University students hold water drive for local colonias

A&M-CC Sociology class brings water to area in need

by CONNOR TICHOTA

news reporter

Thursday, Nov. 14 marked the conclusion of the Water Drive sponsored by the Social Class and Inequality sociology class at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. The drive was very successful with 441 gallons of water and $1,540 in donations from various organizations participating. All the proceeds gathered will be given to various unprovided colonies throughout Nueces County.

What ended, ultimately, as an awareness and local outreach project, began as a service project, students would like to examine the structural factors that affect individual’s life chances (survival, social mobility, etc.). By integrating a service project, students would get the opportunity to take class room theory and apply it to real world situations.

“We wanted to highlight an area in our community that [explores] all the things we are discussing in class,” said Azaria. Hence, the class chose to examine the local colonies throughout Nueces County.

Colonial is a Spanish term to describe an extremely impoverished area, a shanty town, essentially. According to the South Texas Colonia Initiative, a Corpus Christi based service organization, colonias are living communities that lack basic amenities of which are vital including water, sewer systems and electricity. Furthermore, and the residents of these communities lack the resources necessary (including money and representa- tion) to change or improve their situation. According to Dr. Isabel Arazia, Sociology professor at A&M-Corpus Christi and a coordinator of the Water Drive, the focus of the class was to examine the structural factors of society that affect individual’s life chances. Students in the class area in the Sociology class, agree that one of the largest issues facing the local community on to campus is the large number of parties that students tend to get tired and worn out and, in turn, lose motivation and interest in things because of exhaustion, which acts like a filter that everything is seen through.

According to helpguide.org, “Burnout reduces your productivity and saps your energy. Leaving you feeling increasingly helpless, hopeless, cynical, and resentful. Eventually, you may feel like you have nothing more to give.”

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has services available for students who may be suffering from burnout through the Counseling Center. Even though meeting with a counselor may not be feasible for some, the Counseling Center is still reaching out to students in help relieve the stress.

“We are bringing in therapy dog teams,” said Sharpe. “Students can interact with them and students that means an increase in stress as the end of the semester is close but for many,�yuVa is the more mild end of the spectrum,” said Sharpe. “There’s a risk for a certain amount of burnout even if it’s not extreme as we get to the end of the semester, are at risk for a certain amount of burnout even if it’s on the more mild end of the spectrum,” said Dr. Theresa Sharpe, Associate Director at the University Counseling Center.

Today’s modern student is often juggling many things besides classes, such as work or family obligations. Sharpe says that all of these things, along with ineffective coping strategies, often lead to student burnout. Students tend to get tired and worn out, and in turn, lose motivation and interest in things because of exhaustion, which acts like a filter that everything is seen through.

According to helpguide.org, “Burnout reduces your productivity and saps your energy. Leaving you feeling increasingly helpless, hopeless, cynical, and resentful. Eventually, you may feel like you have nothing more to give.”

Students find relief from finals in therapy dogs

by TINA LENTZ

features reporter

The end of the semester is close but for many students that means an increase in stress as deadlines for projects, assignments and even graduation looms. Students may be at risk for burnout but the University Counseling Center has found creative ways, such as therapy dogs, to help students relieve stress.

“I tend to think that most students, especially as we get to the end of the semester, are at risk for a certain amount of burnout even if it’s on the more mild end of the spectrum,” said Dr. Theresa Sharpe, Associate Director at the University Counseling Center.

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Professor spotlight

Get to know Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi English Professor Dr. Molly Engelsdahl in this week’s professor spotlight.

Restaurant review

Looking for a new favorite eatery? Entertainment Reporter Andrew Liguez reviews the brand new Mediterranean restaurant on Saratoga, Kuzina.

Eighth anniversary for Islander Lights Celebration

A&M-Corpus Christi staff encourages students to get involved in the holiday festivities

by MARINA CANTU

entertainment reporter

Eighth anniversary for Islander Lights Celebration. The Corpus Christi Ballet will be performing The Nutracker at the Selena Auditorium at the American Bank Center this holiday season for the the thirty-ninth year in a row. Read all about this tradition on PAGE 5
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Over 100 students teemed in the Michael and Karen O’Conner Building on Nov. 13 for the Internship Business Fair. Representatives from Frost Bank, Neal Tax Services and other local corporations were present at the fair to give students a chance to network and find internships. A second fair is being planned for the spring semester.

