

Monday, January 22, 1990

For the birds

## A&M professor produces radio show of bird sounds

By STACY E. ALLEN  
Of The Battalion Staff

A new radio show produced by a Texas A&M professor is for the birds—or about them, actually.

Dr. Robert Benson in the engineering technology department is the creator of "Bird Note," a five minute segment that airs Wednesday mornings at 7:30 on KAMU-FM and provides bird sounds and facts to listeners. The program debuted Wednesday.

Benson said the program is offered free to public broadcast stations across the country.

"We wanted to test out the water here locally and work the bugs out so it will be better suited for the national distribution efforts in a few weeks," he said.

Benson has been a professor in the electronics group of engineering technology at A&M since 1985. He directs the A&M Bioacoustics Laboratory, which studies many different types of sounds.

"The purpose of offering this program is to make the bioacoustics lab at A&M known across the country," Benson said.

A 1980 survey by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found that 60 million people are casual bird watch-

ers and 7 million people can identify at least 40 species or more by sight. Benson said this shows that bird watching is one of the fastest growing recreations in the country.

"I'm very optimistic that the show will be successful," said Benson.

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— Dr. Robert Benson,  
A&M Professor

"There's a large audience out there for this type of program. 'Bird Note' is not technical, but is designed for those who have chosen bird watching as a hobby."

Although Benson records most of the bird sounds heard on the program himself, he has access to other sources if he needs them. He trav-

eled to Central Mexico over the Christmas break to record bird sounds, but he gets most of his animal sounds from different places in the United States. He said he carries recording equipment everywhere he goes.

His interest in birds and wildlife goes back to his junior high years when he saw a book on birds in the school library.

"On the way home that afternoon, I was able to identify some common birds from pictures in the book," Benson said. "After that, it became a game to see how many birds I could find and identify."

Although the bioacoustics lab at A&M hopes to gain nationwide recognition through bird sounds, birds are not the only sounds the lab records and studies.

An ongoing project that Benson is working on is developing a new diagnostic tool to discover coronary artery disease in individuals without actually going inside the body. The diagnosis would be based on sounds that are produced by blood flowing through the obstructive arteries.

The lab also studies many different types of animals and is conducting a study on highway traffic that will enable highway departments to build better highways.

## Art for nature lovers

Exhibit features works with organic themes

By SELINA GONZALEZ  
Of The Battalion Staff

The art exhibit "Organic Abstractions" offers students a study distraction.

The art show, sponsored by the Texas A&M Office of University Art Collections and Exhibitions, is on display in the Rudder Exhibit Hall until Feb. 17 from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m.

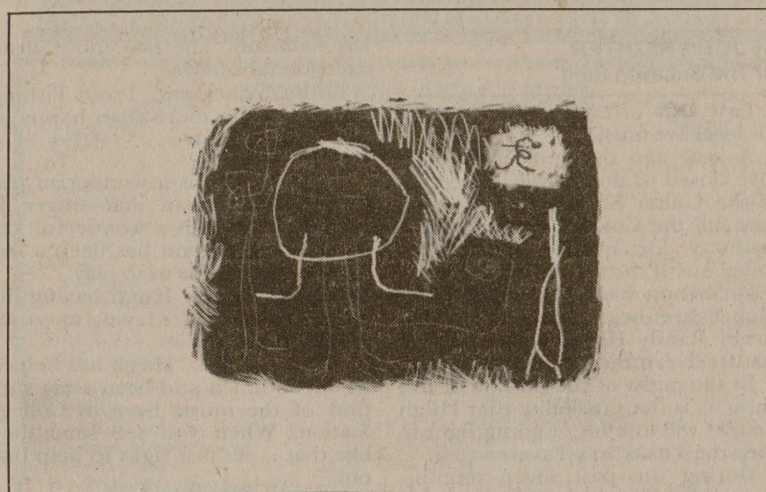
"Abstraction is a very well-known style," Catherine Hastedt, registrar curator, said. "The chosen works are abstractions based on organic themes."

