

Parents and education working together

By PATRICK M. WALKER

Though not a new or unusual practice, home schooling has become an issue of controversy at both the state and national levels in recent years.

One MCC student, who home schools five of her seven children, said she does so because she feels it is her responsibility to see they get a good education. "Nobody cares as much as you do whether your kids get educated or not," said Helenmarie Deleon, a journalism major.

She said the primary reason she chose home education is to avoid some of the behavioral problems which may be found in public school classrooms where a single instructor might be responsible for 30 students. In such a setting, she said, one instructor cannot possibly effectively deal with such a wide range of problems.

On the other hand, she added, if the same problems occur at home she feels she can handle them. But she wanted to make it clear she bears no grudges against the public school system.

"I think there are a lot of good teachers in public schools," she said. Her children spend most of the morning on schoolwork, she said. She allows her children over the age of 10 to work at their own pace, provided they spend a certain amount of time on the subjects she has planned.

She also said her elder children help the younger, an activity she said helps reinforce certain social skills. A home schooled student wishing to enroll at MCC is faced with a more difficult task than one from a traditional high school setting. Such a student must provide a completed application for admission; must submit a written request seeking admission; must submit a notarized record of high school completion; and must pass the GED Testing Program. Special cases not falling in this category must contact the coordinator of student admissions.

Five students who come from a home school background are currently enrolled at MCC. Estimates on the number of home schooled children vary from 300,000 to one million nationwide but since many parents of home schooled children are afraid of legal repercussions and may not respond accurately when polled, it has been difficult to confirm any certain number.

The main lines of battle are drawn between parents who, for various reasons, do not feel their children can get the kind of education they need in public schools and school officials who worry about attendance figures for federal aid eligibility.

A working definition of home schooling, from Patricia Lines of the U.S. Department of Education, is instruction and learning, at least some of which is through planned activity, taking place primarily at home in a family setting with a parent acting as teacher or supervisor of the activity, and with one or more pupils who are members of the same family and who are doing kindergarten through 12th grade work.

The association recently held its second meeting. In the meeting, officers were elected and future plans were discussed. In addition to Johnson as president, Cybil Morton was elected vice president, Tammy McCoy as treasurer, and Traci Smith as secretary.

Tentative plans for the club include a bake sale this semester to raise funds, involvement in community service, and providing gifts for some less fortunate children at Christmas. Johnson said she encourages all legal assistants to join the association. For more information about the organization, call 772-5801, and for information concerning the legal assistant program, call 299-8651.

Students in the paralegal program also have their own organization on campus, the MCC Student Paralegal Association. According to President Felicia Johnson, the organization provides students with "networking" which she explained as a chance to get to know people and work with attorneys.

She also said it provides beginning students a chance to meet with well-established students in the paralegal program and find out information about the State Bar of Texas Legal Assistant Division.

The association also does a lot of volunteer work for the Texas Young Lawyer's Association, Johnson said.

MCC legal assistant program shows future paralegals the ropes

By ROBERT STONE

A well-established defense attorney pulls out a piece of evidence which makes the courtroom audience gasp with surprise.

After the judge pounds his gavel repeatedly several times and the courtroom is again quiet, the smiling defense attorney makes a motion asking the case be dismissed. The judge has no choice but to dismiss the case.

Back in the office, the attorney pats the assistant on the back. With a satisfied grin the attorney tells the assistant, "We did it... I don't know how, but we did it. By God, we did it." The assistant sits down, smiles within with pride, and begins work on the next case.

For legal assistant students at MCC, this is the same type of recognition and pride students expect when they graduate with an Associate in Applied Science and pass the state examination.

According to a pamphlet entitled "Legal Assistant Program," lawyers expect "competent legal assistants to whom they can delegate case research, document preparation, investigative work and office management."

Due to this, the paralegal "will work with clients, witnesses, court personnel and other professionals." In return, the paralegal can make starting salaries of up to \$25,000 a year. By the year 2005, the demand for these graduates is predicted to more than double.

According to the pamphlet, skills a paralegal must possess excellent communication, reading, and organizational skills. "But a legal assistant must also have good people skills and be interested in working on the clients' behalf," it advises.

At MCC, students enrolled in this program get a chance to learn from experienced lawyers and paralegals. According to the pamphlet, the director of the Legal Assistant Program has been a practicing attorney for more than 12 years. MCC is also a member of the Texas and American Association for Paralegal Educators and the State Bar of Texas Legal Assistant Division.