The 13 annual Holiday Gala Concert will take place Friday Dec. 6 to help raise money for the Dept. of Music scholarship fund. The concert begins at 7:30 in the Performing Arts Center but attendees can arrive early to participate in pre-concert activities. Tickets are $10 for adults and $5 for students. Children under 10 receive free admission. For more information, call 825-2787.

Volunteers are needed to help set up for Navidad de los Ninos, which takes place Sat. Dec 7. The festival will take place at the Antonio E. Garcia Arts Education Center, located at 2021 Agnes St. It is the 30th annual festival.

Nine students were accepted into the McNair Scholars this semester. The program is designed to help first generation college students get into graduate school. To be eligible for the program, students must have a 3.0 and be going to college full time.

Crime
UPD Activity Log

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<td>Police responded to a class C criminal mischief with damages less than $50 in Miramar 000 building at 11:37 a.m. The case is exceptionally cleared due to victim refusal.</td>
<td>Police responded to two class C disorderly conduct at the Dugan Wellness Center at 7:04 p.m. The cases are cleared.</td>
<td>Police responded to a class B criminal mischief ranging from $50 to $500 at Island Hall at 1:15 p.m. The case is still active.</td>
<td>Police responded to a class C possession of paraphernalia in Miramar 500 building at 5:20 p.m. The case is still active.</td>
<td>Police responded to a class C minor in possession of alcohol in Miramar 500 building at 5:46 p.m. The case is still active.</td>
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Students join McNair Scholars

Nine students were accepted into the McNair Scholars this semester. The program is designed to help first generation college students get into graduate school. To be eligible for the program, students must have a 3.0 and be going to college full time.
University officials clear up questions, rumors surrounding the Affordable Care Act

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi to hold event Dec. 14 to help students sign up for health insurance on the program’s Marketplace

by CONNIE TICHOTA
news reporter

Controversy and confusion have swirled around the Affordable Care Act since it was signed into law in 2010. Now that it has been activated in the new fiscal year, the questions boil down to how will this legislation will affect the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi campus and its student employees.

According to Dr. Kathryn Funk-Baxter, Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration, the University has already made the necessary changes to the budget to accommodate the new healthcare reform.

“This has not been a financial impact on our campus,” said Funk-Baxter in an e-mail. “We did not have to do any major changes to our coverage that affected [insurance] premiums for us or the employees.”

One of the biggest changes made to the University’s health care policy was making coverage available to all full-time employees not just those who are benefits eligible. According to npr.org, the Affordable Care Act requires that, starting in 2015, all employers with more than 50 employees are responsible for offering all full-time employees insurance coverage. Full-time employee is designated by any worker who puts in over 30 hours of work a week.

According to Funk-Baxter, the majority of student employees at the university work less than 20 hours a week. “We highly encourage full time students not work over 20 hours to ensure they are able to achieve academic success,” said Funk-Baxter.

There are a few students, however, who may work over 20 hours a week via overtime or even two jobs. If these individuals are averaging 30 hours a week in work load, then they will eventually have the opportunity to transfer over to full-time status and receive benefits or may have to quit or cut back on their hours.

“Each employing unit makes the decisions on hours and schedules, and will be responsible for the benefits costs,” said Funk-Baxter.

The adjusted insurance program will be available to all full time employees in the upcoming academic year. The University is required to offer a health insurance plan, but student employees are not required to take it.

According to hhs.gov, the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services’ website, young adults under the age of 26 may remain on their parents’ health insurance plan until the age of 26. University employees who choose to have their own coverage may enroll individually through HealthCare.gov or through the University’s insurance plan.

For those students looking to receive coverage, there will be an event on campus to help students enroll and sign up for coverage in the national Marketplace on HealthCare.gov.

According to Funk-Baxter, the event will be guided by “navigators” — people experienced with the system and website — to aid students in their enrollment. The event will be held Dec. 14 from 10:00-3:30p.m. There will be an e-mail sent to the students detailing ways to reserve a time and spot at the event.

