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Clinic helps develop study skills

By Mia B. Moody Reporter

The Texas A&M Counseling and Assessment Clinic offers a study group to help undergraduates develop good skills in taking notes and preparing for tests.

Judith Pitts, a doctoral student in the educational psychology department, directs the program. Pitts, who is also the coordinator of the Educational Psychology 101 class, said the study skills group is similar to the course. She said every student can benefit from the study skills group.

"Test anxiety is where the group

spends the most time because it is the area where students have the most problems," Pitts said. "Anxiety is good, but too much can cause failure. Students who say, 'I'll never be able to understand this material and I'm going to fail this test,' probably will fail."

Pitts teaches how anxiety can be reduced through the use of relaxation and techniques that reduce irrational thoughts. Students are taught how to replace discouraging phrases with positive ones.

Pitts also teaches note-taking and non-procrastination methods. Students are given hints on how to listen for changes in the pitch of the pro-

fessor's voice and other important cues. To deal with the temptation of procrastination, she gives students pointers on how to keep up with all of their classes so they don't have to cram the night before the exam.

The group also stresses self-motivation. Pitts said breaks and rewards are important parts of self-motivation. She shows students how to make out schedules outlining the amount of time they will study and how breaks can be used effectively.

The Counseling and Assessment Clinic is a non-profit organization. It is a psychological service and training clinic operated by the Department of Educational Psychology.

ment of Educational Psychology. The clinic offers three other special groups: a children's problem-solving group for children who have problems at home and at school, a substance abuse group for individuals who are self-referred and committed to abstinence, and a violence-free adults group for self-referred male batterers in Briscoe College Station.

The study skills group meets every Wednesday from 6-7 p.m. Cost is \$5 per session. For more information on any of the programs contact the Counseling and Assessment Clinic at 845-8021.

68 die on highways during holidays

By Fiona Soltes Staff Writer

The Texas Department of Public Safety recorded 68 deaths on Texas highways during the holidays. Mike Cox, spokesman for the DPS, said 66 deaths were estimated for the Christmas and New Year's periods combined.

The National Safety Council designated a 78-hour Christmas count-

ing period, from 6 p.m. Friday, Dec. 23 to midnight Monday, Dec. 26, and a 78-hour New Year's period from 6 p.m. Friday, Dec. 30 to midnight Monday, Jan. 2. In Texas, 36 died during the Christmas period and 32 during New Year's.

Last year, 81 people were killed on Texas highways during the two counting periods. But Cox said the department discourages compari-

sons between years.

"Last year, Christmas fell on a Friday," Cox said. "That meant a 102-hour counting period. In 1986, only 48 were killed, but the designated periods were 54 hours long."

Cox said during the holidays, the Texas DPS instates Operation Holiday, which means all available units are on patrol during the designated periods, checking for excessive

speeding, drunken driving and driving without safety belts.

"This is a program that we started around the 1940s," Cox said. "The underlying purpose is to raise public awareness, letting everyone know the dangers of public travel during the holidays. Of course, accidents can happen at any time, but they are more likely during the holidays due to excessive drinking and extra travel times."

Deal makes Coastal largest gas supplier

HOUSTON (AP) — Coastal Corp. announced Monday it is trying to buy Texas Eastern Corp. in a \$2.6 billion deal that would make Coastal the nation's largest natural gas company.

The \$42-per-share offer was about 40 percent more than the \$30.25 Texas Eastern stock was bringing when the market closed Friday.

But with Coastal's announcement Monday, Texas Eastern stock soared more than \$13 to \$43.87 1/2 in early trading on the New York Stock Exchange. At the same time, Coastal's stock was down 6 1/2 cents at \$34.25 on the exchange.

Coastal is the third largest natural gas company in the country while Texas Eastern is among the top six. A third Houston corporation, Enron Corp., holds the top position, analysts said.

"In my view, Coastal and Enron are two prototypes of interstate pipeline networks of the future," said Charles Strain, director of energy research for Lovett Mitchell Webb & Garrison in Houston. "Texas Eastern seemed the most logical. It was just a question of which one was going to suck it up and do damage to the balance sheet."

Texas Eastern is attractive to both companies because of its pipeline system reaching the Northeast market. Strain said even though the acquisition will put Coastal further in debt, it is a good move in the long run because stiff pipeline regulations are expected to weaken.

Coastal's long-term debt, as of Sept. 30, was \$3.11 billion, while its short-term debt was \$369 million, according to Coastal spokesman R.W. Wells.

