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College Station, Texas

"Serving Texas A&M since 1893"

Wednesday, July 3, 1991

A&M emphasizes quality of teaching through skills training

By Karen Praslicka
The Battalion

The director of Texas A&M's Center for Teaching Excellence said he welcomes student and faculty input to achieve the center's overall goal of improving the quality of teaching at the University.

Dr. Larry Gresham, associate professor of marketing, said the center began about eight years ago but only recently has received strong attention and support from A&M administration.

The center provides assistance and support for faculty and teaching assistants (TAs) to improve their teaching performance through several programs and activities.

One of the major programs is a TA training program that will cover information about syllabus development, administering tests, motivating students and handling student complaints.

In addition to the general training, international TA's will learn about differences in American classroom culture and their own cultures, as well as what

to expect from A&M students.

Gresham said this is the first time TA training will be mandatory.

"We're hoping to get them off on the right foot and avoid complaints (from students)," he said. "The administration has heard the complaints and is taking steps to do something."

Gresham said TAs are knowledgeable in their fields but might not have teaching skills.

"Teaching skills aren't a requirement for a Ph.D.," he said.

The TAs also will be required to attend training sessions through their

departments and attend semester-long training programs.

Gresham said this is a University-wide program aimed at helping TAs become better teachers.

Another of the center's major programs is a grant program that encourages and supports faculty research about teaching effectiveness.

The grants are largely funded by the Association of Former Students as an incentive to faculty to innovate teaching techniques.

Gresham said the grants are given to faculty who are researching to improve

the teaching field not their own lectures and classes. The money is used for such things as audio-visual equipment and computer software.

For the first time this fall, a Council of Master Teachers will meet and work with the center to recognize and reward teaching excellence at A&M.

The council is a University program that allows teachers to address issues related to teachers, Gresham said.

Universities are often criticized for
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A HOUSE BUILT ON FAITH

Volunteers construct third house in B-CS area

By Tammy Bryson
The Battalion

Habitat for Humanity's "building blitz" crew is in Bryan to help raise a house in a week's time in honor of Habitat International's 15th anniversary, said Habitat member Trish Burk.

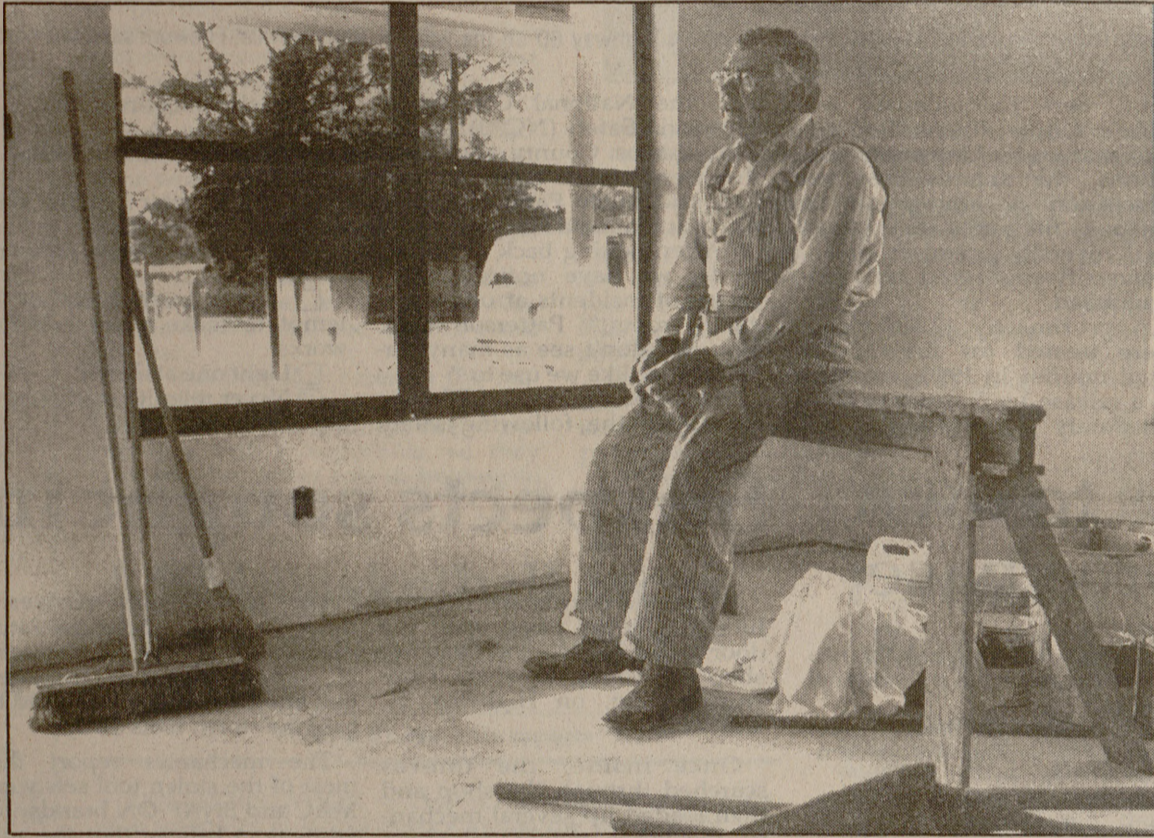
A traveling work crew was invited to help complete the house, which is the third to be built in the Bryan-College Station area, said Burk, a past president of the local chapter of Habitat and presently head of volunteer coordination.

