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'Official witch' says civil rights violated by biased reports

BOSTON (AP) — A woman appointed the "official witch" of Massachusetts in 1975 has begun a letter-writing campaign to protest what she and other witches believe are violations of their civil rights.

Letters of complaint, stemming from news reports linking a "witch" to a cult of drug smugglers connected with the ritualistic deaths of 15 people near the Texas-Mexico border, have been sent to major newspapers and television networks by Laurie Cabot's Salem-based group, Witches League for Self-Awareness.

"We are not Satanists; we do not do black magic or any evil magic," said Cabot, who formed the 900-member group in 1986, shortly after the filming of "The Witches of Eastwick," a movie witches said made them appear stupid.

"We are trying to raise the consciousness of these people so we are not harmed," Cabot said. "We need to separate ourselves from this hateful propaganda."

The witches complained they have been "portrayed in an inaccu offensive and libelous manner which is in violation of our constitutionally guaranteed civil right to practice religious freedom, as well as freedom from harassment, discrimination, persecution, or the incitement of the public to form adverse opinions of members of a religious community."

In group literature, the league is described as a "national and international anti-defamation organization which is working to protect the civil rights, dignity and public portrayal of over six million Witches, Pagans and Pantheists."

Cabot, dubbed the "official witch" by Gov. Michael S. Dukakis, said she and other witches are part of a legally recognized religion that is peaceful and devoid of the evil doings associated with witchcraft stereotypes.

The recent complaints sent to news organizations such as the New York *Times*, the Associated Press and NBC News stemmed from stories about the murderous cult of drug smugglers in Texas.

Mexican police have called Sara Villareal Aldrete, the missing 24-year-old college student believed to be one of the cult leaders, a "witch."

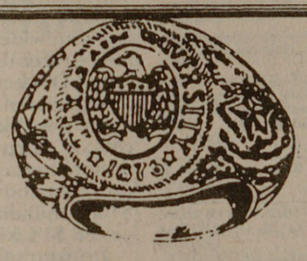
Aldrete has been linked to the 15 victims of the cult, some of which were unearthed at a ranch south of the U.S. border last week.

"It's very loose terminology," Cabot said. "Those were drug runners. What they were doing had nothing to do with witchcraft. Witchcraft has no evil gods."

Cabot describes witchcraft as a "nature religion" that uses a mixture of astronomy, astrology and psychic powers to heal and make things better. She said they use potions and cast spells to promote well-being and general good.

Witches should not be painted as people who engage in acts of violence such as animal or human sacrifice, she said.

DEBATE ON
ABORTION
Pro Choice: Prof. Manuel Davenport
(Department of Philosophy)
Pro Life: Prof. Walter Bradley
(Sponsor of Campus Crusade)
Moderator: Prof. Richard Stadelmann
(A&M Professor of Religious Studies)
Date : April 19, 1989
Place: Blocker 158
Time : 7: 30 PM
Cost : FREE Admission
Sponsored by Pretheology Society of Texas A&M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In Advance

Group debates whether Corps is anachronism

By Richard Tijerina
STAFF WRITER

"The Corps of Cadets: Is the Corps a Glorious Anachronism that No Longer Serves a Viable Purpose at A&M?" will be the topic of a parliamentary debate **Tuesday at 7 p.m. in 701 Rudder.**

The debate, sponsored by the Texas A&M Debate Society, will feature oppposing speakers. After their speeches they will field questions from the audience, which will then vote on the debate to decide who won.

Chamber Series presents 3 Dutch musicians

The final concert of the 1988-89 University Chamber Series, featuring three musicians from The Netherlands, will celebrate the American Recorder Society's 50th anniversary. The concert begins at **8 p.m. today at First Presbyterian Church**, 1100 Carter Creek Parkway in Bryan.

The trio consists of Frans Brueggen, who plays the recorder, Anner Bylsma, baroque cellist, and Gustav Leonhardt, harpsichordist.

Tickets are on sale in Rudder Box Office for $5 for students and children and $8 for adults. Call 845-3355 for more information.

Student Government to meet tonight at 7

The Student Senate will meet **tonight in 204 Harrington at 8.** The meeting is open to the public.

What's Up

Wednesday

UNIVERSITY CHAMBER SERIES: will have a Dutch Masters Concert at 8 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church in Bryan.
CATHOLIC STUDENT ASSOCIATION: will elect CSA board members at 5:30 p.m. at St. Mary's Student Center.
NABA: will elect officers at 7 p.m. in 120 Blocker.
ALPHA EPSILON DELTA: will meet at 7 p.m. in 308 Rudder.
T.E.A.C.: Dr. Flagler will speak about acid rain at 7 p.m. in 118 Civil Engineering.
COMPUTER USERS GROUP: will meet at 3 p.m. in 502 Rudder.
MUSIC PROGRAM: will have a brown bag concert at noon in 402 Academic.
OUTDOOR RECREATION CLUB: will elect officers at 7 p.m. in 704 Rudder.
UNITED CAMPUS MINISTRIES: will have an Aggie supper at 6 p.m. at A&M Presbyterian Church.
NEWMAN: will meet to celebrate a special liturgy at 7:30 p.m. at the student center.
CATHOLICS ON THE QUAD: will present a summer maintenance manual for spiritual life at 9 p.m. in lounge B on the quad.
CIRCLE K INTERNATIONAL: will meet at 7 p.m. in 401 Rudder.
NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS: will meet at 8:30 p.m. Call the C.D.P.E. at 845-0280 for more details.
FRIENDS OF EVANS LIBRARY: presents National Library Week with Kinky Friedman speaking at 2:30 p.m. in 204 C Sterling C. Evans.
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS: will meet at noon. Call the C.D.P.E at 845-0280 for more information.

Thursday

WOMEN'S STUDIES/CLASSICAL STUDIES: will present "Sappho and Her Companions" at 7:30 p.m. in 203 Blocker.
FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY: Davis Scholarships and the Longevity Awards Ceremony will be at 2:30 p.m. in 204C Sterling C. Evans.
SUGARLAND/MISSOURI CITY/STAFFORD HOMETOWN CLUB: will meet and elect officers at 7 p.m. in 105 Heldenfels.
MEXICAN STUDENT ASSOCIATION: will meet and those seeking election must present a work plan at 8:30 p.m. in 308 Rudder.
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM: will meet and elect officers at 7 p.m. in 502 Rudder.
STUDENTS OVER THE TRADITIONAL AGE: will meet at 5 p.m. at Dudley's Draw.
VIETNAMESE STUDENT ASSOCIATION: will meet and elect officers at 8:30 p.m. in 226 Rudder.
R.E.A.C.H.: will have a panel discussion about world hunger at 12:30 p.m. in the MSC flagroom. There will also be a canned food drive from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. at Rudder fountain.
NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS: will meet at 8:30 p.m. Call the C.D.P.E. at 845-0280 for more information.
ADULT CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLICS: will meet at 6 p.m. Call the C.D.P.E. for more information.
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS: will meet at noon. Call the C.D.P.E. at 845-0280 for more information.
LATIN AMERICAN CATHOLIC STUDENTS: will meet to discuss current issues in Spanish at 8:30 p.m. at St. Mary's Student Center.

Items for What's Up should be submitted to The Battalion, *216 Reed McDonald, no later than three business days before the desired run date. We only publish the name and phone number of the contact if you ask us to do so. What's Up is a* Battalion *service that lists* non-profit *events and activities. Submissions are run on a first-come, first-served basis. There is* no guarantee *an entry will run. If you have questions, call the newsroom at 845-3315.*

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