

Foundation representative, doctor push public awareness of arthritis

Organization says it is time public took disease more seriously

By Juliette Rizzo
STAFF WRITER

Outside the meeting-room door in the hospital was a large, white sign with the words "it's time we took arthritis seriously" scrawled in handwriting that many people would associate with their grandparents. It was the handwriting of a victim of arthritis; not necessarily an elderly person, but anyone of any age or race.

The word arthritis usually brings to mind an old, hunched over elderly figure with knobby fingers, but, according to the National Arthritis Foundation, this is more myth than reality.

According to the foundation, arthritis, affects 37 million people; one in every seven people and one in every three families. It can develop at any age causing inflammation of joints, pain, stiffness and loss of joint movement.

Laura D. Brown, representing the South Central Texas Chapter of the foundation at a Humana Hospital arthritis seminar, said young people may be as susceptible to arthritis as the elderly but do not take the disease as seriously.

"The 'not me' syndrome surrounds the college community as well as others," she said. "Eve-

ryone needs to realize it can happen to them."

At the meeting, Dr. James Giles, a local orthopedic surgeon, addressed local community members who are suffering from one of the many forms of the disease or know someone who is.

Through knowledge of the disease, he said, victims may become more aware and less scared of what their bodies are going through.

Some general symptoms that may appear as signs of one of the forms of the disease are pain, swelling, limited range of motion and deformity, he said.

Brown said the average person with the disease may suffer less if medical attention is sought as soon as any of the symptoms appear.

"The average person who has periodic aches and pains waits four years to seek medical help," she said. By this time it is too late to stop the degenerative processes of arthritis.

Giles said some forms of arthritis may be hereditary, but many forms cannot be traced to anything specific, although some scientists have linked some cases to viral infections and stress.

Arthritis is a disease that affects the autoimmune system, he said. The body's autoimmune system forms antibodies that aggressively attack the joints, thus causing joint destruction. Carti-

lage breakdown occurs faster than the body can repair it. Besides affecting the joints, arthritis can also affect the heart, lungs, kidneys and vision.

Brown said once the disease attacks the immune system, the victim may be vulnerable to a number of other diseases unless proper health care is taken.

Giles stressed the importance of balancing exercise, to keep the joints active, and rest to keep the joints stress-free. He recommended exercise that is less stressful on the joints, such as swimming.

For further information about the disease or to become a member of the South Central Texas Chapter of the foundation, contact Laura at (512) 451-7323.

On Wednesday, April 26, the Arthritis Foundation is sponsoring an All-Star Salute to Secretaries' Week at the University Inn in College Station from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Local celebrities will auction items donated by members of the community. President William H. Mobley donated a book for the auction, and Texas A&M representatives will attend. All proceeds will benefit the Arthritis Foundation.

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Official says media inaccurately depicts Texas agriculture

By Sharon Maberry
STAFF WRITER

Mass media coverage of agriculture usually does not accurately represent the industry, Texas Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture told Texas A&M agricultural journalism students Thursday.

"Public perception is everything in journalism," Mike Moeller said. "Unfortunately, public perception doesn't always reflect reality."

"Over the last few years, the media, in particular the electronic media, has concentrated on the sensational, dramatic and unusual aspects of agriculture. Tractor races to Washington, D.C. become news because they're visible. Musicians putting on a concert to alleviate the farm crisis become news. Farm auctions become news."

Moeller said one problem lies in the complexity of agricultural issues.

"It's difficult to explain what the Farm Credit System is in 30 seconds, much less why anyone should be concerned about it," he said.

Another problem with accurately covering agricultural issues is the stereotype that agriculture has gained, in part, from television shows like "Green Acres" and "The Beverly Hillbillies," Moeller said.

Also, American society has evolved away from the agrarian society that it was as recently as World War II, he said. Moeller estimated that only 40,000 Texans earn their entire incomes from farming and ranching. It's difficult for the urban population to relate to farmers and ranchers

who make up a relatively small part of the population, he said.

