

Students get second chance Texas A8 to learn in alternative school

Wednesday, November 2, 1988

BEAUMONT (AP) — One of the, Alternative School is the quiet.

The Battalion

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At the end of a period, no bells or buzzers sound. No lockers slam. No teen-agers loudly hail their friends in the hall.

Instead the teacher softly tells the students to get ready.

After all the students in the school's five classrooms line up they file quietly into their next period class in carefully choreographed transition.

When they arrive in the next class-room, the students pick up their assign-ment folders, sit at a desk and begin working with little or no prompting from the teacher.

The loudest noise in the room often is the hum of the air conditioner, the rattle of a page turning or a soft whispering as the teacher answers a student's question. The Beaumont Independent School

District set up the school earlier this year as an alternative to middle school and high school students who were having back to school, he said. trouble in a regular classroom.

"What we are offering here is a highly structured academic environment with no distractions," alternative school su-pervisor Patrick Thomas said. "When my students come through that door they want to come in for the academics because that is all there is here."

The school has no cafeteria, no pep rallies and no sports, he said. Because the school discourages talking among students, they have little social life at the

But Thomas said the individual attention each of the 50 students receives from the school's caring staff along with the school's emphasis on study provide a fertile ground for troubled students to flourish academically.

5 TDC prisoners to receive master's from UH program

ROSHARON (AP) — Earning a master's degree usually allows students to quickly slide into the job market, but five University of Houston at Clear Lake graduate students will have to put their job searches on hold until they can take their diplomas off their cell walls.

If plans progress as scheduled, the university will graduate its first master's degree candidates from the Texas Department of Corrections Ramsey I Unit near Rosharon in December, more than two years after the program began.

"We're extremely proud of our students for persevering through the clas-ses," said George L. Trabing, director of the university's program at the prison. "Our master's program is tough . . . we don't water our classes down at Ramsey.

"It's the same program we offer to our students on campus. We don't offer the Ramsey students anything special.'

The program is part of a plan by the Texas Department of Corrections and the

Thomas and the staff say they have to most notable things about the Beaumont fight the notion that most students at an alternative school are dangerous.

"I think most people think we have a bunch of thugs and that it's a battleground here," English teacher Ginny Welsh said. "It's anything but that. I think it's one of the safest environments anywhere in the district.'

Thomas acknowledges the school has to discipline students at times.

But the structured environment and small class size help head off many prob-

Most students at the school are intelligent but lack motivation, study skills or district's. confidence to perform well in a regular classroom, Thomas said.

who have been held back two or more years or who are achieving at a significantly lower level than their classmates It also serves dropouts who want to come

Although the district offers the school to students who face expulsion, none of the students this semester fit into that category, Thomas said.

Some students will go back to their home schools, while others may choose to stay at the school until graduation, he said

After school officials refer the student to the alternative school, Thomas interviews the teen-ager and the parents before the student can enroll.

Both students and parents sign a docu-ment outlining the school's procedures to show they understand what the school expects. The district cannot force a student to attend the alternative school, he

fers lower-level college courses to the in-

mates, the University of Houston at

Clear Lake offers bachelor's degrees in

general studies, behavioral sciences and

humanities along with the master's de-

TDC will pay for one class per semes-ter for eligible students, but inmates

usually pay their tuition through federal

grants or from their own pocketbooks,

And to those who say the prison sys-tem is becoming too relaxed, Trabing

said the prisoners are required to com-

plete a full day's work before attending

ment, but we need some type of retrai-ning," he said. "Just locking somebody

up and keeping them from family and

trouble in prison can participate in the

Only those who have stayed out of

'There's nothing wrong with punish-

gree in humanities.

Trabing said.

the night classes.

friends is punishment.

The staff includes five teachers and one counselor. The school offers courses in reading, language arts, science, mathematics and social studies. It also has a computer laboratory.

After evaluating each student's abilities, the teachers develop a learning plan that lets each student proceed at his or her own pace, Thomas said. The teachers prepare daily assignment sheets for the students.

They also send home weekly progress reports, telling the parents their child's conduct and grades

The curriculum closely follows the

They are doing same thing they The alternative school helps students would be doing if they were in a regular school," social studies teacher Clydette

Ball said. "They are just doing it ferent way.

Thursday During the class period, the circulate, helping each student w signments. "I had to invest in pair of shoes because I have to student to student to student. teacher Carla Dunlap said. "W to find a learning style the child spond to.'

The school strives to build up t dents' self-esteem by showing t can succeed in school.

"When they understand they sponsible enough to do the as and not cut up in class and when t

alize they can do this and be succe ebrew, once p this is a lesson for their other on as a crime and for life itself," science teacher official of the McCord said. id Wednesday Officials also

participate in **Texans honor** ts executive of ho met with hig Both steps w nges in how ith the country man who saved they come in the President Mikhail French grapes Sus

SHERMAN (AP) - Sherman and Denison residents recently completed a "French connection" that paid homage to Texas' unlikely grape genius.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of T.V. Munson's celebrated success in saving the French wine industry from a parasite that ravaged vineyards A French delegation visited Munson's home in Denison in 1887 to learn the

agronomist's secrets. Munson had grown grapes in lime-stone soil, similar to that of the French

vineyards. The roots were resistant to root lice

and adapted well from cuttings For helping to save the French vineyards, Munson received the French Legion of Merit in 1888, an honor pre-

viously accorded only one other American, inventor Thomas Edison. Commemorating the 100th anniversary of his work, several Munson rela-

tives and interested friends went to the south of France in October and returned with glowing accounts of their visit. "This was a great way to build Franco-American relations," John Mor-

ris, President and CEO of Associated Travel, said. "This was a significant occasion. The real news happened 100 years ago with Munson and Viala (Pierre, a major French researcher).'