William D. Hyler, an analyst for Oppenheimer & Co. Inc. in New York, said he was surprised by the timing of Coastal's offer because of its heavy debt.

"I believe they've always had an

interest in this company," Hyler said. "Apparently they thought that if they waited someone else would get it."

"In the long term, it looks good. It's a good strategic fit."

Hyler said if the buyout was successful, he expected Coastal to sell off Texas Eastern's exploration and production operations.

Monday's jump in the price of Texas Eastern stock, however, prompted analysts to predict Coastal would have to sweeten its deal to \$45 or \$48 per share.

Once the offer is received, the Texas Eastern board of directors will make a recommendation to shareholders within 10 days of the commencement of the offer, the company said in a statement.

Coastal said it would initiate the offer on Tuesday for all outstanding shares of Texas Eastern's common stock.

U.S. District Judge Lynn Hughes in Houston was considering a request from Coastal for a temporary restraining order to keep Texas Eastern's board of directors from taking any action to prevent shareholders from accepting the offer.

Coastal said it decided to make the offer at a Sunday meeting of its board of directors.

James R. Paul, president and chief operating officer of Coastal, wrote his counterpart at Texas Eastern, Dennis R. Hendrix, requesting a meeting with the Texas Eastern board of directors to discuss a business combination.

"We are convinced that a combination of Coastal and Texas Eastern would be in the best interests of our respective stockholders as well as employees, customers and suppliers," Paul wrote. "Operating flexibility and efficiencies brought about by a combination of our companies would significantly improve the abilities of each company to provide the best possible service to customers.

We also believe that our offer is a fair one. It gives Texas Eastern's stockholders an opportunity to receive immediately a very attractive cash price for all their shares."

Coastal is diversified energy company with \$8 billion in assets and operations in natural gas transmission and storage, gas and oil exploration and production, refining and marketing, coal, trucking and independent power production.

Texas Eastern, with \$5 billion in assets, is involved in natural gas and petroleum products, pipeline and international oil and gas exploration

and production, and real estate, also refines and markets petroleum products at wholesale.

Coastal said its offer will be financed primarily by bank borrowings and subordinated notes. Coastal Bank N.A. has told the company's lawyer it is confident it can provide up to \$2 billion in senior bank financing, including \$500 million Citibank credit line under a firm commitment.

Drexel Burnham Lambert Inc. sent a letter to Coastal saying it is confident it can place up to \$1.5 billion in subordinated notes for Coastal.

Sound Warehouse, Shamrock to merge

DALLAS (AP) — Shamrock Holdings Inc. and Sound Warehouse Inc., said they expect shareholders will approve a merger agreement to acquire Sound Warehouse, one of the nation's leading retailers of home entertainment software, for approximately \$132.5 million.

Under the agreement announced Monday, Shamrock Entertainment II, Inc., organized by Shamrock to acquire Sound Warehouse, will merge into Sound Warehouse and all stockholders of Sound Warehouse will receive \$25.65 in cash per share of common stock.

The agreement also contemplates that Sound Warehouse will pay a cash dividend of up to 10 cents a share to stockholders of record immediately before the merger. The amount available for payment of the dividend will be reduced by certain specified costs incurred by Sound Warehouse in performing certain of its obligations under the agreement.

Conditions of the transaction include approval of Sound Warehouse's stockholders at a meeting in March or early April.

Major stockholders of the company have granted Shamrock Entertainment their irrevocable proxies regarding approval of the merger. The shares subject to the irrevocable proxies represent an aggregate of approximately 73 percent of the currently outstanding shares of Sound Warehouse common stock.

Sound Warehouse, based in Dallas, has 121 outlets in 13 states. An additional 10 outlets are planned for opening by Dec. 31. For the year ended May 31, Sound Warehouse had sales of \$181 million and net income of \$4.2 million or 80 cents a share.

Shamrock Holdings, based in Burbank, Calif., is wholly owned by the Roy E. Disney family.

Advertisement for 'THE FIRST TEXAS TRIENNIAL' art exhibit. Includes dates (January 19 - February 18, 1989), location (Rudder Exhibit Hall), opening lecture (Thursday, January 19, Memorial Student Center, Room 201, 7:00 p.m.), reception (to follow), docent tours (845-8501), and contact information (764-8289). Organized by the Contemporary Art Museum, Houston, and supported by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts.