

Monday, April 10, 1989

## Gramm begins examination of rural health care

WASHINGTON (AP) — Doctors, hospital administrators and nurses are among a coalition of volunteers being drafted by Sen. Phil Gramm to examine the rural health care crisis in Texas.

Gramm, a Texas Republican, said the task force would conduct hearings around the state in conjunction with personnel from the state and federal offices of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The purpose is to "look at areas of rural health care — the problems, the successes and failures in trying to provide quality rural health care," Gramm said in an interview Friday.

Gramm said he hopes the group, which was still being formed late last week, would be able to draft a set of recommendations to revitalize the failing health of rural medical care.

"I'm trying to get local people with a stake in the problem," Gramm said. "I'm bringing people together from various regions to present their concerns, their ideas. We'll sift through all of this and find the common denominators."

Gramm said he has asked Dr. Louis Gibson of Corsicana to be chairman of the committee, which will include hospital administrators, nurses, hospital board members, and at least one consumer. Some 20 to 25 people will be included and all will be volunteers, paying their own transportation costs.

"The primary prerequisite is knowledge and concern," Gramm said. "Closing a rural hospital is an economic and medical tragedy for a small community."

Gramm said he is looking at the possibility of holding the first hearings by the end of the month, in the High Plains-Panhandle area and East Texas.

"My primary concern is the Texas problem," Gramm said. "Ultimately what we come up with will be taken to HHS and good ideas might become national policy."

## Pesticide scares promote interest in organic foods

HOUSTON (AP) — Two recent pesticide scares have helped fuel the already growing popularity of organically-grown fruits and vegetables, as the mainstay of American agriculture before World War II and the hobby of the hippies in the 1960s moves into the mainstream.

Interest in organic farming — growing food without chemical fertilizers or pesticides — is surging as American consumers become more health-conscious. And Texas agriculture producers and grocers are cashing in on the trend.

"We're not talking about something that is the province of a bunch of health nuts," said Fletcher Clark, marketing specialist for Austin-based Whole Foods chain, which operates eight Texas stores. "We're talking about pure economics."

"Texas is looking for ways to diversify its economy," Clark told the *Houston Post*. There is a huge market out there that we can develop and position ourselves for."

The day after a recent "60 Minutes" television program on Alar-treated apples, sales jumped about 25 percent at Whole Foods stores, Clark said. A more recent scare over cyanide in Chilean grapes also reflected in sales, he said.

In reaction to consumer trends, state Agriculture Commissioner Jim Hightower announced a program in February 1988 of certifying Texas organic farmers. Farmers who comply with the Texas Department of Agriculture regulations can send their crops to market bearing a state logo guaranteeing the product is organically grown.

Since the TDA began sending out applications last June, 60 Texas farmers have joined the program and

are now in the process of certification. Four hundred more have requested applications, officials said.

The products range from watermelons grown near Wichita Falls to long-grain rice from the Beaumont area to Rio Grande Valley citrus.

About 15 states now have some laws or regulations relating to organic farming, but Texas and Washington are the only states where agencies conduct site visits and regulate organic farmers, Susan Raleigh, consumer affairs director for the TDA, said.

A recent Lou Harris poll found that 84 percent of Americans, given a choice, would prefer organic foods. Forty-nine percent said they would pay more for the normally higher-priced organic produce.

The products which generally have found a market only in health food stores are now moving into major supermarket chains, and other retailers are testing the waters.

Carmen Pate of Kroger Food Stores, said the chain which operates 173 Texas stores has been test marketing organic produce in 15 of its Michigan stores. Safeway spokesman Debbie Rog said the chain has had a pilot program marketing a variety of organic produce in about 25 percent of its Texas stores for more than a year.

But price is making sales difficult, despite the polls, Rog said. "We're not going to sell apples for \$4 a pound," she said.

Dr. Dudley Smith, associate director of the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, said his organization is helping organic farmers by looking for non-chemical ways to kill pests and for new methods of crop rotation that allow natural enrichment of soil.

## Texas oil spill teams not ready for leaks, commissioner says

AUSTIN (AP) — Texas oil spill teams have not implemented a number of measures needed to combat another mishap, despite two major leaks that oozed millions of gallons of crude onto Texas beaches in the past decade.

The two biggest spills of the past ten years, the 1979 Ixtoc well blow-out and a 1984 spill by the tanker Alvenus, convinced many Texans the state needs a well-coordinated response effort, Texas Land Commissioner Garry Mauro said.

He said several crucial proposals among recommendations made by a special oil spill committee appointed by then-Gov. Mark White in 1985 have not been implemented.

"I would hope that with the problems we've seen with the Valdez, we'd put these things on the front burner," Mauro said of the recent

spill from the Exxon Valdez tanker that fouled the Alaskan coastline.

"The only problem now is before the state can intervene, they have to get permission from the feds," he said. "We've seen what's happened in

Alaska; everybody waiting for someone else to begin the work."

"In White's committee recommendations was that the responsibility and the authority be given to one person or group to make absolutely certain the proper action will be taken in the appropriate time," the land commissioner said.

Not enough oil cleanup equipment is available in the state, said Coast Guard Capt. Robert W. Mason, who runs the Marine Safety office in Galveston.

"The State of Texas personnel is well-prepared and qualified to handle an oil spill cleanup," he said.

## Riviera couple selected A&M Parents of Year

By Juliette Rizzo

STAFF WRITER

Dr. Patrick L. Hubert and his wife Goldie of Riviera were named the 1989-90 Aggie Parents of the Year Sunday.

The award was presented at a Parents' Weekend awards ceremony in Rudder Auditorium.

Leslie Lam, parents' weekend programming sub-chairman, said the Huberts didn't know they had been nominated for the award. They were nominated by their youngest son, John Thomas Hubert, Class of '88. Eight of the Huberts' nine children attended Texas A&M.

Lam said the Huberts were told their son was to receive an award at the ceremony.

The Huberts, selected out of eleven nominees, were named Parents of the Year for outstanding service to their local community and to A&M.

Hubert, a 1951 graduate of A&M, is a veterinarian in Kingsville and a member of the Texas A&M Sports Hall of Fame. He played baseball at A&M for the 1949 to 1951 seasons and was an All-American in 1951. Hubert was inducted into the hall of fame in 1980.

Hubert also devotes time and service providing healthcare to the horses in Parsons Mounted Cavalry.

Mrs. Hubert is a music teacher at Saint Gertrudes Catholic School in Riviera and is attending classes at Texas A&I University. She is an active member of the Kleberg County Aggie Mothers' Club.

## Wadley conducts blood drive at A&M, celebrates 30th year

The Blood Center at Wadley will conduct its 30th anniversary blood drive at Texas A&M this week.

Representatives of Wadley recommend that individuals eat within four hours of donating blood. Those who have donated blood within the past 56 days before the drive are ineligible to donate.

Individuals who participate in the Aggie Blood Drive, which is a joint campus service project of Student Government, Alpha Phi Omega and Omega Phi Alpha, will receive credit for up to a year after donating in the Texas A&M Blood Club.

The club provides blood replacement coverage to A&M students, alumni, faculty and staff, and their families.

Wadley, which conducts a blood drive each semester at A&M, collected 5,471 pints of blood at A&M in 1988. It is a non-profit organization that distributes blood to hospitals throughout Texas.

Donors for the spring blood drive will receive a free T-shirt inscribed with the logo "grin & bare it."

The following are locations and times for donating blood this week on the Texas A&M campus:

- Commons 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday — Thursday.
- MSC 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday — Friday.
- Sbis 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday — Friday.
- Medical Sciences Library 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday — Friday.



Are you interested in the performing arts?

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**MSC OPAS**

(The Opera and Performing Arts Society of Texas A & M University)

An information session will be held April 11th in 410 Rudder at 7:00 p.m.

Applications for membership are available at the session and in the OPAS cubicle in 216 MSC.

For more information call 845-1515.



**The Middle East: Peace or Powder Keg**

April 12, 1989

*His Excellency*  
**Javier Pérez de Cuéllar**  
United Nations Secretary-General

*The Honorable*  
**Robert C. McFarlane**  
former National Security Advisor

*Admiral*  
**Stansfield Turner**  
former C.I.A. Director

**Ed Bradley**  
Co-Editor "60 Minutes"



MSC Wiley Lecture Series

8 p.m. Rudder Auditorium

Tickets on sale now at the MSC Box Office

Tickets \$6-\$8-\$10 for all TAMU students, \$8-\$10-\$12 for all others