

Conference: Challenging students for tomorrow

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form the SBSLC in 1989 while she was a graduate student.

She said all the speakers at this conference provided a challenge for African-American students.

"They talked about self worth, self knowledge, where we as African-Americans have come from and empowerment," James said. "They provided the challenge to students on college campuses to question things."

Williams and Dominique Bourda, assistant director of registration, said Kunjufu is an educator who focuses on the strides made in the African-American community and how

to continue making progress. "He is an educator," Williams said. "He addressed what we need to do to become leaders. It all starts with education."

Bourda said African-American students have important responsibilities. "The burden is placed on us," Bourda said. "We have to do all we can to better ourselves. We have made such strides in

the past, it is our obligation to continue in a positive light. It is not good enough to just grad-

"The conference helps us heighten awareness and promote leadership among our African-American students."

—Dr. Jan Winniford, assistant vice president for student affairs

uate, we have to do the best we possibly can."

Bourda said Smith spoke of the image of African-Americans and their roles in American

society.

"Some of the things Smith pointed out are how the media portray African-Americans, especially black males, in a negative light," Bourda said. "By perpetuating that image, they crush the image of African Americans. When children see TV, they don't see any positive black role models."

Bourda said conferences like SBSLC are important because of the issues presented and the networking opportunities.

"These conferences are so important because it is uplifting to see 1,200 black leaders who are successful students making strides on their campuses," Bourda said.

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TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY VOLUME 92

Dentist performs root canal on jaguar

BRIDGE CITY — Dentist David Olson said he would have put his patient, "Tasha," in one of his comfortable chairs with a bib and drool cup if he'd had to.

Fortunately, Olson and veterinarian Dr. Albert Pugh were able to situate the 85-pound jaguar on the floor of Olson's front office and take the necessary X-rays with a portable machine.

"That cat let out roars and sent everybody running," Olson said, laughing. "That was more than just some 'meow.'"

Tasha, a jaguar from the Exotic Cat Refuge and Wildlife Orphanage in Kirbyville, arrived at Olson's office on a Saturday morning earlier this month.

Olson had agreed to take a look at Tasha's teeth, with Pugh on standby. He said he expected to take the X-rays and then do a little repair work. Despite about 20 years of experience with root canals, what Olson found from the X-rays turned out to be his most challenging dental work.

"She had abscesses in all four canine (large front) teeth," Olson said. "We had to get her sedated just to do the X-rays. Thank goodness Dr. Pugh was here. He let us take her to his office to put her under and do the work there."

Pugh said animals, like humans, lose their appetite and suffer general health problems from bad teeth. "People don't realize that the same principles apply for animals as for humans," Pugh said. "It's important for an animal to be able to keep their teeth. They eat better. The large canine teeth help keep the tongue in place, and healthy teeth help keep down infection in the space between the mouth and nose."

Pugh said because people take better care of pets, domestic animals have life expectancies of 15 to 20 years. Good dental care can add as much as 20 percent to 30 percent to their life, he said.

Working on 9-year-old Tasha was his first experience with such a large cat, but he had the 3-inch files and other oversized dental tools because of his work with large dogs.

Olson said he has worked on a few large dogs with Pugh, but the three-hour root canal work on the jaguar's four large teeth was certainly a first. Olson found Tasha's teeth had had an attempt at root canals about a year ago, but the work was not thorough and infection had set in. He re-cleaned her inner teeth cavities and filled them with a natural rubber that should last her lifetime.

Olson said he had to get the job done correctly this time because the big cat could not endure another round of anesthesia anytime soon.

Pugh, Olson and Bridge City dentist Dr. Nina Leifeste donated their Saturday services for Tasha.

At last report from refuge owner Monique Jackson, Tasha was getting back to some of her playful ways and eating better, Pugh said.

"I was glad to be able to help the cat out," Pugh said. "It's hard to tell when an animal has trouble with teeth because they can't tell you it hurts, but you can really see the difference after the work is done."



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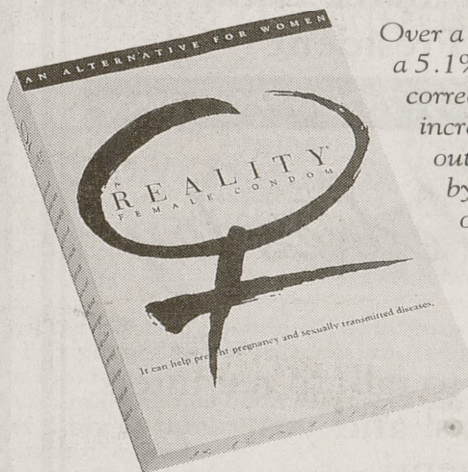
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