"We have 12 out-of-town volunteers from as far away as Rhode Island and California assisting us (the local chapter) in our 'building blitz,'" she said. "We began Tuesday and were scheduled to finish in a week, but since everyone is working so hard it looks like we might finish as early as Thursday."

Burk added that the work crew, as well as several local volunteers, are at the house from 6:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. every day. A "catch-up crew" also comes in at night to finish anything not completed that day.

Joanne Arnold of Atlanta, leader of the work crew, said Habitat has done incredible things in an effort to eliminate poverty housing.

"We (members of Habitat) stress that this is a Christian organization, and it has been so successful because it is based on faith," said Arnold, a representative from the Habitat for Hu-



RICHARD S. JAMES/The Battalion

Ernest Sims, construction coordinator for Habitat for Humanity, takes a break after finishing a day's work on the house the organization is building in Bryan. Sims said he expects the house to be finished Saturday.

manity headquarters in Americus, Ga.

Mack Moore, vice president of the Board of Directors for B-CS Habitat, emphasized that Habitat for Humanity is not a charity organization.

"Each family selected to receive a Habitat house must put in 500 hours of work on their own and other Habitat houses," Moore said. "This 'sweat equity' takes the place of a down payment on the house."

He added that the house is paid for by the family through a 15- to 25-year interest-free loan, and this money is used to fi-

nance other Habitat homes.

Radio station KAGG, Aggie 96, has been successful in gaining attention to the Habitat "building blitz" with its fundraising promotional, Burk said.

"The morning crew is living on a billboard across from the Kroger in Bryan for 96 hours," she said. "They are trying to help raise 1 million pennies which will pay for the next Habitat house. They (the radio crew) will be there until Thursday at 6 p.m. when we hope to have raised all the money."

Burk said Habitat volunteers are at the billboard collecting

money from people driving by the site. Volunteers at the Habitat office in College Station are also accepting pledges by phone at 846-7200.

The house, at 1113 Groesbeck in Bryan, will be dedicated at 4 p.m. Saturday, Burk said.

There will also be a square-dance at 8 p.m. Saturday at First Presbyterian Church in Bryan as a "thank you" to all volunteers and donors, she added.

Construction on the fourth Habitat house will begin in August or September. The house will be located in College Station.

Yugoslav cease-fire collapses

Slovenians attack federal army positions

LJUBLJANA, Yugoslavia (AP) — Slovenian militiamen armed with rockets on Tuesday ambushed a federal army tank convoy and fought for control of key border posts. The army called in air strikes and the chief of staff said "a truce is no longer possible."

The federal army said seven to 10 people were killed and 13 wounded in Tuesday's fighting, but Slovenian television later said as many as eight people died in one firefight alone. The death toll in Slovenia was expected to rise in the heaviest day of fighting since Slovenia and neighboring Croatia declared independence June 25.

Violence involving federal troops also broke out for the first time in a week in Croatia, where soldiers opened fired on demonstrators throwing stones and Molotov cocktails at federal tanks as they left a barracks in Zagreb.

One civilian was reported seriously injured. In Belgrade, hundreds of distraught parents of soldiers serving in Slovenia stormed the Serbian parliament to demand that the troops come back home. Police used tear gas in a vain attempt to disperse the crowd, which crashed through the gates and poured into the chamber where a session was underway.

Late Tuesday, Slovenia proposed an immediate end to hostilities. The statement released by Slovenian Information Minister Jelko Kacin proposed a disengagement of forces starting at 9 p.m. (3 p.m. EDT) at the latest.