According to the pamphlet, "both the practical and theoretical aspects of the law" are taught, "emphasizing knowledge of court systems, litigation processes, computerized and manual re-

search investigation and law office management."

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Opportunity for a future

By NANCY CARLTON

A van left here Friday morning Oct. 4, with a destination to North Texas University.

For the last four years, vans have been mysteriously vanishing off the campus and reappearing in different locations. Sometimes they show up at Central Texas University or maybe even as far away as Prairie View A&M.

When the van reappears on campus, out walks several students who have been transformed into enlightened beings.

Students from different walks of life and circumstances take these rides to places unknown to them.

When a student is thinking about going on to a four year college but lacks the opportunities or encouragement to examine the different colleges available, that is when people like Patsy White, Johnnie Talton, and Katherine Calucci get involved.

Sometimes the students are referred to the advisors by faculty, staff or other students.

The program is provided for by the government.

Four and a half years ago the federal government funded a program which opened up a new

office. The Transfer Advisory office is a support service for students who fit into three categories.

"The first category is physically challenged people.

"Another category is students from low income families.

"The last category is one in which students are the first in their families to go to college.

The purpose of the program, the college, and the government is to encourage students to consider a higher degree of achievement. The trips in the college vans help accomplish this goal.

The commander of the voyages is Patsy White. When ask about the program, White sits a little taller in the chair as a broad smile encompasses her face.

"Success stories — those are the things that make a job worth getting up and coming to work for," White said.

One of many success stories was of a totally blind man who went on to Baylor for a masters degree in rehabilitation counseling.

A former student took one of these trips to another college and decided to go on with her education. The student is now in medical school.

Another success story is on of a young Mexican-American woman. She lived in a family of nine children and was the only one to ever make it to college. All it took was guidance and encouragement for her to go on and get a secondary education degree.

Advisor and van driver Johnnie Talton said, "I look forward to these trips with enthusiasm and expectation."

"Once a student is ready to step over the threshold into a four year college, all they need is a ready ear, information, and an occasion to visit other colleges," Talton said.

Students get more than these things from the trips.

Alternate van driver and advisor, Katherine Calucci says, "When students go on these trips they get an opportunity to get the feel of a campus before they make a firm commitment to attend."

To go on these trips, students students are required to provide their own lunch and follow all policies of the college.

A van will leave here Oct. 25 for Prairie View A&M. Call Callucci, White or Talton for further information.

Computer Exchange program growing between MCC and the Czech Republic

By CAROLINE BLAHOVA

The Computer exchange program for computer teachers between the Masaryk University and MCC is growing.

More and more people are using computers with some finding it as normal as using the telephone.

The computer technology on MCC has improved during the last four years, said computer teacher Tracy Dobbs.

"We started to use Novel Network, new series of Win-

dows and DOS," Dobbs said.

Dobbs is teaching Introduction, to Computers, Computer Design, C Programming and Fortran at MCC.

"Computers are good teaching tools for students," Dobbs said.

"It helps students to learn, to do research work and better understand the various problems."

On the question if he is planning some exchange programs between the foreign universities or colleges, Dobbs said that there

was a professor, Arnost Svoboda, from Masaryk University, Czech Republic.

Svoboda was there for three weeks. He shared the experience with Dobbs about new HTML Internet systems. Svoboda said that in comparison with his university, at MCC there is a one computer for one student, while on Masaryk University there is a one computer for a big group of people.

"We correspond by e-mail, so we would know about new computer future technologies," Dobbs said.

Another-exchange professor is David Epperhart from Weatherford College in Texas.

He is a data processing manager and has been here for few months.

Now the computer class on MCC has about 2,050 students. The lab hours are open from Monday to Thursday from 8-9:50 p.m., on Friday from 8-4:50 p.m. and on Saturday 9-12:50 a.m.

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Students spread word about Free Enterprise

By JOSH RAMBO

Students all over America are joining the Students In Free Enterprise team.

SIFE is an organization of students whose goals are spreading the word about the free enterprise system as well as obtaining experience and leadership qualities.

The SIFE team meets regularly in class to organize specific outreach programs for students in elementary all the way through high school. They will teach students how to manage money, basic economics, citizenship and how the free enterprise system works. Each individual SIFE member will have particular schools to do a 20-30 presentation about the free enterprise.

The SIFE team's main target group will be MCC's adopt-a-school program in which the entire SIFE team will teach a selected school about voter registration and how to get information about candidates.

