Tuesday, November 29, 1988

The Battalion Page 5

in Thomas Latchkey kid' problem spurs Project Home Safe programs

By Sandy Hastings Reporter

care for themselves while their ents work — are not a new phe-menon. Millions of American children return to empty homes after school. These children, ranging in age from 6 to 13, may be alone or may have the responsibility of caring for younger brothers and sisters. Dr. Sarah Anderson of the Texas gricultural Extension Service said dren.'

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that many of these children will take responsibility for their own care, Latchkey children — children sometimes cooking, cleaning and operating major appliances on their

own. "We don't have any real solid data on the situation in Bryan-College Station yet, but there are significant numbers and they're still growing," Anderson said. "A survey was taken in schools in the area, and 75 percent said they were latchkey chil-

Lrime awareness key to prevention of illegal activities

By Laurie Tomasini Reporter

Awareness is a key to preventing

But particularly on the Texas M campus, there is a lack of reness that anyone is a potential im of criminal acts, including ual assault, said Bob Wiatt, direcf security and University Police. "A&M is a part of the planet arth," Wiatt said. "This is the real rld. Students should quit acting es than required ke Alice in Wonderland and believg in the tooth fairy.

"People think once they enter the private, forput es for the retards state money at when federal is vo sources of fund the reter of the retards when federal is the retards the retards

"This is a congested area with bout 50,000 residents plus thou-ands of visitors on campus every week. With that many people in a so-dety there are going to be offenders who will victimize students." Wheth gency contracts fo es to a number o mployees, and in z will victimize students," Wiatt

Linda Castoria, director of the her right to truth razos County Rape Crisis Center, aid that students often seem not to alize that a society exists outside elected officials he A&M campus. artment's pro s guaranteed b

"The majority of students do not rad the local newspaper," she said. So they have no sense of what is lowers Act and n's guarantees of

poing on in Bryan-College Station eyond the campus. Therefore, stu-dents relate the occurrence of crime in the whole area to what they know Mark Perlmu Little, said she had t performance eval-evious job. He said ought to fill the legshappening on campus. "Students hear about the theft of

backpacks or bikes and think that is the extent of crime in the area," she within 2.5 month As a result, she said, many stu-

nts have a false sense of security. Incidents such as the sexual as-ault and attempted murder of an A&M student on Oct. 20 may make Heat reported offenses to a law average of the least reported offenses to a law only until the offender is caught or a glary or vandalism, they said. length of time elapses, she said. National statistics show that only Four sexual assaults we

ne in 10 rapists is apprehended.

who is caught, there are nine or 14 who are still committing the crime.

"Who's to say those criminals who are still out there won't walk onto campus or into a citizen's home?" Castoria said. "Students must be aware that a crime may occur anytime, anywhere, to anyone.

'No one should walk around absolutely paranoid that they could be-come a victim any minute," she said. "But they should realize that as often as sexual assault occurs on the national level, it has to affect our local

community Wiatt, also president of the rape crisis center, said he wants students to be aware that they are part of the

"Awareness is the best preven-tion," he said. "Be aware that you could be victimized."

Students have complained that they cannot be aware of something that officials and administrators are trying to hide.

"It seems the police and the ad-ministrators try to keep incidents of rape hush-hush," Wendy Layer, a senior elementary education major, said.

Wiatt said the University Police Department writes daily, monthly, and annual records of all the crimes reported. The reports are available for anyone to read.

"That is where the information for the police beat comes from," he said."If anything serious occurs it usually gets headlines in the paper."

However, not all sexual assaults are reported, so the police reports and newspaper stories are not actual representations of how often they

dents more cautious - but often more likely to report a robbery, bur-

The difficulty in obtaining accurate statistics is directly related to the emotionally sensitive nature of the In addition to training home situation. For many families, leaving the children at home alone while the parents are working is a secretive arrangement, she said.

Parents don't reveal their children are latchkey for two reasons," she said. "One, fear of child abuse and neglect charges and two, fear for the child — possibly setting the child up in a dangerous situation.

