

Older students say adjustments to college life not hard to make

By Jackie Feldman
Reporter

Of the 39,079 Texas A&M students, 642 students are more than 40 years old, Registrar Don Carter said.

Middle-age students return to college for a variety of reasons. Some decide to raise a family before returning or starting college. Others return because they want to change their careers.

Ruth Moore, in her 40s, is a senior history major from College Station. She decided to begin college after her children left home.

Moore earned 42 hours at Blinn Community College and transferred to A&M.

"Education is one of my highest

priorities," Moore said. "No matter if I had to take one course at a time, I was willing to do it."

Fifty-year-old Patricia Childress, a junior history major from College Station, returned to college after deciding she wanted a change from being a real estate agent.

"After the real estate business began to get bad," Childress said, "I decided I needed an education."

Both Moore and Childress said it wasn't difficult to settle into the college routine of studying and going to class.

Childress said the biggest problem she faces is the loneliness caused by the lack of peers. Despite this, she gets along well with the younger students and has formed lasting friendships.

Moore said she hasn't noticed any barriers between herself and the younger students.

"Your attitudes, vitality and the way you handle problems influence the way people perceive you," Moore said.

Although Moore and Childress would like to be involved in degree-related clubs, they are not because of other commitments — Moore is married and Childress works.

Moore and Childress agree college has changed their views about life.

"Learning has opened my eyes to preconceived notions," Childress said, "and increased my self-esteem. School has strengthened my views

on some subjects and changed my views on others."

Moore said, "The wide range of cultures allows me to develop my world views of many subjects."

Moore and Childress agree their lives have changed since they've been in college. College has made time scarce for both social and daily activities.

Moore has found that college has forced her to organize her time better.

"I am more polished at getting things done," Moore said. "The more I do, the better I get at finding time to do them."

"Although I get frustrated at times because so many interests pull me in different directions, college is definitely an enriching experience."

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Housing glut hinders selling in Dallas area

DALLAS (AP) — An increase in the number of houses for sale in Dallas is making it harder to sell homes, with sellers facing competition from foreclosures in an already-glutted market.

"Any time supply is generally exceeding demand, you have to say it's a buyers' market," Benny McMahon, executive director for the Greater Dallas Board of Realtors, said.

But McMahon cautions against painting the market with "a broad brush," saying there are too many individual factors at work.

At the end of October, there were 25,866 active listings in the board's cooperative listing service, up from 25,165 for the same period last year.

That increase has helped add to the amount of time it takes to sell a home.

In the first 10 months of this year, it took 101 days to sell the average pre-owned home in the Dallas area — up 21 days, or 26 percent, from the average 80 days on the market for the same time last year.

In most neighborhoods, it takes an average 140 to 145 days for a home to sell.

Realtors say sellers this year are starting at a lower list price, but the average sale price is up.

That, they say, is because some of the more expensive homes are being sold and not because of an increase in overall prices.

In 1987, the average home sold for \$125,900, or 12.75 percent below the current average list price of \$144,300.

Some of the major factors affecting the Dallas-area housing market this fall and winter include a glut in foreclosures, fewer single-family home being built, higher mortgage rates and the shock of last month's stock market crash.

Restaurant's 'grand closing' draws crowd with offerings

FORT WORTH (AP) — Sam Allen and Bobby Platt wanted to do something grand to mark the closing of Sammie's Bar-B-Que after 42 years of operation.

Nickel beer and 25-cent sandwiches should have been enough to draw a crowd, but they advertised that Boots, a popular former car hop, and Big Red, a well-known former waitress, would also be there.

The restaurant closed down after the "grand closing" festivities Saturday at the site where it has served Fort Worth residents since the end of World War II and will reopen next Thursday in a new location.

The restaurant had to be moved because the old building can no longer meet safety codes.

Allen and Platt stocked the restaurant with 2,500 pounds of beef, 500 pounds of ribs and set up three beer stations outside the building to prepare for the eight-hour bash.

Customers began lining up an hour before the "grand closing." By 7 p.m., manager Frank Tyler said customers had consumed nine kegs of beer and the line to get in the restaurant wound around the corner.

Platt said he never expected such a crowd.

"Down through 40 years, there've been so many good, steady customers, we just wanted to do something where they could get a meal almost free," he said. "We got them and a lot more."

Allen said, "We wanted to give them one last chance to come here and eat and look around. But with this crowd I don't guess they had much chance to look around. Some of 'em got to eat."

Charlotte Chatman, who was known as "Big Red" when she worked at Sammie's as a waitress, came from her East Texas home in Lindale for the closing.

"Boots," a carhop for 15 years until she left in 1969, wouldn't give her real name.

"It's just 'Boots' Hall," she said. "Besides, if you put 'Beulah Fay' in the paper no one would recognize it."

State legislator says attending UT bolstered support for education

AUSTIN (AP) — University of Texas officials can rest assured that higher education funding is not just another issue to some state legislators.

Especially reassuring is the fact that one representative thinks enough of the university to commute there weekly from Laredo, about 250 miles southwest of Austin.