As a result of their accomplish-

ments the SIFE team will be meeting at a regional competition April 27 in Ft. Worth. This will give the team members to network with prospective employers and other professionals. The winner of this competition will compete in a national contest in Kansas City. Winners of this contest will receive a partial scholarship to a school of their choice.

The only thing that really stands in the way of this organization is money. "You have to have money to make money," says instructor Kae Hinesline, leader of the SIFE team.

The students have organized a campus wide recycling awareness program for aluminum cans and paper. The money made from this will go to supporting the spreading of the free enterprise message.

SIFE is looking for people to join their team. If you are interested or would like more information on SIFE contact Hinesline at 299-8692.

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Editorial

Federal regulation causes financial aid mix-ups and delays

Financial assistance can make the difference in whether a student experiences success or failure with their school experience. Total frustration may set in, after making it through a maze of paperwork, when the student must handle the sometimes slow turning of the financial aid wheel. Sometimes a missing cog can cause the student and financial aid worker to want to pull out their hair.

Some problems are not in anyone's control. The financial assistance program is fraught with government bureaucracy. The federal government, state and this institution each have their own regulations and policies. Efficiency when an office is handling a lot of paperwork is a possible challenge. Stress levels affect the quality work of every person working in financial assistance.

Students have three main concerns. "When will I get the grant or loan money I have qualified for? Will I be able to survive until that time without my utilities being turned off or my landlord sending me an eviction notice? With this on my mind will I be able to keep my grades up?"

WORKERS IN A FINANCIAL AID office have government guidelines they must follow in order to protect the program so it will continue to be available. They want to help the students. Their job could not exist unless they were helping students. But they are also concerned about people who abuse the system, those who attempt to get loan or grant money but have no intention of pursuing an education.

James Kubacak, the Senior Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Financial Student Assistance said, "This year was worse than others. When the Federal Government shut down last year, it caused delays in the processing of SAR (Student Aid Reports) forms. So the government was behind in the processing of this year's forms. Then they decided to change to a different software for electronic filing which was not fixed until May."

Kubacak goes on to say that each delay causes a snowball effect causing the work load to get farther behind.

"Some students mistakenly think that the SAR form they receive doesn't have to be taken to the school. This is because some of the information on the report tells you that they (SAR processors) will send the report to the school."

TO FURTHER COMPLICATE THE SITUATION, MCC offers services that most other schools do not offer.

"We are one of the few colleges that offers financial aid in the summertime which is good for the students but it creates more work for our financial assistance office," said Kubacak. "They must work on two financial aid years at once."

With recent changes in the government program for financial assistance, things can be further complicated.

"Now students can get a student loan even if they do not qualify for the PELL grant. They can receive an unsubsidized Stafford loan. But they have to go through the PELL process," said Kubacak. This creates more paperwork.

Students also have problems getting all of the required paperwork in because for instance a financial aid transcript was not transferred by a previous college. Or this is the year their paperwork was selected for verification and the tax preparer was supposed to mail in a copy of their tax statement and it was not done.

TO ENSURE THAT YOUR FINANCIAL AID is set takes careful planning. It is to the benefit of the student to do that anyway because there are several supplementary grants including the work study grants, that are only awarded to the students who have their paperwork in by the June 1st deadline. Some steps that might be helpful to the student are:

- 1) Send in the application for your new SAR at least by early February. Make a note on your calendar when you expect it to receive it about 6 to 8 weeks later.
- 2) While you are waiting to receive the report back, pick up the institutional forms, the ones you must fill out for MCC, and get those filled out and turned in.
- 3) Request the financial aid and academic transcripts from your last school, ask when they will be sending them and make a note on your calendar when they are supposed to be here at MCC.
- 4) If you have not received your SAR by the date on your calendar, call financial assistance and ask them for the number for the student aid report processing center. This will be an 800 number and they can give you the status of your SAR report.
- 5) As soon as you receive your report take it to the financial assistance office.

SOMETIMES THERE ARE VALID REASONS for not having your file completed by the deadline. Following this plan should allow most people to have everything in by June 1st. If you decide to wait, you will end up being one of those files that have a late date (after June 1st) and you will have to wait for your paperwork to be processed only as that date comes up.

