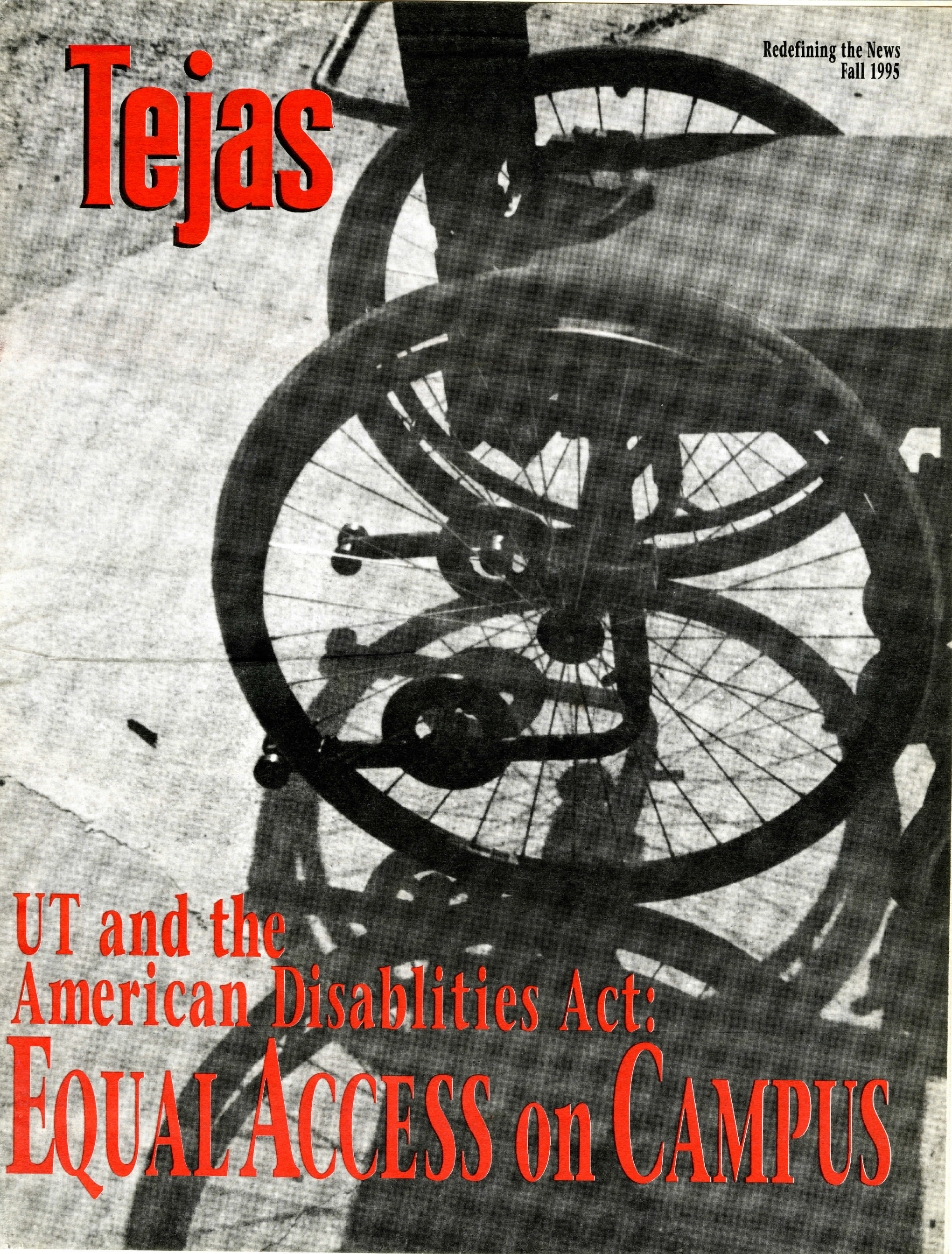




Tejas

Redefining the News
Fall 1995

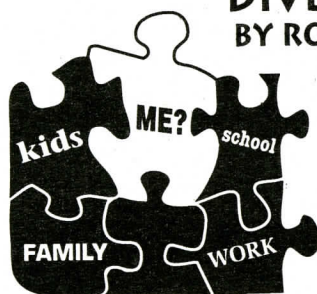
UT and the
American Disabilities Act:
EQUAL ACCESS on CAMPUS

Table of

4 UT AND THE AMERICAN DISABILITIES ACT—EQUAL ACCESS ON CAMPUS BY JENNIFER SALCEDO

UT's student disability enrollment jumped from 2.6 percent in 1978 to 8.8 percent by 1991. Analysts attribute the increase to the American Disabilities Act of 1990, which prohibits disability discrimination.

7 OLDER STUDENTS CREATE A NEW DIVERSITY WAVE BY ROBERT GRANADO JR.



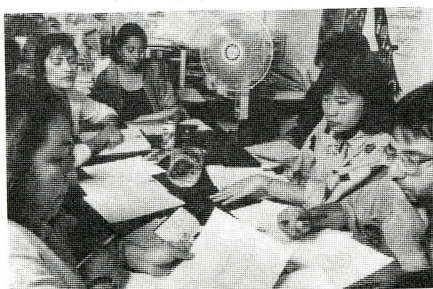
More than 13,600 UT students—24 years or age or older—now attend classes. They join a nationwide trend, forcing an understanding of needs very different from the typical campus youth ghetto.

10 GLORIA SALAS, 35, SINGLE PARENT & GRAD STUDENT BY MARGARITA GONZALEZ

She returned after eight years to complete her B.A. and then entered LBJ. But don't forget Isaiah, 13, and Charlie, 9—plus a car that runs sporadically and a daily time schedule from hell.

12 EMPOWERING THE POWERLESS BY JENNIFER RILEY

From the wrong side of I-35, an East Austin group of Latinos made it all the way to the front page of *The New York Times* with their story about environmental racism.



15 FOR WOMEN ONLY: MEDIA POWER BY SHELAH CISNEROS

Women's Access to Electronic Resources, or WATER, opens media technology training to a denied population. Women from American Indian nations, Mexico, and Central America arrive regularly to learn video editing and the mysteries of Internet.

18 BUILDING THE AMERICAN DREAM? BY JEFF MOFFIT

Empowering a family to move into their own home transcends national boundaries. Habitat for Humanity's initiative embraces a universal dream.

20 LIVING RACISM BY ANNALISA GALVÁN

Racism at large public research universities remains obscured when white administrators, faculty, and most students live in just one perceptual bubble.

22 CHICANO, TEJANO, HISPANIC? BY GINA CARDENAS

Skin color, gender, socio-economic status and historical development contribute to a student's ethnic identity. And then come tough questions — prompting personal quests to discover cultural roots.

24 DISCOVERING MY CULTURE, MY HISTORY... BY VERONICA BRISEÑO

Coming to UT means that many young Mexican American students will confront racism, forcing them into new cycles of exploration.

26 REALITY UNDER THE ROTUNDA BY JUDITH MORENO

A young Mexican American woman student experiences the pain and exhilaration of Texas politics.

28 IN SEARCH OF "HIGHER LEARNING" BY ROBIN WILSON

Blacks barely comprise four percent of UT's population, but most have complaints of racist, sometimes hostile attitudes and insensitivity. Instead of integrating into "mainstream" UT, they prefer to form a separate community.

30 INTERRACIAL DATING BY SHILPA BAKRE

With the number of minorities growing, interracial relationships are becoming more common. Race relationships extend further than just blacks dating whites.



Contents

32 BATTLING FOR LITERACY IN A GLOBAL ECONOMY?

BY ANNE MARIE MOSS

Can Texas businesses compete internationally when 28 percent of its adults cannot complete a job application?

35 SAT WARS: MEASURING TEENAGE POTENTIAL

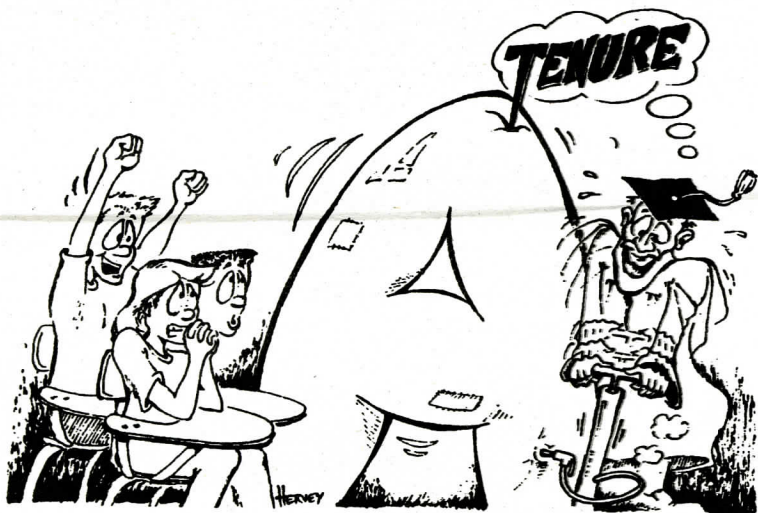
BY GILBERTO SALINAS

The Scholastic Aptitude Test appeared in 1926 to predict a student's success in college. Now, universities use the scores to deny admission or mandate remedial courses.

36 THE HIDDEN REALITIES OF HUB

BY RICHARD GARCIA

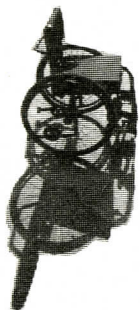
HUBS—or, Historically Underutilized Businesses—confront an intricate system of fraudulent scheming, banking barriers, competing business discrimination, political backlash, and . . . access to funding.



40 TUG-OF-WAR OVER GRADE INFLATION

BY ANNA AGUILAR

One professor argues that a "rise of easy grading" jeopardizes UT's reputation. But others focus on how hidden grade pressures influence faculty tenure and promotions . . . this timeworn issue overflows with complexity, where the struggle is more intense in certain academic arenas.



COVER PHOTO: Charlotte Sobeck

CARTOONIST: Greg Hervey

Write to:

TEJAS

c/o Chuck Halloran

Department of Journalism

A1000-CMA 6.144, UT—Austin, 78712

or call (512) 471-3791

ART DIRECTORS

Adela M. Etcharren

Alana Taylor

PHOTO EDITOR

Michelle Christenson

PROFESSORS

Mercedes Lynn de Uriarte, Founder

Chuck Halloran, Faculty Adviser

STAFF TAS

Pam Schwartz

José Luis Benavides

STAFF WRITERS

Anna Aguilar

Shilpa Bakre

Veronica Briseño

Gina Cardenas

Shelah Cisneros

Annalisa Galván

Adolph R. Garcia III

Margarita M. Gonzalez

Robert Granado, Jr.

Jeff Moffitt

Judith Moreno

Anne Marie Moss

Jorge Renaud

Jennifer Lyn Riley

Gilberto Salinas

Jennifer Salcedo

Robin Wilson

Statement of Purpose

Tejas is a publication of J352/MAS374/LAS322: Latino Community News, a course taken for credit in Journalism, Mexican American Studies or Latin American Studies. *Tejas* encourages student interest in underrepresented community news and opinion, and seeks to attract students to the journalism profession. By providing opportunities to acquire clips and practical experience, *Tejas* prepares students to apply for internships, scholarships, grants and jobs.

UT and the American Disabilities Act: EQUAL ACCESS on CAMPUS

By Jennifer Salcedo

Fall, 1989 — Amanda Babcock's first year as a student at the University of Texas at Austin. She registers for a French class, confident that she would exceed her high school performance.

But on the second day, the instructor asks her to drop because of its oral format. Babcock was stunned.

In high school, she read and wrote French with the proficiency of an 'A' student, but couldn't speak it. Babcock is deaf; a hearing disability makes verbalization of any language extremely difficult.

Her high school teachers had always exempted her from oral discussions, making the classes accessible by writing out the exercises for private study. Babcock knows American Sign Language and lip reads proficiently; with a hearing aid, she communicates without a sign language interpreter.

"(The UT prof) told me it was unfair to the whole class," Babcock recalls. The request was done without malice, but she believed her intelligence was in doubt.

"I dropped the class in tears. 'I can't do this, I'm stupid,' I thought to myself," she adds. "It was the first time in my life I had been told I couldn't do something."

"Later, I realized that the professor was not making accommodations for my disability, which is required under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973," Babcock argues.

The statute provides that "... no otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States shall, solely by reason of his (sic) handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

It was not the last discriminatory experience for Amanda Babcock. Her first-year memories stem from repetitive frustrations based on her attempt to succeed as a student with a disability.

There are more than one million students with disabilities attending American post-secondary educational institutions, according to HEATH, a nationwide clearinghouse on college education and student disabilities — including those with physical, learning, emotional and psychological disabilities.

UT's student disability enrollment jumped from a standard 2.6 to nearly 9 percent by 1991. Analysts attribute the increase to the American Disabilities Act of 1990, which prohibits disability discrimination.

About 800 students with disabilities have enrolled at UT on an undergraduate and graduate level.

University records reflect only voluntary information about disabling conditions. Like sex and race questions on UT admission forms, students with disabilities have the option of declaring their disability to prevent discrimination.

In the Spring of 1989, the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (SSD) served between 40 and 50 students; currently, the office aids more than 510 students.

The dramatic growth stems from increasing numbers of high school students with disabilities actually graduating and entering college, according to Associate Dean of Students Gage Paine, the Office's supervisor.

Barriers to educational faculties, which deny students with disabilities equal access include both physical (equipment related) and attitudinal.

The latter stems from students, faculty and staff. Whether the barrier is one of ignorance, insensitivity, or apathy, the result always harms both the student's feelings and education, say analysts.

Babcock describes one student who was doing well in all her courses, except language. "She went to her college's counselor, and was told that she was just 'mad at the world.'"

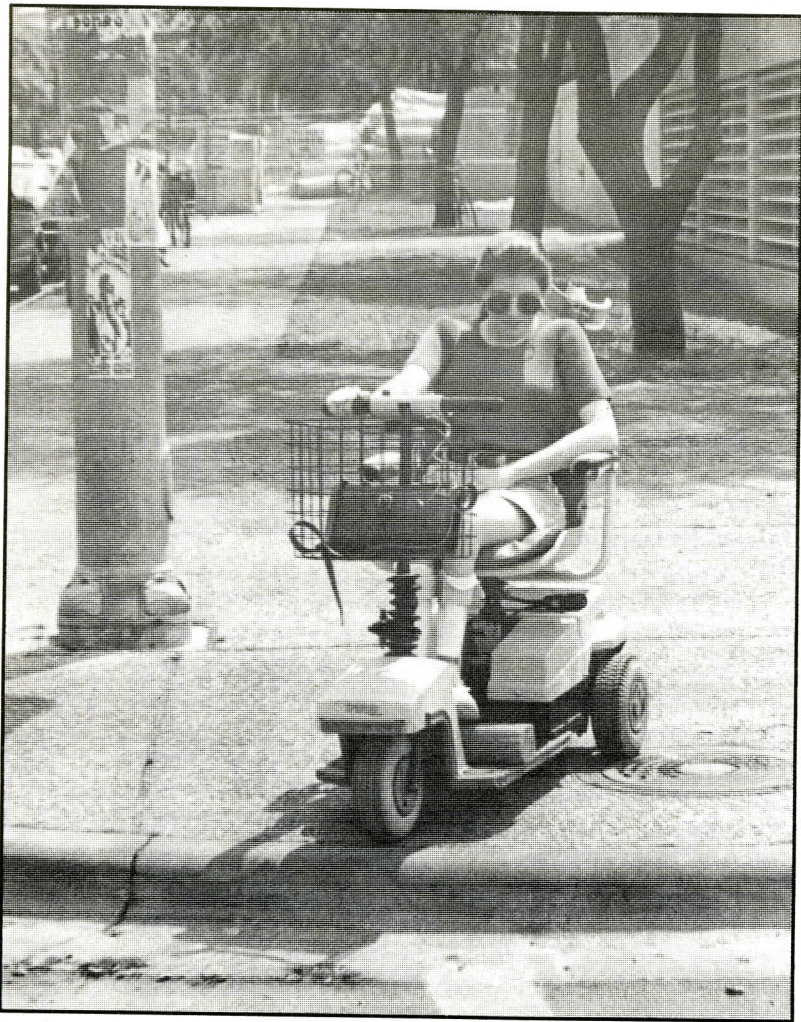
She later discovered that she suffered from a learning disability, which specifically affected language instruction. The student finally graduated from UT.

Karolyn Hogan, who uses sign language interpreters for class lectures, receives many complaints from students saying they are distracted by the interpreters.

Another attitudinal barrier comes from the unwillingness of instructors to accommodate students with disabilities — due to misunderstandings about the student's disability. Test-taking accommodations and teaching styles draw the most complaints from disabled students.

But students with learning disabilities have become the fastest-growing group in higher education, says the American Council on Education. First-year students increased from 14.8 percent in 1985 to 24.9 percent by 1991.

Learning disabilities include difficulties or delays in



Ashley Carroll

communication, memory, attention, spatial relationships and the three R's (reading, writing and arithmetic). Experts say that learning disorders are not related to intelligence; often individuals who have these disabilities are of average or above-average intelligence.

Dyslexia and Attention Deficit Disorder currently command the most attention. Dyslexia affects reading, where letters may be reversed or an inability to comprehend sentence meaning and paragraphs.

Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) arrives as a newer psychological syndrome — recently determined as neurological in origin. Although professionals differ over

diagnostic questions, ADD often coexists with dyslexia — marked by high distractibility and activity, impulsiveness, language problems and failure to complete tasks.

"Some professors think it's an imposition for them, because they're already allowing for other accommodations or to modify something they've been doing for years," says Malcolm Graham, a blind journalism senior.

"But according to the law, people have to take affirmative steps to make sure you're getting equal treatment," he adds.

For students with hearing and visual disabilities, a professor's teaching style can be a problem. For instance, incorporating the use of visual aids (overhead projectors, films and diagrams) into lectures will greatly assist in the deaf person's learning.

But the biggest physical barrier to education, for students who are blind or have visual impairments, is unequal access to information and computer technology due to a lack of adaptive equipment (converting written information into speech or braille, or obtaining access to printed materials and databases like Lexis/Nexis).

Until recently, only one computer provided by the Texas Commission for the Blind was accessible. Graham said sharing one computer with approximately 35 to 50 UT students was difficult.

"The main concern for UT students with disabilities right now is the issue of testing accommodations. There is simply no room for the SSD office to administer tests," explains Babcock.

Issues include more test-taking space, qualified test-taking assistants and proctors and testing material that provides equal but fair examination opportunities.

"UT conducted a self-assessment survey as far as their compliance with the ADA, relating particularly to physical accessibility," says Dr. Sheryl Robinson, who is a program development coordinator for the Texas University Affiliated Program (UAP), a nationwide organization which advises on disability issues.

Physical Plant Director John L. Rishling also helped design a campus renovation plan to comply with ADA standards as part of the Capital Improvement Plan. In its first implementation, all UT building entrances will offer

Federal Law Mandates Equal Access

The American Disabilities Act adds a new category to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, prohibiting discrimination against people with disabilities. It mandates equal opportunity for employment, as well as accessibility to all buildings and transportation open to the general public.

Services provided by state and local government must be accessible to all.

Most colleges have been legally required to accommodate students with disabilities. Section 504 of the 1973 Act specifically declares that no student can suffer discrimination because of a disability in reference to post-secondary and vocational educational services.

And a mandate of the ADA strengthens the notion of "reasonable accommodations" in education for the disabled.

Federal law requires all colleges to make campuses and academic programs accessible to students with disabilities so their experiences can be equal. This means that colleges must have classes in accessible buildings and provide the equipment, textbooks, and personnel to ensure the availability of academic programs.

For example, colleges must buy technology that translates written text into braille or hire sign language interpreters.

Architectural barriers also provide an endless source of frustration for students with disabilities, either hindering or denying accessibility. And for most students with mobility impairments, physical campus barriers are the biggest problems they confront.

Ashley Carroll, a 23-year-old '94 journalism graduate, has spina bifida, a congenital disability of the spine. She walks with crutches, and often

used a battery-operated scooter to get around on campus.

Carroll recalls being sent to a deadline testing location on an upper floor of a building without an elevator. Luckily, a late arriving student notified the test proctor; she was given the exam hastily in a ground floor office.

Ramps and handrails, usually on staircases, also can both aid and obstruct disabled students regularly. For example, bicycles illegally parked on ramps and handrails, despite signs threatening impoundment by the UT Police, deny accessibility to blind students when entering and leaving a building.

Mary Ward, who earned degrees in linguistics at the University of North Texas, is currently a UT graduate student in the College of Arts and Sciences. She usually walks with a cane or a seeing eye dog, but once tripped over a bicycle illegally chained on a handrail.

For students who are deaf or have hearing impairments, two common architectural barriers include the lack of public telephones and visual fire alarms. On campus, there are nine telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD), most of which were donated to the university.

As for visual fire alarms, even though Texas Senate Bill No. 111 of 1973 required that all buildings have visual warning signals to aid the hearing impaired, total university compliance has yet to be achieved.

Karolyn Hogan, a Liberal Arts sophomore, entered UT in the Fall of 1992. She requested a visual fire alarm for her dorm room. Although Kinsolving has fire alarms in individual dorm rooms, Hogan didn't receive a visual one until two weeks before the semester ended.



Amanda Babcock and
Gary Marhsall

"disabled accessibility."

"This will be a project of about \$3 million with a construction dollar amount of \$2.6 million for the upcoming year," says Rishling. An estimated 60 percent of ramps, elevators, and access to public restrooms in targeted high priority buildings, as indicated by the President's Committee on Students With Disabilities' survey, will be renovated.

In the last five years the Services for Students with Disabilities Office has also increased staff members to provide more individual attention, according to Paine.