After completing his first legislative session, which ended this summer, Rep. Henry Cuellar began doctorate-level government studies at the university.

Cuellar, D-Laredo, said UT instructors and the classroom experience reinforced his vote for higher education funding.

"Now I know why it's important that those (faculty) salary increases were given," he said.

Having a 32-year-old state representative in class does not intimidate Cuellar's instructors.

"I have lots of different people in my class with different backgrounds, and he's just one of them," government instructor Cavan Duffy said. "There's also a guy who works in a record store — it's no different."

But Cuellar's experience is sometimes useful in the classroom, government instructor Mark Graber said.

"It's come in handy a couple of times when discussing

issues about the relationships between local and state governments," Graber said.

Back home in Laredo, Cuellar is his city's connection between state and local government. Cuellar represents a new class of South Texas politicians, replacing the old "patron," — Spanish for boss or chief — politicians in Laredo and other areas of South Texas.

Cuellar said, "Now, in Laredo there is no single entity that can deliver the votes."

So far, Cuellar said, his position as state legislator permits him to change Laredo more than if he were a politician in his city. His legislation influencing the Laredo district "is easier to pass over here, but politically not always popular," he said.

Those new laws passed during Cuellar's first term included measures that created a public defender position in Laredo's Webb County, prohibited the Webb County district attorney from participating in private practice and increased the penalty for removing ballots from a ballot box.

Raul Vasquez, Webb County court-at-law judge, said Cuellar's efforts to update the political structure should go smoothly.

"I don't even think he's (Cuellar) going to get opposition" in the next election, Vasquez said.

Texas' mentally retarded adults suffer from shortage of community services

AUSTIN (AP) — Slowly and reluctantly, Darryl Gottschalk is disappearing from society.

Day after day, the young man sits alone in idleness, a captive in his own home because of circumstances beyond his control.

Gottschalk, 22, is mentally retarded and has no job at which to report, no school to attend and no one to share the loneliness while his mother works two jobs.

The only things to help pass the time for Gottschalk are television, the music of Willie Nelson, George Strait and other country singers, and a few household chores. Although his mind is like that of a 5-year-old, he takes care of himself and keeps out of mischief.

Gottschalk is fading from the public's eye because there are few opportunities for retarded adults in Texas. He is one of hundreds, probably thousands, of retarded people

in Austin who have finished school and now spend day after day inside their homes because there is nowhere else to go.

"He's just sort of down in the dumps," said Barbara Gottschalk, Darryl's mother. "He doesn't want to go anywhere or do anything. What does he have to look forward to? That's what I think all the time. It's pretty dim."

"But he's not the only one. That's the sad part."

A recent state-by-state survey found Texas has the biggest shortage of services for the retarded. Gottschalk is one of nearly 22,000 retarded Texans trying to get help, according to the survey by the Association for Retarded Citizens of the United States.

Many of the retarded people awaiting services never have been in an institution. Instead, they grew up in the community, attended public

schools and are searching for a way to make a contribution to society. It never has been easy for a retarded adult to find employment, but parents say it is even harder since the recent decision by the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation to move large numbers of retarded people out of institutions and into community programs. Competition for community services is keen.

The Association for Retarded Citizens' study found that the system of public services for retarded people "has not been able to cope with increased numbers of people leaving institutions, a new generation exiting school special-education programs and the growing number of older families who have kept family members at home for years but who now need services."

Many parents of retarded adults in Austin say they willingly provide

room and board for their children at home but would like to see more jobs and supervised activities available during the day for retarded adults.

"We didn't burden the state with raising our kids," said Barbara Gottschalk, who is divorced and makes ends meet by working full time as a receptionist for a state agency and part time as a sales clerk at Foley's. "We're not asking the state to feed and clothe them now, but just to give them something so they don't have to sit at home."

Jackie Roberts' 22-year-old daughter, Donna, is set to graduate in the spring from the Jerry Mac Clifton Center, an Austin Independent School District training center for retarded students aged 16-22. "We who have kept our children at home feel discriminated against," Roberts said. She doubts that her daughter will find a job.

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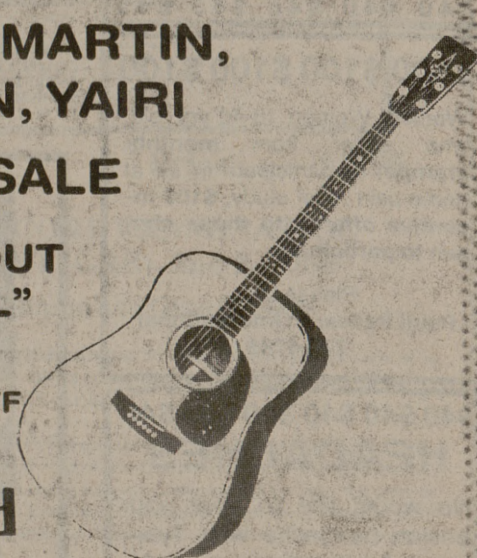
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