For more information about the Affordable Care Act and the benefits, please visit HealthCare.org, or the U.S. department of Health & Human Services website.

Affordable Care Act

facts

At the national level

Insurance Companies cannot withdraw coverage because of illness or injury.

Lifetime coverage is not limited to a fixed dollar amount.

Insurance providers cannot deny children coverage because of a pre-existing condition (asthma, diabetes etc.)

Establishes temporary health insurance program for individuals who are denied coverage because of pre-existing conditions.

At the state level (Texas)

Establishes temporary health insurance program for individuals who are denied coverage because of pre-existing conditions. (asthma, diabetes, etc.)

Provides coverage without cost-sharing for a variety of preventative health services: (mammograms, colonoscopies, flu vaccines etc.)

Approximately 3.4 million women in Texas will have guaranteed access to additional preventative services without cost-sharing.

$224 million awarded in grants to Texas health centers to support operations and establish new health care centers.

Adults under the age of 26 may stay insured on their parents’ health care plan.

according to hhs.gov

COLONIAS

Colonies are the lack of representation in local government.

“It’s hard to fix [the problems], because the system is so broken,” said Fairley. “The people that could fix it, don’t want to.”

This problem becomes most evident when examining the allocation of resources that are designed to help these communities. According to the Caller Times, a municipal deed was passed in Nueces County in 2005, requiring that all developers are required to build homes with water, sewage, and other basic amenities. The problem with this deed is that many of the older colonias –established prior to the deed’s installment – are still not renovated to meet the required standards.

Furthermore, the few grants that are supplied are not being spent in the proper manner. As Arazia and her students learned at a conference they attended concerning the conditions of colonias.

“A few of the challenges was trying to get private businesses to bid on refurbishing the colonias,” said Arazia. “[The government] held a public bid…and no one showed up.”

Without the financial help of the private sector, the government is very limited on the amount of grants they can provide and they are also limited to how far that money can go. According to Arazia, the conference she attended revealed that the majority of monies spent goes into not repairing the old housing.

Worst of all, most of these colonias won’t receive any help, because they are not recognized as such.

“There are 35 colonias that are recognized…there are over 125 total in Nueces County,” said Fairley.

The ultimate goal of the Water Drive was to bring awareness of these issues, whilst providing aid to the colonias. The sociology class completed the Water Drive with the help of several other organizations throughout the Corpus Christi area. Two of the top donors were HEB with over $1,000 donated, and CVS which donated approximately 30 cases of water. A few of the University’s on-campus contributors included: Circle K International Club, the Marine Society, and the IT department. For more information about colonias or ways to help, please contact the South Texas Colonia Initiative; for contact information, please visit the Facebook page.
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Men’s basketball losses 78-57 against University of Houston in heartbreaking second half

by ALEXIS DE LEON

sports editor

It was a brutal loss for Texas A&M-Corpus Christi men’s basketball team Saturday as over 3000 fans watched Houston defeat the Islanders 78-57 in the second half to snap a 78-67 victory at Hofheinz Pavilion.

Freshman forward Jeff Beverly (20) and senior Joy Williamson (18) each had career highs in points for the Islanders (3-4) in the losing effort.

Junior guard John Jordan was forced to add 10 points, six assists and five rebounds for A&M-Corpus Christi. The hometown Houston (6-2) placed five players in double figures. The Cougars muscled the Islanders into 15 turnovers at the offensive end, and outscored the visitors 40-18 in the paint.

The Cougars showed a strong offensive game early on, starting 5-for-8 from the field to open up a 14-9 lead. The Islanders were not ready to be held down and tightened defensively, while pairing that with an impressive surge on the offensive end to embark on a 16-4 run to grab a 25-18 advantage. Jordan was the catalyst, scoring eight of the visitors’ 16 points.

The game turned into a nail-biter quick as the teams traded baskets for a 27-29 score, but Houston came right back after that. 19 buckets to close a 5-0 run, making it a two-point game. Not backing down, the Islanders then got a key triple from Williamson to put the score at 30-25, but Houston closed the half on an intense 4-5 run for a 31-29 Islanders lead at the half.