"In 1995, the office will have four full-time student affairs administrators, three quarter-time administrative staff, two full-time support staff members, and most of my time will be devoted towards students with disabilities," Paine says.

As for eliminating attitudinal barriers, UT participants agree that educating faculty, staff and students about disability issues provides the best solution.

Dr. Linda Thibodeau, vice-chair of the President's Committee and associate speech professor, argues that real benefits would result from more campus unity. Each college or school could appoint a permanent member to inform their respective constituencies.

Geoffrey Courtney, a UT Law School 1994 graduate, has a vision disability and was a committee student member. He summarizes the feeling that most students share when it comes to the University's response to their needs:

"Some accommodations at this University have been grudgingly made without lawsuits after complaints were lodged, (while) students with disabilities are being asked to wait patiently for their civil rights," he says.

"One way that UT could improve is to better their relationship with people with disabilities by having an

attitude where they would truly be willing to help," says Karolyn Hogan. "I do not honestly think they listen to us."

In the fall of 1994, the SSD office created an advisory board composed of students with disabilities in order to solicit student responses about SSD services.

"UT is such a bureaucracy, to do anything is a difficult and slow process. And because of the size of the University, it's probably difficult for them," says Dr. Robinson, also a member of the President's Committee.

In regard to total federal law compliance — such as removing or replacing architectural barriers — she adds: "Cost is always a prohibitive issue, and because the school is so big, to do something campuswide is incredibly expensive."

An estimated \$40 million will be required for UT renovation in order to comply with ADA building code provisions.

Geoffrey Courtney blames the high compliance cost on the University.

"UT has ignored these building codes since the passage of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973," he claims. "For more than 20 years, buildings have been designed, built and modified almost wholly without regard to the needs and opinions of disabled students."

According to UT Vice Provost Patricia Ohlendorf, basic renovation cost estimates to achieve total compliance with ADA architectural standards run between \$18 and \$40 million.

Ohlendorf, who is also the university's ADA coordinator, says that "the coordinator makes sure that the people who have operational responsibilities in the different areas, who need to take the provisions of the ADA into account, know what their responsibilities are and how to implement the requirements and the regulations of the law."

The lack of adaptive equipment led some students with visual disabilities to consider filing a class action lawsuit against UT during the fall of 1993.

The student initiative came after a lack of response from the administration following years of allegedly repetitive requests to the Dean of Students' Office, the President's Committee and several administrative officials to purchase adaptive equipment, says Courtney.

However, UT President Robert Berdahl resolved the issue by applying a \$50,000 stipend to purchase adaptive equipment for future semesters.

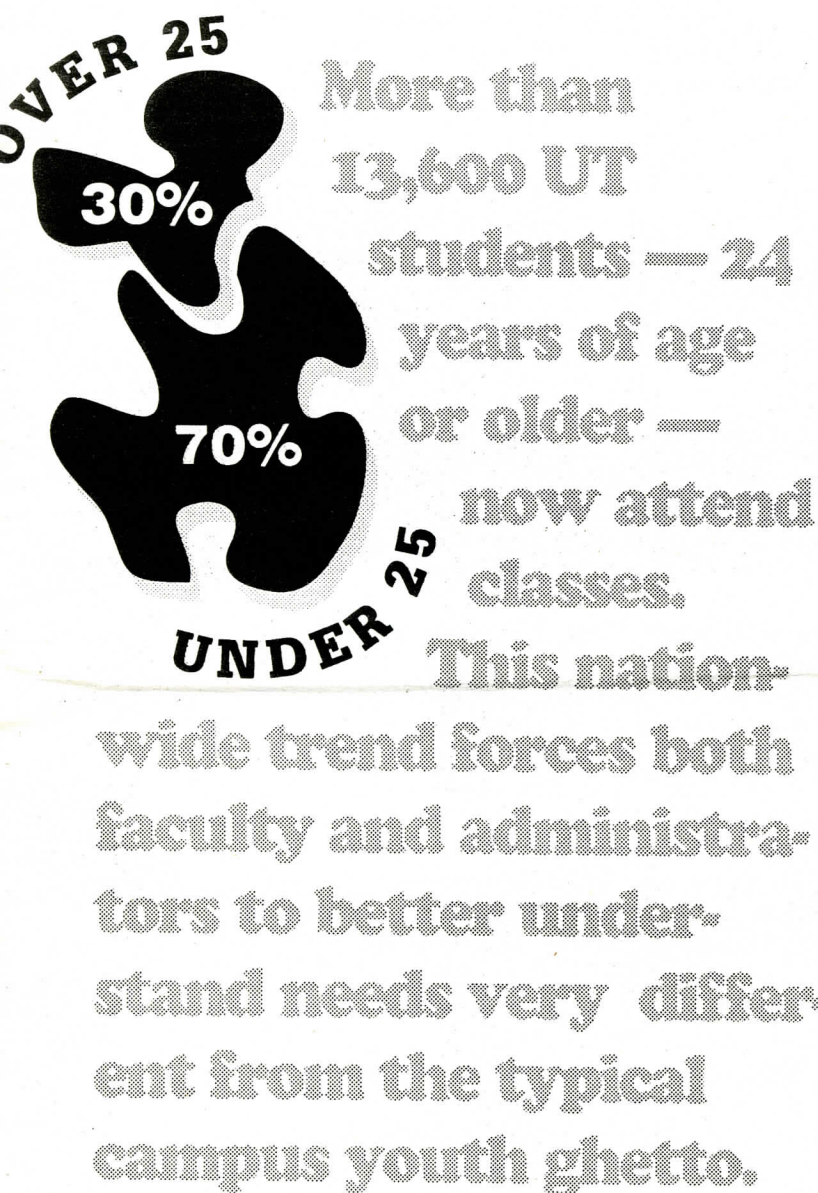
"Sometimes in our frustration we feel like that's the only language the university understands — threatening lawsuits — and then that gets their attention and all of a sudden things get done."

"That has to stop. They need to learn to be more responsive before it gets to that point," says Carroll.

**"That's the only language
the university under-
stands—threatening law-
suits—and all of a sudden
things get done."**

Older Students Create a New Diversity Wave

By Robert Granado, Jr.



In the early days of the large business class, most students assumed that Angela was a teaching assistant.

She always sat in the first row, determinedly taking notes. And she was visibly more than 30 years of age, contrasting sharply with the class's 18-21-year-old youth ghetto stereotype.

But Angela now symbolizes the fastest growing segment of college enrollments — men and women in their 30s to 70s pursuing a college degree or returning as older grad students to retool job market skills in the global economy. In fact, the typical college student — full time, living on campus and younger than 22 — accounts for only about 20 percent of all college students in the U.S., according to the College Board.

"Not so long ago the average college student was a white male between the ages of 18 and 24. Today, that

student is likely to be a non-white, older female who attends college part-time and commutes," says Manuel J. Justiz, Dean of the UT College of Education, in his new book, *Diversity in Higher Education*.

This increasing trend recently prompted the U.S. Department of Education to predict that nearly half of all college students will be 25 years of age and older by 1997. Only 42 percent on campus are now 25 or older, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

At UT, "nontraditional" undergraduates accounted for 12 percent during 1993-94, or about 3965 students by Fall 1994. Nearly 100 new undergrads joined the "older" category in Spring 1995.

The sacrifices nontraditional students face daily makes their younger classmates cringe. "I'm just amazed at how they can handle all those family responsibilities, plus college," says 21-year-old Michelle Botello, a UT speech communication junior.

Indeed, nontraditional adult students often feel undermined by self-doubt and anxiety—juggling academic demands with a career and family responsibilities.

Better time management, financial restructuring and new parenting skills remain common focus areas for married adult students. They must divide their time among classes, employment, spouse or children.

For others, just returning to student status can cause self-esteem problems. Feelings of isolation and marginality are not unusual.

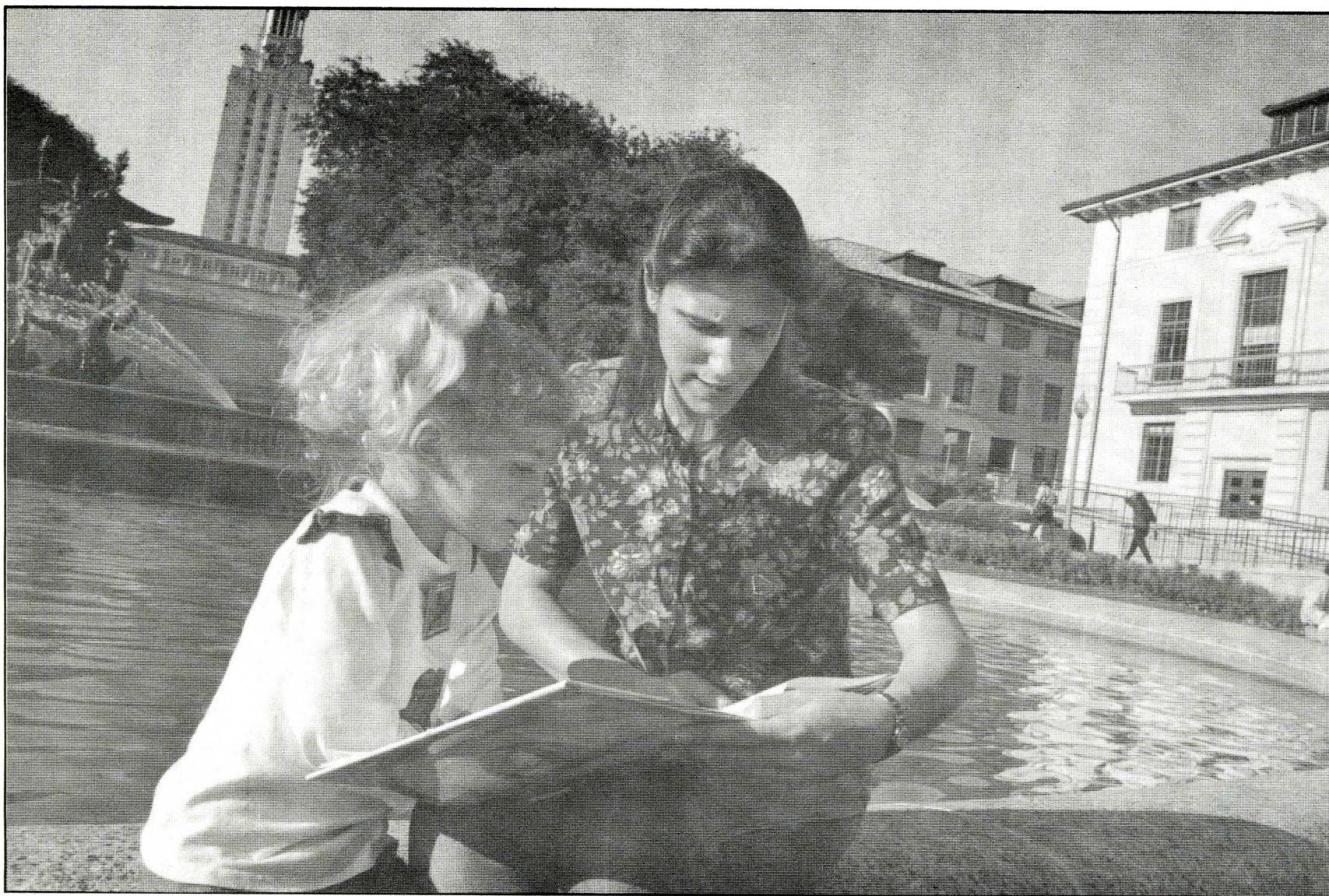
"Most faculty see the historically typical student as an 18-20-year-old, parent-paid, and waspy. . .they don't realize that those students are in a minority," says Arthur Rauch, a Learning Skills Center specialist and former adult student.

University procedures can add misery to the daily plight of these students, while the lack of services can alienate them from the campus atmosphere, adds Rauch.

Consequently, adult students often question their decision to return to college. Contributing to negative emotions are "days when they feel like they're neglect-

Nontraditional adult students often feel undermined by self-doubt and anxiety — juggling academic demands with a career and family responsibilities.





Angela Mendoca and her daughter

ing their family, when they're too exhausted to study and think it's impossible (to get a degree)," says Judy Gross, also a former nontraditional student and now program coordinator for Florida State University's continuing education program.

Pamela Overall, hired last semester by the Dean of Students for the position of Nontraditional Adult Student Coordinator, believes a stronger awareness of enrollment diversity needs to be emphasized.

"UT students have to understand that the Nontraditional Adult Student Program is here to help those with needs that differ from the average 18-year-old student," she says.

Overall works with her two-person staff, emphasizing "getting the word out" via a newsletter, *Transitions*. She plans to establish a computer bulletin board, "NTAS-Line," which will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to help nontraditional students communicate with other students on solving problems.

"Nontraditional students can often experience prejudice by a professor, particularly when the student knows more because of work experience. . . they feel the professor's theory may not apply to the real world," adds Overall.

The program is currently designing a "needs assessment" to better examine the sacrifices incurred by the older student, including lack of social life and poverty.

"The biggest sacrifice is having to give up a social life . . . since adjusting to the full-time student role leaves me with no leisure time, not to mention being constantly without any money," Angela Bravo, an RTF junior at UT, says.

As a thirty-something Latina, Bravo has left the colorful life of a travel agent to pursue strong interests in documentary film making.

"I'm fortunate because I have emotional and finan-

cial family support in my decision to return to college," explains Bravo.

Others are not as lucky.

Angela Mendonca, 32, a UT business accounting junior, claims both full-time student and single mother status. Her four-year-old daughter attends day care, while Angela works part-time at the UT Engineering Foundation Department and tackles 12 credit hours.

"I don't have any family in the state besides my daughter, so I don't have the traditional support other students have," she laments.

More advisors and professors need to be informed, says Rauch, about how the transition to UT affects the individual's academic, financial, and family life.

"I've had to deal with a lot of bureaucratic crap to continue my education," adds Mendonca. "You walk up to the campus and the first thing you experience are barriers. You would not believe the obstacles I had to overcome to get accepted into the College of Business. UT

"The biggest sacrifice is having to give up a social life . . . adjusting to the full-time student role leaves me with no leisure time, and no money . . ."



"I was sick and my daughter was sick but the professor would not accept my homework the next day..."

is not a place for parents to be. At least at ACC they cater to the mature student," she adds.

Adults, perhaps more than any other student population, need to know that someone within the institution cares and fosters a sense of belonging about them, says Cheryl J. Polson, associate professor in the Foundations and Adult Education department at the College of Education at Kansas State University.

Mendonca believes that standardized practices and regulations are fine but they don't take into consideration issues faced by students with more than average responsibilities.

"I had one professor who couldn't understand that there's life beyond school . . . I was sick and my daughter was sick but the professor would not accept my homework the next day . . . I can understand policy, but I was older than the professor and I was the only student in the whole class with a child to care for . . . there needs to be more understanding. Most people my age have a home, car, insurance, and family to care for," she argues.

UT Student Child Care policy does not allow for children over the age of three to be admitted before 3 p.m., due to space constraints. The College of Business often gives evening exams to combine all sections of one course, adds Mendonca. Since the child care center only offers service until 9 p.m., Mendonca has to finish her exam before the allotted time in order to claim her daughter on time.

"How do you explain to a professor that I got a 'D' on an exam, because my daughter had a major tantrum . . . I knew the material well, but I felt so guilty about leaving her with that sitter that I rushed," she recalls.

Mendonca and others believe nontraditional students take education more responsibly, because they know exactly what they want from college.

"Older students are more responsible and take their studies seriously. When I hear younger students talking about the guy who they will see at the big frat party that night, it makes me wonder. I'm lucky if I can see the news at night," she adds.

Older students "seldom change their majors. They have already done all the shopping and taste testing," says Ronald Coleman, staff advisor to UT's Student's Older Than Average club (SOTA).

While returning mothers may perhaps have the hardest time assimilating, it is urgent, says Rauch, that programs for each segment of this group be reshaped. However, all nontraditional students regularly understand the economic demand they place upon themselves.

"After I calculated my financial resources including my 25 hours of part-time work and federal grants . . . I almost fainted," says Mendonca. "I get one-fourth of the financial aid at UT since transferring from ACC. By the time I get out of school, if I can manage it, I expect to be \$15,000 in debt from student loans," she says.

Unfortunately, federal and state financial aid programs have not kept up with the escalating costs of

higher education, reports a recently formed group, the Alliance to Save Student Aid. In fact, many federal aid programs such as work-study, Perkins Loans, and Stafford Loans are currently listed as possible cutbacks by Republican-dominated Congressional committees.

Changes are inevitable, and efforts to ease the already heavy burden on students who depend on financial aid are unlikely, says Scott Sudduth, assistant vice chancellor for federal relations at UT.

"Someone or something will suffer because of your trying to better the quality of your life," says Mendonca.

"I'm torn between my daughter and my education. I want to provide the best life and future for my daughter, but until I graduate and get a better job, my child suffers until then," she says.

The percentage difference in annual medium earnings between all men, ages 25 to 34 with a college degree, and those with a high school diploma is 54 percent. But for women in the same categories, that figure jumps to 88 percent, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

"Compared to other universities, UT's few resources and programs for nontraditional students is one of the best in accommodating these students" says Rauch. "It's the most elaborate support system," he says.

"When I first started they were very few older students and no resources, but now I see a little difference," says Krystyna Aitala, an over 40 psychology student and newly elected co-president of UT's SOTA Club.

Rauch believes awareness among faculty remains a key issue in the years to come. "More faculty need to view nontraditional students as a positive change," he says.

All of this, says Carol Aslaian, Director of the Office of Adult Learning Services at the College Board, means that "we've begun to mainstream adult education. Most colleges are realizing that it's not just a good will gesture anymore."

Pamela Overall,
Nontraditional Adult
Student Coordinator



by John Anderson



Gloria Salas, 35, Single Parent & Grad Student

By Margarita Gonzalez

She returned after eight years to complete her B.A. and then enter LBJ. But don't forget Isaiah, 13, and Charlie, 9 — plus a car that runs sporadically and a daily time schedule from hell.

Her day begins with a frantic race against the clock. Once the buzzer goes off she must get out of bed and start breakfast.

Even after the children are off to school, there's house cleaning, dishes, getting the car fixed, and studying. In order to complete the day's goals, not a moment can be squandered.

Gloria Salas, 34 and a single parent, just finished her B.A. in U.T.'s government department after an eight-year absence, and then immediately entered the LBJ School of Public Affairs as a grad student — one of 8.2 million other single head of U.S. household mothers.

"I don't feel I have a choice; I know I don't have a choice. I never really thought about how I'd handle it all, I just know I have to," she says, glancing at her two children: Isaiah, 13, and Charlie, 9. Now, more than 30 percent of American children live with one parent, including nearly one-third of all Hispanic children.

"We have our quality time. I think that's what keeps us going," Salas says. "Sometimes we will pile on the sofa and talk about things they want to talk about. I know I should be studying — I always feel guilty because I feel like I'm not devoting more time toward my courses — but it's so much more important to me that my boys know I care about what they want to tell me."

Non-traditional students, those 24 years of age or older, include former homemakers with grown children, single parents, divorced women who need a degree to better support their families, professionals who are changing careers, and even people who simply didn't know what they wanted to do with their lives and finally returned to college. For many, the decision to embark on a new lifestyle is a scary necessity.

"Traditional college students — those who enroll in full-time undergraduate programs directly out of high school — are gradually becoming the minority of many campuses nationwide," according to the Pew Higher Education Research Program in Philadelphia. If current trends continue, they predict that nontraditional students will make up 60 percent of all college enrollments by the year 2000.

Over the past two decades, the number of college students above 35 has doubled. These students make up 2.2 million of the 13.1 million people enrolled in two- and four-year colleges.

Nationally, the majority of older students are women. Below age 35, both genders are represented about equally, with women making up the slightly larger group. But the gap widens among students over 35. Men account for only 700,000 of the older undergraduate students.

No matter how crucial the figures, non-traditional students have a higher dropout rate because of the pressures of juggling a family, a career and college.

For Gloria, the struggle consumed twelve years before she received her B.A.

"I think back now and I feel pursuing higher education was always there for me, but I just didn't place as much of an emphasis on it until I realized that if I wanted to be able to succeed — career wise, I was going to have to finish my B.A.," she says.

After high school, Gloria attended classes part-time at a junior college. However, in 1980 a relationship absorbed most of her time and she dropped out.

