

A&M Floriculture and Horticulture Society reaps the fruit of its labors

By NATALIE COBB
Staff Writer

Some Texas A&M students just proved to their peers that they can be a little green and still be best in the nation.

The members of Texas A&M's Floriculture and Horticulture Society (FHS) recently returned from American Society for Horticultural Sciences Conference, where they took home the award for Most Outstanding Collegiate Club in the United States for horticultural sciences.

The award is based on a report the club members compiled that provided detailed information and descriptions of all the activities and projects the club participated in throughout the year.

Jana McCormick, a junior horticulture major, said winning the contest was exciting and it required a lot of preparation.

"We prepare all year for the conference," McCormick said. "We have won the contest for several years and hope to continue to work hard in preparation for next year's conference."

Jennifer Mullin, president of the FHS organization for the 1997-98 school year and a senior horti-

culture major, said A&M's horticulture department is ranked second in the nation behind Cornell University in New York.

Mullin said A&M's high ranking in horticulture is a big honor. The ranking of second is due to A&M's lack of an arboretum.

Mullin said there are plans to build an arboretum on campus, possibly next to the

George Bush Library.

"We are ranked second in the nation instead of first because we don't have an arboretum and Cornell does," Mullin said.

"We have started talking about building one in the future with the help of Barbara Bush," she said.

Mullin said building an arboretum would bring prestige to the entire University.

"It would be a great asset to campus and to the horticulture department," Mullin said.

Although the horticulture department at Texas A&M is known throughout the nation for its faculty, education and student club, it also is known throughout Bryan and College Station for its fall and spring plant fairs.

These fairs are the biggest events FHS plans for the school year.

McCormick said the club advertises in the community and on campus to promote the events.

"These events are the biggest fund raisers the club has," McCormick said.

The plant fairs not only provide the club with money, but they also give the members something money can't buy.

"The fairs are also great experience for us to raise and sell the plants we have worked on for a whole semester," she said.

Doug Maxwell, a horticulture graduate student, said a lot of work goes into planning the spring and fall plant fairs.

"We work every Wednesday night during the school year on the plants in the campus greenhouse," Maxwell said. "The horticulture building is turned into a full service nursery when the spring and fall fairs are going on."

The fall and spring plant fairs are held on a Saturday during the semester, and provides the horticulture students with hands-on experience in raising and selling plants.

Mullin said the experience is one of the best parts of being a horticulture major.

"We have a very close knit faculty always willing to help us," Mullin said. "The on-campus greenhouse also allows us to practice and perfect

our horticultural knowledge."

Mullin said many students do not realize why horticulture majors are so important to society.

"A lot of students will ask me what I will do with a degree in horticulture," Mullin said.

Mullin said a lot of the fields that horticulturists work in are not very obvious to those not familiar with the applications of the study.

"I tell them that we have bio-technological scientists, landscape designers, molecular biologists and many other people that benefit society through the science of plants," Mullin said.

Mullin said few people realize what the field of horticulture has done to put food on their tables.

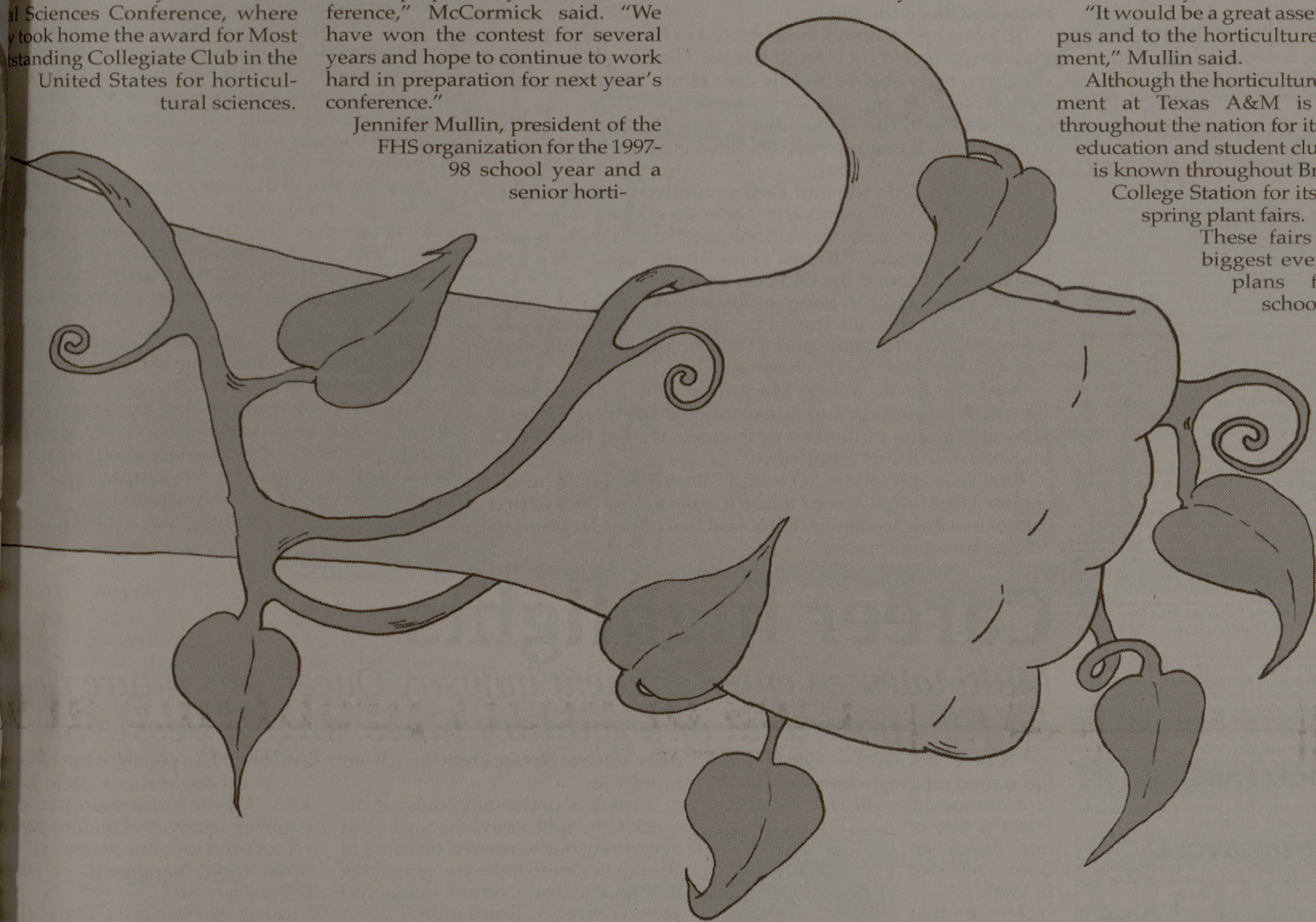
"Horticulture plays an important part in many people's lives since horticulturalists are the scientists behind the research on fruits, nuts and crops that are major foodstuffs for people around the world," she said.