Beverly led all scorers with 10 points on 3-for-4 shooting, hitting a pair of threes. The Islanders went 12-for-24 from the field, including a 3-for-5 performance beyond the arc. Houston, in comparison, went just 3-for-23 from the field.

The Cougars entered the locker rooms with continued momentum, organizing the lead on a dunk that made it 33-31. The rally culminated with five straight points that featured thunks by TaShawn Thomas and Knowles to make it 63-53 and force an Islanders timeout. From that point on, the Cougars man handled the court and had an answer for every attack from A&M-Corpus Christi, ultimately sealing the victory.

The Islanders were able to get back to 52-51, but Houston closed the lead on a 16-4 run for a 31-29 Islanders lead at the half.

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For the 39th year, the Corpus Christi Ballet is going to be putting on The Nutcracker at the American Bank Center Selena Auditorium from Dec. 7 through Dec. 15.

Teleport back to a day in your childhood when you may have seen the play The Nutcracker and think of what images come to mind. The only images that come to my mind are an army of mice and a lady with a huge skirt that children run out of. Feelings of festivity leaked through my pores as a child and for most of my childhood friends as well.

The Nutcracker is the story of a young girl, Clara, who is given a nutcracker doll by the toy maker for Christmas. Her jealous brother, Fritz decides to play catch with her new toy and ends up breaking it. Clara is devastated, but with the help of toy maker and his nephew the nutcracker is saved and is placed in a bed under the tree to rest. Before bed, Clara goes to check on the injured toy and ends up falling asleep under a Christmas tree, clutching her nutcracker doll, and wakes up to find out that she has shrunken to the size of the Christmas decorations. All of the Christmas ornaments and decorations have come to life and Clara is engulfed in wonderlands of many.

The only problem her and the Nutcracker face is the Rat King who traps the Nutcracker in the corner leaving him helpless. In an attempt to save the Nutcracker, Clara throws her slipper at the Rat King and dazes him enough for the Nutcracker to defeat him. They go on to have a Christmas adventure and travel through the snow forest and the Land of Sweets. They meet new characters and are enchanted by numerous dances. Just as the evening is ending Clara and the Nutcracker say their goodbyes and Clara wakes up still holding her nutcracker.

"I guess my favorite part of the story is when Clara receives the nutcracker and she gets so excited. Kids now day's wouldn't think anything of getting a nutcracker for Christmas, but back then it's different, to Clara, getting this doll was so special and important," says Robin Murray, President of Board of Directors at the Corpus Christi Ballet.

According to the Corpus Christi Ballet's website, corpuschristiballet.com, the cast of the 2014 production of The Nutcracker has been rehearsing since Oct. 4 and will continue to rehearse and perform through Dec. 15. The Nutcracker cast is made up of over 100 cast members including four different Clara's, played by Gabriella Barreda the first night, M.E. de Ases the second night, Alexis Hamano-Friday the third night, and Abby Vocansek the fourth night. The role of The Nutcracker will be played by Matthew Brehm all four nights.

There will be two types of showings of the Nutcracker, one with the orchestra and a Family Weekend showing. Orchestra shows will be on Dec. 7 and 8 and prices range from $11.50 to $31.50. Family Weekend shows will be on Dec. 14 and 15 and prices range from $6.50 to $16.50. For more information on The Nutcracker or to purchase tickets go to americankbankcenter.com. To learn more about the Corpus Christi Ballet check out their website at corpuschristiballet.com.

by MARINA CANTU
entertainment reporter
by ANDREW LIGUEZ
entertainment reporter

eating, to me, is a necessity (joke implied), which means that the type of food and flavor matter a lot. This time around I am reviewing Kuzina Mediterranean Grill, a simple place that serves Mediterranean, Greek and Italian food.

For starters, the location of Kuzina Mediterranean Grill is 3801 Saratoga Blvd. It is located in a small strip mall of sorts, and the actual restaurant is quite easy to miss, as I did. The atmosphere of the place is made to look like the Mediterranean. They also add a modern flare to the ambiance already present in the restaurant.