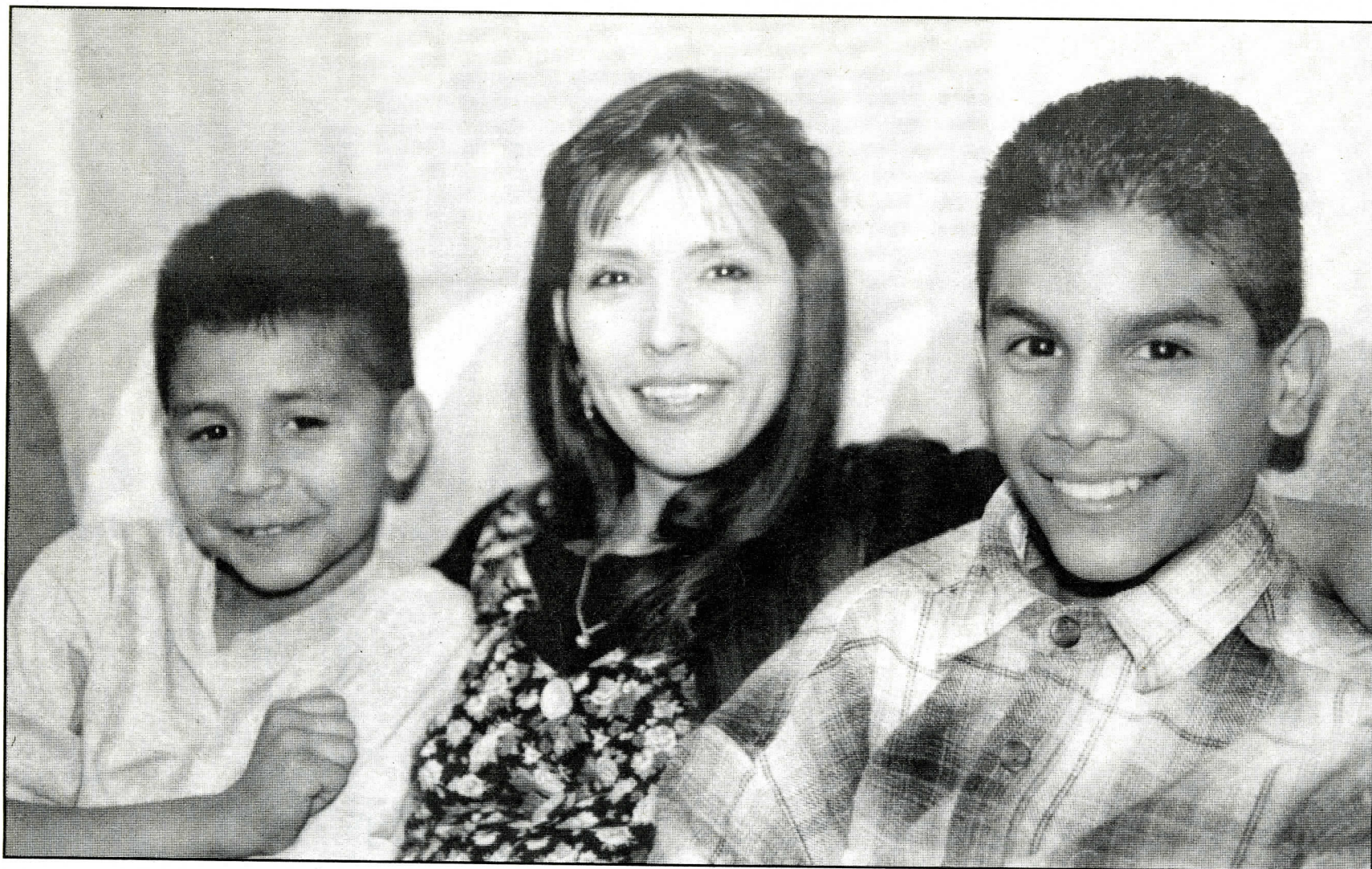
At 21, she had her first child, Isaiah. It became difficult to re-enroll in classes because her husband was in the military and they moved regularly. In 1985, Charlie was born; a few short years later, she and her husband divorced. "His goals were different than mine and I realized I was not going to grow knowledgeably if he wasn't going to let me."

Gloria moved back to Austin and began working two jobs — full-time at a local bank and part-time at a furniture store.

"I didn't go to school at all while I was married. Being a housewife and mother were my priorities; although school was a thought, my circumstances prevented it," Salas explains.

Approximately one year after her divorce, Gloria re-enrolled as a part-time student at Austin Community College. She began taking finance classes to complement her bank job. However, due to a lingering bank reces-





Margarita Gonzalez

sion, Gloria's employer laid her off in 1992.

That same year, she transferred 36 credit hours to the University of Texas at Austin. For the next two years, she became a full-time student and part-time employee.

Returning to school was not an easy choice.

"I had to learn to interact with students 10-12 years younger than me. Even now, even though there are older students at the LBJ school, I still feel older because I feel like I've already gone through a cycle — being married, having children and then not being married. The students, who are a lot younger, have completely different lifestyles than mine," she says.

"I wake up thinking today is another day; once we settle into our daily routine, we don't have too many problems; I know we will eventually work things out," she says.

She believes her accomplishments stem from a supportive family network. "It makes a big difference when you have a lot of support. If I didn't think I could fall back on my family it would be a lot harder — It would."

"I've definitely surprised some of my family members. I have nine siblings. Of the four of us who have gone to college, only two have completed our BA's," she says.

"We've always made it a point to discuss how important it is to succeed academically, especially for minorities," she explains. "I may be making them aware of things that parents don't normally share with their children, but my children definitely know about statistics related to minority issues. There are so few of us completing higher education. I don't know if the statistics will ever change, but I do feel it's important that it changes in my family."

The demands preclude any romantic encounters in

the near future.

"My children are at a point in their lives where they need me and bringing someone else into their lives would be a difficult adjustment — not only for my boys,

"I learned to interact with students 10-12 years younger than me ... They have completely different lifestyles than mine."

but also for that individual; I feel like we are a complete family now, and it would be a challenge to include someone else into that," she says.

After completing her MPA, she wants to focus on community development.

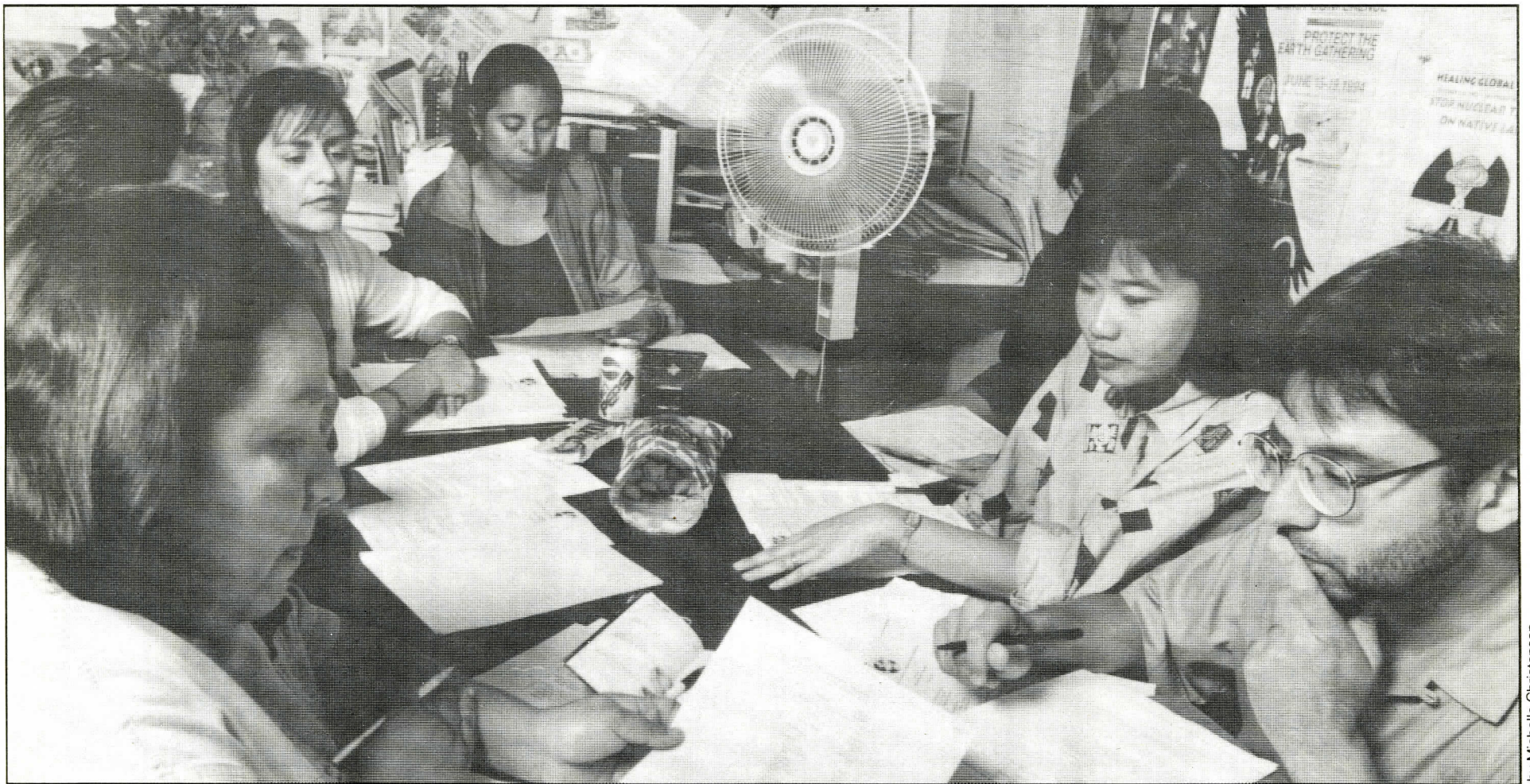
"Never be afraid to tell other people what you want to achieve or what your goals are," she says firmly. "I think that people are more willing to help you, if you let them know what you would like to accomplish. I think that talking to others helps reaffirm your goals and helps you to succeed."

Big Brothers and Big Sisters provide her sons with tickets to games, shows, and other local events. She feels the boys need a male perspective that she cannot provide; both children are currently awaiting big brother assignments.

Gloria also wishes she had support from other single mothers: "It would be nice to share ideas about your family with other people who really understand your circumstances."



EmPOWERing **THE** POWERless

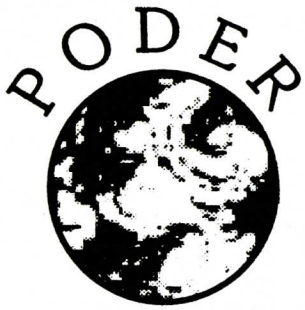


PODER monthly director's meeting
by Michelle Christenson

From the wrong side of I-35, an East Austin group of Latinos made it all the way to the front page of *The New York Times* with their story about environmental racism.

By Jennifer Riley





It's no coincidence that PODER means "power" in Spanish.

Power enabled four East Austin Latinos to win the initial battle in a war against environmental

racism. But the conflict continues.

PODER, or People Organized in Defense of the Earth and her Resources, rallied East Austin's predominantly lower-income Latino and African American residents to force the relocation of six oil company storage tanks in 1992, which were leaking.

PODER introduced racial minority and lower economic class perspectives into an environmental movement often characterized as reluctant to understand race and class conflict.

But economic disadvantage makes the environmental justice movement both a race and a class issue, says Richard Moore, coordinator of the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice, or SNEEJ.

There is "a very clear pattern of disproportionate impact and targeting of people of color specifically," Moore says. "But when you find a low-income community with lower education, you're bound to find waste facilities (and contamination) from industry, (the) military and agriculture."

"The environmental movement has traditionally left out human beings," says PODER co-founder and current director, Sylvia Ledesma. "When you put human beings in, you begin to look at disparity."

More than 70 percent of Texas Latinos live in close proximity to a toxic waste site, according to a 1990 United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice study.

Three of the largest commercial hazardous waste landfills in the United States affect predominantly African American and Latino communities, according to this same study.

After PODER forced the six national oil companies to relocate 43 tanks, the group continued with a busy agenda.

PODER now watches Austin's growing high-tech industry — protecting the interests of East Austinites — who stand to lose the most as new industry takes root in their neighborhoods.

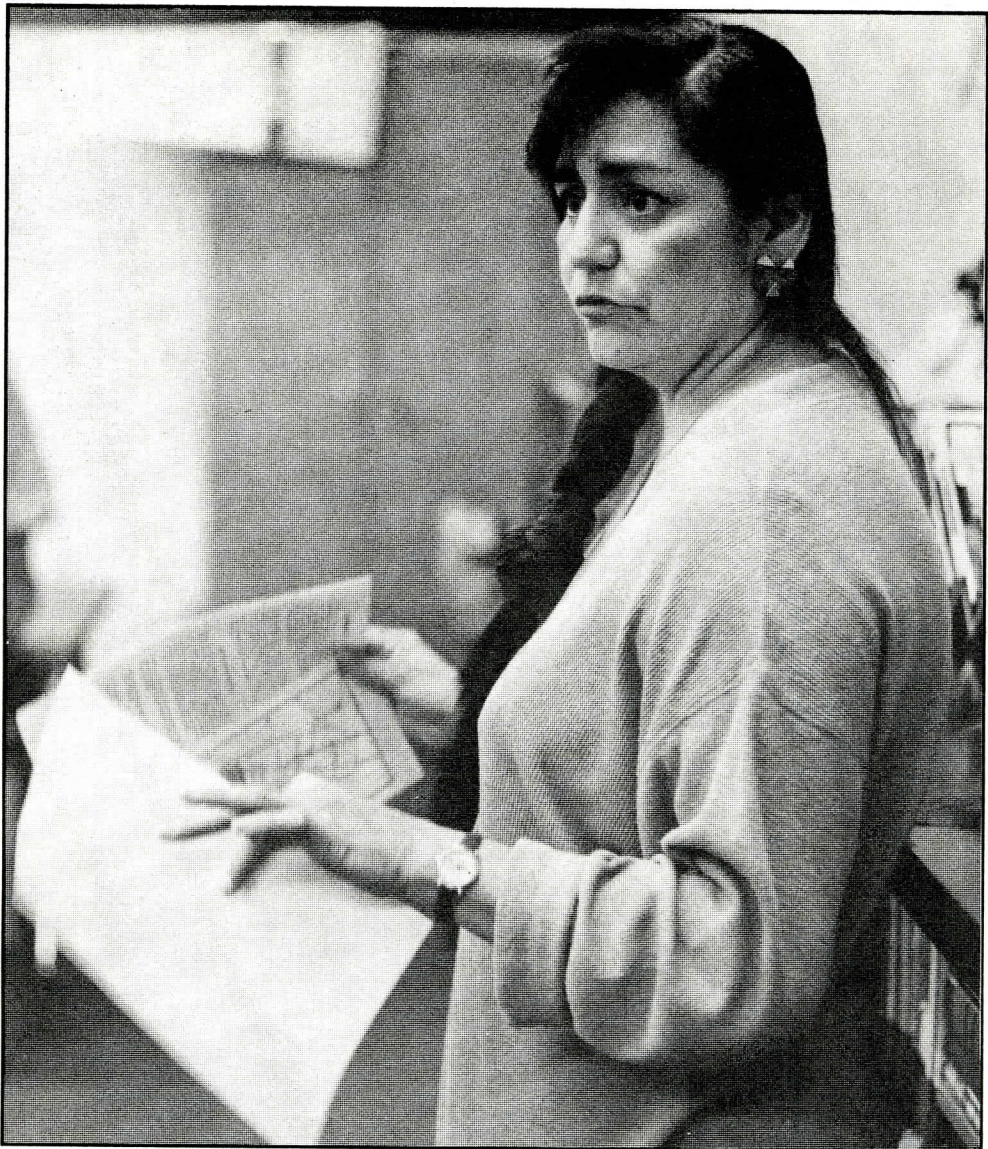
The city's construction of a new airport in southeast Austin at the former site of Bergstrom Air Force Base will bring increased traffic and commerce into the Montopolis neighborhood.

PODER's Economic Conversion Campaign "gets people who are impacted directly" by the closing of Bergstrom Air Force Base "involved in the process of change," Ledesma says.

Ledesma also wants to focus PODER's attention on how new transportation projects such as light rail and construction of a new state highway will affect East Austin.

She plans to continue the Electronic Industry Good Neighbor Campaign, which evaluates tax breaks the city gives to industries as an incentive to locate in East Austin, and monitors industrial waste disposal methods and worker safety programs.

Although PODER shares the weaknesses that limit



Sylvia Ledesma

by Michelle Christenson

Economic disadvantage makes the environmental justice movement both a race and class issue.

the success of all environmental justice groups — insufficient funds — it must fight for money against the exclusive Group of Ten, the ten most influential environmental groups in the country, which includes such familiar names as the Sierra Club and the National Audubon Society.

The Austin organization receives no government funding, and relies on local fund-raisers and support from various foundations for its operation.

PODER's 1994 budget was approximately \$40,000 — less than half the salary of most presidents of the Group of Ten, co-founder Antonio Díaz estimates.

They fear that these prominent names pursue "what little money that has been appropriated for people of color groups. The greatest obstacles we face are financial," explains Susana Almanza, PODER's co-founder and the current new coordinator of the Texas Environment and Economic Justice Resource Center.

"I don't see as much being done (with environmental justice issues) as could be done," says Jerry Greenberg of the Washington, DC-based Wilderness Society. He criticizes Congress for attempting to "roll back environmental protections that have a very direct



TEXAS



Susana Almanza

impact on urban neighborhoods. We are in a partnership here in that we don't want these environmental protections rolled back."

The Sierra Club's Birmingham, Alabama-based John McCown, the Southeast Grassroots Organizer, says his organization "feels that environmental justice is real and that the movement is legitimate." He adds that the Sierra Club acknowledges that "in the past national organizations have operated in a vacuum."

Despite the Group of Ten's attention to environmental justice, groups like SNE EJ and PODER say this focus offers only lip service without commitment to people. Díaz stresses the "empowering process" of speaking for oneself.

"All environmental issues should be called environmental justice," Ledesma says. She explains that minority and lower-income issues are unnecessarily "separated" from so-called mainstream issues.

However, the local founding residents arrived on the scene with a coherent geographical view. PODER began after a 1990 SNE EJ meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico, when neighborhood residents gathered to discuss regional and national effects of alleged environmental racism and economic injustice.

Díaz and other organizers petitioned the mainstream environmental groups to recognize their existence.

They wrote letters to the Group of Ten "trying to hold them accountable for the funding they were getting" from the government and criticizing them for not focusing "on issues that were affecting these communities," Díaz adds.

The Boston-based Campaign for Responsible

Technology, CRT, subsequently contacted Díaz to request his help in organizing a meeting with Austin-based SEMATECH, an industry-government consortium that researches semiconductor manufacturing.

After meeting with SEMATECH, Díaz, Ledesma, Frank Campos and Susana Almanza, "felt a need to create an organization that was looking specifically at the high-tech industry in the Austin area and was familiar with environmental racism," says Díaz.

These four native Texans formed PODER to introduce pollution monitoring and worker safety to SEMATECH's organizational agenda.

They arrived with documented research charging that many corrosive acids and poisonous gasses, which are involved in semiconductor manufacturing, endanger people working around or living nearby a plant — particularly if released into the ground, water or air.

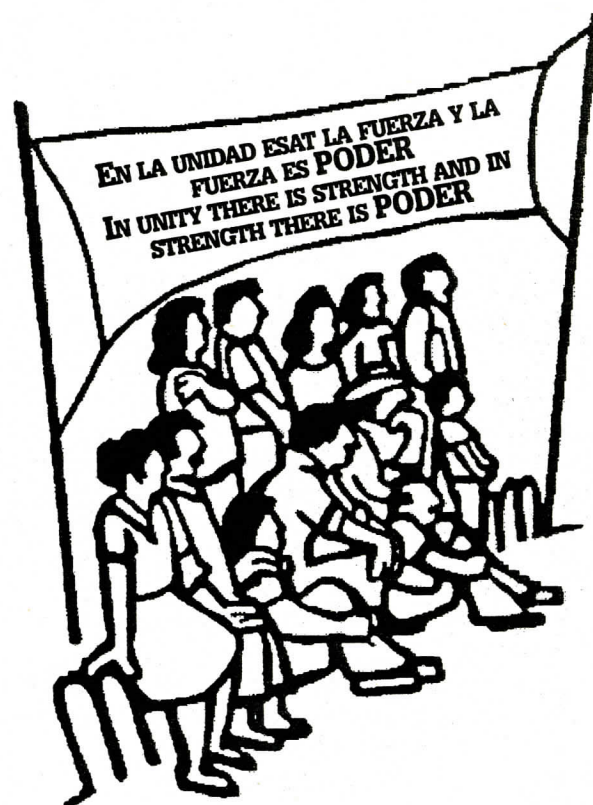
PODER had studied the semiconductor industry record in California's Silicon Valley, which has one of the largest concentrations of Superfund sites in the country, Díaz explains. These are areas the government deems most threatening. Motorola — Austin's largest high-tech employer — has several Superfund sites at other plants, says Díaz.

SEMATECH's \$100 million in government funding entitled taxpayers to a "say as to what their research and development is including," Díaz explains. "Instead of building smaller and faster microchips for this race against the Japanese, we felt they should also be building cleaner and safer ones for workers, for the industry and the environment in general."

The City of Austin gives industry tax abatements to locate in East Austin, requesting that these new semiconductor plants employ local residents.