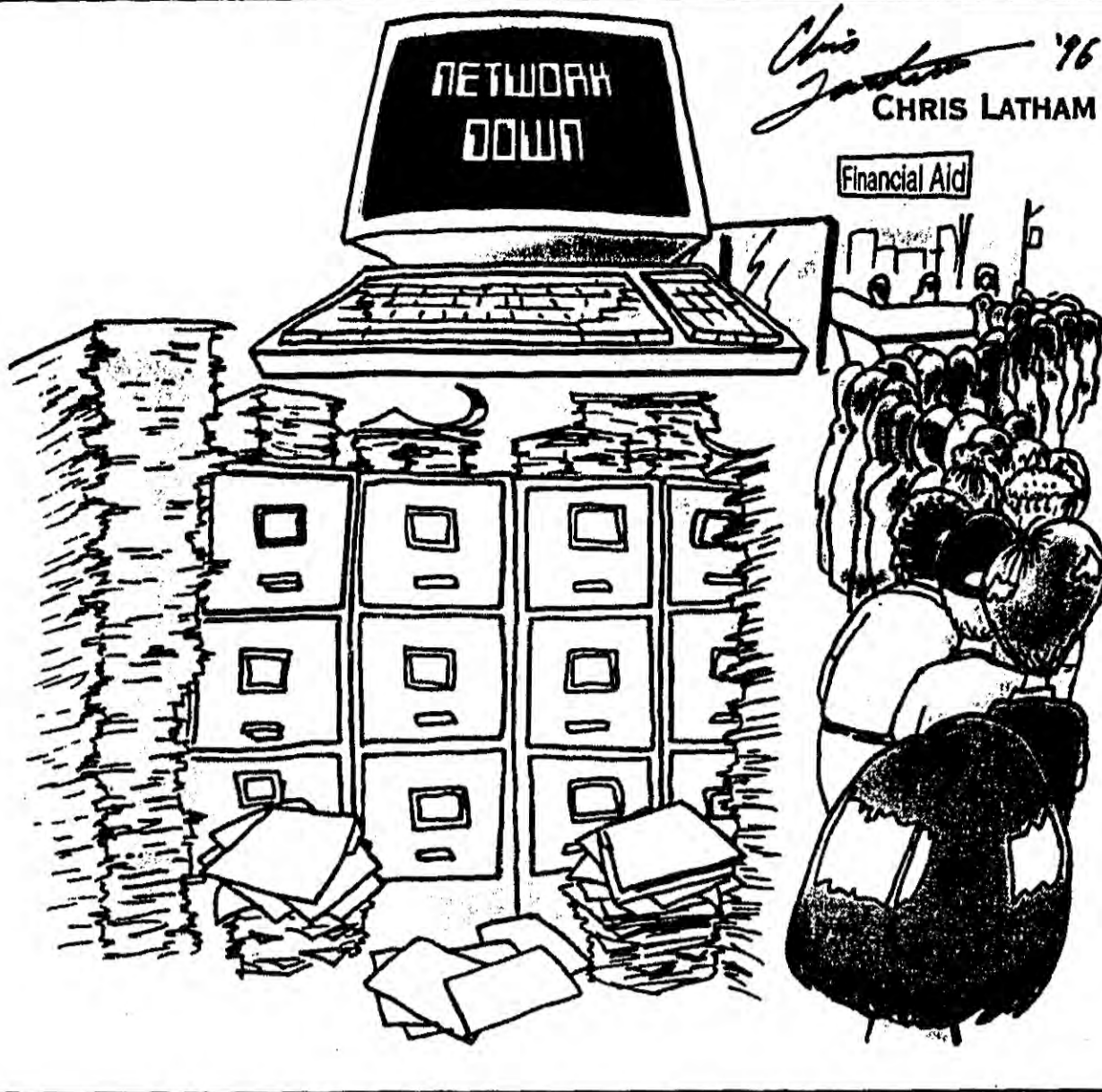
If there are only 30 people who procrastinated, well that is not too bad. But what if there are 100 people who delayed - or 200. I think you get the picture.

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Chris Latham '96
CHRIS LATHAM

Stone's momentary commentary

River users are 'road' over by county officials

By **ROBERT STONE**
Well, it finally happened. Rock Creek and Patrick's Crossing are closed to the public.

The issue on whether to close the two areas originally arose some seven or eight years ago. In their first ruling, the county commissioners ruled the road leading to the spots was county property and had been since 1918. For property owners, the fight did not end. Several months ago, the issue came up again in County Commissioners Court. This time, the road was closed.