We started off with an appetizer, the Kuzina Mediterranean Combo. This combo appetizer came with a mixed platter of baba gnanouj, dolma, falafel, hummus and tabouli. This was served with fresh pita bread and pita chips. Each of the different pastes on the plate had their own unique taste, the hummus in particular had a really good taste to it especially when it was combined with the falafel.

We also ordered a special drink called a yogurt drink. Let me start off by saying that when it comes to drinks I am not usually one to be someone that judges but when I drank this, it was a surprise that I did not spit up all the drink all over the table. The drink, to say the least, was different. It tasted like a mix of milk and cottage cheese and I could only take a one drink before being turned off milk for a week.

For the actual meal I ordered lasagna rolls and a red potato soup. The lasagna rolls were two pretty much just like the title says. They had a tomato sauce over them with some parmesan and what I assume was cottage cheese. The lasagna rolls, while nicely presented, were not much better tasting than ravioli from a can heated over an oven.

The red potato soup, on the other hand, was actually a good soup but not that well presented. The soup tasted sweet and spicy, it also had a good liquidity substance to it. My only complaint was the soup was served a little too hot and had to be cooled before it could be even eaten.

For dessert we simply ended with a tiramisu which was the most delicious part. The best thing about it was that it was a decent size for only 1.99.

competition we have. Or you can just come out and enjoy the festivities, but remember to bring a new unwrapped toy to donate to Toys for Tots,” says Kotulsik.

For some, Islander Lights is a tradition that they have attended their entire college years, but for others this will be their first time. Freshman, William Rose says, “I’m really excited to check out Islander Lights. I have heard about it from a lot of my friends that have gone before and it sounds like something really interesting. I plan to bring a toy maybe more than one.”

This will be Rose’s first time attending Islander Lights and he says he has been trying to stay involved with things on campus to make his first year here count.

“I always hear about the “college experi-

ence” so what better way to get some experi-
ence then by participating in a campus trad-
ition,” says Rose.
by TINA LENTZ

For Dr. Molly Engelhardt, an Associate Professor of English, the moment of discovery that she facilitated in her students is something that she loves about teaching English. Engelhardt said that she loves when students finally comes to understand and appreciate the literature that they are studying.

“No teachers, we love to hear that,” said Engelhardt. “That’s what our role is, to help you have a relationship with these writers and these texts.”

Classes come in many shapes and sizes what it makes it hard for a professor to decide what content to teach in their courses. But Engelhardt said that she is conscious of what students would like.

“I’m always trying to think ‘What would my students like?’” Engelhardt said. “I don’t want to go so just be that, I want to have a mix—one in there that’s going to be a little challenging, one that students will have to step out of the box a little bit, but then one in there that’s going to be comforting and fun to read.”

According to one student’s review on ratemyprofessor.com, “I’d recommend her, but be prepared to work a little bit.”

One way that Engelhardt facilitates the discovery of literature is through the use of questions. She said that the Socratic Method is often how she approaches teaching, in an attempt to complicate and deepen students’ thinking.

“I’m always trying to find the right question that will get students going,” said Engelhardt.

Engelhardt said that sometimes it just works. A class may just have that perfect chemistry between students and professor, and she said that it’s unvocable to be in that type of classroom.

“I strongly recommend her for discussion-types,” stated one student review on ratemyprofessor.com.

In order to keep energy high she said that she likes to introduce new things to the class to keep things fresh. This may include a film clip, group work, activities or close readings.

“I normally have a lot of energy and sometimes I use that—get that energy going in the classroom. I hope that it infects the students and that they feel it too,” Engelhardt said.

Engelhardt’s currently teaches women’s literature and critical approaches to literature and culture this semester but in the Spring she will be teaching the undergraduate capstone course and a graduate class in Victorian literature and culture.

Engelhardt is also currently helping to plan a graduate conference that will be held at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi next semester, April 17 and 18. The theme is “Visions of Elsewhere” and a keynote speaker, Dr. Joseph Boone, will be present to talk about his field research in Turkey and his soon to be released book.

PROFESSOR SPOTLIGHT
MOLLY ENGELHART

by KATHLEEN RAMIREZ

On Sept. 21, 2010, Eric Lindgren, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi senior, was diagnosed with testicular, liver and lung cancer.

