

State and Local

'Just say no' program spreads to CS schools

By Mary McClenny
Reporter

The national "Just say no" campaign — which is against illegal drugs and has been used from big-business offices to rural school yards — is now formally spreading to classrooms in College Station.

About 375 fifth-grade students at Oakwood Middle School are learning ways to avoid involvement with the drugs in an 11-week drug awareness program taught by College Station police officer Bob Price.

"There is a drug problem everywhere," Price says. "We (the College Station Police Department and the College Station Independent School District) chose fifth grade because kids are very impressionable at this age."

The Drug Abuse Resistance Education program, or DARE, was developed in 1983 by the Los Angeles Police Department and the Los Angeles Unified School District in response to the city's drug problems.

After training with the Los Angeles Police Department, Price began his own program at Oakwood earlier this month. The classes will run through Feb. 18 and consist of related subjects that build on each other, week by week.

"The information we are giving them (is something) they can hold on to into junior and senior high school,

where the drug problems are worse," Price says.

Topics such as personal safety and drug use and misuse already have been discussed; and consequences of use, drugs in media, peer pressure to use drugs and other types of pressure are some other topics scheduled in the program.

"I use role-playing a lot of the time to get the children involved," Price says. "It makes a difference in the kids' understanding and motivation when you let them get involved."

In the 11 lessons, Price plans to give the children examples of ways to stay away from drugs, such as walking away, making excuses and changing the subject. The children then act out these techniques.

His teaching is reinforced through use of drug-awareness films and lessons.

Susie Striegler, a fifth-grade health teacher at Oakwood, says the children like the program.

"The kids really love the class and even ask when the next class will be," Striegler says. "In our follow-up discussions, the kids are really attentive. They are looking for answers."

In order for Price to gain the children's respect and trust, he says, he keeps in contact with them outside the classroom.

"Sometimes I go to the lunchroom and eat with them or to the play-

ground to play kickball," Price says. "It's very important to get to know the kids so they will trust me enough to tell me if they have a problem. They have to be able to trust me or the program won't work."

The program is funded by the College Station Independent School District, the City of College Station and K Mart. It's now classified as a pilot program, but Price says there is hope the program will spread to other schools and grades.

It would be difficult to predict where the program is heading because it is so new, but responses have been overwhelming, he said.

Striegler says the classes are beneficial for her students.

"The classes really stress those things the kids need to know about drugs and it also makes it easier for kids to open up and ask questions," Striegler says. "They need to develop refusal skills now."

Price hopes to extend the effects of the classes to parents.

This, along with a presentation about the program Price is hoping to give at an upcoming Parent-Teacher Association meeting, will give parents a chance to try to understand the program and be there to help their children understand, he says.

"The drug problem is everywhere and I'm just trying to help these kids make educated decisions," Price says.

Worker overtakes heights to help build A&M garage

By Stephen Masters
Reporter

For eight years Willie Hampton has been climbing the ladder of success but he comes back down around 4 p.m. each day.

Hampton runs the huge crane at the parking garage construction site. Each morning he makes a 15-minute climb to the 230-foot-high cab of the crane, which is like climbing a ladder up a 23-story building.

Hampton says the distance didn't take much time to get used to because he has worked at heights of up to 700 feet on previous jobs. It just takes a little bit of adjustment, he says.

But height is the least of his worries on this job.

"You have to know what you're doing and be really careful," he says. "You have to be sure of who's doing the rigging (on the ground)."

"There are lives at stake here. If you get someone who doesn't know what he's doing at either end, then it wouldn't be long before somebody gets injured."

Hampton has been in the construction business for 20 years and has worked with cranes since coming to the Bryan-College Station area in 1979. He's worked on construction jobs such as the College Station Hilton and Convention Center, the First Bank & Trust building and the Western National Bank.

"You name it and I've worked on it," he says.

The crane is a Hammerhead Lindy, 8,000 series, he says. It is run by two joysticks and can lift anywhere from 6,600 pounds at the far end to 39,700 pounds close to the tower.

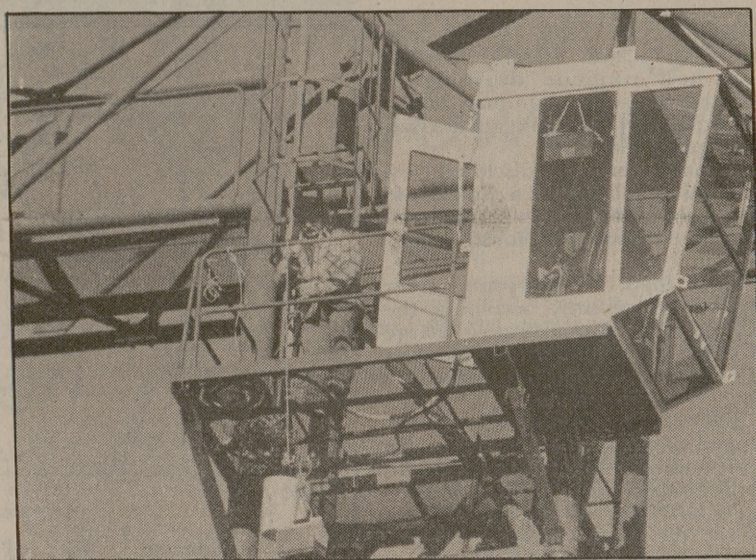


Photo by Sam B. Myers

Construction worker Willie Hampton towers above the site for the new A&M parking garage on the crane Thursday afternoon.