Examples of organic art are works in human or floral form, Hastedt said. The artists in this exhibit used several mediums, such as wood, granite, glass, steel and oil.

"One main goal of the exhibition is to stress the learning aspect," Hastedt said. "The more you study it (the exhibition), the more you get out of it."

Some of the artists whose work will be displayed are Texans Dorothy Hood and James Surls as well as Joan Miro and Dick Ray.

Hermona A. Dayag, former director of the Office of University Art Collections and Exhibitions,



Joan Miro. Untitled. 1948 lithograph on paper from the "Organic Extractions" exhibit on display in Rudder Exhibit Hall.

developed the idea for "Organic Abstractions."

Creative volunteers who have studied the show and the artists offer tours for more than four people of "Organic Abstractions." To make an appointment, call 845-8501.

The Office of University Art

Collections and Exhibitions has scheduled the annual show entitled "Perceptions 90" for the spring. The show is composed of selections from A&M's permanent collection, Hastedt said. Students from an advanced floral design course will do floral interpretations of the paintings.

## Texas' senators seek funds for state

WASHINGTON (AP) — When Congress reconvenes Tuesday for the year, Texas' two U.S. senators will be pushing for more super collider money, fighting for tax incentives for the oil and gas industry and seeking to cushion the state's military establishment from a slowdown in defense spending.

Sens. Lloyd Bentsen and Phil Gramm also want extra money to fight illegal drugs along the Texas-Mexico border and to create more federal judgeships in the region. They'll be looking, too, for ways to protect Texas hospitals from potentially devastating reductions in Medicare spending and to curb illegal immigration along the border.

Much of their job in the year ahead will be protecting the state's share of the federal spending pie — including such high-dollar projects as Sem-

atech, a Pentagon-industry semiconductor research consortium in Austin; the \$5.9 billion super collider, which is to be built in Ellis County; and the space station, which is being built in part in Houston.

Both expect challenges to those projects, especially if the super collider's price tag rises to \$7 billion, which is what scientists say it would now take to build the particle accelerator as large and as powerful as originally envisioned.

President Bush is expected to ask Congress this week for about \$395 million for the collider, up from the \$225 million appropriated last year to begin construction at the Waxahachie site.

The Energy Department also will announce, possibly this week, whether it agrees with a panel of leading physicists that the collider should be

built as planned, despite a cost increase.

The higher price tag, however, could give opponents the ammunition they've been looking for to kill the project. Some say the collider will rob worthy scientific projects of funding as more money is spent each year to build the world's biggest scientific instrument.

"It's going to be tough this year," Bentsen, a Democrat, said of the fight over collider spending. "You can bet it's going to be tough."

Bentsen also is wary of challenges from the administration and Congress to Sematech and the space station, as well as a host of Pentagon projects with important links to Texas — the V-22 Osprey aircraft, the B-2 stealth bomber and the rail-based MX missile.

## Professor emeritus dies at age 95; funeral today

A Texas A&M professor emeritus of soil and crop sciences died Friday in a local hospital.

Dr. Luther Goodrich Jones, 95, taught at A&M from 1926 to 1952.

Jones, who was born in Temple, graduated from Princeton University in 1917. He served in the U.S. Army in Europe during World War I. He came to A&M in 1920 and earned his master's degree here in 1921. Jones earned his doctorate from Cornell University.

Jones returned to College Station in 1926 to teach agronomy at A&M.

He served on the first College Station City Council in 1937 and on the board of trustees for the College Station school district. He helped form the College Station State Bank, now University National Bank, in 1946 and served as its first president.

Funeral services for Jones are scheduled for 2 p.m. today at A&M Presbyterian Church.

Memorials may be made to the Brazos Valley Rehabilitation Center in Bryan or the Luther Goodrich Jones Agronomy Scholarship fund at A&M.

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