Immediately after being diagnosed, Lindgren was admitted into Bay Area Hospital, where he underwent three weeks of chemotherapy.

“Eventually, I went to the University Health Center, and they’re the ones that sent me to the ER. So I went, and that was when I was really really sure what was going on with me,” said Lindgren. “I went to a bunch of different doctors, but no one was really sure what was going on with me,” the environmental science major said.

“Eventually, I went to the University Health Center, and they’re the ones that sent me to the ER. So I went, and that was when I was diagnosed with testicular, liver and lung cancer.”

Aside from the love and support he received from his family, Lindgren said his fraternity brothers also helped take his mind off the pain. In addition to visiting him everyday in the hospital, Lindgren’s brothers also shaved their heads in honor of him.

“My fraternity brothers were always down here, they were always at the hospital. They put me in a two-bedroom, and left the other one open because every night, one of my brothers would spend the night with me and take care of me,” the Beta Theta Pi president said.

“If I got good news that day, they would bring a bunch of root beers and ice cream, and we’d have their root beer float parties in my room. I don’t remember everything just cause of all the stuff that was going on, but I remember that, and it helped me out a lot.”

After his three weeks at Bay Area Hospital, Lindgren flew back home to Fort Worth to continue his treatment there. During this time, Lindgren’s mother started to get sick as well.

“When I was a senior in high school, my mom was diagnosed with breast cancer and went into remission. When I went home after that first round, my mom got sick again,” Lindgren said. “There was actually a point in time when we were both doing chemo together, like sitting next to each other doing it.”

Throughout this whole ordeal, Lindgren said he tried to remain positive, and always looked at the good side.

“I just didn’t give a shit about anything else. Like if they said, ‘Well, what we’re about to do, you only have a blank and blank odds,’ I didn’t really listen to it, I didn’t really care,” Lindgren said.

“I know I was in good hands; I was in God’s hands.”

While Lindgren was able to beat his cancer, his mother wasn’t able to do so, and lost her second battle to cancer in 2011.

“I realized [getting cancer] could happen to anyone. If you catch it early enough, either by spreading awareness or doing stuff like self-exams, it can save you so much, so much trouble. It could save your life,” Lindgren said.

“Cancer isn’t what you think of. It’s not what you think about whenever you start losing weight and start feeling really sick. There’s a lot more symptoms to breast cancer than just feeling a lump.”

For more information on testicular and breast cancer or to learn how you can help raise awareness, visit the Lindgren Cancer Foundation at lindgrencancerfoundation.com.

The fight after a win
Islander Eric Lindgren starts foundation after diagnosed with cancer, hopes to help others

by KATHLEEN RAMIREZ

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New student organization promotes healthy food choices

by KATHLEEN RAMIREZ
features editor

With over 17 years of not eating meat between them, five representatives from the newly formed Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Vegan and Vegetarian Club are striving to educate others about this alternative lifestyle.

“We want to be inviting to people, not just vegetarians or vegans, but people who may be flexitarian or are just curious. We want to show people what options there are and give them support,” Doug Beard, Veg Club secretary and A&M-Corpus Christi art major said.

While still in the early stages of developing the club, art major Avelen Cisneros and history major Mimi Beard, co-vice-presidents, are hoping the club will serve as a source of education for people who may not be as familiar with a vegan or vegetarian diet.

“Some people want to be vegetarian or vegan or whichever they choose because of health reasons, but they just really like the environment or because animal cruelty. There are also some people who don’t even care about the animals, but they just really like the diet and the health benefits of it,” Avelen Cisneros said. “We just want to educate people about what a vegan or vegetarian diet looks like.”

In their attempt to educate others about a vegan and vegetarian lifestyle, some of the events that club participates in includes handing out informational brochures, swapping vegan/vegetarian-friendly recipes and trying out food from various vegan restaurants.

“We’re interested in doing things that show people that it’s not as difficult as one might think to adopt a vegetarian or vegan lifestyle,” Doug Beard said.

Dimitria Karydas, club treasurer and A&M-Corpus Christi zoology major, believes in the value of educating people, and hopes that the club will stamp out any negative stereotypes students may have about vegans and vegetarians.

