

Wednesday, December 6, 1989

## A&M fights education problems

### Task force investigates school drop-out epidemic, sponsors conference to share projects with teachers

By Bill Hethcock

Of The Battalion Staff

A Texas A&M task force is fighting the elementary and secondary school drop-out epidemic and other critical problems in the education

system, Dr. Dean Corrigan, head of the "Commitment to Education" task force, said.

There is a 30 percent drop-out rate in Texas public schools, Corrigan said.

"We can't afford to have people drop out of school and pay \$35,000

a year to incarcerate them," he said. "Eighty-five percent of the prisoners in Huntsville are drop-outs."

"The United States work force needs people who are finishing school with basic skills needed to succeed."

Corrigan, who was the dean of the College of Education until August, said he feels students are dropping out because they are bored and unchallenged. One of the goals of the task force, Corrigan said, is to help schools become "centers of intellectual inquiry" where students will want to be involved.

"We've got a lot of people dropping out of school that are competent," he said. "They can do the work, but they are not turned on by it. Engagement and involvement are the keys to creating healthy learning environments. People have to see a purpose in what they're doing."

Good teachers are vital for an environment that will keep students in school, Corrigan said.

"A key to a lot of this problem is to get creative teachers," he said.

"That's another part of this project. We want to attract into teaching the most outstanding candidates for teaching."

One of the activities the "Commitment to Education" task force will sponsor is an annual conference called "New Directions in Education," Corrigan said. In this conference, the task force will share projects they are working on with school officials who attend. Teachers, principals and superintendents also will share what they are doing in their own districts, he said.

Corrigan said the task force is designed to serve as a leadership team and a communication link between different groups. The group will recognize and support new ideas in education.

"I think one of the most important things a university can do through the leadership of its president and an activity like this is to support the people who are willing to try out new ideas and support the search to better educate children at all levels," he said.

## A&M senior creates computer program

By James M. Love

Special to The Battalion

A Texas A&M senior recently developed a computer program that periodically saves the user's data without interruption.

Mechanical engineering major Scott Crawford anticipates that the program, which can be used with IBM computers, soon will be a necessity to most computer users.

"Almost anyone who has ever used a computer has at one time or another experienced a loss of valuable data due to keyboard lock-up or power loss," Crawford said. "My program completely eliminates this human problem of forgetting to occasionally save your work by saving it for you."

Crawford came up with the idea while co-oping at Bechtel, an engineering company. He said many workers there were consistently losing hours of work through loss of data because they didn't save their work periodically.

Crawford said he was discouraged at first by his experienced co-workers and the literature he found about computer clocks. All of them

indicated that what he wanted to do was impossible on an IBM computer.

Nevertheless, he began working on preliminary programs. After many pitfalls he was able to get an internal clock to strike a command key on the keyboard.

"I felt like I won the lottery," Crawford said. "I had a fully functional program that worked on any IBM compatible computer."

Crawford has since copyrighted the program and written a user manual. He said he anticipates the first 200 program sales will go to Bechtel, and he is hoping for more sales after that. He said he plans to use funds generated by program sales to purchase advertisements in computer magazines.

Crawford plans to attend graduate school to get a master's degree in computer science. He said his goals are to learn computer-integrated manufacturing, which will allow him to apply both his mechanical engineering degree and his computer skills toward one career.

"Some day I hope to write a computer program that will make people say, 'This... is amazing.'"

## A&M sends servicemen holiday greeting cards

By Andrew Kehoe

Of The Battalion Staff

Some Texas A&M students are making Christmas a little brighter for American servicemen who might be alone or away from home.

The students are participating in "Mail Call!," a national, non-

profit, independent but military-related program that routes Christmas mail to members of the armed forces. Although "Mail Call!" has existed for 15 years, it has been at A&M for only two years.

Kathy Hopkins, a junior biology major, was in charge of this

See Mail/Page 4

## B-CS organizations stress community's environmental duties

By Pam Mooman

Of The Battalion Staff

It seemed harmless.

As Michelle Chase sat near the edge of a Connecticut cliff, she soaked in the unspoiled beauty. She noticed another sight-seer drinking a Coke.

"I hope he's not going to throw that over the edge," Chase, a senior psychology major at Texas A&M, thought. But she did not say anything and returned to enjoying the scene around her.

Her thoughts were interrupted, however, as the sight-seer finished his drink and tossed the empty can over the cliff's edge. The can tumbled and bounced its way

out of sight.

The man watched, fascinated by the can's erratic trip down the cliff's side. Chase scowled at the man but said nothing.

There are so many others like him, she said, that sometimes thinking about reaching all of them gets frustrating.

Bryan-College Station environmental groups are trying to show the community that everyone is personally responsible for the environment and to teach people how to take care of it.

One careless action, like throwing a can over a cliff, may seem harmless. But when multiplied by 50,000, one can becomes significant.

"I had always been interested, but I didn't know I could do anything," Chase

PART 1 OF A 3-PART SERIES

said. But Chase has found ways to promote conservation and raise concern for the environment.

At the 1988 Texas Renaissance Festival, Chase met John Kurger, a falconer. This meeting began Chase's year-long efforts to sponsor a conservation program at A&M with Kurger as a speaker.

On Oct. 11, 1989, Chase's efforts paid off as "One Earth, One Chance — An Evening Dedicated to Conservation" was presented at the Grove.