Rock Creek and Patrick's Crossing are picnic and swimming areas on the Brazos River between the Lake Whitney Dam and Waco. At this point of the river, the Brazos is not more than five feet deep and the river is constantly moving. The river bed is rocks, hence the name Rock Creek.

This heated issue between property owners and river users found me on the side of the river users. I enjoyed every minute I spent at Rock Creek. The cool, clean water was always so refreshing on the hot, summer days. The different people who used it — friendly. My grandmother and I spent a lot of time out there. She was out there so much others who frequented the site called her "mama" or "grandma" instead of Margaret.

The Rock Creek I knew sounded so much different than the one the property owners described to news media on television and in the newspaper. No one ever pulled a gun on me or my grandma. No one ever cussed me out or tried to start trouble with me. The place was never trashed out like I heard someone say on television. One television station had

someone talking about how bad the litter problem was in the background and showed a close-up of two potato chip bags in a pile of branches. I thought to myself, "Is this what they meant by trashed out? Two potato chip bags! Two potato chip bags!"

Even worse, the reporter did not get an opinion from a river user. Was this a one-sided issue? No!

So where were the opinions from the other side? Did they accidentally get edited out in the editing room or did the video just happen to run out?

The things property owners say happened out there may have happened, and I empathize with them. But, why close Rock Creek for everybody because of a select few? I never caused anyone a problem and it seems like I have to pay for somebody else's thoughtless actions. I am sure

others feel the same way. Another thing which stumps me is how the commissioners can let a property owner claim land which is river bed. I am not sure, but a certain amount of land on either side of a river is state property.

When surveyors went out to determine property lines, they went out during the day. At night, the Lake Whitney Dam is opened, causing the edge of the river to increase. I find it weird how man can claim rights to God's beauty and serenity.

For these reasons, I feel it is in the best interest of everyone the road to Rock Creek and Patrick's Crossing be re-opened. To solve vandalism and other problems go back to the way it was just before the road was closed, have the sheriff's department patrol the area. In any case, somehow re-open the road.

Highland Herald Poll How can financial aid program be improved



Deidra Emanuel
I believe that there should be more money available to the students that put out effort in high school and have a high GPA.



Terri Harper
The limits for the amount available are too low. You can't get more than about \$6,600 for a loan if you don't still live with your parents.



Rodney Farmer
I think they need faster service. It takes too long for a student to know if they have been approved or not.



James Olson
They need less paper work and bigger loans available to hard working students. I also think that students should have more time to pay loans back.



Martha Campbell
You should be able to borrow money from your loan account if you have already been approved and are in need of the money.

Photos and text
by
Kelly Charlton

Editor's Corner Relationships, how to make them work

By **JOE GINGERICH**

Relationships can be great. Relationships can also be a pain.

But relationships are the essence of life and we need them.

Life would be easy if we could just get rid of people. "Peopleless" relationships are the best kind. No adjustments. No sacrifice. We always get our own way.

IT'S PURE BLISS, until we see a great football play and want another "arm-chair quarterback" to analyze it with us. Things are fine, until we see a beautiful sunset and wish we had a friend with whom to share it. And if we would admit it, we hope someone is there to notice when we sweat and struggle to reach a goal. When we stop and think a little, we really do desire relationships.

RELATIONSHIPS grow out of desire. And desire grows out of familiarity. We acquire a taste for what becomes familiar to us.

Very few things threaten our marriage more effectively than neglect and selfishness. I want my wife as a friend for a lifetime. Since I always seem to find time for whom and what I want, I go out with her on Sunday evenings to spend a few hours talking. Our intimacy doesn't remain static. We change. Every time we do something together, we renew our friendship. Familiarity breeds desire.

But when the time comes for adjustments and sacrifice, when I must give up my own way and give in, it's toughness that keeps us going. Norman Vincent Peale once said, when the going gets tough, the tough get going.

DESIRE'S satisfaction comes from sacrifice. We give up one thing for the pursuit of another. Desire increases with self-control and sacrifice. A rose constantly at the nose "loses" its fragrance. But, as an old proverb says, "To the hungry soul, every bitter thing is sweet."

The secret joys my wife and I share increase with the self-control we exercise in thought and action whether together or apart. Some treasures must be guarded so closely that they never are stolen.

That's true of all commitments—in school, with friends, in marriage, on the job, and in the nation.

The issue then becomes, can I find the ingredient which makes me desire what I desire to desire?

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