“Vegans are made fun of because of PETA, people are like, ‘Oh my gosh, vegans are crazy.’ So when they think of the vegan and vegetarian club, they are like, ‘Oh, what do they do, vegans eat seaweed and meat eaters or something like that?’” Dimitria Karydas said.

“A lot of them are concerned because not many people know that there’s other alternatives besides meat. That’s what we’re trying to do, educate people that there’s something else out there, and it’s not crazy, you just have to open your mind to it.”

Veg Club membership chairwoman Alexandra Karydas also believes in educating people, and even mentions how she had to do her research when deciding to eliminate meat from her diet.

“When I started off, I honestly just thought it was a diet of plants, like I’ll have salad all day long, but it’s not about that at all. If you really do your research, truly understand what it is to be vegetarian, then you’ll realize it’s really all around beneficial to you,” the environmental science major said.

Dimitria Karydas hopes the club can serve as a support system for students, and encourages anyone interested in learning more to join.

“I’ve noticed from experience that there are a lot of vegetarians out there, but they don’t really have that support group that’s necessary for them. So often, they’ll quit or give up too easily. We feel that there’s a lot of people in this school that need that support system, and we want to be there for them,” Dimitria Karydas said.

As of now, the club is currently in the midst of planning events for next semester, including a camping trip, vegan candy gram fundraiser and a trip to Austin so members can sample vegan food.

The club is free and open to meat eaters and non-meat eaters alike. Visit facebook.com/TAMUCVVCLUB for more information, or stop by the club’s next meeting on Dec. 6 at 2 p.m. in Tejas C.

The Counseling Center’s services may be a good fit for students who may not be able to find support in other places and one way they facilitate support is through group counseling.

“When students are meeting with their peers in a group setting,” said Sharpe, “they’re getting input from the therapist but also from the other students in the group—getting feedback, getting support and encouragement from one another.”

The program mentioned earlier, known as “Stressed Out, Stress Less,” is an informal group that focuses on having fun while essentially relieving stress through discussions over games. Currently the group is still open, but an appointment with a counselor must be set up to join.
A fight for better education

College students prove to be less prepared for critical thinking during their freshman year and it’s not their fault

an opinion by ERIKA GALINDO managing editor

I’m convinced that the reason half of us have made it to our senior level of college has to do with a combination of persistence, dumb luck and the ability for us to accept that we will forever be in debt due to student loans, amen.

With this in mind, many of us have had a hard time as incoming freshmen. This wasn’t because we weren’t able to keep up. Our natural capacity as students had nothing to do with being able to cope with the critical thinking that higher learning needs. This ability simply wasn’t fostered in the public education system that most of us were taught in grades K-12.

Quite frankly, except for a small handful of classes, the majority of my high school years were spent talking about standardized tests. I became an expert at filling in bubbles by the third grade. The fact that I even knew what a Scantron was in the first grade is a bit unsettling.

Currently there has been much in the news about public education and a growing resistance to standardized tests. Last year at the beginning of the academic school year, Chicago public school teachers went on strike due to their demands being ignored by Mayor Rahm Emanuel. One of these was the decrease in standardized testing, which were affecting how much funds each school would receive depending on their performance. The fact that underfunded schools were already performing low due to various circumstances that all probably had to do with poverty was overlooked. Administrative efforts were focused on closing public schools that were “underperforming” to open for-profit charter schools, putting teachers out of their jobs, as if their teachers to blame for the staggering amounts of unneeded and expensive curriculum and months spent focusing on teaching their students how to write with formulas versus creatively or critically. Frustrations with these various phenomena have been mounting across the state, and many advocates for public schools will air some of their grievances during February at the Save Texas Schools March and Rally in Austin.

The important thing that we need to remember when we’re designing and providing public education is that if we design a two-tier system of schools, we will have a two-tier system of future contributing citizens. While some people might be okay, we have to remember that these are our kids who will have to live with the consequences of their parent’s inactivity when it comes to advocating for a better education.

If there is one thing we are guaranteed as Americans, it is a free and quality education. We should remember this and keep fighting for it.