Chase's love of nature dates back further than 1988. Three years ago, Chase, an out-

door education minor, began backpacking and camping.

Learning outdoor skills helped her develop self-esteem and problem-solving abilities, she said. Chase joined the Outdoor Recreation Club, serving first as secretary and then as president.

"I kept putting more and more effort into outdoor education," Chase said. Her enjoyment of the outdoors led her to become concerned with the environment.

"If (people) don't take care of leisure places, then they will have no place to have leisure," she said.

Diane Craig agrees. Craig, executive coordinator for Brazos Beautiful Inc., said the organization's purpose is to educate the

community about caring for the environment.

"Who can be against having a clean, beautiful community?" Craig asked. "Nobody wants to live in trash and filth."

Craig, who has been executive coordinator since 1983, said the litter problem doesn't have to exist.

"It's not a natural occurrence," she said. "We're the people who cause it."

Michael Worsham, vice chair of the Sierra Club, agrees that people cause, and can control, environmental problems.

"I guess it's training and the way they were educated," he said. "It was

See Sierra/Page 6

# ROTHER'S BOOKSTORES

## NOW BUYING ALL BOOKS

• TAMU • BLINN • STUDY GUIDES • PAPERBACKS •

## Sell Your Books & Play WHEEL OF FORTUNE

340 JERSEY

901 HARVEY ROAD

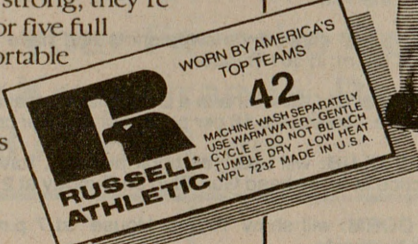
ACROSS FROM UNIVERSITY POLICE

IN THE WOODSTONE CENTER

## The Sweats

With the 5-year guarantee.

Sweat pants, sweat shirts and pullover hoods from Russell Athletic are so strong, they're guaranteed\* for five full years of comfortable good wear. Naturally, thoroughbreds like these go fast. Ride by today for the best selection.



\*Exclusive of team or organized sports participation.

TOP OF THE LINE AGGIE SPORTSWEAR

ROTHERS BOOKSTORES



# HOLIDAY MEAL DEALS

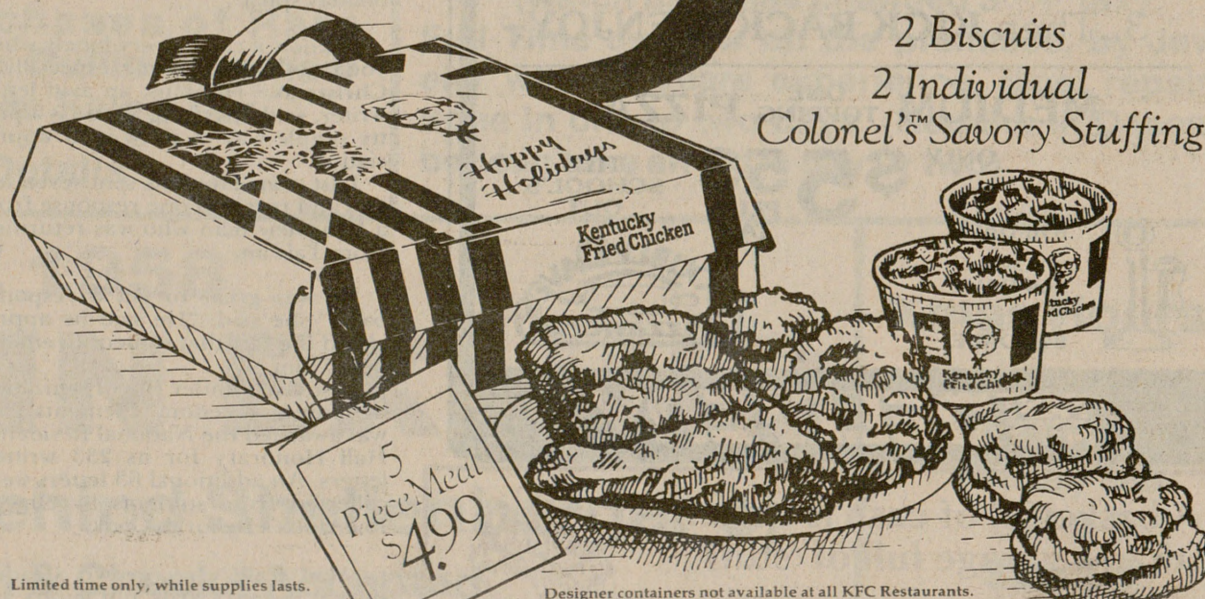
10 Pieces Chicken  
4 Biscuits  
1 Large Colonel's™ Savory Stuffing



Kentucky Fried Chicken  
3321 South Texas Ave.  
Bryan, Tx 77802  
846-3238

Kentucky Fried Chicken  
2501 Texas Ave.  
College Station, Tx 77840  
693-2331

5 Pieces Chicken  
2 Biscuits  
2 Individual  
Colonel's™ Savory Stuffing



Limited time only, while supplies last.

©KFC National Advertising Co-op 1989

Designer containers not available at all KFC Restaurants.

Available at Participating KFC® Restaurants.