Slovenian President Milan Kucan appealed for an end to violence, saying Slovene territorialists had been told to stop offensive maneuvers.

"Under the existing circumstances, a truce is no longer possible, which forced the supreme command to start full scale combat activity," Gen. Blagoje Adzic was quoted by the Yugoslav news agency Tanjug.

Adzic vowed to prosecute a war until his troops gained control over Slovenia and neighboring Croatia.

"We will make sure that the war that has been forced upon us will be as brief as possible," Adzic said on Belgrade television.

For the first time, the United States hinted it might support independence for Slovenia and Croatia if it came peacefully.

"We do not support the use of force to preserve Yugoslavia's unity," said State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler in Washington. "A cooling off period is needed to launch a dialogue that responds to national aspirations of the people and creates a new basis for relations among the peoples and republics of Yugoslavia."

Iraqis deny U.N. observers access to nuclear equipment

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — Despite repeated promises, the Iraqi government denied a U.N. delegation access Tuesday to a secret convoy of equipment and material allegedly used for making nuclear bombs, U.N. officials said.

The officials had emphasized earlier that such a refusal could have "serious consequences." President Bush warned Monday that he might order a military strike against Iraq if it refused to comply.

Hans Blix, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said the Iraqis showed him only destroyed nuclear research equipment for civilian use, not what U.N. officials earlier said was specialized equipment used only for making weapons-grade enriched uranium.

Regarding a mysterious armed convoy of trucks that U.N. inspectors have been seeking for a week, the Swedish nuclear expert said, "We have not had a satisfactory explanation of what they were and where they went."

"The Iraqis have shown in this way of behavior that definitely does not give confidence," Blix said after meeting with Iraq's foreign minister.

"This is sad, very sad."

In another part of the country Tuesday, Iraqi soldiers supervised by U.N. officials destroyed ballistic missiles of the sort that showered on Israel and Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War.

Blix and Rolf Ekeus reserved final judgment on the seriousness of Iraq's alleged violation of the Gulf War cease-fire agreement. Under the April 3 U.N. resolution, Iraq agreed to the inspection and destruction of its chemical, biological and nuclear weapons.

Adolescents use gangs to gain social approval, professor says

By Peggy O'Hare
The Battalion

Teenagers caught engaging in deviant gang behavior benefit more from a punishment that focuses on education and positive opportunities than from traditional forms of correction, a Texas A&M sociology professor said.

Distinguished professor Dr. Howard Kaplan said teenagers might feel the need to join a gang to search for an identity that can be judged by.

Kaplan, who has spent 20 years studying the behavior of Houston adolescents who engage in deviant behavior, said the teens might feel that by joining a gang, they are provided with a sense of belonging to a group.

"If they don't feel accepted by

conventional groups, they may seek unconventional wants," Kaplan said. "In some areas, this gang may be the only form of social organization they can belong to, especially if they don't feel a part of the school group."

He added that different behaviors demonstrate the different feelings the teen may be experiencing.

Kaplan said physical assault might be the individual's way of expressing anger at his or her failure to become part of society and the need to blame someone else, while drugs may serve to reduce feelings of self-hatred and stealing may serve to provide an image of prestige.

"They evaluate themselves and believe others evaluate them in terms of things they have," Kaplan said. "There's a sense of a need to search for an identity,

to find some set of standards that they can believe in and by which they can be judged."

To show these individuals that crime is not a way to better their situation, the goal of punishment should be to provide them with hopes of becoming part of society and how this will lead to a more successful life, Kaplan said.

"In order to prevent people from joining gangs, alternative forms of behavior that are more rewarding than they anticipate gang behavior will be must be provided," Kaplan said. "At least those alternative forms of behavior have to be less punishing than these individuals found them to be. If they have good experiences in school and at home, there will be less of a need for them to adopt to gang-life responses."

Kaplan, who has written several books on the subject of deviant behavior among adolescents, said an individual who faces a "revenge" type of punishment might feel stigmatized by the punishment.

As a result, adolescents might feel that they have no chance of becoming part of society. These feelings might serve to encourage the individual to return to deviant forms of behavior, he said.

Kaplan cited a jail term as an example of a worst-case scenario form of punishment.

"There are some social groups in which some kinds of behavior, which others see as deviant, represent a normal way of life; and sometimes individuals engage in the behavior because they've learned that's the way to behave."