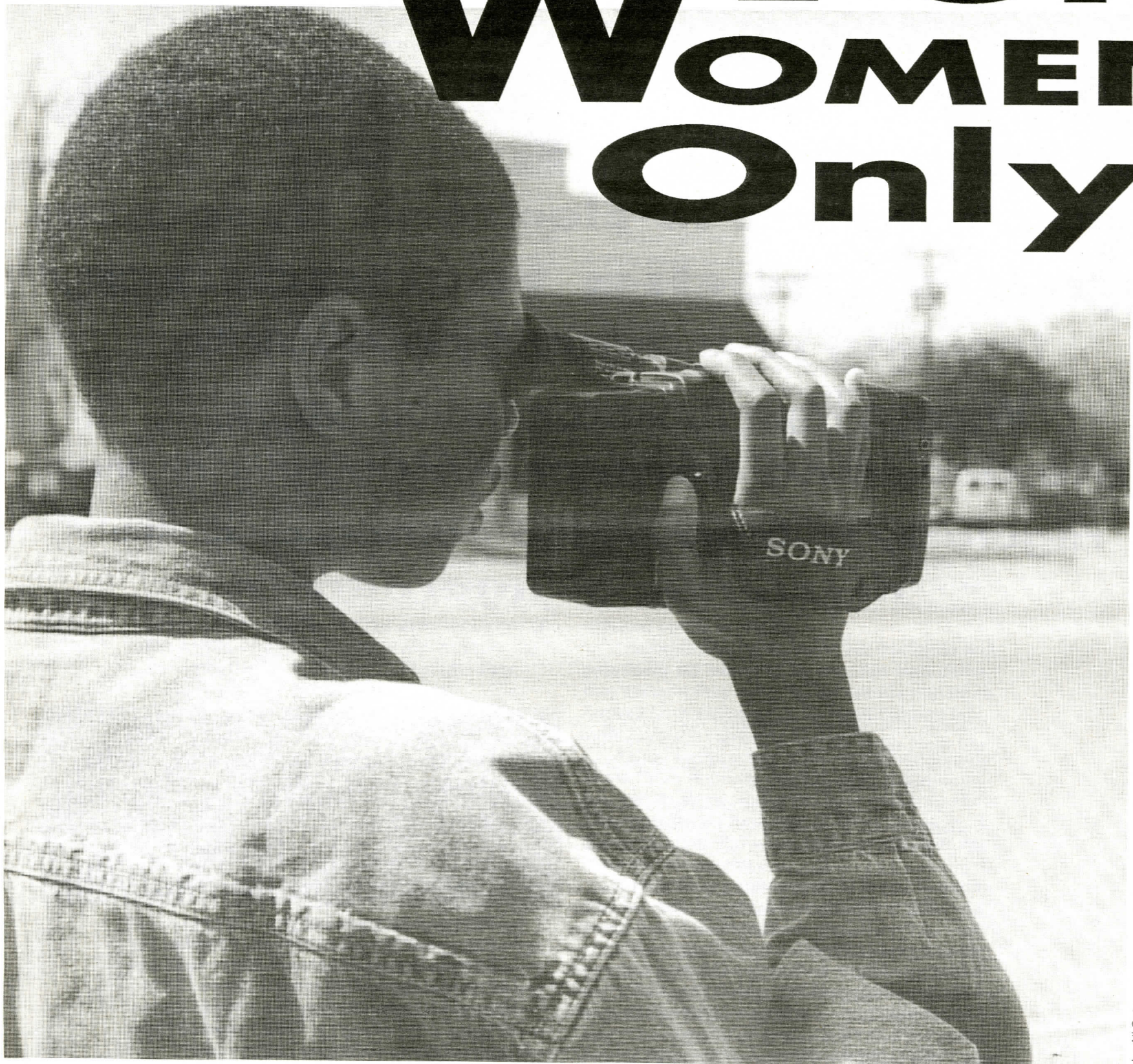
That same industry "thought that they were bringing jobs, that they were good corporate citizens and that not only would people welcome them with open arms, but we would be at their beck and call," Díaz says.

"We've redefined environmentalism to be a broader thing," Almanza says. "The environment is not just nature — it's where you live, work and play."



Media Power

W For WOMEN Only:



by Ali Cato

Arriama Matlock-Abdulah

B y S h e l a h C i s n e r o s



TEJAS

LA COMUNIDAD 15

Voices of women fill an unassuming blue house in Austin on a balmy Saturday afternoon — not far from the bustling downtown scene and the state capitol.

The many windows and light colors give the house an open and airy feel. But behind the dark curtains lurk the powers of technology — radio, video and computer equipment — reserved specifically for women.

On this day, several are exploring the house and learning video operations, audio operations and video editing.

"It's so much easier than I thought it would be," says

plays the role of computer networking guru. A soft-spoken UT doctoral candidate, she focuses on Internet resources and assists trainees to locate other women on the net.

Frieda Werden, a self-taught pioneer of feminist radio programming, now produces WINGS (Women's International News Gathering Service) and shares radio editing knowledge with WATER.

"I can teach anyone to edit in 30 minutes," declares Werden. "But I only teach people who are ethical. It's very easy to use it to make people seem to say some-

WATER

**Women's Access to Electronic Resources
opens media technology
training to a denied population.**

**Women from American Indian nations,
Mexico, and Central America arrive
regularly to learn video editing and the
mysteries of Internet.**

Veronica, who has never had formal video training. She and three other women are at the house receiving instructions on how to tape and edit segments for a local access television feminist program.

The WATER house, or Women's Access to Electronic Resources, serves as an international multimedia training site — created last year as a project of the Austin-based Foundation for a Compassionate Society.

"If you look at the world from a woman's point of view, most of the dominant media structures are patriarchal," says Angela, who is visiting from Central America. "It's particularly difficult for women to even gain access to media, to learn how to apply technology to women's issues and not be told 'no' right at first. Half of each national population — women — are routinely denied access."

WATER provides training in video production and editing, radio technology, interviewing and computer networking to women who are working to create social change around the world. Providing a safe and accessible environment to de-mystify electronic media for women who want to document their own reality merges with WATER's goals.

Ana Cisnett, Frieda Werden, Deborah Hill and several volunteers — all of whom believe in the philosophy of nurturing "women's" values — provide both leadership and inspiration.

Ana Cisnett, known to friends as "Technomama,"

thing they didn't."

Werden believes that her work at WATER helps women to use their skills to benefit other women and foster international women's media work — something she and the other women at WATER have made their life's work.

Deborah Hill (a.k.a. Fern), a video professional, conceived WATER as a place to assist women of all cultures, encouraging health and peace. She initially brought the project to life.

Hill received her master's degree at Rice University and then attended the London School of Film. At Rice, she noticed that the instructors were all men; there were very few women students.

"I found it very disconcerting," says Hill. "It was kind of like being at the wrong bar. I was misplaced — the odd person out."

"I had always wanted, because of my experience of not having anyone to identify with, an effort geared toward women and minorities . . . people who didn't have a place that identified with them and their issues," Hill adds.

She was lured back to Austin after working in Boston access television.

"I felt uncomfortable about giving energy and equipment to the KKK and groups I felt were organizations of hatred," says Hill of her work in Boston.

The common denominator linking the trio together



begins with local community leader, Genevieve Vaughn, who established the Foundation for a Compassionate Society. Vaughn devotes much of her life to issues of women on an international level — with particular interest in women and alternative media.

"I have always wanted to do a multi-tier media approach," says Vaughn. "The powers that be have a monopoly on operations. If you can do it at different levels, it's easier to break through. So that's why I've been particularly interested in the multi-media approach," she says.

She created the foundation to fund projects encouraging world peace — while at the same time emphasizing the values of women, particularly before the year 2000.

Vaughn's definition of nurturant "women's values" strongly opposes the "profit and me-first" cultural syndrome.

Their long-term social change projects include retreats for educational, cultural and healing practices; alternate agricultural farming; cause-related marketing stores (selling wares of indigenous and third-world people); feminist radio programs; women's computer conferences and a living well health center.

One woman from Central America who attended a training produces a segment for WINGS — heard on short wave radio in more than 60 countries. Other women have arrived from Guatemala, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Mexico and from indigenous groups in the U.S.

Hill wants WATER sites all over the world.

In Brazil, women are developing a media training



Fern Hill by Ali Cate

center. And in Central America, the women of FIRE (Feminist International Radio Endeavor) are funded by Vaughn's foundation to train more women to produce local radio programming.

Werden worked with a group of Austin pre-teens for a kid's radio program in Austin.

Hill trained a group of Indian American women, who are interested in starting their own tribal media centers to document their respective ancestral histories with video.

Cisnett has acquainted middle-aged-women with the joys of e-mail.

Transportation to Austin provides the only expense for WATER training; the foundation often helps defray the expense of travel.

The average house stay covers one week.

Some of the original trainees return to volunteer or teach.

K. Bradford recently arrived after filming a documentary in southern Africa on white supremacy.

Bradford is also responsible for arranging the training for the feminist access television program at the house. "Fern had heard the buzz about it and planted the seed in me," she says.

Like WATER, the women volunteering for the local feminist program are starting to form their own web of feminist networking — hoping that their activism will empower future training initiatives at WATER.

"Women hold back when they are perfectly capable and would have fun (speaking out)," explains Werden. "Even in a group of women and a microphone, they are afraid to go to the microphone. But if they do, one million will hear them instead of ten. We have to be confident that what we have to say is important."



by Ali Cate

K. Bradford, WATER staff holding camera. Laura Saponara (left), Pia Córdova (center).



TEXAS

the **B u i** **American**

Empowering a family to move into their own home transcends national boundaries. Habitat for Humanity's initiative embraces low-interest mortgages, volunteer "sweat equity," materials, and most of all — the shared community dream itself.

Andrea Simpson-Jones doesn't want her daughters, Aaron, age 4, and Arianna, age 3, to ever have to change schools.

Growing up she never lived in one place long enough to make close friends. Noisy sleep-overs and birthday parties were always for someone else. After her twelfth school change, she stopped counting, wondering how long it would be before her family moved to another city.

As an adult, she moved relentlessly to avoid rent increases. But Andrea Simpson-Jones and her girls now have their own home — a one-story, pink three-bedroom dwelling with lavender trim. Thanks to Habitat for Humanity and the Texas Veterans Land Board, she will never have to worry about another rent increase.

Millions of Americans dream of owning their own home, but the quest remains elusive for many. Because of low-income, high debt, or bad credit, people become "locked out" of the American

Dream — forced to rent, live with relatives, or turn to the government for assistance.

Habitat for Humanity was created to help the working poor by eliminating poverty housing, not by handing over a house, but by empowering a family to become homeowners. (Its motto: "A Hand Up, Not a Handout.") A non-profit organization, Habitat for Humanity includes more than 1000 U.S. affiliates and at least 164 chapters abroad. In its 19-year history, Habitat has built about 30,000 homes for job holders who could not qualify for mortgage loans.

Even in the late 1980s, when interest rates fell, 60 percent of U.S. families still could not afford to buy a home. Despite loan approval, more cash must satisfy the down payment, closing costs and taxes.

The Census Bureau's 1991 report, Who Can Afford to Buy a House in 1991?, says that about 1.6 million families could have purchased a median-priced house (worth 25 percent less than the neighborhood average) that year, if they had had access to another \$2,500 for the down payment and closing costs.

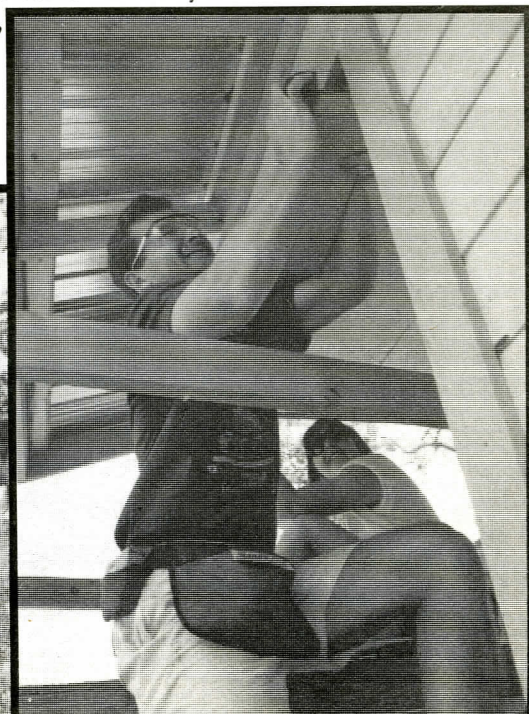
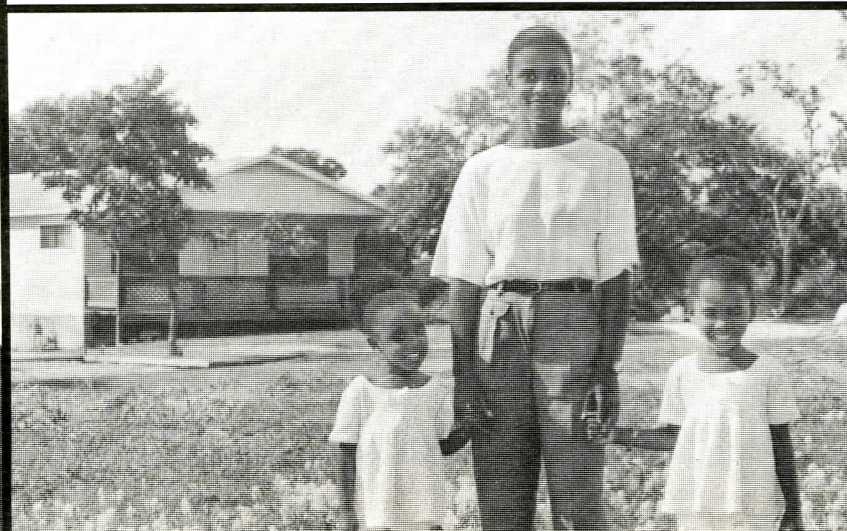
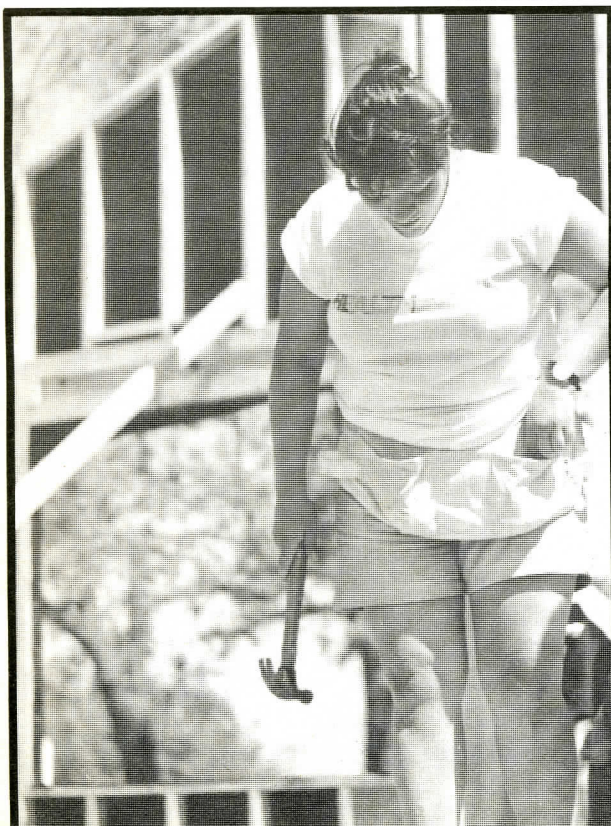
In contrast, the average Habitat house cost varies depending upon its location. Normally, the new homeowner will pay about \$35,000 over a 14-year period, ranging between 1,200 and 1,500 square feet for a three bedroom-one bath floor plan.

National home buying medians begin around \$39,700, but most working poor families cannot generate enough income to obtain loan approval at that level. Two factors determine approval via traditional lenders: the buyer's creditworthiness and the property as security for the loan.

Too much consumer debt and a basic lack of cash also figure prominently as major preventatives.

Most lenders require that a borrower spend no more than 28 percent of his or her gross income on housing debt (monthly payments, interest, taxes, and insurance). Additionally, a cap of 36 percent of a borrower's gross monthly income should go for all monthly installment debt (credit cards, housing, auto payment, etc.).

Photo Credits from left to right: Michelle Christenson, Joshua Gray, Mark Goodrich, Joshua Gray, Mark Goodrich, Michelle Christenson.



1 d i n g Dream?

Federal Housing Authority, or FHA programs, serve first-time buyers who have lower annual incomes, make smaller down payments and purchase less expensive homes than those served by conventional lenders. In 1992, 44 percent of FHA borrowers had family incomes of less than \$35,000 — 16 percent below \$25,000.

In order to be selected for a Habitat House, at least one family member must hold a full-time job, the family must show need and demonstrate that they would be a good partner in the program. Families are selected by a committee and must meet certain financial and residency criteria; they also must contribute 500 hours of project "sweat equity."

The process begins with a sponsor, who provides half the cost of the house. The remainder comes from the new homeowner in the form of a 20-year no-interest mortgage loan. Materials are then donated, with labor provided by local volunteers.

For example, Simpson-Jones is a single mother, a student, and an Army veteran. Due to some credit problems caused by her divorce and her six years of active duty, Simpson-Jones was penalized.

After her divorce and increasing rent costs, she moved in with a roommate. That didn't work, and she moved her family to a shelter — where she read a family solicitation notice by Habitat for Humanity. She attended the explanatory session, and immediately filed an application. Simpson-Jones was contacted by telephone by her family liaison a month later, who notified her that she had been accepted.

"The first thing my girls said was 'what color will it be?' I told them whatever they wanted it to be. I wanted them to have a say in the house, so I let them choose the colors. That explains the pink and lavender."

Acceptance was only the initial phase of the process.

The Simpson-Joneses still had to wait for a housing site and a sponsor to help with the building costs.

Simpson-Jones had worried about approval, because of her full-time student and part-time work status.

The Texas Veterans Land Board helped out by providing Simpson-Jones with a zero percent interest loan. "The recipient of the no interest loan must be a 501C3 qualified veteran, who was anything other than dishonorably discharged," says David Gloier, deputy commissioner and executive secretary of the TVLA.

The Simpson-Jones house cements the second joint venture between the TVLB and Habitat for Humanity. Situated at 402 Kemp Street, the house backs up to protected land, including the Colorado River.

Simpson-Jones looks forward to taking her girls on nature hikes in the area. The land was donated to Habitat for Humanity by the City of Austin, providing the first in a row of three Habitat houses on Kemp Street.

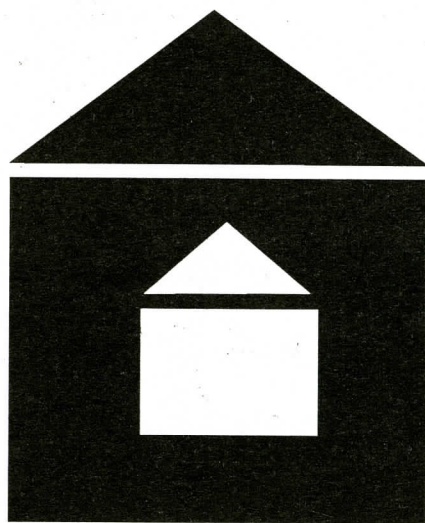
And for the first time in her life, Simpson-Jones is going to decorate.

"[Habitat for Humanity] let me pick out everything that is going into the house. I have a lot of framed prints that I have never been able to put up in an apartment," Simpson-Jones says.

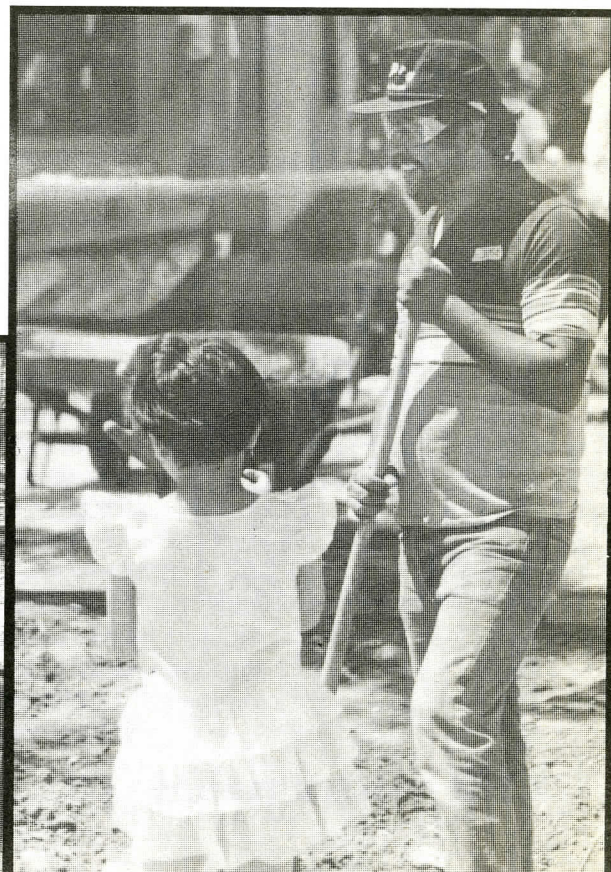
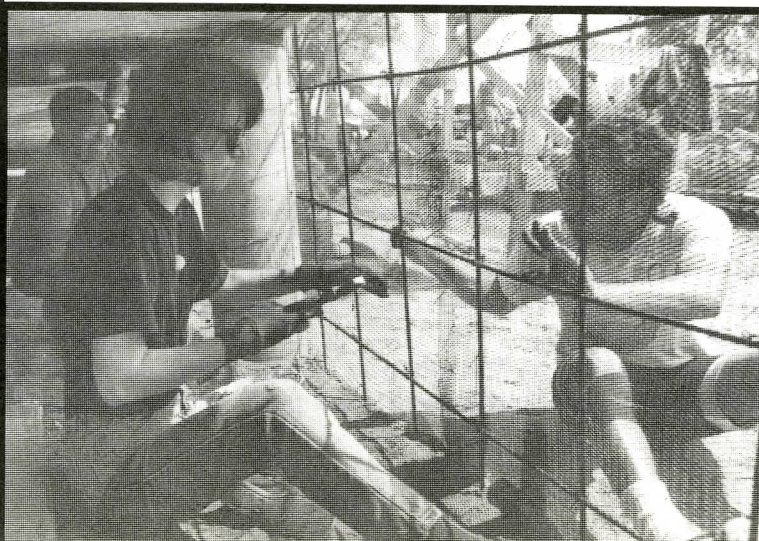
In her new home, she can depend upon her \$300 per month mortgage not continually increasing — unlike her apartment-dwelling past. Simpson Jones has also completed Habitat's 500 hours of sweat equity, working at the construction site and volunteering at Habitat's Rebuild store.

The best thing about owning her own home, she adds, stems from "being stable, having a sense of security about knowing that my rent won't go up."

After all, her version of the American Dream comes in pink and lavender.



