

Museum explores Brazos Valley

By Katherine Arnold
THE BATTALION

Children of all ages are the focus of educational programs and exhibits at the Brazos Valley Museum of Natural History.

The museum, located at the intersection of Briarcrest Drive and East Bypass, provides community members with the opportunity to explore the history of the Brazos Valley.

Exhibits in the museum include the Discovery Room, which is full of hands-on activities and exhibits, fossils, and live animals such as snakes, box turtles, an observation bee hive, and Madagascar hissing roaches.

The museum also features a mural entitled "Brazos Spring," depicting a late spring afternoon in the Brazos Valley approximately 12,500 years ago.

The mural, which is 40-feet long and 11-feet high, features over 50 species of animals which were known to live in this area. Houston artist Emma Stark painted the mural.

Karen Goodgame, interim director of the museum, said it is important for citizens interested in history to visit the museum.

"The museum is an excellent educational tool," Goodgame said. "It is the only facility of its kind in this area, and is specific

to the Brazos Valley."

The museum is set on 50 acres of wilderness. Nature trails wander throughout the backyard of the facility.

"The nature trails allow people to get a first hand look at the environment and learn more about it," Goodgame said.

There are many educational classes offered at the museum. The summer program invites children ages 3 to 12 for a week of classes which cover animals, insects, and natural sciences.

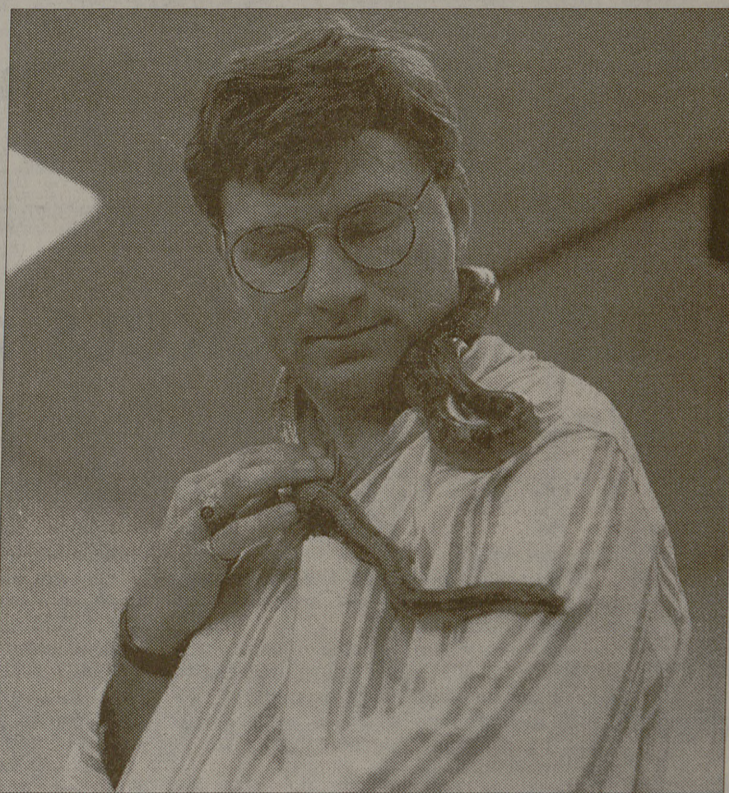
During the school year, the museum holds morning classes for children and adults.

These educational programs are important to the museum, Chuck Thornton, Class of '88 and curator of education, said.

"We have many different types of classes," Thornton said. "They focus on teaching a respect and understanding of nature, and let kids know that science is not some big mystery."

The former Museum Gift Shop has changed its name to the Museum Nature Store. The store is now selling items geared toward young scientists, such as science kits, natural history items and T-shirts.

Admission to the museum is free, and there is a small charge for classes.



Chuck Thornton, curator of education at the Brazos Valley Museum of Natural History, holds Colonel, a red rat snake. Colonel is a friendly exhibit on display at the museum.

AIDS hits minority population harder

Blacks, Hispanics account for half of all new cases

ATLANTA (AP) — Minorities are being hit increasingly harder by AIDS, accounting for more than half of all new cases in the United States in 1993.

