

Texas A&M The Battalion



WEATHER

TOMORROW'S FORECAST:
Partly cloudy and cooler.
HIGH: 76 LOW: 62

Vol. 89 No. 133 USPS 045360 10 Pages

College Station, Texas

Tuesday, April 17, 1990

Labor of love

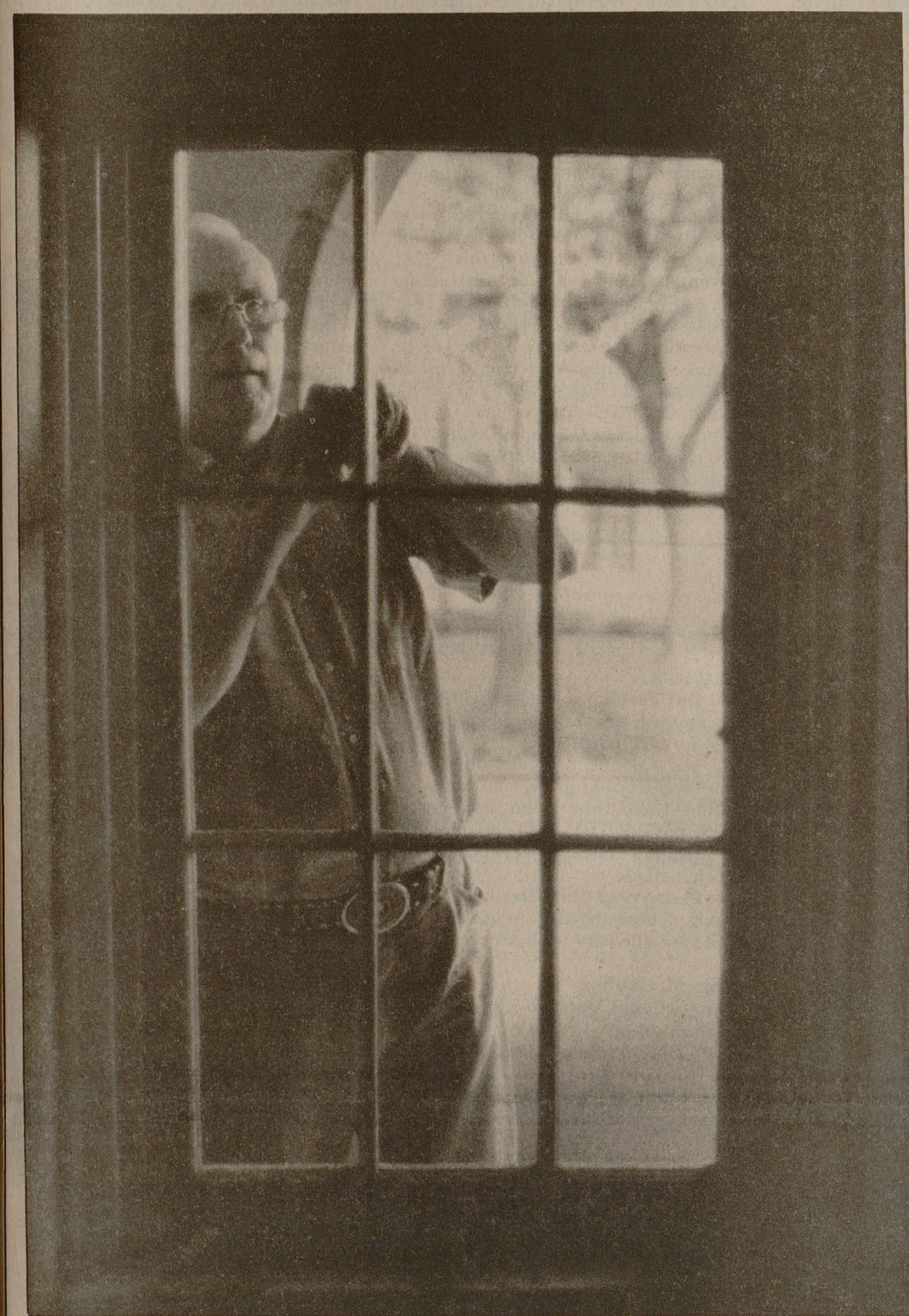


Photo by Fredrick D. Joe

John Haislet, a member of A&M United Methodist Church, volunteers his time to refurbish some of the church's windows Monday afternoon. He has removed the panes from this window and will sand and paint it before replacing the glass.

Haislet has been a member of the church since 1960 when he came to A&M with the Texas Forest Service. He retired two years ago as the Assistant to the Director of the Texas Forest Service.

Program trains faculty System offers communication options for professors, students

By NADJA SABAWALA
Of The Battalion Staff

Problems stemming from poor communication between students and faculty soon may be resolved easily, said Dr. E. Dean Gage, acting provost and vice president of academic affairs.

In a presentation to the Texas A&M Board of Regents Monday afternoon, Gage said the Classroom Communications Enhancement Program has already received statewide recognition and is "a model program that others will want to talk to us about."