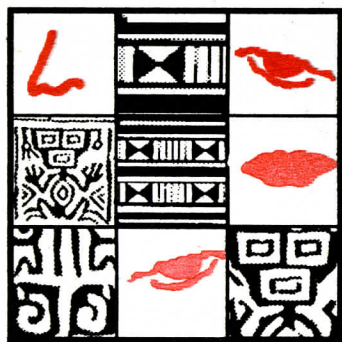
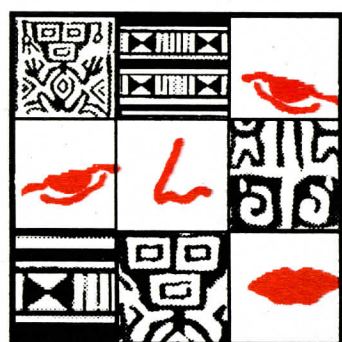
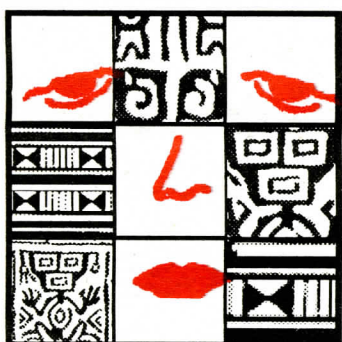
By Jeff Moffitt



B Y A N N A L I S A G A L V Á N

LIVING RACISM

Racism at large public research universities remains obscured when administrators, faculty, and most students live in just one perceptual bubble.



Veronica Brown, a business senior, returns home to Houston and tells her friends not to come to UT.

Although she earns high grades and leads several African American organizations, she feels alienated. Problems range from administrative insensitivity to the lack of multicultural education to the current attack on affirmative action. When Brown finds professors willing to help her, she believes they are limited by university bureaucracy, which she feels discourages working with minorities.

Her comments, echoed at many large public research universities nationwide, signal complex perceptions of student life breaking down along race and ethnicity lines.

"White students and white administrators live in a white bubble with many misconceptions about racial conditions," University of Florida graduate research professor and sociologist Joe Feagin says, who earlier spent 20 years on the UT faculty.

"We have not created on this campus an atmosphere where students feel they are going to be comfortable and treated right," adds Melvin Sikes, retired UT professor and clinical psychologist.

Minority students find a hostile environment when they come to UT and other traditionally white campuses, where they face not only administrative insensitivity, but also animosity from faculty and fellow students, says Feagin.

"For most minority students, and for many white students, this is a relatively cold, impersonal campus," says Sikes, "We do the appropriate welcoming, but you don't find the same warmth when you start getting into your classes."

Minority students often feel that too many of their white peers, professors, and administrators act as if racial

sensitivity ranks as an annoying triviality, the two write in their new book, *Living With Racism — The Black Middle-Class Experience*.

Last May, the Southern Education Foundation released "Redeeming the American Promise," a study which charged that Texas and 11 other states formerly administering segregated universities or colleges still have not achieved an "acceptable level of success in desegregating."

Issued on the anniversary of the landmark May 17, 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Brown vs. Board of Education*, which banned public school segregation, the Atlanta-based Foundation said that standardized testing scores, lack of financial aid and poor school preparation continue segregation in the 12 states — all of which still remain under federal court orders to desegregate.

The Foundation conducted an all-day hearing on February 10, 1994 at the Texas State Capitol — "Educational Opportunity and Post-Secondary Desegregation" — which elicited testimony on UT's racial campus climate from students and one faculty member.

Much of the student commentaries echoed the findings of Drs. Sikes and Feagin.

For example, many minority students say that when they do succeed, some white students openly discount their work as the result of reverse racism and affirmative action.

"African-Americans constantly deal with direct experiences with whites, whereas whites can live away from Blacks, or know Blacks only as acquaintances. This is why reverse racism is nonsense," asserts Feagin.

"To be racist, you have to participate in the system with the ideology of inferiority. Black people can have prejudices, but can't be racist," explains Feagin.

More than 40 percent of African-American youth, ages 15 - 24, have been victims of racial discrimination, according to a 1991 Hart Research Associates National Survey, among others.

Both scholars present a lengthy nationwide track record in race and ethnic relations.

Dr. Sikes, who received his Ph.D from the University of Chicago, retired from the UT Educational Psychology Dept. after a lengthy academic career, publishing *The Administration of Injustice* in 1975. He now coordinates the Austin Community Policing Program, while leading anti-racism workshops for schools, corporations and law enforcement agencies.

Dr. Feagin, a Harvard Ph.D in sociology, publishes widely on the same subjects; he received a Pulitzer Prize nomination for his 1973 work, *Ghetto Revolts*. Another book, *White Racism*, arrived this year, co-authored with Hernán Vera.

But white students and university staffs tend to deny that racial discrimination exists in the 1990s, explains Feagin. "Whites are illiterate on the subject of discrimination. Most whites just don't have a clue how massive the problem is."

Society tends to accept racism as a normal part of human existence, says Sikes, observing that some professors oppose diversity.

Multicultural education is one solution "to overcome the ignorance of most white professors," Feagin adds. "But, how do you expect a group of illiterate people to understand that change is necessary? That's the issue."

"When a Black student walks up to a group of white students, he's not sure what kind of reception he's going to get," says Sikes, adding that "the white student doesn't walk in uptight, but I walk in uptight because I'm Black."

"The expectations, though people might not admit it, are that Blacks are somewhat inferior," asserts Sikes. "We'll bring in a senior Black professor, but we really don't think he's as sharp as a junior white professor. We don't get immediate credibility."

During his professorship at UT, Sikes says faculty and administrators accepted him, but also labeled him a nonconformist, angry professor. "I never had the luxury of being without some defensive stance," he recalls.

"No matter how good you are, you still have to prove yourself to people who sometimes aren't as good as you are," he says.

Many minority professors work in a stressful environment, claims Feagin. "They feel embattled, marginalized, and not listened to."

"There are so few minority faculty in white institutions that minority professors are under great pressure to conform to white norms of doing things," asserts Feagin. "These norms are not even seen as white, but just as normal," explaining that minority faculty give up part of their culture when they conform. "They make sacrifices," he adds.

Feagin believes this forced conformity perpetuates monocultural thinking at traditionally white academic institutions, cheating students from experiencing other cultures.

Traditionally white universities also discourage minority faculty from conducting research on minority issues, says Sikes.

"I know of some faculty members who are told, 'you can do work that benefits minorities, but your rewards come from your research and your writing,' and the university will reward you for researching and writing things that make the institution look good," he argues.

Universities traditionally require research based on universal theories, which discourages minority faculty and graduate students from researching the African-American and Hispanic experience, says Sikes.

"Professors are rewarded for research on a priori theory, which appears to ignore questions relevant to the lives of minorities," maintains Sikes, arguing that most universities do not acknowledge the differences of minority populations.

"Until the worlds of minorities are seen as legitimate and acceptable, research based only on white norms will continue to interfere severely with the validity and reliability of minority research," charges Sikes.

He believes universities neglect the qualitative research that "taps the human experiences of minorities." This forces minority professors to choose between helping the minority community and performing traditional, promotion-earning, quantitative research.

Faculty members have the right to work for the promotions that they want and the minority community should not condemn them for doing so, cautions Sikes. But universities should also reward professors for minority community research, he says.

A minority professor interested in doing concrete things to uplift minority students may become ambivalent, says Sikes, because "he is questioned for doing the things he thinks education ought to do."

But the real obstacle for a minority professor may be getting hired.

Feagin believes that hiring committees are most comfortable with minorities who have assimilated into white culture. "We like to hire people who are like us," he says.

Search committees will not usually hire an outspoken African-American professor, because he or she makes white faculty uncomfortable, says Feagin. As a result, African-American student communities suffer a lack of interested faculty willing to help them.

This adversely affects minority students "because their own cultures and ways of thinking are not made a part of the institution," says Feagin. "The institution is monocultural, which makes it unfriendly at best," he says.

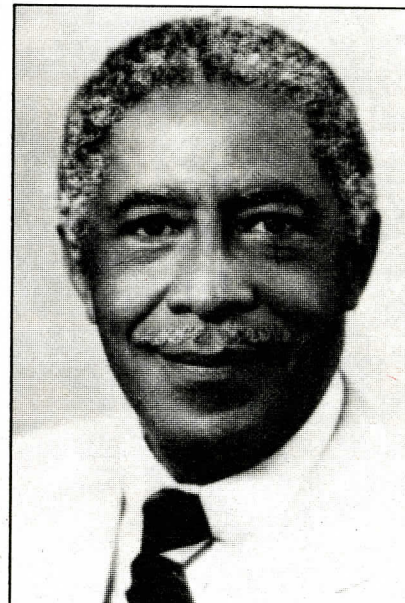
Minority students also face faculty who expect them to fail — affecting their grades and ability to learn because it undermines their self-confidence, says Sikes.

African-American and Latino students may not approach professors because "they don't know which professor will support them and which will hold a negative stereotype," he adds.

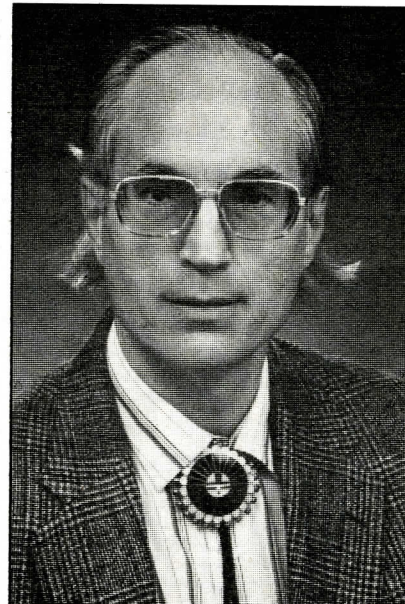
White faculty and students should learn about racism, because a society with strong internal tensions and oppressed social groups cannot survive, he adds.

"You should care (about understanding other cultures) if you want your children and grandchildren to live in a healthy society," says Feagin, pointing out that demographic trends indicate the national population will be majority African-American and Latino by 2050.

Both authors urge faculty and students to vigorously reeducate white Americans about insensitive attitudes. The most crucial step toward creating a friendlier campus environment, they write, requires white Americans "to admit the reality of current white racism."



Melvin P. Sikes



Joe R. Feagin

CHICANO... TEJANO... HISPANICO?

BY GINA CARDENAS

As a child, Pablo Garcia, a UT senior, remembers the dread he felt when he visited his grandparents. He shared their last name, but not their language.

His grandparents' life stories were subsequently lost to his consciousness, Garcia — not his real name — grew up in predominantly white schools and neighborhoods. As a result, he adopted the cultural beliefs of white America.

For him, confronting his Mexican roots meant accepting negative stereotypes, which he later internalized. Today, he remains ashamed of his mother, because she did not obtain an education and earns \$12,000 a year. His bronze skin and dark hair contrast sharply with his bleached beliefs.

"I absolutely consider myself to be culturally American," Garcia says. "There was never a point in my life where my culture was a necessity, only a hindrance," he adds.

Students of color at the University of Texas live daily with issues of ethnic identity. Their lives have been uprooted. In trying to put all the pieces of their existence into order, many gaps emerge. They face the challenge to find out who they are and how their lives fit into U.S. society.

For some students, coming to terms with their ethnic identity fosters pain. Living in a nation, in which it's good to be white, causes confusion. From children's dolls to lead roles in popular television and film, the spotlight belongs to the blond, blue-eyed Anglo.

"The dominant culture wants to say: 'let's not look at difference, Let's all be human beings.' Basically what they're saying is 'be like me,' which is oppressive and

maintains dominance. There's a paradox here. Only until you can be different, can you be the same," says Lillian Roybal Rose a national cross-cultural consultant, who recently conducted training sessions at UT.

Students harbor internal conflicts when they determine what to call themselves: Chicano, Hispanic, Tejano, Mexican American, or Latino. Adopting a label traps students into trying to out-Mexican each other. Names such

as vendidos (sell-outs), coconuts ("brown outside, white inside") and "radical Chicano" fly in both directions.

An example of opposing realities includes national authors' points of view about ethnic identity.

Rudy Acuña's *Occupied America* offers a radical point of view concerning the way Hispanic people are treated in the U.S. His book depicts Mexican Americans as a group of oppressed people, contrasting sharply with Richard Rodriguez' *Hunger for Memory*, which promotes assimilation into mainstream culture.

"We injure each other constantly by measuring each other in the group. We should distinguish our ethnic identity rather than define it. If we define it, then one of us won't measure up," explains Roybal Rose.

Skin color is another source of stress, say analysts. Acceptance into a culture, which promises a higher standard of living, seduces many light-skinned Mexican Americans into leaving their culture and history. Appearing physically white equals a ticket out of poverty.

Darker and more indigenous-looking people have a tougher time with mainstream social acceptance,

Skin color, gender, socioeconomic status and historical development contribute to a student's ethnic identity. And then come tough questions — prompting personal quests to discover cultural roots.

explains Manuel Ramirez, a UT psychology professor.

Most Mexican-Americans learn intra-ethnic discrimination in their homes, says Ramirez. For example, popular celluloid culture offers the comedic portrait of La India Maria, a Mexican Indian woman who embodies negative stereotypes against indigenous peasants in Mexico. People find humor in the character's ignorance and opposition to modern society.

"This is a big secret we don't talk about. The important thing to remember is that we are not being racist against each other. It's not racism, it's the result of racism," says Roybal Rose.

Mexican-Americans of darker skin color experience more internalized oppression — accepting white society's oppressive perspectives — which cause feelings of inferiority and depression, says Ramirez.

Ramirez said it was easier for him to grow up and become integrated in this society because his skin was lighter. He also mentioned that before the civil rights movement, the majority of Chicanos or Chicanas who had PhD's in psychology had an Anglo appearance.

Gender contributes to the identity dilemma. Women and men have different expectations within traditional Mexican-American culture, say analysts. Women are encouraged to be subservient and quiet. Men are encouraged to succeed, and adopt powerful leadership positions.

"You're made to feel shitty if you're a girl when you're growing up. Boys are favored, not only in the family but in the classroom. In the classroom their voices are heard while the voice of la mujer is drowned out," says Gloria Anzaldua, a nationally acclaimed feminist Chicana author and scholar.

Tired of the deeply-seeded cultural rules, which say women are secondary to men, many Mexican American women are dating outside their race.

"A lot of minority women feel minority men are too authoritarian. We are too authoritarian," says Ramirez.

"Women feel their personal growth is inhibited," he continues.

Historical development, or the family and neighborhood a student grew up in, strongly determines their ethnic philosophies and identities. Their families set the road map of their cultural identity.

A student growing up in Brownsville, Texas, where the majority of the people are traditional Mexican-Americans, will have a completely different experience compared to a student who was raised in white, suburban Bastrop.

A typical family in Brownsville includes both parents, children and often, grandparents. Living in a border area — with Matamoros, Mexico a few minutes away — Spanish-speaking Mexican-Americans are the majority. "I never realized I was minority until I came to UT," say many Brownsville students.

Mexican-American children growing up in an area like Bastrop grasp mainstream American culture. In order to better function in their environment, they adapt to establishment norms. Spanish has no value because

it's not needed to communicate. They develop a sense of community with Anglo culture. When faced with claiming an ethnic identity, they encounter confusion.

Skin color, gender, socio-economic status and historical development contribute to a student's ethnic philosophy. "Who am I?" resonates through the minds of many embarking on their personal quest to discover their cultural roots. But the road to self-discovery is not easy. Identity conflicts arise.

"I've been trying to figure out who I am for the last 23 years. I thought I was white when I was young, and was later made to feel inferior and inadequate by my white, wealthy friends," says Marisol Espinosa, a journalism senior.

Novelist Anzaldua says that she has gone through different cycles of identity crisis.

"I continue to have them. Identity is not fixed, it's ever-changing and that's where the crisis comes in. You have to come to terms with that change," Anzaldua says.

Ramirez thinks that having an identity crisis is part of an Anglo myth, which stereotypes minorities as inadequate.

"It's primarily an Anglo myth directed towards minorities, who were thought to have an identity crisis. It's being in this oppressive environment which causes stress. If your culture isn't valued, if who you are isn't valued, then it will inhibit growth," he adds.

Roybal Rose adopted a study as part of her cultural programs, which illustrates the stages of ethnic identity. Each stage represents many characteristics of ethnic students on campus.

1. Ethnic Psychological Captivity: absorb negative stereotypes, reject ethnicity, strive to become highly culturally assimilated.

2. Ethnic Encapsulation: ethnic converts, separatists, strongly reject individuals who are assimilated into mainstream culture.

3. Ethnic Identity Clarification: students understand both the positive and negative attributes of ethnic groups, learn self-acceptance, genuine pride.

4. Bioethnicity: can function in their culture and also in mainstream.

5. Multiethnicity and

Reflective Nationalism: individual functions within several ethnic cultures within his or her nation.

6. Globalism and Global Competency: individual functions within ethnic cultures of his or her nation, as well as cultures in other parts of the world.

Ramirez emphasizes that students need to be aware of the issues surrounding their lives — understanding that their difference is not the source of the problem, but rather, the oppressive environment in which they live. Students should be made aware of their culture and values and how these have affected their persona and then make the conscious choice to remain oblivious to their culture or embrace it.

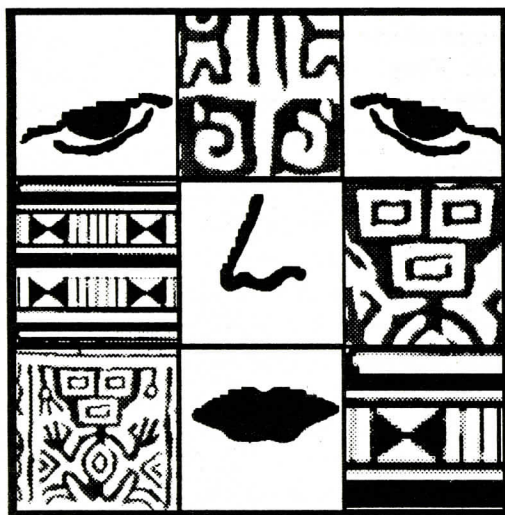
"As long as you continue going along not knowing who you are, you will be buffeted by the winds of life. You won't feel like you're the master of your destiny," Ramirez says.

Many students have developed an ethnic identity consciousness. For the first time they are questioning their roles in society and are faced with the issue of cultural loyalty: Anglo, Mexican-American, or both. Several factors contribute to a student's ethnic philosophy: skin color, socio-economic status and family environment.



DISCOVERING MY CULTURE, MY HISTORY...

By Veronica Briseño



It was a cold, wet and miserable day...

I was standing in West mall listening to a young conservative's angry words in celebration of Texas's independence.

"Go home!" he said with hatred and ignorance. I couldn't believe my ears. I was stunned because his hatred was directed to the Mexican-American race and me. This is my home, I wanted to shout, but I couldn't because his group

had reserved the mall and vocal opponents to their views were asked to leave.

Before coming to the University of Texas, I had never experienced this kind of racism. I grew up in San Antonio, where over 50 percent of the population is Hispanic. But my Northeast neighborhood represents the white middle class — Hispanics are a minority there, But I never felt any different than anyone else.

I was always aware of my ethnicity, I was never ashamed of it, but I was never interested in it either.

I constantly blew off my father when he taught me about Mexican American traditions. I covered my ears when he put on Spanish music and I would roll my eyes when he explained to me the importance of learning the Spanish language. Now I'm exploring all of these things that I once despised.

Once I came to UT, I wanted to learn about my culture. UT is an enormous campus with much diversity. Many students, in order to avoid getting lost in the crowd, look for an identity that separates them from others. For me, that identity has been my ethnicity.

"Because UT is so big, you look for something that is familiar, such as Mexicanos speaking Spanish, and listening to Tejano music because that was something we had in common," Leslie Carrasco, a junior government major, says. "Even though we don't know each other and we're from all parts of Texas or all parts of the United States, we have that common bond because we are Mexican and we share that culture. You look for the similar; you look for someone or something that is like you (at UT) so that you don't feel as alienated."

To explore my ethnicity I have done several things. One of the most apparent changes stems from my expanded taste in music. I once cringed at Spanish on the air, but now I listen to Tejano, the genre which incorporates traditional Mexican music, country and Spanish words.

This genre of music is one of the ways that

Hispanics have used to unite. Tejano has become very popular in the past few years.

People of all races were surprised at the reaction of Latinos to Tejano star Selena's death on March 31, 1995.

Thousands of fans mourned her death by participating in candlelight vigils, calling into local Tejano stations to share their feelings and even making a trip to her hometown of Corpus Christi to attend the memorial service. Many people had not even heard of the young singer, and I believe they were shocked at the Hispanic community's unity in their sadness.

I have also done other things to participate in my heritage. I enjoy going to bilingual plays at the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center in San Antonio, which explores Hispanic issues today, Latino cultural traditions and different Latino group lifestyles.

One of the plays brought to life the legend of El Cucui, a bogey man or evil spirit, set in contemporary time on the West Side of San Antonio (a predominately Mexican American neighborhood). El Cucui would visit an old man, Papi Tres, and threaten to take his spirit. After the play, my mom told me stories that she used to hear when she was little about El Cucui and how he would come for you in the night.

Another play I saw showed the lives of five undocumented workers in a Los Angeles sweat shop, or garment factory. The women had just received amnesty as a result of 1986 legislation, which naturalized Mexicans who could prove U.S. residency and employment during documented periods of time.

From this play I learned about undocumented workers and their dreams, something I have never experienced. Even though they were now citizens, they were constantly looking over their shoulders in fear of La Migra, or the Border Patrol. However, they also planned on staying and succeeding in the U.S. One of the women had a dream of opening a boutique to sell her fashion designs, another hoped to attend New York University and become a writer.

Mexican American traditions also play an important part in the Hispanic culture. After seeing Las Tamaleras, a play about three Hispanic women who get together to make tamales for the first time, I asked my grandmother and mom why we didn't make tamales anymore. It's customary for Mexican American women to get together before Christmas and make tamales — a time-consuming activity passed by sharing gossip.

