

Forum examines women's issues

By Julie Polston
The Battalion

The MSC Great Issues Committee will sponsor a symposium Feb. 18-19 on women's issues to discuss crime victimization, social attitudes and give students safety tips.

On Tuesday, Brazos County Attorney Jim Kuboviak will discuss crime victimization in the program "Get Smart." Kuboviak will give students safety tips on how to avoid being victims of crime.

Dr. Katherine Dettwyler will speak Wednesday on the changing social attitudes of the female anatomy in the program "Beauty and the Breast."

Dettwyler, an anthropology professor at A&M, will focus on the recent controversy over silicone breast implants and breast

feeding in the United States. Dettwyler said society views breasts as sexual objects, rather than as a natural way of feeding babies.

"I will relate these issues to the way our culture perceives women's breasts and what they are used for," Dettwyler said.

The final presentation, "Sex, Power and the Media: Rethinking the Myths of America's Dream Girl" will also take place Wednesday evening in the MSC.

Former top model Ann Simonton, who has appeared on the cover of "Sports Illustrated" and "Cosmopolitan," will discuss the media's role in exploiting women.

Simonton, director of Media Watch, has traveled nationwide to present her views on the effects of media images in advertising and pornography. Simonton will also discuss the hidden costs concerning America's beauty standard, which include eating disorders and

cosmetic surgery. Barbie Flaten, chairperson of the committee, said "One of the reasons we thought this program was important, was to make people aware of the kind of advertising and things that are out there."

"If you are shocked by the images on the program advertising poster, then you would really like her," Flaten said. "You should be agreeing with what she's saying, more than being shocked that we're bringing her."

Flaten said the focus of MSC Great Issues is to bring programs about social and economic issues to the A&M campus at no cost to students. Programs are almost always free unless a speaker has an unusually large speaker fee.

Future Great Issue programs include the recession or recovery of the American economy, and ethics of the medical field.

Fort Worth jury acquits man charged with arson

FORT WORTH (AP) — A Tarrant County jury has acquitted a man accused of setting a house fire that killed his 27-year-old wife and severely injured his three infant daughters.

Scott Berns cried and hugged his attorneys Saturday after the verdict exonerated him in the September 1988 blaze that destroyed his home in the Fort Worth suburb of North Richland Hills.

"I would like to thank God and my lawyers. It's been a 3 1/2-year nightmare," Berns said. "I just want to get home and see my little girls."

Berns was charged with starting the fire that killed his wife, Patti, and injured his 17-month-old triplet daughters so severely that they were forced to undergo months of rehabilitation. Berns said he was asleep on a sofa when the fire started.

Prosecutors presented four expert witnesses who testified the fire was arson. Others testified that Berns had said before the blaze that arson was the best way to kill someone.

Defense attorneys described Berns as a caring husband and father who rescue his daughters.

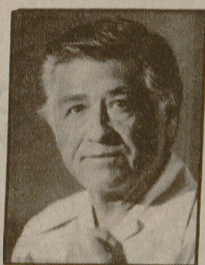
Farm workers' union grows

Uncertain economy fuels support for UFW, leader says

SAN JUAN, Texas (AP) — Support for the United Farm Workers of America is growing again, fueled by its trademark boycotts and uncertainty about the economy, union leader Cesar Chavez said Sunday.

"We get a lot of pressure," Chavez said. "But we've been able to overcome all of that."

"Now we're going to start growing." The growth has been spurred



Chavez

in part by new union efforts which have been helped by a new recession-drive awareness of the plight of workers, he said.

"People are thinking more today about working people... than they have in the last 20 years."

Chavez told more than 200 union members gathered for the UFW's biennial convocation that the organization was increasing its efforts and urged them to support boycotts. "The boycott is your strength," he said.

"They can't resist that force. That's our best form of winning."

The UFW, led by Chavez, a longtime labor leader and advocate of farmer workers' rights, has been boycotting the sale of grapes since 1985.

The effort centers on educating consumers about the use of dangerous pesticides on agricultural products.

The union contends pesticide exposure is responsible for high cancer and birth defect rates among the children of farm workers.

"Birth defects after birth defects after birth defects. That is frightening," said UFW Secretary David Martinez.

"The parents, they feel bad because they believe they're bringing the poisons in with them from the fields," Martinez said.

Growers benefit financially from the sale of these products, Martinez said, while consumers and farm workers are left to deal with the risks they represent.

Texans develop device to counter friendly fire

SAN ANTONIO — A group of Texans, including a former Army helicopter commander involved in two friendly-fire deaths during the Persian Gulf War, are developing a device they hope will prevent future tragedies.

Lt. Col. Ralph E. Hayles Jr. has joined with two San Antonio businessmen and an inventor to create Identification Systems Inc.

The company is developing a system, dubbed Identification Friend or Foe (IFF), to

help attack vehicles identify their own troops using low-power microwaves. The San Antonio Express-News reported in Sunday editions.

The information exchanged between attack vehicles and receivers mounted on other vehicles takes less than a second and has a range of 16 miles, Hayles said.

"This is new technology," Hayles said. "This is not something that is out there now."

Hayles said the first 100 units of the

system could be sent to the Army for testing for about \$3.5 million.

The company eventually hopes to equip 31,716 attack vehicles and 52,884 transponder vehicles at a cost of about \$205 million.

"Eighteen months from the day we start, we will hand 100 of these things to the Army," he said. "We hope this becomes a solution."

Hayles, commander of an AH-64 Apache helicopter battalion during the war,

was forced to retire after he mistakenly fired a missile at U.S. troops, killing two.

Army officials at the time said Hayles was forced to retire because he violated orders forbidding battalion commanders from direct involvement in combat.

Hayles was reassigned to Fort San Houston and retired last November.

Identification Systems President John Walter contacted Hayles after he was featured on a segment of the CBS news program "60 Minutes."

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