One of the main problems of the job is its complexity, he says.

"You have to compensate for the wind, because we have to work even on windy days," he says. "You can be swinging around and the wind will blow you right past where you want to go. It can be tricky."

Hampton says it also takes a while to acquire the right depth perception to work on the crane. All the people working around it must work as a team, he says.

"Getting used to a new height is a gradual thing," he says. "While you do all this, you have to be aware not

only of what you do, but what the people around you are doing. If you're not aware, then it'll cause problems and people can get hurt."

"But then again, they won't put a beginner on the crane; it's too dangerous."

Hampton doesn't think one can stress safety enough.

"It doesn't take a crazy person to do my job," he says. "You could put just about anybody up in the booth but before long their lack of knowledge would show and someone would get hurt or even killed."

Engineers build concrete canoes to race against other SWC schools

By Sara Mitchell
Reporter

Every day, hundreds of students passing through the staff parking lot near the Engineering Research Center at Texas A&M see a maroon and white trailer which reads "TAMU Concrete Canoe."

It's not, as odd as it may seem, an error. The trailer contains two canoes made of the unlikely material.

These concrete canoes, which actually float, are products of the A&M Concrete Canoe Team, which is comprised mainly of civil engineering students. The canoes are raced two or three times a year against teams from other schools in the Southwest Conference, usually at conferences of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

A&M Concrete Canoe Team Chairman Fred Ramirez, a senior civil engineering major from San Antonio, says A&M usually does well and has placed in all of its races since 1979. Last month in a Houston race, the women's team placed second and the men's team placed fourth, Ramirez says.

Teams of men, women, faculty and alumni participate in the races,

he says, which usually take place in lakes since the canoes tend to crack under too much stress.

Races usually are conducted in a half-mile triangular course. Ramirez estimates the canoes' top speeds to be 10 to 15 mph, depending on who is rowing.

Ramirez says A&M's 18-foot canoes are the longest canoes raced by all Southwest Conference schools, which makes them the fastest. It also makes them the heaviest, at about 150 to 200 pounds each. The canoes are painted maroon and white and are decorated with what opponents must consider appropriate instructions for Aggies: "This Side Up" and "Paddle Here."

Each year, team members try to develop a light-weight concrete for the canoes that is strong enough to hold two people and withstand the stress of the race. Ramirez says ASCE rules require the canoe to stay afloat even when it is holding water.

Team Vice Chairman Allan Moore, a senior civil engineering major from Whitesboro, says the concrete formulas used for A&M's canoes are based on past formulas that have been proven successful.

This year, Ramirez says, members

have developed what they hope is an improved mix — using cement, perlite, glass beads, ceramic nodules and a new fiber mesh containing half-inch metal strands to better withstand impact.

Once a satisfactory concrete mix is developed, wire mesh is formed into the shape of a canoe. Moore says the same form has been used at A&M since the team formed in 1975.

When the wire frame is ready, the concrete is poured and must cure for about two weeks. The team usually makes two canoes at a time.

Because all race contestants are secretive about their concrete formulas, Ramirez says, no one knows what ingredients are in the most successful formulas.

He says ASCE rules state canoes must be poured nine months before a race. The team plans to pour two canoes the weekend of Dec. 5.

"We're trying to get as many people as we can," Ramirez says. "We need a lot of help pouring the canoes — it's a lot of work."

The next race is scheduled for April at a Corpus Christi ASCE convention.

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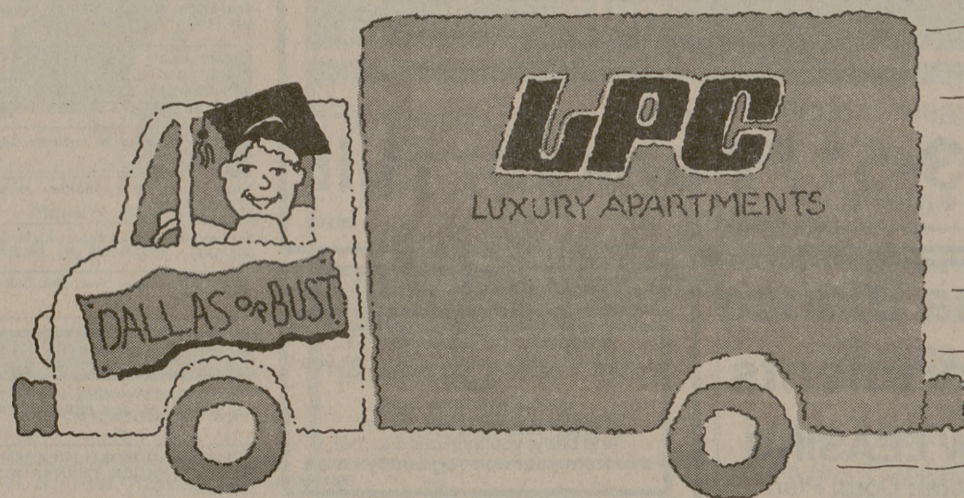
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