The program will be implemented for the fall 1990 semester in hopes of improving the communication skills of faculty members.

Gage said educational communication relies on delivery of the message as well as the curricular content, but most student complaints have stemmed from the delivery process.

"Any student can file a com-

plaint," Gage said. "But our action will depend on the number of complaints."

With the new system, a student has the option to air his views not only to the faculty member with which he is having the problem, but the student can go to the department head or associate dean as well.

Gage said these options leave channels open for the student to follow on his own. If the student is having a problem with a professor, it may go unreported because the student may feel he could not approach the instructor, Gage said. By giving the students other channels, more complaints that may have gone unreported have a better chance of getting reported.

Dr. John C. Calhoun Jr., a distinguished professor in the Department of Petroleum Engineering, said he believed that the fault of lacking communication is not always dependent on one side.

"Communication is a two-way street," Calhoun said. "The trans-

mitter and receiver must both work. "My belief is that most of the time it's the receiver that's not working."

Student Government President Kevin Buchman said the program will have its weaknesses but that it is a good start to addressing the problem.

"At least the students will know that the administration is sincere in looking at these problems," Buchman said.

Not only is the University concerned about its faculty, but its teaching assistants as well. Gage reported that many assistants feel unready to teach a course.

The Committee on Teaching Assistant Training and Evaluation is concerned with the fact that some assistants have not received proper training to teach college courses, Gage said. They are not aware of the responsibility that stems from taking on the teaching role.

"We owe it to them to properly

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Committee begins hearings on campus discrimination

By CHRIS VAUGHN
Of The Battalion Staff

The Texas A&M Committee for a Discrimination-Free Campus begins a series of open hearings today to gather information about campus discrimination.

Information obtained for a report will be delivered to University President William H. Mobley.

The first hearing is scheduled at 4 to 5:30 p.m. today in 502 Rudder. A second hearing is scheduled for 11:30 a.m. Thursday and a third hearing is set for 2 p.m. April 25 in the same room.

Sheran Riley, chairwoman of the committee, said the open hearings will be used primarily as information-gathering tools.

"We want to find out what the concerns and the problems are of people on campus," Riley, an assistant to Mobley, said. "It will just basically be a forum."

Any student, faculty or staff member wishing to testify before Riley and the other committee members present, however, will only have three minutes to voice their concerns.

The committee, established in June by Mobley, is reviewing current mechanisms to cope with racial, ethnic, religious, age and gender discrimination, and will make recommendations to the president about how they could be improved.

Representatives from the Committee for the Awareness of Mexican-American Culture, Black Awareness Committee, student government, Multicultural Services Department, athletic department, international pro-

grams, and from various colleges are on the 16-person committee.

Riley said the three hearings also will serve to alert people to the current procedures available to deal with discriminatory practices.

"We wanted to make ourselves known on campus," she said. "We want to let people know that we do have mechanisms on campus for people to go to if they do have problems."

The Student Affairs office of Student Services handles student complaints, while the dean of faculty deals with any problems professors might have. The Human Resources Department handles staff discriminatory problems.

"As of right now, I would recommend those places to people," Riley said. "From what we understand, they are all working okay."

But Riley said any committee recommendations to change the current procedures depends on the problems heard during the open hearings.

The committee had planned originally to report its findings to Mobley in March, but Riley said it will more likely be May or June now.

It was formed last year with student race discrimination as its focus, but it gradually broadened to include religious and ethnic discrimination on a university-wide basis.

After studying the problems in its first few meetings in November, Riley said, the committee again increased its focus to include age and gender discrimination.

Horticulturists domesticate unusual pink, white bluebonnets

By SUZANNE CALDERON
Of The Battalion Staff

Don't let the name of the Texas bluebonnet deceive you — it's not just blue anymore. The Texas state flower now comes in white and pink.

Horticulturists from the Texas Agricultural Extension Service have domesticated the bluebonnet and developed these two new colors, Dr. Doug Welsh, a TAES horticulturist who participated in the project, said.

With the leadership of Jerry Parsons, an extension vegetable specialist for the TAES in San Antonio, Welsh said, they isolated the naturally occurring, but very rare white and pink bluebonnets.

Welsh said the white and pink colors are very recessive; the odds of whites occurring

naturally are one in a million and pink, one in a billion.

To increase the odds of these colors occurring naturally, Welsh said they started looking for white and pink bluebonnets in the wild from which they could harvest seeds.

"We put it out in the media (in San Antonio) ... we put out a call to tell people 'if you see white bluebonnets, let us know,'" Welsh said.

He said they told people not to pick the flowers, but to tell them where they were located, so the seeds could be harvested.

To give an example of how rare the flowers are, in 1985, the first year of the project, Welsh said they only had a pound of white seed.

"A pound of seed was all we could collect in all of San Antonio," Welsh said. "You are talking these plants are rare, rare."

