

Wednesday, May 3, 1989

## Surprising response inspires formation of ecological society

By Julie Myers

**STAFF WRITER**  
A local radio personality angered by the March 24 Exxon Valdez tanker accident is attempting to organize "Aggies for Mother Earth," an environmental society concerned with the Earth's welfare.  
Radio station KTSR personality and Aggie Hour host Dan Rush is encouraging his listeners to attend an organizational meeting tentatively set for 6:30 p.m.

Saturday at Hensel Park.

"It was an idea I conjured up over the weekend and initiated Sunday night," he said. "I tossed the idea out and the phones lit up like a Christmas tree."

In the tanker accident, 10 million barrels of oil spilled into Alaska's Prince William Sound.

Response to Rush's initial announcement concerning the group was so overwhelming he decided to increase his visibility

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## Professor earns honor for work with insects

By Selina Gonzalez

REPORTER

A Texas A&M distinguished professor of entomology became the fourth member of the National Academy of Science from Texas A&M April 25. Dr. Max Summers has been honored for his pioneering work on insect virology, or the study of viruses transmitted by insects.

The National Academy of Sciences is a private organization of scientists and engineers dedicated to science and its use for human welfare.

Summers joins A&M University System Chancellor Dr. Perry Adkisson, Deputy Chancellor Dr. Charles Antzen and inorganic chemist Dr. F. Albert Cotton as campus members of the academy.

"I was extremely pleased," Summers said. "It is a very significant honor for a professor in the academic and research community."

The A&M entomologist's research focuses on the molecular biology of insects. Summers' investigation re-

lates to how insects transmit disease to man, animals, plants and crop systems. Summers said he thinks insect research will be important over the next decade.

The National Academy of Sciences membership adds to Summers' string of awards. In 1983, Summers received the Faculty Distinguished Achievement Award in Research from the Texas A&M Former Students Association.

In 1987, Summers became the holder of the chair in agricultural biotechnology.

Last year, the entomologist accepted an outstanding faculty member award from the Alumni Association of Wilmington College.

Summers also received the first J.V. Osmun Alumni Professional Achievement Award in entomology from Purdue University.

Earlier this year, Summers was elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

"My future goals are based upon my past goals, which allowed me to receive this recognition," Summers said.

## Senate OKs \$500 million increase to develop equity in Texas schools

AUSTIN (AP) — The Texas Senate on Tuesday approved a \$500 million increase in public education funding over the next two years aimed at bridging the gap between poor and wealthy school districts, an issue that is now before the Texas Supreme Court.

Sen. Carl Parker, D-Port Arthur, said his bill represented the first outlay of a \$2 billion state commitment over the next five years to try to erase the disparity between schools in poor and rich areas of the state.

"The longest journey begins with the first step," Parker, chairman of the Senate Education Committee, said. "This puts us on the road to equity."

In addition to the school funding increase, the Senate passed measures that would provide state support for the construction of school buildings and reward school districts that improve student academic performance.

The Senate approved Parker's funding increase and sent it to the House on a 31-0 vote.

Sen. Carlos Truan, D-Corpus Christi, voted

for the increase, but said, "obviously we need to do more than \$500 million."

He and other members of the Senate Hispanic Caucus issued a statement saying their support for the increase "should not be misconstrued as support for the proposition that this bill will bring the Legislature within its constitutional mandate."

The state is the target of a lawsuit by poor school districts who claim Texas' method of funding public schools discriminates against them because they are unable to raise as much in local tax dollars to supplement their schools as wealthy school districts can.

In 1987, a state district court judge agreed with the poor districts and declared the state's financing system unconstitutional. An appeals court, however, said it was up to state lawmakers to correct the problem. The case is pending before the Texas Supreme Court.

"I am also persuaded that if we do nothing this session that the Supreme Court will uphold the state district court's decision in some form," Parker said.

Parker said more education funds are needed, but that only \$500 million was available without a tax increase. Gov. Bill Clements has said he will veto any tax increase this session.

He said he hoped districts receiving more money would use the funds to increase teacher salaries.

An organization comprised of poor school districts said the funding increase was inadequate, but would help.

"It's like you're dying of hunger and you get another meal, so you're going to live another day," Craig Foster, executive director of the Equity Center, said.