"I was impressed with the generosity and warmth of the French people," Sherman realtor Ben McKinney said. "I had the impression that the French were always cold and rude. This was not the

The ceremony honoring Munson was held in the city of Cognac, where an entire research center is devoted to viticulture (the study of vines.)

The American consul to Cognac joined in the ceremony along with Pierre Gaillet, a prominent French researcher. Dr. Roy Renfro, the Grayson County College professor who organized the trip to France, compared Gaillet to Pierre Vi-

ways cold and rude. This was not the case." - Ben McKinne

and police til the victim' harvests of the year in France.

uspect on Oct. It was a hectic time, but the Fm showered their guests with friendship artment and "They (vineyard owners) all took out to welcome us and really shows some great hospitality," Renfro a 'That was the thing that impresse

Throughout the trip, the Texans sented their French hosts with me

cellent wines. The group visited all the major vyards, which comprise the region's

"It was really fascinating hearing seeing that their very livelihood is vines," said John Morris, who ow Sherman travel agency. "If the were damaged or destroyed, a lot w be at stake.

While there, the trio was inducted the "Commanderie du Bontem Medoc et des Graves," a group of teau-owners who promote their wit The group has existed nearly

years, according to Renfro. "It was like being inducted into ternity," Morris said. "We are members of the most prestigious

"I had the impression that the French were a

A suspect line the case of a T as raped and st Sherman realtor

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After police ce Department ips in the case nore of those tip

8 to the doorst the most. It was really nice to see." Corwin. His fin ound in the wor

tions commemorating the anniverse Touring Chateau Margaux, the station Police D witnessed the first pressing of the statistic vill take place v mine statistics of the statistic vill take place v im is feeling b

for the 1988 crop. Chateau Margaux is famed for its

industry.

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university to enhance the prisoners' chances of finding a job upon release "and to stay out of here," he said.

Nine faculty members are teaching a record 130 college students this semester in nine classes, ranging from history to literature, on weekdays from 6 to 9 p.m. The master's program has 54 enrolled inmates.

The university offers inmates with clean disciplinary records and 54 credit hours of college classes a chance to work toward a bachelor's or master's degree. While Alvin Community College of-

And while the inmates will not have the option of practicing their chosen fields immediately upon graduation, their confinement helps make most of them better students, Trabing said.

The average inmate has an eighthgrade education and has had to take remedial courses from the junior colleges before being accepted into the advanced classes. While Trabing said the Clear Lake students are very serious students, the inmates quite often score higher on tests because they have more time to study

Viala's great-grandson helped unveil a plaque honoring Munson.

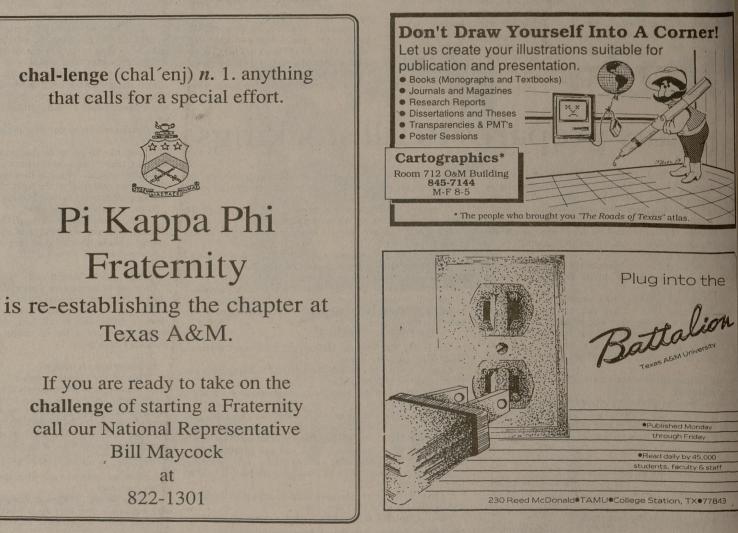
The French still revere Munson's memory. A replica of the plaque is dis-played in the T.V. Munson Viticulture and Enology Center at Grayson County College

A French delegation visited GCC in September to honor Munson.

The trip coincided with the first grape

society in France. I'm very The visit also reminded Texans dedicated agronomist more than a tury ago introduced vinegrafti France, where for nearly 20 year lice had cut vineyard acreage by a

80 percent. "I was impressed with all they done," Renfro said. "And with they have thought. This event hap 100 years ago and the French st member Munson and what he has They are still very grateful and a ciate what he did.





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While doin and the Ho

solution Texas A&M be declared Mike Kel and a senior because the be appearing this season omething to he end of th

"Neither th any objectic Hurricane B College Stat has already r