Then the white and pink bluebonnet seeds were sown and grown in fields in Wintergarden to increase the seed source, he said. The fields usually would have pink or white flowers, but quite a few blue flowers also would appear, he said.

To keep the white or pink seed pure, he said, the blues immediately were pulled from the fields.

He said the first year the seed from the white plants came back 90 percent pure.

Because the pink bluebonnet is more recessive and rare than the white, only 8 percent of the pink bluebonnets came back true pink the first year. During the second year, however, 98 percent of the plants were true pink.

The key to the process is selecting the color variants of the flowers and letting them grow alone, he said.

"By having the plants together, they

cross-pollinate only recessive genes," he said.

Through the isolation of specific colors, Welsh said, different shades of colors are emerging.

In some of the pink flowers, a maroon throat is emerging, showing the possibility of a maroon bluebonnet. The maroon flower will be called the Aggiebonnet, he said.

"If there is a maroon throat, that means we can get a maroon flower — so now we are after the maroon," he said.

There is no physical manipulation involved in getting these various colors, Welsh said.

"We are just helping out Mother Nature," he said.

The idea for isolating different colors of bluebonnets was started by Carroll Abbott, a seed company owner in Kerrville, who

loved wildflowers.

"He was just in love with wildflowers, bluebonnets specifically," Welsh said. "His dream was to have a red, white and blue bluebonnet Texas flag for the (Texas) sesquicentennial (1986)."

But before Abbott could make his dream a reality, he lost his life to cancer.

After his death, Parsons, a friend of Abbott's, took up a mission to continue Abbott's dream to find a way to come up with red, white and blue bluebonnets.

"The germans are out there — Mother Nature has given us the pink, white and blue," Welsh said. "A mixture of pink and blue will give you red — the question is can we get it to happen naturally."

The domesticated blue, white and pink bluebonnets are now commercially available as annual bedding plants.

UT campus activists battle against racism

AUSTIN (AP) — The new student body president at the University of Texas said Monday that campus activists have just started their battle against discrimination, after last week's protest at a fraternity house whose members were accused of racist acts.

Days after that peaceful protest, UT-Austin President William Cunningham was interrupted when he tried to deal with the racial incidents during a prepared speech.

"We have been taking it to the street," Toni Luckett, new president of the university's Student Association said. "I think that we have been bringing it to the administration's attention in a way that shows they cannot placate us."

"This is definitely a form of protest that we're going to use, among others, and that's why I was elected," said Luckett, who is black.

But Larry Dubinski, president of the Interfraternity Council, said the protesters have been "showboating."

"The whites are being very alienated this week, I think," he said. "It's got to stop being a black

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thing. It's got to be a university thing, because it's got to be best for all the university."

For at least the second time in recent months, a crowd of about 1,000 students on Friday disrupted a statement by Cunningham on recent racial incidents at the school.

Cunningham also was interrupted by student shouts — including "UT divest" — on Jan. 15, while giving a speech on the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday.

Several hundred students marched last Wednesday in a protest organized by the Black Student Alliance to protest two incidents associated with a spring fraternity-sorority celebration called Round-Up.

A Phi Gamma Delta member sold T-shirts with a "Sambo" caricature head depicted on top of

basketball star Michael Jordan's body. And a car was painted with racial slurs and destroyed at the Delta Tau Delta house.

After the march, the students gathered at the Phi Gamma Delta, or Fiji, house to protest.

The administration temporarily has suspended the two fraternities, pending an investigation. Black student leaders have called for a one-year suspension.

While students are concerned with the recent incidents, Luckett said, they want to eliminate institutional racism at the university.

"We think the way to attack the ignorance on our campus is to diversify the curriculum," she said.

Students have called on the administration to adopt a Black Student Alliance program advocating diversification of the UT curriculum and more intensive recruitment and retention programs for minority students and faculty.

Dubinski said the Interfraternity Council supports those proposals.

Census Bureau's added phone lines assist callers

The Census Bureau announced that toll-free phone lines for those needing help completing their census forms will be available until Sunday.

In response to an overwhelming number of calls to the Spanish assistance number, the Census Bureau has added lines in its phone banks in San Diego, Austin and Jacksonville, where the bulk of the calls will be handled.

Persons who have not yet received a census questionnaire should call the appropriate phone number and report their address so that they will receive a census form or so they can be contacted for non-response follow-up.

All numbers are staffed from 9

a.m. to 9 p.m. seven days a week.

The numbers are as follows:

- English — 1-800-999-1990
- Spanish — 1-800-283-6826
- Cambodian — 1-800-289-1960
- Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese) — 1-800-365-2101
- Korean — 1-800-444-6205
- Laotian — 1-800-888-3208
- Vietnamese — 1-800-937-1953
- Thai — 1-800-288-1984
- Assistance for hearing impaired — 1-800-777-0978

There is still time to complete and return census forms, but starting in late April, census-takers will visit households that haven't returned the questionnaires.