One of the best ways to participate in my cul-



ture comes from learning the language. Many Mexican Americans, especially those who grow up in South Texas, are brought up speaking Spanish; however, I was not. Now I see the importance of being bilingual.

I wish I had learned the language when I was younger, but it was not as important to me. In high school, Spanish was just a foreign language. It fulfilled the requirement; but now I am determined to learn for my own benefit.

Other UT Hispanic students choose to join Hispanic-based organizations, creating yet another network of students who have their ethnicity in common. A place to belong is important on a large campus. Hispanic organizations also promote and display Hispanic culture. UT Hispanic Journalists sold tamales last year as a fund raiser. Other groups such as LULAC have sponsored Diez y Seis de Septiembre celebrations, celebrated Mexico's independence, and held other social gatherings to highlight Mexican American culture.

Hispanic sororities and fraternities, such as Phi Kappa Theta and Sigma Lambda Gamma, are like any other sorority or fraternity, except that they promote the Hispanic culture.

"When I first arrived here the Phi Kapps were known as coconuts, I think that's changed a lot," says Gregorio Lopez, a UT journalism student who believes there has been substantial change. "Coconuts meaning brown on the outside and white on the inside; they were people who denied their heritage or their culture."

For example, he says the Phi Kappa Theta fraternity recently attended the screening of Hector Galan's documentary about Tejano music, *Songs of the Homeland*. "I've seen that more of the people who have joined in recent years are more aware of who they are and where they come from. They don't try to deny it."

"Before I wasn't sure what my culture meant to me. It is who I am, and it makes me unique from everyone else."

I have not only learned about my heritage from my family, I have taken classes focusing upon Mexican American politics and history. Many people assume that Hispanics naturally know about these subjects, but that is usually not the case.

These classes taught me about the injustices that have hurt Hispanics in the past, and the fighting that Chicanos had to do to get past these injustices. I have learned a different version of the Alamo, which does not symbolize pride and freedom to everyone.

The freedom that Texans envisioned when they fought for the Alamo did not include freedom

for Mexicans and Blacks. One of the causes, and perhaps the main cause, of Texas's fight for independence was that Texans wanted to have slaves, but the Mexican government would not allow it.

Americans who settled in Texas had to abide by three Mexican government mandates. First, they had to become Mexican citizens. Second, they had to become Catholic and third, the slave trade was not allowed. The first two requirements were easily met, but the third one was hard for Texans; they decided that they needed their own republic.

"The history I learned when I was growing up was one-sided," Carrasco says, who has also taken classes in Mexican American Studies. "We were taught what 'they' wanted us to know — 'they' meaning Anglos who wrote the books."

These courses also teach about the equality battles Mexican Americans endured after Texas became part of the United States. Blacks were not the only people who were segregated. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Mexicans were not allowed in many public places. They were forced to attend schools separate from Anglos.

Even up until World War II, Hispanics suffered discrimination. Felix Longoria, a WWII soldier who died in combat, was denied burial services by the only funeral home in his South Texas hometown of Three Rivers because of his ethnicity.

I initiated these changes, but they surprised my family. I believe, though, that a person's culture provides strong bonds within the family. It has brought me even closer to my family to talk about their experiences as Mexican Americans at different points in history.

They also enjoy discussing our traditions and practices. My mom and my grandma both claim they thought they never would see the day when I asked for a molcajete, a Mexican cooking tool used mainly for grinding spices.

Before I wasn't sure what my culture meant to me. Now it means many things. It is who I am, and it makes me unique from everyone else. The experience I have had at UT — learning about my ethnicity — has made me stronger and more knowledgeable.

Racism lives everywhere; UT is no exception. Blatant, racist portrayals such as last March's scene on the West Mall are rare.

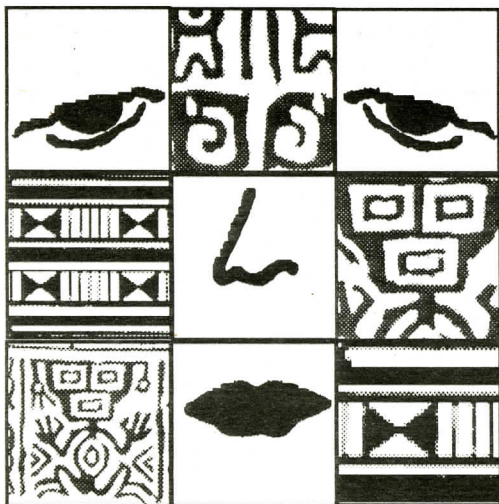
I was disgusted. I wanted to cry, to scream, to stand in their faces and let them know that I did not intend to leave. I even began to direct my anger at all Anglo Americans. But then I realized, the majority of Anglos don't feel the same. I knew that these people did not know who I was, and that they were ignorant of my heritage.

They were also ignorant of the fact that both Latinos and Anglos have progressed since the days of the Alamo, and that we could respect and learn from each others' cultures. I knew then that they did not deserve a response from me.

So I didn't give them one.

REALITY UNDER THE ROTUNDA

By Judith E. Moreno



Ideal. An ideal society is what I wish for. Sure, I realize it will not happen, but call me a dreamer.

I believe in justice. I always believe that it will prevail. My life has been good and I want it to be that way for others.

I want equality for all. I want to believe that our government can give everyone fair treatment.

A young woman with basically very little experience in life, I decided to give the world of politics a try. I wanted to see for myself how our government works and if it truly works for the people.

It was not only that, but the love I felt for it while on the outside looking in.

The whole debate scene has always captured my attention. It is two people fighting for what they think is right. Or it can be many groups trying to obtain what they feel is the best, the most fair result, which provides one reason why politics fascinates me.

There is nothing that gives me a greater rush than talking to someone about a particular issue and finding out they are on the other side.

This gives me an opportunity to share my thoughts on the subject with them. And it also provides me with a chance to hear their side and see if they have any valid points.

I make sure to always listen to both sides of an issue. It is extremely important to be open-minded in a world where one person's decision can affect numerous lives.

I know that I have a belief in fair treatment and strong morals because of my parents.

They have always encouraged me to believe in myself and go after my dreams. When I was a little girl, my parents left the decision up to me as to whether I should attend a Vanguard elementary school.

I remember at the time I felt they should have helped me make the decision, since they were my parents and I was only eight years old. But my father told me that the choice I made would only affect my life.

This is why I learned to give others the respect they deserve, because of my parents. They respect my decisions, because they have confidence in me.

I do remember times when my parents

and I did not exactly see eye-to-eye, but they would hear my side. Of course, it was not always willingly, but the important thing is that I got to express my side of the story to them.

As far as the rest of my school years, I always focused on attending college.

An education is the one thing that both of my parents have always encouraged us to obtain. And I feel that my education, along with my Mexican upbringing, plays a large part of who I am today.

Before arriving at the University of Texas, I had never felt discrimination.

If a person outside of my race was rude to me when I was growing up in Houston, I simply thought it was because he/she was rude. I gave no thought to the idea that maybe they acted that way towards me because I am a Mexican American woman.

My desire to learn more about my Mexican heritage began to grow while attending college, because for the first time in my life I was made to feel different because of my race.

I had to understand why.

My parents were born and raised in Mexico and moved to Houston after they married. We visited Mexico frequently, and I speak Spanish fluently. I believed that I knew all about my culture.

What I did not realize is that there was another side that I had missed.

I only knew the Mexican side, but knew nothing of Mexican American history.

This led me to begin taking courses in the Center for Mexican American Studies at UT.

I not only became aware of so many of the injustices that Mexican Americans have been subjected to, but I felt their pain. This made my interest in government grow even more.

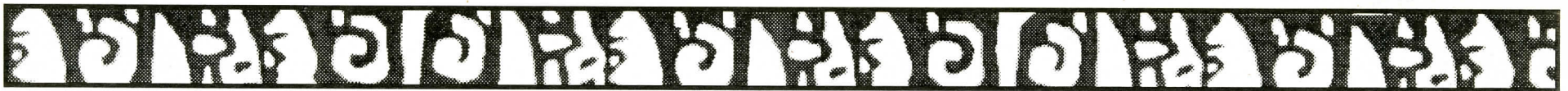
I want to find a way to make a difference in people's lives. I want to open some eyes and expose them to the beauty of diversity.

So, I obtained an internship working at the District Office of a State Representative from Houston. I was surprised at how easy it was. I simply called the Representative's Capitol Office asking if they needed an intern for the summer.

Next thing I knew, I had an internship lined up the summer after my first year in college.

Needless to say, I learned many things that summer. I worked for him the next two





"I am both a Mexican American and a female, so I feel very good knowing that I am there taking part in the process, adding to our numbers."

years during my semester breaks.

He became a Senator last January, and I am currently interning at his Capitol Office.

But no matter how much I thought I had learned the past two years in the District Office, it in no way prepared me for this semester.

The Legislative Session is an entirely new ballgame, with many of the same rules, but the action moves at a much faster pace.

The future of the State of Texas for the next two years gets decided during the five months of session (January-May). And it is very exciting to join the center of the action, where bills become laws and lives can change forever.

Days go by like minutes and I often find myself wishing that there were more hours in the day. I am learning everything about our state government. Fortunately, my fellow staff members have been there for me since day one, showing me the ropes.

What I find most uplifting, though, stems from the tremendous support that I receive from other Mexican American women, who are proven veterans of the political world.

Without necessarily voicing their feelings, I can feel them genuinely taking an interest and encouraging me to learn, to obtain a degree and continue pushing forward.

They have already accomplished many goals themselves, but each new generation increases past gains. Their encouragement makes me feel even better about getting involved in this environment, because I know that they are behind me. We can have the success we desire with the support of our people.

The learning process is continuous.

Lobbyists come in and out of the office all day, talking about different issues. They either try to get the Senator to carry their legislation, or to oppose bills they feel are not in their clients' best interest.

But lobbyists can be quite helpful. They do most of the research on issues, saving staff members lots of time. This process also carries its dangers. A lobbyist may not

necessarily lie to me, but could only give out the information he/she wants me to have, omitting critically important facts.

This is why a Senator's and Representative's staff commits to their own research. We know that one cannot trust too much in this business.

I must admit that I have seen and heard many things that make me think, "Judith, why in the world do you want to be a part of this," but then I realize something.

The only way to make a difference is to make yourself a part of the process. Taking myself out of politics will not accomplish anything for me. It will only make the job that much easier for those trying to pass legislation against what I believe.

I always keep in mind what my father told me: "Hijita, just always keep your morals and your integrity and you'll be all right. Don't do anything to compromise those two things."

And I realize that he is right. The world of politics is not as bad as people make it out to be.

There are legislators, who try to pass some scary legislation that I do not agree with, but I think that some of them truly believe in what they are doing. After all, the people of Texas elected them to serve as their representatives in our state government.

But if I do not agree with their ideas, I need to make myself be heard. Every single person can and should be represented at the Capitol.

However, it is a world dominated by men. I can walk through the Capitol and see one female for every 15 males.

This is another reason to get involved. Minorities need the representation. I am both a Mexican American and a female, so I feel very good knowing that I am part of the process, adding to our numbers.

All we have to do is get involved and make our ideas be known. The importance of getting involved cannot be stressed enough.

At the end of this internship I will leave with some pleasantly surprising findings and some not-so-pleasant ones, but I will be a better person because of them.

I will know that the system is not perfect and there are many, many things that need to be changed. But it will never happen if people do not care to make themselves heard.

The belief that one voice will not make a difference is not right, either. One person can bring a friend, and that friend can bring a friend.

And then, and only then, will our voices be heard. Things will start to change.

RACE RELATIONS AT UT

“HIGHER LEARNING”

Instead of integration into “mainstream” UT, Blacks and other minority students prefer to form a separate community

BY ROBIN WILSON

“About ten of us friends from Preview were on our way to Subway to get something to eat. We were trying to do the ‘happy-go-lucky’ student thing,” recalls Typhannie Beasley, a pharmacy senior at the University of Texas at Austin.

“We were having a good time, and this blue car from out of nowhere came flying down the street and yelled ‘Niggers! Go home, niggers!’ out the window at us. That was very offensive because we were minding our business. It’s not like we were dressed like ‘Crips’ or anything like that. It was obvious that we were UT students, but it didn’t matter.

“Some people got upset, some people were just really angry, some people were just sad, and some people just said, ‘Oh well, that’s a part of life.’ A few more incidents like that happened to some other people, and some of them left and transferred out to other schools. It’s interesting how one incident can shape your next three or four years at the University,” says Beasley.

Rhonda Thomas [not her real name], a journalism junior, remembers when she decorated the outside of her door in Jester Dormitory for Black History Month.

“I had red, black, and green streamers around the door, pictures from magazines, and a lot of uplifting poetry. Everyone would stop to read my door, and it was right next to the resident assistant’s room.

“One day as I was putting my key into the door, I noticed that someone had taped a pornographic picture of penises and men being sodomized directly over my picture of Malcolm X. It was calculated because they had the picture perfectly lined up over mine with poster adhesive tabs that are impossible to get off.

“Everyone on the hall swore that they didn’t know anything about it. But I lived right next to the RA! I was so angry that I saw fire, and it was difficult to keep that from distracting me for the rest of the week,” says Thomas.

The approximately 1,800 African Americans and 6,000 Latinos who attend UT exist as islands within the 48,000 total population. African Americans barely comprise four percent, but most have complaints of racist, sometimes hostile attitudes and insensitivity which they believe they should not have to tolerate.

Instead of integrating into “mainstream” UT, African Americans and other minority students prefer to form a separate community.

Many factors influence the racial and ethnic segregation that exists at UT — society’s denial that discrimina-

tion against minorities still prevails, UT’s ambition to become a premier research university, UT’s long history of prejudice and insensitivity with minorities, misconceptions and stereotypes, high minority student attrition rates, and a Washington, D.C. political climate against affirmative action.

Many whites believe discrimination no longer represents a serious problem. A new credo symbolizes the African American middle class as a successful product of equal opportunity and affirmative action, thus immune to racism, says Joe Feagin and Melvin Sikes, co-authors of *Living with Racism, the Black Middle Class Experience*.

However, a 1990 national survey of the University of Chicago National Opinion Research Center reported that “53 percent of non Blacks believe that African-Americans are less intelligent than whites.”

African American and Latino students complain that a “covert” form of racism exists on campus — often difficult to counteract because of fear of being called paranoid or hypersensitive.

“I would say that on the surface that you don’t see it, that it’s not there. But this is America, and there’s no way that it’s not here because it’s embedded in our fabric,” says Brenda Burt, the newly appointed Equity and Diversity Administrator, a position formerly known as Race Relations Counselor.

The size of the University and its emphasis on research instead of student affairs only increases alienation, say students Beasley and Suneese Haywood, fifth year government and sociology seniors.

Undergraduate students also have few graduate and faculty mentors and role models. Out of the 2,342 teaching faculty members, 88.7 percent are white, 4 percent are Latino, and 2.3 percent are African American.

Minority students need role models and mentors, such as accessible faculty and graduate students. “I’m a fifth year student here, and I’ve had only one African American professor. I think that’s ridiculous,” Haywood laments.

“I realize that we are the minority of the minorities here, and yet I don’t know of that many Hispanic professors either. And I think it makes a difference in a minority student’s comfort and how welcome they feel here. Especially when you first start here, because you’re under the impression that you’re just a number and that you don’t really matter,” says Haywood.

“If I see you, then I know that I, too, can be,” Burt says. “So it’s really important that the role models be

there. And the perception of the person teaching is coming from their background, so it's important to see yourself reflected [in the faculty]."

UT's history of prejudice and insensitivity with minority students also poses problems.

Many politically and historically versed minority students are aware of past schisms such as Hemann Sweat, an African American man who sued the university in 1952 for the right to attend the UT law school (when he was forced to attend Texas Southern University), and the FIJI house incident, where the slur "nigger" was spray painted across a sledgehammer car.

Outward, blatant displays of racism occur infrequently, but all of the above factors — combined with current right-wing conservative politics and the attack on minority programs — create a racially tense social climate.

Little social interaction between minorities and whites outside of the classroom happens, and sometimes the segregation can reach extremes, says Haywood. When she moved into the Contessa dormitory her first year, her assigned roommate never appeared. Some time later, she learned that her roommate did arrive, but when she found out Haywood was Black, she requested a room to herself.

"I think that UT is a really Old South school," Haywood says, "and a lot of people come here with preconceived notions and ideas [about minorities], and they act upon those once they get here. As much as UT promotes educational diversity, it is still very segregated. The Blacks are with the Blacks; the whites are with the whites. I think that's the reason for the disharmony, and it perpetuates it."

Misconceptions about African American students worry Beasley.

"I know a lot of people who think that not only are [Black students] all here on scholarship, but that we're all on financial aid and that we're all from the ghetto; and we don't deserve to be here because just last year we were 'hoods' out in the streets, and now we're at their prestigious university. But I just found out myself that about a third of the Blacks that go to UT are very well-off."

High attrition rates — students dismissed, dropped out or transferred — reinforce the sense of alienation among minority students. Most Blacks and Latinos see many of their peers "disappear" by either dismissal, dropping out, or transferring.

The completion rate for whites is 34 percent, 13 percent for African Americans, and 18 percent for Latinos. However, the attrition rate for African Americans is 30 percent after two years.

The goal of graduation becomes hazy and less and less clear for students who do not see many people around or ahead of them achieving the same goal.

"I had taken a year off of school, and when I came back I was surprised at the number of people that I had known who dropped out or left for some reason or

another," Thomas says. "And everyone seemed surprised to see me back, even though I never said I wouldn't. You just get used to there being so many casualties that it's a miracle when someone comes back."

UT does implement retention programs, such as SHARE, Success, and Preview, but many minorities believe UT does not aggressively recruit and keep minority students. Many also believe that aside from UT's academic reputation, African Americans and Latinos have little incentive for students to stay at what many deem a historically racist institution. The statues of Confederate leaders Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis in the South Mall are tangible reminders of UT's past.

To many minority students, *The Daily Texan* serves as another social barometer. The newspaper has a pattern of printing racist and discriminatory political cartoons. One recent cartoon depicted a white employer telling another white man that he was not cast as JFK for a movie because of affirmative action, while the caricatured and less qualified Black woman sitting beside him received the role.

In addition to these alienating factors, the current political climate against affirmative action increases tension and hostility.

"There is indeed a war against affirmative action," George Curry, editor-in-chief of *Emerge magazine*, said at a forum held at UT last April.

Instead of using the Old South methods of intimidation like racial slurs and blatant discrimination — although they still occur in various degrees — the South has become "more clever" with discrimination through political agendas, said Curry. There are attacks on minority scholarships and affirmative

action that a large number of African- and Latino/a-American students rely on to attend the university.

No immediate solutions to change the racial tension on campus exist. The Equity and Diversity Administrator will try to change and cope with the intolerance that exists on campus. The position answers to the Dean of Students and the duties are designed by students who formed a panel after former Race Relations Counselor, Curtis Polk, resigned last semester.

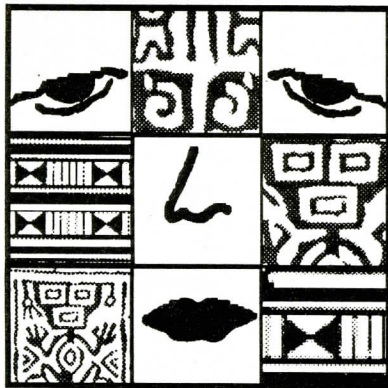
Brenda Burt will mediate disputes patterned after the former counselor approach, but her position will focus on programming. She will also program and advise the Minority Information Center.

Burt's task won't be easy in the years to come.

"Education is the solution," she says. "Student-to-student communication can help alleviate and dispel myths or stereotypes. Join me this fall to plan workshops and forums . . . to help each other to learn and appreciate the value of diversity."



Brenda Burt By Michelle Christenson



INTERRACIAL

**By
Shilpa
Bakre**

The happy couple, Joe and Prithi, strolls through the mall, dodging weekend crowds. Neither really is shopping, they are too engrossed with their own intense feelings.

Suddenly, someone grabs her arm and she turns to confront the disapproving face of her father. With her pulse racing she says "Wait daddy I can explain . . .," but it's too late — they had been discovered.

Prithi, whose family originally came from New Delhi, was immediately found guilty throughout her expatriate Indian community. She had dated outside of her own Indian race.

Analysts are increasingly studying cross-cultural relationships in America's flourishing, diverse society. No longer, they say, is conflict focused on black and white dating. It encompasses all races.

At UT, in the fall semester 1994, out of an undergraduate enrollment of 34,746, there were 3,896 Asians — comprising 11.3 percent of the total undergraduate population at UT, according to the Office of Admissions Research.

With the number of minorities growing, interracial relationships occur more and more commonly in a rapidly changing society.

An interracial relationship encompasses individuals who date outside their particular race, including those in which clear visual differences are not immediately evident, say analysts. Pressures from families, peers, and especially the general society weigh heavily on the consciences of all in the dating game.

For example, socialization becomes very tense in most Asian Indian homes. Children

grow up with the notion that they must date and eventually marry within their own race or suffer the consequences, which vary from self-imposed guilt to denial of family relations with the "guilty" child.

The child can eventually be ostracized.

After Prithi's shock meeting with her father at the mall, she believed that she was at fault for having such feelings. In the end, Prithi's parents prohibited any further contact with her boyfriend.

Experts say, however, that another possible censure stems from other Indians with whom her family socializes. Often, parents may understand and accept their children's actions but are fearful of what others in their social circles might say or think. This nationwide "grapevine" motivates parents to make harsh judgments — all done for the sake of protecting family reputation.