Of the 106,949 AIDS cases reported last year in the U.S., Puerto Rico, Guam and the Virgin Islands, 58,538 — 55 percent — were among minorities, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported Thursday.

In 1992, minority cases accounted for 52 percent of new cases, up from 51 percent the year before.

As the epidemic develops, its pace has slowed among homosexual white men while quickening among minorities, particularly among blacks.

Among American Indians, Eskimos, it was 24 percent, and among Asians and islanders, 12 percent.

Black women, with a rate of 73 per 100,000, about 15 times more likely than white women to get the disease, were nearly 10 times more likely than males to get AIDS.

Geography also makes a difference in how the disease spreads, said Dr. Teresa T. Iversen, director of the CDC's National Center for Infectious Diseases.

"Although we aggregate geographic differences among minority groups," she said, "black and Hispanic men in the Northeast, it's spread by intravenous drug use, while in the South, it's spread by heterosexual contact."

The Northeast has the highest rates of AIDS infection, both blacks and Hispanics, the South and Midwest have the lowest.

In some states, vast differences between minorities exist. In Florida, the rate for blacks is almost three times greater for Hispanics.

Report targets drug company for suppression of Halcion danger

HOUSTON (AP) — A drug company targeted in dozens of lawsuits over the world's most widely prescribed sleeping pill suppressed and misrepresented the sometimes fatal dangers Halcion posed, according to a published report.

The Houston Chronicle, for a copyright story Sunday, reviewed memos of the Upjohn Co., along with government records and court transcripts.

The newspaper's five-month investigation found consumers who experienced the drug's adverse side effects and the doctors and researchers who observed them were targeted in an Upjohn campaign to discredit critics.

Halcion, which has generated \$2 billion in sales since 1977,

has been the subject of at least 100 lawsuits. They include individual and class-action product liability claims, a class-action case brought by Upjohn shareholders, and a racketeering and conspiracy case that is pending in Tyler federal court.

The drug, according to plaintiffs and consumers, has caused suicides, murders and episodes of psychotic behavior.

The newspaper's review of records shows that Upjohn, to win approval for Halcion and keep it on the market;

—Paid millions of dollars to Halcion victims in settlements that required their silence and then retained Shook, Hardy and Bacon, the Kansas City law firm used by the tobacco industry, to fight damage claims;

—Omitted and misrepresented unfavorable results from clinical studies;

—Orchestrated a campaign to influence U.S. and foreign regulatory agencies;

—Contracted with physicians who produced favorable test results, sometimes by fabricating studies entirely, but whose work was later discredited; and

—Promoted excessive dosage and duration of use of the drug.

When a U.S. Food and Drug Administration investigator recommended that the Justice Department review Upjohn's conduct for possible criminal violations, he was reassigned. The case never was sent to the Justice Department.

This spring, an FDA report described Upjohn's activities as

"an ongoing pattern of misconduct." But the FDA has refused to admit that its usual safeguards were circumvented.

The FDA's report examining

Upjohn's handling of Halcion contended that the company's misconduct involving the drug lasted for almost 20 years.

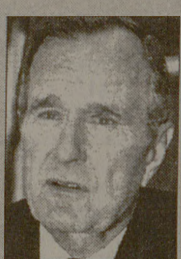
The newspaper said it was

unknown outside Upjohn's mazoo, Mich., headquarters, before then that the company

Please see Halcion

Bush among victims of drug's side effects

HOUSTON (AP) — Former President George Bush stopped taking Halcion after controversy emerged over its side effects.



George Bush Halcion use came to light in January 1992

during his ill-fated trip to Japan, in which he vomited and collapsed during a state dinner with the Japanese prime minister.

Then-presidential spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said the only drugs Bush had taken around the time of his collapse were an anti-nausea medication and a half-tablet of Halcion.

Bush aide Jean Becker told the Houston Chronicle that Bush suffered no side effects

from Halcion.

"He never had any problems with it," she said, adding Bush had taken Halcion occasionally when traveling overseas. But Fitzwater announced the next month that Bush now lives in Houston, stopped taking the drug.

Other users have not been fortunate in their experience with the world's most prescribed sleeping pill.

Please see Victims

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