plunge is affecting the Texas economy, state Comptroller Bob Bullock said Wednesday.

"A slowdown in consumer spending will tell us that the fallout from the problems of the stock market has hit home," Bullock said.

Falling stock prices on Wall Street in recent days, particularly the record 508-point plunge in the Dow Jones industrial average Oct. 19, have sparked fears nationwide about the direction of the economy.

Bullock said any lack of confidence in the economy that translates into a steep drop in retail sales could spell trouble for the state's budget.

Taxable retail sales in the fourth quarter last year in Texas totaled more than \$16.3 billion. The comptroller's office said sales have been expected to grow slightly this year to about \$16.9 billion.

The Legislature spent more than a year struggling to balance the state government's budget in the face of falling oil prices and a slumping economy. Lawmakers finally increased the state sales tax rate from 5 1/2 percent to 6 percent to raise the money needed to balance the budget.

Heart specialists prepare to examine San Antonio mayor's 4-month-old son

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Heart specialists in Philadelphia prepared Wednesday to examine Mayor Henry Cisneros' ill infant son, who has been diagnosed as having a congenital heart defect, officials said.

Four-month-old John Paul Anthony Cisneros has not had any complications, but Cisneros wanted a second opinion on the diagnosis.

The baby, named after Pope John Paul II and San Antonio, was to be examined by Dr. John D. Murphy, said Shiril Thomas, Cisneros' administrative assistant.

Murphy is a child heart specialist and assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of Pennsylvania medical school.

Murphy has worked closely with Dr. John D. Norwood, a professor of surgery at the medical school, who invented some surgical procedures used to treat children with heart deformities.

Norwood also may examine the child, hospital officials said.

The Cisneros child was born June 10 and shortly afterward pediatrician Dr. Fernando Guerra and Dr. James Rogers, a specialist in childhood heart disease, diagnosed the child as having asplenic syndrome.

"We feel very confident about the care John Paul has received here," Cisneros said Tuesday. "But as in all other cases of very complex medical problems, Dr. Rogers concurs that it just makes good sense to have the most experienced doctors in the country also have an opportunity to confirm the diagnosis."

"Our baby is doing very well now, and we feel very fortunate to be able to meet with Drs. Murphy and Norwood."

The mayor and his wife, Mary Alice, took the baby to Philadelphia Tuesday.

John Paul Anthony's heart never fully formed. Instead of having two upper chambers, he has just one. The heart acts as if it only has two chambers because of an abnormal opening between the two lower chambers.

The baby also has problems with his stomach and he has no spleen.

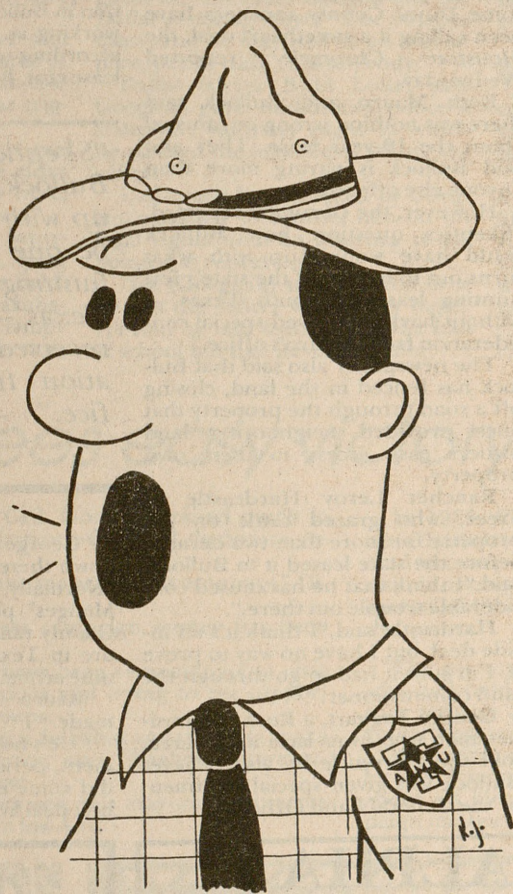
The mayor's mother, Elvira Cisneros, said her grandson is feeling very well, but that the family wanted to take him to the consultation with the Philadelphia specialists.

"It's nice to get a second opinion before the winter settles in and before he gets any colds," Mrs. Cisneros said.

The baby was blessed by the pope during the pontiff's visit to San Antonio last month.

"I am praying they will have good news for us," the mayor's mother said about the Pennsylvania physicians.

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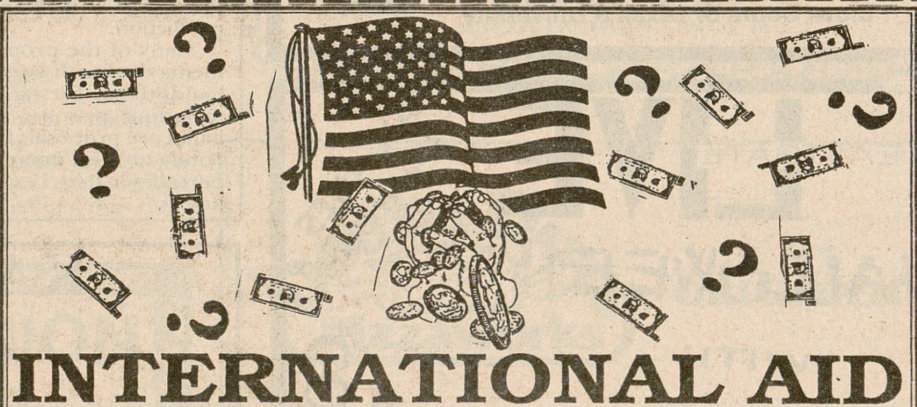
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