Can these intense family pressures be overcome, without a permanent break?

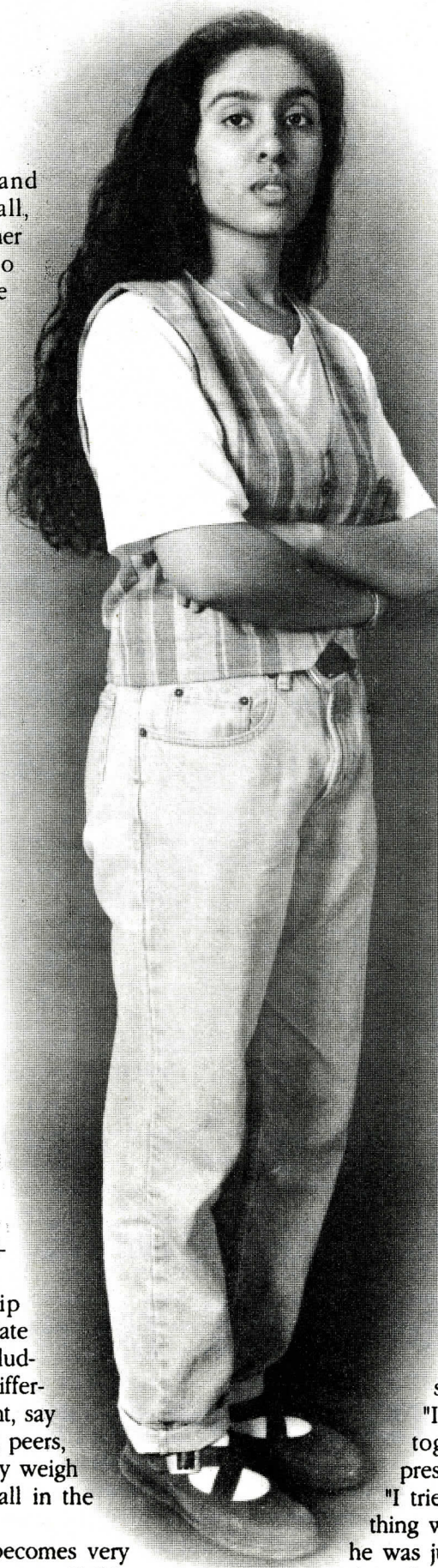
"I felt like I was never good enough," says Maria Rodriguez, a UT junior who dated an Indian for more than two years. The couple recently broke up.

The boyfriend's mother constantly reminded him that Maria was "not the one . . . don't get involved with her, she's not right."

From the beginning, the relationship endured formidable difficulties.

"I never enjoyed the time we shared together. I felt like we were always pressured about the future," recalls Maria.

"I tried to ignore it, but it seemed everything we talked about was time. I felt like he was just passing the time. This made me feel inadequate, and like I was being used, I



Prithi by Michelle Christenson

DATING

CONFLICT BETWEEN RACES EXPANDS BEYOND

BLACK WHITE

STEREOTYPES

guess I knew that we were just wasting our time."

She adds: "A part of me will always love him, but a part of me will always hate what I had to go through to be with him."

As with any culture, Asian Internationals (ASs) and Asian Americans (AAs) confront adjustment difficulties with dominant U.S. white society.

"Few, if any Indian immigrants indicated that they were trying to assimilate into American culture," says a recent study conducted by Dr. Sheila Mehta, psychology professor at The University of Connecticut. "Most indicated that they were remaining Indian in their cultural orientation or attempting to integrate aspects of American and Indian cultures."

Those who leaned toward biculturalism appeared to be healthier psychologically than those who tried to separate themselves from American culture, adds Mehta.

But another source of conflict between Asian Indian Americans and Euro-Americans stemmed from personal openness. Indian culture utilizes unspoken understanding, say analysts. In most strict Indian families, it is understood that marrying within the race is looked upon more favorably than marrying interracially.

Donna Cruz, a Filipino sophomore biology major, has been dating an Asian Indian for more than two years now, but says it has not been easy. They got together while still in high school, continuing their relationship through college.

Cruz says that race did not appear until after high school graduation. "When we got together, I didn't really even think about us being two different races, I just thought of us as two different people who liked



each other and wanted to make it work," she says.

College, however, increased her awareness. She spent more time with Indian students, who regarded her as dating across cultural lines. "The Indians put more pressure on the relationship; they brought out things that I refused to see," she says.

Often, Cruz was asked by other Indians whether she had met her boyfriend's parents. Inevitably, she replied, "no."

"Most parents of Indian children want their children to just finish school and not look at girls at all. Basically, to have tunnel vision and not be tempted. . . then one day after graduation, after they are all settled down, 'bam!' then they can have a family," she says.

Cruz echoes that parents are afraid of what family friends and the larger Asian Indian community will say about dating interracially.

Predictably, she believes that their problems as a couple would not exist if she was Indian. "It seems that his mother always has good things to say about other girls, who are Indian — just not me. I know that I would have things a lot easier if I was Indian.

"I think that he feels bad that he can't bring me home; he has to lie a lot about his whereabouts. Every once in awhile he gets caught in a lie, which puts added stress on the relationship . . . because then he blames me. Because if it weren't for me, he wouldn't be in this situation."

Battling for Literacy in a Global Economy?

**Can Texas businesses
compete globally when
28 percent of Texas
adults cannot complete a
job application?**

By Anne Marie Moss

Amidst a continuous mechanical hum, the XeTel corporation exudes high-tech global competitiveness: busy lab-coated technicians, complex electronic machinery — and an adult basic literacy program.

"Today, we will discuss making and following written instructions," announces Sara Heydon, a workplace literacy instructor to her class of five. For the next hour-and-a-half, the staffers focus on mandatory English as a Second Language (ESL), designed for 5th through 10th grade proficiency levels.

Wearing reading glasses rimmed with protective goggle-like plastic, a woman with furrowed brow forms her words slowly, "Draw a square inside a circle." She stops reading and glances quizzically at Heydon. Her XeTel name tag reads "Hong."

"That's right," responds Heydon, nodding encouragingly. "Now can you draw that on your paper?" she asks, pointing to a worksheet example. Two students discuss the request in Vietnamese before beginning.

Besides beginning English speakers, the XeTel literacy program places employees in "Adult Basic Education" classes, below 5th grade proficiency levels, and

"Competitive Edge" classes, 5th through 10th grade levels. Once in the classroom, concentration switches from electronic manufacturing to precise vowel sounds.

Functional illiteracy exists not only in unemployment lines and Texas' burgeoning prison system, but in high-tech industrial environments of the 90s. Not merely a gateway to personal growth and empowerment — literacy guarantees paycheck security.

Like thousands of U.S. adult learners, Heydon's students do not attend class purely for self enhancement.

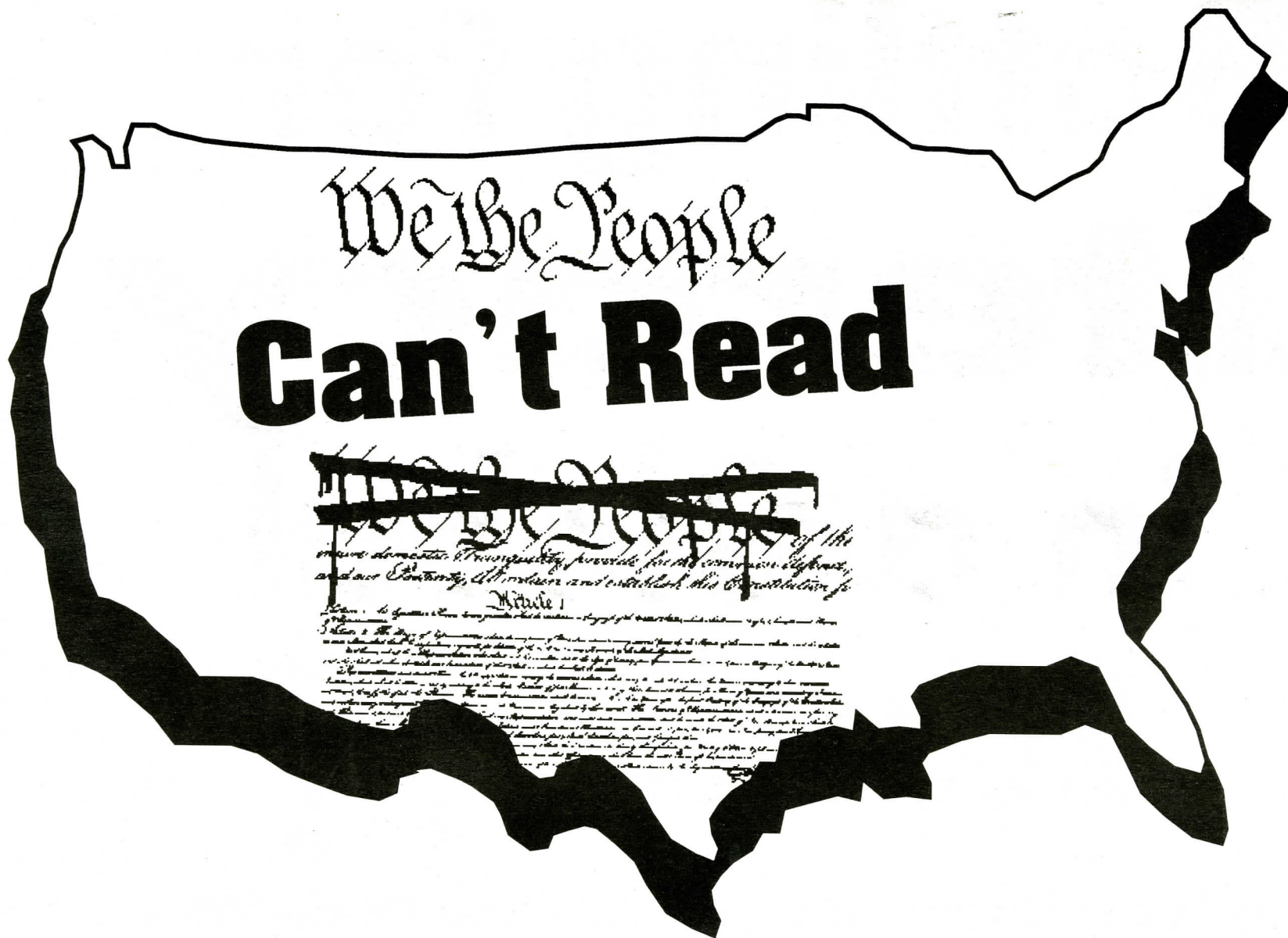
"They know that they have to do well if they want to keep their jobs," says Kathy Jones, XeTel Corporation trainer. "In order for our company to compete globally, we had to adapt a more stringent workmanship standard," she says matter-of-factly.

Staff positions now require a minimum 10th grade reading and math capability for company students and future employees. A new pre-employment proficiency exam "weeds out" unskilled applicants. Increasingly, sophisticated job requirements force technical companies like XeTel, Dell Computer Corporation, Motorola, Texas Instruments and IBM to confront functional illiteracy.

"In the 1980s, literacy was a good value unto itself," says Barbara Crosby, Texas Council on Workforce and Economic Competitiveness (TCWEC) planner. "In the 90s, it is couched in 'workforce development.' What's important is how it contributes to the economy," Crosby adds.

"In the 21st century, high school graduates will need the math skills of an accountant, the technical savvy of a computer specialist and the communication skills of a teacher," wrote Texas Comptroller John Sharp in 1992. High skill occupations, often requiring computer expertise, will comprise 40 percent of the job market by 2000, according to a 1994 TCWEC report.

For half of all American adults, a "high skill" task



means understanding a map, interpreting a credit card statement or registering a child for school. The 1993 National Adult Literacy Survey says that 50 percent of the U.S. population lacks enough reading, writing and math skills to cope with daily life.

Texas ranks 47th nationwide on literacy, behind California, New York and most southern states. Nearly 30 percent of the state's 13 million adults struggle daily with job applications, warning labels and restaurant menus.

As more companies adapt pre-employment exams, thousands of adults will be excluded from industrial jobs once suitable for low skill workers. "If entry-level jobs continue to require higher levels, then we'll have a group of people who will practically fall out of the workforce," says Crosby.

Employees now enrolled in workplace classes possess a great advantage.

"Me and the other students really enjoyed it," says "Johnny," a XeTel facility maintenance employee. "The classes refreshed my mind and brought back the little things. But it went so quick . . . I want to go on to the next level — the 'Competitive Edge,'" he adds earnestly.

Classes commence on company time and cost students nothing. The corporation invests resources because it believes these employees have potential, says Jones. "We've helped a non-reader jump to 3rd-grade level," says Carol Wyche, a XeTel literacy instructor.

While boasting success stories, XeTel's program is not permanent. Unskilled adults cannot depend upon the business sector to supply future training, says Jones. High costs, time restraints and unrealistic expectations create problems.

But a limited hiring pool of qualified workers demands immediate solutions.

"We train applicants with no experience or educa-

tional advantages in seven days," says Stephanie Hill, TEAMSOURCE director, an Austin-based specialized temporary agency. The free crash course funnels grads directly into technical jobs, serving as a placement agency for corporations.

Although Hill encounters high school graduates lacking 5th-grade reading proficiency daily, the agency avoids educational training. In fact, clients must possess basic reading and math capabilities to participate. Hill recognizes a "desperate need," for literacy services, but feels the responsibility lies elsewhere.

Traditional literacy programs like the Travis County Adult Literacy Council (TCALC) continue to battle illiteracy in the public sector.

In the spirit of grassroots community involvement, TCALC recruits volunteers to become Basic Literacy or English as a Second Language tutors. "We have about 300 hard working people helping adults learn to read and write," says Judith Manriquez, TCALC volunteer tutor coordinator.

The stigma of "illiteracy" in American society frustrates her: "Illiterate people are not lazy leeches — that's a myth," Manriquez says. "They're working full time, often at minimum-wage jobs, with families and weekly tutoring," she explains. "Many students start and leave in a year because they move on once they gain confidence."

The personal goals set by the students reflect concern about employment demands.

An "I want to read Tom Sawyer" objective evolves into "I want to get a better job" for many adult learners. More career-oriented "accomplishment-based goals" versus life-enhancing "personal goals" reflect priority changes, says Manriquez.

TCALC itself now offers contractual services to private sector companies.

THE HARSH STATS OF TEXAS LITERACY RATES

- Texas ranks 47th nationwide, behind California, New York and most Southern states
- 28 percent of Texas' 13 million adults test at the lowest literacy proficiency level
- 40 percent of jobs in the American workforce will be high-skill by the year 2000
- 28 percent of Texan adults do not hold a high school diploma
- 33 percent of all Texas 9th graders drop out of high school
- 50 percent of Texas Latinos and 45 percent of Texas African Americans are functionally illiterate
- 90 percent of incarcerated individuals in Texas are functionally illiterate
- Texas allocated \$9 million for adult education, ranking 46th nationally in 1992. (Michigan--\$426 million, California —\$400 million)
- 50 percent of U.S. adults are functionally illiterate
- 44 percent of functionally illiterate Americans live in poverty

(*Statistics from the 1993 National Adult Literacy Survey and the 1991 Texas Adult Literacy Survey)

"Although the workplace literacy programs will grow," notes Manriquez, "they can't provide the depth of one-on-one tutoring."

Employees receive both worlds at the Division of Housing and Food Service (DHFS) literacy program at the University of Texas. An Austin Community College instructor conducts formal classes and exams, while volunteer university students tutor staff members in adult basic education, English proficiency or GED preparation.

"They're certainly not required to do it," says Steve Phillips, DHFS training specialist, "It's on their own time

... but response has been great." Participants learn at their workplace, but without managerial pressures.

DHFS's program, like TCALC, elicits the support of Austin Community College (ACC). Demonstrating a supply-and-demand climate, the ACC Center for Career & Business Development, markets training contracts to local businesses. "We assess company requirements and employee capabilities," says John Mercado, lead coordinator.

ACC classes for reading, writing or math training vary from eight weeks to twelve weeks. "It all depends on the company and the individuals' skills and motivation," says Mercado. XeTel literacy instructors insist that learning takes more time. "The management expected students to be capable of 10th-grade reading in five to six months. Try five to six years!" says Wyche.

Concern for staff, not just a limited hiring base, motivates management action, says Mercado. "We have companies that really care for their employees. It's not

regulations or taking advantage . . . There's nothing wrong with caring," asserts Mercado. "That buys you loyalty," he adds.

Behind "corporate caring" lurks a sensitive issue: To what extent should business be responsible for education?

"Business is providing remedial training and can't continue to do so . . . That's education's job," says Jones flatly. "We're really their customers," she adds.

Lack of communication between businesses and educators, besides heightened expectations of high-

school graduates, contributes to the problem. "Only recently has business demanded new skills," says Bob Glover, University of Texas research scientist.

Education reform tops the agenda of an Austin task force called "School to Work Initiative," under the Capital Area Training Foundation. "Changes involve the integration of academic content with applied vocational work skills," explains Glover, an active participant.

The connection between a high school education and a career directs students down the right path, says Glover. Computerized instructional tools, hands-on learning projects and workplace visits characterize the new curriculum. High school will become a stepping stone to the "real world."

For Johnny, the XeTel basic education student, a practical school-to-work transition would do society a world of good, "because once you stop your schoolin' for awhile, you kind of get lost from reality."



Sara Heydon, XeTel Literacy advisor by Michelle Christenson

SAT WARS:

Measuring Teenage Potential

The Scholastic Aptitude Test appeared in 1926 to predict a student's success in college. Now, universities use the scores to deny admission or mandate remedial courses.

At eighteen years of age, Albert Cortez and 29 other San Antonio graduating high school seniors participated in a 1967 longitudinal research study, which attempted to predict each individual's success in life,

But Cortez's evaluation wasn't too great — he didn't take the Scholastic Assessment Test, known as SAT.

Twenty-eight years later, Cortez works in the offices of the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) in San Antonio, where he proudly wears the title of a director.

"All young people are valuable and can make a great contribution to society," says Dr. Maria Robledo Montecel, executive director of IDRA. "But the problem is that many

students, especially minorities, are underrepresented through the SAT, because it is not an accurate evaluation of their potential," Robledo added.

Since its debut in 1926, SAT attempted to predict a student's success in college. Now, universities and colleges use SAT scores to either deny students admission or place them in remedial courses, charge critics.

Experts say this particularly affects low economic status and minority students. It also prolongs a student's college career, while lowering self-confidence — subsequently producing dropouts.

"Research shows that if a student doesn't perform well in the SAT, it will have a psychological impact on the student and affect their self-esteem and self-confidence levels," Cortez explains.

Students scoring lower than a 1,000 combined average score are susceptible to remedial courses in many colleges.

In the 1993-94 Texas school year, only 5.4 percent of the Latinos and 4.3 percent of Blacks taking the test achieved higher than a 1,000 score, compared to 24.1 percent of whites, according to recent state education figures.

Kevin Gonzalez, a spokesman for the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey, which creates the SAT yearly, says the scores are used with other measures in the college admissions process — including 2,700 different colleges nationwide.

He stressed that the SAT only predicts college performance, adding that its official policy emphasizes never using the exam alone as a means of admissions.

"The SAT is actually pretty accurate. Every year we

compare scores with various freshman classes," Gonzalez says.

However, Cortez's situation was different. Several of the students in the 1967 study had not taken the SAT and others received low scores. But the researcher's predictions were proven wrong.

Seven out of the 30 students graduated with a doctorate; one became an assistant for a Congressman. The majority became educators and administrators like Cortez.

"Our success rate was exceptional, because a number of us even made the Dean's List," Cortez recalls. "Therefore, any one test is not the only indicator that can be used for success in college... it's an inappropriate practice," he adds.

Despite the accuracy of SAT exams, one element stands clear — minority students lag behind white students in combined average scores, Gonzalez says from ETS headquarters.

In 1976, when scores were first divided by ethnic groups, Mexican-American students scored 60 points lower in the verbal and 62 points lower in the math sections of the SAT. In 1994, they scored 51 points lower in the verbal and 52 points lower than white students in the math section, say ETS statistics.

Black students fell short by 99 points in the verbal and 120 in the math, but also scored the largest increase among minorities. In 1994, the comparison showed a narrowing 71 in verbal and 39 in math, says another ETS spokesperson, Joe Sanchez.

"The reason for this is that white students have more books to read at home or school," Sanchez explains. "A higher family income translates to higher scores, while low scoring individuals are usually from low economic families, many of which are from inner cities," Sanchez adds.