Although there are only 40,000 full-time farmers and ranchers in Texas, their diversified interests make it virtually impossible for them to be cohesive around one issue and speak with one voice, Moeller said. Therefore, they can't approach the media with their concerns and be heard.

"The end result is that the press holds a perception that there are two agricultures in Texas," Moeller said. "There is traditional agriculture, made up of the people who have been in the business for a long time and who grow traditional crops like wheat and cotton and corn."

"In general, traditional agriculture is not news. You rarely find anything interesting enough to put on the news, unless it's a catastrophe."

"The second type of agriculture is, what I call, new agriculture. This includes non-traditional crops, like fish farming, exotic wildlife and growing crops in arid land."

Moeller said the Texas Department of Agriculture works to accurately represent agriculture to the general population. The agency focuses on the transition from traditional agriculture to new agriculture.

"Agriculture is in transition and that message goes out all the time from our agency," he said. "We're also trying to give urban people something they can relate to in the area of agriculture. We recognize that most Americans today have no farm background. We do a lot of programs on things that directly affect urban dwellers, like food quantity and quality and controlling pests."

Eastern

(Continued from page 1)

ern pilot. "We are ready to accept concessions — if that's what the new management wants, I'll go along with it."

At a crowded union hall in Miami, Machinists members chanted "Hey, hey! Ho, ho! Lorenzo's got to go" and sang "Take Me Out To The Ballgame" as they heard news of the sale.

Union officials were more cautious. John Peterpaul, vice president of the International Association of Machinists, said his union is "guardedly optimistic" and Jack Bavis, chairman of Eastern's 3,600-member pilots union, said his group was encouraged by the development and looked forward to working with Ueberroth.

In New York, Lorenzo told reporters that under the proposed purchase Texas Air would get about \$200 million cash, would be forgiven \$185 million that it owes to Eastern and would get \$79 million worth of Eastern assets.

The asset transfers — which have been vocally opposed in principle by the unions — would include Eastern's New York-Montreal route plus eight landing slots and one gate at New York's LaGuardia Airport.

In turn, Ueberroth and his partner Thomas Talbot, a former airline

executive from California, would own 30 percent of the airline. Eastern's unions would get another 30 percent of the company in exchange for wage and work-rule concessions to be negotiated with Ueberroth.

Drexel Burnham Lambert Inc., a major investment house, and Ardshiel Inc., a smaller New York firm, would sell securities to investors for the remaining 40 percent of Eastern.

Eastern would get a 19.9 percent interest in Texas Air's computer reservations system, System One, as well as the Miami-London route operated by sister carrier Continental Airlines.

Ueberroth said his group also would receive proceeds of Eastern's previously-agreed \$365 million sale of its profitable Northeast shuttle to developer Donald Trump.

Lorenzo said an outright liquidation of the airline's assets would have been more profitable to Texas Air shareholders. However, he said, "We did not buy Eastern Airlines to dismantle it or to liquidate it."

The Texas Air chief said Eastern intended to file a bankruptcy reorganization plan that would pay creditors 100 percent. Lorenzo will remain in charge of the airline until the deal is approved, but Ueberroth will participate in formulating the reorganization plan.

Faculty

(Continued from page 1)

cause many problems exist in departments concerning who should be tenured.

"We hope to make the tenure system better by providing fairer access, clearer rules and fair compensation to non-tenured faculty members," Hunting said. "Right now tenure procedures vary too much. Departments have different criteria. Tenure is sometimes based on favoritism. We want it to be based on merit."

Jim Biehn, secretary and treasurer of TFA and a senior engi-

neering lecturer, said TFA has a powerful lobby group in the state Legislature and that it encourages faculty members to write letters pushing faculty-oriented bills.

"TFA is trying to pass many important bills," Biehn said. "One would put a faculty member on the Board of Regents. This member would not be able to vote but would represent faculty interests."

"Another bill would establish a minimum salary for full-time faculty members of \$20,000. Currently A&M has more faculty members that make less than \$20,000 than any other university in the state."

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