"Because of parental feelings of guilt and fear, the children are taught to maintain a low profile, and their presence may not even be noticed by friends and neighbors." Because of these factors, commu-

nities are frequently unaware of the extent and impact of the latchkey situation in their population, she said. While children in self-care are not solely products of the 1980s, the magnitude of the situation is, An-derson said. Unsupervised children must be considered at risk, she said. For example, 6,000 children die each year as a result of in-home acci-

dents and fires, and in nearly every case no adult had been present. Recognizing the challenges faced by latchkey children, the American Home Economics Association, with funding from the Whirlpool Foun-dation, established Project Home Safe in an effort to find both imme-

diate and long-term solutions to the latchkey situation. The three-year project includes

Texas dieters taken by health plan frauds

FORT WORTH (AP) — More edly increase metabolism, ampheta-and more dieters are telling Texas mines, and hormones that many consumer fraud investigators that they are being bilked by quick-weight-loss plans that seem too good to be true — and are.

Robert Kaman, director of pro-grams for Preventive Health-Pre-ventive Medicine at the Texas Col-lege of Osteopathic Medicine, said dieters often want a quick fix to lose

"But there ain't no free lunch," he said. "You don't eat, you don't gain. The trick is to keep the weight off. Statistics suggest that within a year, 80 percent of all dieters gain their weight back. If the diet does not provide an education program to help you change your lifestyle, then you face a lifetime of what we call the yoyo diet.'

Kaman suggests dieters be leery of any weight-loss plans involving food supplements or diets devised by laymen without a doctor's appro-

Consumers should be sure they Four sexual assaults were re-ported to the University Police be-but a legitimate program, he said.

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economists and providing material for use by trainers, parents and chil-dren, Project Home Safe offers a na-tionwide toll-free hotline and a national Resource Center that makes

available research, books and other resources on child care. "I will be going to Washington, D.C. for Home Safe Trainer's train-ing," Anderson said. "The four-day, 28-hour training program will train us to teach volunteers at our training resonance to provide a life skills train sessions to provide a life-skills train-ing for children in self-care where the community offers no alternative to the latchkey arrangement.

"For example, we will pretend there is a fire and practice for emergency. We don't advocate leaving children alone, but the program is to help parents be sure the child is ready to care for himself if there is no

other option available." Texas has been chosen as one of the six training sites for the pro-gram. Several criteria were used in the selection process: a large popula-tion of school-age children with working parents, a strong state home economics association supporting the project, and a pool of qualified home economists working in the child development or education fields, Anderson said.

"Our training will target about 33 counties this side of San Antonio, from Austin to Houston," Anderson research, training, materials devel-opment and start-up or strengthen-ing of 'community school-age child state. said. "We won't target the entire state but the program is open to oth-ers in the state.

mines, and hormones that many

Another recent weight-loss fad is a patch soaked with chemicals and

placed on the skin to allow slow ab-

"The so-called patch technology has been recognized as safe and ef-fective utilizing some drugs," said Jim McDonald, compliance officer for the Federal Drug Administration district office in Dallas.

But for weight loss, the technique

has not been proven, and the Texas Attorney General's Office is battling advertisements and sale of the prod-

Some plans are fraudulent, one state official said. "We are just covered up with health frauds right now," said Den-

nis Baker, a spokesman for the Texas Department of Health's Food and Drug Division. "If it sounds too

The Dallas-Fort Worth Council

good to be true, it probably is.

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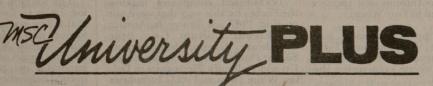
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"It is probably more like one in tween September 1987 and August 15," Castoria said. "So for every one 1988.

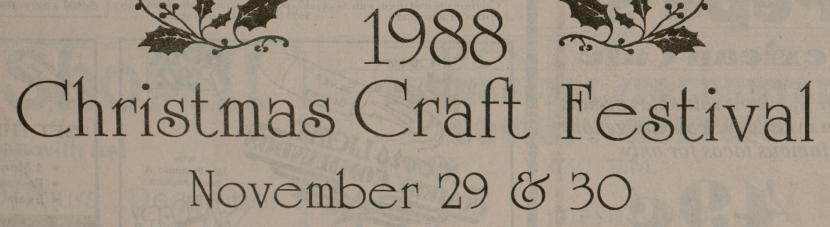
Kaman said

should avoid substances that suppos- were on weight-loss programs.

would-be dieters 14, 1988. Of those calls, 46 percent



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