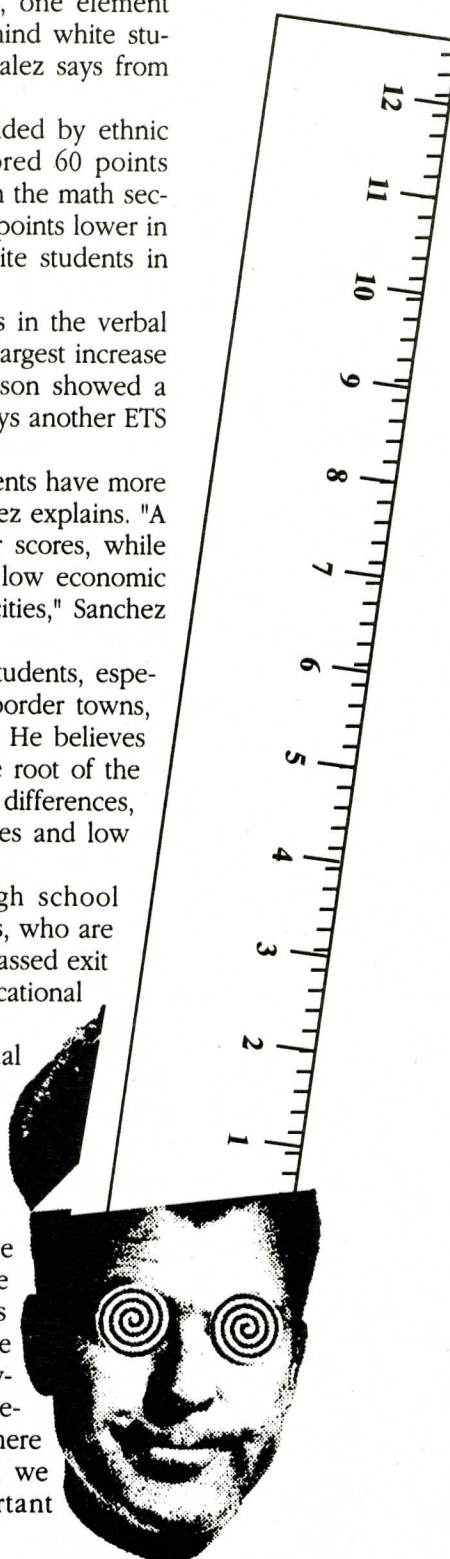
Cortez explains that many minority students, especially from poor Texas districts such as border towns, are not exposed to SAT testing material. He believes that inadequate school funding lies at the root of the problem. Other factors include language differences, lack of minority teachers, lack of resources and low income households.

Only 35.8 percent of all Texas high school juniors and seniors in 1991 or 1992 classes, who are considered economically disadvantaged, passed exit level exams, according to the Texas Educational Agency.

"A student who is a victim of unequal funding is almost always a victim at the end," says Cortez. If a student cannot be admitted at a college, they will pursue other options and likely become discouraged.

IDRA's Robledo hopes that more minorities will enroll at universities by the year 2000. "You see, we are at a crossroads now," she says. "It could mean that the future will be good and exciting for everybody in the U.S., or it could mean something else. But in order to determine where we (Latinos) will be 10 years from now, we must make education our most important focus," she adds.

**By
Gilberto
Salinas**



The Hidden Realities of

HUB

By

Richard

García

As the son of a migrant farm worker, Rick Mendoza remembers the poor working conditions, discrimination, and injustice encountered by his father.

He obtained a degree from the number one accounting school nationwide — The University of Texas at Austin. Back then, he could count the number of minorities in his classes via the number of pencils in his backpack.

After working for a local accounting firm, Mendoza started his own CPA firm. After his business began growing, he stumbled into the state's minority contracting program.

Mendoza then discovered the hidden realities of the Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) programs — confronting in the business world the same problems his father faced earlier in the fields.

"I'm competing against firms whose fathers were in the same business and their grandfathers and their fathers. They all grew up together, had the same rearing, went to the same churches, the same social clubs, they played golf together, they were fraternity brothers at UT. I don't have anything against that. I want that life for my kids too," says Mendoza.

Originally established to pursue equity in the disbursement of government contracts, HUB programs today confront poor results and an embittered political climate, which may lead either to program reform or termination.

Mendoza also discovered — along with other minority small business owners — that he had to overcome an intricate system of fraudulent schemes, institutional barriers, discrimination, political backlash, and lack of capital resources to achieve HUB's original goal — increasing competitiveness and diversity among U.S. entrepreneurs.

HUB programs began in 1977, when the U.S.

Congress passed a minority contracting law to ensure that at least 10 percent of the nation's \$100 billion-plus in public works federal money projects would be subcontracted to minorities.

However, state and local agencies implemented the program, using federal guidelines to decide whether companies are eligible to receive HUB minority contracts.

Texas sets a goal for state agencies to make a "good faith" effort to award 30 percent of all its contracts to businesses, which are at least 51 percent minority owned.

Additionally, non-minor-

ity prime contractors agree to make a "good faith" effort, using resources such as the State's HUB directory, to notify certified HUB subcontractors of business opportunities. However, a business is not required to use the directory.

To be certified as a HUB, a minority must prove ownership and control of the firm, which generally means 51 percent ownership. Desk audits usually review business records to validate a business assertion of minority status.

As of September 1, 1994, the state had certified 8,951 HUBs.

Most analysts conclude that "fronting" frauds — or scams by non-minority business owners to gain advantage in the public bid process by representing themselves as minority HUBS — are the most common.

The problem carries national significance, says David E. Wilson, Chief of the Criminal Division of the U.S. Attorney's Office in Seattle, where federal officials are now investigating a \$1 billion dollar fronting scam.

Besides "fronts" and other criminal initiatives, small minority business owners like Rick Mendoza must also deal with "several institutional barriers," according to the Joint U.S. Select Congressional Committee during the 73rd Legislature. The committee's purpose was "to make specific recommendations for legislative action or to provide remedies that would be appropriate in assisting the state meet its goals" on greater HUB participation.

As a result, minority businesses show significantly poorer participation rates as government contractors.

For example, the Joint Select Committee discovered disappointing HUB participation rates in fiscal year 1994 for the Texas State Capitol Renovation Project, directed by the state's preservation board.

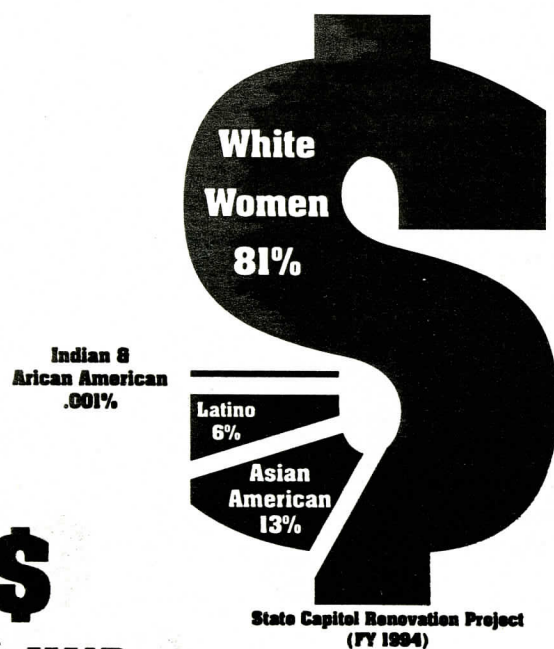
Of the \$42,267,041 spent in the renovation project, only 4.9 percent, or \$2,065,349, was allocated to HUBs.

White women-owned businesses received almost 81 percent of the total HUB allocation in the renovation project, or \$1,671,425. By comparison, Asian American-owned firms got almost 13 percent, or \$264,644; and Latino-owned businesses got about 6 percent, or \$129,057. Indian and African American businesses share represented less than .001 percent, or \$166 and \$56 respectively.

In terms of bidding for government work, Mendoza remembers a discrimination situation when his company wanted to participate and sought out the prime contractor, who had already been awarded the Texas government business without minority participation.

HUBS—or, Historically Underutilized Businesses—confront an intricate system of fraudulent scheming, banking barriers, competing business discrimination, political backlash, and . . . access to funding.

HUB ALLOCATION



"They literally cursed at us and told us to go away and hung up the phone," says Mendoza.

"People tend to hire people that look like them," says Lenoria Walker, acting director of the City of Houston Affirmative Action and Compliance division.

"They think they are giving up something, they think it's only their money, they think money has no color, they don't want to share (referring to HUB programs that are funded by tax dollars)," concludes Walker.

She believes the City of Houston's program has been successful because of the commitment from its own government — at its highest leadership levels.

"These last three years, the City has awarded \$285 million in 1,200 minority business contracts, compared with \$180 million for the preceding three years. Prior to the creation of the program in 1984, less than one percent of the city's business went to minority or women-owned firms," says Bob Lanier, Houston's Mayor.

The program stringently enforces the certifica-

Bank investigations also reveal a disparity between the percentage of business loans to whites and minorities, critics claim.

"Banks are cautious," says Margo Possey, president of the Dallas-Fort Worth Minority Business Development Council, which helps identify minority owned business for the private and public sector.

"Access to capital is one of the number one issues for minority owned business . . . Good loans are overlooked because they do not fit the traditional way a banker looks at loans . . . Cash flow impacts any small business, particularly a minority owned business," says Possey.

Recognition of the problems within Texas's HUB program has prompted reform proposals.

Recently, a group of scholars and politicians submitted recommendations to the General Services Commission, including Dean Ray Marshall of the LBJ School, also a former U.S. Secretary of Labor under President Jimmy Carter.

The group recommends banishing for life front companies, enforcing stringent penalties, and rais-

"I'm competing against firms whose fathers and grandfathers were in the same business . . . They all grew up together, had the same rearing, went to same churches, the same social clubs, played golf together, and were UT fraternity brothers...I don't have anything against that, I want that life for my kids too."



Rick Mendoza
by Michelle Christenson

tion process, and imposes strict penalties for fraudulent applications, including a five-year suspension from bidding, instead of the state's civil charges and petty fines. Since the program's inception, fronts have been virtually non-existent, says Walker.

Excessive specifications, procurement notices, bonding, insurance, lack of capital resources, and lack of prompt payment prevent HUBs from flourishing in a politically, bureaucratically dense environment.

General contractors argue that the minority contracting laws are poorly administered, forcing them to allegedly hire underfinanced, unqualified, minority firms that often cannot finish the job.

Minority prime contractors usually do not exist because of the vast amounts of capital needed in start-up costs and bonds — contractors under current HUB legislation are forced to post a bond at 100 percent of the contract value.

"I had a business making \$50,000 a year and they wouldn't even lend me ten," says Mendoza.

ing the criminal penalty for claiming minority status — from a civil offense to a third degree felony. The group also calls for a system of more specific documentation.

"If you open the doors and windows of opportunity, the numbers will increase. If there's opportunity, people will come. It's like saying if you open the borders no one will come," says Abel Ruiz, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce president.

Reforming the state HUB program to accomplish its original goal of equity will not be an easy task, say both Republican and Democratic state legislators, who fought throughout the recent session. But some feel optimistic about the level of awareness among state and local governments.

Analysts and proponents of the HUB program — along with obvious affirmative action issues — believe its importance lies in one statement by Margo Possey, president of the Dallas-Fort Worth Minority Business Development Council.

"The private sector is driven by the public sector."

Grade Inflation

Continued from
back cover

Grade inflation was a top media story in the 1980s, criticizing practices which allegedly lowered grades to "representative" levels, such as the bell curve.

But the controversy — defined by some educators as "the designation of grades higher than those earned by merit" — continued quietly, even though students on large public research campuses remained unaware of its impact.

Now a decade later, grade inflation critics charge once again that students aren't working for their As. Easy grading jeopardizes the reputation of quality universities, they argue, while presenting a useless gauge to employers about postgrad potential.

They cite Stanford University as an example, where 93 percent of the students in 1994 claimed A or B averages. Until last year, the grades D and F did not exist, courses could be dropped until final exam day with no consequences, students had the option to retake courses for a higher grade and they could choose which grades were recorded on transcripts.

But wait a minute, say other educators. Too much importance gets placed on grades, not enough on quality teaching. "Hard-grading" policies lower students' willingness to risk taking non-required courses. They add that this effectively prevents them from independent exploration.

Grades cannot be seen as true measures of student performance, they add, emphasizing that grade "deflation" restricts a student's learning experience.

Yet at UT and other campuses, the conflict expands into greater complexity, often affecting a professor's career as well.

"I'm a young, tenure track professor here," says a recently added UT faculty member, who requested anonymity. "Of course, my grade inflation stats are important to my tenure — the senior professors in my department can judge me accordingly . . . some want to know whether I'm too easy on students, whether I'm 'pandering to students' to be popular."

Many faculty fear that students may react to lower grades with negative teaching evaluations.

Besides the hidden pressures on non-tenured professors to allegedly maintain certain grade distributions — other linkages emerge: ties between grade "deflation" and awards, raises, promotions, and recognition for faculty; the serious implications for students who arrive from poor Texas school districts more academically unprepared than the university population as a whole; and the role that differing political perspectives play in the grade inflation fight.

At UT, debate parameters range between Dr. Harry Cleaver, who teaches classes

about Marxist political economy in the Economics Dept., to Dr. Joseph Horn, psychology professor, former associate dean of the College of Liberal Arts, and current president of the Texas branch of the conservative National Association of Scholars.

Horn is also regarded as the inventor of a campus grade inflation index, which measures grade inflation levels.

Nearly 60 percent of UT students boasted an A or B average GPA in 1992, according to Office of Institutional Studies reports. In only seven years, the number of As and Bs awarded by professors at UT rose by 6 percent — nearly 3,000 more students were awarded As or Bs in 1992 than in 1985.

"Six percent is nothing!" insists Dr. Harry Cleaver, author of "Worried About Grade Inflation? Abolish Grades!," an article written for publication at his Stanford alma mater. "Each time the grades go up just a little, it's assumed grading is easier," he says. "The grade is 'devalued.' Maybe students got smarter, maybe they work harder, maybe we're better teachers now."

Even though the undergraduate average GPA at UT is an unassuming 2.78, Horn believes that UT is guilty of grade inflation.

"You just can't compare Stanford to UT. Most of the students going to those kind of schools graduated in the top 10 percent of their classes. You would expect higher grades. That's not true at UT," he says. "Our student body in academic aptitude has lower scores. You must take that into account."

"Our graduation rate is higher than it is predicted to be, and I believe grade inflation might be responsible."

In an effort to eradicate any signs of grade inflation, many professors apply the bell curve, which means that most class grades will fall into the "C" or average category, followed by equal groups of Bs or Ds, followed by smaller increments of As and Fs.

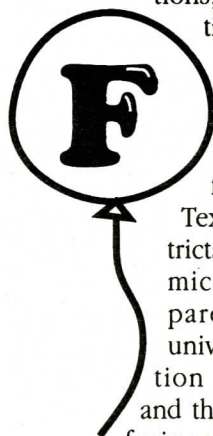
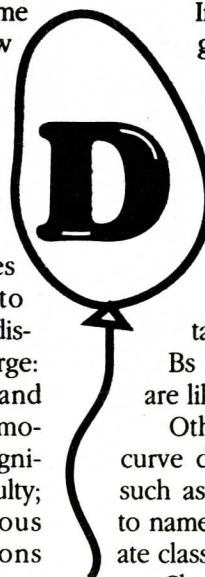
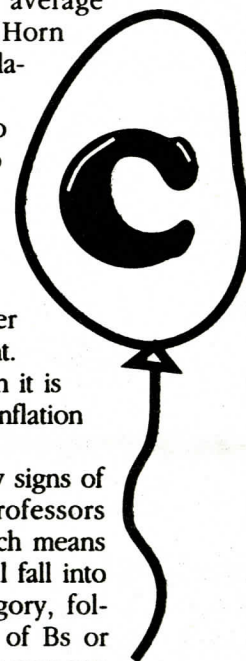
"What gets students really upset is when professors give a certain percentage of As, a certain percentage of Bs — regardless of what the numerical scores are like," counters Cleaver.

Others believe that the grade inflation's bell curve doesn't easily adapt to certain disciplines — such as writing, journalism, drama and fine arts — to name but a few, as opposed to large undergraduate classes with multiple choice tests.

Cleaver argues that UT's grading stems from the "nasty result" of business socialization. Before the generalization of public schooling, he says, the question asked by employers was not whether students obtained a degree or high GPA, but whether the graduate knew how to do the job.

"We need to force businesses to evaluate whether people are capable of doing the job," he says. "What happened to apprenticeships? Those were the good 'ole days, when you got paid for learning how to do the job."

Cleaver also believes that the grade inflation debate matches contemporary conservative attacks. "Grade inflation fits hand in glove with the Contract with America. The Republicans are out to lower wages and the standard of living. Grades are like wages — if you



lower grades, it's like lowering wages."

Horn, however, denies that grade inflation is a political issue.

"My concern is with the inaccurate feedback that grade inflation produces," he says. "The accusation of politics in grade inflation is usually leveled by people who want to hide the problem."

"My point of view is that grade inflation is deceiving students concerning how well they are really doing. If an average writer needs improvement and should get a C, but instead receives an A or a B, you're depriving him of honest feedback."

"Since grades today are so inflated, employers and grad schools look for other indicators of excellence," he says. "They have to look for something they think is extraordinary since grades can't be trusted anymore."

"Twenty-five years ago, if you graduated with a 3.3 or a 3.4 GPA, that was considered a sterling record. Now, it's just considered average. In general, people can't trust grades as an indicator of talent. You must go beyond grades."

"I understand both poles of the debate," says the same untenured UT professor who requested anonymity. "I see students here who are working excessive numbers of hours, and dealing with other hardships — and are constantly beaten down by the system. What happened to the idea that grades are rewards for a job well done against great odds?"

"If you don't consider this variable, the university simply becomes too punitive; it robs very young, struggling students of any hope at all, and convinces them that they don't have a right to dream of a better job future, that even they are 'stupid,' and that they really should become the victims of 'weedout' classes on a huge, 48,000-student campus," he adds.

Grade inflation debates also carry serious implications for minority students.

"It is my guess that anything that makes grading harder would make it differentially harder on minorities, especially since many of them are not as well prepared when coming to the university," says Cleaver.

"When you crack down on grades, people who already have a hard time will have the hardest time after grade inflation policies are implemented," he adds.

Grades not only serve to evaluate student performance, they often serve as a criteria for measuring the ability of a professor. Grade inflation reports can become one key part of decisions on tenure, promotion, recognition awards and raises.

Tenure considerations, for example, begin with a UT department's senior faculty evaluating a younger member within a six-year time period. Tenure means that UT makes a lifetime commitment to that professor's employment — based on scholarship, teaching ability, and community service. Grade inflation can also be emphasized as a promotion criteria.

Cleaver says that administrators at the College of Liberal Arts cannot promote anyone without first consulting a thick binder, filled with rows upon rows of every single course that professor ever taught and every single grade that professor ever assigned — a grade inflation

report.

"As soon as somebody is up for a promotion, that book is on the table. The kind of grades you give are scrutinized," says Cleaver.

"Grade inflation indices are not an infallible index," admits Horn. "It's just a piece of information that's available when considering someone for a promotion or a w a r d . There's no standard formula for selecting an individual for a promotion, but that information is there to be considered."

Those notorious for giving high grades are often accused of engaging in popularity contests through the assignment of high grades in an effort to perform well on student evaluations, another criteria determining promotion.

Educators also cannot be certain whether tough grading translates into a quality education.

"Grades are not an accurate measure of what you learn," says Mohammed Khan, a senior accounting major at UT. "They're more an accurate measure of what you knew at the time of the test and what your professor decided to put on the test. Everything depends on how you were tested and how you were graded."

Cleaver agrees. "Grading is completely arbitrary," he says. "You're the one deciding what you want to teach, what the tests are going to be like, and what kind of grade distribution to bestow."

"Grades are an obnoxious obstacle to learning," he adds. "All too often students spend their time worrying about what they're going to get on their tests, instead of actually learning anything. They only memorize for the test and then they forget what they learned. Everything is geared towards tests and grades."

Cleaver has suggested abolishing grades as a solution to the grade inflation controversy.

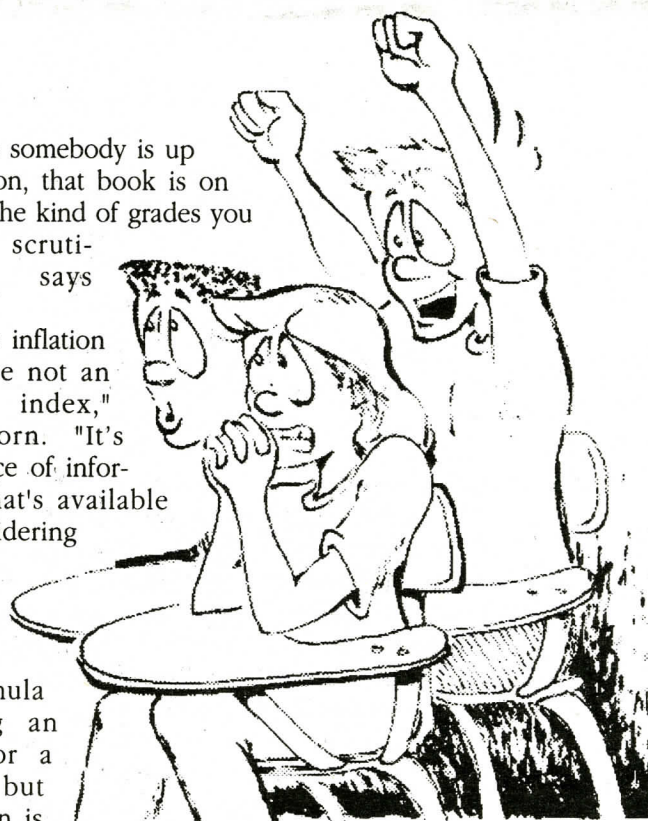
Horn, on the other hand, believes that "the way to deal with grade inflation is to emphasize the importance of honest feedback and its role in allowing students to improve in the future."

"Honest grading" can be restored by focusing on achievement tests, he believes. Students would take a standardized achievement test after each class, much like the advanced placement (CLEP) tests administered to incoming freshmen at UT today.

"A CLEP test?" exclaims advertising senior Leticia Diaz. "That's crazy! We're supposed to be educated here! We already have enough to worry about as it is without having to worry about taking only one test per class."

"And if we abolished grades, how would we be evaluated? I really don't think either of those two solutions would work," says Diaz.

As the new semester gets underway, faculty sources say that the grade inflation tug-of-war issue will continue.



A

B

Tug-of-War over **Grade** **Inflation**

One professor argues that a "rise of easy grading" jeopardizes UT's reputation. But others focus on how hidden grade pressures influence faculty tenure and promotions . . . this timeworn issue overflows with complexity, where the struggle is more intense in certain academic arenas.

Please see Grade Inflation, page 38

By Anna Aguilar

