

Group to aid disabled students

By TANYA WILLIAMS
Reporter of THE BATTALION

Disabled students at Texas A&M University agree that the University offers some of the best facilities and support systems but feel that it is time for disabled students to have a voice.

Ben Wolf and Andrea Nixon, both disabled students, are developing the Disabled Student Network Support Group, an organization to help disabled students gain a voice on campus.

"A&M's got the best services for handicapped students, but the students don't have a direct link to the administration," Wolf said. "Communication is the broken link in the chain."

"We hope that the student network gives the disabled students, as a whole, a sense of continuity," Nixon said. "Right now, our

voice is broken, and we need more unity." The support network would allow disabled students to do things for themselves as well as allow other students on campus to be more aware of the disabled students.

"Other students are not aware of the number of students that are disabled on campus because most of the disabilities aren't visible," Wolf said. "Students do not realize that there are 400 to 500 disabled students on campus."

Nixon hopes that the support system can be set up on a computer network, so that more students can respond.

"In the past, accessibility has been the problem," Nixon said. "Now, they will be able to link up."

In their meeting this evening, Wolf and Nixon hope to get input on how to develop the support network.

"We hope to get a steering committee nominated and develop goals, specifics on

membership and ideas about the group," Wolf said.

The meeting will be this evening at 7 p.m. in room 146 of the Student Services Building. Wolf and Nixon hope to get a good diversity of students, both disabled and non-disabled.

Wolf, who is a second year graduate student, went blind in 1985 as a result of a disease.

He had previously worked as a loan officer, and after going blind, Wolf felt that going back to school would help prove to himself, and future clients, that he could succeed.

Nixon, a junior aerospace and psychology major, suffers from Chronic Idiopathic Progressive Atoxic Polymyohuropathy which she describes as a peripheral nervous system disorder affecting balance. Hers is one of 20 cases known worldwide.

"We have to bring a new mind-set to A&M," Wolf said. "We need to get as many people as possible involved."

State prison board chairman resigns

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN (AP) — State prison board chairman Selden Hale resigned Tuesday after the governor's office looked into his investigation of a fellow board member.

"The board needs the consensus and cohesiveness of all those members working together, especially the chairman... This investigation (of another Board of Criminal Justice member) we felt had compromised that ability of his to bring the board together," said Bill Cryer, spokesman for Gov. Ann Richards.

Cryer confirmed that board member Joshua Allen of Beaumont was investigated 14 months ago, at Hale's behest, by the Department of Criminal Justice's internal affairs unit concerning conflict-of-interest allegations that "proved to be groundless."

Hale said of the allegations that "it turned out there wasn't anything to it."

But Hale said the investigation was within his authority and that he believed at the time that it "was the right thing to do."

"If I hadn't done it, people would have said I was trying to cover it up," he said.

Cryer said Allen brought the matter to the attention of the governor's office after learning just two weeks ago of last year's investigation.

The governor's office looked into the matter for 10 days, as soon as it was notified by Allen, Cryer said.

Allen had left his Beaumont business when The Associated Press called after 6 p.m. Tuesday, said a woman who answered the telephone.

He did not immediately return a message.

Another listing for Allen is non-published, according to directory assistance.

Cryer said he knew of no link broken by Hale or Allen.

Hale would not name the board member he had investigated, but said he had recently told him that he was sorry for the incident.

Hale also said there are other divisions on the board, including over the wisdom of constructing private prisons.

"After the inquiry (by the governor's office) I just looked around and said if y'all are questioning what I did, maybe it would be better if I just left," Hale said.

Richards in a statement said she accepted Hale's resignation "with regret."

"I thank him for his hard work on the people's behalf," she said.

"Now the board must reach the consensus that it needs for difficult work in the coming years."

In his resignation letter to Richards, Hale cited advances he's seen in criminal justice, including an agreement to settle the long-running Ruiz federal lawsuit over prison conditions, promotion of women and minorities within the department and the underfunding of "the largest drug treatment program in America."

"After achieving these milestones, I ask your leave to resign," Hale said in the letter.

Hale said in an interview that when he was appointed by Richards in February 1991, he believed he didn't think he'd be able to serve out the full term.

His term would end in February 1997.

"It's really a killer of a job," Hale said.

He said that he has been out of town several days a week during his time on the board and "I killed my law practice."

Richards will replace Hale quickly as she can, Cryer said. Hale said his resignation was effective immediately.

Court denies man's stay of execution appeal

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN — The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals rejected Wednesday the appeal of a man sentenced to death for killing four members of a San Antonio family.

Leopoldo Narvaiz Jr. was convicted in the April 15, 1988 slayings of Shannon Mann, 17, her sisters, Jennifer, 19, and Martha, 15, and brother Ernest Jr., 11.

The crime was described by officials at the time as one of the most brutal in the city's history.

Each of the victims suffered numerous stab wounds, and their bodies were scattered throughout the Manns' mobile home.

In his appeal, Narvaiz alleged numerous errors were made during his trial and claimed the evidence against him was not sufficient to support the jury's finding of guilt. The court rejected all

arguments.

Prosecutors said Narvaiz, who was 20-years-old at the time of the crime, committed the killings out of anger over a breakup with Shannon Mann, whom Narvaiz said he had known for several years.

He was arrested shortly after police found the bodies.

He had numerous cuts and scratches, and a pair of wet jeans and tennis shoes that were later determined to have contained traces of human blood, police said.

During the trial, the jury was presented a statement about the crime that police said was given by Narvaiz.

According to the statement, Narvaiz said he was high on cocaine, remembered stabbing Jennifer but not the others, and that Shannon was dead when he left.

"The state's case was quite strong, especially in light of the appellant's written statement,

which corroborated much of the state's other evidence and implicated appellant alone in four murders," Judge Charles Campbell said.

When Narvaiz arrived on death row he blamed the murders on two unknown men.

The court also rejected Narvaiz's arguments that he should have been tried in another location because of pre-trial publicity, and that photographs of the crime scene were introduced as evidence for inflammatory purposes.

But the court said Narvaiz failed to prove that the jury was prejudiced against him because of pre-trial publicity.

The court also said that although the photographs were gruesome, they merely depicted the crime scene as found by the police.

Also Wednesday, the court denied the appeal of Jesse DeWayne Jacobs, a former Okla-

homa auto mechanic sentenced to death in the 1986 murder of Etta Ann Urdiales, a 25-year-old paramedic in Conroe.

Jacobs in a videotaped statement had told investigators he forced Urdiales from her apartment, shot her and buried her in a remote area of Montgomery County.

He said in the statement he did it for his sister. Jacobs said his sister was in love with Urdiales' estranged husband and believed Urdiales was creating problems in a child custody dispute.

Jacobs later recanted his confession and said his sister shot Urdiales after he brought the woman to her.

His sister was convicted of a lesser charge of involuntary manslaughter and sentenced to 10 years in prison.

The court, which earlier granted Jacobs a stay of execution, denied his appeal.



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