Foster said there was no assurance future Legislatures will accept funding provisions that would add about \$2 billion to equalize funding.

"Legislatures could simply reduce those numbers in future years. Unless the Supreme Court rules, the promise of future additional funds is in jeopardy," he said.

## 'Habitat for Humanity' group tries to build new affiliation, homes for poor in B-CS

By Cindy McMillian

STAFF WRITER

Home ownership is part of the American dream, but an organization called Habitat for Humanity hopes to make housing a reality for families who can't afford it.

Habitat for Humanity, a non-profit ecumenical housing ministry, builds and restores homes for people with substandard housing or no housing. A&M students and area residents hope to establish a Bryan-College Station affiliation of the program and help local families.

Bryan has about 3,000 substandard houses and 250 families waiting for government housing, Heather Hilton, organizer of the Bryan-

College Station affiliate, said. Hilton and seven other members of a steering committee hope that by linking up with the Habitat program, they can provide houses for these families with donations and volunteer workers.

Cindy Flippen, also a student member of the committee, said she has been in contact with people living in Bryan housing projects and witnessed the poor conditions of some of the buildings. She said she has seen residences in Bryan where rats chew through the walls and floors.

"I think it's terrible that people live in such conditions," she said. "This program gives them a choice."

Hilton said Habitat uses no government funds in its projects. After the houses are built using volunteer

labor and donations, they are sold to a needy family at no profit. A small down-payment is requested, and the family has 20 years to pay the interest-free mortgage. All mortgage payments are used to build more houses.

Hilton told about 20 students and residents at an informational meeting Tuesday night that the committee hopes to establish a local affiliation by August 1, the next deadline. Representatives from several campus organizations, including student members of the National Association of Home Builders and the Association of General Contractors, showed up to hear about the program.

If Habitat approves an affiliation in Bryan-College Station, a campus chapter may also be formed, Hilton said. Habitat requires affiliates to

form four committees, elect a board of governors and collect \$3,000 in donations, she said.

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### Clarification

The Christian residence hall opening to students in Fall 1989 is sponsored by ACTION — American College Teams in Other Nations — and is not affiliated with the Residence Hall Association.

Contact ACTION Director Dan Cummins at 696-1376 or at P.O. Box 1144, Lindale, Texas 75771 for more information.

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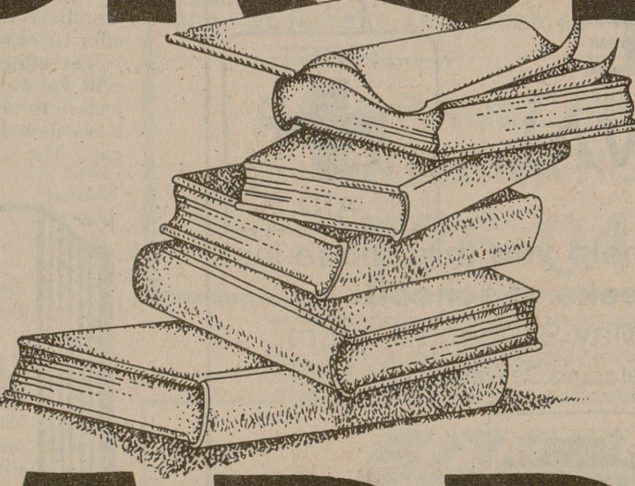
SUNDAY, MAY 7, 1989  
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Private tours can be arranged anytime during the first two weeks of May.

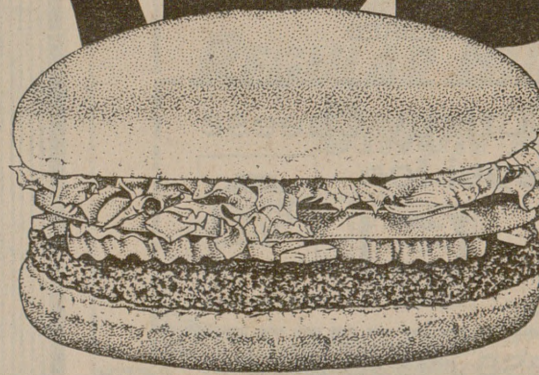


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