The members of FHS believe the national awards, community projects and a solid education provide the horticulture department at A&M with a solid groundwork for the future.

They said they hope A&M will continue to be a name synonymous with horticultural success.

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— Jennifer Mullin
president, Floriculture and Horticulture Society



Student radio DJs promote hometown bands on community radio

By GRAY WHITTEN
Staff Writer

Thanks to a student-run show on local radio station KEOS 89.1 FM, musicians in the Brazos Valley have an opportunity to find new fans and support they may not get from touring alone.

"First Cut," hosted by Jon Campbell, a graduate student in entomology, and Jonathan Hudson, a senior biomedical science major, airs every Monday night on KEOS from 11 p.m. to 1 a.m.

The program features album tracks from local rock bands as well as live in-studio performances and interviews with band members and friends of the hosts.

Campbell said the origins of the show and his involvement with the station is not a glamorous story.

"We started out doing operations at the station, and little grunt work... switching cassettes and running station IDs every hour," he said.

"Then we finally got a shift from one to three in the morning. It was right after these guys we knew from Lechner [Hall] did a show. It was crazy stuff," Campbell said.

Campbell and Hudson said they chose the idea of hosting a local music show as a way of standing out from other shows.

"We were trying to think of a format, and there wasn't a local music show yet, so we got interested in that," Campbell said.

Campbell said the show gained momentum with time.

"When it started out, it was kind of slow," he said. "We played Jester, a band from Houston called Shed and Peeping Tom back when they were just a cover band. We only had two or three CDs of purely local stuff."

Campbell said the drought of albums by local artists has turned into a welcome flood.

"Now we have more than we can play in one show, including both the local and re-

gional bands."

Campbell and Hudson said in the early days of the program, the local artists had to be supplemented with bigger names, so they would play music from bands that had recently toured in the area.

Hudson said he hosts the show in order to benefit the local music scene, as well as the entire community.

"We just thought it would be cool to help out," Hudson said. "We figured it would be something different, and it's a good way to get more music for the station."

The show was named in a last-minute brainstorming session after the original title, "Exposure," was taken by another program that was created shortly after "First Cut" went on the air, Campbell said.

"I think we have the better title now, anyway," he said.

The two DJs have been lucky enough to become friends with many of the musicians that they promote on their show.

"We're very good friends with Blue Earth," Campbell said. "We knew the guys in Jester before their band kicked the bucket. Peeping Tom was another band we knew before they lost their lead singer, who is now a part of Blue Earth."

Jeremy Renaud, a member of the band Blue Earth, said he is a big fan of "First Cut," which he affectionately calls "The Jon and Jon Show," and thinks the support they give the local music scene is important.

"I've been in this town for four years and my favorite station is 92.1, but they play the same mainstream stuff over and over every day," Renaud said. "What I like about KEOS and 'The Jon and Jon Show' is that they are serious about local music. They're there at every show. Pushmonkey, Vallejo, whatever. They're there. They cover it and they're serious about it."

Renaud's bandmate Rob Chickering was also quite enthusiastic about the idea of local

music support by students on the radio.

"Phenomenal. Cutting edge. I think they're definitely a good thing for this town," Chickering said. "It's definitely a plus that they can play new stuff from just about anyone without any real restrictions."

Other bands from Bryan and College Station have shown support for the show by playing exclusive on-air performances, giving interviews and promoting the station and its format to others.

Campbell said that radio will most likely remain a pastime for him after graduation.

He said a career in the radio industry would not allow him the freedom he has today.

"I thought about it a lot for a while, but it's really just a release — it's fun," Campbell said.

Professional radio stations don't allow the freedom that community radio affords, Campbell said.

"We've heard that the radio industry is all scripted now," Campbell said. "You may get to improvise once in a while, but we get to do that here all the time. We can play whatever we want to. It's pretty lenient."

Hudson said the idea of a talk show together with Campbell would sound something along the lines of MTV's "Lovelines."

"He's always rattling something off and I'll be the one to play some music and try to get us back on track," Hudson said.

When the signal power of KEOS is boosted tenfold in the next few months, "First Cut" will reach more listeners than ever.

And as far as local musicians and their fans are concerned, it can only be a good thing.

